

Independent Review of Systemic Racism

Commissioned by the InternetNZ Council

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Me tika ā mua, kia tika ā muri

The past must be addressed for our future to be right

Report provided to President and the Chief Executive of InternetNZ
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 Kaupapa Independent Review of Systemic Racism, Internet New Zealand

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HE KUPU REO: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In mid-2021, a YouTube video containing discriminatory and racist threats, including threats of mass violence against Māori, was circulating online in New Zealand. People in the Māori Internet community worked to flag their concerns to YouTube and New Zealand authorities. It took nearly 24hrs for the video to be taken down, while spin-off harassment and abuse against those who responded continued on various online platforms.

In the midst of these events, two Māori women who were InternetNZ Councillors complained that InternetNZ's failure to act in response to these threats was systemic racism. Confronted with the worst of the Internet, there were complaints that InternetNZ did not act quickly and clearly enough to condemn racist extremism online or other online threats of violence and harm directed at Māori, and Māori women in particular. The two Councillors resigned from Council.

InternetNZ Council resolved to investigate the complaints and engaged an independent expert, Dr Hana O'Regan, to review what happened and to go further by making recommendations for any improvements in broader policy and practice at InternetNZ. The review was undertaken in three parts: a literature review, a survey for InternetNZ staff and membership and interviews.

The Reviewer found evidence of institutional racism within InternetNZ's historic foundations and at membership, governance, management and staff levels. The review highlights examples of institutional, cultural and personal racism requiring attention and proposes recommendations to help InternetNZ move positively into the future as a Te Tiriti centric organisation.

The Reviewer presented the report to the President and CEO of InternetNZ, and was subsequently received by the whole Council.

The Council recorded their thanks to Dr. O'Regan for undertaking this Systemic Racism Review and acknowledged her commitment to bringing forward the voices of the complainants and others who participated.

WĀHANGA I: BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

1.1 Background

This is a report on a review of complaints made in 2021 that InternetNZ failed to respond to online threats of violence and harm directed at Māori, and Māori women in particular: a failure, it was claimed, was due to systemic racism. InternetNZ Council acknowledged the complaints and engaged an independent expert, Dr Hana O'Regan, to review them. Dr O'Regan was asked to assess the events leading up to the complaints, the policies and practices that led up to them, what subsequently occurred and to provide a view on them. Dr O'Regan was also asked to make recommendations for improvements in policy and practice at InternetNZ. The full terms of reference are attached as Appendix i.

1.2 Scope of the Review

The Reviewer proposed an approach based on three key imperatives:

- I. The people impacted by the events of 2021 are given the opportunity to share their kōrero and 'be heard' to support their healing and help identify key historic issues.
- II. The issues relating to current practices and experiences of staff and members, both positive and negative, be identified and exposed where appropriate.
- III. Staff, Councillors and Members are offered the opportunity to share their future-focused recommendations for improvement and development of InternetNZ to tackle any issues of systemic racism and to help fulfil its goal to be a Te Tiriti centric organisation.

To this effect, the review was broken into three parts:

- He tirohanga whakamuri (looking back)
- He tirohanga mohoa nei (current views)
- He tirohanga whakamua (looking to the future)

1.3 Methodology

The review was undertaken in three parts, commencing with a literature review of historical relevant information. A survey was developed for InternetNZ staff and membership, with the option of extending this to past staff and Council members who were directly impacted by the events in 2021. The last stage of the review involved interviewing those staff, Councillors and Members, present and past, who wished to have the opportunity to meet with the Reviewer either individually or as a group.

Forty written responses were received, and 18 interviews conducted. In addition, 36 separate historical documents were initially provided by management to the Reviewer by either electronic copy, email or weblinks, to support the review. A further 18 documents were provided by individual interviewees during the review period.

The survey responses, interviews and other communications have been amalgamated and ordered based on the themes identified and issues raised. This has been done to further ensure the anonymity of respondents who chose to engage in the interview process, and therefore, known to management. A full description of the methodology is attached as Appendix ii.

1.4 Te Horopaki — Introduction

The issue of racism strikes at the very core of our identity as a nation, how we like to think about ourselves and how we like to be thought of by others. For this reason, discussing racism, its existence, and the way it plays out in our society is difficult. It makes people uncomfortable and is often avoided or denied because of those reasons.

This review has come about because of claims of systemic racism levied against Internet New Zealand. In the March Council paper that introduced the Terms of Reference for this review, systemic racism is described as:

the concept that the ways things are done in a society or an organisation disadvantages groups of people based on their race. It is a form of discrimination.

The Terms of Reference go on to make an acknowledgement of the existence of racism in InternetNZ in three areas where Māori and te ao Māori have been discriminated against:

1. Much of the early development of the Internet took place at a time when racism was embedded in NZ society, and this resulted in the exclusion of Māori and other indigenous peoples from free and equal participation in the development of the Internet. This has led to an under-participation of Māori in the development of the Internet.
2. The voting system used by InternetNZ, which followed colonial democratic principles, delivered a result that for many years excluded Māori from being InternetNZ Councillors, and no attempt was made to redress that through other means. This has led to an under-representation of Māori in InternetNZ membership and governance.
3. The policy framework used by InternetNZ, which was built around NZ law and colonial consultation principles, for a long time prevented Māori from using te reo in domain name registration, and to this day provides lesser protection of Māori taonga than it does for the colonial concept of intellectual property. This has led to an under-appreciation of te ao Māori, te reo Māori and tikanga in .nz policy and other governance instruments, and in the use of .nz by Māori.

Racism in New Zealand is not a new discussion; however, we have in recent times, taken another step forward in our understanding, admission, and awareness of the issues of racism. In 1986 The Māori Perspective Advisory Committee that had been established to review issues impacting Māori for the Department of Social Welfare, and to propose an approach to meet the needs of Māori in policy, planning and service delivery, presented their report to the Department. The report was named *Puao-te-ata-tu* and became a landmark text on Māori issues and welfare.

Puao-te-ata-tu, addressed the issue of racism directly in the report, and a more extensive paper titled *The Faces of Racism*, was presented as an appendix to the report (for reference, this has also been added to this report as Appendix iii).

Puao-te-ata-tu provides a helpful explanation of the different terminology associated with racism within the New Zealand context. Racism is defined in the report as:

The belief or practice based on the assumption that one race, culture or ethnic group is inherently superior or inferior to another. Societies are racist, as are individuals, but few are avowedly racist ...Racism is commonly confused with social class attitudes. The latter are often used as explanations or excuses for behaviour which is basically racist (*Puao-te-ata-tu* 1988:18).

The report identifies three broad forms of racism in New Zealand, those being personal racism, cultural racism and institutional racism, and explains them as follows:

Personal racism manifested by attitude or action is the most obvious form and the one most easily confronted. Although it is not now as unfashionable as it was a decade ago there is a considerable reservoir of social resistance to it and a range of law and social practice arrayed against it.

Cultural racism is manifested by negative attitudes to the culture and lifestyle of a minority culture or the domination of that culture and its efforts to define itself by a power culture. An obvious form is the selection by a power culture of those aspects of the minority culture which it finds useful or acceptable. Essential dimensions of the minority's values and lifestyle are discarded to its detriment.

The most insidious and destructive form of racism, though, is **institutional racism**. It is the outcome of monocultural institutions which simply ignore and freeze out the cultures of those who do not belong to the majority. National structures are evolved which are rooted in the values, systems, and viewpoints of one culture only. Participation by minorities is conditional on their subjugating their own values and systems to those of "the system" of the power culture (Puao-Te-Atatu 1988:19).

The report goes on to discuss how these three forms of racism relate to each other, highlighting the fact that institutional racism is born from the existence of personal and cultural racism and represents a bias in institutions that serves to benefit the power culture and discriminate or penalise minority groups (Puao-te-ata-tu.1988:78).

The fact is, though, that New Zealand institutions manifest a monocultural bias and the culture which shapes and directs that bias is Pakehatanga. The bias can be observed operating in law, government, the professions, health care, land ownership, welfare practices, education, town planning, the police, finance, business and spoken language. It permeates the media and our national economic life. If one is outside, one sees it as "the system". If one is cocooned within it, one sees it as the normal condition of existence (Puao-te-ata-tu. 1988:78).

Although this review is centred on the term 'Systemic Racism', this is best aligned to the description of institutional racism as defined above. Systemic or institutional racism needs to be considered within the context of the inter-relationships between the different 'faces' of racism.

The Reviewer has found the description of people's responses to accusations of institutional racism in the *Faces of Racism* paper, strikingly similar to a number of those shared by respondents to this review and the claims of racism of InternetNZ that gave rise to this review, 34 years later. This review seeks to share the experiences and views of those participating in the process and provide reflections of those that will help InternetNZ to take the next step forward on this important journey. The Reviewer acknowledges that people on all sides of the events that took place in 2021 will be understandably feeling uncomfortable about these findings, and that is to be expected. What is more important is that the uneasiness manifests in an action to do better, to be brave and deliberate in the approach to address inequities and racism where they are found, and to look proactively to identify them in other places. This will be of benefit to InternetNZ and to all of Aotearoa.

InternetNZ can be an exemplar of positive change that recognises the value of effective and meaningful engagement with, and representation of tangata whenua. This requires an acknowledgement of the historical inequities and examples of racism in the organisation's past, and a willingness and commitment to address these manifestations of those in the present. It also requires an acknowledgement of the events and impact of those event, experienced by the two Māori Council members who raised the claims of systemic racism in 2021 that led to this review, and identifying the lessons learned from those experiences by all involved in the process.

