

# A brash and backward step for our society

## Editorial

On August 29, Dr Don Brash gave a speech entitled "We are all New Zealanders". Every word was carefully chosen to maximise political capital and play upon the emotional responses that swirl around race relations.

In the speech, Brash pledged that the National Party would ensure all Treaty of Waitangi claims were completed by 2010. All references to the Treaty would be removed from acts of Parliament and National would take a close look at the functions of the five Maori agencies to consider whether they should be closed down.

They are: Te Puni Kokiri (Ministry of Maori Development), Te Mangai Paho (Maori Broadcasting Funding Agency), the Maori Land Court, the Waitangi Tribunal and the Office of Treaty Settlements.

Brash's ideas are a backward,

illogical step for New Zealand. They play on the public's ignorance of the Treaty and ignore the economic and demographic realities of New Zealand in the 21st century. It's an old policy stemming from old thinking that is out-of-step with the diversity of New Zealand's emerging society.

As our columnist Paul Moon says, the changes in our society mean we can be New Zealanders *and* Maori, Pakeha, Asian, or Russian. These are not mutually exclusive.

Brash says the Treaty process "poisons the relationship between Maori and other New Zealanders". Yet it is politicians like Brash who exploit, rather than foster this

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PHOTO: BEN CLARK

**OLD THINKING:** National leader Don Brash's ideas are dated and take no account of demographic trends.

relationship for nothing more than political gain.

Voters must not fall prey to this short-term vision.

Our society will continue to change in the next 20 years. Currently one in five young New Zealanders identifies with more than one ethnicity. Statistics

New Zealand projects that by 2021 the Maori population could rise by 29 per cent to 760,000 and the European population by only 5 per cent to 3.23 million.

The Maori population will have a younger median age. The European population faces lower fertility rates, net migration outflow and an older demographic. The proportion of New Zealanders who identify as European will drop from 79 per cent to 70 per cent by 2021.

A younger, more diverse workforce will have to support an ageing, largely white population.

Most people are aware that on average Maori are poorer, have shorter life-expectancy, are more likely to end up in our jails and leave school without proper qualifications. The gap between

Maori and Europeans is evident.

More Maori need to be educated and employed in the future yet Brash is suggesting cutting support to Maori agencies charged with closing the gap. This will alienate an increasing proportion of our population.

This is illogical.

The five separate agencies were originally created because past governments and bureaucracies had failed Maori. We cannot fail them again. If New Zealand does not engage young Maori people we are losing a huge amount of human potential.

## Letters to the Editor

### Zaoui's cookbook

Sarah Kaci's article of August 26 ["Zaoui cooks up a storm"] featuring the Ahmed Zaoui cookbook has special relevance considering that the SIS Inspector General has yet to complete his review of the security risk certificate against Zaoui.

My advice to the Inspector General would be don't overboil your sources ... the result may be less substance than what was intended. Besides, Belgian and French cuisine, which have close connections, sometimes tend to be a little on the rich side.

Richard Mayes  
Te Atatu Peninsula

### Strikes and politics

Firstly, I want to congratulate *Te Waha Nui* for putting out such a good paper. At last there's an alternative to *Debate*.

I would like to comment on a few things too. It was good to see the story about the stolen computers and security scare for AUT, especially for us art and design students who are most affected. I would love to see a follow-up on this.

But I was puzzled about why the item about AUT staff going on strike was on the inside pages. I think it deserves to be prominently displayed on the front page because it affects everybody in the university.

Also it is election time. It would be more informative if the

centrefold was devoted to political and social issues affecting us students and our families rather than gambling.

Annabel Lee  
Newton

### Converting to Islam

I would like to respond to this journalist's misinformed reporting ["Captive turns to Islam", *TWN*, August 26].

This is so spooky if you get it wrong.

Many get the wrong picture and it is important that our eyes and ears inform us accurately.

This is the press stigma Yvonne Ridley was talking about.

People who know a lot of nothing and in turn misrepresent the facts are an indictment of the tutors or lecturers.

Obviously the reporter went to the hui loaded with his own prejudice and came out with the same. He lost an opportunity to inform, educate and build bridges.

*Te Waha Nui*, if you are going to be a big mouth get it right at least, or call yourselves Big Mouth.

Don't you think its time we got another side of the story?

All we have been inundated with is the Western perceptions and fears. We, as Maori, have had enough of the propaganda spat out by media, including *TWN*.

I really enjoyed the hui.



CARTOON: RUFUS MCEWAN

Yvonne got a standing ovation at the end. Also about 400 people had to be turned away from the hui.

Yes, a lot of people want to know the truth and your journalist has yet again denied us.

Gaile Boyd  
Auckland

### Grey power

Congratulations on your excellent paper. I enjoy its topicality and wide interest and applaud the general high level of reporting.

What I didn't enjoy in your August 26 issue was Ben Clark using grannies as a tool to belit-

tle Winston Peter's policies. ["The circus comes to town..."] Criticise them — fair enough — but not by using grannies as proof of the absurdity of Winston's policies.

According to Ben, if grannies support them then the policies must be stupid. Grannies apparently, can't exercise sensible political judgement and even if they could, their views don't count because they and other old codgers are on death's door.

I appreciate that Ben was focusing on student readers but assume that your paper is, in fact, aimed at a wider audience.

It's neither witty nor clever to make fun of an entire group in society — even if they are

grannies — and as Ben knows, a writer should never lose sight of his audience.

Anna Holt  
School of Communication  
Studies, AUT

**We welcome your feedback and views:**

Te Waha Nui,  
School of Communication  
Studies, AUT  
Private Bag 92006  
Auckland 1020

wahanui@aut.ac.nz  
www.journalism.aut.ac.nz

