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By Wayne Mapp

The New Zealand Centre for Political Debate

Political Correctness

School around New Zealand are holding team sports events but are refusing to allow scores to be kept, in case the children are unable to cope with defeat. What kind of lesson do the teachers think they are giving that children can't think; that games are not about lessons for life? The children are certainly smart enough to keep the scores anyway, as one youngster was overheard telling her father, "There is no score, but we won by three goals."

This is the kind of political correctness that people are fed up with. It is an ideological attempt to change New Zealand where mediocrity reigns; where people are closeted from achievement. How many New Zealanders asked for this kind of change?

One of the features of political correctness is that it involves zealots capturing public institutions and then using their power to require people to act in a certain way. We, the public, don't usually get to vote on these things, we simply find out that at school games, it has been decided to no longer keep score.

Well, something can be done. We don't have to sit there and take it. That's why Don Brash appointed me to deal with political correctness. Most of us can recognise political correctness when we see it. There is usually, but not always, an element of the farcical present. And often there is an element of political indoctrination. For example, the AIDS Foundation has decided that the

only valid text of the Treaty of Waitangi is that of the Maori text. UNITEC decided that campus bus drivers must have an understanding of the Treaty before they can get a job. At least students can talk to the bus driver if they miss a lecture on the Treaty.

It is easy to cite numerous examples of political correctness, ranging from the absurd to the ideological. What was the underlying motivation of Air New Zealand and Qantas having a policy prohibiting men from being seated beside an unaccompanied child? Their view of "risk" stems from the extreme feminist viewpoint: "All men are rapists."

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Over the last few months I have received a huge number of letters and e-mails, citing examples of what various people see as political correctness. A common feature is that they usually involve the actions or practice of a state organisation. People intuitively know we are not just talking about the wide range of

ideas in the marketplace. There is invariably some element of state capture by zealots who intend to change how people act or think.

The education sector has been particularly guilty of political correctness. The PPTA felt so concerned that Georgina Beyer's bill on Transgender Sexuality had been dropped that they issued a special press release on it. At what point does the PPTA focus on the educational needs of children, rather than the rather esoteric issues of transgender sexuality of students and perhaps teachers.

The business sector has been under constant

attack from politically correct bureaucrats. OSH inspectors would sooner spend their time investigating a law office's torn carpet, rather than focussing on areas of real risk. Transit New Zealand planners will try and direct supermarket owners to predict traffic flows on motorways.

Of course, bureaucrats only work under the guidance of legislation. If governments pass legislation giving bureaucrats wide new powers, as has happened over the last few years, we can hardly be surprised if they use them. It might be said that this is just bureaucratic excess, but one of the features of political correctness is wrapping people up in paper work in the name of protecting them the Nanny State.

However, simply railing against political correctness does not effectively deal with it. What is required is a more systematic approach. First we have to identify what it is; second, why it is harmful; and, third, what to do about it.

It is National's goal to bring some commonsense back into those parts of government that are particularly vulnerable to the allure of political correctness. It is not my intention that this project become a reactionary attack on Maori, or

gay people. Instead, I am going to focus on those areas where the actions of the bureaucracy verge on the ridiculous or unreasonable, or where free speech is threatened.

It is not the role of State institutions to try and direct political viewpoints, but this is exactly what politically correct institutions are guilty of. In some cases exposure will be enough to create change. In others, a change to the law may be required to curb the excessive powers of the bureaucracy.

Dealing to political correctness means people standing up to the state and unrelated bureaucrats.

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Dr Wayne Mapp is the National Party Spokesperson for Labour & Industrial Relations, and Political Correctness issues. He also sits on the Industrial Relations and Transport Select Committees. These responsibilities fit neatly with National's philosophies for limited government, self-reliance, competition, speaking honestly not political correctness, equal opportunity, strong families and safe communities, and one standard of citizenship.

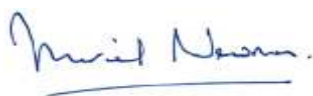
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Regards



Muriel Newman
(founder & director of NZCPD)