

## **Social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand: Building a profession**

Liz Beddoe, BA, MA (Social Work), PhD

### **Abstract**

Social work in the Pacific nation Aotearoa New Zealand has developed within a unique cultural and socio-political context. An essentially western model of social work developed sixty years ago in a colonial state which imposed British education, policing, child welfare, criminal justice and mental health systems into the lives of Māori people. Growing awareness of the negative impacts of those systems on Māori families and communities led to significant challenges to the social work profession, leading to conflict and continuing ambivalence about the emergent professionalisation project. Social work education reflects these tensions, being influenced by political forces, the global struggles of indigenous peoples and, in the last three decades, the impact of neoliberalism in social welfare reform. A limited form of statutory regulation in 2003 saw the introduction of benchmark educational qualifications for entry to social work. In 2018 legislation will introduce mandatory registration and protection of title. The aim of this article is to explore the history of social work in this national context with reference to a Bourdieusian framework of professional capital to explain why social work education is, and will remain, a site of struggle in its mission for social justice and human rights informed practice.

**Keywords** social work education, Aotearoa New Zealand

### **Introduction**

The history of social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand is inextricably woven into the story of the development of social work. In this aspect this history is not very different from many other countries. The context though is unique. Social work itself is a Western project and as such the profession emerged and developed as a colonial practice in Aotearoa New

Zealand. The singular and distinguishing factor is that this country has a foundational document a treaty (Te Tiriti o Waitangi- hereafter referred to as Te Tiriti). This document which has a turbulent political history has shaped many aspects of modern social work and its education. In Aotearoa New Zealand it continues to provide a central focus of social policy and education in social work. The extent to which this focus achieves the intentions of its modern advocates remains contestable.

Social work in Aotearoa New Zealand is also not immune to the challenges of social policy, managerialism and the demands of neoliberal governments. Social work finds footholds in health and welfare systems where practitioners, and indeed the profession itself, construct professional identity within complex hierarchical fields. For Bourdieu such sites encompass power relations in which actors employ strategies to meet their aims. Bourdieu located emerging professions such as social work and counselling in 'the interstices between the teaching profession and the medical profession' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 369), with ambiguous status, blurred by associations with poverty and inequality. Professional knowledge and credentials are crucial in determining professional status.

The profession's history reflects the ebbs and flows of social work's relationship to government and its own struggle to achieve simultaneously a place to stand as a recognised profession and its aspirations to building social justice and human rights for all.

This article will explore the history and development of social work education, locating this both within the broader political project of social work and its professionalisation in the unique sociocultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand. To finish some current challenges will be outlined.

## **Aotearoa New Zealand**

It is commonly said that we can't understand the present without understanding the journey that brought us to 'now'. It is thus not possible to understand how social work education has developed in Aotearoa New Zealand without first understanding that social work itself is part of a colonisation process. This requires a brief overview of colonisation and the significance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its impact on social work.

New Zealand is a small country of nearly 4.7 million people in the south-western Pacific Ocean inhabited by Māori since the 13th century. Colonisation was to bring British models of education, policing and later child welfare, criminal justice and mental health systems into

the lives of Māori people. Large-scale European colonial settlement began in the 1840s and since then New Zealand has changed from a British colony to a modern democracy with a Westminster style government (Wilson, 2009). Te Tiriti, signed in 1840, is an agreement between the joint tribes of New Zealand and the British Crown. Two different versions of the Te Tiriti were signed, in Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) and in English. The Treaty provided protection and governance but does not, according to the Māori version, cede sovereignty in exchange for British citizenship (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999). The key principles are partnership, protection and participation. In the present day the Te Tiriti is legally effective in the New Zealand law courts as it is recognised in many Acts of Parliament and ‘is central to New Zealand political life’ (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999, p. 13). The principle of partnership embeds biculturalism into much government policy –especially environment, health, education, welfare, justice. It would be politically inconceivable to have a major inquiry or Royal Commission into issues of mental health or child welfare for example, without Māori input at the highest level and ministers have faced severe rebukes for taking this expectation lightly. New Zealand governments have actively worked to address treaty breaches, for example recognition and recompense for land confiscation.

