
Editorial

This *special issue* of the *South Pacific Journal of Psychology*, volume 15 (1), 2004, on “*The Development of Psychology in Oceania: Theory, Research and Practice*” is timely for the Oceania-Pacific region as the new millennium emerges on us. Many theoretical and practical questions remained unanswered or unaddressed, especially for the study of psychology in our region. The debate on the nature of psychology as a positivistic science continues while our region, recently exposed to the discipline itself, continues to be less critical about its application. However, the papers in this special issue directly or indirectly, do address theoretical, research, and application issues in the areas of indigenous mental health, cognitive development, policy, Indigenous education and behaviour therapy, among the indigenous peoples of Oceania. What is interesting is that the topics published are representative of the main areas of ongoing research in the Oceania-Pacific region. Furthermore, and most importantly, these articles show a primary concern for the understanding of the Pacific indigenous peoples’ way of perceiving and making sense of their physical and psychological world. On a critical front, some of the papers (e.g., see Flett, Hirini, Long and Millar, in this special issue) have questioned the validity of applying theories or models developed in the West up-front on the local population, without serious consideration of their cultural validity.

Without deliberating too much on the content of the articles in relation to the topic of this special issue (which the readers can judge for themselves), the challenge upon us, (especially the indigenous psychologists), as experts in the field in our region and elsewhere, is to reflect on the recommendations as well as questions and problems raised in the issue. We must see for ourselves what we can contribute to the development of psychology in our region, specifically in defining an appropriate and true psychology for our peoples of the Oceania-Pacific region. This remains a task for us all!

Special Issue Editorial Team, 2004