

National Issues — Action research on media reporting of Māori issues and the Treaty

Kupu Taea

Jenny Rankine and Tim McCreanor are researchers with longstanding interest in the way Pākehā talk about Māori and Māori/Pākehā relations.

The *Media, Health and Wellbeing Project* run by Kupu Taea: Media and te Tiriti Project aims to enhance the health and wellbeing of population groups in Aotearoa by examining the impacts of media depictions on Māori and tauwi audiences, and working for improved media coverage of Māori and Treaty issues.

The project is analysing a representative news sample from TV, radio and newspapers, and carrying out focus groups with Māori and Tauwi.

A final part of the study will be two action research projects, one with audience members and one with journalists, to understand how the media can tell stories that better serve community needs and aspirations.

The workshop aimed to discuss the action research with Treaty workers to gather ideas, constructive feedback and potential interest in participating.

A small group of participants gave constructive feedback about the action research proposal. They said that increased centralisation of newspaper operations and editing severely limited the amount of impact a regional campaign could have on regional newspapers.

They suggested three possible directions for an action research project with media audiences:

1. Media advocacy - a campaign with a Treaty-focused group to get their viewpoint in the mass media
2. Make your own media - a skill-building project using video, blogs, documentary or zines to create alternative media that tell a pro-Treaty message
3. Media monitoring - a time-limited campaign monitoring and responding to a particular media outlet, for example, a newspaper or talkback radio for three months.

The participants were more enthusiastic about the first two options than the third, as some had monitored media before.

The Media Health and Wellbeing project is keen to hear from any Treaty workers or groups who would like to be part of an action research project along these (or other) lines.

Te Rōpu Whāriki can offer:

- Expenses (koha, food, transport, phone calls, photocopying up to \$2,500)
- Research evidence about what approaches could be most effective
- Research findings from our own projects about media and te Tiriti/Māori issues (see www.trc.org.nz/resources/media.htm)
- Skill workshops about media advocacy, Photovoice, blogging and other community media skills
- Workshops about how we analyse media items
- Journalism networks
- Public meeting to kick off the project
- Facilitation of meeting/s with chosen media
- A co-ordinating webpage.

Kupu Taea is based at Te Rōpu Whāriki, Massey University, Auckland.

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