From the 1840s until the 1990s citizenship in the new colony reflected the British Empire with a very narrow immigration policy with settlers from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Pacific nations and other commonwealth countries (Bartley & Spoonley, 2005, p.137). Since the early 1990s liberalised immigration policy has led to increased migration from Asia with a view to developing trade and attracting investment. The growth of migration from Asia, Africa and the Middle East has raised tensions between conceptualisations of multiculturalism and the bicultural stance developed over the last three decades, set in motion by the political consequences of Te Tiriti. ‘Multicultural policies and programmes offer legitimisation of migrants’ status and contributions in New Zealand society while biculturalism is fundamental acknowledgement of ‘indigeneity and original occupancy’ (Fleras & Spoonley, 1999, p. 248).

### **The impact of the Treaty of Waitangi in social work**

Te Tiriti is of great significance in social policy, health and education systems in Aotearoa New Zealand (Belgrave, Kawharu, & Williams, 2005). In social work its importance is reflected in the Bicultural Code of Practice of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of

Social Workers (ANZASW, 2013) which requires members to advocate for equal Māori participation in policy, decision making and equal access to resources. As will be demonstrated below, there are mandated policies which require social workers to have an appreciation of Māori culture and protocol and significantly, to aspire to support Māori social workers to work with Māori service users, and such expectations are embedded in the system of social work education.

Ruwhiu (2013) describes three recognition points as underpinning education for social work practice in Aotearoa. Recognition points are “important cultural markers that we can use to explore cultural complexity and gain a deeper cultural understanding” (p. 125). Ruwhiu’s three recognition points comprise the significance of history, the role of narratives in promoting identity, and the importance of cultural concepts of well-being.

Despite early social policy leading to a strong historical narrative of Aotearoa New Zealand as a ‘social laboratory’, settler social policy established a welfare state while also continuing “apace with colonisation and neglect to indigenous traditions.... Little effort was made to respect the way *whānau* [*family*] and *tikanga* [*custom and belief*] were enduring and sustaining means of social practice’ (Harington, 2016, p. 117). Harington writes that no social work student in Aotearoa New Zealand today ‘would be unfamiliar with the Treaty of Waitangi and the impact of colonisation. John Rangihau [*an important Māori leader in social services*] and Pūao-te-Āta-tū (Ministerial Committee, 1988) [*a significant report on the institutional racism in statutory child welfare and youth services*] made it very clear what social work practitioners needed to know about the impact of colonisation: how Victorian, western, regulative values were framed and imposed on Māori’ (p.116-17). Pūao-te-Āta-tū reported on a comprehensive series of consultations throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, where the stories of hundreds of Māori families who had been caught up in the child welfare systems were heard. The preface to the report was blunt and to the point:

There is no doubt that the young people who come to the attention of the Police and the Department of Social Welfare invariably bring with them histories of substandard housing, health deficiencies, abysmal education records, and an inability to break out of the ranks of the unemployed. It is no exaggeration to say, as we do in our report that in many ways the picture we have received is one of crisis proportions. To redress the imbalances will require concerted action from all agencies involved-central and local government, the business community, Māoridom and the community at large. We make recommendations for a comprehensive

approach accordingly. Our problems of cultural imperialism, deprivation and alienation mean that we cannot afford to wait longer. The problem is with us here and now. (Department of Social Welfare, 1988, p.8)

