



A Report on the Treaty of Waitangi Community Discussions Initiative

30 June 2006

Treaty of Waitangi Information Unit
State Services Commission
Wellington

State Services Commission
June 2006
ISBN 978-0-478-30300-1
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Executive Summary

Introduction

In November 2004, the Government directed the State Services Commission (SSC) to facilitate a series of discussions on the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in contemporary New Zealand. This report provides an overview of the implementation and the effectiveness of the Community Discussions Initiative. The key findings of the report will be used as the basis of a report back to government on how effective the Community Discussions Initiative was at engaging communities in dialogue about the place of the Treaty in contemporary New Zealand. This report draws information from a range of quantitative and qualitative sources collected throughout the series of discussions.

In February 2005, Cabinet agreed that:

- the series of community discussions on the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in contemporary New Zealand would be fostered by way of a dialogue method, and
- the key purpose of the community discussions was to provide New Zealanders with the opportunity, and on-going support, to get together to consider and discuss the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand now and in the future.

Design and implementation of the Community Discussion events

The objectives set for this series of Community Discussion events were to provide an opportunity for participants to:

- a get together to consider and discuss the place of the Treaty in New Zealand, now and in the future
- b examine and develop an understanding of their own views on the place of the Treaty relationship in New Zealand today and in the future, and
- c increase their awareness of the views of others about the place of the Treaty relationship in New Zealand today and in the future.

The dialogue method developed to guide the Community Discussions was designed to:

- create a safe space for people with diverse views to meet
- encourage communication based on co-operation, mutual respect and active listening
- work towards a shared meaning
- foster understanding of participants by changing the way we communication, and
- increase understanding of how views are shaped by personal experiences and assumptions.

Two providers, each with different skills and expertise were engaged, by the SSC to contribute to the design and implementation of the project. The Auckland Workers Educational Association (AWEA) had extensive experience in designing and developing resources about the Treaty and facilitating Treaty training and education workshops. Mixed Media Ltd had extensive knowledge and experience in designing, developing and facilitating dialogue processes. AWEA led the development of a methodology to guide the facilitation of the dialogue events, and produced a resource booklet to provide background information to participants prior to the event. Both providers facilitated events, with Mixed Media Ltd taking assigned responsibility for the South Island events and AWEA for the North Island events.

Within each community where an event was held, a key contact person from that community was engaged to secure a diverse range of participants for the discussion event. The locations for the pilot events were chosen to ensure diversity in terms of geographical location and with the aim of drawing participants from a cross-section of the population. Key contacts were responsible for confirming the date and timing of the dialogue events.

A total of 29 discussion events were held throughout the country. Five pilot events were held between October and November 2005 and 24 main events were held between February and May 2006. Of the 29 discussion events, 23 general events were designed to attract a cross section of the population. Six events targeted specific population groups including: two events for Pacific people, two youth events, one Māori event and one migrant event.

Participants' had a diverse range of values, beliefs, assumptions and experiences that they drew on to develop and explain their views. When asked prior to the event, almost three quarters (74%) of registered participants indicated that the Treaty was very important or important to them. Similarly, over three quarters (78%) of participants indicated that the Treaty was very relevant or relevant to New Zealand today. Knowledge of the Treaty was more diverse with 57% of participants indicating that they had a fair amount or a lot of knowledge on the Treaty and 37% indicating that they did not know much or hardly anything about the Treaty.

Of those who registered, 76% (327 people) participated in a dialogue event. Six percent withdrew prior to the event, and 18% did not attend on the day. Of those who participated in the dialogue events:

- almost two thirds (64%) were female
- almost half of participants (48%) were aged 50 years or over and the age of participants ranged from 15 – 83 years, and
- 58% of participants identified as European, 19% identified as Māori, 13% identified as Pacific, and 6% identified as Asian.

Effectiveness of the Community Discussions

In assessing the effectiveness of the Community Discussions, the SSC considered whether the objectives of the Community Discussions Initiative were met. Overall, the SSC considered that the dialogue method was effective at engaging communities about the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in contemporary New Zealand. Participants were able to come together and engage in conversations about the Treaty, in a way that would not often occur within their communities. The strength of the dialogue method was that it provided a safe and open forum for participants to share their views on the Treaty of Waitangi.

A safe space was provided for people with diverse views to meet; communication was based on co-operation, mutual respect and active listening. A deeper understanding of the Treaty was gained by most participants and there was also an increase in understanding how differing views are shaped.

The dialogue method successfully moved discussion away from the adversarial confrontation that has historically surrounded the Treaty. It enabled a safe and non-threatening environment where different viewpoints could be exchanged and debated.

Feedback from participants indicated that they were both highly satisfied with the process and that the objectives of the community discussions were met. The majority of participants

indicated that they were able to examine and clarify their own views of the Treaty relationship. Similarly most participants agreed that their knowledge and understanding of other people's views about the Treaty relationship had increased. Many participants reported that through the process they were able to increase awareness and understanding of the views of others, even those views that were different from their own. Almost two thirds of participants indicated that they had rethought their own views about the Treaty relationship.

Finally, the process clearly gave participants the impetus to gain further knowledge and understanding of the Treaty. A large number of participants expressed the desire to gain further knowledge and education about the Treaty.

Section One - Introduction

Background

In November 2004, the Government directed the State Services Commission to facilitate a series of discussions on the place of the Treaty in contemporary New Zealand. This report provides an overview of the implementation and the effectiveness of the Community Discussions Initiative. The key findings of the report will be used as the basis of a report back to government on how effective the Community Discussions Initiative was at engaging communities in dialogue about the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand today, and in the future.

Structure of report

The introductory section of the report provides an overview of the structure of the report and the information sources used to inform the findings. **Section two** provides background to the Community Discussions Initiative and includes an overview of the Treaty of Waitangi Information Programme, and the terms of reference for the initiative. It also provides an introduction to the concept of dialogue.

Section three outlines the design and implementation of the Community Discussion events including the development of the dialogue method used to guide the discussion, the structure of the events and the way in which the events were implemented. This section also provides an overview of the event location, the views and knowledge of registered participants and the demographic characteristics of participant.

Section four considers the effectiveness of the series of Community Discussions. It provides an overview of participant satisfaction with the events assesses the degree to which the objectives of the discussion were met and considers the flow on effect of the events.

Section five provides an overview of the key challenges experienced in implementing this series of discussions, records a number of observations about what worked and reports feedback from participants about the role of government in promoting dialogue. These observations are intended to inform any further initiatives taken by government and may also be useful to others seeking to promote discussion of issues where there are strongly held views and conflicting values involved.

