

28 April 2026

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

sg(2)(a)

By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe,

Request for information relating to mandate and settlement negotiation policy affecting Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Hine

Thank you for your correspondence of 6 March 2026 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the **Act**):

Information relating to mandate and settlement negotiation policy affecting Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Hine between January 2022 to March 2026 (in terms of both the collective and individual Treaty settlement documents).

Following discussion with you, on 8 April we wrote to you confirming the request had been rescoped to cover a timeframe of January 2025 to March 2026.

Response to your request

Please find attached at **Appendix One** a table of documents and information released in response to your request. Some of this information has been withheld in part under the following sections of the Act:

- g(2)(a) – to protect the privacy of natural persons, including the deceased;
- g(2)(g)(i) – to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank provision of opinions; and
- g(2)(j) – negotiations sensitive.

Crown Treaty settlement policy is publicly available

Crown Treaty settlement policy is publicly available in 'Ka tika ā muri, ka tika ā mua – Healing the past, building a future' (the **Red Book**). The Red Book was last updated in August 2025 and can be found at [the Red Book](#).

Proactive release of your request under the Act

When Te Tari Whakatau acknowledged receipt of your request under the Act, we advised we may proactively release the response on our website.

Your request was considered for proactive release in line with Te Tari Whakatau's Official Information Act 1982 proactive release policy. Our assessment determined your request is appropriate for proactive release as its contents are of interest to the wider public. We intend to proactively release the response to your request in 20 working days from the date of this letter. Your personal and other identifying information will be removed.

You have the right under section 28(3) of the Act to seek an investigation and review of this response. Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

If you have any concerns with the proactive release of any material contained in this response, please respond in writing by 19 May. For any queries or requests for further information, please contact Alex Mellows, Negotiations and Settlement Manager, at Alexandria.Mellows@whakatau.govt.nz.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Leah Campbell'.

Leah Campbell
Director

Appendix One: Table of documents

#.	Year	Type	Title	Withheld	Reason/s
#1 p1-9	2025	Aide Memoire	Ngāti Hine: update on mandate progress	Partially	S9(2)(g)(i) S9(2)(j)
#2 p9-14	2025	Aide Memoire	Letter to Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine re draft mandate strategy	Partially	S9(2)(a) S9(2)(g)(i) S9(2)(j)



Aide Memoire

To	Hon Paul Goldsmith Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations	File no. CLA-N052-OF-03
From	Leah Campbell Director 027 836 0532	Report no. 2025/2026 - 37
Date	28 July 2025	
Title	Ngāti Hine: update on mandate progress	

Purpose

1. On 17 July, you and the Prime Minister met with representatives of the Ngāti Hine Forestry Trust, which also includes representatives of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine (**TRONH**), the group seeking a mandate to represent Ngāti Hine in Treaty settlement negotiations with the Crown. Although the visit was focused on regional economic development, TRONH representatives raised Treaty settlements and the key issues they consider are impeding mandate development.
2. Following this meeting, your office requested information on TRONH's mandate progress, and key matters the Crown and TRONH need to resolve to progress mandating.

Background

3. TRONH are a group of nine hapū (Ngāti Hine ki Waiomio, Ngāti Kahu o Torongare ki Waiomio, Ngāti Te Ara, Ngāti Kōpaki, Tekau i Mua, Ngāti Ngaherehere, Ngāti Te Tarawa, Ngai Tai ki Kaikou and Te Orewai) centred on ten marae in the Te Pēwhairangi and Whangarei areas. TRONH represents Ngāti Hine interests in Treaty settlement mandating discussions¹ and is made up of three representatives from each marae. Rowena Tana is the Chair of TRONH.
4. The Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations (**MftOWN**) confirmed TRONH as a hapū grouping for mandating purposes in April 2022, and TRONH advised they intended to proceed with mandate work with urgency.

S9(2)
(i)

¹ TRONH also has separate arms which represent their interests in health, housing, and forestry.

6.

