

# **THE THREE INGS : RECRUITING, TRAINING & RETAINING**

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The purpose of this paper is to address the problem of firstly how we recruit Maori to our profession, train them in the range of skills required to be successful and lastly how to stop them leaving the profession. The preparation of this paper has been assisted through an informal email survey of Te Ropu Whakahau members. Comments from the survey are used throughout the presentation to illustrate a number of key issues that emerged from the survey results. Later in the presentation I will also provide examples of overseas initiatives to recruit ethnically diverse peoples to the Library profession.

This paper has taken a long time to develop. It's evolution commenced back as far as the first ever Te Ropu Whakahau hui in 1992. I was part of a group talking over dinner about why we had become librarians. The conversation revealed that for most of us it had just happened either falling into a job or by word of mouth had found out that a job was available and had managed to secure it. Hearing these stories made me wonder whether we should leave things to chance or alternatively develop a recruitment strategy to get more Maori into the profession.

Over the years my concerns have been increased through the realisation that we have been unable to retain Maori that have entered the profession. Many of these losses have been to other professions and some have been conscious lifestyle choices. Although more and more Maori are choosing to join our ranks we can still not afford to lose people at the other end particularly the trained and the experienced. These are our potential mentors that will assist to nurture the next wave.

Attracting Maori to the profession is not enough, there has to be more emphasis on training Maori in order for them to succeed is essential. The range of options available has changed over the last few years with the restructuring of the undergraduate options, the introduction of overseas providers and the successful debut of the Diploma of Maori Information Management at Te Whare Wananga o Raukawa. Choosing the right qualification to go with the individual is crucial. It could be argued that none of the courses available will cover everything that is required to be successful. However it is

also obvious that the Diploma of Maori Information Management at Te Whare Wananga o Raukawa adds an extra Maori dimension that is missing from the other programmes.

## **The Survey**

To assist with the development of this paper an email survey was conducted via the Te Ropu Whakahau listserv and was also delivered to other known email addresses. Conducting the survey by email was difficult to facilitate. It would have been my preference to conduct the survey by post but this was not possible due to problems in accessing a mailing list. Locating email addresses of other Maori not subscribed to whakahau was difficult. In all the survey was sent to 56 people. Just over half (35 ) of those surveyed responded. The survey itself was based on a similar survey conducted in the United States of America by Butlar and Canyon<sup>1</sup>. The survey was adapted for New Zealand conditions but still reflected the USA influence very strongly.

The questions in the survey focused on a range of factors including, sex, age, iwi affiliation, type of library worked in, qualifications. There were also a range of questions where respondents were asked to identify methods to recruit, train and retain Maori.

Some respondents objected to aspects of the survey and others found some of the phraseology strange. One of the major objections was to the phrase “preferential treatment” which was used when looking at the ways of getting more Maori into library education. This was a phrase used by Butlar and Canyon in their survey and as I intended to make comparisons with their results I was trying to keep some parts of the survey as similar as possible with their original survey. Offensive as the term may seem I actually feel that alternatives such as “quotas” may have appeared to be more offensive.

## **Survey Results**

As previously mentioned there were 35 responses to the survey. All survey forms returned were valid. However not all questions were answered on every form.

## **Iwi**

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<sup>1</sup> Butlar, Lois and William Canyon. “Recruitment of librarians into the profession: the minority perspective”. *Library and Information Science Research*, Vol. 14, no.3 (Jul-Sept) 1992: 259-80.

The first question in the survey asked participants to indicate their iwi affiliations. There were 63 responses made to this questions with many respondents indicating that they could whakapapa to more than one iwi. Overall 34 different iwi were noted covering the full range of Aotearoa. Although the results indicated that there was no clear domination by any one iwi, it was clear that those from the East Coast were dominant.

## **Sex**

Female respondents to the survey numbered 29 and males returned 6 of the survey forms. The result from males although low was probably representative of the overall number included in the survey distribution.

## **Age**

Survey participants were asked to indicate an age range that matched theirs. The ranges were 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70+. This question was answered by all participants except one. All age ranges were represented except the last two. The figures for the individual ranges were as follows: 20-29 - 6; 30-39 - 17; 40-49 - 9; 50-59 - 3. Albeit that this is a small sample of the total number of known Maori workers the age spread is quite favourable when compared to the cultural statistics data produced after the 1991 census which demonstrated that the average age of librarians was 40 years over for all of the sectors within the profession.