The Reviewer is of the view that those at the centre of the events did not act with malice or negative intent on either side. The publicity of the claims of systemic racism had a profound

impact on those in the organisation at all levels, but especially upon those at the centre of the issues, including those in leadership positions at the time and Māori staff across the organisation, membership and internet community.

The hurt, ongoing tensions and damage to reputations experienced because of those events, need to be recognised on all sides within the context in which they occurred. This should not however, cloud or be seen to minimise the experiences of those directly experiencing the weight of racism targeted against Māori and, in particular, Māori women at the time, or indeed the hurt and racism experienced by Māori attempting to advocate for equitable treatment of Māori people, language and culture in InternetNZ since its inception.

It is within this context that the Reviewer presents this report to share the views of the respondents and propose recommendations to help InternetNZ move positively into the future as a Te Tiriti centric organisation.

2. WĀHANGA II: WHAT WAS HEARD

2.1 He tirohanga whakamuri — looking back

In response to the question asking respondents if they were aware that in 2021 claims of systemic racism were raised in relation to the InternetNZ Group, overwhelmingly, participants responded in the affirmative, with 93% of those completing the survey affirming their knowledge of the claims, and 100% of those interviewed saying they were aware of them.

A small proportion of respondents chose not to elaborate on the historic events, choosing instead to focus on their current experiences and recommendations for the future.

Most of the respondents aware of the events that led to the claims of systemic racism chose to share their recollections of Council and management responses. Many respondents shared in-depth accounts reflecting on their own observations, experiences and views of the cause and impact of those events. There was a notable acknowledgement that issues of systemic racism did exist in InternetNZ, although these differed in terms of the extent to which it was deemed historical or current, deliberate or more broadly influenced by our wider societal colonial past as a country.

Only two respondents shared that they had not been aware of any behaviours of systemic racism prior to the events of 2021, instead believing InternetNZ to be a gender-inclusive and multi-cultural organisation that valued diversity. While there were certainly views articulated that differed greatly from others in terms of the justification and validity of the claims and responses, there were also many points where all parties agreed on short-comings, lessons learned and practices that require improvement.

The Reviewer does not believe it useful in the context of this report to identify a blow-by-blow account of those events and responses from staff, councillors and management, where the respective positions are presented, and their counter views or perceptions identified. The events were well canvased in the interviews with key respondents and through the records of the events provided to the Reviewer and analysed as part of the literature review process.

The order of the events, the context in which those events occurred and the roles that individuals played in them were consistently shared across all informants and supported by the supporting documents. What differed across the responses, were views on the merits of the claims, the ways in which both sides responded and perceptions about the integrity or ethics associated with responses.

The Reviewer seeks to provide a high-level assessment of the claims, to summarise the key themes and issues identified, and to offer reflections on these.

Regarding the events that precipitated the claims of systemic racism, there were four key themes that emerged and discussed by all parties. These largely centred around:

- Origins of InternetNZ and historic examples of racism and prejudice.
- The way in which the events of 2021 were raised and managed.
- The lack of clear and agreed processes to deal with complaints and concerns.
- The communications to affected and related parties.

All contributors to the review agreed that there were no clear commonly known processes and protocols in place for management and Council to deal with issues of racism and racial online harm raised to them.

“We had little in place to support the internet community as it is in New Zealand and the organisation seemed unaware and taken by surprise that this could happen”.

There was a general agreement that the lack of identified processes and protocols contributed to delayed and reactive responses from Management and Governance to the claimants that caused considerable pain, hurt and disappointment to those affected, and resulted in a spiralling of events that added further distress.

Many respondents shared their perception that the same level of concern and regard that had been given to The Christchurch Call was not afforded to Māori raising issues of threats against their lives, whānau and communities.

There were significant concerns around the nature and content of communications back to the membership and staff that created environments where staff, members and Councillors felt unsafe, culturally unsupported, threatened and under attack. Again, there were no clear commonly known processes and protocols in place for such communications.

Staff were deeply impacted and the events and subsequent management of them have resulted in enduring tensions and trauma for InternetNZ staff, leadership, and members, past and present.

2.1.1 Origins of InternetNZ

When discussing the perceptions of the claims of systemic racism, many respondents spoke to the origins of the internet in New Zealand, and the establishment of InternetNZ as an entity and a ‘movement’.

It was acknowledged by all that Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles were not at the centre of the organisation, and this was an accurate reflection of ‘the time’ in New Zealand society and where we were at as a nation in terms of our understanding of ‘ourselves’ and our regard for the status and value of Te Tiriti and for Māori people, Māori language and culture.

People spoke about the organisation being founded by ‘*middle aged white men*’ who had little awareness for, and regard to Te Tiriti.

“It was set up in 1995 as an incorporated society by the tech community. It reflects the people in that community at the time, male, Pākehā, tech people. But 20 years on - the internet has become a part of everyone’s lives. It is much broader - Of course its structurally racist in today’s world - as it was a product of the time”.

The founders were perceived as men who thought about the internet and tech as being separate from issues relating to ethnicity and culture, and, importantly, free from politics and political interference. The founders, it was said, were driven by a belief in the ‘internet for all’ and was set up based on that assumption and their interpretation of what that meant in terms of access, culture and representation.

“The charitable objects are still okay but were written by the founders. There’s a deep history where we still carry with us some of the norms of the time, which are primarily Pākehā male, and a strong philosophical base. There was and is an orientation to protect the internet from external influence. They are met with a techno-libertarian response. The idea that we should have protection from interference runs the risk of locking in systemic conservative views. So, when we hear other views, people’s voices and calls for support or help, they can be marginalised and seen as interference. This also means that certain voices get more airtime”.

This sentiment was supported by one of the respondents who was part of that founding group who established the internet in New Zealand:

“Some of the issues are historical in making. Back in the day it was very technical. How we technical (sic) build the internet. When you do that - you build a society that looks like a slice of society, not society as a whole. Fast forward 15 years and we have a society that wants to look beyond that. Most of the members all came the historical slice of society”.

One of the founders of the internet in New Zealand reflected on those changes from the perspective of someone on the inside:

“I have seen INZ grow and develop from a technocratic- more interested in driving the internet as a tool and what it can do for society... to a bit of a horror in terms of what the impact the internet can have on society. That shift started happening around 2021-2015 (sic). It was a big environmental shift”.

The respondent spoke of the dramatic realisation that this thing they had seen as only a tool for good could be used as a tool for bad – something they hadn't conceived of in those early years.

“It was an awareness that the technology has the ability to ruin people's lives - and create really bad behaviour. The environment changed substantially. The org intentionally and consciously tried to stay above the fray - decoupled from the social stuff - and just tried to concentrate on building the internet as a tool to connect everyone together”.

2.1.2 Māori experiences of early InternetNZ

In terms of the early experiences of Māori with InternetNZ, Māori respondents with a long association with the organisation who reflected on the history, shared many experiences of institutional racism and prejudice, specifically around the battle to have anything Māori considered or recognised.

“If I think back to 1997 - Maori trying to get Maori.nz created were abused in emails and face to face meetings – it was declined. Then in 2000 we went through drama to get it created. The members discussion list was all attacks, where we were being called separatists. INZ did not want to consider its Tiriti obligations back then. We paid the money as a group and got it created. There has always been negative interactions and general racist comments over the years”.

Respondents spoke about the lack of recognition given to Māori aspirations, and lack of engagement with the Māori community and iwi and the complete absence of Māori at the decision table. When Māori tried to advocate for kaupapa Māori responses, they were often dismissed or made to jump through hoops that others didn't have to. One respondent was able to readily provide a list of examples of such treatment over a 20 year period, some of which are listed below to provide a snapshot of the issues raised:

“When it was suggested that INZ could offer a translated version of the 2nd level domain name system, it was dismissed”.

“In the late 1990s the Kohanga National trust wanted to set up Kohanga .nz and were flatly declined. They were told they had to use .school.nz and .ac.nz, but kohanga didn't fit in - anyway. .kura.nz declined as well”.

“In 2000 the moderator for the domain name for iwi.nz. was made to take on the role in a voluntary capacity and was told if he didn't, they would delete. This was an extra burden taken on in a voluntary position”.

“When iwi.nz. was set up, there was no consultation with iwi about who could use it. It was decided wholly by InternetNZ that only iwi with an established legal trust - who had settled who could use it. Then trying to change the criteria, letters had to go to all registered iwi and get approval for the change”.

In the 2000s there was a lot of comment about digital divide, and INZ said there was no longer a digital divide. One comment was made to me – “all those Maori up the East Coast chose the satellite dishes, so it's their choice”. This was used as proof of no internet divide”.

“In 2010 it was suggested INZ incorporate macrons - they decided it needed to be member consultation (not iwi). They got in Taura Whiri, but it wasn't a given - we had to go through hoops before eventually getting it through. Everything is a fight - iwi were not consulted.

“When we tried to get .Maori, it was a huge process, but at the same time (just after), the membership list snowballed the application to get .geek.nz which went through quickly”.

“I got a grant to see how many Maori words were used in domain names, but then refused to give me a list of domain names. Eventually they agreed to give me the stats - but these were not accurate. I wasn't able to analyse the words as an individual or a company, yet others were given that info quite freely. Eg; INZ give the National library all the domain names in NZ for their web-harvest, but with no consultation”.

Maori approached INZ for funding to set up a Maori internet society (to sit to the side of INZ), yet Pacific Islanders had a significant amount of resource (financial and technical) given to them at the same time to help them set up a society. Maori were 2nd class citizens to the Pacific people. Maori were declined.

These examples of prejudiced treatment, lack of voice and constant push-back, left the respondent over many years feeling like Māori were being set up to fail and actively being put off from trying to advance initiative to help raise the status of Māori needs and aspirations in the work of InternetNZ. They reported in the end, that they ‘gave up trying’ because of the sustained experiences of what they described as entrenched institutionalised racist beliefs and practices.

