



## **MEDIA STATEMENT**

**Hon Tariana Turia**

**Co-leader, Maori Party 25 May 2011**

**'Turia promotes breast-feeding is best'**

Co-leader of the Maori Party Tariana Turia is championing the cause of breast-feeding as the best nutritional start for all babies.

“Breast-milk is easily digested, it’s free and it’s always fresh” said Mrs Turia.

“I have always encouraged our young mums to read up about the amazing properties inherent in breastmilk. It contains a perfect blend of nutrients and protective antibodies, breastmilk can help protect a baby from infections as well as reducing the risk of allergies, eczema and asthma, and it is also a wonderful way to start intimately connecting with your baby”.

Mrs Turia’s statements came in response to concerns she had received from Maori midwives about a product being sold overseas, marketing Heitiki infant formula as containing a ‘super-gene’.

“One of the most concerning aspects for me, was seeing the cultural misappropriation of one of our most sacred terms (heitiki) – being associated with food.

“The use of Heitiki, our traditional taonga, for the marketing of infant milkpowder has been criticised as both disrespectful of tikanga Maori and representing the ‘theft of cultural knowledge’.

“I think it is unacceptable on two fronts – firstly that a sacred name is being misused in such a way, but secondly that in targeting a Maori concept, it could be seen to be actively encouraging Maori women to substitute breastmilk with infant formula”.

“I want to remind all of our whanau, that breastmilk is by far the most natural and precious food for your pepe, and a source of sustenance for their physical and emotional development”.

“Breastfeeding helps to lay the foundations of a healthy life for babies, for mothers and for whanau” ended Mrs Turia.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgdMXrGw8C4> (Maori midwives protest over Heitiki baby formula)

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