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KAUPAPA MAORI AND RESPONSIVENESS:

**New Zealand Children And Young Persons Service
Management Responsiveness
To Maori In The Restructured State Sector**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about the responsiveness of the Department of Social Welfare's social work division, the New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service (since 1992), to Kaupapa Maori. It examines the relationship of the Treaty of Waitangi to Maori welfare status and the commitment of this organisation to biculturalism. It takes the position that Maori people have been and continue to be disadvantaged by monocultural attitudes, beliefs and practices within the statutory social work system and that managers are in a position to improve that. An examination of the poor social and economic status of Maori is included with exploration of the historical exclusion of Maori from mainstream society. The thesis focuses on the report *Puao Te Ata Tu* (Ministerial Advisory Committee, 1986a and 1986b) and the pivotal position this has taken within the Department of Social Welfare because *Puao Te Ata Tu* provides a benchmark from which to measure bicultural awareness and progress. This measurement is undertaken by drawing on literature relevant to Kaupapa Maori, management and the social services, and to the responses of eleven managers to questions on Kaupapa Maori and management responsiveness.

This thesis was written at a time of major reform within the state sector and within the Department of Social Welfare. The history of the state sector reforms, the impact on the provision of statutory social work services, and the provision of services to Maori are analysed. The thesis argues that while change was widespread within the state sector the response by the Department of Social Welfare to Maori became less effective. This was especially so after the election of the National Government in 1990 and the subsequent disestablishment of structures that provided links between the Department of Social Welfare and the wider community, including Maori. Structural reform and policy confusion were seen to be pivotal as disadvantaging Maori but it became evident during the research that managerial attitudes were also a significant factor regarding the responsiveness of the New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service to Kaupapa Maori.

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To my family, Dane and Brett who can't remember their father not being preoccupied with "Massey stuff", and especially to Marg who consistently provided encouragement, support, and understanding.

Ka kōhi te toi, ka whai te maramatanga.

If knowledge is gathered, enlightenment will follow.

The Treaty is always speaking. It has relevance to all economic and social policies. Not only must the past be reviewed in the light of its principles, but the Treaty's promise must also be seen as fundamental to those principles, which underlie well being in years to come (Royal Commission on Social Policy 1988: Vol 2.3:151).

PREFACE

I began work for the Department of Social Welfare in October 1989 in what was then called the Social Services Division. I was employed as a Community Services Social Worker with responsibilities for liaison and co-ordination of a number of community service providers within the Tauranga district. By this time I had been out of social work in New Zealand since 1983, when after completing a Bachelor of Social Work degree in 1981 and having two years as a social worker in a health setting I travelled overseas. I worked for a period of time as a supervising social worker in a residential establishment in London and returned to New Zealand in 1985 working in the hospitality industry in the private sector. However my interest in social work remained and the political aspects of the profession and its potential to challenge the current social order continued to attract me.

I returned to Tauranga in 1989 and was employed by the Department of Social Welfare. At that time, and since, I followed developments within the Maori community and what the response from the government and government departments was to Maori and to issues such as the Treaty of Waitangi.

I had a renewed interest for social work when I accepted my appointment in 1989, and naive expectations of positive influences the stated emphasis on biculturalism could be having within the Department. Upon arriving I was informed there would be a "culturally appropriate" welcome for me. No doubt this was because I had put that I was of Maori ancestry on my job application. There had been no prior consultation or discussion with me to see if I expected or wished for any welcome and what I would see as appropriate. I cynically observed that there was probably no need for such consultation because the "culturally appropriate" welcome was probably not for the new arrival, but for the mainly Pakeha staff and management desperate to convince themselves that they belonged to an organisation that was indeed culturally sensitive and bicultural. Requirements for the Department of Social Welfare to be culturally sensitive and bicultural were clearly outlined in the current plans.

Most staff seemed very uncomfortable with the process and my impression on this first day was that this was a tokenistic attempt at being bicultural, and at the expense of who it was supposed to be for and other Maori staff. The process did not seem to fit well in what was obviously a Pakeha bureaucracy, but the managers responsible were perhaps influenced by policies that guided such statements as articulated in the *Social Work Development Plan* of 1989:

The plan is called the new path because of its clear statement that the direction of social work is to do everything from the standpoint of recognising the cultural values of families and groups, especially Maori (Department of Social Welfare, 1989:2).

I have remained at various times intrigued, embarrassed, and angered at the Department of Social Welfare's attempts at biculturalism and responsiveness to Maori since that welcome. I have seen an ebbing and flowing of commitment and many tokenistic responses. At times there has been no response at all perhaps because of over-riding guilt, ignorance, or paralysis caused by both. I have become determined to try and influence the response to Maori and to increase the active and meaningful participation of Maori in the agency I work for. This research project is driven by a belief in the intention of the Treaty of Waitangi and by the personal frustration at actions I have witnessed the Department of Social Welfare take regarding Maori staff, clients and communities.

Don Sorrenson
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ABBREVIATIONS

CYP and F Act:	The Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act 1989
CYPS:	The New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service
DEC:	District Executive Committee
DSW:	Department of Social Welfare
EEO:	Equal Employment Opportunities
FGC:	Family Group Conference
HR:	Human Resources
NZCYPS:	The New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service
NZCYPFS:	The New Zealand Children and Young Persons Service was renamed the New Zealand Children, Young Persons and Their Families Service in 1996
WARAG:	Women Against Racism Action Group