2.1.3 Views on the claims in 2021

It is not the intention of the Reviewer to minimise the importance of the events that took place when the claims of systemic racism in InternetNZ were raised by only summarising key aspects here; however, it is necessary to highlight those aspects in order to provide the context of the views provided.

In summary, two Māori wāhine council members had been raising their concerns of increasing online harm targeting Māori for a sustained period. The mechanism they had been using to do this, was through the environmental scan section in the council meetings. These were minuted under the environmental scan, however they never made it on to the main agenda, and therefore were never adequately responded to.

When questioning Council on this matter, there was no identified process where issues raised in the environmental scan were escalated and responded to, if they were not specifically asked to be an agenda item. It is important to note this was still the case in July 2022. The assumption that the two wāhine members reached was that they were not being listened to and that the organisation didn't care.

“One outcome of systemic racism is a lack of understanding of the impacts on a lack of equity. Digital equity - glaring inequity - we didn't drive that. Another example of the way organisations fail to deliver is that they see the problems as generic problems - they don't unpack it. There were no calls around the board table to do the unpack it and look at it. Equity was seen as a nice to have - not an essential”.

Although some respondents have suggested that they should have elevated the concerns from the environmental scan to an agenda item as a matter of process, the counter argument is that this shouldn't have been only theirs to do, and the fact that they had been raising the issues, in whatever context, was in itself, a call for help that went unanswered.

“There is a bigger theme - Govt practices aren’t flash. Over the last 5 years - what we have had is a group of persistent Maori council members, who have said they really want attention to this - and they have been seen as a minority voice. They were always in the minority so perpetually disappointed”.

It was within this context of inaction to their previously articulated concerns, that the more direct call for help and action was raised when those members experienced direct threats of harm to them and their families. The response to which precipitated their complaints, claims of systemic racism and subsequent resignations from the Council.

The Reviewer does not consider the debate as to ‘how’ the issue should have been raised as helpful. As discussed in the *Faces of Racism* paper presented in the introduction to this report, the challenges of those representing minority voices to have their voices heard and kaupapa addressed, are significant, and are inherent in institutions that favour the power culture upon which those institutions have been established. This view was shared by one respondent who had been witness to the interactions:

“There was no right way of them to bring this up, they were angry that we didn’t respond and then responded better. These were lessons that we needed to learn... Their concerns weren’t responded to - we just rubbed salt on the wound. They felt unsupported”.

With regards to the views expressed in this review as to the merits of the claims of systemic racism at InternetNZ, the majority of respondents were of the view that the claims of historic racism were justified, although not all were supportive of the approach taken to raise them and the way in which the events played out.

“Systemic racism is something every person and organisation should acknowledge and grapple with if they want to be a positive contributing member of society today. It may not be your personal fault, but each of us should be able to recognise the advantages and disadvantages we experience today as a result of these systems. Each of us should take responsibility to be better.”

There is a strong view that the issues at the Council table remain unresolved, and there is still not a collective view held by Council of what it means to be a Te Tiriti centric organisation. The need to better understand the existence of racist practices and behaviours or otherwise for the organisation was present in much of the feedback on this question:

“We’ve never considered how systemically racist our practices are. We have never evaluated them on that basis, so we wouldn’t know”.

The events created a polarisation of views across the organisation, where some took offence to the allegations because of what it meant *for them* as staff or members of InternetNZ being associated with an organisation labelled as ‘racist’. This response had the effect of clouding or flipping the response to the issues raised, where the victims of significant threats of harm on their lives were blamed for causing distress to others because of their actions.

“Structural racism. If someone says an off-colour thing - doesn’t mean we are racist. What makes it racist is how we then respond to that. If there is a robust response then structurally you are okay. If it is left to junior staff who stand up off their own bat with their own emotional labour – that’s not okay”.

A number of respondents identifying as non-Māori spoke directly to this behaviour and reaction as an issue of concern, stating that it meant the attention was taken away from the actual experiences of the Māori women who raised the issues, and instead diverted the focus to how others felt as a result of them raising the concerns.

“Then to sit through meetings where staff made comments like we as an org were being attacked and having to remind people that we are not the victims in the situation — the Māori

threatened with mass murder were. It was a huge effort to keep repeating this and trying to get people to focus on what the people raising the issues were actually saying”.

As mentioned above, there were strong feelings shared with the Reviewer, predominantly by those who had held positions of leadership or governance at the time, that focused on the ‘way that the allegations were raised’ and the behaviour of the two council members that raised them. People articulated their disappointment and hurt as a result of the actions and the subsequent fallout. One respondent, who was reflecting on their personal distress, shared their reflection that the issue may have continued to have been ignored, had the Māori Council members not acted the way they did and resigned. Their actions forced the Council and organisation to react to an issue they had been trying to get a response to.

“I didn’t like the way it was brought up. On the flip side - if you have to rise a difficult message to raise - how else do you do it? I didn’t like it – although in all honesty -I don’t think I could see a different way. If they hadn’t have done it that way - would we have responded in the way we have?”.

A small number of the respondents disagreed that there was any evidence of systemic racism in InternetNZ either historically or at the present time. One went so far as to say that there was no such thing as systemic racism.

“as outlined in the last comment, systemic racism is a theory not based in reality”

The respondent went on to share views that raised concerns for the Reviewer about current beliefs held within the organisation, albeit they were presented as a singular and isolated view. In itself however, they presented clear evidence of racist thinking by at least one individual associated with the organisation.

A small number remained neutral on the matter, suggesting that the term meant different things to different people, so they were not able to make an assessment on its existence of otherwise. Most respondents however, agreed that it was indeed an issue for INZ, both historically and in the current environment.

“By nature, systemic racism is baked into our foundations. Our members can stand and vote for council, they set the direction for the organisation and employ the CE, who leads the staff team. Our members are predominantly white and male, certainly the dominant voices are older white men. The way they communicate creates an environment in which few non-male folk would want to speak or even be involved”.

“We continue to be held back by the loud minority who don’t understand the importance and benefits of becoming authentically Te Tiriti centric”.

When discussing the claims of systemic racism made against InternetNZ in 2021, one respondent shared their experiences of examples of inaction by InternetNZ to properly protect Māori from deliberate racist behaviours of some of the internet community.

“Over the years there were a number of offensive and derogatory domain names registered that InternetNZ claimed they could do nothing about, despite being the .nz policy owner. A number of opportunists would register lwi names for \$40 and then try to resell them back to lwi for tens of thousands of dollars or redirect to R18 sites”.

“Other domains were advertising racist views of Māori and stereotypes. Two examples were [kfc.Maori.nz](#) with an inappropriate image of an overweight Māori person and [winz.maori.nz](#) was a mock up of the official WINZ web site but full of racist diatribe. This continued as people knew InternetNZ would not intervene”.

2.1.4 Sphere of control and influence

A significant issue raised by all parties at the centre of the events of 2021 was concerned with the role of InternetNZ and perceptions of the limitations or scope of the organisational sphere of control and influence. While all parties spoke of the known 'grey area' in terms of the responsibilities of the vested parties of NetSafe, The Police and InternetNZ, to ensure safety of people and the management of online harm, there were different views on how this grey area should be addressed.

"There is a problem in the online safety system where INZ doesn't want to get involved and NetSafe not being seen as a culturally safe org to address it. That problem needs to be solved. A big discussion is needed. We tried to tell Govt officials that there is a big issue that needs fixing. We need to make the discussion discussible".

The dominant point of tension, was a belief of those in management and governance that the call to action to respond to the online harm against Māori wāhine identified in the claims, were outside of their zone of control, and therefore, they were powerless to act in accordance with the wishes of the wāhine raising the alarm.

"That INZ was not set up to deal with questions about race. People in the community were confused and hurt that INZ did not respond in the way that they had expected. There was confusion about what INZ's role is or should be and there was nothing in place for INZ to help those people in the community that we saw hurting".

The counter position was that InternetNZ had a responsibility to use its position in the sector to influence and lead a response, and this should have involved addressing the 'grey area' so that such events would be repeated in the future. Even if it was deemed outside of the organisation's control, the argument was that it should have done more to advocate for a response that recognised the severity and impacts of the issues at hand.

It is important to note that this issue of core responsibilities and protocols for responding to similar events across the vested parties remains unclear, and therefore the risk of these issues presenting again in the future are high. A planned and deliberate solution is required as a matter of urgency.

The Reviewer sees this as an area of opportunity for InternetNZ to show leadership in the sector, by initiating a call to action to the vested parties to formalise an agreed understanding of key roles and responsibilities that addresses the current gaps and clearly lays out the lead agencies and inter-relationships to address such issues in the future.

2.1.5 The impact on staff, their morale, and experiences

As mentioned earlier, the events and subsequent responses had a profound impact on all those who engaged in this review, including the wāhine who first raised the issues and their whānau, Māori and non-Māori staff at InternetNZ, Council members and the wider membership base who participated in the process.

Some identified not feeling culturally safe in the organisation, and a concern that the wairua of the organisation remained challenging and heavy.

"That affected the organisation deeply and wasn't handled well internally. It resulted in staff and councillors' resignations, caused reputational damage and affected our ability to do the work and engage with Māori communities. I still notice the aftershocks in a way we approach work".

"I feel aroha for all those involved with InternetNZ at that time and particularly those who are of Māori descent. Being Māori I experience racism frequently, so I am empathetic towards whānau and the mamae that they and their peoples have endured".

One impact identified by respondents was a loss in trust and faith in the leadership of Council and Management.

