



15 JUN 2020

File Ref: OIA 41540

Tēnā koe

Official Information Act request

I refer to your information request dated 6 April 2020 to Hon Andrew Little, about Māori Land Court records being microfilmed by the Mormon Church. You asked for the following information:

- *What and who arranged for the transfer of records of whakapapa and records by microfilm to the Mormon Church?*
- *How did this take place?*
- *How were hapu and iwi consulted on this matter? If not why not?*
- *Am I correct in assuming that in 1963 consultation was not common practice by the New Zealand government and as such it is likely that no consultation took place?*
- *Given the sensitivities in the modern day around matauranga and whakapapa do both Ministers (Andrew and Nanaia) and the Ministry of Justice believe that this was the right thing to do in terms of the transfer of whakapapa and records to the Mormon Church?*

On 19 May 2020 your request was transferred to Te Puni Kōkiri for a response, as the Ministry of Justice advised that the project was administered by the then Department of Māori Affairs. Your request has been considered in accordance with the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

A check of Te Puni Kōkiri records has not identified any records related to this project, and I trust you will understand that for this reason, I am only able to provide general commentary based on the views of staff.

In the past, Archives developed the use of microfiche as one way to preserve and restore information. I am advised that many churches including the Mormon Church, developed their own records through members obtaining and submitting information on mātauranga and whakapapa to their church. It would appear also that the Mormon Church at some point in the past was able to obtain such information directly from the Māori Land Court records.

At present, access to information from the Māori Land Court is provided through the Māori Land Online website and includes a summary of current ownership including land blocks and trust information related to Māori land. Access to mātauranga Māori and whakapapa



information beyond that is subject to restrictions, and anyone seeking such information can do so through making direct contact with the Māori Land Court. Offices of the Māori Land Court are located around the country.

Broad consultation with Māori landowners at the time that digitisation of records began, raised concerns about the availability of information containing whakapapa. This was taken into account in the policy that has been adopted by the Māori Land Court.

Last year, Government agreed to develop a whole-of-government approach to consider the issues raised by claimants and the Waitangi Tribunal in the Wai 262 inquiry. It brings together topics as diverse as natural resources, te Reo Māori, and intellectual property. A key common thread is the ability of Māori to act as kaitiaki for their mātauranga Māori and taonga. Further work on these areas is likely to inform the future work programme. More information on the status of this work can be found on the Te Puni Kōkiri website here <https://www.tpk.govt.nz/en/a-matou-kaupapa/wai-262-te-pae-tawhiti>.


With regard to the Department of Māori Affairs in the 1960s, the Department of Māori Affairs' Hunn Report which was released in 1961 may be of interest to you.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this response. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that Te Puni Kōkiri publishes some of its OIA responses on its website, after the response is sent to the requester. The responses published are those that are considered to have a high level of public interest. We will not publish your name, address or contact details.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of your request with us, including this decision, please feel free to contact Madeline Smith, Senior Ministerials Advisor, Ministerials and Business Support via smitm@tpk.govt.nz.

Ngā mihi



Fiona McBeath
Manahautū Tuarua Te Puni Tautoko | Deputy Chief Executive, Organisational Support

