


Executive Summary – David Higgins

1. My name is David Thomas Higgins. I am the Upoko (Appointed Traditional Leader) of Moeraki and my marae is situated on the Moeraki Peninsula. I inherited the position of Upoko in the 1980s upon the death of my Pōua Rawiri Mamaru Renata and I have maintained this position ever since. Traditionally, the Upoko were the rakatira (chiefs) and tohuka (high priests) of our people. The role of Upoko is generally a lifetime position. I am also the Moeraki representative on the Ngāi Tahu tribal council - Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.
2. The Lindis Catchment is a wāhi taoka (treasured resource) for Kāi Tahu. The confluence of the Lindis River and the Mata-au is of special importance to Kāi Tahu because of the Matau and Kopuwai taniwha tradition, and because this is where the mauri of the Lindis and Mata-au rivers mix.
3. My whānau lived on the coast at Moeraki. Many whānau lived at the mouth of the Waitaki River. They made seasonal journeys inland to gather resources and mahika kai following ancient trails (ara tawhito) along the major rivers. One ara tawhito ran along the whole length of the Lindis River.
4. Travel inland in pursuit of pounamu (greenstone) and other resources was made possible by the abundance of mahika kai in rivers and streams. This is why ara tawhito followed rivers – they provided food for the journey. The resources gathered inland could also be transported easily along rivers in mōkihi (boats made mostly from raupō, bulrushes or flax).
5. Well known mahika kai species traditionally gathered in the Lindis catchment included aruhe (fernroot), papai (an edible plant), weka, kiore (Polynesian rat) and tuna (eels). Most of these are also considered to be taoka species.
6. On their journey back to the coast, our tīpuna would have stood at the confluence of the Lindis River and Mata-au and said karakia to acknowledge that they were leaving the realm of one tipua and entering the realm of another. Acknowledging this in karakia was very important so that the tipua did not get angry with them and cause misfortune.

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7. As Manawhenua Kāi Tahu are kaitiaki in the Lindis catchment. Kaitiakitaka is fundamental to our relationship with the environment. As kaitiaki, Kāi Tahu has an obligation handed down from our tīpuna to ensure that these values and the healthy resources that support them are passed on to future generations.
 8. Over time, the Lindis catchment has undergone significant change and modification. This has adversely affected our cultural values, beliefs and uses in the catchment.
 9. The drying reaches of the river have a significant impact on our association and values in the Lindis catchment. We are concerned that the Lindis River cannot flow to the confluence, as this is such a big part of the mauri of the river and of the Mata-au. Currently, the river dries up, severing the flow of wai Māori (freshwater) ki uta ki tai. It is especially frustrating that this is an artificial situation caused by abstraction – the mauri of the river is being artificially controlled.
 10. In summer, there is no water at the confluence and the Lindis River can no longer flow into the Mata-au. This is unacceptable. It is important that the mauri of the Lindis River flows into the mauri of the Mata-au because the whakapapa of the two rivers come from different sources. Their different whakapapa and mauri join and mix at the confluence on their way to the sea.
 11. Mahika kai is an important part of Kāi Tahu identity. The knowledge of how and where to gather resources is a gift passed down from the tīpuna. It is crucial to our cultural wellbeing that we are able to continue these traditions and teach them to our children, and for them to be passed on down the generations.
 12. Kāi Tahu whānau keep our traditions alive by visiting the places of our old people and passing on the traditional practices and stories associated with those places. We often take our tamariki (children) along the trails of our ancestors and tell them the stories of those places. There is a real sense of loss when we go to places like the Lindis River and have to show our tamariki and mokopuna (grandchildren) that despite our kaitiaki role, this is what has happened to the river.
 13. We want to restore a meaningful continuity of flow in the Lindis River, so that it can travel ki uta ki tai – from the mountains to the sea. A healthy river with a strong flow at the confluence is fundamental to the restoration of our association with the river and is the ultimate aspiration for Kāi Tahu in the Lindis catchment.