## **Type of Library**

Most of the respondents worked in either public libraries (17) or academic libraries (13). The other respondents were spread evenly over the Special, National and Special - Government sectors. One respondent listed themselves as self-employed. The absence of representatives from the school sector was noticeable and may be partly explained by the fact that they have restricted access to email services and may not subscribe to the Te Ropu Whakahau listserv.

## Library Qualification

Survey participants were asked whether they had a library qualification or not. If their answer was positive they were asked to provide the name of their qualification. Only 4 respondents indicated that they had no qualification and one of these was studying towards their MLIS. Of the other respondents, 14 indicated that they held the Library Certificate issued by either the New Zealand Library Association / School of Library Studies, 7 hold the Diploma of Librarianship from Victoria University of Wellington or the New Zealand Library School, 6 hold the MLIS, 2 hold the Diploma of Maori Information Management from Te Whare Wananga o Raukawa, 3 other qualifications were also indicated including a Bachelor of Arts with a major in Librarianship, Certificate in Archival Studies, Diploma of Information Studies (Teacher Librarianship). Three respondents indicated that they had more than one qualification. Overall the level of qualified librarians is extremely pleasing. The qualifications offered by the three tertiary institutions in New Zealand vary enormously. The delivery of library education is also becoming more and more flexible and this will hopefully lead to more Maori becoming qualified.

## Maori participation in Library and Information Education

This question was designed to identify strategies to enhance the number of Maori entering library schools. Survey participants were given a list of statements and were asked to answer yes or no.

The statements were:

In order to attract more Maori into their programmes - Library schools should

Have flexible admission standards	Yes (27)	No (4)
Give Maori preferential treatment	Yes (8)	No (22)
Provide scholarships	Yes (29)	No (1)
Provide tutoring for academic deficiencies	Yes (23)	No (5)
Advertise in Maori publications	Yes (32)	No (0)

Once again not every respondent answered every question.

A number of comments were made in this section particularly with regard to the statement on giving Maori preferential treatment.

*Not preferential treatment but Treaty of Waitangi based treatment. e.g. Up to 50%of Maori information, Maori resources, Maori surveys & stats., etc. I do not like the words - preferential treatment. As tangata whenua o Aotearoa under Article 2, the Crown is obligated as of right!!!!*

*I do not agree with the way you worded this question Spencer. Maori applications need to be considered differently, not preferentially.*

*I wouldn't call it preferential treatment - more positive discrimination*

*I was one of the people who was put off by this question, but I have decided to reply after seeing .... emails. I don't think it is preferential treatment that Māori are seeking. I also do not agree with the term "positive discrimination". I think that what Māori want is a level playing field, and this is very difficult when the majority of libraries and providers of library education are predominantly monocultural organisations.*

*This is not necessary if there is no quota then should only have to meet minimum requirements*

*I've got a real bug about this - everyone should be given a fair shake!!!*

*(I don't agree with your choice of the word deficiencies)*

Other comments were also made about scholarships, advertising and how libraries and library schools could market themselves more effectively.

*Library schools need to market more effectively the courses (e.g.: MLIS) they offer to Māori students who are going to graduate. Information could be sent out to them when they graduate for instance.*

*Also, libraries themselves could also offer internships / work experience (paid or not paid is up to the library) for Māori University and Secondary school students.*

*But remember that a lot of Maori don't read these publications anyway*

The notion of preferential treatment is obviously an issue. Identifying methods of selection for library school that are fair and equitable and recognise the unique position that Maori hold as tangata whenua is extremely important. Although entry to the courses offered by the Open Polytechnic and Te Whare Wananga o Raukawa are reasonably flexible, a selection process still takes place for the MLIS programme at Victoria University. It is obvious from the survey results that Maori are being selected for this programme and its predecessor the DLIS. However what we are unaware of is how many Maori have been refused entry.

There was overwhelming support for the provision of scholarships. Some scholarships are already in existence or have existed in the past. National Library has provided scholarships for library education for a number of years. The Parliamentary Library has also had a scholarship scheme running for a number of years but this is currently under review. LIANZA this year is also looking to introduce a scholarship

Obviously the fees involved with attending library school are a barrier. Once upon a time many students doing the New Zealand Library Studies Certificate had all their expenses paid for by their employers. This was also true for some students doing the Diploma of Librarianship part-time. Over the years such benevolent employers have become fewer and fewer. The absence of sufficient scholarships to fill the gap makes it difficult for some Maori to be able to afford tuition and living costs associated with library education.

There was also overwhelming support for the various library and information education providers to be advertising in a range of Maori publications. Although there are not many of these in print form, there are some that are extremely well established such as Mana, Te Maori News and Tu Mai. Other obvious mediums of advertising are the Iwi radio stations dotted throughout New Zealand.

