

Corporatisation causes NZ Maori Council to sue

The return of Maori land to tribal owners was the reason behind the extraordinary move by the NZ Maori Council to take the Government to the Court of Appeal.

The move by the Government to change many government departments into state owned enterprises has many detrimental implications for the Maori people, especially under the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi, to safeguard Maori taonga.

It was this that the Maori Council feared most, so just before the official date of corporatisation on April 1 this year, it succeeded in getting a High Court injunction which effectively stopped any transfer of Maori land over to the Forestry Corporation and the Land Corporation.

Much of the land formerly administered by the departments of Forestry and Lands and Survey has been placed under the administration of new state owned corporations which are empowered to trade commercially.

Unfortunately much of the Crown land they administer is under dispute by various tribal groups such as Ngati Tama in Taranaki and other areas also. Some of these groups have already placed their cases for consideration before the Waitangi Tribunal and others have been preparing theirs. The Tribunal has a very heavy workload, as it does not have fulltime members, and has yet to set hearing dates for these land cases. In its five years of existence it's usually found in favour of Maori claimants and against the Crown and the statutory bodies under government jurisdiction.

At the time of going to press with Tu Tangata, a reserved decision had been made by the Court of Appeal, but an ongoing legal difficulty seems certain.

Opening of Tamaoho
whare tupuna at
Otawhiwhi marae,
Ngaiterangi iwi of
Tauranga Moana.



(From left) Kaumatua of Tauwhao hapu: Wiremu Tekarehana and MP Mr Peter Tapsell. The puhi stands next to her father who carved the house, Mr Te Ninihi Taikato (Sonny).



Ngaiterangi prepare to powhiri to the Minister of Internal Affairs who opened the house. The tangata wero at far left is Tutengaehe.