

**THE ESTABLISHMENT**  
**OF A**  
**CENTRE FOR PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES**  
**IN**  
**AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

*From now and forever, never again let there be war as this day has seen.*

– Nunuku Whenua

*I oppose all violence because the good it does is always temporary but the harm it does is permanent.*

– Mahatma Gandhi

Revised, 14 May 2006

## AIM

To establish in Aotearoa New Zealand a designated, well-funded Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies that brings together research, teaching, tikanga, theory and practice and provides a focal point for New Zealand universities, teachers, students, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers.

## RATIONALE

The non-violent resolution of conflict is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. Serious levels of violence continue in our society and the world: interpersonal violence, aggression between ethnic and religious groups, heightened international tensions, attacks on civilians, inter-state conflicts and civil wars, increased incidence of government breakdown and rapid growth in the number of refugees and displaced people. Short-term fears and misplaced priorities are evidenced by a huge disparity between what the rich countries spend on defence and the amount they spend in development assistance. Yet because poverty, peace and stability are inextricably linked, this emphasis on military solutions is counter-productive and indeed exacerbates the situation by increasing fear and insecurity.

Now is the Gandhian moment to explore, to discover and to practise viable non-violent ways to prevent and resolve conflicts. For example, the continuing recourse to violence in Aotearoa New Zealand presents a challenge to the development of a peaceful society. Yet Aotearoa New Zealand also has a rich heritage of peace initiatives drawing from its indigenous and other cultures. For example, the Moriori peoples of Rekohu (Chatham Islands) have observed a non-violent peace covenant on their island for over 500 years. It has an established international reputation for peace activities and initiatives and has taken a leadership role in the anti-nuclear movement furthering the abolition of nuclear weapons globally. Regionally, Aotearoa New Zealand has assumed a growing peace-keeping and peace-building role in the Pacific. Domestically, the Treaty of Waitangi, the Waitangi Tribunal, the treaty settlements process and the conferencing for youth and adult offenders serve as living examples of positive biculturalism and as a model of restorative justice. This provides an

evolving framework which acknowledges and implements the partnership between Moriori, Maori and Pakeha. Furthermore, peace education has been integrated into the school curriculum.

In order to increase New Zealand's active role in the prevention of violent conflict in the Asia-Pacific region and throughout the world, there needs to be a deepening and developing of knowledge, skills and understanding of conflict prevention, management and resolution. Until now, there have been individual and sporadic attempts to establish peace and conflict studies courses and programmes at a number of different tertiary institutions. These have had a precarious existence and there is always the risk that peace studies disappear from an institution when key staff leave or financial priorities change. What is needed to ensure a constant focus on the engendering of peace is a dedicated and well-funded centre of peace and conflict studies at a university where the research, teaching and training will have international integrity. Such a centre would:

- Bring together all tertiary peace and conflict studies initiatives and activities in New Zealand.
- Recognise and develop peace and conflict courses and programmes.
- Conduct research and engage with other scholarly activities related to peace and conflict resolution.
- Liaise and make academic links with peace research institutes and centres around the world.
- Establish partnerships with key international institutions and non-governmental organisations.
- Liaise with peace groups and initiatives in the community

## VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

A Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies in Aotearoa New Zealand would be committed to the following values and principles:

- Non-violence in all areas.
- The international human rights framework.
- Truth, compassion, and social justice.
- A Focus on New Zealand's contribution to international peacemaking.
- The Treaty of Waitangi.
- Bicultural principles and processes within our multi-cultural society.
- Academic endeavour, integrity and credibility at the highest levels of the universities.
- The role of universities as critics and conscience of society.
- Wider community education.
- A teaching methodology which is harmonious with the aims of peace and conflict resolution.
- Inter-faith and intra-faith exploration and dialogue in the area of peacemaking.
- Recognition of the role of religion and spirituality in providing resources for peacemaking.
- Recognition of the role of women in peace-building.

## GOALS AND PLANNING

### Finance

To establish sustainable financial support for a Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies.

- Establish a finance committee.
- Raise necessary funds.
- Seek donors and sponsors from individuals and organisations.
- Obtain government funding and support.

### Structure

To establish a designated Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies.

- Obtain university sector support to establish a permanent national Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies in New Zealand.
- Find a permanent physical location for the Centre.
- Establish a founding Chair for Peace and Conflict Studies with supporting staff.
- Develop collaboration and cooperation in peace and conflict studies involving as many NZ universities and other tertiary education institutions as possible.
- Establish collaborative partnerships with Tangata Whenua peace centres and other peace education initiatives.
- Establish links with other peace education initiatives.
- Establish links and partnerships with overseas peace and conflict studies institutions.
- Establish links with peace groups in the community

## Teaching and Research

To provide teaching and training and undertake research in peace and conflict studies, including non-violence and its role in conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation.

- Focus initially on postgraduate programmes in peace and conflict studies.
- Broaden focus to include undergraduate and community education and training.
- Encourage research, teaching and praxis across the disciplines including natural and human sciences, engineering, medicine, history, philosophy, political studies, law and theology.
- Provide teaching programmes in a variety of locations.
- Liaise with interested lecturers and researchers in tertiary institutions throughout New Zealand and overseas.
- Establish a database of teaching and research on peace and conflict studies in New Zealand.
- Establish collaborative research teams.
- Tender for research and training contracts from government and private sector.
- Make provision for students to learn from and work with peace groups in the community