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H I K O I



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In the eyes of many New Zealanders, the Hikoi was all about the seabed and foreshore.

JEAN WHITE followed the march to Rotorua and found the Hikoi had a much deeper meaning.

The Hikoi was a far more significant event for Maori than just a protest against the foreshore and seabed legislation, say leaders in Maori and business communities.

"The Hikoi was one of awareness," says Doug Tamaki, co-owner of award-winning Tamaki Tours. He and his brother Mike rode motorcycles at the front of the march as it came into Rotorua.

"It's the first time since Dame Whina Cooper's march that you've seen so many Maori talk about being one — and that is awesome."

He says the Hikoi has brought together Maori from all walks of life. "With Mike and I being a part of it, it should show John Banks that it's not just a pack of koha-grabbing unemployed people crossing the bridge. It's about a lifestyle and a people and a generation to come."

Wena Harawira, executive producer of *Marae DIY*, and soon-to-be Bay of Plenty reporter for Maori TV, says the media should have seen the Hikoi as a visually powerful story. "It could have been shown as the linking of the contemporary and the historical — a re-creation of the land march that happened 30 years ago."

"Instead there was a focus on the North Shore mayor getting up in arms about the hold up of traffic, and taxpayers in New Zealand having to foot the bill so these blinkin' Maori could traipse over the Auckland Harbour Bridge."

National MP for Bay of Plenty Tony Ryall does not understand the necessity for the Hikoi. "I'm surprised these people are marching because they've got significant rights over the foreshore and seabed from this legislation. I would have thought they'd

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Tame Iti (top right) saw the Hiko over Auckland Harbour Bridge; a bike escort into Rotorua from the Tamaki brothers (above right) preceded a march through the town centre.

be jumping in the streets rather than marching."

But Ms Harawira says people need to understand there is a deeper significance to the march. It is a visible demonstration of Maori rangatiratanga (self-determination).

She says her tribe Tuhoe is a land-locked tribe and her hapu are conservative and traditionalist, but many of the kuia and koroua (the elders) were marching. "I just thought, 'Far out — you don't usually see that happening.'"

Dr Jill Chrisp of the Human Rights Commission took part in the 1975 Whina Cooper-led Hiko. She says she now looks at the experience differently. "I aligned myself with the oppressed rather than questioned the oppressor."

North Shore MP Dr Wayne Mapp, who was invited to speak in

Rotorua, says National's message to all New Zealanders is one of equal right of participation in the government.

"National recognises customary usage. I understand the particular connections of iwi like Te Arawa to Maketu (in the Western Bay of Plenty) but the foreshore and seabed belongs to all New Zealanders."

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But Doug Tamaki says the foreshore and seabed is just the tip of the iceberg. "There are a lot of other issues that haven't been addressed over the years."

Dame Whina Cooper led the "land march" in September 1975 when she was 80 years old. It was partly in response to an Act in which the crown acquired coastal land, including land under Maori customary title, to turn into public reserves.



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