

## Mark Solomon speech Hui-ā-Tau 2009 (for the web)

Tēnā koutou Ngāi Tahu Whānui,

I always look forward to Hui-ā-Tau, it is one of the highlights of my year. For me personally at Hui-ā-Tau there is only one kaupapa, to celebrate being Ngāi Tahu – and I believe this weekend we have much to celebrate.

Hui-ā-Tau offers us the time to connect with whānau and friends – to celebrate our whakapapa, our Ngāitahutanga – and the values of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga – for at the end of the day these are what give us strength and bind us as whānau, hapū and iwi.

After the balance sheets have been balanced, the i's dotted and the t's crossed, I am convinced it is only our participation in Ngāitahutanga, our ability to express who we are and where we come from, that will ensure we continue to prosper as a people and a tribe.

I personally want to thank each one of you for making the time and the effort to be here this weekend, because no matter how good the balance sheet is, without you here now, in this tent on the foreshore of Oraka, it would surely be an empty celebration.

Mō Tātou, a, mō ka uri a muri ake nei – for us and our children after us, is the whakataukī that guides us, but by your being here this weekend, you not only support that vision – you breathe life in to it - for that I thank you.

To our hosts the whānau of Oraka Aparima Rūnanga, Stewart Bull and Aunty Jane Davis, the organising committee and all those behind the scenes - ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou! The wairua of Hui-ā-Tau is captured in the theme of this year's hui "Our Place- Our People". Again you have risen to the wero and opened your home to us - it is both an honour and a pleasure to be warmed by the fires that burn so brightly on this beautiful marae.

It was just over the hill at Aparima/Riverton in 1993 that the Ngāi Tahu Māori Trust Board gathered to sign the Ngāi Tahu Charter, the document that sets out the rules which govern Te Rūnanga and honour the principles of our Kawenata.

And it is 16 years on that Te Rūnanga gathers today to report to Ngāi Tahu Whānui about the work of the past 12 months, much of which has been undertaken to uphold the intent and aspirations contained in these two important tribal documents.

As sole Trustee Te Rūnanga is responsible to act as kaitiaki of our tribal assets, we are bound to uphold the tino rangatira of the Papatipu Rūnanga and protect the mana of our people and our whakapapa.

The act of signing the Charter was the culmination of years of consultation so Ngāi Tahu could arrive at a point where we better understood ourselves and what was needed to be in place to govern ourselves as a collective.

The past year has been a time for Te Rūnanga to return to those fundamental matters set out in the Charter, to reaffirm our role as Trustees and Representatives of our Papatipu Rūnanga, in a way that allows our organisational structures to function unencumbered.

Looking ahead I believe there are important conversations that have to be had in respect of our Charter – when we examine our achievements as a tribe and an organisation, what is the yard stick we use? How we hold these conversations and who do we ask them of will be real questions for the coming year. We need to talk transparency.

Two key themes that have emerged for me during the year are growth and opportunity.

Everywhere I look I see growth, a prime example is the completion of the electoral review process and the on-going rūnanga representative elections. In my opinion this is one of the defining periods in the recent history of Ngāi Tahu. Until such a time as we decide to change

our system we have in place an effective electoral college process that gives all registered adult Ngāi Tahu Whānui a voice in their, and their tribe's future.

While we all share this democratic right, it only has value when we choose to exercise it. I encourage all whānau to get involved – this is your opportunity to have your say. The results of eight elections are now confirmed and while I acknowledge that overall things have improved with the average returns around 20% - compared to about 5% in the past - it is my opinion that the turn out should be better. You can't complain if you don't participate.

From the eight completed elections, five incumbent representatives have been reconfirmed and there are three new representatives at the table – and we are on track to have the remaining elections completed by March next year.

I see this as a tangible sign that as a tribe and an organisation we are continuing to mature. Eleven years on from Settlement we are becoming more sure on our feet and comfortable in our own skin. To have a clear and consistent method of choosing who will best represent our collective tribal interests is a basic right to participate in tribal life and serves only to strengthen us.

I would like to acknowledge those representatives who have ended their tenure with Te Rūnanga, Donald Couch (Rāpaki), Charles Crofts (Koukourārata), Hine Forsyth (Ōtākou) and Gary Waaka (Arowhenua). Each of these representatives have contributed in their own way to the ongoing success Ngāi Tahu enjoys today and for that - on behalf of all Ngāi Tahu - I thank them. I know that their expertise is not lost to the tribe and they will continue to serve their respective rūnanga and the iwi in other ways.

In particular I want to acknowledge Donald Couch who served for five years as Deputy Kaiwhakahaere.