Information sources

This report draws information from a range of quantitative and qualitative sources. The quantitative data provides the basis of the report findings and was drawn from:

- registration forms – which focused on the demographic characteristics of participants (such as their age, gender, and ethnicity), and
- participant evaluation forms – which focused on the quality of participants and the outcomes of the discussions.

The quantitative data is supplemented by qualitative information, which was gathered through:

- face-to-face interviews with a small sample of participants and facilitators
- written reports from key contact people, event reports from facilitators, participant evaluation forms, and final reports from the facilitation teams, and

- Cabinet papers and early scoping documents to provide the historical context for the initiative and the background on the dialogue methodology.

Appendix One sets out the methodology used to inform this report.

Definition of key terms used

A number of abbreviations (acronyms) have been used throughout the report to enable ease of reading. These include:

- The Programme – The Treaty of Waitangi Information Programme
- SSC – State Services Commission
- Treaty Unit– The Treaty of Waitangi Information Unit
- Community Discussions – this refers to the 29 specific events that took place
- Dialogue – refers to process that was used to facilitate discussion within the Community Discussion events
- Project Manager – the Treaty Unit staff member who was assigned responsibility for leading and co-ordinating the initiative
- SSC official – the Treaty Unit staff member who attended the discussion event.

Section Two – Background to the Community Discussions Initiative

This series of Community Discussions was one of a number of initiatives established as part of the Treaty of Waitangi Information Programme. This section provides background on the Programme and the terms of reference for the Community Discussions Initiative. It also provides an introduction to the concept of dialogue.

The Treaty of Waitangi Information Programme

This series of Community Discussions was one of a number of initiatives of the Treaty of Waitangi Information Programme. The Government established the Programme in May 2003 for a three-year period to June 2006. The goal of the Programme was to increase public knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi through both greater coordination of existing resources and the development of new initiatives and resources.¹ This was to be achieved through increasing the range, distribution, accessibility and provision of factual information related to the Treaty. The State Services Commission was directed to oversee the Programme and did so through the establishment of the Treaty of Waitangi Information Unit.

The Treaty Unit has increased the range, distribution, accessibility and provision of factual information related to the Treaty, through the production of:

- a Treaty of Waitangi website (in English and Māori)
- a set of five booklets on the Treaty of Waitangi
- a picture book for primary school students, and
- a teacher resource kit for use in secondary schools containing a CD ROM, a book of teaching activities and a poster.

The Treaty Unit has also implemented a number of community activities to contribute to the goal of increasing public knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi including:

- a Sponsorship Scheme that supported community groups to implement activities which promoted and improved understanding of the Treaty
- the TREATY 2U touring exhibition, and
- providing funding to the Human Rights Commission to undertake work on human rights and the Treaty of Waitangi.

In addition to the above activities, in December 2004 the Treaty Unit was tasked with facilitating a series of community discussions on the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in contemporary New Zealand, and advice was sought from the SSC about how this might be done.² On 15 November 2004, Cabinet

- agreed that the SSC's Treaty of Waitangi Information Unit should seek to facilitate community discussion on the place of the Treaty in contemporary New Zealand, and
- invited the Minister of State Services to report back on how this might be done, including budget implications [CAB Min (04) 37/4B].

¹ CAB Min (03) 16/4D refers.

² CAB Min (04) 37/4B refers.

Choosing the process for the Community Discussions

In considering how a series of community discussions might be implemented, the Treaty Unit was seeking a process that would:

- focus the discussion of the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in contemporary New Zealand (as opposed to a historical focus)
- move beyond the adversarial debate that has come to dominate much of the public discussion around Treaty issues, and
- build understanding of the views of others, rather than persuade people to adopt a fixed position.

In its report back to Cabinet, the SSC recommended that the series of community discussions be facilitated by way of a dialogue method. This advice was informed by the recent experience of the Bioethics Council, which had employed the dialogue process to facilitate engagement with the public of New Zealand on the Cultural, Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of the Use of Human Genes in Other Organisms.

Through this process, the Council found dialogue to be a useful mechanism for working through an issue about which strongly held views and conflicting values are involved. The Council reported that the dialogue process provided a context in which people could acknowledge the views and perspectives of others, hear the challenges to their own positions and think about the issues differently. People were able to put their concerns on the table, to propose some responses or questions and to enquire about the positions of others without any climate of attack. The Council observed a very positive response from most participants to such a context and reported that people embraced the opportunity to explore the complex issues in a respectful and open manner.³

Terms of reference for the Community Discussions

In February 2005, Cabinet agreed that:

- the series of community discussions on the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in contemporary New Zealand would be fostered by way of a dialogue method, and
- the key purpose of the community discussions was to provide New Zealanders with the opportunity, and on-going support, to get together to consider and discuss the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand now and in the future.⁴

The Terms of Reference for the community discussions, which were agreed by Cabinet, were that they would:

- take place at a local level, giving people the opportunity to discuss the place of the Treaty, using examples that are real to them
- employ a broad-based approach. The regions will be selected by the SSC, in consultation with other key agencies, in order to ensure a diverse range of communities are engaged in the process
- be informed by factual information about the Treaty, available prior to the discussions
- use resources which reflect the range of views New Zealanders have of the Treaty of Waitangi, and

³ The Cultural, Ethical and Spiritual Dimensions of the Use of Human Genes in Other Organisms, the Bioethics Council, Wellington, 2004 p39.

⁴ CAB (05) 4/2.

- be co-ordinated and supported by a network of trained facilitators to ensure constructive discussion.⁵

The dialogue process

A range of ‘dialogue’ models (including public dialogue/conversations, sustained dialogue and community dialogue) have been used in different contexts and for different purpose around the world. Many are premised on the work of academics such as Martin Buber, David Bohm, Peter Senge and William Isaacs. The common theme of all these approaches is that dialogue is a process, which enables a group of people to express and explore views about an issue to develop understanding.

William Isaacs defines dialogue as:

...dialogue is a conversation in which people think together in a relationship. Thinking together implies that you no longer take your own position as final. You relax your grip on certainty and listen to the possibilities that result simply from being in a relationship with others – possibilities that might not otherwise have occurred.

*...a conversation with a centre, not sides. It is a way of taking the energy of our differences and channelling it toward something that has never been created before. It lifts us out of polarisation and into a greater common sense, and is thereby a means for accessing the intelligence and coordinated power of groups of people.*⁶

David Bohm has noted that:

*In dialogue... nobody is trying to win. Everybody wins if anybody wins. There is no attempt to gain points, or to make your particular view prevail... We are not playing a game against each other, but with each other. In a dialogue, everybody wins.*⁷

Dialogue aims to draw participants from as many parts of the community as possible to exchange information face-to-face, share personal stories and experiences, honestly express perspectives, clarify viewpoints, and develop solutions to community concerns and opportunities. Unlike debate, dialogue emphasises listening to deepen understanding. It aims to develop common perspectives and goals, and allows participants to express their own interests.⁸

⁵ CAB (05) 4/2.