“I lost trust and respect in the leader, and that affected me and my work”.

“Emotionally for staff this was hugely upsetting, INZ then derailed - we had emotional staff meetings and it was an upsetting place to work. It felt like staff were being called out as racist and some staff could no longer actually do their jobs connecting with Maori due to the allegations. What started I think at the Council table, caused a meltdown for InternetNZ with mass resignations”.

Although several respondents spoke of various hui and counselling opportunities offered them after the events of 2021, there was a general agreement that these had not been sufficient or effectively delivered, and the need for comprehensive processes, training and supports remains as a critical issue for staff and whanau, so that the appropriate healing can occur.

“What I wanted to see in 2021 was a ‘down tools moment’ - Everybody to take a step back, breathe and be in genuine reflection / commitment to new values and a relaunch - but instead we just did tinkering around the issues. I believe this is what is needed still now”.

Staff reported inertia or dismissive reactions from leadership when concerns were raised about staff morale, and this resulted in some choosing to leave and others giving up hope of change and conciliation.

“What was hard about that chapter – leadership were listening to Members and Council rather than staff members. Staff were gagged. I realised I could have more of an influence as a member than a staff member. I resigned ...some staff wrote a paper after meeting with staff members and wrote to SLT telling them that staff were on breaking point - they said they’d think about it. But didn’t respond”.

Other respondents reported a negative impact on their professional and personal reputation because of the events and subsequent actions of InternetNZ.

“There was an unevenness of people’s consideration of racism and other social justice issues. It meant people are scared to have the meaningful constructive discussions. People got offended that INZ was being accused of being racist. My credibility was damaged - I could do my job but I lost my moral foundation to go and argue for people’s rights online”.

2.2 He tirohanga mohoa nei — current initiatives

When respondents were asked to comment on current initiatives in place at InternetNZ to support INZ to become a Te Tiriti centric organisation, most were able to share examples of policies and initiatives that they were either aware of, or that they had directly participated in.

The examples provided fitted in to three main themes:

- **Structural responses:** These included the appointment of Māori staff and the establishment of the Māori business unit, Te Puni Māori; Te Kōmiti Māori and The Māori Design Group.
- **Cultural competency:** This included initiatives that supported the incorporation of tikanga Māori into the daily routines (karakia and waiata) and te reo learning opportunities for all staff.
- **Te Tiriti training:** the opportunity to participate in Te Tiriti training workshops.

Respondents spoke positively about the Māori design group, however knowledge of their role and influence differed greatly across those participating, with those closer to governance being able to share more examples of the positive impact of their mahi on the organisation's strategic direction.

One respondent was able to share in depth their views of recent changes at the Council level that were seen as another positive step forward in raising the profile and position of Māori in organisational governance.

With the exception of two respondents, there was a general appreciation expressed about the intent of the organisation to be a *Te Tiriti centric* organisation.

“We have a cool strategy that has us becoming Tiriti centric / alongside an internet for everyone and a membership that benefits. It's an inspiring vision - what we should be and could be as INZ”.

Amongst those who were supportive of this focus, some shared that they were not completely sure of what that looked like in reality, and a number were concerned about the speed at which this was occurring and where the weight of the responsibility sat on the implementation of the goal across the organisation.

“I think probably the biggest thing is the move to becoming a Te Tiriti focused organisation, if we look at work we've done previously, (and ask) has the work been done in a way which has been done with the intent to be equitable for Maori - I'd say probably not”.

The focus on the cultural competency training and development of non-Māori staff and the expectation on Māori employees to deliver this training was discussed as an inappropriate cultural load placed on the shoulders of Māori kaimahi. Māori kaimahi with these roles were referenced as being placed in situations where they were exposed to prejudice, racist and negative views on their culture, language and tikanga, and were expected to not only listen to the responses, but to positively guide those making the comments through their learning journey.

The expectations placed on kaimahi Māori were described by one respondent as ‘emotional labour’ - when those who are experiencing the equity have to give of themselves to educate on that inequity.

“We have our Te Puni Māori team building capability within the org but even that feels very much like this is on Te Puni Māori to make sure this works. It's a lot to put on one team to do this within an org who is currently running a racism review”

“This organisation is big on being a safe place so Pākehā can be on their Te Ao Māori journey but not the same energy is being put towards making sure this a safe place for Māori and other ethnicities during these discussions”.

The lack of regard for the cultural safety of kaimahi Māori in these roles and the failure of the organisation to ensure their safety and protection was raised as a serious issue by several respondents. There were also concerns raised by a number of respondents about the lack of consistency across the leadership in terms of their commitment to, and modelling of, the organisational values and strategic goals. This included the speed at which issues were addressed when raised and the ‘soft’ approach taken to responding to those issues.

“One example would be the recent dismissal of te ao Māori practices like the 8:50am karakia, as "unimportant" and something we should ignore to meet pressing commitments”.

One gap raised was the lack of training that specifically addressed the issue of racism and ‘unconscious bias’ training that was needed to create a safe working environment for Māori staff.

Although generally the opportunities for staff to develop their cultural competencies were seen as positive, many suggested that this wasn't given due prioritisation across all teams in terms of the day-to-day expectations of them. In essence, cultural development was seen as an 'addition to' their mahi, as opposed to a 'key part or expectation of' their mahi. This meant staff who wanted to commit to their cultural development were often left feeling conflicted and were expected to prioritise other work instead.

"These get lost in the noise of the day to day work we do and the huge amount of other pieces of work/ expectations of staff. It is hard to prioritise everything, which then disengages people with the initiatives, as people feel like they should be giving something like this their full and undivided attention".

The conflicting messages from leadership around these expectations, left some staff feeling like they couldn't possibly 'win'. On the one hand they were expected to prioritise their core work as a matter of urgency, but this meant others perceived them as not respecting or valuing the Māori cultural opportunities.

2.2.1 Current issues of systemic racism raised

The process of engaging in this review helped some respondents to think deeply about the claims of racism and review their own practices and behaviours with that lens. This helped to raise potential areas of concern that they had not previously analysed or considered. A powerful example of this related to the terminology used within the Internet 'architecture' itself. Although the terms did not originate within the New Zealand context and were commonly used terms globally, when viewed with an indigenous and equity lens, the respondent was able to see how they could be seen as an example of systemic racism:

"Wording in the Tech world - while it might not bring to mind racism to many people, if you look at the history of the wording it then has an impact. So those using the words don't mean any racism by it, but those words came into the industry at a time when that may have been the implication. Words like development branches and the "master branch" or databases and the "slave" database (backup one) are examples".

On the question of current experiences and examples of racism, there was a strong response from a significant number of respondents on the matter, confirming existing and continuing issues of concern. It was felt that there continues to be a lack of action and poor response to issues raised. Respondents gave specific examples, post the events of 2021, of actions and comments made by Council members, management, InternetNZ Fellows and members, that undermined Te Tiriti and the position of Māori culture and staff in the organisation.

The experience of those who shared these examples, were that the organisation was still not responding to issues of racism well, and that they continue to go largely unchecked, or excuses made for them. The lack of effective control of, and response to such situations, was believed to be evidence of an acceptance of the status quo. Although when questioned on this issue, most conceded that the biggest factor influencing leadership's response to the issues, was because people 'didn't know how to deal with it' and feared 'escalating the issue'.

The most common reasons shared by respondents with regard to the lack of effective responses to known issues raised were:

- Inaction due to inertia
- Lack of confidence
- Nervousness of getting it wrong
- Anxiety about causing another event / timebomb

Because of the way that issues raised have been dealt with by leadership over the last 18 months, current and past staff shared that they do not feel supported or safe to raise their concerns and believe if they do so they will be targeted, and their employment negatively impacted.

“InternetNZ is unable to effectively respond to racism. I experience it and this seems acceptable to InternetNZ that I do experience it”

Structural barriers were also identified as a problem by a number of respondents when referring to the ability to effectively communicate across the organisation.

“INZ does not enable cross communication in the org. It is very hierarchical, and I’m left second guessing myself - wondering whether I can contribute or share”.

Two respondents provided examples where the lack of effective mechanisms to raise issues that should be known about or addressed, meant they were left feeling powerless to act proactively.

“A lot of the staff want to be more responsive, but often the structures / processes have barriers which prevent us doing so. As an example. I might see Tina Ngata speaking on an issue - and I will take this internally and report that ‘hey here’s some things that are going on in the environment’. But there is nowhere to take that or they get dismissed. Staff don’t have ways of raising this”

“Sometimes it feels risky to raise concerns or when they do get raised - they get shut down rather than be explored. There are a lot of people who have tried to help INZ use their voice and mana to help people - but there isn’t a positive response with INZ saying ‘that’s not our role’ - not in our job discussion”.

2.2.2 Structure

Another area raised as an example of inequity for Māori was the structural representation of Māori in the organisation. Although it was recognised that steps had been taken to appoint Māori into positions of leadership, this has not been without its challenges either.

The Aka Matua team responded with group feedback to the proposed organisational change in February 2022 highlighting their disappointment about the proposed shift of the Chief Advisor Māori and the team into a third-tier position:

“We want Aotearoa to recognise that Ipurangi Aotearoa has prioritised Māori outcomes for the organisation - that this priority is not just reflected by words in a framework, it's not just a goal and/or vision, but it is internally led within the organisation, and is accountable externally to the Chief Advisor Māori as an executive member to the Group Chief Executive”.

Although the decision was made to keep the Chief Advisor Māori as a Tier 2 position, reporting to the Chief Executive, concerns remain as to the small size of the team and the large load they carry across the organisation.

The lack of equitable investment into kaupapa Māori and provision for Māori specific roles in the organisation, was identified by some respondents as an example of continued bias against Māori.

