

NEW ZEALAND (/NEWS/NATIONAL) / IN C

Ihumātao land battle: a timeline

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Ihumātao: believed to be one of the first places where Māori in Tāmaki Makaurau settled, farmed and thrived, has been designated to make way for 480 new homes in a city crippled by a housing crisis.

But the housing development has been protested by the SOUL (Save Our Unique Landscape) group who say the land has historical, cultural and archaeological significance and should be left an open space or returned to mana whenua.



People continue to occupy Ihumātao after protestors were served an eviction notice. Photo: RNZ / Dan Cook

Timeline of the Ihumātao dispute:

1863: The land at Ihumātao was taken 'by proclamation' during the invasion of the Waikato, according to SOUL.

It was confiscated under the New Zealand Settlements Act, thus breaching the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi agreement.

Historically the land was believed to be occupied (https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/SCR_89650/941b97691a598670df28a53d0db22f3a8d5a12d4) by Waikato-Tainui, Ngāti Whatua, and groups connected to Waikato-Tainui (Ngāti Tamaoho, Te Ahiwaru, Ngāti Tai Tāmaki, Ngāti Te Ata, Te Ākitai Waiohua, and Te Kawerau ā Maki).

1867: The land was acquired by Crown grant.

1869: It was sold to a private owner believed to be the Wallace family whose descendants held on to the land for more than a century.

2012: Auckland Council tried to make the land an open, public space, but the move was challenged in the Environment Court and council was directed to rezone the land (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/395220/regret-over-ihumatao-land-decision-expressed-at-council-vote>), meaning it could be developed for business or residential purposes in future.

February 2014: Te Kawerau ā Maki and the Crown signed a Deed of Settlement (<https://www.govt.nz/treaty-settlement-documents/te-kawerau-a-maki/>) at Makaurau Marae in Māngere.

July 2014: After the Super City was formed, the government and Auckland Council designated 32 hectares adjacent to the Otūataua Stonefields Historic Reserve as a Special Housing Area (SHA).

2015: Pania Newton, one of the founders of SOUL along with cousins and other locals raised concerns saying they would oppose the zoning of the land.

2016: It was sold to Fletcher Residential - a wholly-owned subsidiary of Fletcher Building.

September 2016: Supporters built a structure representing a whare and a pou whenua was erected on Ihumatao Quarry Road.

5 November 2016: About 20 members of the community started camping by the side of the road (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/320579/'it-is-trampling-on-tapu-whenua'>). Some continued to live there - sleeping in caravans,

sheds, tents and even an empty boat.

December 2016: Joe Hawke, who led the occupation of Bastion Point/Takaparawhau from January 1977 to May 1978, visited Ihumātao to give his support and some advice to those occupying the land.

The same month, Fletcher Building was given the green light for the housing development but Heritage New Zealand denied (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/320579/'it-is-trampling-on-tapu-whenua'>) them the ability to build.

April 2017: The campaigners took their fight to the United Nations (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/329477/campaigners-take-fight-against-akl-development-to-un>) hoping for an intervention to address alleged breaches under the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People.

The UN report recognised that consultation and consent from Māori had not been adequately sought.

It also recommended the government evaluate the plan's compliance with the Treaty of Waitangi (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/338357/housing-plans-for-ihumatao-should-be-re-evaluated-un>) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

November 2018: The Environment Court declined to overturn (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/375483/decision-allows-development-near-sacred-maori-site>) the permission granted to Fletcher Building to build the houses in Māngere.

By then Fletcher Building said it had been through the Waitangi Tribunal, the Māori Land Court and the Environment Court - as well as the normal consenting process.

February 2019: Fletcher Building says that if a good offer came along, they would be open to selling the Ihumātao property (https://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=12202548).

March: SOUL along with supporters in Wellington take their petition to Parliament (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/384487/south-auckland-group-takes-land-protest-to-parliament>) demanding government intervention to prevent a confrontation on the land.

April: A hikoi, ending in Auckland's Aotea Square, saw a 20,000-signature petition (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/386696/hikoi-confronts-phil-goff-over-ihumatao-development>) delivered to Auckland mayor Phil Goff, calling for local council and government to protect the land.

The same month, the Māori Affairs select committee said it was considering the case and could recommend the government find a way to stop the development (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/387479/select-committee-weighs-options-for-land-occupied-by-maori-in-auckland>), initiate a Treaty justice process or even return the land to the mana whenua.

23 July: An eviction notice was served

(<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/395007/protesters-at-ihumatao-served-eviction-notices>) to those occupying the land. Three people are arrested (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/395045/three-people-arrested-at-ihumatao>).

24 July: Auckland mayor Phil Goff said after several efforts there was nothing more the council could do. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said the government would not intervene (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/395100/ihumatao-protest-govt-will-not-intervene-pm-says>).

