



## Summary of Te Karae Historical Claims Te Karae Blocks

### Tupuna and Hapu

Te Karae block contained at least 19,000 acres running from Pikiparia to Mangataipa. In 1904 and 1905 it was investigated at length by a Papatupu Block Committee. Interests in Te Karae were awarded, in unequal shares, on the basis of key tupuna and their respective hapu as follows:

<i>Tupuna</i>	<i>Descendant Hapu</i>
Tohu Kakahi	Ihutai
Tama	Ngati Toro, Kohatutaka, Te Patutaratara
Ruawaha	Ngai Tupoto, Te Rahowhakairi
Umutahi	Ngati Hua
Parangia	Kohatutaka
Te Ngaru me Tu	Ngati Here, Ngai Tupoto

### The Tokerau Maori Land Board and Vesting of Te Karae

In 1905, the Maori Land Settlement Act established the Tokerau District Maori Land Board. Maori land boards were set up to speed the process of determining the individual ownership of Maori land, which often led to increased alienation. It was board policy to sell half and lease half of any lands not reserved for Maori occupation. Initially the boards had six members, including four Maori. By 1913, that configuration had changed to two members; the Judge and the Registrar of the Maori Land Court.

In 1907 the Stout-Ngata Commission of Inquiry into Maori land recommended that 5200 acres of Te Karae be reserved for the owners. Subsequently, Te Karae blocks were vested in the Tokerau board without consultation with the owners. The block was divided into Te Karae 1, 2, 3 and 4 and individual shares were issued to several hundred people, a number of whom were minors:

- Te Karae 1 contained 4879 acres;
- Te Karae 2, 8952 acres;
- Te Karae 3, 2268 acres; and
- Te Karae 4, 3025 acres.

## **Public Works and Debt**

One of the major grievances arising out of the board's administration of Te Karae was the way it mortgaged the land to finance extensive roading and survey work. The cost of the work was covered by a £7,500 loan from the Crown to be paid off over 40 years. The loan paid for road construction from Kohukohu to Mangamuka and Broadwood and other subsidiary roads.

From 1912, the board began leasing large tracts of Te Karae to Pakeha farmers on 50-year terms. The roading was largely designed to facilitate their settlement.

The owners of Te Karae were excluded from the board's structure and administration and were unable to influence any of its decisions.

## **Owners' Desires to Retain Te Karae**

In 1915 the board proposed that the owners sell all four Te Karae blocks to the Crown for £1.1.0 an acre (after the deduction of loan repayments). Permanent kainga were to be cut out as part of the proposal.

The proposals were widely opposed and clearly defeated in respect of Te Karae 2, 3 and 4 blocks. A split vote in Te Karae 1 led eventually to its sale.

- In September 1915 the shares in Te Karae were split 50:50 over whether or not to sell –  $667\frac{1}{7}$  shares voted for and  $666\frac{9}{10}$  against. The sale was carried by  $\frac{17}{70}$  of a share. In December a larger majority voted in favour of selling (713 shares to 573), with several large owners agreeing to cut out their shares. Sixty-two owners were for the sale and 24 against.
- In Te Karae 2, 94 per cent opposed the resolution to sell with 83 people or 3132 shares against, and five people or 216 shares in favour.
- In Te Karae 3, 96 per cent were against: 77 people (849 shares) against and three (849 shares) in favour.
- In Te Karae 4, 85 per cent were against: 88 people (815 shares) against and fifteen (69 shares) in favour.

## **'Sales' and Debt**

Following the 1915 meetings the Crown actively pursued the purchase of shares from individual owners, clearly ignoring their collective will. The debts built up by the loan were charged against each shareholder and deducted from their purchase monies.

There was much disquiet amongst the owners about having to repay the board's debt, including a petition in 1918. Some owners said they sold to free themselves from debt.

No lump sums were ever deducted from the principle of the Crown loan, despite the advantage that would have accrued to the Maori owners.

## **Accumulation of Crown Interests**

As the Crown accumulated shares in the various blocks it had them partitioned out, with a focus on acquiring the better, developed land.

By 1939 the majority of the land was owned by the Crown (Te Karae 3 being a notable exception). Meanwhile, the roads Te Karae had provided had become the main roads for the district.

## **The Burden of Debt**

The board experienced financial difficulties during the depression and missed loan repayments in 1929 and from 1934 to 1936. From 1939 the board tried to get the balance of the loan written off. The loan was eventually written off after £12,000 had been repaid over nearly 30 years.

Crown acquisition and facilitation of sales to Pakeha continued into the 1970s. Approximately 1750 acres of Te Karae 3 Block was alienated from Maori ownership between 1953 and 1971, at least 450 acres of which was to the Crown.

Te Karae hapu lost the majority of their land and enjoyed no significant benefit from the Board's administration of the block. Instead, hapu were burdened with a debt which drew heavily on any revenue accrued from Te Karae to fund Pakeha settlement of their lands – a process the Crown actively oversaw.

## **Want to Read More on This Topic?**

See chapter six of Te Rarawa Historical Overview Report, available online at [terarawa.co.nz](http://terarawa.co.nz).

## Te Karae Today

Approximately 1100 of the original 19,000 acres of Te Karae block remain in Maori ownership today, little more than a fifth of what the Stout Ngata Commission had recommended in 1907. In c.1990 the Crown (Landcorp) owned about 3444 acres (1394 hectares). At that time, Landcorp also owned an adjoining 1664 acres (674 hectares) just west of Te Karae 2.