2.2.3 Governance

There remains a considerable amount of tension between the Council and staff with respondents sharing an erosion of trust in leadership as a result of the events in 2021, the way in which they were managed and subsequent engagement with staff and membership.

Although there were several positive reflections of the efforts that Council has made to raise the status of Te Tiriti in the organisation, the general view shared was one of disconnect, mistrust and lack of transparency.

“In Council they are abrupt and rude. It’s not a nice environment”.

Respondents spoke of issues being raised about comments made by councillors and these being brushed off or dismissed with no resolution to the impacts of those comments on staff attending.

“I believe the Council fully owning their actions and taking responsibility for the damage to the communities and the org would be healing - call me a dreamer. I believe the Council issuing a proper apology to the wahine Māori councillors who resigned - sincere apology, with some hard mahi and changes done to back it up - would be fully appropriate. Call me a dreamer again”.

The current governance structure and its limitations was a significant issue raised by many respondents. Suggestions of co-governance, reserved representative seats for Māori were all suggested as alternative models to the current structure that was not seen as being Te Tiriti compliant, and perpetuated inequities for tangata whenua. This was explained by one respondent in this way, when asked what might need to change to achieve a more equitable result for Māori:

“Our leadership frameworks need to change. The organisation has traditionally had a western framework of leadership. We have always fallen back to the models we know. We need to challenge ourselves to ask what the te ao Māori version of internet can look like? We need to challenge ourselves at a fundamental level”.

The suggested models for a more Tiriti responsive governance and management structure, differed greatly across the respondents, however a number suggested the work been done to identify options and challenge the current constitutional arrangements.

Two respondents suggested that the opportunity to do so would be in line with the review of the new Incorporated Societies Act which requires all societies’ constitutions to be updated by 2025. Any alternative model would need to be co-designed with Māori and it was suggested by one group of respondents, that the Māori Design Group would be well placed to advise on this matter.

2.2.4 Membership

A consistent area of concern raised by respondents was around the membership. Concerns centred on the following main areas:

- The lack of diversity amongst members
- The way in which members engage in the Members Discuss forum and the way this is managed
- The role members have in the election of the Council

Throughout the discussions on the topic of membership, there seemed to be an inherent contradiction at the centre of this debate. While concerns were raised with the Reviewer as to the lack of visibility of Members and their associated anonymity, there were also calls against a lack of diversity of that same membership. The Reviewer was unable to get any data on what the actual demographic of the membership looked like, and therefore, was unable to make any assessment of Membership diversity, relying instead on what people’s perceptions of the membership base *‘looked like’*.

Some respondents spoke of their frustration at not being able to get a clear view of who members were, because of what this meant for them in the context of wanting to respond to

comments on the Members Discuss forum. They reported not feeling confident about holding some members to account for what was being said on the shared platforms. They reported experiencing 'key-board warriors', who often hid behind their anonymity, and who sought to protect the perceived 'status quo' in terms of the power of membership to vote the Governance.

"Members discuss. If you speak up, you are likely to be shot down. The way the members work - structural oppression. It's not a safe place to engage in. A lot of this starts from the structure of the society".

What was clear, however, was the high level of discontentment with the current membership structure and the primary platform for communication used by members, known as the Member Discuss forum.

"We have a membership where some are vocally racist, but it's always dismissed as just their point of view and have seen no real attempts to address it head on. We are then set up as having a Council that is voted in by this same membership".

What has become evident is the discord with which membership is seen to have an inappropriate level of control and influence in the organisational decision making, in particular around the voting and selection of Council members. This imbalance of power between members is seen as something that constrains InternetNZ from advancing its aspirations to become a Te Tiriti Centric organisation.

"Our membership elects our Council and everything flows from there. If our membership is not representative (and it is not) then we will continue to be systemically racist. Something has to change to support a diverse and representative Council. Get rid of membership?"

Several respondents gave examples of misogynistic and racist communications by members engaging in the Members Discuss list, that went largely unchecked and challenged the direction being taken by the organisation towards becoming Te Tiriti centric.

"The loud ones don't want us to be Te Tiriti centric, they don't understand what happens and why - and they don't want to learn or listen. They don't believe that online harms experienced by Māori are real. They are offended by the staff 'wokeness'. How on Earth can we change and be better, if that's our governance grows on this base and relies" on the votes of those people? This conflict is so deep for me".

Staff reported the challenge inherent in such discord with values and sentiments expressed by Members, who, by nature of the organisational structure, were identified as the primary stakeholder, but who were expressing views that went against their own personal and stated organisational values. This had an impact on their view of their workplace, and ultimately their perceived integrity of the organisation.

"Don't get me wrong - the members are not the only issue. INZ is an enabler. We created a sanctuary for those folks to feel safe and multiply, we welcomed them and allowed the status quo to remain. Nothing has changed about our membership work since 2021 - and I am not aware of anything in the pipeline".

One respondent stated that the culture change needing to take place across staff, management, and the Council, is also important for the membership.

"We have to be brave enough - and that means some of our membership and stakeholders will be pissed off and we have to be strong enough to ride that and stand up for it. We need to make that call this year - and if we have that strength, we will be far better at the end of it".

2.3 He tirohanga whakamua - looking to the future

Respondents were asked to provide their views on what could be advanced to positively create the necessary change for InternetNZ in the future to achieve better and enhanced outcomes. The responses have been clustered into 6 main areas:

- The need for culture change in the organisation
- A clear plan for cultural capability development
- The need for diversity and power sharing mechanisms
- A change to membership arrangements
- A change to governance structure
- Scope of control and influence

2.3.1 Need for culture change

There was a clear call from respondents for the need to work as a whole organisation to address the culture change required to give effect to the Tiriti Centric aspirations and positively engage all staff and leadership in the vision of InternetNZ. Culture change requires deliberate action and strong leadership, to safely guide and engage people effectively and meaningfully in the journey.

“Change our language at InternetNZ so that 'we' talk about 'us' and 'we' and no longer 'them', 'they', those people' or other. We need to be inclusive, and we need to develop tools to be more inclusive, participatory, and effective partners”.

One barrier identified was an attitude expressed by some, that things were ‘too hard to shift’ or that we were ‘powerless to do so’, when considering our place in the world and the wider politics around the internet overseas. In response to those sentiments, respondents offered the suggestion that our primary focus should be on Aotearoa, and that we have the ability to lead by example: that we should not underestimate the influence we do have on the international stage, and we should not be scared to stand up for what is right.

“Looking internationally and worrying that people outside of NZ won't understand what we say or do is not as important as getting an internet and organisation that works for our people”.

Another respondent also leaned into the notion of leading by example, coming from the perspective that there was benefit for all if we were able to learn from the experiences of the last few years, even though they have been incredibly hard and hurtful, to help build a narrative that might help others to work with indigenous people.

“My aspiration – is that we become the first Country Code Top Level Domain (CCTLD), to actually partner with the indigenous peoples and pave the way for other CCTLDs to do so. We could have conversations with our Aussie counterparts. I am keen for us to document this journey, to provide a pathway to help others go on the journey”

It was acknowledged that the kind of culture change required would be challenging for those who had only just began the journey of cultural capability and awareness of our political, social, and cultural history in New Zealand. Encouragement was given for the good work and inroads that have been made in the organisation with the leadership and mahi of the Puni Māori team, the establishment of the Māori Design Group and the various initiatives to encourage the use and practice of te reo and tikanga Māori in the organisation.

“Take time to get this right, bring staff on the journey, they will be your strongest advocates and can help to make the change we need. Recognise that this is changing more than just a few processes this is changing the way we think, act, do and approach the people we are in contact with”.

The culture change required went beyond understanding of Māori cultural capability and development and spoke to the way the organisation engaged with each other internally, and externally with the communities it served. It was discussed in terms of a reflection of the values, the way people ‘treated’ each other, and importantly a shared view of the organisational vision that was grounded in an understanding of what the internet needs to be now and into the future, and not merely tied to an outdated vision of what the goals of the internet were when it was established.

2.3.2 Clear plan for cultural capability

There was a strong agreement from most respondents, that much more needed to be done in terms of building the cultural capability of staff at InternetNZ, and that the organisation needed to prioritise this by making the appropriate investment of resourcing to enable it, and the allocation of staff time to fully commit to that development.

“I believe we need to focus strongly on the internal capability growth. If we are capable, we can make change for the communities and serve them better. I believe we need to take all staff on the journey and meet them where they are - many learn Te Reo as their third or fourth language and are minorities themselves. We should be aware and acknowledge that”.

The breadth of areas raised by staff that needed development were extensive, and included te reo Māori and mātauranga Māori, unconscious bias training, racial awareness, and cultural intelligence. Importantly, these areas of development were identified as needing to be both in the content knowledge space, and around the practical strategies for implementing and incorporating them into the work, planning and practices of all levels of the organisation.

“Staff need to be empowered to develop cultural competencies, for example mātauranga Māori, and learning more about appropriate ways to incorporate tikanga and adapt our systems and processes to authentically integrate Māori perspectives and practices”.

It was identified that there is a need to be time-bound in terms of cultural capability development and deliberate around the setting of expectations for staff and leadership. Whilst it was recognised that everyone was on different stages of their own journeys, there should still be an expectation that this is an area requiring prioritisation, and it should be accepted as a gradual increase over time. Being time-bound, would mean setting clear expectations of progress and development on a 6 monthly or yearly basis, and those expectations would be specific and measurable.

