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Auckland Catholic Diocese

## Te Kaupapa Tikanga Rua Bicultural Desk

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### Submission on the New Zealand Curriculum Draft for consultation 2006

#### Introduction:

This submission is made on behalf of the Bicultural Desk of the Catholic Diocese of Auckland which was established in 1990 following a Diocesan Synod in 1989 which resolved that the Diocese should be "committed to honouring the Treaty of Waitangi as a covenant and to a bicultural church and a bicultural society" The desk is supported by a Bicultural Working Party, a consultative group set up following the 1989 Synod, and works under the direction of the Maori Vicariate of the Auckland Catholic Diocese. It is staffed by one part-time worker. The desk promotes education on Treaty of Waitangi issues within various structures of the Catholic Diocese, including the Catholic Education system.

#### General Issues

- Our overall concern is that the suggested Curriculum reduces the status of the Treaty of Waitangi, particularly in its Te Tiriti o Waitangi form, as the basis of the relationship between the two founding nations who signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi.  
It does this through reducing Te Reo, the language of Tangata Whenua, from one of two official New Zealand languages to one of many minor languages. It also attempts to perpetuate the damaging thesis that our modern nation began with the arrival of the British Crown rather than developing a more inclusive approach which recognises that it is founded on the culture of Maori who agreed to share Kawanatanga of their land with the British Crown in 1840 while retaining for themselves the Tino Rangatiratanga traditionally exercised by the leaders of hapu who signed Te Tiriti.
- Another major concern is that, in essence, the curriculum draft appears to suggest that the Treaty is something that applies to Maori rather than being the heritage of all people who live in Aotearoa-New Zealand.
- These concerns have arisen specifically in this draft, as they were not present in the previous curriculum. In fact, a section of the NZ Curriculum Framework of 1993 notes that:  
*"The New Zealand Curriculum recognizes the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi. The school curriculum will recognize and value the unique position of Maori in New Zealand society. All students will have the opportunity to acquire some knowledge of*

*Maori language and culture. Students will also have the opportunity to learn through te reo and nga tika Maori. The school curriculum will acknowledge the importance to all New Zealanders of both Maori and Pakeha traditions, histories and values."*

- We would contend that the position represented in the above statement should be reinstated in the new curriculum and be regarded as one of its fundamental guiding principles. We support the recommendation of the Human Rights Commission to "*Incorporate the Treaty of Waitangi in the guiding Principles and reflect accordingly throughout the Curriculum including the Learning Areas*" and the subsequent details explicit on page 11 and 12 of their "Human Rights issues" submission of October 2006.
- We would agree with the NZ Educational Institute that "*an inclusive curriculum cannot assume homogeneity and overlook the particular need to address the relevance of differences in ethnic, social and religious backgrounds and beliefs*". We feel that such an assumption overlooks the very important influence that prior knowledge, what the learner brings to the learning process, is of critical importance to the overall outcomes of the process. An assumption of homogeneity implicit in the draft curriculum denies the reality of the increasing range of cultural experience brought to education by today's learners. In his address to the Maori people at the Auckland Domain in 1986, Pope John Paul II said:  
*"It is as Maori that the Lord calls you, it is as Maori that you belong to the Church, the one body of Christ."*  
In saying this, he affirmed the uniqueness of Maori culture and, by implication, the cultures of other people of New Zealand. This principle continues to inform Catholic education policy in this diocese if not the whole country.
- We would also agree with their contention that "*biculturalism*", understood by us as the relationship between Tangata Whenua as hapu and each of the many cultures now present in New Zealand, is "*essential for all New Zealanders whether they be Maori or Tuiwi*" in recognition of the 'living document' status of Te Tiriti.
- Like NZEI, we are deeply concerned at the implied division in the draft curriculum of our population into 'real New Zealanders' ('mainstream', Pakeha, fluent English speakers etc) and 'other New Zealanders' (of non-European culture, with English as a second language etc). We feel that all citizenship in New Zealand should be founded on relationships between people and the land which go back to the origins of human settlement here. We feel that, in the words of NZEI, "*These relationships need to be made explicit*" across all levels of any educational curriculum.
- Again, we would like to endorse the general position of NZEI on the role of Maori language learning. We further believe that Te Reo Maori must be positively promoted as an official language of New Zealand and as part of NZ Government obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi. The grounds stated for this by NZEI are very cogent:  
*"New Zealand's cultural heritage, relationship and commitment to Maori learning and Te Reo are unique in the world. NZEI stresses the need for every*

*teacher to be able, at least, to pronounce students names, place names and common Maori words correctly.”*

- In addition to this, the progress made in reviving Te Reo among Maori and the consequent positive contributions made to the vitality of New Zealand culture in general through Maori TV and radio, Maori arts and craft and the small but notable presence of Maori expressions in general language use (more than 1000 words in general use) are too important to be overlooked in any new curriculum.
- Finally, we would fully endorse comments on the contribution of second language learning to cultural awareness, intellectual and social growth. (NZEI p 15)

### **Detailed Comments**

We would like to make the following comments on the draft curriculum section by section:

#### **Overview:**

- While we applaud the inclusion of “*Te Marautanga o Aotearoa for Maori medium*”, we are distressed to find that it may be a means of restricting consideration of things Maori to Maori people. There is definitely a place for specialist studies under the heading Te Marautanga Maori but this does not mean that there is a need for the restriction of all studies pertaining to Maori to that section of the curriculum. This is especially important with regard to the Treaty of Waitangi, as it is not a treaty specifically for Maori but a treaty to guide a future relationship between Maori and all who would come to Aotearoa-New Zealand under the Kawanatanga authority of the Crown and following the 1852 Constitution Act, the government of New Zealand.