⁶ Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together: William Isaacs; Doubleday, New York, 1999.

⁷ On Dialogue: David Bohm; edited by Lee Nichol, Routledge, London, 1996.

⁸ Community Dialogue Toolkit, Canadian Rural Partnership (2002).

Section Three – Design and Implementation of the Community Discussion Events

This section provides an overview of the design and implementation of the Community Discussions Initiative. It sets out the dialogue method that was developed to guide this series of community discussions, including the development of the dialogue method used to guide the discussions, the structure of the events and the way in which the events were implemented. This section also provides an overview of the event locations, the views and knowledge of registered participants and the demographic characteristics of participants.

Development of the dialogue method

It is important to distinguish between consultation and dialogue. Consultation between government and the public often involves the government hearing what the public has to say on a specific issue, often about a proposed policy direction. By comparison, the dialogue method developed here was designed to ensure that community groups themselves were the key parties to the discussions. The role of government was to facilitate that process.

The objectives set for this series of Community Discussion events were to provide an opportunity for participants to:

- a get together to consider and discuss the place of the Treaty in New Zealand, now and in the future
- b examine and develop understanding of their own views on the place of the Treaty relationship in New Zealand today and in the future, and
- c increase their awareness of the views of others about the place of the Treaty relationship in New Zealand today and in the future.

The dialogue method developed to guide the Community Discussions was designed to:

- create a safe space for people with diverse views to meet
- encourage communication based on co-operation, mutual respect and active listening
- work towards a shared meaning
- foster understanding of participants by changing the way we communicate, and
- increase understanding of how views are shaped by personal experiences and assumptions.

The discussion events took place over a six-hour period.⁹ In order to guide the discussions within the time available, participants were asked to focus on the Treaty relationship today and in the future, rather than the broader historical context or Treaty related issues (such as colonisation and its consequences, government and other strategies of redress and racism). This decision was based on the experience of the Auckland Workers Educational Association who advised that focusing the discussions in this way would increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for the participants and mitigate the problem of generally low level of public knowledge about the Treaty and New Zealand history.

In order to create a non-threatening environment in which people felt able to share their views and listen to others, participants were asked to:

⁹ Including breaks.

- listen carefully to what others say
- reserve making assumptions about other people's beliefs or views
- contribute to the conversations in a constructive manner
- work to understand different viewpoints, and
- share the time amongst those who wish to speak.

Confidentiality was also highlighted as a key guiding principle for the events. An overview of the structure of the event is outlined below:

Section One (2 hours)

- Introductions, dialogue process and agreeing on the process.
-

Section Two (3 hours)

- What views do you hold on the place of the Treaty relationship today?
 - What are some of the feelings, assumptions, beliefs and values that influence your view?
 - Review of the Treaty relationship concept;
 - Ideas associated with the Treaty;
 - Expectations of the relationship;
 - Place of the Treaty today;
 - What affects views;
 - Uncertainties about views.
-

Section Three (2 hours)

- What views do you hold as the place for the Treaty relationship in the future?
 - Vision of the Treaty in the future;
 - Comparing visions.
-

Section Four (1/2 hour)

- What next?

A set of facilitators' guidelines, was developed to ensure consistency in the way in which discussion events were implemented across the country. An information booklet was also developed for registered participants to provide background information prior to the event.

Implementation of the events

Facilitation of events

Two providers, each with different skills and expertise were engaged, by the SSC to contribute to the design and implementation of the project. The Auckland Workers Educational Association (AWEA) had extensive experience in designing and developing resources about the Treaty and facilitating Treaty training and education workshops. Mixed Media Ltd had extensive knowledge and experience in designing, developing and facilitating dialogue processes.

The SSC considered there were merits in bringing together the experience of both organisations in the implementation of the initiative. AWEA led the development of a methodology to guide the facilitation of the dialogue events and produced a resource booklet to

provide background information to participants prior to the event. Both providers facilitated events with Mixed Media Ltd taking assigned responsibility for the South Island events and AWEA for the North Island events.

Each event was attended by a team of two facilitators and an official from the SSC. It was essential that the facilitation teams were seen as neutral and non-political. Given that there would be a mix of Māori and non-Māori participants, a decision was taken to ensure that each event had a Māori and non-Māori facilitator. This also ensured that Māori protocols or use of Te Reo Māori could be managed if a situation arose which required it. Further, for the targeted events, facilitators were engaged that identified with the target group (that is, Asian, Pacific and youth).

The role of the Treaty Unit staff member was to provide an overview of the broader programme, the purpose of the dialogue events (including the objectives of Government) and outline how the information collected throughout the process would be used and the nature of the report back to Government.

Participant engagement

Participants for the discussion events were secured through a key contact person (key contact). For each event, the responsible facilitation team identified a key contact with local knowledge of their community. The primary role of the key contact was to identify potential participants, encourage them to register their interest in attending a dialogue event and then work with the Treaty Unit to issue an invitation to that event.

As a starting point the key contacts were provided with a list of people who had registered their interest in a dialogue event via the Programme's website (www.treatyofwaitangi.govt.nz). They then identified other potential participants from within wider community networks in an attempt to gather a group with a diverse range of views on the Treaty of Waitangi. For each event, a maximum of 15 participants was sought. Potential participants were invited by key contacts to formalise their registration of interest with the Treaty Unit. Every person who registered was invited to attend a Community Discussion event in their area.

Event locations

The locations for the pilot events were chosen to ensure diversity in terms of geographical location and with the aim of drawing participants from a cross-section of the New Zealand population. In addition, where possible event locations were selected to align with the itinerary established for the TREATY 2U touring exhibition. It was intended that the touring exhibition would provide information and motivation for potential participants in the lead up to the dialogue events. For this reason, key contacts were asked to organise the events one to two weeks after the exhibition had been through the local community. Discussion event locations ranged from rural areas and small towns to large cities. Appendix Two lists the locations and dates of the events.

Timing of events

Key contacts were responsible for confirming the date and timing of the dialogue events. Key contacts were asked to ensure that the discussion event did not coincide with other significant local events that might limit the pool of participants or could negatively impact on the dialogue.

Key contacts were asked to organise the events to enable maximum participation from individuals. Discretion to organise and hold the events on weekdays, weekends, or evenings was given to the key contacts, pending the availability of facilitators.

