

Lawyer, Activist, Lecturer, Te Puhio Ngāti Pikiao

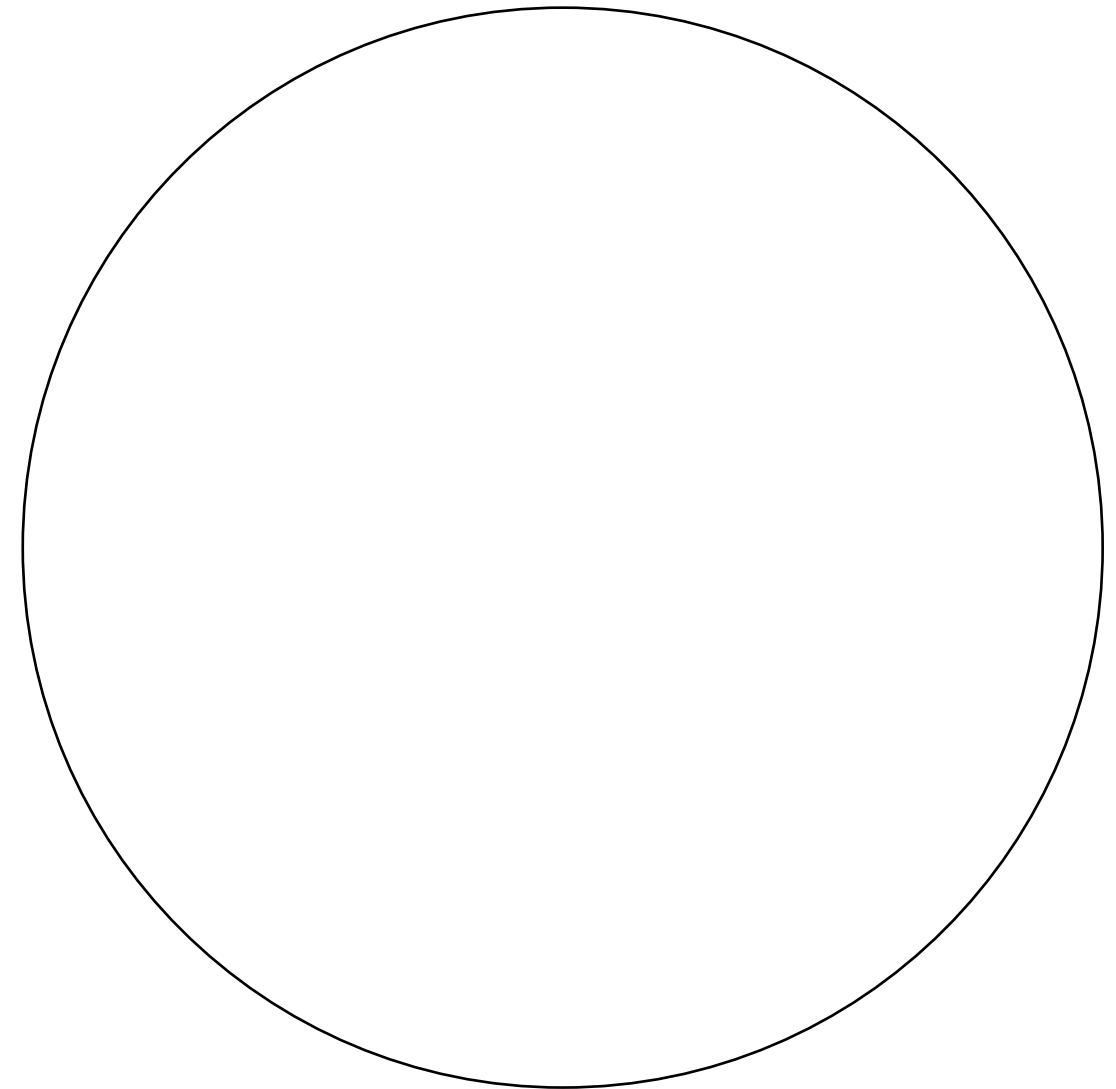
Annette Sykes

Over 40 years representing Māori before the Waitangi Tribunal

Advocate for Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Māori sovereignty

Specialist in constitutional law, indigenous rights, and political activism

Lecturer and mentor to the next generation of lawyers



The Waitangi Tribunal Under Attack

The Tribunal was born out of Māori Rata's struggle in the 1970s.

In its early years, Ministers felt an obligation to respond to findings of breach.

Today, we face the most serious assault in 40 years of Tribunal work.

No pretence of respect.

Systematic obstruction by the Crown.

A government openly hostile to Te Tiriti and the Tribunal



01 Early Impact: Significant changes in laws and policies

Muriwhenua reports reshaped SOEs and fisheries settlements, promoting better resource management.

Te Reo led to the Māori Language Act 1987

Orākei inquiry followed land occupations and advanced justice

02 Shift Over Time: Evolving respect and treatment of claims

Ministers have become increasingly combative, sidelining major claims and delaying progress significantly.

More claims being sidelined (Wai 262 lodged 1991, reported 2011, little change since)

Gains rolled back rather than advanced

REPORT OF THE
WAITANGI TRIBUNAL
ON THE TE REO MAORI CLAIM

Then vs
Now



WAITANGI TRIBUNAL REPORT 1986

Current Crisis in the Waitangi Tribunal

Key Documents and Sovereignty

- Crown withholding key documents until the last minute, disabling proper Tribunal oversight.
- Constitutional kaupapa inquiry challenges the very basis of Crown sovereignty - a question Crown counsel avoids

Resource Challenges and Review

- Resources are starved while contemporary claims mount
- Review of Tribunal controlled by Ministers hostile to Te Tiriti and already signalling a predetermined outcome.



Where to From Here?

Ka uia ngā pātai:

- Does the Waitangi Tribunal still have a role in Aotearoa?
- Should it remain a tribunal, or become a commission with different powers?
- Should criteria for claims be narrowed, and how?
- How can Crown accountability be enforced in practice?
- What role should counsel play – do we need streamlined representation?
- Should the Tribunal be less adversarial, more accessible?
- What if the Tribunal is stripped of its ability to address contemporary breaches?