TRONH consider Crown policy requirements are the key barrier to their mandate progress

7. TRONH consider Crown policy requirements are the key barrier to their mandate progress and that Crown funding processes are also a barrier.
8. The Crown's mandating policy has been developed to ensure mandating is fair, open and transparent; encourages strong participation from, and proposes a mandated entity that is accountable to, the claimant community. A diagram outlining the standard mandating process is attached at **Appendix Two**. Mandate policy has also been informed by the Tribunal's minimum standards, which Ministers consider before recognising a mandate (attached at **Appendix Three**).
9. Standard mandate strategies are typically endorsed by Te Tari Whakatau and Te Puni Kōkiri officials, as was TRONH's in June 2024. However, where mandate strategies contain non-standard elements, Ministerial endorsement is required, as is the case with the revised TRONH mandate strategy.
10. The Crown makes a funding contribution towards costs incurred by the negotiating group. For mandating, Crown policy is to pay the bulk of the Crown contribution to mandate activities retrospectively, i.e. at Crown recognition of a deed of mandate. This approach is intended to avoid the Crown being seen to 'pick winners' before it recognises a mandate has been conferred on a group by its community. In the Ngāpuhi context, funding is provided during the mandate process on achievement of key milestones to support Ngāpuhi hapū groupings to progress mandating, as most groups do not have any alternative source of funding.
11. Officials have consistently sought to be flexible when applying:
 - a. the Crown's mandate policy to TRONH's process to enable expression of their tikanga and the core tenets of mandate policy to be met; and
 - b. claimant funding policy to ensure groups have a sufficient funding contribution to enable them to undertake mandating work.

13. Officials have recommended changes be made to the draft mandate strategy to ensure the proposed process is robust, informative and inclusive; and also advised TRONH that, as the proposed voting process is non-standard, Ministerial agreement will be required. Officials have also advised that a funding request can be considered when their mandate strategy has been re-endorsed as at that point there will be an agreed mandate strategy to consider making a funding contribution towards.

The proposed voting process includes several non-standard elements and is unclear

14. The revised mandate strategy describes hapū and individual voting processes, with different voting methods, but it is not clear:
 - a. whether the Ngāti Hine claimant community can vote in both processes; and
 - b. what happens if hapū and individual votes yield different results.
15. Officials have advised TRONH the mandate strategy should set out:
 - a. how voting results would be interpreted if the hapū and individual vote are different;
 - b. whether the claimant community can participate in both the individual and hapū voting process, or only one;
 - c. when and how mandating information will be provided to the claimant community; and
 - d. when information hui will be held and when voting will commence.

S9(2)
(j)

TRONH are currently focused on revising their governance structure

20. On 6 June, TRONH met with Chief Crown Negotiators, Sir Robert McLeod and Brian Dickey, where they expressed their frustration with the Crown's application of its mandating policy and requested that officials take a more flexible approach.

S9(2)(j)

Next steps

22. Officials are available to work with TRONH to progress their mandating when they are ready to re-engage.

23.



982

24.

s9(2)(g)
(i)

Recommendations

25. It is recommended you:

- a. **note** the contents of this aide memoire;
- b. **note** officials are available to work with TRONH when they are ready to re-engage; and
- c. **direct** officials to brief you and the Minister for Māori Development on YES / NO TRONH's latest mandate strategy.



Nāku noa, nā

s9(2)(g)(i)

Leah Campbell
Director

NOTED / APPROVED / NOT APPROVED
Hon Paul Goldsmith Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations
Date: 30/7 / 2025

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OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT

s9(2)(j)

ACT 1982

Appendix One: timeline summarising Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine's mandate journey since 2022



