

Occupation of Bastion Point begins

5 January 1977

(MCH, 2020III)



Led by Joe Hawke, the Ōrākei Māori Action Committee occupied Takaparawhā (Bastion Point reserve), a promontory overlooking Auckland's Waitematā Harbour. Ngāti Whātua maintained the land had been unjustly taken from them and were angered by plans to subdivide it for a private housing development.

In April 1977, a disused warehouse was re-erected on the site as Arohanui Marae, but facilities were rudimentary and in winter the exposed promontory was a bleak place to live. In February 1978, the government offered to return some land and houses to Ngāti Whātua if the iwi paid \$200,000 in development costs. The occupiers stayed put, but on 25 May – 506 days after they had arrived – a large force of police moved in to evict them, arresting 222 protesters and demolishing buildings.

When the jurisdiction of the Waitangi Tribunal was widened to cover retrospective issues, Joe Hawke's Ōrākei claim was the first historical claim to be heard. The Tribunal's 1987 report recommended the return of land to Ngāti Whātua, and the following year the government agreed (see 1 July).

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