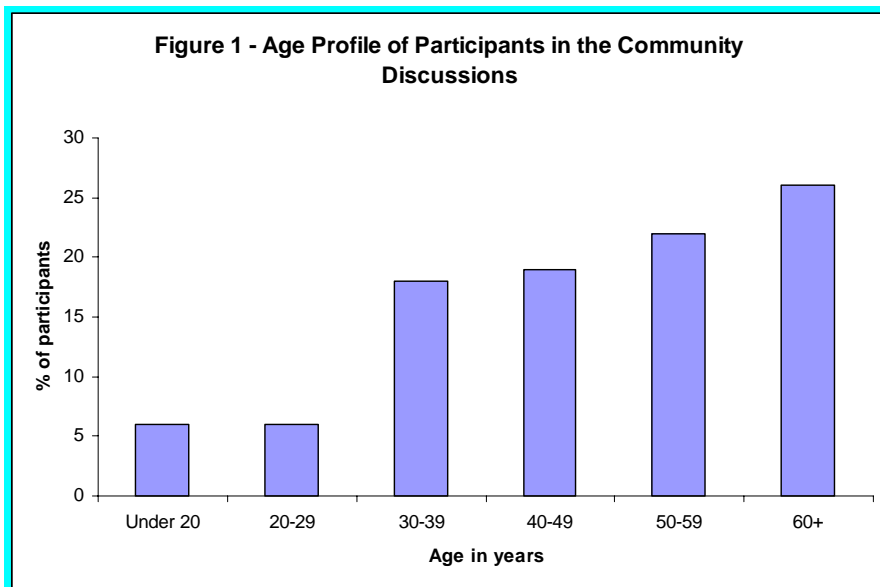
Profile of the events and participants

A total of 29 discussion events were held throughout the country. Five pilot events were held between October and November 2005¹⁰ and 24 main events were held between February and May 2006. Of the 29 discussion events, 23 general events were designed to attract a cross section of the population. Six events targeted specific population groups including: two events for Pacific people, two youth events, one Māori event and one migrant event.

Demographic characteristics of participants'

Of those who registered, 76% (327 people) participated in a dialogue event. Six percent withdrew prior to the event, and 18% did not attend on the day. Of those who participated in the dialogue events:

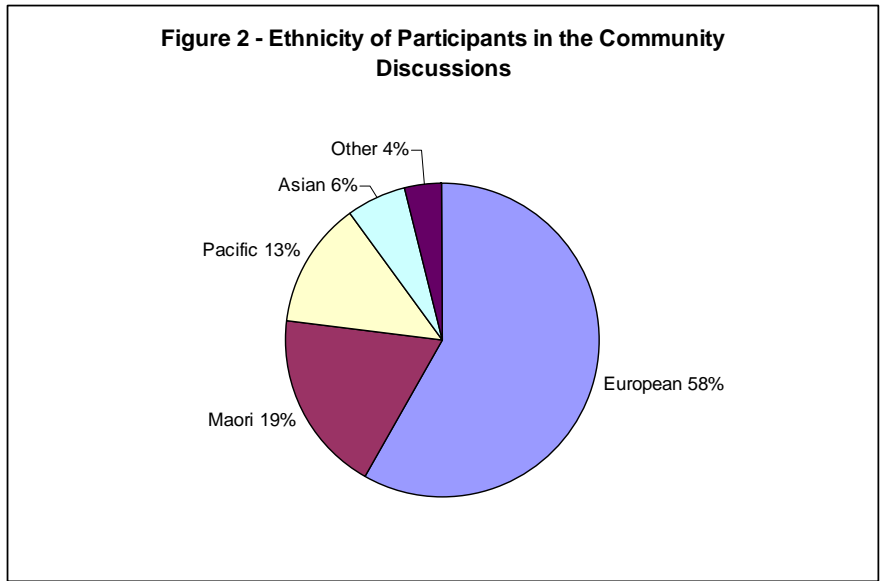
- almost two thirds (64%) were female
- almost half of participants (48%) were aged 50 years or over and the age of participants ranged from 15 to 83 years, and
- 58% of participants identified as European, 19% identified as Māori, 13% identified as Pacific,¹¹ and 6% identified as Asian.¹²



¹⁰ The pilot events were held to test and modify the dialogue methodology and information prior to the main events taking place.

¹¹ Pacific included those people who identified themselves as Samoan, Cook Island, Niuean, and Fijian

¹² 4% of participants did not record their ethnic group.



Registered participants’ views and knowledge about the Treaty

In response to approaches from key contacts, a total of 430 people formally registered their interest to participate in a dialogue event. All of these people were extended an invitation to participate in an event. Those who registered were asked to provide a response to the following questions:

- How important is the Treaty of Waitangi to you?
- How relevant is the Treaty of Waitangi to New Zealand today?
- How much do know about the Treaty of Waitangi?

In terms of views on the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi and its relevance to New Zealand today, the views of registered participants were fairly polarised. Almost three quarters (74%) of registered participants indicated that the Treaty was very important or important to them. Similarly, over three quarters (78%)¹³ of participants indicated that the Treaty was very relevant or relevant to New Zealand today.

Table 1 – Registered participants views and knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi

Relevance	%	Importance	%	Knowledge	%
Very Relevant	33	Very Important	33	A fair amount	50
Relevant	32	Important	41	A lot	7
Not Relevant	4	Not Important	8	Not much	31
Unsure	8	Unsure	12	Hardly anything	6
No response given	23	No response given	6	No response given	7
N =	100		100		100
	310		310		310

¹³ Because this question was modified between the pilot and general events, data for this question was collected from the 24 general events only. Therefore responses are based on 275 participants, rather than a combined (pilot and general events) total of 327 participants.

Table 1 shows that there was greater diversity among participants on their level of knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi. Fifty seven percent of participants indicated that they had a fair amount or a lot of knowledge on the Treaty, while 37% indicated that they did not know much or hardly anything about the Treaty. The quotes below illustrate the range of views on the Treaty of Waitangi that emerged throughout the discussion events.

“I think the Treaty is very relevant to our country today and is our founding document. I got to hear from some who just didn’t feel that way. I also talked to others who felt similarly to me but by varying degrees.” (Participant)

“I don’t think the Treaty really has a place in modern New Zealand. It’s not relevant to a modern society, but I did hear the view that it is relevant and that we should incorporate the Treaty into legislation today. I don’t agree with it but I did hear it.” (Participant)

“I respect Māoris. But frankly, there is no need for the Treaty to progress their lot. The government is obligated to look after the “whole” of the population and progress together.” (Participant)

Section Four – Effectiveness of the Community Discussions

In considering the effectiveness of the Community Discussions Initiative, this chapter considers:

- participant satisfaction with the events; and
- the degree to which the objectives of the Community Discussions Initiative were met.

