

**UNDER THE HEALTH AND DISABILITY
SERVICES ACT 1993**

**IN THE MATTER OF THE MINISTERIAL
INQUIRY INTO THE UNDER-REPORTING OF
CERVICAL CANCER SMEAR
ABNORMALITIES**

EVIDENCE OF HENI MATEROA SUNDERLAND

1. My name is HENI MATEROA SUNDERLAND, I grew up at Muriwai and Manutuke, with my grandparents. I am speaking now on my knowledge of Rongowhakaata tribe, one of the tribes of Gisborne.
2. This illness of the cervix was not an illness suffered by our ancestors, was not present at the time of my parents. This is a recent illness and an ugly one. I began to ponder about the ignorance of this man Bottrill. I am at a loss as to why. Perhaps he is not well because of his work.
3. When I was growing up the women did not go to the hospital to have their babies. And I was wondering just now about the umbilical cords, and the afterbirth and those aspects of giving birth and their impacts on our Māori women. I am aware of a boundary fence between our Granny Tiakiwhare's home and the home of Hiwirori. I know that on the line of that boundary fence certain things were buried there. And because of this ritual on the boundary of the fence the fence could never be shifted. A boundary was laid down. Before that those things were buried under trees. And this is how our ancestors maintained their rituals for sacred things. And so we did not have cervical cancer at those times, they arrived recently.
4. This is a very sacred part of the body, the womb. The world of the Māori regarded the taking away of the womb as a very unsatisfactory thing. It was a sacred matter.
5. Because of my strong desire to be with my man we slept together. And at that time there were many thoughts in my mind about having a child. That was deep inside of me. Most women at that time had the same feelings and thoughts. We did have a

child. There was always the desire to have a child. I think that was the thoughts within the mind , at some time to have a child.

6. I turn now to the proverb:

“Although Turahiri was only one, the seas rippled and the land was abundant with people.”

These are my own thoughts about this proverb. The same applies to the proverb of Taharakau.

“Thousands of stars in the sky, thousands of Ngāti Maru below, thousands of kahawai in the sea, thousands of Ngāti Maru on the shore”

For me this refers to Māori having many children. And so that is my interpretation of this proverb – that we should multiply to ensure survival of a people. And although Rongowhakaata had two other wives it was Turahiri that gave him children that led to Rongowhakaata iwi. And this ensured survival of the traditions of the Rongowhakaata tribe. And in my mind it is those who came to live here that are the Rongowhakaata tribe.

7. If we look at the descendants, we are still here right now. There are many of us who are Ngāti Maru no more no less. Having children and descendants is a very important issue. If there are no issue you are gone from this world. And so referring to this illness, it is a very bad one. The most important matter now is to find medicinal cure for the illness. This is a most important goal for our health and that is the cure for cervical cancer.

From me

Heni Materoa Sunderland

Translated by Lewis Ruihi Moeau, Certificated Translator 28/6/2000