

Submission of Hori Turi Elkington on behalf of Ngāti Koata Trust

Wednesday 17 May 2017, Te Hora Marae, Canvastown

MR ELKINGTON: Thank you, Panel, for your graciousness and respect for Māori. I'm going to take a different approach. Although you will have heard some of the things I have said, I've expanded a little bit more.

My remarks today are intended to cover three purposes, as follows, to declare that iwi Māori are conservationists. Ngāti Kuia have covered that very well. To declare that iwi Māori are scientists, they have also done that too and to oppose the relocation of the shallow water salmon farms to their proposed locations. I now give sequential brief examples supporting the above. I can give many more examples if we had time and some of the examples I give are Ngāta Koata examples. I'm very much aware that Ngāti Kuia have many, many examples that they could relate as well.

With regards to Ngāti Koata's Iwi Management Plan, part of our culture is if I've got something and my cousin wants it, my cousin has it. So, as of about half an hour before lunch, if it's okay with our Chairman, the Ngāti Koata Iwi Management Plan could well be referred to as Ngāti Koata and Ngāti Kuia Iwi Management Plan to progress things a little further.

I'll talk about iwi Māori, a conservationist. Kupe came to Aotearoa in pursuit of Te Wheke a Muturangi. Thank you, Ngāti Kuia, you've covered that very well. The octopus of Muturangi. This octopus was destroying the ecosystem in our homeland in a wasteful manner. In a bionic and historical feat of tracking, courage and conservation, Kupe slew Te Wheke a Muturangi here in Marlborough. The meandering waterways that make up the Sounds are the tentacles of the octopus.

Like our tūpuna, we are conservationists with hundreds or perhaps even thousands of years of proven knowledge passed down. As independents, you do not have to discard the Crown's Treaty Party or our conservational values. I gave evidence opposing salmon farms such as Waihinu Bay as being detrimental to the environment a long time ago. Only a decade later, such evidence seems correct now. This issue is not so much a matter of who is right, but what is right. But more specifically, what is environmentally right? If this goes ahead as proposed, it will be our children and grandchildren who will pay the price. In other words, it will just take longer for evidence to accumulate.

Whānau hapū iwi concern is what will we lose that our tūpuna, like Kupe, so valiantly protected. Iwi are not opposed to the salmon farm industry. However, we are opposed to destructive, environmental practises condensed in a small and uniquely valued, pristine waterway of which we are kaitiaki on behalf of all mokopuna regardless of race. The we is Māori, in particular, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Kuia in this area, and Ngāti Toa.

We do not buy into the science that there are no other sites. There are. Consult with us and we will show other options. Māori conservation looks at this as a three-dimensional issue, not surface only. It is a volume issue, not hectare. Environmental influence from a volume perspective may expand many times more than current sites and must be considered in its holistic perspective in order to reduce, minimise or eliminate environmental risk.

I'm going to cover iwi Māori are scientists. We came to Aotearoa in waka. We had no GPS, no radar, no chart plotters, no magnetic compass, no sextant, no laptop, no engine, no nuclear power, carried no diesel, oil or other pollutants. We came with all the skills of science handed down from

generation to generation. Over thousands and perhaps millennia of years, our science had evolved into a pure form. Guesswork had been eliminated. Yet we feel that we are regarded as primitive in today's world of academic science.

I relate only three examples as follows. There are many others. From the Nelson News entitled "Skipper saves divers". Two young divers employed by the Ministry of Agriculture owe their lives to the detailed knowledge of tides and currents in the Marlborough Sounds possessed by Turi Elkington of D'Urville Island. Two divers were lost and could not be found by their support vessel, other vessels assisting or a spotter plane. Turi was unloading the mail at French Pass when he got the call to assist. From information regarding the time and last seen position of the divers, knowing he would only have one shot at locating them before dark, he calculated the influence of the tides and set his course. An hour and 20 minutes later, he found them two points off the port bow. There was no room for error. He relied upon traditional knowledge, traditional science. One of the rescued divers, now a very successful marine farmer, John Meredith Young, in gratitude said, "Your intimate knowledge of the area undoubtedly saved my life". This is science.

In 2003, Ngāti Toa waka ama crew made a double crossing of Cook Strait, the only successful Cook Strait crossing of waka ama in modern times.

A year later, a group of waka ama crossing of Cook Strait was organised as a racing event. Māori tohunga advised that conditions did not align with tikanga. The organisers responded that NIWA told them the times aligned perfectly with tides and other conditions. Ngāti Toa declined to participate. To cut a long story short, Ngāti Toa is still the only successful waka ama Cook Strait crossing team. Is this science?

This is a story from afar but it relates to us. On 24 December 2004, a powerful earthquake struck off the coast of Indonesia causing a huge tsunami. It was a terrible disaster. In a matter of minutes, millions of lives were forever changed. More than 200,000 people lost their lives. Amidst all the carnage, there was a group of people who, although their villages were destroyed, never suffered a single casualty. The Moken people live on islands off the coast of Burma. A society of fishermen, their ancestors had studied the oceans for hundreds of years. One thing they were particular about passing down was what to do when the oceans receded. According to tradition, when that happened, the laboon, a man-eating wave would arrive soon after. When the elders of the village saw the dreaded sign, they shouted for everyone to run to higher ground. The older fishermen persisted until everyone was on higher ground. Not a single life was lost. This is science.

This is a discussion about higher ground. It must be had with our tohunga, our ocean experts. As marvellous as the above story is, it applies in Aotearoa society as well. In contrast, an example of experimental science is what is sometimes referred to as the spawning season closure of the blue cod fishery. Science has had three different goes at the timeframe for the closure. Three different seasonal times, not to mention the slot size or even if a closure is required at all. Is that science? Is it trial and error or just error? Where is consultation with the Treaty partner, tohunga? Consult Māori tohunga, respect the Treaty partners, tikanga, and our environment will collectively be a safer place.

Opposition to this proposal. We acknowledge our Ngāti Kuia cousins for the clarity of their opposing position and I quote from a phrase one of them said, "United Māori response". Their support is supported by traditional conservation and tikanga which is not experimental science.

I'm going to move along a bit. If they or we had relocated the inshore farms to deeper water sites in the first instance in 2013 or thereabouts, and were now applying for new water space for the farms, that they established then in deeper water, what degree of success would they have with this

application? Probably, minimum. The result is the same, whichever comes first. Too many farms, and too many pollutants in such a pristine and treasured confined waterway.

Summary. I'm only going to give one summary, although you've got four there. I'm just going to say, relocate the inshore farms elsewhere, in deeper and more tidal waters, but not in this precious waterway. And talk to Māori, and they'll tell you where other sites can be. Thank you, rangatira.