Participants’ satisfaction with the dialogue events

Feedback from participant evaluations indicated a high level of satisfaction by participants with the way in which the events were organised and facilitated. Some 91% of participants rated their overall satisfaction with the event as either: good, very good or excellent.

Most participants were pleased with the quality of the background material that they received and the way in which the events were facilitated. Ninety one percent rated the quality of facilitation as good, very good or excellent. Further, more than half the participants considered that the material that they had access to before, during and after the event, would be useful in the future.

Were the objectives for the Community Discussions initiative met?

The objectives of the Community Discussion events were to provide an opportunity for participants to:

- a get together to consider and discuss the place of the Treaty in New Zealand, now and in the future
- b examine and develop understanding of their own views on the place of the Treaty relationship in New Zealand today and in the future, and
- c increase their awareness of the views of others about the place of the Treaty relationship in New Zealand today and in the future.

As part of the evaluation process,¹⁴ participants were asked to rate the degree to which they considered that the objectives for the event had been met.

Were participants able to get together and discuss the place of the Treaty in New Zealand, now and in the future?

Public conversations about the Treaty of Waitangi are often fraught and confrontational. A number of participants noted their reluctance to engage in conversations about the Treaty of Waitangi for fear of confrontation.

*“People usually do not have a safe space to discuss the Treaty relationship.”
(Participant)*

“Due to misinformation and scandal mongering by many aspects of the media in particular, I still feel that discussing the Treaty is akin to discussing politics and religion, you have to carefully choose your audience.” (Participant)

¹⁴ The results are drawn from 310 evaluation forms completed by participants at the end of the dialogue events.

“The Treaty and issues tend to be a ‘not for discussion’ topic among many groups.” (Participant)

Most participants (93%) either strongly agreed or agreed that the dialogue event that they attended provided an opportunity for them to share their views on the Treaty in a way that often would not happen elsewhere.

“Such conversation does not occur normally in every day conversation.” (Participant)

“Gives everyone a chance to express their views, rather than just the highly opinionated people.” (Participant)

“Points were discussed and explained rather than views criticised.” (Participant)

“I would recommend this model of engagement to all sensitive topics that require public consultation.” (Participant)

Many participants noted that the environment was non-threatening and identified that both the dialogue method and the quality of the facilitation as contributing to this.

“...Interesting to hear others opinions without fear of being “spoken down.” (Participant)

“...I felt very comfortable and not threatened about discussing my views.” (Participant)

“Incredibly safe environment where all views could be heard. There should be more of this [dialogue events].” (Participant)

“The facilitators did a great job of setting ground rules and making a safe environment.” (Participant)

“Hearing views, perspectives of others in a respectful forum has been a huge benefit.” (Participant)

The dialogue process also enabled an exchange of different viewpoints. Over three quarters (77%) of participants either agreed, or strongly agreed that the dialogue process enabled different viewpoints to be expressed.

“This model is good to [use to] express ourselves. No matter if our views are different from others.” (Participant)

“I was able to share my own views and hear someone else’s view, a view a bit different from mine. Hearing their view didn’t really influence my view but it did enhance my knowledge of the Treaty and helped me understand where they were coming from.” (Participant)

“I learnt that different views can be expressed with respect towards each other. We can learn from opposed views.” (Participant)

“Participants gained more awareness of others issues regarding the Treaty, they gained a growing understanding of difference...a growing ability to listen and accept others’ opinions, some growth in understanding Treaty issues, some sharing of historical facts, some sharing of personal stories.” (Facilitator)

Most participants indicated that they were pleased they took the opportunity to get together (some for the first time) with other members of their community to share and build understanding of their views on the place of the Treaty. They also appreciated the opportunity to meet and interact with others in their community from different social and professional backgrounds and ethnic groups.

“It brought together a group of people who would not have talked to each other about anything of importance.” (Participant)

“The dialogue process was useful for people from different ethnic/socio economic backgrounds to discuss issues concerning the Treaty that would not normally be discussed with people outside their social comfort zone.” (Facilitator)

“Provided some safety and release mechanisms between people who may otherwise not talk or listen to each other.” (Participant)

Through the dialogue process, a different quality of conversation about Treaty became possible. Participants noted that they had begun to engage in a different way in conversations about the Treaty of Waitangi.

I was able to discuss with others their opinions which I haven’t ever been able to do.” (Participant)

“It taught us to listen to each other.” (Participant)

“Helped me take the blinkers off.” (Participant)

Were participants able to examine and develop an understanding of their own views on the place of the Treaty relationship in New Zealand today and in the future?

Nearly three quarters (73%) of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their understanding of their own views about the Treaty relationship had increased as a result of participating in an event.

“It was good to have time to reflect on specific areas and get to know my own perspective better as well as that of others.” (Participant)

“I came to have an opinion and understand my own ideas.” (Participant)

“It has expanded my thinking about the implications of Te Tiriti, especially as some people have strong views that some aspects of New Zealand life have nothing to do with the Treaty.” (Participant)

“I’ve learnt a lot about what others think and have understood why.” (Participant)

A large number of participants attributed an increase in their understanding to hearing the ‘stories’ and views of others within their group. The process provided an opportunity that often led to participants questioning and clarifying their own views to gain a better understanding of their views.

*“Listening to others has made me think about the future, my kids future.”
(Participant)*

“It also reinforced my views, but opened my way of thinking that others views were different.” (Participant)

“Comparing the Treaty issues to our own experiences has given me more of an awareness.” (Participant)

Almost two thirds (65%) of participants indicated that they had rethought their own views about the Treaty relationship. Some 18% of participants remained undecided about whether their understanding of their views about the Treaty relationship had increased as a result of participating in an event.

“I can’t say... it may have enhanced my knowledge of the Treaty, but I don’t think it did this as much as an educational workshop could have.” (Participant)

“My views have largely remained unchanged, but other peoples views have provided a useful perspective.” (Participant)

For other participants, the dialogue events had very little impact on their view of the Treaty.

“No I really don’t think it had any influence or impact on my view, I really didn’t learn anything, there was no additional knowledge for me.” (Participant)

Were participants able to examine and develop an understanding of other people’s views on the place of the Treaty relationship in New Zealand today and in the future?

Most participants (91%) agreed that their knowledge and understanding of other people’s views about the Treaty relationship had increased. Many participants reported that the process had enabled them to gain a deeper understanding of views that were different from their own.

“Even if we don’t totally agree with somebody’s views, then at least we can learn to see where they are coming from.” (Participant)

“I was able to share my own views and hear someone else’s view, a view a bit different from mine, hearing their view didn’t really influence my view but it did enhance my knowledge of the Treaty and helped me understand where they were coming from.” (Participant)

Participants were able to hear different perspectives (both positive and negative) on the Treaty and explore some of the underlying assumptions of the viewpoint. This helped in many instances to clarify the viewpoint, as well as gain a better understanding of the broader issues.

