

# Letters to the Editor

## Support for struggle...

Thank you for drawing the New Zealand public's attention to the human rights abuses and genocidal policies as practised against my people, the people of West Papua.

I have met a great many New Zealanders and spoke at many public meetings since I arrived in your country before the West Papua human rights conference at AUT University last month.

It is encouraging and humbling that so many New Zealanders care about our plight and share our concern for the future of the indigenous people of West Papua.

Your article, "No watchdogs for West Papua" (Issue 14), showed very graphically how the media in New Zealand have shown very little interest in West Papua, unlike the people. And I thank Dianna Vezich for the article.

But I must say as I travelled around the country that many other media started to show interest. Radio New Zealand International, Canterbury Television, National Radio and the *Dominion Post* were among them — and, of course, *Te Waha Nui*.

Just recently an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* focused on the issue of 2500 Papuan refugees at East Awin in Papua New Guinea. And a further 8000 Papuan refugees close to the border between the Star Mountains and Torres Strait. It's a never-ending story of desperate, displaced people and a culture wanting to survive.

Many thanks,

Rev Socrates Sofyan Yoman  
President, Fellowship of Baptist  
Churches of West Papua  
Jayapura, Indonesia

## ...and for our coverage

I wanted to compliment your newspaper on the high quality of the articles generally.

I was particularly impressed with the article in your September 1, 2006, edition entitled "No watchdogs for West Papua".

I attended the conference held last month at AUT University on "West Papua: The Hidden Conflict", which was organised by the Indonesian Human Rights Committee to draw attention to the plight of the West Papuans. Your article explains very well why the conflict will remain hidden from view in New Zealand.

It is good to see that an important issue in our Pacific backyard is being covered by the journalism students at AUT University, even though the mainstream media have all sorts of reasons for not having even mentioned it.

Perhaps this article could also be circulated to the mainstream media. This way excuses such as time constraints, other priorities, lack of resources, inability to get visas, lack of relevance can be addressed by using the very professional piece which your own journalist, Dianna Vezich, has produced.

Cameron Walker  
Indonesia Human Rights Committee  
Auckland

## TWN a treat over coffee

While sifting through the reading material on our staff room table during break for something of interest to read, I came across your paper (Issue 14).

Admittedly the first thing that caught my eye was the title, *Te Waha Nui* — to most this means "big mouth". But on taking a closer look, it also means — "shout out, speak up!" and because this is a student initiative I thought it was worthwhile taking the time to make some comment.

The fact that you use a well-known slang word as your title is a plus as it attracts both cultures, Pakeha and Maori.

Way back in my student days, *Craccum* was the chosen read for varsity. Personally I didn't see how many of the articles were about student issues on a local level. It was a fairly monocultural read and that fact must have impacted on its readership.

Your paper has a good mix of article topics and writing styles and I found the articles informative enough to actually capture the theme while still giving the reader a platform to consider the point.

I think the sectioning of articles allows the reader to get a broad overview on what's current in that topic eg. Education, Taha Maori, Health and I particularly enjoyed the Opinions page.

It's a good opportunity to meet the reporters and no doubt gives them the space to make their statements on issues.

The Special Report ("The changing face of crime") as a key feature article didn't seem to go deep enough to warrant the centre pages. Perhaps perspectives from some of the community groups actively working with crime prevention and rehabilitation would have offered a balance of comment. Having said that, I thought it was an easy article to read.

I would like to comment on the two articles by Karen Tay. I enjoyed her style of writing and her headlines are catchy and imaginative eg. "New market opens for designer shoppers"... catchy pun there and well hey, "eye of newt"... who wouldn't want to read on.

She's witty and informative and I'll look out for her articles in future.

Cheers and keep up the good work.

Francie Tutara  
Auckland

## Pollution - is this true?

I read your newspaper today for the first time and was very impressed at the range, style and depth of content. Congratulations.

In reading the articles, I was instantly engaged and have the following comments/questions:

"Walking to our graves," is this true? Or are these deaths attributable to a range of respiratory diseases, not just due to pollution?

"The changing face of crime," with all these challenges why were so many police standing next to the supermarket/Progressive protesters in Queen St today? Hardly a crime threat?

Keep in touch with Maire Leadbeater, a real jewel in civil rights.

Noah Hickey, who really cares about the All Whites? A huge opportunity to seek out the real soccer stars in New Zealand. There are so many teams and individuals out there way better than these losers.

Check out business teams and weekend tournaments with different ethnicities, eg. Fiji, Somalia.

Sally Peake  
Auckland



## Halting ads and pylons

What a week...

The purpose of *Te Waha Nui*, apart from being a damn interesting read, is as a training paper for us budding journos here at AUT.

And boy have we been learning quickly this week.

Without going into too much unnecessary detail, there was much controversy in the news room about the Homeowners Against Line Trespassers (HALT) campaign advert on page 23.

More precisely, the controversy was about the advert that was supposed to run on page 23 but was replaced at the last minute.

In any other newspaper the editorial team would have no say over the content of the adverts in their paper.

But as our seasoned readers know we are not any other newspaper.

There is no doubt the ad was a brilliant creation. Made even more so by the fact it was produced by two advertising students here at AUT.

However the ad in question featured a graphic suicide photo, a touchy subject among the media and wider community.

The arguments both for and against were well considered and the debate caused much consternation and sleepless nights for our team.

However we came down on the side of caution in the end. So instead we are running an advert supporting the same campaign but created by a different pair of students.

To Bex Radford and Ray McKay, the students whose ad we withheld, the team here wishes you all the best in your burgeoning careers and apologises for giving you the run around.

However, let this not take attention away from the HALT campaign itself.

We here at *Te Waha Nui* wish to extend our support for your campaign. This paper has a history of taking on the causes of ordinary people and HALT is another cause worth supporting.

There is extensive research supporting a link between high tension powerlines and a rise in numerous ailments amongst residents in the surrounding areas.

A study published in the *British Medical Journal* found that children whose birth address was within 200m of an overhead power line had a 70 per cent increased risk of contracting leukaemia.

Children living 200m to 600m away had a 20 per cent increased risk.

Some research links high tension power lines with cancers other than leukaemia such as adult brain tumors, Lou Gehrig's

disease and miscarriages.

There is even research from England, Scotland and America linking proximity to power lines with increased rates of suicide.

It is our hope that this campaign, which is only possible thanks to the generous support of so many, will raise the level of public discussion around this important issue.

Taking the opinion that "it's not affecting me so it's not my problem" is not only weak, but distasteful.

If the pylons were going in backyards and parks in your neck of the woods I imagine you would hope for as much support as you could muster.

To Jane Berney and the everyone else involved in HALT we wish you good luck with your fight.

\* Those with a sharp eye or memory will have noticed a number of changes between this edition of *TWN* and the previous two.

I have taken over as editor for the final two editions of the year. But don't worry, nothing has happened to Craig. Our tutors could not choose between us and so decided to give us equal share of the role.

Thus the CBD community paper initiative is on the outta and *TWN* has returned to its traditional fare.

I hope you enjoy this edition. Please send us your feedback. Receiving your kudos makes the long hours or effort all the more worth it.

— Mathew Grocott

*From the editor...*



**Letters Policy**

Here at *Te Waha Nui* we welcome your feedback and opinions.

Send your letters to:

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The editor reserves the right to edit letters for reasons of readability or length.