



PREFACE

It is my great pleasure to introduce this collection of research essays from communications scholars at Unitec Institute of Technology. As President of the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association (ANZCA), I recognise the important contribution of scholars in New Zealand to discussion of issues emerging from our ever-more complex communications environments. ANZCA is a professional association that aims to support scholars in communications and media disciplines by facilitating annual conferences, sponsorship of professional development and workshop events, as well as facilitating opportunities to publish innovative research. On behalf of the Association I wish to acknowledge the hard work of the editors and authors featured in this collection, which offers important new research and innovative analysis of contemporary issues in media and communications in New Zealand.

The aim of this collection is to showcase Unitec's Department of Communication engagement with contemporary communications issues and this collection presents a rich and diverse response. From questions of race, multiculturalism and cultural politics, to case studies discussing questions of digital accessibility, governance and organisational communications, the research highlights a specifically New Zealand context, but is applicable to global understandings of communications.

A collection such as this is important in an era where mass communication has shifted to "mass conversations" (Spurgeon, 2009). From a global perspective, communication has become increasingly 'social'. Some have lauded the opportunities for people to connect across previously insurmountable geographic, as well as cultural and political divides. However along with these new opportunities have come questions of accessibility, representation, censorship and sanction of the use of digital, online and social-media enabled forms of communication. Thus, the paradoxical nature of contemporary communications environments is that while they have undoubtedly created new opportunities for inclusion and exchange, those opportunities are mediated by increased disruption, disorientation and dissent. Nowhere is this more evident than in New Zealand, where cultural identity and representation are constantly negotiated on what seems like shifting political grounds.

The authors in this collection recognise the increasingly complex nature of communications environments in New Zealand and have responded with the research presented here. Using the overarching themes of 'representation' and 'voice', the collection analyses many of the complex cultural and political negotiations that occur in representing the different voices that give Aotearoa/New Zealand its unique place in the world. Much of the work presents strong voices of intervention or voices staking a claim to particular representation in contemporary New Zealand. As New Zealanders, as communications scholars, as people everywhere trying to find our way through the complex nature of communications today; listening to those voices might give us clues as to a way forward. I hope that you enjoy this collection.

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REFERENCES

Spurgeon, C. (2009). From Mass Communication to Mass Conversation: Why 1984 wasn't like 1984. *Australian Journal of Communication*, 36(2), pp. 143-158.