## **Reasons for choosing a career in librarianship**

Once again a series of statements were provided and everyone was asked to check all those that applied. The statements were as follows

A Maori Librarian served as a role model (4)

A non-Maori librarian served as a role model (5)

A Maori librarian served as a mentor (1)

A non-Maori librarian served as a mentor (3)

A scholarship was available	(3)
I just fell into a non-professional job	(7)
I wanted to work in a library and sought a position	(8)
A librarian friend told me of a job opening	(1)
I worked as a school library volunteer	(5)
A teacher / careers guidance counselor told me about careers in librarianship	(2)
Another member of my family is a librarian	(1)
A friend influenced me to go to library school	(6)
Other (please specify)	(9)

Like the previous question a number of people made comments which were mainly under the other category

*A non-Maori librarian served as a role model (actually Information Manager at the\*\*\*\*\*) - good friend of the family who I worked for during secondary school holidays. Her job seemed really interesting to me and the \*\*\*\*\* library gave me a taste, and increased my awareness of the information and archives that is actually out there about Māori.*

*I wanted something more than a BA in Anthropology and the MLIS looked like an attractive degree that could provide not only a career in librarianship, but also other professions such as research and policy analysis. The fact that I would learn about how to search the Internet and electronic databases for information also caused me to do the MLIS.*

*I have always held the view that information (knowledge) is powerful and am interested in the dissemination of information and how information can be used to empower Māori. Speaking personally, and possibly for many other Māori too, Māori could tend to undertake degrees and training with the overall goal of helping out their own iwi / whanau in some way, rather than just for individual gain. I tend to think - "how can I use what I know to help my iwi? whanau? hapu?" For example, setting up own iwi archive is a long term goal and MLIS was the only relevant training that seemed available at the time (i.e.: included archives training and there were no degrees in archives training - closest other*

*training would be museum curatorship which did also appear attractive to me).*

*It may sound unusual, but possibly poor library service (at least at the University I was at anyway) also drove me to do the MLIS - I figured if the library staff could not assist me with finding the information I need then I should learn how to access information from a library myself.*

*I wanted to work with Maori*

*I visited libraries that held large repositories of Maori manuscript information, with less than adequate catalogues and wanted to get into a position that I could effect change or do the work myself to improve appropriate access for Maori to Maori information (mainly manuscript material located in National libraries)*

*I was offered a position at \*\*\*\*\* Library as part of a scheme by my Runanga. The idea was that the Runanga pay my salary for 1 year in which after that the \*\*\*\*\* Library then employ me and take over paying my salary. The intent was to become qualified and then return home and work for the Runanga. Beforehand, I didn't even think of librarianship as an option! Maybe because I never came across that option through advertising and promotion of that career.*

*Because my mother has always been an avid reader all her life. My brother saw the advert. in the NZ Herald and so I applied for the job. I did not have a clue what the job was about. I fell into librarianship and I will probably fall out of it as well. I totally love my job!!!*

*A scholarship was available and a few Maori and non Maori friends encouraged and supported my decision to go to library school and pursue this particular qualification*

*I had been working in a tertiary library while I was doing my undergraduate degree and saw the need for more Maori in the library profession and I chose to respond to that need*

*I love that librarianship covers so many different fields and that I have the versatility to go in many different directions within my profession at any stage, for example, IT, Conservation, Archives, Records management, Oral History etc.*

*My employer paid for my training as well as providing study leave, I would not have entered into study otherwise*

*I loved reading!!!*

*A library seemed a better option than Retail (bookshop), where I used to work. I talked to someone at a party (not a friend or a Maori) who had done the MLIS and worked in a library - they said they enjoyed it and it seemed like a good*

*environment to work in (especially after retail). Then I looked at the MLIS pamphlet and decided it looked interesting and worthwhile.*

*I saw a position advertised which called for the use of Te Reo and a specialist knowledge of whakapapa. During the same period I applied for Library Assistant positions with other institutions in \*\*\*\*\**

*Returned to work after birth of children. The Library offered me work experience and I started casual relieving, then permanent jobshare then permanent full-time. I studied librarianship thereafter and gained a qualification. Opportunity for further professional development has been available and ongoing.*

Obviously a number of Maori are still falling into the profession basically due to being in the right place at the right time. However it is pleasing to see the numbers that are choosing to pursue a career in librarianship by deliberately seeking out positions. Many of these respondents were attracted by the opportunity to assist Maori in fulfilling their information needs.

