

Media Statement

14 May 2025

Public release of *Te Puna Manawa Whenua* | *Māori Land Court Bench Book*

Kei ngā reo pāorooro o ngā pari kārangaranga puta i te motu, tēnā rā koutou katoa. Pēnei i te ingoa o tēnei pukapuka nei, he manawa whenua te puna o mihi ki a koutou, ki ngā iwi, ki ngā hunga, ki ngā hapori e kuhu mai nei ki ō tātou Kooti Whenua Māori, nōhea rawa ia e mimiti. Ko te Kooti Whenua Māori tēnei e mihi atu nei, e mihi atu nei. Ko te tūmanako ia, he āwhina nui ki roto i tēnei pukapuka hei hāpai i ngā wāwata o tēnā, o tēnā o tātou.

Te Kura Kaiwhakawā | The Institute of Judicial Studies* has today published *Te Puna Manawa Whenua* | *Māori Land Court Bench Book* on the [Courts of New Zealand website](#). Today's release follows the publication of the *Criminal Jury Trials Bench Book* at the end of 2024.

Te Puna Manawa Whenua has been developed by judges for judges, and outlines what they may need to know, understand, and do when hearing applications in Te Kooti Whenua Māori | Māori Land Court. While *Te Puna Manawa Whenua* was written for judges, it is being released publicly with the support of the lead judges of all courts across Aotearoa to promote transparency in the justice system, to assist Māori landowners and their advisors, and for educative purposes.

Te Puna Manawa Whenua is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of the law. It has no more authority than any other commentary—it does not bind judges and does not have the equivalent authority of a judicial decision. The bench book is a guide only and is one of many resources that judges may choose to refer to. The standard documents and templates contained in *Te Puna Manawa Whenua* will need to be tailored appropriately to the facts and legal issues of the particular case. Māori Land Court judges have discretion whether to use these standard documents and templates, with or without amendment.

Te Puna Manawa Whenua is produced by an editing committee comprised of Māori Land Court judges. It is subject to a programme of regular review, with revisions made as the law develops. Although best

efforts have been made to ensure *Te Puna Manawa Whenua* is correct and up to date, no assurances can be given in this regard.

Chief Judge Caren Fox of the Māori Land Court says that she is delighted to share this resource, which captures in one place the wealth of knowledge regarding the law relevant to the Māori Land Court jurisdiction, and which will be used to support the development of the whenua and the people who come to the Court.

***About Te Kura Kaiwhakawā**

Te Kura Kaiwhakawā provides judicial education and professional development for the judiciary throughout their judicial careers. Te Kura Kaiwhakawā is a judge-led organisation that supports continuing learning by way of courses and seminars and through the provision of bench books.

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