

# Maori land reformers told to slow down

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IT is the largest reform of legislation relating to Maori land in a generation, but a Government delegation was told this week there is no need to rush.

Te Ture Whenua Maori Act 1993 is being reviewed and a consultation meeting was held at Adventure SolutionNZ in Whakatane on Wednesday night.

Consultation has taken place throughout the review and proposed reform of the Act. Maori landowners are now being asked to give feedback on the draft Te Ture Whenua Maori Bill to ensure it is workable and reflects their aspirations.

The goal of the new legislation is to make it easier for Maori landowners to develop and use their collectively-owned parcels of land.

Consultation meetings are being held across the country over the next two weeks with the final one in Whanganui on June 18.

Those wishing to make a submission on the draft bill must do so before 10am on July 3. A report on the submissions will be presented to the minister of Maori development, Te Ururoa Flavell.

The intention is to introduce the draft Te Ture Whenua Maori Bill into the House of Representatives in late 2015 and it is anticipated that reform will be enacted as law in 2016.

Taria Tahana, who led the meeting in Whakatane this week, said the Government wanted to have the reviewed bill enacted before the next election.

"As you will understand, the perception is that it is much more difficult to get a bill passed in an election year."

However, Ngati Awa deputy chairman Pouroto Ngaropo, who attended the Whakatane meeting, said the issue was a significant one for all of Maoridom and more time was needed to digest the information being presented.

"I'm used to these sorts of forums where they fly these people in and



Puroto Ngaropo,  
Ngati Awa  
deputy chairman

out, but we are not going to be told how it is. It is not up to [the consultation panel] to come here and tell us. It is up to us to tell you.

"A lot of Ngati Awa are not here, a lot of Mataatua are not here – some of us are here but this is only a little group of people. It is not going to be law until next year so what is the rush?"

Mr Ngaropo said he had some concerns about the draft bill and wanted to be able to encourage others to make submissions to it.

"There are a lot of holes in this legislation that is being proposed.

"Some things are good but with some things we have just changed names, and does it really mean that the decision-making will be made by the hapu (sub-tribe) – there is nothing in there that reflects that from what I can see.

"I think we need to establish a runanga position and every hapu (sub-tribe) in Ngati Awa could have their own submissions and our land trusts and whanau trusts.

"It needs full consultation with full transparency giving people a real opportunity to understand what they are agreeing to, or not agreeing to."

Mr Ngaropo said he had been contacted by Maori leaders from Tauranga who wanted to delay the closing of the submission period until August 31.

He said he agreed with this proposal and would call a hui-a-iwi, a meeting that would involve all of the tribes that affiliate to the Mataatua waka, including Ngati Awa, Tuhoe, Te Whakatohea, Te Whanau a Apanui, Ngati Manawa, Ngati Whare, Ngai Te Rangi and Ngati Ranginui.

Mr Ngaropo's points were supported by others at the meeting.