The role of mentors and role-models is also interesting. Overseas, particularly in the United States of America mentors play a significant role in encouraging and enhancing the careers of those in the earlier stages of their library and information careers. Mentoring schemes exist through a number of the state divisions and the affiliated bodies of the American Library Association. In New Zealand mentoring tends to be more informal. The establishment of more formal mentoring systems could help in not only the recruitment stakes but also the retention stakes as well. Role models are perhaps more difficult to create but obviously would also play an important part in promoting a positive image for the profession.

## **Why Maori do not choose Librarianship as a career**

Like the previous two sections a series of statements were provided as possible reasons why Maori don't choose librarianship as a career. The statements were as follows:

- Low status of librarians (12)
- Low salaries (14)
- Not attractive as other professions (e.g. law, teaching, etc.) (22)
- Physical environment of libraries unappealing (18)
- Prior negative experiences with libraries (22)
- Perception of Libraries as monocultural institutions (27)

Libraries do not advertise in the right places (Maori radio, (23) newspapers etc.)

Other (please specify) (15)

A range of opinions were expressed in this survey mainly under the 'other' category.

*Maori are currently outdoorsy type people, who welcome the outside rather than inside professions. Academic inability inhibits their influence in pursuing librarianship as a career.*

*Hey any job in \*\*\*\*\* is something. I came in off the DPB and my starting salary was \$6000 more than my benefit. There were 120 applicants for my job, so it just goes to show that in a poor area, people will apply for any job*

*Don't realise that it could be a career which could provide benefit to other Maori*

*Libraries are not promoted adequately as a career choice in secondary schools*

*Perception of Libraries as monocultural institutions. In addition to this, if Maori have gone into libraries most are recognised as people who are able to bring a richness to the workplace because they are Maori but no provision is made to care for them culturally, spiritually and emotionally. So often we become dissatisfied, but once in the profession feel obligated to their jobs because library and information services to Maori are so important so we stick in there hoping and fighting for change*

*Check out the Dip. in Maori Information Management, this is an attempt and a very successful one for Maori to attract Maori to the Information profession of which librarianship is a part of. It is a course which does strive to recognise and put into practice Maori thinking and values*

*The perception that librarianship is a 'sissy' profession - women's work (a macho male perspective)*

*Librarianship is seldom offered, especially at secondary schools, as a viable career option.*

*Lack of Maori role models. Maori need to promote the profession to Maori.*

*Prior negative experiences with libraries (as mentioned above, ironically the negative experiences I had actually drove me to train as a librarian as I thought by doing so I could not only access the information that libraries hold by myself,*

*but also possibly I could make some changes in the library world - make libraries more friendly to Māori by becoming involved)*

*I think also Māori may be unaware (like the general public actually) of what trained librarians actually do, and what information is actually available from libraries. I get many people contacting me who I might refer to the National Library / Alexander Trundle Library who are stunned that these places actually exist and what information is actually available there. So, I guess a lack of awareness of what librarianship can involve could also deter some from entering the profession -i.e.: the library users only get to see people standing at desks issuing books and reshelving books most of the time.*

*Most Maori in our rohe know that half of library staff are Maori so come in quite frequently*

*Lack of knowledge and understanding of what the library profession is all about*

*No resources put into supporting local Maori to apply for positions e.g.: No work experience on offer targeted at young Maori, school visits, career expos*

*Ignorance or uninformed knowledge base i.e. most Maori are unaware of the scope of the actual and potential work in librarianship for Maori, due perhaps to stereotypes that you have listed in your list - however, I think that stereotypes are quickly overcome once the ignorance or rather uninformed knowledge base of those Maori change to informed.*

*There definitely needs to be more promotion of librarianship as a career!!*

*Some Library Managers are not pro-active in their recruitment of Maori staff*

*There is a limited understanding of what a librarian does as a profession it does not promote itself very well*

*Teaching is hardly a more attractive profession , rather it is an easy option in my view!!!*

*Because of the stereotype!!!!*

This section obviously revealed that there are serious problems with the overall image of libraries which has lead to a negative pre-disposition towards libraries. These results seem to confirm the range of opinions expressed by participants in the Te Ara Tika Guiding

Voices hui. Stereotyped impressions seem to be dominant. Remember that these are the opinions of those who work in libraries and information centres. Yes our salaries are low in comparison to other professions and this can make other professions more attractive. It is difficult to change peoples perceptions of libraries particularly if they have had a bad experience in the past. One of the more concerning trends amongst the range of opinions expressed in this section is the lack of knowledge of the role of libraries, range of skills, variety of work available within libraries and the lack of promotion of librarianship as a career option for school-leavers.