I found it interesting to experience other people’s views on a personal level rather than through the media. In this sense I’ve learned a lot of new things about the Treaty.” (Participant)

Seeing things through a different point of view helps people to see the issues a lot better.” (Participants)

“I’ve learnt a lot about what others think and have understood why [they think like that].” (Participants)

A small number of participants considered that they did not get to examine and develop understanding of other people’s views because:

- they felt the dialogue was dominated by the facilitators
- they were looking for discussion (rather than dialogue) and education, or
- they considered other views that they heard insignificant because they considered that the participants with those views had limited knowledge about Treaty.

Flow-on effects from the dialogue events

Through face-to-face interviews, a selection of participants was asked whether participating in the event had any influence or impact on them beyond the event itself. Participant responses were varied, however a common theme emerged which highlighted a number of “flow-on” effects. This series of discussions have enabled understandings that will contribute to future dialogue about the place of the Treaty.

“I will tell and discuss Treaty issues with better understanding.” (Participant)

“Gives me some knowledge to take back to our local communities for our own dialogue.” (Participant)

Some of those interviewed expressed the view that the process had given them a particular desire to learn and gain more information or education about the Treaty. Other activities such as active discussions with family and friends, writing articles for newspapers, hosting informal discussions or promoting their various understandings in other ways, or through applying their learning in their workplace or other community settings such as their church group were highlighted as other possible initiatives to continue dialogue about the Treaty of Waitangi.

“It has encouraged me to continue my learning and reminded me that my actions are part of the solution for the future direction in this area.” (Participant)

“I have already instigated some really good discussions with my family and the people I work with about the Treaty and its place in New Zealand today. Just talking about it more has been really good. I’ve even gone back through a lot of my strategic documents I use at work and started seeing where the Treaty fits in and how I can work it into what I do, and try and do it better.” (Participant)

Section Five – Community Discussions – What Worked?

This section provides an overview of the key challenges experienced in implementing this series of discussion and records a number of observations about what worked. These observations are intended to inform any further initiatives taken by government and may also be useful to others seeking to promote discussion of issues where there are strongly held views and conflicting values involved.

Engaging participants

The role of key contacts

The network of key contact people, who engaged participants from within their communities, was critical to the success of the dialogue events. We observed the value of utilising key contacts drawn from the communities in which the events would be held. Because of their local knowledge and networks, they were able to draw in a range of participants who may not otherwise have agreed to participate in the discussions. Key contacts identified that the factors that enabled them to effectively engage participants were: regular and on-going support from the project co-ordinator; having a clear understanding of the purpose and benefits of dialogue; having sufficient lead in time to plan for the event and engage participants, and having flexibility to schedule the date and time of an event.

Key contacts reported that they experienced a level of suspicion and scepticism about government's intentions in running these events. Providing potential participants with the opportunity to clarify that the purpose of the discussions prior to the event (both through conversation with the key contact or the project manager) was an important step in the engagement process. Through this process we found that people were more willing to participate once they had clarified that the purpose of the event was about dialogue and not consultation or advocacy.

We learnt that the role of the key contact is an intensive one and can be time consuming. Our experience was that this role (which included recruiting participants, managing logistical arrangements and liaising between their community, the facilitation teams and the Treaty Unit staff) could entail between one and two weeks work. Future dialogue initiatives need to recognise the time intensive nature of the key contact role, and allocate sufficient time, resources and support to those undertaking the role.

Flexibility of timing and scheduling of events

One of the challenges in engaging participants was identifying event times where people would be available. We were aware that events held during working hours would limit the catchment of potential participants or attract mainly those participants who worked in an environment that supported their attendance. Similarly, events held during the weekend would impinge upon people's personal time¹⁵. Having a team of facilitators who were willing and available to facilitate evening weekend events, and providing key contacts with the discretion to schedule an event that suited the availability of potential participants were key factors in scheduling the events.

¹⁵ For example, the Pacific event held in Auckland coincided with the Secondary School Polynesian Festival and this impacted on that event where there were 20 participants at the start, and only 9 were still present at the end of the event.

The event

Opening the events

The introductory session of the events was critical because it set the scene for the discussion. For most events, the facilitation team and SSC official were visitors to the region, and therefore the role that key contact played in opening the event, welcoming the participants, introducing the facilitation team and then “handing over” to the facilitation team was important for breaking the ice.

During the opening of most events, (and at times during the event) participants expressed a level of anxiety about the purpose of the discussions, the intentions of government and the likely outcomes of the event. Feedback from facilitators was that it was useful to be able to direct these questions to the SSC official for a response. Similarly many participants commented that, on matters such as the background to and purpose of the event, they found it useful to be able to engage with a government official rather than the facilitators.

Creating a safe environment

Public discussion on the Treaty of Waitangi can often be confrontational. Few participants had experience of constructive dialogue on the Treaty but skilled facilitation made a positive experience possible for most.

The engagement of facilitators experienced in dialogue processes was invaluable. Their experience meant that they were able to guide the discussions in a way that generated an equal exchange of information and ideas that revealed people’s diverse views. Further, they were adept at creating an environment where the opinions and views shared by participants did not need to be defended.

The facilitators noted that the communication guidelines enabled a safe and respectful environment to be established, and allowed free flowing discussions to emerge. Even when strong feelings were being expressed and emotions were high, participants treated each other with respect.

One of the issues that arose in the general events was that Māori (who were often a minority) were on occasions, unfairly ‘singled out’ or asked to explain why Māori took a particular position on the Treaty.

“Dialogue requires participation by people of different perspectives, which often equates with different backgrounds. In some cases, there were issues of cultural safety.” (Facilitator)

Feedback from Māori participants indicated the ability of the facilitators to ensure the process remained safe and effectively manage potentially adversarial situations, affected the quality of their experience.

Following the pilots, the project co-ordinator contacted Māori who had registered an interest in participating in a dialogue event to ensure that they were aware of the nature of the discussion that would occur. Talking through the potential issues that could arise gave these participants the opportunity to consider their participation in an event and, if they chose to, withdraw from the event. When given this information and opportunity, most Māori opted to confirm their registration, but appreciated the opportunity to discuss what the process involved and/or could involve for them as participants.

Facilitation teams

Feedback from the facilitators indicated that the tailored dialogue method (which provided guidelines to facilitators) helped to ensure that a consistent approach was taken to the delivery of the events across the country. As the series of discussions progressed the benefits of “pairing up” facilitators became apparent. By their third event, facilitators who had delivered events together developed synergies in the way they ran the process, and their respective delivery styles and roles. This resulted in more streamlined and polished delivery of the events. Thus the formation of facilitation teams is a strategy that we recommend for future dialogue initiatives.