Ruwhiu's second recognition point concerns the crucial role of narratives in promoting identity. For social work as a profession this has meant listening to the voices of Māori and in particular hearing the 'stories of displacement, discontinuity and cultural oppression- that remain relevant today as Māori continue to experience socioeconomic and structural disadvantage' (2013, p. 130). The narrative emerging from Pūao-te-Āta-tū (Department of Social Welfare, 1988) was to change social work in Aotearoa New Zealand forever. Pūao-te-Āta-tū led to legislation that put whānau at the heart of social work practice with children and young people in statutory social work and beyond. The resurgence of Māori language and culture and demands for the 'articles' of the Treaty to be honoured in law and practice were to impact on practice, and to validate and develop Māori knowledge and theory (Hollis-English, 2012, 2017). Hollis-English (2012, p.45) notes that the report:

created huge changes for Māori social workers, in terms of their identity and their practice. Not only were organisations actively employing Māori but their methods were also being validated, which encourages the acceptance and understanding of Māori ways of doing things.

Ruwhiu's third recognition point addresses the significance of indigenous concepts of wellbeing and the need for healing the wrongs. Ruwhiu notes that throughout the short history of social work in Aotearoa New Zealand 'its theoretical foundations have largely been devoid of Māori understandings of healing and wellness' (2013, p. 135). Ruwhiu calls for social work education to imbue an appreciation of philosophical and spiritual values. Ruwhiu proposes an embedding of Māori theoretical concepts to underpin support for healing and socially restorative work with Māori. Māori children and young people are still severely over-represented in statutory care and protection services (Ministry of Social Development, 2015). Table 1, Children and young people in statutory care 2017, demonstrates the disproportionate nature of state care. The impact of structural discrimination and inequalities impact on wellbeing in every dimension of health, education and welfare (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2015; Cooper & Wharewera-Mika, 2013).

**Table 1 Children and young people in statutory care 2017**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>CYP in care</b>	<b>CYP Out of home placements</b>	<b>YP in Youth justice residences</b>
Māori	3,518	2,895	550
New Zealand Pākehā	1,538	1,302	176
Pacific Peoples	418	341	101
Asian	93	61	7
Other European	60	47	8
Other / Multiple Ethnicity	81	70	9
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>5708</b>	<b>4716</b>	<b>851</b>

#### Notes

1. At 30 June 2017 New Zealand's estimated Māori population was 734,200 approximately 15% of NZ total population.
2. Pākehā, a term denoting English-speaking Europeans living in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
3. Statistics retrieved from Ministry of Social development, Wellington, NZ: NZ Govt <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/statistics/cyf/kids-in-care-national-and-local-level-data-jun-2017.xlsx>

There are recognised programmes within 17 different tertiary education institutions (TEIs) (five Universities; nine Polytechnics; two Wānanga (Māori higher education), and one Private Training Establishment. The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB), as the social work regulator responsible for ensuring the safety of the public from social workers, monitors and recognises the TEI programmes for the purposes of registration (SWRB, 2016a). These qualifying courses include those programmes in which students are immersed in a Māori worldview and those more mainstream which include Māori content within a traditional Western social work degree. To a large extent programmes have considerable autonomy in organising their curriculum but must satisfy the regulator (SWRB) that they will design teaching and learning that equips graduates to practice competently for practice in Aotearoa New Zealand and that ensures that bicultural practice is a significant focus in qualifying courses. Thus, the professional bodies require social work education to prepare practitioners for bicultural practice outlined in sets of standards. The main professional association for social workers the ANZSW has a set of practice standards that are expected of members (ANZASW, 2014). The second standard requires that a social worker demonstrates a commitment to practicing social work with an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Articles 1, 2, 3 and 4 and demonstrates competence to work with Māori.

This standard is met when the social worker:

- Demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of Te Tiriti O Waitangi, te reo, tikanga and kawa and its implications for social work;
- Recognises the Tangata Whenua status of the indigenous Māori people of Aotearoa New Zealand;
- Respects Māori culture and protocol and has an understanding of their own culture and cultural heritage;
- Challenges racism at personal and institutional levels in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Recognises the right of Māori people to determine their own needs and to develop services in accordance with those needs;
- Offers practical support to the local Tangata Whenua for their initiatives
- Works collaboratively with Māori services in their area of work;
- Demonstrates and understands and respects Māori / Indigenous models of practice;
- Demonstrates, understands and constantly applies skills, knowledge and experience required for working with Tangata Whenua

Source: ANZASW Practice Standards (2014).

The Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) has a set of Core Competency Standards.

The first of these competencies is “*Competence to practise social work with Māori*”.

The social worker demonstrates this competence by:

- Demonstrating knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi, te reo Māori and tikanga Māori;
- Articulating how the wider context of Aotearoa New Zealand both historically and currently can impact on practice;
- Te Rangatiratanga: Maintaining relationships that are Mana enhancing, self-determining, respectful, mindful of cultural uniqueness, and acknowledge cultural identity.
- Te Manaakitanga: Utilising practice behaviours that ensure mauri ora by ensuring safe space, being mana enhancing and respectful, acknowledge boundaries and meet obligations.
- Te Whanaungatanga: Engaging in practice that is culturally sustaining, strengthens relationships, is mutually contributing and connecting and encourages warmth.

Source: From the Social Workers Registration Board. (2016b). *Core Competence Standards*.

These professional bodies, by incorporating such standards and expectations at the heart of social work practice are driven by a goal of biculturalism. Eketone and Walker (2015) note

that biculturalism is a term that must be defined in its particular context, emerging from the unique history of Aotearoa New Zealand. It arose from the living document Te Tiriti, which recognises two parties - Māori as indigenous people of the land, and the British Crown which is represented in contemporary times in our Westminster government and membership of the British Commonwealth. In essence biculturalism in practice is the reflection of Māori language (an official language of Aotearoa New Zealand), values and cultural practices in laws, policies and institutions.

It is important to note that biculturalism does not negate the rights of other groups. Pacific people have long settled in Aotearoa, migrants from diverse countries and refugees have made new homes here. Pacific social workers and researchers have articulated approaches to practice to work with Pasifika communities and to raise awareness in social work education (Mafle'o, 2009; Passells, 2006) and social workers in Aotearoa come from many ethnic communities (see table 2 Registered Social Worker Count by Ethnicity), representing Māori Europeans and the many other peoples who have settled.

**Table 2 Registered Social Worker Count by Ethnicity (at September 30, 2017)**

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Count</b>
African	116
Asian	102
Asian Other	57
Chinese	90
Cook Island Māori	81
European	1715
European Other	72
Fijian	38
Indian	235
Japanese	8
Latin American/Hispanic	17
Māori	1139
Middle Eastern	18
New Zealander	1998
Niuean	34
Other	71
Pacific Islander	16
Pākehā	568
Samoan	186
Southeast Asian	5
Tokelauan	7
Tongan	60



Total	6633
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Note:

4. NZ Statistics categories. Statistics about ethnicity give information by the ethnic groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Ethnicity is a measure of cultural affiliation. It is not a measure of race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship. Ethnicity is self-perceived and people can belong to more than one ethnic group.
5. Those identifications mean people may affiliate with Pākehā, a term denoting English-speaking Europeans living in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

In accordance with the diverse population, the second of the SWRB competencies addresses this broader mix of communities in Aotearoa.

***Competence to practise social work with different ethnic and cultural groups in Aotearoa New Zealand***

‘The social worker:

- Acknowledges and values a range of world views including divergent views within and between ethnic and cultural groups;
- Understands that culture is not static but changes over time;
- Demonstrates awareness and self-critique of their own cultural beliefs, values and historical positioning and how this impacts on their social work practice with their clients from other cultural backgrounds;
- Critically analyses how the culture and social work approaches and policies of their employing organisation may compromise culturally safe practice;
- Demonstrates knowledge of culturally relevant assessments, intervention strategies and techniques;
- Engages with people groups and communities in ways that respect family, language, cultural, spiritual and relational markers’.

Source: From the Social Workers Registration Board. (2016). *Core Competence Standards*

Social work education must thus balance the essential and foundational development of an understanding of our history, the narratives and migration stories of all whose journeys brought them to New Zealand, the stories of loss and dislocation and the aspiration to achieve social justice, structural equality and human rights.

