

Submission presented by Taipari Munro re (1) The change from Significant Landscapes designation; and (2) The Resource consent application by Winstone Quarry to place over-burden onto the Pegram Block.

Monday 3rd July 2017

Tēnā koutou katoa,

If it please the members of the panel for me to introduce myself;

My name is Taipari Munro, I am a Whangārei Māori community leader and spokesperson, a traditional orator on the Marae, and a recognised keeper of tribal histories, protocols and traditions. I am an exponent, practitioner, and teacher of the Māori language and culture.

I am a trustee appointed by the TaiTokerau Māori land Court of the Ruarangi Block Māori Burial Reserve located above Winstone's Quarry just south of Whangārei on State Highway One. I am also the Trust chairperson.

I appear before you today, first in regard to the proposed change to the District Plan which will effectively lift the Significant Landscapes designation off the Ruarangi Block Reserve and surrounding lands, and secondly the application made by Winstone's Quarry for Land-use Placement of Over-burden from the quarry onto the adjacent Pegram Block.

The Significant Landscapes Designation

With respect to the proposal to lift the Significant Landscapes designation, I present this submission on behalf of the Ruarangi Block Reserve Trust and the members of its' nine beneficiary tribal owner groups, being;

Te Parawhau
Te Uriroroi
Ngāti Rua
Ngāti Tū
Te Uri-o-Te Tangata
Te Kōiwi
Ngāti Hau
Ngāti Haua
Te Whānaupani

The Ruarangi Block is a 40 acre Māori reserve and these nine tribal groups are tangata whenua hapū of Whangārei. The earliest trustees for Ruarangi were appointed as representatives of the beneficiary owners in 1906. The present trustees were appointed in 2005.

EVIDENCE 04
TOPIC 85A-~~D~~, 86A and B, 87, 102, 114
SUB# Rural Plan changes
DATE 03/07/2017

The land is described as having native bush containing old native trees and consisting of limestone outcrops, caverns and underground streams. It has sites of special cultural and spiritual significance which lend names by which this area has become known;

Ruarangi, is a small ridge peak terraced Pā that was last occupied approximately 300 ago. Some of its' archaeological features are pathways paved with limestone slabs, stone hearth fire-places, complex drainage systems, karaka tree orchards, kowhai tree groves to attract bird-life for food source and evidence of areas which had been heavily palisaded.

Te Nohoanga-o-Torongare, is a large limestone rock. It was the *taumata* or sacred chair of the chiefly ancestor Torongare, father of Hineamaru, eponymous ancestress of the Ngāti Hine tribe of central Northland and founding ancestor of the Ruarangi tribes. From here Torongare would preside over his land and people and receive important visitors. Skeletal remains were discovered in its' rocky crevices during the archaeological investigation of the 1960's.

Te Pouaka-o-Ruangaio, is a burial cave known as the 'coffin-of-Ruangaio', a grandson of Torongare, whose mortal remains were interred there, and subsequently those of his descendants. The last interment reputedly happened around 1900.

On the adjoining lands are further limestone outcrops, caverns and underground streams. The interment of skeletal remains were also hidden in caves and rocky crevices on these lands. In the late 1980's and 1990's Māori elders removed several of these to the tribal cemetery at nearby Te Toetoe, before property developments were started in the Smeatons, Tauroa, and Acacia Park areas.

Large pūriri trees on these lands were used by early Māori to suspend the corpses of deceased tribal members and left there for two to three years or more to undergo the decaying process before being taken down, the skeleton dismantled and then hidden away into the burial caves.

The whole area surrounding the Ruarangi Block reserve is still regarded by Māori as 'tapu', a scared place of restricted access to some and forbidden to the majority of others.

In the bush clad valley above Tauroa Street is a large cave described by noted spelaeologist Peter Crossly and other caving enthusiasts as the most pristine cave in the Whangārei district, with spectacular features of unbroken stalagmites and stalactites. Anecdotal information handed down through generations of Māori informants talk of the whole area being riddled with caves, caverns, fissures and underground streams. This coupled with the historical, cultural and spiritual features of the land strongly indicates the area be retained and extended as Significant Landscape and Outstanding Natural Landscape. This would certainly be the desire of local tangata whenua and I believe this would be strongly supported by other Māori as well. The nature of Ruarangi and its' surrounding lands is well known and respected by Māori today from throughout the North.

I believe the Northern Regional Council's assessment of the area is incomplete as it hasn't factored in the limestone areas or the historical, cultural and spiritual value of the lands.

Placement of Over-burden by Winstone Quarry onto the Pegram Block

With regard to this application by Winstone Quarry the Ruarangi Trustees are unable to provide any conclusive comment as there has been no time for the Trust to consult with the beneficiary owners.

It's the opinion of some trustees that the Pegram Block needs more cultural investigation, it requires a comprehensive report on the cave systems and underground streams.

Neither does Winstone's archeology report give a full coverage, but simply deals with the Pegram Block alone and what is above the ground without looking carefully at what is below the ground. I understand the study done by the geotechnical engineers Tonken and Taylor used sweeps that were wide apart and bores that were shallow. It would be remarkably inadequate not to give thought to those lands surrounding the Pegram Block considering the geographical and geological make-up of the whole area. To look at the Pegram block in isolation would be to ignore what effect the cave systems and underground streams immediately next door will have on the heavy over-lay of extensive over-burden onto the land.

On the boundary line between 52 Acacia Drive and the Pegram block is a sink hole which fills with water during heavy rain coming from below the ground as well as water gushing from the limestone bluff above. Obviously the underground stream below there overflows and forces the water upwards. The gradient of the land all along the boundary line slopes down towards the Pegram block and water overflowing from the underground streams is what notes the Pegram Block area as 'flood-plain'. Parts of the area are still very wet even in dry weather. Tonken and Taylor have identified seepage all over the Pegram Block. However their report is noted as being preliminary and I would take that to mean inconclusive.

I understand a fault has been identified on the Pegram Block and it would be important to understand the nature of this fault and the effect any development above it will have.

It is also known that human bones have washed out into the streams on the Pegram Block. These have become dislodged from where they were originally placed in burial places further on up the land. I know elders would walk the streams after heavy rains to collect these up and reinter them into the burial sites. In recent times I know these have been taken to the cemetery at Te Toetoe.

In conclusion outstanding natural features have been identified on and near the Pegram Block;

Limestone bluffs

Cave systems

Burial sites

Funeral trees

Underground water systems

Native trees of considerable age

The whole area should properly be taken as an area of historical, cultural and spiritual importance.

The placing of over-burden here creates a man-made mountain upon the landscape. In 2016 Council voted to decline the motion to place over-burden onto the Pegram Block for lack of information then and a footprint that was considered to be too big. This application has a smaller footprint yet with a higher amount of over-burden. If I can say, the giant's foot print may be smaller but he's grown bigger and taller.

I thank you for giving me this time to present to you today. Nāreira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, kia ora huihui mai tātou