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‘Margaret Mutu, The State of Māori Rights’

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Margaret Mutu, *The State of Māori Rights*, Revised edition. (Huia Publishers, 2026).

The State of Māori Rights provides an impressive account of developments over nearly thirty years which have affected Māori and the recognition of Māori rights. Professor Margaret Mutu is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's most well-known and respected Māori leaders. She is an esteemed academic, a formidable community leader, and a determined rights advocate. This collection brings together the annual reviews of issues affecting Māori that Mutu has written since 1994 for *The Contemporary Pacific*, a journal published by the Center for Pacific Island Studies at the University of Hawai'i (Manoa). The first edition of *The State of Māori Rights* was published in 2011 and covered the period 1994 to 2009. This revised edition brings the collection right up to 2022-2023, which provides very substantial expansion from the original edition.

The annual reviews that form the chapters of this book cover a wide range of issues. As one might expect, these include major legal and political developments that affect Māori. Issues relating to Māori land, te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the treaty claims and settlement process feature throughout. There are also recurring themes of racism and colonialism and their impacts on Māori rights. Mutu writes concisely and economically but also conveys the nature of public and media discussions that have often shaped formal legal and political responses.

The chapters describe many challenges to the effective recognition and implementation of Māori rights. However, Mutu is careful to also point to 'bright spots' such as the creation of the Māori Party in 2004 – providing an independent Māori voice within Parliament, the Supreme Court's recognition of tikanga (Māori law) in a long-running legal battle over seabed mining, the establishment of Matariki (the Māori new year) as a national public holiday, and various sporting and cultural achievements to be celebrated.

In places, this book expands on the published annual reviews, to elaborate on a particular issue or provide further context and references that could not be included in the original journal articles. This book also includes many wonderful images that portray significant people and events.

Another notable feature is the inclusion in each annual review of acknowledgements of the passing of prominent people within the Māori world. This is something that, from a Māori perspective, feels very natural and important and this provides a small reminder that these reviews are reporting on the issues as seen through Māori eyes, from a Māori world that is shaped by filmmakers, poets, entertainers, educationalists and language advocates, lawyers, politicians, policy-makers, knowledge-keepers, thinkers and scholars.

The State of Māori Rights is thorough, carefully curated, and highly readable. It provides important context and insight into key moments for Māori rights amongst the ebbs and flows of Aotearoa New Zealand's politics and culture. For anyone who is interested in the wide-ranging and, often, fast-moving changes that have affected Indigenous rights in Aotearoa New Zealand over the past thirty years, it would be hard to find a better 'go-to' source than this collection.

Carwyn Jones, *Te Wānanga o Raukawa and Te Herenga Waka* – Victoria University of Wellington