25 July: Some Auckland councillors said they regretted signing off (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/395220/regret-over-ihumatao-land-decision-expressed-at-council-vote>) on the Ihumātao land being used for housing and voted unanimously in favour of organising an urgent meeting between interested parties as a last-ditch effort to resolve the dispute.

26 July: Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern vows that no building would take place at Ihumātao (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/395318/ihumatao-protests-no-building-while-a-solution-is-sought-pm>) while government and other parties tried to broker a solution.

27 July: A free concert by Teeks, Troy Kingi, Stan Walker and others swells the crowds to about 5000 people (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/395326/ihumatao-government-ministers-welcomed-to-protest-site-with-powerful-powhiri>). A pōwhiri welcomes government ministers Peeni Henare and Willie Jackson to the site.

28 July: Muslim leaders come to pray (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/395410/muslims-at-ihumatao-they-can-always-rely-on-us>) with the people of Ihumātao.

30 July: National Party leader Simon Bridges, who supports the iwi authority rather than the protesters, says the prime minister is failing in her duties (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/395617/simon-bridges-accuses-pm-of-bad-error-of-judgement-over-ihumatao>) by being in Tokelau instead of leading a government response to the dispute.

31 July: Māori Development Minister Nanaia Mahuta meets with SOUL co-founder Pania Newton (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/395691/ihumatao-maori-development-minister-nanaia-mahuta-meets-soul-co-founder>).

Mr Bridges accuses the PM of an "bad error of judgement" (<http://https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/395617/simon-bridges-accuses-pm-of-bad-error-of-judgement-over-ihumatao>) for getting involved, but Labour rejects this (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/395587/labour-hits-back-at-bridges-over-tokelau-criticism>).

3 August: Kiingi Tūheitia arrives at Ihumātao, which is also where the first Māori King was crowned.

The Kiingitanga who had supported the Fletcher development now say they want a solution for all mana whenua (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/395881/kiingitanga-flag-raised-at-ihumatao>) and offer to host a hui, an offer which is accepted by the protesters (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/395906/ihumatao-protesters-accept-kiingitanga-s-offer-to-host-hui>).

5 August: Protesters move past the police front line (<http://https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/396027/ihumatao-protesters-move-past-frontline-we-re-in-for-the-long-haul>).

Police deploy many more officers (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/396034/ihumatao-police-deploy-more-officers-to-front-line>) to what protest leader Pania Newton said was a "very intimidating" five-hour standoff (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/396045/ihumatao-police-presence-very-intimidating-protest-leader-pania-newton>).

6 August: Two Auckland councillors call for a reduced police presence (<http://https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/396083/ihumatao-auckland-councillors-call-for-reduced-police-presence>).

Hundreds protest (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/396068/hundreds-turn-out-for-ihumatao-solidarity-rally-in-wellington>) around the country. Police Deputy Commissioner Wally Haumaha goes to Ihumātao

(<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/396142/ihumatao-police-presence-not-the-cause-of-tensions-district-commander>) to meet with protest leaders and look for some means of resolution.

16 August: Police dramatically reduced the number of police (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/396814/police-dramatically-reduce-presence-at-ihumatao>) at Ihumātao.

19 August: Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern says she will not visit Ihumātao (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/397043/pm-on-not-visiting-ihumatao-crown-not-a-party-in-negotiations>) before the deadline given to her by occupiers, 22 August.

22 August: Around 150 people hīkoi from Ihumātao to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's electoral office (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/397222/live-singing-and-chanting-as-people-hikoi-from-ihumatao-to-pm-s-office>) in Mt Albert, calling for her to visit the whenua.

23 August: Waikato-Tainui and the Kiingitanga shut down claims (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/397328/there-is-no-deal-waikato-tainui-leader>) that they are about to buy back Ihumātao but have not ruled out the possibility.

18 September 2019: Māori King Tūheitia says mana whenua have finally reached consensus (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/399023/mana-whenua-reach-decision-on-ihumatao-land>) over what to do with Ihumātao - they want it back.

22 January 2020: The Kiingitanga flag at Ihumātao has come down (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/407855/kiingi-tuuheitia-s-work-is-done-flag-comes-down-at-ihumatao>) and Kiingitanga representatives say a positive resolution is expected ahead of Waitangi Day.

19 February 2020: Fletcher Building grows impatient for a solution (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/political/409893/fletcher-building-growing-impatient-for-ihumatao-solution>). The construction company is seeking \$40 million for the property - more than double the \$19m it paid in 2014.

23 July 2020: One year since (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/te-manu-korihi/421802/ihumatao-one-year-since-eviction-notice-served>) occupiers were served with eviction notices. Mana whenua and others have remained on site since late 2016.