## **A brief history of social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand**

Bourdieu's (1984) concept of a 'distinctive space' proves useful in exploring the role of education in the professionalisation of social work (Beddoe, 2011; 2013). Education is a significant factor in ability of professions to find their own distinctive space in complex welfare systems. Mandated educational qualifications contribute to social 'distinction' grounded in a territory of social practice, with the artefacts of professional status, occupational closure and protection of title denoting symbolic power (Beddoe, 2013).

Bourdieu (1984, p. 251) writes of symbolic power:

The struggle to win everything which, in the social world, is of the order of belief, credit and discredit, perception and appreciation, knowledge and recognition-name, renown, prestige, honour, glory, authority... always concerns the 'distinguished' possessors and the 'pretentious' challengers.

Social work education's history in Aotearoa New Zealand thus can be seen as a reflection of the struggle of the profession to balance its aspiration to find a distinctive space to stand along with its commitment to social justice in a unique cultural context.

### *Education as the vanguard activity of the professional project*

Social work in Aotearoa is in the midst of a 50-year-old journey of professionalisation. The professional project needs to be understood not as a conscious, articulated project in the everyday sense of the word, but as a sequence of activities linked to an underlying purpose, which in the development of professions in society, is directed at the improvement of the standing and symbolic power of an occupational group (Beddoe, 2011, 2013 a, 2013b, 2013c). Part of this process is creating a distance between the practices that are constituted as 'professional' by members of a group, and those that may be the business of volunteers or practitioners of lesser training or different focus. In the professionalisation of social work, education is in the vanguard of seeking change because it is crucial to the establishment of occupational closure. The connection of professions with a 'particular educational training and the practice of a particular type of knowledge, basically academic knowledge' is one thing they share all in common (Olgiati, 2006, pp.540-541). As Hunt (2016) and Nash and Munford (2001) have noted Aotearoa New Zealand social workers have often rejected an outright knowledge claim as elitist, while at the same time wanting to achieve some degree of occupational closure and protect vulnerable client groups from poor practice.

Hunt (2016) explores possible explanations for the length of time taken for the social work to be established as a fully regulated profession, include its origins in religious work and volunteering, often gendered. She also notes social workers demonstrate ‘internal ambivalence about professionalising ...the initial lack of a clearly articulated body of knowledge and corresponding availability of education and training [and the] associated low levels of social work practitioner autonomy’ (Hunt, 2016, p.19). As a direct result of these dilemmas over the decades of the 1960s to late 1990s, public perception of social work as a profession remained ambivalent, the social work image even deemed invisible by one author (Clark, 1971). Despite these factors social work education became well established before the turn of the century.

This overview draws on the work of Mary Nash whose thesis and related publications provide a rich and scholarly account of social work education in Aotearoa New Zealand (Nash, 1998; Nash & Munford, 2001). Nash notes that the history of social work education begins with the establishment of the first programme in 1947 at Victoria University of Wellington. This was a small course and graduates quickly became the supervisors and managers of statutory and health social work services.

Social work education was established in the English tradition of both links to sociology and to the discipline of social administration, a subject area until the 1990s where it became subsumed into social policy. Harington (2016, p.119) notes that formal university education for social work was ‘was contested from the start’. Nash describes social work education as contested by ‘community workers, Maōri, Christians, humanists, anarchists and the social work profession itself’ (1998, p. iv) each struggling with the complexity of knowledge and skills needed for the scope to work with individuals, families and communities rendered vulnerable by personal and social circumstances.

The School of Social Science at Victoria University of Wellington, where the first social work qualification was developed, went on to be the incubator for the social workers who would lead the profession for many years. It was mainly graduates of the school who led the formation of the NZASW [ the A for Aotearoa was added in the 1990s] in 1964. The new association pushed hard for many years for improvements in social work education.