Targeted events

The targeted events created an opportunity for particular communities (Māori, Pacific, Asian and youth) to explore the significance of the Treaty of the Waitangi in relation to their own experience. At these events, we observed the benefits of engaging key contacts and facilitators who the participants from specific communities were able to identify with.

The Māori, Pacific and Asian facilitators were quickly able to: establish a level of rapport and credibility with the participants, bridge traditional language barriers (which had the potential to restrict participants participation in the event), create a safe environment where cultural differences could be discussed without the fear of being disrespectful and ensure that the cultural values and beliefs were not overshadowed during the events. Thus the strategy of utilising facilitators that are able to identify with participants from target communities is one that we would recommend for future initiatives.

“Definitely have to have Pasifika presenting to Pasifika but also must have a Māori person there. They can help us with their perspective on things”.
(Facilitator)

Through the targeted events we learnt that the degree diversity amongst participants was as comparable to that of the general event. Some participants were had a high level of knowledge of the Treaty of Waitangi whereas others knew very little. Some considered the Treaty of Waitangi to be a critical document within contemporary New Zealand. Others thought the Treaty of Waitangi had no relevance to New Zealand now or in the future.

Feedback from the targeted events was that participants appreciated the opportunity to explore the relevance of the Treaty to their community. The key advantage of the Māori event was that participants were able to explore their views on the Treaty without the dynamic of being asked to explain the “Māori view” of the Treaty. In addition, whanaungatanga amongst participants within communities meant that established relationships already existed. Therefore, participants had a level of trust, respect and rapport with one another that enabled them to engage quickly in the process.

At the outset of the Pacific and migrant events, participants felt that the Treaty of was little relevance to them because the Treaty relationship is defined as being between Māori and the Crown. Indeed, this was a theme that filtered through the general events as well. A common question posed by participants was “If the Treaty relationship is between the Crown and Māori – then where do we fit?”

In these events, it was important that facilitators allowed time to explore this issue before moving on to the relevance of the Treaty now and in the future. By the end of the event, many

Pacific and migrant participants considered that they had developed an understanding of the relevance to the Treaty to them.

“The event informed my personal journey of my knowledge and understanding where I as a Pacific person fit in.” (Pacific Participant)

“I now know where I stand with the Treaty and that I am a New Zealander.” (Asian Participant)

The dialogue method

Diversity of views

One of the underlying premises of the dialogue approach is that it should draw on participants with a diverse range of views on an issue. With almost three-quarters of participants indicating that they thought the Treaty was either very important or important to them, we were concerned that we may not have recruited a range of participants with sufficiently diverse views to enable an effective dialogue process.

This profile of participants was consistent with the experience of key contacts who identified that recruiting participants with diverse views was a challenge. They also reported that people with extreme views on the Treaty were less willing to participate in such an event for fear of being publicly exposed, ridiculed or ostracised. Others reported that participants with extreme views on the Treaty were difficult to recruit because they were less likely to be interested in hearing views that were different from theirs.

Our experience was that the dialogue method worked well, both for those groups where the viewpoints of participants were extreme and for those groups where the views were less diverse. Thus the challenges experienced in engaging participants with very diverse views, did not detract from the usefulness of the method as a way of guiding discussions on the Treaty of Waitangi.

Focus on the Treaty relationship

In order to focus conversations during the discussion events, the dialogue method was designed to focus on the Treaty relationship today and in the future, rather than the broader historical and contemporary issues around the Treaty.

Many participants told us that it was difficult to separate the Treaty relationship today and in the future from ‘other Treaty related issues’ (such as Treaty settlements or the debate about race based policies). A number of participants expressed a frustration with the focus of the dialogue being limited to the present and future Treaty relationship.

One of the key challenges for future dialogue initiatives will be to balance the need for a method that focuses the discussion within a limited timeframe, against the desire of participants to explore the complexity of Treaty issues.

Role of government in promoting dialogue about the Treaty of Waitangi

At almost every event, participants questioned whether government intended to play an on-going role in promoting discussion about the Treaty of Waitangi. We heard that one-off community events just open up the topic. Participants wanted the opportunity for on-going discussions to build on the interest and momentum that the discussion had generated and were

seeking a level of commitment from government to support local level initiatives to promote on-going dialogue on the Treaty of Waitangi.

“A very good start for many – now we really need to move to the next step.”
(Participant)

Beyond the event they participated in, many participants were keen to establish other initiatives to promote dialogue about the Treaty of Waitangi within their communities. However, some noted that previous attempts to identify resources to support such initiatives had been time-consuming, frustrating and few attempts had met with success. It was noted that beyond the Sponsorship Scheme initiated by the Treaty Information Programme¹⁶, no other government agency provided support for initiatives that promoted information and dialogue on the Treaty of Waitangi.

Participants identified three key ways in which government can contribute to on-going dialogue about the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in contemporary New Zealand. These included the:

- provision of information resources about the Treaty of Waitangi
- support of community initiatives about the Treaty of Waitangi, and
- provision of a range of opportunities to learn and talk about the Treaty of Waitangi.

Provision of information resources

Many participants expressed the view that one of the most important contributions that government can make to on-going dialogue about the Treaty of Waitangi is through the provision of information resources. There was a view that the resources that have been developed as part of the Treaty of Waitangi Information Programme (for example, the sets of booklets and the website www.treatyofwaitangi.govt.nz) were valuable and that government should ensure that these resources are able to be accessed by the public on an on-going basis. The issue of ensuring that there are high quality resources within schools and support for teachers teaching the Treaty was also raised throughout the discussions.

“Easy to read material. Not too long or confusing. Accessible website.”
(Participant)

Support of community initiatives

Participants identified the government has a role to play in promoting dialogue on the place of the Treaty in contemporary New Zealand. However the feedback, particularly from communities, is that government should be seeking to take on a support rather than a leadership role in promoting dialogue of the place of the Treaty. Stakeholders identified that one of the strengths of community driven initiatives is that they are likely to better address local Treaty issues at a time when tensions arise. They are also likely to attract greater buy in and lead to longer-term outcomes within communities.

“A move from State facilitation to community facilitated discussions would be a step forward.” (Participant)

“It’s a good model, but it relies on the State too much.” (Participant)

¹⁶ As a result of a reprioritising exercise, the scheme was suspended in September 2005.

Some stakeholders identified that if government has any resources to support future delivery of dialogue events, it would be most useful if funding is made available to pay for variable costs such as facilitation, venue, and catering where a community group has organised an event.

