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Background

The Maori and Psychology Research Unit (MPRU) was established in August of 1997. The unit is designed to provide a catalyst and support network for enhancing research concerning the psychological needs, aspirations, and priorities of Maori people. The MPRU is well situated to draw together skilled and experienced interdisciplinary research groups by networking and establishing working relationships with staff and students within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the University, and the wider community.

An important role played by the MPRU is in providing invaluable practical experience to both Maori and non-Maori students through involvement in Maori focussed research, planning and management, and professional development activities. Through winning grants and awards, the Unit helps to provide options for students to further their academic development and scholarly pursuits, and to supplement their income.

The MPRU runs an advisory service to assist researchers in writing research proposals that will result in research products useful to Maori development. A particular focus is on constructing procedures that are culturally appropriate and practical for use with Maori. Increasingly, review committees require that the ethical standard of research be measured against Treaty of Waitangi principles and provisions. The MPRU provides advice on how to achieve these standards.

The MPRU facilitates contact with others experienced in conducting Maori focussed research, potential participants in communities of interest, and end-users, to illicit feedback and comment on the usefulness, practicality, validity and support for research ideas and methods to be employed. This contributes to a more robust research endeavour.

A recruitment and training service for the employment of research assistants ensures an available source of people to assist with research projects.
Goals

- To provide a support structure which encourages Maori focussed research in psychology.

- To serve as a scholarly resource to support Maori focussed research projects and to promote new research initiatives among staff, undergraduate and graduate psychology students.

- To seek out new sources of research funding, respond to requests for proposals and tenders relevant to Maori issues, and to obtain continued external funding for Maori focussed psychological research.

- To facilitate the professional development of Maori researchers and to continue to develop future leaders in Maori focussed research and psychology.

- To provide a foundation for the teaching of psychology by enhancing availability and access to Maori focussed research experience and products.

- To promote the use of Maori focussed research products into the Department of Psychology’s curriculum.

- To facilitate internal and external lectures and research seminars to support the development of new projects and disseminate the work of scholars in the Unit.

- To host visiting researchers and scholars.

- To encourage collaborative research in Maori focussed projects across disciplines.
MPRU Researchers

Emeritus Professor
James Ritchie

Director
Linda Waimarie Nikora

Coordinator
Mohi Rua

Principal Investigators
Bridgette Masters
Darrin Hodgetts
Kerry Chamberlain
Linda Waimarie Nikora
Mohi Rua
Neville Robertson
Ngahuia Te Awekotuku

Research Team Members
Tamati Amuketi, Alison Barnett, Puawai Cairns, Kyro Courtney-Clarke, Andrew Duirs, Des Ellis, Shiloh Groot, Rolinda Karapu, Robert Loto, Jane McCaughey, Karyn McRae, Ron Ngata, Henriata Nicholas, Saburo Omura, Nathaniel Pihama, Casey Rawiri, Ariana Simpson, David Snell, Yvonne Te Pohe, & Edwin Wikatene

Visitors
Dr Maggie Scammell, Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Sciences, England
Highlights

Since its establishment in 1997, the MPRU has successfully competed for and won external research funds in excess of $3 million. A significant success rate for external funds contested points to the high calibre of proposals written, the increasing public profile of the MPRU, and the recognition by funding agencies of those areas of staff/student interest and expertise.

- The MPRU secured its third Marsden grant in as many years. The project titled “Health & Homelessness: Social reintegration in Aotearoa” is led by Dr Darrin Hodgetts with assistance from Linda Waimarie Nikora (Director, MPRU), Prof Kerry Chamberlain (Massey University), Eci Nabalarua (Pro Vice Chancellor Academic, University of the South Pacific, Fiji) and Prof Alan Radley (Loughborough University, England).

- The Marsden Funded Ta Moko research group continues their book writing task and look forward to its launch in 2007.

- Darrin Hodgetts and Mohi Rua attended the 10th Biennial Trans-Tasman Conference in Community Psychology, Sydney, Australia and the 8th International Conference for Social Representations, Rome, Italy. Here they presented papers on Bloke Culture and the Media, Ta Moko and Media and policy discrimination against the children of beneficiaries in New Zealand.

- Linda Waimarie Nikora & Rolinda Karapu also attended and presented papers from the Ta Moko project and the Health Media project at the First International Conference on Community Psychology: Shared Agendas in Diversity, San Juan, Puerto Rico. As the only indigenous people from Aotearoa to attend, they provided and returned with valuable insights into the development of Community Psychology globally.

- The MPRU was well represented by student researchers and investigators at the Joint Australia and New Zealand Psychological Society Conference held in Auckland.

