

‘Always speaking’ – The Treaty of Waitangi and public policy

Veronica M.H. Tawhai and Katarina Gray-Sharp, (Eds.)
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This book is a must read for all social workers and should be a core text in social work degree courses across Aotearoa New Zealand. It examines how Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) is observed across the public policy fields of government. The clear message from the book is that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is ‘always speaking’ and is the foundation for both policy and practice in Aotearoa. The contributors also highlight that, “There is yet to be full recognition that effective public policy for Māori is built upon Māori priorities, cultural values and aspirations” (p.1).

Seventeen outstanding authors investigate the place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi across core public policy areas. Their chapters focus on the revitalisation of te reo Māori (the Māori language), the history of public policy for Māori, education, health, the electoral system, youth development,

maternity care, the protection of rights of children, whanau development, the public sector, and rangatahi (youth) courts. Chapters also provide insight into the role of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in broadcasting, land development, international trade and economic development. Each chapter is a detailed case-study within a particular policy area and provides valuable background for readers who work or are interested in these specific areas. The book as a whole highlights the ongoing challenge of truly honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi for both society and our profession.

I highly recommend this book to social workers and students. This text provides a 21st century understanding of how Te Tiriti o Waitangi is ‘always speaking’ in our society, to the social work profession and in our practice and asks us to be responsive to the ongoing challenge honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

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