#### **Vision:**

- We echo the concern of NZEI that a discrete listing of qualities means that some items are missed out. We would prefer the implicit understandings of the curriculum framework to the explicit but limited listing of the draft.
- We are also concerned at the inclusion of “*contribute to the growth of its economy*” alongside “*participate fully in New Zealand society*”. “Economic growth” does not seem to us as an unqualified good, nor are we necessarily convinced that those whose capacity does not enable them to “*contribute to the growth of its economy*” should be excluded from the benefits of education. We would prefer that the sentence stopped after “*New Zealand society*” which implies “to the best of their ability” without involving dubious concept of “economic growth”.

#### **Principles:**

- We are gravely concerned that the second sentence of the Cultural Heritage section appears to restrict the experience of a curriculum that reflects and values te ao Maori to “*students who identify as Maori.*” We would contend that the wording must make it clear that all students should experience a curriculum which reflects and values te ao Maori.

**Values:**

- As this nation is founded in the culture of Tangata Whenua, we feel that it is a serious omission to neglect a reference to “*knowledge of and respect for the history and traditions of all our peoples*” among precepts which students are encouraged to value. Without this, how can we walk into the future with our eyes on the past.

**Key Competencies:**

- Although we would agree with the contention on page 12 that “*English is the medium for most learning in the New Zealand curriculum*”, we feel that it is important to state here that Te Reo Maori is an official language on which the majority of our history and many traditional values are founded. Article Three of the Treaty of Waitangi and the oral agreement, sometimes designated the fourth article, “*to protect alike the faiths of England, of Rome, and also of Maori custom and religion*”, recognise the distinctiveness of Maori language and custom which contain the traditions going back through the history of Maori as distinctive people. These are the elements within which the culture will survive and thrive so an essential aspect of their protection is their recognition and promotion as an official, living language and tradition.

**Learning Areas:**

- We would contend that all these learning areas have a living reality within Maori culture which could well be included in studies relating to each area. As an example, we might note the more holistic approach of Maori to health and physical education, including within the former area, four integrated systems: Tinana/physical, Hinengaro/psychological, Wairua/spiritual and Whanaunga/relational. Maori culture has equivalent systems and process in all of the learning areas which could well be incorporated, perhaps in some comparative way, into the curriculum learning areas.
- We are disappointed to note under the Learning Languages heading that Te Reo Maori is diminished to be just another minority language, in spite of the high-sounding description: “*Te reo Maori is unique to New Zealand and is a source of our nation’s self-knowledge and identity.*” Unless it is given the full role of an official language which can contribute in a living way to “our nation’s [ongoing need for] self-knowledge and identity”, it will sink to the status of an historical oddity. We would contend that the draft curriculum threatens to bring about this result, in contrast to the assurance of growth and life implied in the former framework.
- We also feel that within the Social Sciences Learning Area, Level Five is too late for the introduction of Treaty of Waitangi studies, as some students may be considering ending their education or focussing on specialisation. Level Four would be more appropriate and effective as it would be more part of the general education of all students.

**Effective Pedagogy:**

- We cannot emphasise too much the importance of what the student brings to the learning process as of critical importance to the overall outcomes of the process. We feel that the "Making Connections" segment does not sufficiently promote the importance of the learner's prior knowledge and self-identity; nor does it present a need for teachers and educational practitioners at all levels to develop their own understanding of cultural factors, including language, which might be part of that prior knowledge.

**Planning for Purposeful Assessment:**

- We would like to support the contention that assessment evidence "*is obtained by using a range of informal and formal assessment approaches.*" This should take into account an appreciation of cultural familiarity and preference for specific forms of presentation of ideas and knowledge. Such an approach also ensures that validity and fairness are more likely to be observed.

**Conclusion**

- We support the contention of the Human Rights Commission that the Treaty of Waitangi must be incorporated in the guiding Principles and reflected accordingly throughout the draft curriculum (indeed, we would say, any NZ curriculum) including the Learning Areas.
- We also agree that all students must have the opportunity to experience a curriculum that reflects and values te ao Maori, thereby strengthening their identity and belonging as New Zealanders.
- And we believe it is essential that Maori concepts and content be included through all learning areas at all levels.

Our experience of working with teachers in Catholic schools is that huge advances have been made under the current curriculum framework in the inclusion of Maori concepts, content and te reo in existing learning areas. Teachers are now more familiar with, understanding of and positive towards ideas which, to us represent the development of a respectful relationship under the Treaty of Waitangi.

We are fearful that the draft curriculum represents a withdrawal from the progress made over the past ten years in building our nation on our cultural heritage.

We would support all those submissions which wish to retain the best of the past so that we can move towards the best of futures.



Kevin McBride  
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