In an important article Ritchie (1967) outlined the challenges facing the three-year old NZASW as it discussed what was required to develop a strong foundation for professional social work in Aotearoa. Ritchie, who was a professor of psychology, argued that access and uptake to a university qualification in social work alone was not sufficient justification for a

claim for professional status. Drawing on a traits model of professionalism (Greenwood, 1957) Ritchie outlined professional status as requiring a 'an agreed system of ethics', a 'sense of vocation' and a lifetime commitment to the aims of the profession and the understanding that one is never 'off duty' (p.5). Ritchie also acknowledges the importance of the university in the socialisation of students in the profession: exposure to social work values, new learning and the construction of a professional identity. Ritchie's prescription for a strong profession included a four-year undergraduate degree, followed by a two-year postgraduate social work programme, and then a one-year internship (p.11). It is interesting to note in 2018, that only the first of these has been achieved.

Over the period 1973 to 1986 the number of programmes increased with the establishment of a 4-year Bachelor of Social Work course at Massey University and a two-year Diploma at the Auckland College of Education. While provision of social work education grew over this time, its role and location mainly in universities was heavily critiqued (Nash & Munford, 2002). *Pūao-te-Āta-tū* was published, with an implicit questioning of the training of social workers, the majority of whom at that time lacked professional qualifications. State employees were often fully funded to go to university but women, Māori and workers in youth and community work struggled for recognition of their training needs and for resources.

During this period the New Zealand Social Work Training Council, established in 1987 set basic minimum standards for accreditation of social work qualifying programmes. Nash and Munford note 'These proved as divisive as they were useful'(2001, p.23). The Council decision not to support a community work programme followed a ministerial decision to focus on social work education in universities and colleges of education. That decision brought to the forefront tensions about whether social work should be established on a more professional footing while community work and community development were left to fund their own development. Nash and Munford assert 'Professional social work was consolidated, but this trend was contested by radical groups who felt that social work was becoming elitist and authoritarian' (2001, p. 23).

Over this same period social work in the health sector grew rapidly, employing qualified staff. and setting specific health social work competencies (Daniels, 1989, 1990). Education has always been a significant issue for health social work, social workers were acutely aware of status differentials, where all other health practitioners held professional qualifications and had some system of self-regulation in place (Beddoe, 2013 a). On the cusp of the new decade

significant work was done to develop competencies and standards for social work in health care, in the absence of statutory regulation. Several projects were carried out on behalf of the Area Health Boards Chief Social Workers' Association and funded by the Health Workforce Development Fund (Daniels, 1989; 1990).

In the statutory child welfare sector levels of qualification varied widely, from no social work qualifications at all, to one-year certificates to four-year undergraduate degrees and postgraduate programmes.

### *Growth and change*

From the late 1980s there was a proliferation of new multi-level and part-time social and community courses at polytechnics as well as at universities as the development of a national qualifications framework and competency and standards-based programmes were developed for many occupations. The body which replaced NZSWTC, the NZ Council for Education and Training in Social Services set minimum standards for the accreditation of programmes (1991) which was the first time a state agency directly established influenced curriculum. While the core curriculum—sociology, psychology and human development, theory and practice skills of social work, fields of practice and field education—remained intact, the new body did introduce requirements for the recognition of the unique sociocultural context of ANZ and the importance of responsiveness of social work to Māori

There was a further systemic change when in 1998 on the wave of the competency movement an 'industry training organisation' Te Kaiawhina Ahumahi was set up. This body was to oversee the polytechnic and private training provider sector and accredit programmes to assess 'unit standards', excluding the university programmes. The university sector as a whole rejected the unit standards model and its overly bureaucratic approach to teaching and learning. University programmes were approved by a body constituted by membership from all the universities. Programmes in both sectors required broad support from stakeholders - employers, other institutions, the professional association and nominees who could bring a Māori perspective to the examination of the proposed programme. This dual system stayed in place until the passing of the Social Workers Registration Act of 2003. In 2004 the SWRB set a minimum of a three-year degree as a requirement for registration, with a period of 'grandparenting' in place for mature practitioners who were unqualified but experienced. In 2016 the SWRB raised the benchmark qualification to a four-year undergraduate degree or a two-year qualifying masters.

