

Two reports on the NZEAS Conference held in Rotorua, 9th - 12th January 2002. The themes for the Conference were Partnership, Participation and the Protection of What is Important.

## 2002 CONFERENCE REPORTS

Partnership, Participation and Protection of What is Important.  
NZEAS conference, January 2002.

By Lester Davison – retiring President

The theme of the recent conference of the New Zealand Educational Administration Society encapsulated the essence of the principles of the treaty signed by the British Crown and Maori Chiefs in New Zealand in 1840. The three significant principles of the Treaty of Waitangi – Partnership, Protection and Participation – were woven into all sessions of the conference with a unity seldom seen.

From the opening address by the University of Waikato's Vice-Chancellor Bryan Gould, Building on the Treaty – A University for the C21, to the final keynote by primary school principal Fiona Lovatt Davis who described her school's living example of partnership and participation with children and community, keynotes and workshops alike built an unfolding picture of the many facets of the three theme elements.

High among many memorable moments was the session by Hirini Melbourne and Richard Nunns, high among New Zealand's most respected international performers and collectors of Maori music and instruments. They have evolved a unique form of action-research, working together to identify original materials and methods used in the construction of instruments used in traditional Maori culture, as well as how to play them.

While many of us have produced a sound by blowing through a leaf or piece of grass held between the hands, how many can use this 'instrument' to so closely imitate the call of an endangered bird such as the kakapo (native parrot), that it can entice into the open most of a colony of kakapo concealed in a sanctuary? – Protection par excellence, as instruments, authentic playing of them and endangered species are all conserved by two outstanding researchers.

One other aspect which must not go unmentioned was the strength of support from the local Maori iwi (tribe) – Te Arawa – whose support was evident from the initial powhiri (traditional welcoming ceremony), to the dinner speech and entertainment by internationally known Sir Howard Morrison, to the conference closing. The most powerful 'partnership' statement that could have been made.

The conference also marked the end of NZEAS and the launching of NZEALS the Society's move to include 'leadership' in its name and strengthen this focus in its activities.

## NZEALS CONFERENCE 2002 REPORT

Dr Jan Robertson  
Chair, Organising Committee  
NZEAL Council

The New Zealand Educational and Leadership Society held its biennial Conference in Rotorua, New Zealand from 9-12 January 2002. The theme of the Conference was Partnership, Participation and protection of what is important – the three important principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding bicultural policy document in New Zealand's history – and important tenets for educational leaders to uphold. The theme of the Conference and the exciting lineup of keynote speakers drew a large and diverse delegation from all sectors of education, including early childhood, primary, secondary and higher education, as well as Ministry of Education, Education Review Office and private consultants. Keynote speakers were varied, provocative and stimulating.

Professor Bryan Gould, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Waikato and an ex-Labour party president in the UK, reminded the audience of the uniqueness of New Zealand's founding document and the importance of Universities in particular, being responsive and inclusive in their approaches to education. He also reminded us that knowledge is not a static entity but develops as it is passed through the ages, and a treasure for us all.

Hirini Melbourne and Richard Nunns brought the spiritual dimension to leadership and research, as they shared their oral histories of traditional Maori music, and reminded us of the importance of "fragments of knowledge". Their music filled the auditorium and the hearts of those present.

The international keynote, Geoff Southworth is the Chair in Educational Leadership at the University of Reading. His challenges were to all leaders, of all cultures, as he explored the tensions between advocacy versus empiricism, lack of differentiation, analysis versus synthesis, strands within the knowledge, and a need for inclusive research. He reminded participants that 10 years teaching experience could possibly be the same year repeated 10 times. How do we as educational leaders, confront this in our work?

Keynote Mere Ngautauta Skerrett-White shared her work at Te Amokura, a bilingual, bicultural early childhood centre. Her children learn through authentic education of life's experiences –from ballet to traditional Maori dance and song. Mere asked us to consider whether we can be truly bicultural if we are monolingual. She shared how Maori and Pakeha children can enrich each other's learning.

Sir Howard Morrison challenged and entertained the group on the Friday night at the dinner, with stories of his life and young people in education and the importance of our role as educators in helping people to Stand Tall – Tu Tangata. He challenged us to hear the voices of all people – of people who may well hear the beat of a different drum.

Fiona Lovatt-Davis gave a passionate keynote address on the final day about her time as principal of Oturu School. Fiona unravelled for us the story of a wonderful Maori community and reminded us of the spirituality of leadership – the essence of a leader truly committed to the people of the local community.

The dialogue groups were a unique part of the Conference programme this year to sustain the momentum of the conference into the final day. Participants were urged to join one of a number of groups which had themes that emerged from the keynote addresses and the papers presented on the first two days. The keynote speakers and the paper presenters were on hand to answer questions and perhaps extend their own thinking in dialogue with the participants.