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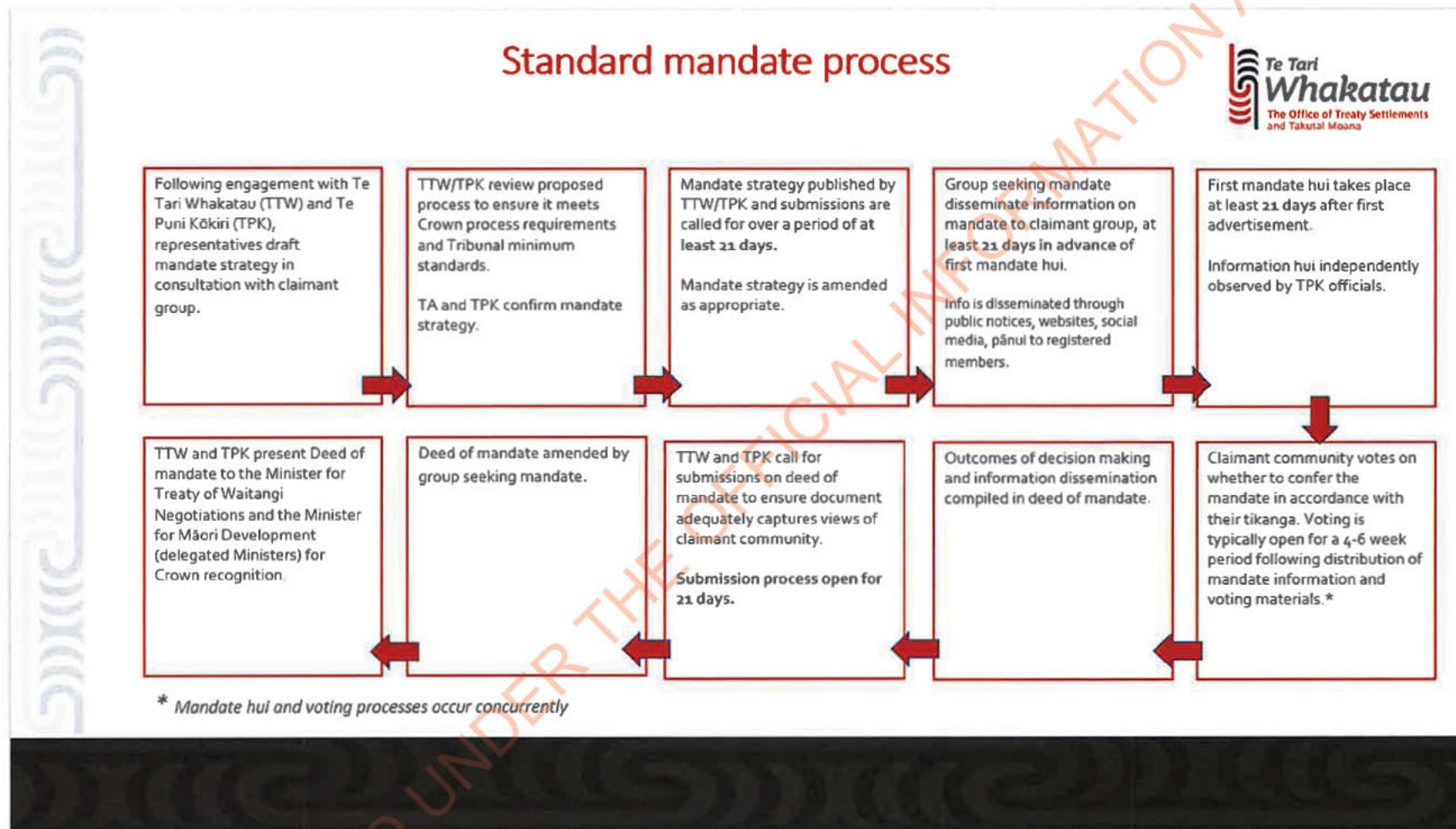


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Appendix Two: diagram of the standard mandate process



Appendix Three: the Waitangi Tribunal's minimum standards

In its *Ngāpuhi Mandate Inquiry Report*, the Tribunal set out 'minimum standards' that 'provide the appropriate test of the Crown's duty of active protection' in a mandating context. The importance of the minimum standards was re-iterated in the Tribunal's Ngātiwai mandate report. According to the 'minimum standards' the Crown should:

- a. ensure it is dealing with the right Māori group or groups, having regard to the circumstances specific to that claimant community so as to protect its intra-tribal relationships;
- b. practically and flexibly apply the large natural groups policy according to the tikanga and rangatiratanga of affected groups;
- c. allow for an appropriate weighing of interests of groups in any recognised mandated entity, one that considers factors including:
 - i. the number and size of hapū;
 - ii. the strength of affected hapū; and
 - iii. the size and location of the population;
- d. recognise that the structure of the mandated entity must allow for hapū interests to be tested and heard; and
- e. on the basis of this assessment, actively protect the rangatiratanga and tikanga of those hapū who are opposed to their claims being negotiated by the mandated entity and weigh this protection of hapū with that of non-hapū interests in the modern context.

