

# Te Whakatōhea move forward with historic settlement agreement

**Ōpōtiki, 22 February 2023:** Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations Minister, Andrew Little, has confirmed that the recent Whakatōhea ratification vote has demonstrated sufficient support to enter into a settlement with the Crown.

This represents a significant milestone in the long journey to settlement for Whakatōhea and marks the conclusion of negotiations which commenced over 30 years ago and 135 years since Whakatōhea first petitioned the Crown in 1887.

Graeme Riesterer, Whakatōhea Pre-Settlement Claims Trust Chair, commented on the announcement.

“This is a historic moment for Te Whakatōhea. The impact of this vote is far reaching and will resonate for generations to come. It means we can start to bring the aspirations of our whānau to life and build a better future for our mokopuna, their children and their children’s children.

“The Settlement will be transformational for Te Whakatōhea and the Ōpōtiki community. From a financial perspective, we will be in a position to invest in our people and the local economy, for example in our world leading aquaculture ventures resulting in greater employment opportunities, improved earning potential, living conditions for everyone. This is critical to our whānau in the current economic environment.

“We will also be able invest in our Whakatōheatanga, our cultural capability, reo, tikanga and even waiata and kapa haka. Something our whānau keep telling us they want to see more of.” says Graeme.

This is also the first time that an Iwi will be able to proceed with settlement while allowing the Waitangi Tribunal process to continue on to hear the historical Treaty claims. Usually, settlement legislation removes the jurisdiction of the Waitangi Tribunal to hear claims subject to that settlement.

Graeme goes on to discuss whānau aspirations of Settlement and the Waitangi Tribunal.

“We have whānau who wanted to progress with the settlement, and those who told us they want their stories told and recorded through the Waitangi tribunal process. The dual process will support our whānau to share their stories and have these taonga recorded for perpetuity.”

“Many of our Whakatōhea whānau have worked hard for this settlement to become a reality. We will finally be able to settle the raupatu and our grievances with the Crown. We know it will be especially significant for whānau to hear the Crown apology and start planning for a bright and prosperous future.

“I would also like to acknowledge those of our Whakatōhea whānau who are no longer with us to see this dream come true. It is now time for us to come together and move forward as one.”

It is confirmed that the signing ceremony will be held in Ōpōtiki with the date for the signing of the Whakatōhea Deed of Settlement to be confirmed in due course.

E roi te Whakatōhea i te roi a Tinirau. Whakatōhea, united by kinship.

**ENDS**

**About Whakatōhea Pre-Settlement Claims Trust**

The Whakatōhea Pre-Settlement Claims Trust (WPCT) is the mandated organisation responsible for negotiating a Deed of Settlement with the Crown for all who whakapapa to Whakatōhea. The WPCT entity, that Whakatōhea katoa approved by way of a vote, has representation for the 6 Whakatōhea hapū, the 8 Whakatōhea marae as well as one seat for the Whakatōhea Māori Trust Board.

[www.whakatoheapresettlement.org.nz](http://www.whakatoheapresettlement.org.nz)

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