



**CHIEF DISTRICT COURT JUDGE FOR NEW ZEALAND  
TE KAIWHAKAWĀ MATUA O TE KŌTI-Ā-ROHE  
Judge Jan-Marie Doogue**

*Statement for immediate release, January 2017*

## Award Honours Pioneering Judge Behind Rangatahi Courts

The District Court judge who led the development of ngā Kōti Rangatahi o Aotearoa, the Rangatahi Courts, has received an international award honouring his pioneering work. Judge Heemi Taumaunu is the latest recipient of the prestigious Veillard-Cybulski Award recognising innovative work with children and families in difficulty.

Judge Taumaunu developed and presided over New Zealand's first Rangatahi Court in Gisborne in 2008 and encouraged fellow judges to set up other marae-based youth courts. There are now eight judges running Rangatahi Courts at 14 marae.

The award is made every two years by the Switzerland-based Veillard-Cybulski Association. The award judges praised Judge Taumaunu's leadership skills in devising an inclusive system where Māori children learn who they are and where they have come from so they can change behaviour and realise their potential. Previous recipients include Dignité en Détention, a mental health project for young detainees in Rwanda, and Terre des Hommes - Aide à l'enfance Foundation which implemented juvenile restorative justice in Peru.

Rangatahi Courts aim to provide the best possible rehabilitative response for young offenders by reconnecting them with their cultural identity, and meaningfully involving local Māori communities in the process. Judge Taumaunu adapted the concept from Koori Courts that cater for indigenous youth offenders in parts of Australia. The model has also been adapted for Pasifika youth in New Zealand through two Pasifika Courts.

Auckland-based Judge Taumaunu now sits in Rangatahi Courts at Orākei in Auckland, Hoani Waititi in Waitakere and Ōtautahi in Christchurch as well as Te Poho-o-Rāwiri in Gisborne. He was unaware he had been nominated for the award: "I see this as a shared honour which recognises the commitment of all the judges involved in Rangatahi Courts and those communities who have embraced the concept of marae-based courts so their young people are offered more culturally appropriate access to justice," he said.

Principal Youth Court Judge John Walker said Judge Taumaunu's hard work and vision had helped embed the Rangatahi Courts in the New Zealand criminal justice system, encouraging a wider appreciation for the value of culturally responsive justice.

Chief District Court Judge Jan-Marie Doogue said the award was further recognition of innovative, judicially led initiatives in New Zealand. In 2015 the Rangatahi Courts won the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration's Award for Excellence in Judicial Administration and in 2016 they received an Institute of Public Administration New Zealand award.

The [Veillard-Cybulski Fund Association](#) honours the work of husband-and-wife magistrates Maurice Veillard-Cybulski and Henryka Veillard-Cybulska, who both worked to advance the rights of children in the justice system.

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