## **Current situation**

This overview of social work education comes to a close as others have with a consideration of contemporary challenges and some questions about what lies ahead (Beddoe. 2007, 2014; Nash & Munford, 2001; van Heugten, 2011). In their important article on social work education published early in the new century, Nash and Munford (2001) wrote a postscript noting that at the time of publication a change of government heralded changes ahead for both tertiary education and social work. In particular the new Labour-Alliance coalition government had committed to legislation for the registration of social workers. By coincidence this present article is written very early in the term of a new coalition government in Aotearoa New Zealand. A bill is before Parliament that will change the current voluntary registration of social workers to a mandatory system, with protection of title. The bill, drafted under the previous government is as it stands, very unsatisfactory to social workers as it contains what is considered to be a loophole, enabling employers to avoid requiring qualified social workers to be registered by defining their work as beyond scope despite undoubtedly requiring them to be using their social work skills and knowledge.

Nash and Munford (2001) ended their article with a discussion of the challenges for social work within the climate of a shrinking welfare state, the consolidation of managerialism and the increase of surveillance. They noted that social work education was preparing practitioners for a very different practice environment to that envisaged when social work was first developed. Nash and Munford acknowledged the tensions as educators hold the line of social work values within the modern neoliberal state where social services were to be marketised. They observed diminishing goodwill and “the old public service philosophy “(p.32). There were hopes that the market model was being questioned however, what was to occur after the Labour government (1999-2008) was a nine-year term of a National government (2009-2017) in which austerity measures reduced welfare, the privatisation agenda expanded and social work was to become ‘caught in the teeth of a gale’, (Hyslop, 2016).

## **Conclusions**

This article has shown, via a brief historical and contextual review, how social work education is inextricably linked to the unique socio-political and cultural context in which it is located. Thus, this survey of social work education In Aotearoa New Zealand ends, as have

previous descriptions, just as the profession is fighting for its integrity and is on the cusp of significant change. The outlook is not however all gloomy. The changes brought about by the SWRB have raised social work to a more consistently educated workforce. At the time of raising the benchmark qualification to a four-year degree the SWRB also raised expectations of the academic workforce by requiring all those teaching social work theory and practice, including placement coordinators to hold a minimum of a master's degree. This has exposed more students in the non-university sector to staff who are active in research, where formerly this was rare. In the university sector there has been a steady increase in the number of professors and associate professors of social work and Aotearoa New Zealand scholarship is more visible in the international arena as networks develop across borders and time zones. Indigenous scholarship is growing and a new cohort of Maōri and Pasifika graduates are seeing research and teaching in their career plan. There is a growing group of social workers who are pursuing higher education with record numbers pursuing masters research and doctoral education.

Currently a three-year project exploring social worker readiness to practice is underway. In this mixed method project a taxonomy of terms and a curriculum map have been developed (Ballantyne et al, 2016 a & b). Survey and interview findings will be available later this year that will inform better investment in support for high quality social work education and programmes for beginning practitioners. Evidence to support a case for better resourced qualifying and post-qualifying education is greatly needed.

There are still many challenges. Social work education is still poorly funded, with a direct impact on the intensive teaching of skills required for complex practice. There are still too few Maōri and Pasifika educators to provide the knowledge and wisdom needed to fully realise bicultural practice. there is only one small scheme which formally supports new graduates in employment and leads to a postgraduate award. Overall participating in postgraduate post-qualifying education is low, possibly still less than 10% (Beddoe, 2014).

A review of social work education been announced to consider provision and quality. Social work educators will face this with some trepidation but it offers some hope that the voices of stakeholders can be heard and better resourcing makes it possible to address the needs of a growing and developing profession. Social work education stands poised to make a renewed contribution in a new political environment that offers hope for a brighter future.

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