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Aide Memoire

To	Hon Paul Goldsmith Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations	File no. CLA-N052-0F-03
From	Maureen Hickey Director (Acting) 027 350 5197	Report no. 2025/2026 - 60
Date	12 August 2025	
Title	Letter to Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine re draft mandate strategy	

Purpose

1. This aide memoire attaches a draft letter to Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine (TRONH) asking them to provide the latest draft of their mandate strategy so that you and the Minister for Māori Development (MfMD) can consider whether to endorse it or if further work is required.

Background

2. On 17 July, at a meeting with the Prime Minister and you, Ngāti Hine representatives raised issues they consider are impeding mandate progress. On 28 July, we briefed you on TRONH's mandate progress since their April 2022 confirmation as a hapū grouping [TTW 2025/26 - 37 refers].



s9(2)(j)

RELEASE

Content of letter

7. The draft letter, attached at **Appendix One**:
 - a. acknowledges your recent engagement with TRONH on 17 July;
 - b. conveys your frustration that TRONH's mandating work has not progressed along timeframes indicated to you 18 months ago;
 - c. notes your understanding that TRONH last provided a draft mandate strategy to officials in April, but advised of further changes to the process in May;
 - d. advises that you are prepared to consider endorsing the mandate strategy if a new version is provided to officials for their assessment; and
 - e. highlights that your assessment will pay particular attention to the voting and submissions process sections of the strategy.



S9(2)
(g)(i)

Next steps

9. Once the letter has been sent, we will ask TRONH when they will provide an updated mandate strategy. That will inform our timeframe for advising you and the Minister for Māori Development on whether or not to endorse that strategy.

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Recommendations

10. It is recommended you:

- a. **sign** the attached letter to Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine to inform them of your decision to consider endorsing their draft mandate strategy and requesting a revised draft be provided to officials; and
- b. **forward** this aide memoire to the Minister for Māori Development for their information.

YES / NO

Nāku noa, nā



Maureen Hickey
Director (Acting)

NOTED / <input checked="" type="radio"/> APPROVED / NOT APPROVED

Hon Paul Goldsmith Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations
Date: 13 / 8 / 2025

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Appendix 1: Draft letter to Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine

RELEASED UNDER THE OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT 1982

Hon Paul Goldsmith

Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage
 Minister of Justice
 Minister for Media and Communications
 Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations



Rowena Tana
 Chair
 Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine

By email: [REDACTED] S9(2)(a)

Tēnā koe

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine's draft mandate strategy

Thank you for meeting with the Prime Minister and I on 17 July. I appreciated hearing first hand your views on engagement in the Treaty settlement mandating process to date.

I share your frustration that work to develop a mandate strategy has not progressed along the timeframes we discussed 18 months ago. I understand you provided a draft mandate strategy to my officials in April and advised them of further changes to the proposed process in May. They advise an updated draft mandate strategy has not yet been provided.

To enable your mandate development to progress, the Minister for Māori Development and I are willing to consider the Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Hine mandate strategy once you provide an updated draft to my officials. This will enable us to make an informed decision as to whether to endorse the strategy or whether further work is required.

Our review will pay particular attention to your proposed voting and submissions processes as it is important these are transparent, accessible, and impartial processes. It is fundamental that a mandate strategy gives the claimant community key information about proposed voting processes. This includes when and how they will be able to vote (either individually and/or in hapū processes); when they will receive information; and, if there is more than one voting process, what will occur if the outcomes differ.

It is key that the Crown (rather than the group seeking mandate recognition) seeks submissions on the draft deed of mandate. This assists the Crown to independently assess the deed of mandate and uphold its duty of active protection by allowing members of the claimant community and groups with shared interests to provide their views directly to the Crown. It is a proven, and often well-utilised, part of the mandate process by both the claimant community and other potentially affected parties. Changing that could invite legitimate concern about robustness and independence of process.

I look forward to receiving an updated version of your mandate strategy for consideration and have asked my officials to follow up with you on a timeframe for this.

Nāku noa, nā


 Hon Paul Goldsmith
 Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations

Cc: Pita Tipene, pita@nhht.co.nz