

The Bicultural Development of NZPsS

Since 1989, the Society has been actively promoting appropriate bicultural practices both within its own domain, and throughout the psychology profession generally. Rule 3, adopted in 1992, formally acknowledged the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi by aligning the Objects of the Society within New Zealand's particular cultural context. The "Bicultural Audit" completed in March 2003 is the latest milestone in the Society's bicultural development.

Establishment of the NSCBI

Establishment of the National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues began back in 1989 when a remit was adopted at the Society's AGM, that in acknowledgement of the Treaty of Waitangi and in negotiation with Maori people, the Society would use the resources and knowledge available within its membership and discipline to facilitate the training of more Maori psychologists. To advise on this goal, the Kaupapa Maori Working Party (KMWP) was established.

The KMWP report to the 1990 AGM focused on three key areas: training more Maori in psychology; support for Maori students; and alleviating social problems affecting Maori. The Working Party recommended to Council that the Society establish a National Standing Committee on bicultural matters, the functions of which would include:

- the teaching, practice and development of psychology in New Zealand; and
- requesting that Psychology Departments initiate ongoing curriculum reviews.

The National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues (NSCBI) was formally established at the 1991 AGM. The Council was charged with approving an appropriate budget to meet reasonable costs of its operation. The NSCBI was initially established with the broad aims of fulfilling a monitoring role and having an educative and promotional role in enhancing biculturalism in all facets of psychological practice, teaching and theorizing.

Rule 3

Rule 3 – Implementation to Objects, was adopted at the 1992 AGM, as follows:

In giving effect to the objects for which the Society is established the Society shall encourage policies and practices that reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity and shall, in particular, have due regard to the provisions of, and to the spirit and intent of, the Treaty of Waitangi.

The NSCBI undertook the task of developing an implementation plan for Rule 3. The resulting plan adopted by Council in August 1994 included four key recommendations:

That the Society -

1. move towards establishing a collaborative relationship based on partnership with Maori
2. develop accreditation standards and procedures that are culturally appropriate and safe for Maori
3. define a period (e.g. a decade) for the urgent development of psychological theory, research, teaching and practice that is specifically useful and relevant to Iwi and Maori community development
4. undertake regular reviews to determine progress made towards the implementation of Rule 3 in all

aspects of Society activities.

Each of these recommendations was expanded into specific action goals. (*The Bulletin*, No. 85, June 1995)

The NSCBI's Relationship with the Executive

While Rule 3 guides the relationship between the NSCBI and the Executive, it is critical to note that the Committee is **not** the Society's Treaty partner. They are both parties to the Society's bicultural development and hold certain responsibilities. In 1998, guidelines for the relationship were adopted to assist the process of communication and consultation. While both parties continue to endorse the spirit and content of this brief document, over the years the practicalities and difficulties associated with decisions about how and when to consult has lead the Committee to recently reviewing its role and developing a workplan for 2003, and this will shortly be discussed with the Executive.

Executive Treaty Training & Planning

In 1997 the then Director of Bicultural Affairs Richard Sawrey suggested that it would be useful for each incoming Executive to undertake Treaty Training together as group. The rationale was that it would assist Executive members in understanding their obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi, and in the formulation of specific strategies and actions to put the Treaty (and Rule 3) into practice in their work as Directors of the Society.

The Executive of the Society has a central role to play in assisting and guiding the wider Society in the implementation of Rule 3. In this they are guided by the National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues (NSCBI), and the two Directors of Bicultural Affairs (DBA's), who are the NSCBI's representatives on the



Executive. It was envisaged that Treaty Training would encourage the Executive to take collective responsibility for the implementation of Rule 3, and specifically minimise their dependence on the Directors of Bicultural Affairs to raise and attend to all the bicultural issues facing the Society. It is now Executive policy that each newly elected group will attend a one-day workshop as soon as possible after the AGM.

The first Treaty Training held in November 1999 focused on information about the Treaty itself, and then looked at the *Guidelines for the Relationship between NSCBI and Council/Executive/Staff (1998)* document. The second training session in 2001 was quite different; there was much less background on the Treaty itself as Executive attendees didn't want to go over material they had been covered elsewhere. Instead the Directors looked at bicultural issues in relation to their own portfolios and came up with individual action plans. These proposed plans were shared with the group, and where there was overlap the Directors agreed how to work together.

The 2003 Bicultural Audit

The Executive commissioned the Audit in 2002, as part of the Rule 3 implementation plan that included regular reviews to determine progress in all aspects of Society activities. The Audit was carried out by David Thomas and Yoke Leng Thomas of *ResearchWorks NZ Ltd*, and their report was received by the Executive in March 2003. Dr David Thomas is a Fellow of the Society and had been involved in setting up and early operation of the NSCBI.

The Audit Objectives were to:

1. Identify key areas within which it might be expected that the NZPsS should implement bicultural initiatives and operations.
2. Describe what activities have been carried out relevant to implementation of Rule 3.
3. Assess the extent to which the

implementations meet the intent and requirements of Rule 3.

The Audit involved two main sources of information collection. The first, a self-completed questionnaire, was mailed to 25 psychologists from a variety of physical and professional locations and resulted in 13 responses. The second was a review of NZPsS documents and records, including the Code of Ethics, periodicals and the website.

The Audit report acknowledged that the Society had been responsible for several important initiatives that met the objectives for Rule 3. One of these was the inclusion of at least two members nominated by the NSCBI in the constitution of the Executive. The work carried out by the NSCBI was considered crucial for the ongoing development of bicultural initiatives and having these two representatives on the Executive would continue to keep bicultural development on the national agenda.

The report also identified other areas in which further development could be made, consistent with the view expressed in the Society's web page, that "commitment to biculturalism is an evolving one":

1. **Communication Strategy** - the Society should develop a general communication strategy with members and other psychologists in New Zealand that incorporates bicultural issues and expectations. This could include greater use of existing periodicals for reporting and discussing activities; setting up internet-based discussion communities; upgrading the website; and establishing a policy manual of key principles and current practices.
2. **Developing a "teaching of psychology" group** - the Society could explore how it might collaborate with other institutions to establish a group that could facilitate the development of bicultural initiatives in the teaching of psychology, an area in which the Society seems to have had relatively little influence in the past.
3. **Support for a Maori and Psychology group** - the Society could

play a facilitative and supporting role in the development of a Maori and Psychology group.

4. **Quality Assessment** - the Society should consider how it might assess the quality of its future bicultural initiatives.

Executive Treaty Training Day 2003

The 2003 Treaty training and planning meeting of the Executive was held in Wellington on 4th April. The day was facilitated by Jillian Wychel and David James of "The Rowan Partnership", from Wanganui, the same facilitators as for the previous two training days. David and Jillian commenced the day with a reminder of the three articles of the Treaty and primacy of the partnership relationship between Pakeha and Maori in NZ. Discussion then moved to the 2003 Bicultural Audit Report and its recommendations.

Moving beyond the symbolic

While Rule 3 is an important statement of the Society's commitment to bicultural development, the executive was concerned to move beyond the 'symbolic level'. Biculturalism is an area of competency and skill for psychologists and subsequently the society sees a need to more actively educate and inform members about their responsibilities in this area.

One concern of the Executive was that through the passage of time, and the large number of new members in recent years, the existence and meaning of Rule 3 may not be well understood within the membership. This article is one response to agreement that more needs to be done to promote understanding and implementation of this rule.

In addition to this article, the Executive identified several other opportunities to promote greater awareness and engage membership in discussion about biculturalism over the upcoming year, including:

- a special edition of the *NZ Journal of Psychology* focusing on Biculturalism (2004 ?)

