

Port Nicholson Block Claim

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Media statement

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Agreement signing a major milestone for Wellington

For immediate use

The signing of an Agreement in Principle (AIP) with the Crown on the Port Nicholson Block claims is a crucial first step in what has already been a two decade long process to settle these claims.

Today the Port Nicholson Block Claims Chairman, Professor Ngatata Love, and the Minister in Charge of Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations, Hon Dr Michael Cullen, signed an AIP to settle all outstanding historical Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi claims of Taranaki Whanui (Wellington).

Claims covered by the Agreement in Principle include those relating to the loss of land Taranaki Whanui (Wellington) suffered in the nineteenth century, the way the Crown administered reserves set aside for Taranaki Whanui, and the loss of their connection to the harbour, forests, waterways and natural resources within the Port Nicholson Block.

“It was just before Christmas in 1987 that the first claim in regard to the land alienation and broken Crown promises our forebears suffered was lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal,” Professor Ngatata Love said.

“While there is still a long way to go and much work to be done before the claims are finally settled and a settlement passed into law, this milestone is certainly to be celebrated,” he said.

Meanwhile, former Governor General, Sir Paul Reeves, said reconciliation and forgiveness is a crucial part of settlement of the Port Nicholson Block claims.

Sir Paul, who is also a member of the Port Nicholson Block Claim Team, said the apology from the Crown and its acknowledgement of the wrongs committed against Taranaki Whanui is an incredibly important part of the settlement process.

“It has to be remembered that the loss of land and mana took a terrible emotional toll on our people,” he said.

However, Sir Paul said that in spite of everything we seek to find a position where we are at one with all people; and following the apology and the acknowledgement of wrongdoing must come forgiveness.

ENDS

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“...Do not direct that the Maoris shall be treated in one way and the Europeans in another; that is wrong... Now, I say it is not right that somebody else should take care of my house and my land. I can take care of them, and of my wife and of my children too...”

Parliamentary Debates, 10 September 1873, Speech of Wi Tako Ngatata