I welcome to the board the new representatives Tahu Pōtiki (Ōtākou), Wally Stone (Rāpaki) and Elizabeth Cunningham (Koukourārata). I look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead - to put the past behind us and work together for the benefit of Ngāi Tahu as a whole.

I also want to acknowledge and welcome to their first Hui-ā-Tau, Ngāi Tahu Holdings Corporation chair Trevor Burt and Chief Executive Officer Greg Campbell, who you will get to meet later on.

Our new Representatives join the board at what I believe is a crucial time. Over the past year I have witnessed Te Rūnanga coming of age. As a board we are more keenly aware of the great responsibility we have sought, to represent our rūnanga and Ngāi Tahu Whānui.

We have faced criticism for not being accountable for driving the direction of the iwi, and in some cases this is rightly so. I am proud, however, that collectively we have faced that criticism, re-examined our responsibilities and set about correcting the situation.

Te Rūnanga is now in the drivers seat – no longer does the tail wag the dog – guided by our rūnanga communities it is our job to set the tribal agenda, provide direction and ensure that the Office and the Ngāi Tahu Holdings Group delivers on our collective vision. The buck stops with us! We are responsible for reducing the Whai Rawa distribution this year, we also decided to reduce the budget to tour Mō Tātou in Te Waipounamu and made the decision to implement Kotahitanga, leading to a subsequent review of some operations within Te Rūnanga Group.

I won't make any apologies for these decisions, nor can I, because as governors it is our responsibility to make difficult decisions, and it is a responsibility we don't take lightly.

On the other hand we also take responsibility for ensuring that the Office continues to maintain the integrity of our key programmes and deliver on our promises of distribution, albeit at a reduced rate in some cases.

In the case of Whai Rawa, although individual distributions have reduced we have retained matched savings contributions to ensure continuity for those members that have a savings

habit. Our commitment to the scheme is borne out by the steadily increasing membership and rates of saving.

Driving the agenda has been the Kotahitanga initiative, which has neatly dovetailed into the Governance Review, and helped deliver immediate and substantial benefits for the Te Rūnanga Group.

Through the Governance Review, Te Rūnanga has standardised the process for board appointments, invested in strengthening our subsidiary Boards to increase performance, introduced new and robust planning tools and made improvements to the Governance manual.

I think most significant is the new subsidiary boards for each of our three Holding companies, Property, Seafood and Tourism designed to build their capacity and ensure separation as required by the Charter.

The Governance Review has produced a renewed framework on which we can build our organisational future. By combining the outcomes of the review with the principles of Kotahitanga - the practice of sharing and working closer together - we have begun to see changes occur.

Already the benefits can be measured – in particular we now have a shared services portfolio which combines our administration, finance, IT, and communications operations delivering cost savings and improved coordination across Te Rūnanga Group.

Examples like this prove to me that for too long we have needed to do more than embrace the concept of Kotahitanga, we have needed to go that next step and put it into action. I am pleased to say that we have achieved that next step and as a result the entire organisation is much better positioned to do the work required of us.

An important part of the equation has been more effective communication across, and up and down the organisation, striving for transparency at every level. This has meant improved reporting to rūnanga by their Representatives, less in-committee discussions - unless it is commercially sensitive or staff related matters - and increased flow of information from Te Rūnanga and Te Rūnanga Group to Ngāi Tahu Whānui and Papatipu Rūnanga. We also established more regular and improved reporting processes via the Ngāi Tahu website, Community Net and directly to rūnanga.

We must be accountable to our communities for our decisions and I believe that through Te Rūnanga's commitment to improve its performance and our active participation in Kotahitanga we have created a new organisational landscape from which will flow benefits for all Ngāi Tahu Whānui.

The past year has been marked by significant changes at home and internationally. The global economy has been very volatile and the inevitable cycle of boom and bust has left few of us untouched. Led by a world wide financial crisis, governments, multi national companies and families were over capitalised, banks got nervous and stopped lending, people stopped spending and helped to create a depressed housing market, job creation became stagnant and unemployment rose. For many whānau it has meant limiting their priorities to keeping a roof over their heads, putting food on the table and keeping the power and phone connected.

And Ngāi Tahu has not been unaffected. We have had to respond to the economy, tighten our belts and ride out the financial storm – but the good news is we have. In fact we have done more than that, we have continued to trade, to grow, to invest and plan – and we have continued to make profits - \$13.3M - when others around us have lost money.

Ngāi Tahu Property returned almost \$16M in cash earnings despite the down-turn in the property sector that saw the new housing market all but dry up and the company rightly deciding to put some of its residential developments on hold. On paper, revaluations decreased investment property values, but our good quality tenants returned above budget cash earnings of \$11.7M.

