



Tēnā koutou e te whānau, e ngā hapū, e ngā rangatira mā—kia ora tātou katoa.

I want to speak plainly, because sometimes the only way to honour truth is to tell it without varnish.

An MP—*Donald Jones*—has chosen to mock and malign Ngāti Kuku with unfounded, derogatory names. He did not engage with evidence. He did not front with humility. He chose theatre over tikanga, insult over insight. And when the paranoid right interferes with the rights of a hapū and claims “it’s good enough for everyone,” we must name it for what it is: racism.

Let us be crystal clear about the facts.

Ngāti Kuku, a hapū of Ngāi Te Rangi, followed the law. They chose a lawful pathway, investing their own hard-earned pūtea to test the Crown’s actions before the courts. They stand up to a fast-track agenda that would push policy through our society without adequate or rightful scrutiny. That is not obstruction as Jones accuses—that is citizenship. That is not subversion as Jones would have the radical right believe – that is stewardship. It is the very practice of kaitiakitanga expressed through the tools of the state that governs us all.

And when a Member of Parliament—more so a Māori MP—denigrates a hapū for upholding the law, that MP becomes the personification of hegemony: power speaking down to the people, swagger crowding out substance. The job of a representative is to represent, not to ridicule; to listen, not to label; to elevate debate, not to degrade whānau.

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

What is the most important thing in this world? It is people.

Ngāti Kuku are people—mothers and fathers, kuia and koroua, tauira and tradies—who chose to purchase their day in court. That is their right. They owe no apology for it. They do not need permission for it. And they certainly do not deserve to be used as props in a shameless pre-election stunt.

We know this pattern. First, caricature a hapū. Second, dismiss their legitimate concerns as “politics.” Third, wave away due process as an inconvenience. But this is Aotearoa. We have courts for a reason. We have tikanga for a reason. We have Te Tiriti for a reason. The fast-track of convenience cannot outrun the slow, steady stride of justice.

Progress without principle is just speed. We are not anti-development; we are pro-due process. We are not anti-growth; we are pro-guardianship. We are not anti-change; we are pro-consent. The difference matters.

So, to you, Shane Jones: end the theatrics. Stop entertaining those who cheer from the sidelines while hapū are belittled on the field. Front up with humility. Apologise—properly—to Ngāti Kuku, and to our other hapū who stand alongside them. Withdraw the slurs. Engage with the substance. Meet us where the kaupapa lives: in evidence, in law, in tikanga, and in good faith.

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To our communities, I say this: hold the line. When you are told to sit down, stand up. When you are told to be quiet, speak clearly. When you are told “it’s good enough,” ask, “for whom?” Our tamariki deserve better than shortcuts that cut out their future, and better than headlines that trample their whakapapa.

Ko te kai a te rangatira he kōrero; ko te tohu o te rangatira he manaaki.

The food of chiefs is dialogue; the mark of chiefs is care.

Let our leaders be measured not by how loudly they insult, but by how faithfully they serve—especially when they disagree.

I close with this: I once asked Shane Jones for directions to righteousness and honesty. He pointed one way, so I took the other. Because our path is not the path of mockery; it is the path of mana. Our compass is not bluster; it is tika and pono—right and true.

Ko te manawa rere, kia ū.

Nāku nā,
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