For InternetNZ to achieve to be able to move positively through this last period of upheaval and stress, and to do so in a way that took all staff collectively on that journey, it was identified that there needed to be an increased focus on accountability and transparency. Expectations of staff and teams needed to be clear and communicated effectively, and failure to address those expectations, across all levels of the organisation needed to be addressed consistently.

“Also, teams are held accountable if not achieving in areas. Then it's having a plan to make sure new people are onboarded and brought up to speed within the first few months of working here. Changing recruitment practices to make sure we are people hiring people who are excited about working in the place that is working towards being Te Tiriti centric and not people who are just suffering through it”.

Those expectations should be reflected in recruitment and staff development and performance policies and practices, and modelled across the Council, Management, and all staff.

2.3.3 Need for diversity and power sharing

As mentioned previously, a common theme across most respondents was the concerns around the membership. As a membership-based organisation, there is a position afforded members at a constitutional level that is therefore entrenched and it's been since the establishment with little change over time.

The membership base is reasonably small and contribute a nominal amount of \$20 a year to be a member. For this association and membership status, they are viewed as having a significant imbalance of power and often unfettered reign.

“If we were to eradicate racism in INZ we need to put our big boy pants on and look at the members who are racist and get rid of them. They pay \$20 a year to be racist on a forum”.

There was a focus on InternetNZ's policy and membership rules. For example, the ability to post to member forums anonymously, and the voting system for choosing the Council members, were considered by several respondents to be archaic and self-serving. Some considered these a fundamental barrier to addressing the issues of racism and the bicultural aspirations of the organisation.

“Get rid of membership and put in place a mechanism to have a diverse and representative Council, everything will flow from there”.

The anonymity of the membership base further challenges notions of diversity and inclusion and the need to ensure any forum where members communicate together is a safe and welcoming space for different voices to exist and contribute. Staff and Council members are able to engage in the membership discussion forum while in employment and holding governance positions, and this was one of the contributing factors that gave rise to some of the complaints about the lack of control of, and response to, racism experienced by individuals in those fora.

“I believe we need to separate [the] staff and our work from [the]membership base more. Change the constitution if needed. Members' engagement with staff as it is now is toxic”.

The lack of trust in the membership base to behave in culturally competent ways, and for management to have and use appropriate controls to create a safe platform of engagement, was repeatedly raised as a significant issue by respondents to this review. The toxic environment results in people feeling uncomfortable encouraging others to join lest they expose them knowingly to that toxic culture.

“With the current membership base, it's neither safe nor productive to invite more diverse groups to join as members ... So until we have the same old bunch of racist folks there, blocking every effort and protecting their own comfortable worldview - nothing will change”.

3. WĀHANGA III: CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted in the Introduction to this report, the Reviewer has found the description of people's responses to accusations of institutional racism in the *Faces of Racism* paper, strikingly similar to a number of those shared by respondents to this review and the claims of racism of InternetNZ that gave rise to this review, 34 years later.

One of the common responses to the claims of systemic racism in InternetNZ of non-Māori respondents, was an immediate personalisation of those claims against them, their values and their integrity. It was explained by several respondents, that they felt they were being personally accused of being racist, even if they had not been directly involved in the events that gave rise to the claims. An accusation or admission of institutional racism was seen to tarnish everybody working in and associated with the organisation, and this resulted in a defensive reaction for some.

This same dynamic was discussed in the *Faces of Racism* paper, as a response to issues of institutional racism being amplified in the 1970s and 1980s in New Zealand, the impact of which was seen to stifle actions and initiatives to address the underlying issue, and therefore, allow for the continuance of those same problems.

The more recent identification of institutional racism as the basic evil constraining Maori participation in New Zealand life, has caused something of a furore. The assumption of those under attack has been that their involvement in our monocultural institutions means that they personally are therefore accused of being 'racist'. The resultant resentment has been bitter and a barrier to change. It has polarised attitudes and clouded the capacity for dealing with the issue of monoculturalism (Puao-te-ata-tu.1988:78).

This reflection should be seen as a warning for InternetNZ in terms of the forward position and need for the organisation to support people's own growth and understanding of institutional racism, lest the personalisation of the issue inhibit the ability of the organisation to proactively address examples of institutional racism, cultural racism, and, where evident, personal racism.

If a person works within an institution that practises institutional racism, that person need not necessarily be racist. However, if those in positions of influence within institutions do not work to reduce and eliminate the monocultural bias that disadvantages Maori and minorities, they can be accused of collaborating with the system, and therefore of being racist themselves. In a system of monocultural/racist policies and practices, individual behaviour when operating these policies and practices, becomes translated into personal reflections of racism (Puao-te-ata-tu.1988:78).

It seems the advice on the need to understand, acknowledge and address racism, given in *Puao-te-ata-tu* in 1988, went largely unaddressed by our nation in the decades that followed, until the significant shift that has been seen over the last 5 or so years.

Some examples of this shift can be seen in the political domain with the apologies to the Tuhoë people in 2017 for the Tuhoë Raids, the apology to the Pacific people of New Zealand in 2021 for the Dawn Raids of the 1970s, and the announcement in September 2019 to make Aotearoa New Zealand History a compulsory subject in the New Zealand Curriculum by 2023.

We can see this shift occurring in the media with the national apology made to Māori by the Stuff Media Network on the 20 November 2020, where they led out in every paper and online forum an acknowledgement of deliberate marginalisation and discrimination of Māori over 160 years. The opening apology; "*Nō mātou te hē – We are sorry*", started a

month-long contribution of articles that exposed examples of historic racism, explanations of their context and discussions on their impacts on Māori people, language and culture;

“...We’ve been racist, contributing to stigma, marginalisation and stereotypes against Māori”

It was a brave, well-planned admission that went a long way to address the grievance felt over generations amongst Māori resulting from their experiences with the media.

The impact of institutional racism on Māori is presented in the recent “Access to Justice Report” of the New Zealand Law Society:

Systemic racism in our institutions (including the justice system) perpetuates unjust outcomes. It can also lead to feelings of alienation, mistrust, fear and lack of participation in justice processes. The disproportionate impact on tangata whenua is a key focus of recent Government reports” (2020:12. Access to Justice. Stocktake of initiatives, Research Report 2020. New Zealand Law Society)

The *Access to Justice Report* cites an increasing awareness and response to institutional racism in New Zealand as a significant problem over the last few years;

Recently released Government reports describe the impact of ‘institutional racism’ which has disproportionately affected Aotearoa New Zealand’s tangata whenua. There is growing awareness of the need to ‘meet people where they are’ i.e. at the intersection where societal issues and the system meet, to try and ensure equitable treatment and outcomes (2020:18. Access to Justice. Stocktake of initiatives, Research Report 2020. New Zealand Law Society)

It is within this context of this increased national awareness and discussion on the issue, that the claims of systemic racism in InternetNZ have occurred. The Reviewer considers this point an important one to help locate the claims against InternetNZ within the wider context of societal and political shifts over time. As examples of institutional and systemic racism continue to be brought into the public arena, we will see more and more organisations facing pressure to reflect on their policies and practices and change their behaviours.

This is not an issue that will go away. If ignored, delayed, or put off, whether that be because of a genuine naivety as to how to grapple with the issue, or a fear to do so because of the inherent difficulties, the issues will continue to fester and worsen over time. What’s more, the level of accountability and obligation placed on the leadership of the organisation is heightened, as there is no longer the excuse of ignorance of the issues or their impact.

This point was beautifully conveyed during one of the interviews for this review, by a respondent reflecting on their own experiences during and after the events of 2021. They drew on the analogy of a river and explained that when you are on one side of the river, and you have never crossed that river before, you don’t know what it’s like on the other side. What you know is your own reality, the things you have learnt, heard, and experienced, on *your* side of the river.

However, when you are made to cross that river, whether that be on your own volition or made to do so by someone else, and you see what it is like on the other side – you see another reality that you previously did not recognise or understand, then you can never go back and ‘unknow’ what you now know and have seen.

In respect of InternetNZ, there was an acknowledgement of naivety and ignorance as to the racism being experienced by members of the community, staff and the Council members at the centre of the claims and their whanau, and the impact on them and their whanau. It was a side of the river they had not fully comprehended. Had they done so, there was a recognition that their own responses would have been different. But once confronted with this new understanding, and with the time to properly reflect and learn, there was an appreciation that it was a journey that needed to be taken. In this regard, one respondent

shared the line; “Not all ignorance is bliss – and this journey, understanding my own ignorance, has been anything but blissful”.

It is accepted that many will believe, and some have shared in this review, that the ignorance is inexcusable, and that people who had an ability to do something about the concerns had been informed of the issues and experiences of racism occurring, but that these were dismissed or ignored.

Although we are able to clearly attribute the origins of systemic racism in New Zealand to the Country’s colonial past, it is not acceptable or appropriate to simply make excuses for their existence today. Nor is it helpful for an organisation to distance itself from that past and deflect any sense of personal or collective responsibility to do something about it, on the basis that ‘we’ didn’t create the policies, institutions and practices that created the inequities and discrimination, or with calls of ‘it’s not our fault’.

It is also unhelpful to excuse historic or current expressions of institutional racism on the basis that they exist in most of the other institutions and organisations in the country, because of those historical policies, ideologies, and practices. Just because others may be equally bad or even worse, doesn’t make what might be happening in our own sphere of control and influence acceptable.

It is accepted, as was conveyed 34 years ago in the *Faces of Racism* paper, that addressing issues of systemic, cultural and personal racism is hard. This requires strength, deliberate action, and a significant amount of personal and organisational commitment and leadership. It is an emotional and challenging journey, but a necessary one to take, and one that will lead to a better and more equitable outcome for all.