Ngāi Tahu Seafood posted its best ever trading result of \$12M this year, but \$6M was wiped off the books due to fluctuations in the exchange rate of the New Zealand dollar and overall the company returned a net surplus of \$4.6M.

The recession also made life difficult for Ngāi Tahu Tourism with falling visitor numbers being one of the major contributing factors - but like our other subsidiaries Tourism still made money, returning a respectable net surplus of \$6.5M.

Though our financial returns haven't been as we'd like, our companies are in great shape and positives have emerged from this time of recession. Our decision to have a conservative approach to financial investment and maintain a diverse portfolio has been borne out as we have more than weathered the storm, and are well poised to take advantage of the financial up swing when it happens – and it will!

Right across the Te Rūnanga Group the tough economy has meant we have adopted a more stringent and prudent approach to spending. Te Rūnanga asked the Office to review the 2008/09 annual plan and remove \$500,000 from the budget. Based on revised income projections we also directed that \$1M in savings be made to the 2009/10 annual planning budget, yet still maintain our core services and projects to support rūnanga and Ngāi Tahu Whānui.

Office Chief Executive Officer Anake Goodall and his staff have achieved this and more – and they have done it with dignity and enthusiasm, which I acknowledge and commend them for.

At the same time Te Rūnanga introduced austerity measures, again asking staff to identify and implement Group-wide operational savings to how it resources and conducts its day to day business. From the most obvious, such as reduced travel costs by booking the cheapest non refundable air fares, sharing taxis and reducing catering and stationery costs, to bigger ticket items such as print procurement and mail delivery agreements with preferred suppliers. No stone was too small to be left unturned.

It has been a difficult period for management and staff, and on behalf of Te Rūnanga I gratefully acknowledge their professionalism and dedication to their work and their resolve to maintain the same high levels of service within these on-going constraints.

Often from change comes opportunity. When the lay of the land changes so too does your view and you begin to see things differently.

Significantly for Ngāi Tahu and iwi Māori there have been changes to the political landscape.

The new National government has dominated our view since coming to power at the last election and it has proven to be a busy and productive time.

National has been very proactive in engaging with Māori. They signaled this early on, making a supply and confidence deal with the Māori Party and within a matter of days the Prime Minister John Key met with iwi leaders to open the communications channels and discuss our collective and individual priorities towards building a better future for Māori.

I have been impressed with the Prime Minister and his decision to include the Māori Party in his government and his desire to engage openly and constructively with iwi, and notably his ability to bring people together.

I have spent many productive hours in Wellington meeting government Ministers and building strong and strategic relationships.

The government's resolve to talk and listen to iwi has also had the added benefit of bringing iwi leaders together regularly and these opportunities have helped cement critical relationships and added impetus to the possibilities that exist for iwi Māori to work together and in partnership with the Crown.

I believe Māori are the perfect partner for the Crown, collectively we have a strong economic base, share a long-term intergenerational view, and our money will always remain in New

Zealand. It makes tribes like Ngāi Tahu an attractive option to invest with the Crown in major infrastructure like roads, schools and hospitals. And these types of assets have tremendous potential to provide stable long term returns for iwi.

A good example is the Christchurch Civic Building project where we have partnered with local government to build the Christchurch City Council's new civic chambers and office building.

Ngāi Tahu owns a half share in the land and building, we have shared the development costs and we have signed the council up to a 96 year lease. Over the life of this lease this deal will generate a guaranteed minimum return of 7.5%. This represents an intergenerational income.

I want to see more of these examples for Ngāi Tahu and I look forward to the day that our long term investments in Crown infrastructure can generate enough income to cover all of our distribution and delivery costs - leaving the remainder of our income for re-investment.

Underpinning Ngāi Tahu's continued prosperity is the on-going work to protect our rights under the Treaty of Waitangi and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Settlement Act. A lot has been happening in this area with the securing of \$28M of fisheries assets, the signing of the Aquaculture Deed of Settlement, efforts to repeal the Foreshore and Seabed Act, defending our northern boundary and protecting our Settlement assets affected by the Emissions Trading Scheme.

Ngai Tahu Fisheries Settlement Limited earlier this year repatriated a further \$28M of fisheries assets from Te Ohu Kaimoana. Ngāi Tahu has now received all fisheries assets that emanate from the coastline of the northern boundary of FMA5 to the banks of the Waimakariri River. A key priority remains the further receipt of all fisheries assets within the takiwā - this however is dependent on us reaching coastline agreements with our northern neighbours and is inextricably linked with ongoing boundary issues.