- Linda Waimarie Nikora and Mohi Rua were honoured to represent the Waikato Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the BRCSS funded inaugural meeting of Maori in the social sciences.
Caption: MPRU student researchers and investigators at the Joint Australia and New Zealand Psychological Society Conference held in Auckland. Clockwise from top left - Karyn McRae, Keri Thompson, Shiloh Groot, Ron Ngata & Syd Davies.
Contracts & Grants

New Projects

Health & Homelessness: Social reintegration in Aotearoa
Investigators: Dr Darrin Hodgetts, Linda Waimarie Nikora, Prof Kerry Chamberlain, Eci Nabalarua & Prof Alan Radley.
Grant Agency: Marsden Fund, Royal Society of New Zealand, $795,342
Descriptor: Homelessness is a pressing public health concern involving social marginalisation and restrained relationships between homeless and housed people. This research investigates the social reintegration of single homeless people across four levels; as rough sleepers, hostel residents, shared housing tenants and re-domiciled individuals receiving support. Three kinds of respondents are involved at each level; a) homeless people, b) residents and workers in the settings, and c) members of homeless people’s social/familial networks. Respondents will be engaged through a series of repeat interviews, photovoice projects, ethnographic observations and media analyses to unravel the everyday realities around health, service use and relationships of homeless people across urban, suburban and provincial settings. This innovative project will produce new knowledge about the function of meaningful social engagements for the health and reintegration of homeless people. It is conducted in collaboration with service providers to ensure findings are relevant to the needs of homeless people.

Strangers in Town: The health & social needs of Ngati Haua young people.
Investigators: Linda Waimarie Nikora & Mohi Rua
Grant agency: Foundation of Research, Science and Technology.
Descriptor: To establish the nature of the health and social service needs of Ngati Haua young people moving into and out of rural areas.

Projects in progress

Increased Uptake of Energy Conservation in Households and Communities - Investigators: Linda Waimarie Nikora, Mohi Rua & Bernard Guerin

The Meanings in Ethnic Labels
Investigators: Linda Waimarie Nikora, Darrin Hodgetts, Neville Robertson, Mohi Rua with Saburo Omura

Defining Pakeha Culture
Investigators: Linda Waimarie Nikora, Darrin Hodgetts, Neville Robertson, Mohi Rua with Saburo Omura

Hei arahi atu: Transforming cultural concepts for the millennium
Investigators: Linda Waimarie Nikora & Ngahuia Te Awekotuku
What does it mean to be a man today? "Bloke Culture" and the Media
Investigators: Darrin Hodgetts and Mohi Rua

Ta Moko: culture, body modification and the psychology of identity.
Ngahuia Te Awekotuku and Linda Waimarie Nikora supported by the Marsden Fund.

Projects Completed

Mediation & the Public Negotiation of Health Inequalities: Comparing Maori & Mainstream Media
Investigators: Darrin Hodgetts, Linda Waimarie Nikora & Kerry Chamberlain

The social and economic determinants of gambling: How gambling affects Maori whanau health (PhD). Laurie Morrison supported by a Health Research Council Training Fellowship scholarship.

The health implications of gambling of new forms of gambling on Maori women and their whanau (PhD). Laurie Morrison supported by a Health Research Council project grant.

Strangers in Town: Tuhoe ki Waikato - Voices from home in Te Urewera.
Linda Waimarie Nikora, Mohi Rua, Ngahuia Te Awekotuku and Bernard Guerin supported by the Foundation of Research, Science and Technology.

Te Rau Puawai II
Investigators: Linda Waimarie Nikora & Mohi Rua

Maori perspectives on the mental health development strategy. Michelle Levy, supported by Health Research Council

Mauriora: Ma ratou, ma matou, ma tatou - Maori Television and Health
Investigators: Linda Waimarie Nikora, Darrin Hodgetts & Rolinda Karapu

Intentional Injury
Investigators: Neville Robertson

Fullbright Scholarship
Awarded to: Ngahuia Te Awekotuku

Evaluation of Marae Auahi Kore Programme
Investigator: Bridgette Masters
Research Outputs

Journal Articles


**Conference Presentations**


Poster Presentations


Community Presentations


Commissioned Reports

Towards 2007

☐ Mohi Rua to begin his Phd work with the MPRU Energy Project

☐ Better supporting Pacific students

☐ Consolidating our research agenda to be better positioned to win longer-term programme grants.

☐ Expanding our collaborations across the University and Waikato Region.

☐ Launch of the Ta Moko Marsden project book.

☐ Linda Waimarie Nikora will be on leave in the second semester of 2007 and Darrin Hodgetts will be the MPRU Director in her absence

☐ The MPRU will play host to Maori and Pacific graduates of psychology at the national “Making a Difference 2 Symposium, to be held in the Waikato region, November 2007”