Should the government choose to continue to promote dialogue initiatives, the experience of this initiative suggests that a support role (rather than a leadership role) is likely to be a more effective contribution. This could be achieved through supporting initiatives identified by communities and by encouraging the development of new locally based initiatives.

Support for a range of Treaty initiatives

Throughout the Community Discussions Initiative a number of participants in the community discussions expressed a concern that they knew very little about the Treaty of Waitangi. It became apparent that there is considerable demand for opportunities to learn about the Treaty. Many expressed a desire to learn more about the Treaty of Waitangi and were seeking information about learning opportunities (for example through courses or workshops). While some participants felt comfortable and sufficiently knowledgeable to engage in dialogue on the Treaty, others wanted to become better informed about the historical context and associated issues. We heard that they would then feel better equipped to discuss the place of the Treaty in contemporary New Zealand.

“The workshop has got me really interested in learning more. I read all the pamphlets I picked up from the workshops and I want to read that Michael King book too, I think it would be great to have some good TV shows too, that way lots of people could benefit.” (Participant)

“I think we all need more education about our history and about the Treaty, we could all benefit from some really good well researched factual documentaries about the Treaty, there are a lot of misconceptions out there and even more uninformed people.” (Participant)

Support for a range of community activities has the potential to contribute to on-going dialogue about the place of the Treaty in contemporary New Zealand. In addition to the Community Discussions Initiative piloted through this programme, participants identified that Treaty education workshops, seminars, hui and conferences were also mechanisms to contribute to on-going dialogue.

This suggests that any future efforts to promote dialogue should offer a menu of initiatives that would enable New Zealanders to engage with the Treaty at a level, and in a way that responds to their needs and interests.

Section Six – Conclusions

This section:

- summarises the views expressed by participants in the Community Discussions initiative on the place of the Treaty of Waitangi, today and in the future
- discusses how effective the Community Discussions Initiative was at engaging communities in dialogue about the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand today, and in the future, and
- highlights any considerations that may need to be taken into account by Government should it wish to implement further community dialogue events in the future.

Overall, the SSC considered that the dialogue method was effective at engaging communities in dialogue about the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in contemporary New Zealand. Feedback from participants indicated that they were both highly satisfied with the process and that the objectives of the community discussions were met.

The dialogue method developed was found to be effective for promoting dialogue on the Treaty. Participants were able to come together and engage in conversations about the Treaty, in a way that would not often occur within their communities. It successfully moved discussion away from the adversarial confrontation that has historically surrounded the Treaty. It enabled a safe and non-threatening environment where different viewpoints could be exchanged and a different quality of conversation about the Treaty emerged.

Participants were able to examine and clarify their own views of the Treaty relationship and also build understanding and increase awareness of views that were different from their own. Lastly the process clearly gave participants the impetus to gain further knowledge and understanding of the Treaty. A large number of participants expressed the desire to gain further knowledge and education about the Treaty of Waitangi.

Participants identified three key ways in which government can contribute to on-going dialogue about the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in contemporary New Zealand. These included the:

- provision of information resources about the Treaty of Waitangi
- support of community initiatives about the Treaty of Waitangi, and
- provision of a range of opportunities to learn and dialogue about the Treaty of Waitangi.

Many participants expressed the view that that one of the most important contributions that government can make to on-going dialogue about the Treaty of Waitangi is through the provision of information resources.

Should the government choose to continue to promote dialogue initiatives, the experience of this initiative suggests that a support role (rather than a leadership role) is likely to be a more effective contribution. This could be achieved through supporting initiatives identified by communities and by encouraging the development of new locally based initiatives.

This suggests that any future efforts to promote dialogue should offer a menu of initiatives that would enable New Zealanders to engage with the Treaty at a level, and in a way, that is responsive to their needs and interests.

Appendix One - Report Methodology

This report draws its data from a range of qualitative and quantitative sources and includes:

Quantitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information drawn from participant registration forms, and • information drawn from participant evaluation forms.
Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interviews with a small sample of participants and facilitators, • written reports from key contact people, • written reports from facilitators, • participant evaluation forms, • progress and final reports from facilitation teams, and • Treaty Unit staff member observations.

Quantitative data

Two main mechanisms were utilised for collecting quantitative information:

- participant registration forms – a total of 327 registration forms were analysed. These provided demographic details of participants such as their age, gender, and ethnicity, and
- participant evaluation forms – a total of 310 evaluation forms were analysed. These posed a range of statements and questions that aimed to draw information on the quality of the experience of participants engaged in dialogue.

Qualitative data

In the main, face-to-face interviews were conducted with a sample of nine participants and four facilitators. However, some telephone interviews were conducted due to the limited time available to complete these interviews. Question guides were developed to ensure consistency of questioning.

Written reports from key contact people, event reports from facilitators, participant evaluation forms, and final reports from the facilitation teams also provided rich information to feed into this report.

Cabinet papers and early scoping documents were also used to provide the historical context for the initiative and the background on the dialogue methodology.

Data analysis

The above information was then analysed and key findings were then drawn from that analysis. A thematic approach was adopted to analyse the multiple strands of qualitative data and refine into key findings. Direct quotes have also been incorporated to enrich the information being presented.

Quantitative information was drawn from the Community Dialogue registration database and analysed using a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. This information formed the basis for the statistical information presented.

Appendix Two – Schedule of Events

Pilot events: October – November 2005

Event Location	Date of Event
1 Raetihi	29 October 2005
2 Gore	5 November 2005
3 Tokomaru Bay (Marae based)	9 November 2005
4 Nelson	9 November 2005
5 Auckland	11 November 2005

General events: February – May 2006

Event Location	Date of Event
1 Hamilton	11 February 2006
2 Rotorua	18 February 2006
3 Auckland Central	25 February 2006
4 Palmerston North	27 February 2006
5 Masterton	28 February 2006
6 Auckland - West	1 March 2006
7 Auckland - North Shore (Youth)	5 March 2006
8 New Plymouth	19 March 2006
9 Te Aroha	20 March 2006
10 Wanganui	22 March 2006
11 Auckland - Manukau	25 March 2006
12 Whangarei	1 April 2006
13 Queenstown	3 April 2006
14 Christchurch (Pacific)	3 April 2006
15 Christchurch (Youth)	7 April 2006
16 Wellington - Porirua (Pacific)	8 April 2006
17 Tauranga	8 April 2006
18 Auckland- Eastern Suburbs	9 April 2006
19 Invercargill	11 April 2006
20 Ashburton	19 April 2006
21 Dunedin	21 April 2006
22 Timaru	27 April 2006
23 Wellington	3 May 2006
24 Blenheim	11 May 2006