

NATIONAL STANDING COMMITTEE ON BICULTURAL ISSUES (NSCBI): A BRIEF HISTORY

By Andrew Duirs, Community Psychology Diploma Programme Student, University of Waikato

Since the mid 1970s, psychologists have been addressing the issue of Maori involvement and contribution to the profession. In 1989, the Kaupapa Maori Working Party (KMWP) was established to advise the Society¹ on how to facilitate the training of more Maori psychologists² and report to the NZPsS Council on concerns regarding bicultural and Treaty of Waitangi issues for the Society and its members. The work of the KMWP led to the establishment of the National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues (NSCBI)³. The NSCBI was initially established to provide monitoring, education and promotion around enhancing biculturalism in all facets of psychological practice, teaching and theorizing. As a result of the work by NSCBI, comprising of both Maori and non-Maori psychologists, the Kaupapa Maori Working Party and other psychologists interested in bicultural issues, a remit to include a new rule (Rule 3) on biculturalism was submitted at the Society AGM in 1993⁴. The remit was passed and Rule 3 established outlining the Society's new commitment to; biculturalism, cultural diversity, active commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi and its principles.

An implementation plan for Rule 3 was adopted at the Society's 1994 AGM⁵ and influences NSCBI's direction and activities, including involvement in: evaluation of bicultural development; publication; submissions to the Psychologists Act and HPCA Act; Code of Ethics development; supervision for registration scheme; accreditation; conference organisation; Treaty training for the Executive; and the President's scholarship.

NSCBI aims to facilitate and monitor the collective responsibility of the Society and its members for the implementation of Rule 3. It is envisaged that this will be achieved by increasing and supporting Maori participation and development in all areas of psychology; promoting bicultural accountability and responsibility within psychology; and supporting the recognition and development of psychologies relevant and applicable to Aotearoa.

NSCBI has also been responsible for identifying issues of relevance to biculturalism and providing advice to the Executive. Recently, NSCBI adopted a strategic plan to align its membership capacity with its objectives in 12 month work plans and is working towards strengthening its working relationship with the Executive. NSCBI remains committed to being involved with the ongoing facilitation and monitoring of Rule 3 by the Society and its members.

Rule 3

"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 provision of, and to the spirit and intent of, the Treaty of Waitangi"

NSCBI participation

If you have a passion for Maori cultural advancement and/or enhancing Pakeha/Tauiwi cultural responsiveness within the psychological profession, and have the energy to contribute to the promotion of bicultural competency, responsiveness and action, please feel free to come along to NSCBI meetings.

If you would like to know more about NSCBI, contact Neville Robertson (email: scorpio@waikato.ac.nz or phone 838 4466 extn 8300).

¹ The New Zealand Psychological Society (NZPsS) will be referred to as the Society in this article

² Executive Minutes 10 November 1989. Wellington: New Zealand Psychological Society

³ Executive Minutes 10 August 1991. Wellington: New Zealand Psychological Society

⁴ Rule 3. "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" (NZPsS, 1993b, p.2)

⁵ Black, R., Goodwin, L. & Smith, J. (1995). The report of an evaluation of the bicultural development of the New Zealand Psychological Society annual conference. New Zealand: University of Waikato

I BUSINESS FROM THE 2004 AGM

In discussing the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the NZPsS and the Australian Psychological Society, the 2004 AGM referred the matter for further consideration to the incoming 2004-2006 Executive – who agreed that it would be useful to have a set of principles to guide discussions with other national psychological societies. The NSCBI undertook, on the Society's behalf, to draft such a document.

The following statement was presented to the NZPsS Executive by the NSCBI on 27 October 2005 and met with Executive approval. Your Executive recommends that these be the principles guiding relations with other national psychological societies and welcomes your comments about the document.

New Zealand Psychological Society Inc. Principles guiding relations with national psychological societies

From the National Executive following consultation with NSCBI (27 October 2005).

The New Zealand Psychological Society, the premier body of New Zealand psychologists, is both a learned society and a professional association.

From time to time, the objectives of the New Zealand Psychological Society may be furthered by entering into equitable, collegial relationships with other national psychological organisations. Such relationships must be mutually beneficial and the negotiated relationship must preserve the integrity of the Society.

As laid out in the Rules of the Society its primary objects are:

- a. To promote the discipline of psychology as a science;
- b. To promote the development and use of psychological knowledge for the alleviation of social problems and reduction of social inequalities, consistent with the principle of empowerment;
- c. To promote high standards of ethical and professional service and practice on the part of psychologists;
- d. To disseminate knowledge of pure and applied psychology;
- e. To promote the interests of the profession of psychology in New Zealand.

Of particular relevance to any relationship the Society has is Rule 3 that commits the Society to pursuing those objectives in ways that ensure it will 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 of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Recent decisions of the Waitangi Tribunal, the Court of Appeal, and the Privy Council, have confirmed that Maori should continue to live in Aotearoa as Maori. The government of New Zealand is committed to fulfilling its obligations as a Treaty partner relating to Maori in good faith with mutual respect, cooperation and trust (*New Zealand Health Strategy, 2000*). The recently adopted *Code of Ethics for psychologists working in Aotearoa/New Zealand 2002* acknowledges that the Treaty of Waitangi sets out the basis of respect between indigenous people (tangata whenua – those who are Maori) and others (those who are not Maori) in this country.

In negotiating relationships with other national psychological societies the Society will engage in a manner that is consistent with its Rules and Objects by ensuring that the interests of indigenous peoples are promoted in these relationships.

There was discussion in the Executive about the parameters of the phrase "will engage in a manner that is consistent with its Rules and Objects ..." in the last paragraph, and it was felt that this was not the time to provide a detailed list of 'rules for negotiators'. To clarify the intent of the paragraph we offer the suggestion that, in such negotiations, the Society should ensure that our representatives are not individualised but are enabled and empowered to work as a collective.

Please note that the above paper is a document for discussion. Could you please forward any comment to: Ray Nairn, President-Elect & NSCBI Committee member rayn@clear.net.nz