

Ms. Annette Sykes



Biography

Annette Te Imaima Sykes is Māori from the confederation of tribes of Te Arawa in New Zealand and belongs to the sub-tribes of Ngāti Makino and Ngāti Pikiao. She is a graduate of the University of Auckland and has been practising as a lawyer since 1984. She is principal of her own law firm Annette Sykes & Co Ltd and has practised in all the courts of New Zealand, but practises particularly in the jurisdiction of the Waitangi Tribunal which is funded by Legal Aid Services under the Ministry of Justice.

Annette has practised extensively in the Family and Criminal jurisdictional Courts of New Zealand. She is a member of the Māori Law Commission which seeks to re-establish the operation of Māori systems of law and custom in Aotearoa. She is a popular guest speaker on issues of Māori sovereignty, the Treaty of Waitangi and Māori justice at various conferences throughout New Zealand and internationally. She has attended numerous International seminars promoting the rights of indigenous peoples and gave evidence in the Women's Court against Racism in Durban, South Africa in 2001.

Annette has been a Director of a number of companies that were established as a consequence of litigation initiated against the New Zealand Government to uphold Māori customary fishing rights. She was a founding member of the Māori Broadcasting Agency, Te Māngai Pāhō which was established as a consequence of claims by Maori to protect Māori language for present and future generations. She has been a long-standing advocate of Māori land rights and appears regularly before the New Zealand Courts and in the special jurisdiction of the Waitangi Tribunal for the return of lands wrongfully taken by Crown policies and practices over the last 160 years. Annette has recently been appointed to the Kāhui Wai Māori Advisory Group, which is one of two advisory groups providing advice to the government on the freshwater reform programme, in particular, Māori customary rights in freshwater.

Annette is also a strong advocate for Māori independence and a nuclear free, genetic engineering free independent Pacific as part of this focus. She has attended seminars in Kanaky speaking against globalisation and new forms of colonisation that beset the Pacific. Annette has also written many articles and publications 'Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Our Bill of Rights)', 'Te Tiriti o Waitangi; A Women's Perspective', 'The Politics of the Brown Table' and 'The "Te Reo Maori Claim" and its ramifications for the New Zealand Broadcasting arena' being three of such articles.