Prior to the commissioning of this independent review, InternetNZ acknowledged known and identified examples of systemic racism. This was a brave and important thing to do. In addition to the 3 areas raised in the terms of reference, this review has been able to highlight other examples of institutional, cultural and personal racism requiring attention.

The bridge is now in place, and the view of the other side of the river is clearer and evolving. There is still work to be done to bring all the staff, members and leadership across the bridge. To do so effectively, requires:

- an understanding of the issues and their origins
- an awareness of the faces of the issue and the impacts of them on Māori
- an acknowledgement of those impacts, and;
- a clear commitment to respond to them as a priority and a matter of urgency

If a decision is made by an individual or a collective, to return knowingly and intentionally to ‘the other side of the river’, then they are in effect agreeing to act in a way that causes harm and enables racism.

As an organisation with a stated goal of being Te Tiriti centric in its design, delivery and approach, it is a fundamental prerequisite for InternetNZ to proactively and decisively respond to known issues of systemic racism within the organisation. There needs to be a safe mechanism to raise issues of racism and an agreed process and commitment to address them.

It is essential that this be an organisation-wide commitment, inclusive of staff, leadership and members. It will involve a timely and sustained commitment to Māori cultural capability, Tiriti and racism awareness that clearly shows a valuing of Māori tikanga and reo, and Māori communities.

Institutional racism can be combatted only by a conscious effort to make our institutions more culturally inclusive in their character, more accommodating of cultural difference. This does not begin and end at “the counter”. The change must penetrate to the recruitment and qualifications which shape the authority structures themselves. We are not talking of mere redecoration of the waiting room so that clients feel more comfortable (Puao-te-ata-tu.1988:78-79).

3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Culture Change

- 1.1. Co-design with Māori staff and other experts, protocols between Council and Management to:
 - (a) address issues of racism and discrimination against Māori; and
 - (b) raise issues or examples of personal, cultural or institutional racism to Management via a culturally safe mechanism; and communicate these protocols organisation-wide, including to members.
- 1.2. Address with urgency, current issues of personal racism being experienced in InternetNZ and highlighted through this review.
- 1.3. Explore options for healing with staff and council members for whom the events of 2021 and subsequent events continue to cause hurt and trauma.

2. On the Claims of Systemic Racism

- 2.1. Consider giving an apology to the parties who raised the claims, for the harm caused and an acknowledgement of the situation in which they arose.
- 2.2. Inform the parties who raised the claims, of actions taken by InternetNZ to address systemic racism in the organisation.

3. Governance

- 3.1. Review the constitution of InternetNZ by 2025 as required by changes to Incorporated Societies laws;
- 3.2. Consider a more representative model of governance for InternetNZ that is co-designed by Māori and informed by iwi and that gives effect to Te Tiriti.

4. Membership

- 4.1. The Membership Discuss forum is immediately reviewed and strategies put in place to prevent the continuation of anti Tiriti and Māori sentiment with the intention to create a culturally safe forum for ongoing engagement. This would involve a strong directive from Council articulating the expectations around engagement and the consequences of not adhering to these.
- 4.2. As part of the constitutional review, consider membership models, including voting systems, to address issues raised in this report including: transparency of membership, diversity and representation, and current imbalances of power.
- 4.3. Develop targeted strategies to widen the membership base to include more Māori and diverse communities.

5. Cultural capability

- 5.1. Proactively identify issues of inequity and bias against Māori and Māori knowledge by undertaking an equity self-review process at team and individual role level where appropriate.
- 5.2. Systematically address identified issues of inequity and bias against Māori and Māori knowledge through a cultural capability plan that supports transparency and awareness of areas of concern, including the use of staff self-review processes.
- 5.3. Adequately resource organisation wide delivery of the cultural capability plan, including the use of external experts where appropriate.
- 5.4. Implement clear, time-bound cultural capability targets for all staff as part of team goals and individual performance appraisal processes.

6. Scope of control and influence

- 6.1. The Tumu Whakarae|Chief Executive of InternetNZ is pro-active in calling together NetSafe, the New Zealand Police, and other interested parties with responsibilities in the area of online harm. A priority action will be to collectively agree to new protocols to address the areas where no clear responsibility currently exists.

Appendix i: Terms of Reference for the Review

Independent Review of Systemic Racism

AUTHOR: Jay Daley, Vice-President and Sarah Lee, Chair Komiti Whakauru Māori

PURPOSE: To commission an independent review of systemic racism within InternetNZ.

Introduction

In October 2021, Council considered options for a review of systemic racism in InternetNZ. Council sought more work and this paper seeks Council agreement to the proposed review.

Background

Systemic racism is the concept that the ways things are done in a society or an organisation disadvantages groups of people based on their race. It is a form of discrimination. Council regards it as a basic a priori principle that racism in any form is unacceptable to InternetNZ. Council acknowledges the reality of systemic racism in Aotearoa and the clearly expressed concerns that it exists within our organisation. Systemic racism within our organisation at any level needs to be brought to light, and the systems involved changed so that they protect and promote the human rights of all.

We acknowledge these areas of concern

InternetNZ Council committed to conduct a review to examine claims of systemic racism within InternetNZ going back many years. As a precursor to that review, we have carefully considered the feedback received and issues raised and have identified three key ways in which InternetNZ has inadvertently discriminated against Māori and te ao Māori:

1. Much of the early development of the Internet took place at a time when racism was embedded in NZ society and this resulted in the exclusion of Māori and other indigenous peoples, from free and equal participation in the development of the Internet. This has led to an under-participation of Māori in the development of the Internet.
2. The voting system used by InternetNZ, which followed colonial democratic principles, delivered a result that for many years excluded Māori from being InternetNZ Councillors and no attempt was made to redress that through other means. This has led to an under-representation of Māori in InternetNZ membership and governance.
3. The policy framework used by InternetNZ, which was built around NZ law and colonial consultation principles, for a long time prevented Māori from using te reo in domain name registration, and to this day provides lesser protection of Māori taonga than it does for the colonial concept of intellectual property. This has led to an under-appreciation of te ao Māori, te reo Māori and tikanga in .nz policy and other governance instruments, and in the use of .nz by Māori.

InternetNZ also recognises the need to address these issues to fulfil our strategic goal of becoming a “Te Tiriti o Waitangi centric organisation”.

Commissioning an Independent Review

To examine, and add to if required, these identified issues, we wish to commission an independent review. The goal of the review will be to address the issues outlined above, and any others that the reviewer may identify, with the goal of strengthening our work and our organisation. We propose the following terms of reference for the review.

Terms of Reference for the Independent Review

The Council of InternetNZ have commissioned an independent review with the following Terms of Reference:

1. To review the claims of systemic racism, the areas of concern identified above and any further areas identified by respondents, and to give a view on them.
2. To make recommendations for improvements in policy and practice at InternetNZ in relation to these matters, those recommendations to be consistent with advancing the objects of InternetNZ and the resource constraints under which InternetNZ currently operates.
3. The Reviewer will be provided with full access to any information that they deem necessary, subject only to unavoidable legal, fiduciary and privacy constraints, to complete a rigorous review of the issues raised. The Reviewer may receive written or oral evidence, receive or request documentary evidence in support of submissions and request that individuals or groups meet with them. Members of InternetNZ (current and former) are encouraged to speak with the Reviewer.
4. The Reviewer may find it helpful to consider the report in two parts, with a report on (a) above as soon as practicable and a report on (b) by 30 June 2022.
5. Individual complaints are not formally within the scope of the review but the Reviewer will be provided with full access to information on matters that have sparked the review.
6. The reports authored by the Reviewer will be provided to the President and the Chief Executive of InternetNZ and will be made publicly available. It will be the Council's responsibility to prepare any version of the report that will be made publicly available, but the Reviewer will be consulted about the public release of any versions of the reports.
7. The Reviewer will be supported by the Chief Advisor Māori, the Māori Sector Partnerships team, Legal Counsel, and by other functions as required.

Timing

The review will be completed by a written report to Council by 30 June 2022.

In meeting this completion date, the Reviewer will also need to have:

- met with Council and members of staff suggested by management.
- provided opportunity for members to make a submission to the Reviewer (either in support of or as an alternative to written submissions).

Recommendations

We recommend that Council:

- (a) Agree to commission an independent review of systemic racism in InternetNZ;
and
- (b) Ask the Interim Chief Executive to commence the review as soon as practicable.

Appendix ii: Methodology

1 Methodology

The review was undertaken in three parts, commencing with a literature review of historical relevant information. A survey was developed for InternetNZ staff and membership, with the option of extending this to past staff and Council members who were directly impacted by the events in 2021. The last stage of the review involved interviewing those staff, Councillors and Members, present and past, who wished to have the opportunity to meet with the Reviewer either individually or as a group.

1.1 Literature Review

36 separate historical documents were initially provided by management to the Reviewer by either electronic copy, email or weblinks, to support the review.

18 further documents were provided by individual interviewees during the review period. These were mostly shared directly with the Reviewer post the individual interviews.

The documents were analysed and key themes identified and referenced to support the report writing at the conclusion of the interviews. These documents provided useful contextual information about the establishment and early years of InternetNZ, the constitutional and organisational changes over time, as well as specific communications and reports relating to the Claims of systemic racism and subsequent events.

Where respondents suggested that specific documents be sought to aide the review, and these were requested, they were duly forwarded on to the Reviewer.

1.2 Survey Design

The survey design was developed by the Reviewer in association with INZ management and it was agreed that it be conducted through the *AskYourTeam* platform, which ensured anonymity for respondents. Support was provided by INZ staff to liaise with *AskYourTeam* and communicate the survey opportunity to identified recipients.

