



Pae Matawai Parawhenua was developed for us by Brian Morris, Licensed Translator of Ngāti Marau ki Rākauātahi hapū.

The word **Pae** refers to the three-member panel, the word **Matawai** relates to what the panel will be doing, it means to 'examine or look closely at, or into things' while the word **Parawhenua** refers to the flooding and what is left behind as a result of the flood.

The Māori term **parawhenua** is a word used to describe the destructive action of natural events such as avalanches, flooding, earthquakes and tsunamis. On this basis the term **parawhenua** is an appropriate term to describe the destruction caused by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Furthermore, the habit of personifying events by naming them – in this case Cyclone Gabrielle, is entirely in keeping with a te ao Māori perspective of the natural world.

From a Māori perspective **Parawhenua mea** (who is also female) is the personification of floods, avalanches and tsunamis – all destructive water-related events. According to Māori oral traditions **Parawhenua mea** is the wife of **Kiwa** who is one of the principal guardians of the oceans, hence the name **Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa**, (the great ocean of Kiwa) for the Pacific Ocean.

In the context of the review the word **parawhenua** can have other connotations.

The word **parawhenua** is also a compound word – made up of **para** + **whenua** - **para** is the Māori word for sediment and silt, **whenua** is the Māori word for land.

As mentioned above, the term **Pae Matawai** refers to the panel and its task. Generally, the word Pae refers to anything horizontal. In this case it is chosen for the independent position or seat(s) that the panel members will occupy in order to carry out the review.

Brian says as we follow a process to unpack Māori terms to find meaning and understanding of te ao Māori, it is useful to highlight a key difference between the Māori and English languages. **The Māori language has one word for many things, while the English language has many words for one thing.**

A good example is the word **parawhenua** – the Māori term for water-related destructive events.

In contrast, the English language has a number of different words such as **flooding, avalanche and earthquake.**

For Māori, **Parawhenua mea** is the source of these events and adequately covers any corresponding English terms.