## **Survey Conclusion**

Although the survey attracted a small number of responses the results are still extremely valid. The range of comments under each question provide excellent guidelines for the profession to focus on. Quickly surveying the results of the survey conducted by Buttlar and Canyon there are marked similarities in the answers for several of the questions. Although the focus of this paper has been on finding ways to increase the participation rates of Maori in the library and information sector there are a number of issues of concern for all parts of the profession that have arisen from the survey. These issues mainly relate to the image of libraries and librarianship and the impression that we make on others. In the last section of the survey it is obvious from the comments that we have a problem in making others aware of the range of opportunities available within our profession. More effort has to be made to promote librarianship as a career option to school leavers.

## **Overseas initiatives**

As part of this paper I thought it would be interesting to have a look at some overseas initiatives. I wish to concentrate on two initiatives, the Spectrum Initiative from the United States of America and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recruitment Strategy from Australia.

The Spectrum initiative was introduced in 1997 by the American Library Association to assist them to fulfill their vision of America's libraries reflecting the rich diversity of the American people and to address the specific issues of underrepresentation of critically needed ethnic librarians within the profession; Spectrum's mission is to "improve service at the local level through the development of a representative workforce that reflects the communities served by all libraries."<sup>2</sup> America's largest ethnic minorities account for approximately 26% of the population, however in the 1995-1996 academic year they only accounted for 9.9% of the graduates from Library School. This figure had declined since the 1990-91 year.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ala.org/spectrum/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> Whitwell, Stuart "Why we need the Spectrum Scholarship Initiative" *American Libraries*, V29, no. 19 Nov. 1998 : 9.

The Initiative is a campaign to raise funds for scholarships for students from underrepresented groups so that they may become librarians. The programme was originally scheduled for three years and aimed to recruit applicants and award fifty annual scholarships of \$5,000 each to enable them to study towards their MLS. Financial assistance was also to be made available to various library schools to help them cater for the specific needs of the Spectrum Scholars. ALA has recently announced that it was extending the Spectrum Initiative for a fourth term by devoting another \$1 million to the project. Members of ALA and supporters of libraries have been asked to raise additional funds to extend the project. Members of the library profession have also been asked to make themselves available as mentors to Spectrum Scholars and to identify possible candidates for the programme.

So far two groups of Spectrum Scholars have completed their studies and the third group has recently commenced their studies. The true success of Spectrum will be measured by the professions ability to retain the Spectrum Scholars.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Recruitment and Career Strategy**

In 1994 consultants were engaged by ALIA to investigate the participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the library and information sector.

One of the major outcomes from the investigation was the development of a sector-wide strategy to increase the opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to gain employment in libraries and archives

This strategy commenced in 1996 and was designed to provide employers with subsidies to employ indigenous cadets that were enrolled in library technician, archival and librarianship courses. The ultimate aim was to secure permanent employment opportunities for indigenous Australians in libraries and archival institutions.

Key objectives were developed for the strategy. These were:

- Increase access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to library and information services.

- Develop a means of making library and information organisations more relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

- Inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the resources held in collections and determine through consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a means of access to these resources that reflect Indigenous people's cultural requirements.

Promote two-way learning and cultural awareness between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people regarding their lifestyle and culture and non-Aboriginal people within the library and information sector.

In the initial stages of the strategy carry out a national survey of libraries. Information gleaned from the survey will provide further information on the activities of libraries in their approach to employment, consultation and usage of library services by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Achieve equitable representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the sector. Libraries should seek to reflect the population distribution within the community they serve by employing an appropriate ratio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff.

Provide permanent employment and career opportunities in the library and information sector.

Advocate training programs to support employment so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may obtain educational qualifications in the library and information sector

One of the first acts of the strategy was to get an overview of the number of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders already working in the sector. 591 surveys were posted to libraries throughout Australia. Resulting from the survey 103 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders were identified as working in libraries with only 15 these being qualified.

The Federal Government provided the necessary funding for the subsidies for employers and ALIA provided the necessary administrative support to run the programme.

The strategy was wound up in the March of this year. I am yet to see any reports on the overall success of the programme but the April issue of Incite<sup>4</sup> contains an article on the Strategy which contains contributions by cadets and their employers.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.alia.org.au/incite/2000/04/atsi.strategy.html](http://www.alia.org.au/incite/2000/04/atsi.strategy.html)