In May Ngāi Tahu, Te Tau Ihu and Hauraki iwi signed a Deed of Settlement with the Crown which settled all claims to do with pre-commencement aquaculture interests in Te Waipounamu and Hauraki.

At the heart of the agreement is a one-off cash payment of \$97 million in full and final settlement of the current Crown obligations for "pre-commencement space" - which are the areas set aside for marine farming that were approved between September 1992 and December 2004.

In real terms for Ngāi Tahu it means a \$6M share that we will receive this financial year and still leaves the question of new aquaculture space to be settled.

The review of the Foreshore and Seabed Act was an important opportunity for our nation and I am very glad the Ministerial review panel recommended that it be repealed and the government has said it will follow through on that recommendation.

It has always been about a matter of principle – the Act breaches basic human rights. Ngāi Tahu and the Treaty Tribes Coalition have been vindicated – we took our case to the United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and were heard.

Now there is real potential for something better than the Foreshore and Seabed Act to be put in place. It was a painful low point in our history and we must take advantage of this opportunity to find the answers and not allow this issue to divide the nation again.

The protection of our boundaries is a work in progress. The Waitangi Tribunal decision to ignore numerous court decisions that support the exclusivity of our boundary was a blow, as was the dismissal of our judicial review. Subsequently we have taken our case to the Court of Appeal where we await the commencement of this process.

Te Rūnanga continues to maintain Ngāi Tahu's position that our mana whenua status within the takiwā is exclusive. Te Tau Ihu settlement negotiations are likely to conclude in early 2010 sealing off the opportunity for any claims to be made within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā and we are optimistic of an outcome that upholds our mana whenua and Settlement.

The most recent development for Ngāi Tahu is the Emissions Trading Scheme – this has been an on-going issue for us since the announcement of the scheme because of the threat it represents to the integrity and the value of our Settlement.

We have always maintained that the government of the time knew the effects signing up to the Kyoto Protocol would have on our Settlement forestry assets – by our estimations it could wipe \$40-50M off the value of our forest lands.

We are at a point now where we have secured an agreement with the Crown that not only neutralises our loss but will give us real commercial opportunity. This deal was agreed yesterday and I am proud to announce it today. In partnership with four iwi affected in the same way as Ngāi Tahu, we will have the right to carbon farm. Ngāi Tahu will grow trees on DoC land in our rohe, and the value of the carbon will offset our losses, enable us to enter a new market and contribute to environmental sustainability. This is an innovative deal worth in excess of \$50m for Ngāi Tahu.

Te Runanga will continue to monitor and work with the Crown to ensure Ngāi Tahu Whānui's rights are protected and honoured – it is time consuming and arduous work, but necessary – only we can ensure this happens – no one else has our interests at heart.

Our relationship with the current government is good – we must maintain the impetus that has been created by our persistent engagement and capitalise on the influence of the Iwi Leaders Group .

Contributing to the building of a strong and vibrant Māori economy – one based on kaupapa Māori values and principles, is also vital not only to Ngāi Tahu, but our collective future as a nation.

It offers us an ancillary vehicle to determine our own future and opportunities to work in partnership with the Crown as enshrined in Article II of the Treaty of Waitangi. It offers us stability, especially through public private partnerships and the potential for iwi to make long term secure investments in our nation.

Personally I feel the current environment has never felt better for Ngāi Tahu and iwi Māori to forge ahead in this area.

I have been involved over the past eight months with the Māori Economic Taskforce a Ministerially appointed group chaired by Pita Sharples looking at long term strengthening of the Māori economy. There is enormous potential and willingness to create practical solutions to build the health, wealth and prosperity of Māori.

While participation in global and national conversations is vital, there are also important conversations of our own that we have to have. Earlier I said opportunity has been a key theme for me over the past year, and I believe the real opportunity for us moving forward is simply to talk – to communicate our ideas, our fears, our needs and aspirations.

To my mind the last real conversation Ngāi Tahu had was almost 10 years ago when we created Ngāi Tahu 2025 – our 25 year tribal vision. It's a living document that captures the hopes and dreams of a generation – it's our road map that seeks to guide us – but over time maps change, new roads are created to new destinations, well worn roads need maintenance and repair, and some become the roads less travelled.

I see the current Ngāi Tahu 2025 review is our time to have another tribal conversation.

My vision for Ngāi Tahu is Kotahitanga - unity – working as one for the benefit of the whole! We need to set our sights high, but we need to continue building from the ground up.

Ngāi Tahu Whānui – that's you – and our Papatipu Rūnanga are the agents of change – our tribal tino rangatiratanga rests in each one of you – our collective challenge is to awaken it, so together we can create a better future for us and our children after us...

Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

Mark Solomon  
Kaiwhakahaere  
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu