

Mai Chen: Stopping the grievance cycle



In October 2012, the Kōhanga Reo Trust took an urgent claim to the Waitangi Tribunal asking for more money and less accountability.

Paid for with legal aid, the claim was prepared by Mai Chen, partner in Chen Palmer Barristers & Solicitors with that Grand Old Know-it-all of New Zealand constitutional law, Geoffrey Palmer.

Claims to the Waitangi Tribunal are guaranteed generous legal aid, irrespective of the financial situation of the claimant. Repayment is not required.

In a self-serving New Zealand Herald article published a month previously entitled 'Mai Chen: Stopping the grievance cycle', she argues for greater government management of continuing treaty claims.

The title of the article is entirely inappropriate, given that outrageous treaty claims have become the norm. She argues that it is now time to entrench the concept of a continuing stream of claims far into the future, with the taxpayer conditioned to perceive them as nothing more than a mildly annoying background hum.

As Geoffrey retreats from the limelight, Mai no doubt feels a deep gratitude towards her misguided benefactor, infamous for having kicked-started the profitable grievance cycle in 1986 by remanufacturing the TOW into a 'living document'.

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