The survey was introduced to recipients with the following brief:

This survey is to gather input for the independent review to examine concerns of systemic racism within InternetNZ / Domain Name Commission. This review is in response to the claims of systemic racism raised in 2021.

Systemic racism is the concept that the ways things are done in a society or an organisation disadvantages groups of people based on their race.

In this survey, some questions refer to Māori perspectives and practices. This term is inclusive of events, activities, behaviours, policy development, products, technology, community engagement, communications and increased internal capability that reflect cultural responsiveness.

This survey is confidential. The responses will be seen by Dr. Hana O'Regan, Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive Officer from CORE Education and AskYourTeam / INZ staff administrator. (TBC)

The survey questions were intentionally directed to the three areas identified in the scope, and written in a way that allowed respondents to provide open ended answers and reflections:

- **He tirohanga whakamuri (looking back) -**
 1. Are you aware that in 2021 claims of systemic racism were raised in relation to InternetNZ? If yes, what are your reflections on the claims of systemic racism raised in 2021 and subsequent issues that arose at that time. Y / N (allow comments)
- **He tirohanga mohoa nei (current views)**
 2. Can you identify any current issues of systemic racism in InternetNZ / Domain Name Commission? Y/ N. If so, please provide examples (allow comments)
 3. Are you aware of recent initiatives to integrate Māori perspectives and practices into the work of InternetNZ / Domain Name Commission? Y / N. If yes, please provide some detail. (allow comments)
- **He tirohanga whakamua (looking to the future)**
 4. Looking to the future, what are some positive steps forward that InternetNZ / Domain Name Commission can take to integrate Māori perspectives and practices into our work? Free text

1.3 Survey Engagement and written feedback

1.3.1 Survey

The survey was optional and was promoted as one way in which those who wanted to engage in the review could do so and remain anonymous. It went live on the 30 June 2022 and was open for two weeks, closing on the 13 July 2022.

Further to the survey, some respondents chose to send their written feedback directly to the Reviewer by email. In some cases, this was to provide more information post the interviews, having had time to reflect on the discussions and wishing to share additional reflections. A few others chose to only provide written feedback via email because of a mistrust of the survey anonymity.

1.3.2 Interviews

When preparing for the interviews, the Reviewer asked that supports be made available to any person engaging in the process who may find the engagement traumatic or triggering. InternetNZ management communicated the availability of the organisational support services to those participating. One person informed the Reviewer they would not be opting for an interview because they knew it would be too traumatic for them to do so.

It isn't known how many people needed to access support services because of their engagement, however it can be said, the majority of interviews were emotionally charged with significant distress shared by the respondents with the Reviewer. This issue is addressed further in the report.

Initially we had looked to conduct all interviews within a two-week timeframe, however a significant number of respondents continued to request the opportunity for a private interview after the two-week date, and the decision was made to be as inclusive as possible and prevent the possibility of people feeling they weren't given adequate opportunity to engage. This did have the effect of extending the Reviews timeframe.

A late interview was requested at the end of August, however the Reviewer declined this out of concern that others may also decide to belatedly engage, and this would create further challenges and delays for the report writing part of the review. That respondent was given the opportunity to submit a late written submission, which they did.

All respondents were asked if they approved the recording of their interviews to help the writing process, and all but one agreed to this request. The recordings were held on the Reviewer's personal device with the commitment to have these recordings deleted on the completion of the report.

Most of the interviews stayed within the hour allocated time, however a few went beyond this. A total of 19 hours were recorded.

Notes were taken during the interviews, again with expressed permission from the respondents, with a total of 143 pages of notes in total.

Prior to the interviews commencing, the following brief was shared explaining how the interview is going to run:

- *We have one hour, however if you feel you would further time, then we can make provisions for that*
- *I have some questions to ask that I will be asking everyone. These are a guide, and you are free to share other whakaaro with me*
- *I acknowledge that this issue has been tough for those involved and there are supports available if you feel triggered in anyway*
- *This is confidential and you can be anonymous.*
- *If you want anything you share to be attributable to you, you will need to clearly state so during the course of the interview, so it can be recorded accordingly.*
- *I will be writing notes and identifying the main themes that come through*
- *If you are happy for me to make a voice recording for my notes - this will be deleted from my phone once the notes have been written.*

The interview questions were the same as those in the written survey. This ensured consistency across the respondent feedback, irrespective of the mode of response chosen.

For the purposes of this report, the responses received from the survey, the direct communications and the interviews have been amalgamated and ordered based on the themes identified and issues raised. This has been done to further ensure the anonymity of respondents who chose to engage in the interview process, and therefore, known to management.

Appendix iii: The Faces of Racism

THE FACES OF RACISM

Racism has many faces. Some of them may be veiled others frankly open unmasked.

These faces may be grouped into three main forms—personal racism, cultural racism and institutional racism.

Personal racism affects individuals or groups. It occurs when people of one group are seen as inferior to another because of skin colour or ethnic origin. It belongs to those situations in which an individual is directly diminished or discriminated against on grounds of race.

In our country as in others, it may be manifested in jokes, disparaging comment and prejudiced attitudes. It may occur in rental housing, unequal distribution of opportunity and in our classrooms. Personal racism is the form that cuts most keenly at individual people. It is the variety that diminishes a person in their own eyes. It attacks the fount of personal identity and destroys a sense of self worth, as well as denying the indigenous person access to resources and opportunities in the larger society.

Cultural racism is less obvious than the more open areas of prejudice between individuals. It is entrenched philosophy and beliefs. Its most obvious form in New Zealand is in the assumption that Pakeha culture, lifestyle and values are superior to those of other New Zealand cultures, notably those of Maori and Polynesian people.

It is rooted in the 19th century heritage of unshakeable belief in the cultural superiority of Europeans. It is a direct inheritance of colonialism and imperialism, and embodied in the ethos of the dominant group and thence the mind of the individual within the group. Without challenge and change this is transmitted to successive generations in the pre-school stage of development and becomes a recurrent theme in subsequent socialisation.

Despite the fact that tenets of Pakeha culture become fractured, eroded or obsolete (for example the nature of family, the role of marriage and the position of women) the assumptions of cultural superiority persist.

One of the most pervasive forms of cultural racism is the assumption that Pakeha values, beliefs and systems are “normal”. This places Maori values, beliefs and systems in the category of “exotic”. Provision for Maori cultural preference thus become an “extra”. That which sees provision for Maoritanga as anything other than a normal ingredient of our national culture is essentially culturally racist.

However, the most damaging aspect of cultural racism is the underlying notion of superiority. It is seldom overtly stated in modern New Zealand, but it is constantly implied in advertising, in education and in the marketplace.

One of the ways in which this parcel of attitudes impacts on Maori culture is that the power culture, because it has the authority of “superiority”, takes to itself the right to select those aspects of Maoritanga it wants to use or include in general New Zealand culture.

These selections range from the tail motif on our national airline to the inclusion of Maori words in the Dictionary of New Zealand English.

It must be stressed that it is not the inclusion of Maori symbols and elements in the national culture that marks cultural racism. It is the arrogantly assumed “right” to select those elements and to use them in ways which hollow them and diminish their cultural importance.

Whilst personal and cultural racism may be described in their own right, institutional racism is observed from its effects. It is a bias in our social and administrative institutions that

automatically benefits the dominant race or culture, while penalising minority and subordinate groups.

The effects of institutional racism are graphically illustrated in our social statistics. For virtually every negative statistic in education, crime, child abuse, infant mortality, health and employment, the Maori figures are overwhelmingly dominant. In virtually every positive statistic in these areas, Maori are in miniscule proportion, if not entirely absent.

It is plain that the institutions, by which New Zealand society governs itself, distributes its resources and produces wealth, do not serve Maori people but they do clearly serve the great bulk of Pakeha people.

The persistent myth advanced to explain the cause of Maori disadvantage is that the Maori have not “adapted” or have “failed” to grasp the opportunity that society offers. This is the notion that poverty is the fault of the poor.

The fact is, though, that New Zealand institutions manifest a monocultural bias and the culture which shapes and directs that bias is Pakehatanga. The bias can be observed operating in law, government, the professions, health care, land ownership, welfare practices, education, town planning, the police, finance, business and spoken language. It permeates the media and our national economic life. If one is outside, one sees it as “the system”. If one is cocooned within it, one sees it as the normal condition of existence.

Institutional racism is the basic weapon that has driven the Maori into the role of outsiders and strangers in their own land. The more recent identification of institutional racism as the basic evil constraining Maori participation in New Zealand life, has caused something of a furore. The assumption of those under attack has been that their involvement in our monocultural institutions means that they personally are therefore accused of being ‘racist’. The resultant resentment has been bitter and a barrier to change. It has polarised attitudes and clouded the capacity for dealing with the issue of monoculturalism.

If a person works within an institution that practises institutional racism, that person need not necessarily be racist. However, if those in positions of influence within institutions do not work to reduce and eliminate the monocultural bias that disadvantages Maori and minorities, they can be accused of collaborating with the system, and therefore of being racist themselves. In a system of monocultural/racist policies and practices, individual behaviour when operating these policies and practices, becomes translated into personal reflections of racism.

Institutional racism can be combatted only by a conscious effort to make our institutions more culturally inclusive in their character, more accommodating of cultural difference. This does not begin and end at “the counter”. The change must penetrate to the recruitment and qualifications which shape the authority structures themselves. We are not talking of mere redecoration of the waiting room so that clients feel more comfortable.

Affirmative action programmes aimed at reducing the monocultural bias in our institutions are an essential ingredient of change. The first stage of change to a more culturally inclusive New Zealand is the recognition of biculturalism. This involves both the place and the status of Maoritanga in our institutional arrangements (Puao-Te-Ata-Tu. 1988:77-79).