

# Aotearoa NZ Peace and Conflict Studies Centre

**20<sup>th</sup> Sept 2005**

## Initial Background Paper

A small Working Group has been meeting in Auckland to explore the possibility of establishing in New Zealand a designated Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies. The Institute once developed would provide undergraduate, graduate and research facilities so that young New Zealanders wanting to be qualified in these areas would no longer need to go overseas for a coherent degree or piece together courses in New Zealand from a variety of institutions. The Institute would ideally be established within a university with the facility to cooperate between departments and with other universities. It could become the Aotearoa/New Zealand Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies.

New Zealand already has an international reputation for some important peace initiatives: for example the stand for peace taken in 1835 by Moriori in the Chatham Islands; the refusal of Maori to fight at Parihaka in 1881; the Lange Government's stand against nuclear ships in the 1980s; the protests against nuclear testing in Mururoa in 1985; and the case taken to the World Court at the Hague in 1996. The Peace Foundation was established in Auckland in 1975 and it originally aimed to set up a Chair of Peace Studies at the University of Auckland. The Foundation has worked in the field of disarmament, in schools and has instituted the Media Peace Awards. However we have no centre that can bring together the work that has been done and the work that is being done now in some university courses, in peace organizations, in the community and through some government initiatives.

Peace studies at such an Institute would encompass a wide range of disciplines and consider peace in different contexts. It could

- \* Teach and co-ordinate undergraduate and post graduate programs to provide the knowledge and practical skills necessary for students to be able to become peace builders, peace keepers and mediators in contemporary situations.
- \* Conduct research into the causes of conflict, models of conflict prevention and resolution and peace building strategies.
- \* Provide short courses and training for government and non-government organisations engaged in peace keeping and peace building. Provide advice to and do research on peace issues for public and private organisations.
- \* Liaise with Peace organisations within the New Zealand community and the Peace Institutes or Centres around the world.

The Working Group envisages an institute that would become equivalent to and liaise with other leading peace and conflict resolution centres around the world. We have enclosed information from institutions at two universities to give an indication of what we should aim for. The Centre at Bradford started in 1973 and several New Zealanders have studied there. The Australian Centre at Queensland started in 2003 and Kevin Clements, a New Zealander well known in peace and justice initiatives both here and internationally, is the director. The Centre is now working in partnership with the Department of Peace and Conflict Research in Uppsala

We are aware that in the present climate of university funding in which universities are in competition with each other and even within a university faculties or departments are in competition, money for such a dedicated institute would not be easy to obtain but if New Zealand is to continue to be a leader in peace making and thinking internationally a dedicated centre is essential. The Institute would need a mixture of government funding, money from professional and religious organisations and from visionary individuals and businesses.

We would like to collect more ideas and information from those who might be interested. Would you like to be kept in touch with this project? Have you ideas you would like to send us about the purpose, structure and/or financing of this centre? Can you suggest others who might be interested?

Email to: [info@peacetrust.org.nz](mailto:info@peacetrust.org.nz)

Phone or write to:

Dorothy Brown, 83 Taylors Road, Mt Albert,  
Auckland. 09 815 0228

20<sup>th</sup> September, 2005