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**Principal Support -  
a personal construction?**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education (Adult Education) at Massey University.**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this work was to find new approaches to supporting principals to be the 'best they can be' using individual principals' own ideas of what support for principals does, could or should look like. Reflection was used as a research tool throughout as it offers opportunities to consolidate assumptions, to change our minds and rethink our assumptions, to synthesise new ideas with existing knowledge and come with up fresh perspectives to take up, reflect upon and act or not, to produce change, or not.

The literature review having demonstrated that much is already known about what forms support for principals ought to take, this work became a vehicle for the voices of eight principals in Aotearoa/New Zealand each of whom after reflection provided accounts of their own experiences regarding support. Justified by the viewpoint that "originality" is "often buil(t) on ideas that others have already written about, extending an argument ... .. or modifying a point of view "Clark (2007, p.12), the investigation focussed on the data presented by individual principals juxtaposed at times with existing literature to determine if individual accounts might provide new perspectives on how provision of support for principals might enhance individual wellbeing.

In concluding a number of recommendations were made for further research, both about support for principals and about collaboration between government departments to enhance services in schools.

## Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to my brother-in-law, Keith Miles, a believer in 'going for it'.

My achievements are not mine, but the efforts of many  
"E hara taku toa he taki tahi engari he taki tini"  
(translation by D. Ratu June 2008).

Thank you to each of the participants, for your kindness and professionalism. I admire and applaud your dedication to education and pray that I have done justice to your valuable input for without it this project would not exist.

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My family whose belief in me carried me through the times of self-doubt, the times when I wanted to give up – I return your love.

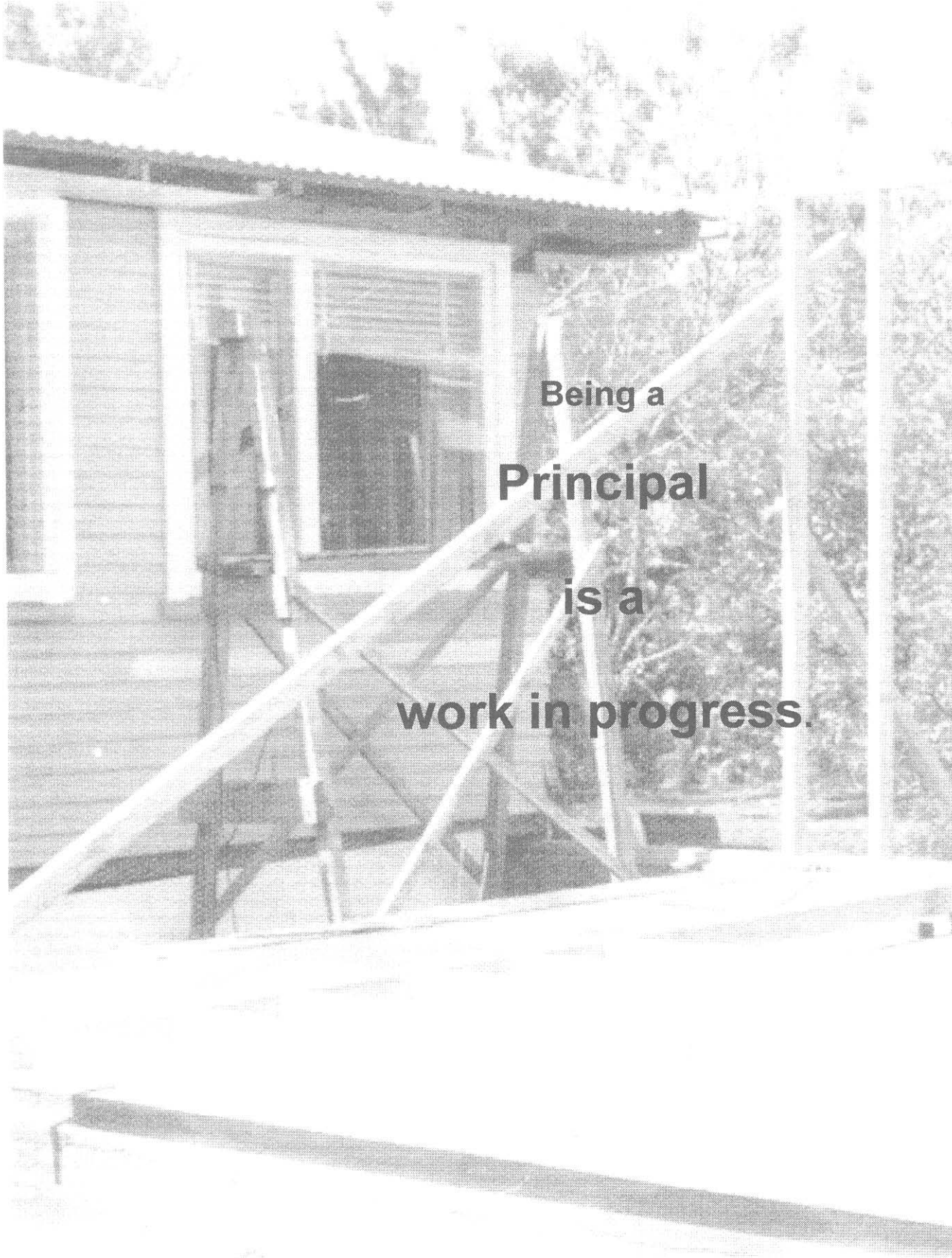
Last but not least I thank my mother's family for the great grounding in and thirst for academic knowledge. I salute you, my ancestors.

## **Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi)**

This research being based in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the researcher acknowledges and respects the Treat of Waitangi concepts of “protection, participation and partnership” (Massey University, 2009).

“Article 2 of the English version guaranteed to Maori “the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Land and estates Forests Fisheries and other properties which they may collectively or individually possess so long as it is their wish and desire to retain the same in their possession”. The Maori version of the Treaty guaranteed “te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa”, which may be translated as “the unqualified exercise of their chieftainship over their lands over their villages and over their treasures all”. (Kawaharu, 1989).

For this reason on matters Maaori, the researcher maintained consultation throughout with David John Ratu who is of Ngati Te Ata descent, part of the Waiohua tribes whose rohe encompasses parts of Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland).



Being a  
**Principal**  
is a  
work in progress.

# Principal Support – a personal construction?

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