

AMAT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

AMAT

The *Auckland Medical Aid Trust (AMAT)* was incorporated under the *New Zealand Charitable Trusts Act* in 1974. Because AMAT is charitable, it is public rather than private, and is located in the 'not-for-profit' discourse. As a public institution it must make itself accountable. This report is one of its means of accountability.

AMAT's objects can be summarised as empowering it to address issues concerning:

- the support of human reproduction; and the provision of education -- including the research, publication and dissemination of literature -- about human reproduction.
- the requirement to arrange and conduct lectures, meetings and classes and to publish and disseminate literature.
- the requirement to do all other things to educate the public in the facts of human reproduction and the human reproductive process and of all matters concerning reproductive health, and well-being physical and social.

These objects imply that although human reproduction is often seen as purely a medical matter, it is much more than that; reproduction covers a range of other discourses and AMAT has begun to theorise these.

IN THIS ISSUE

- The objects of AMAT
- The Research Institute
- Publications
- Conference presentations
- Other items of interest
- Plans for the future

THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

During 1996, it was resolved that AMAT set up a research institute to promote and carry out research, and disseminate research findings in terms of the objects of AMAT. It was accepted that this would fulfil a requirement of AMAT. Fully owned by AMAT, the Institute would be governed and operated separately and was expected eventually to be partly self-funded.

Among the developments associated with this initiative so far are:

- The establishment, funding and promotion of the *AMAT Research Institute* to formulate, promote, and disseminate research, and promote the educational role of AMAT;
- the development and maintenance of electronically mediated communication and information technology to disseminate such information, including its website <http://www.amat.org.nz>
- an increased emphasis by AMAT on policy and research, especially into national and globalised developments;
- the development and maintenance of functional relationships with national and international organisations.
- the education of Trustees and provision of electronically mediated communication technology. This has enabled the trustees to address the issues that derive from the technological and other changes in national and international regimes (such as the electronic technological imperatives, neoliberalism, globalisation and the 'informational' economy) within which AMAT is now situated;
- the development and promotion of an *Adoption Resource Centre* in New Zealand
- Setting performance indicators for the Adoption Resource Centre.
- a major investigation into adoption and its relationship with globalisation;
- a major investigation into MVA abortion technology

on the advice of the Abortion Supervisory Committee. This has resulted in AMAC offering abortions two weeks earlier at six weeks gestation, rather than the previous eight weeks. For this service, AMAC has also gained support from the New Zealand Family Planning Association

- To commemorate the launch of the institute, a research award was presented to Elaine Papps and Mark Olssen as authors of *Doctoring Childbirth and Regulating Midwifery in New Zealand*, a book that traces the medicalization of childbirth in New Zealand. The \$10,000 prize was shared with Dunmore Press to assist with publicity and distribution costs for promotional copies of the book.

PUBLICATIONS

The following diverse array of AMAT funded publications -- under the direction of the Research Institute -- have made available -- always and already -- material that reflects the objects of AMAT. Through national and major international publishers as well as its own website, this material is available to the public of New Zealand in the first instance and to the rest of the world in the second.

One article has been published in a refereed journal, and another paper was accepted and read at an international law conference. The book reviews by Michelle Brewerton (our policy adviser) provide access to literature for researchers and the public of New Zealand as they alert them to the material -- that is one of our tasks.

There have also been two books published by Professor Michael Peters as a result of AMAT funding. One is a New Zealand publication and the other is from a major New York publisher. These books address the areas of AMAT's concerns and explicitly acknowledge the assistance of AMAT in the form of a research grant.

Where -- as a result of AMAT support -- such refereed publications result, AMAT can be assured of the value of that support. The AMAT website has now been underpinned by the same standard because some material from those publications is posted and available [on-line] <http://www.amat.org.nz>.

The following book reviews are currently available on the AMAT web site:

- Brewerton, M. (1999). *Book Review*. [Pavao, J. The Family of Adoption. London: Beacon Press, (1998)], [\[on-line review\]](#)
- Brewerton, M. (1998). *Book Review* [Hartman, B. Reproductive Rights and Wrongs and the Global Politics of Population Control. Massachusetts: South End Press (1995)], [\[on-line review\]](#)
- Brewerton, M. (1998). *Book Review* [Jefferies, S. The Idea of Prostitution. Melbourne: Spinifex Press (1997)], [\[on-line review\]](#)
- Brewerton, M. (1998). *Book Review* [Roiphe, K. *The Morning After*. London: Penguin Books (1993)], [\[on-line review\]](#)
- Fitzsimons, P. (1999). *An Investigation Into Manual Vacuum Aspiration (MVA): A report to AMAT*. Auckland: Auckland Medical Aid Trust.
- Fitzsimons, P. (1999). Michel Foucault, regimes of punishment, and the question of liberty. *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*. 27, (4).
- Fitzsimons, P. (1998). 'Abuse': an issue in human sexuality, Auckland: Auckland Medical Aid Trust, [\[available on-line\]](#)
- Fitzsimons, P. (1999). *Questions concerning technology and human reproduction*, Auckland: Auckland Medical Aid Trust, [\[available on-line\]](#)
- Fitzsimons, P. (1998). *Human Reproduction in the Postmodern Condition.: An Occasional Report to the Auckland Medical Aid Trust*. Auckland: The AMAT Research Institute.
- Fitzsimons, P. (1998, December). Sex abuse: *THE* emergence of a special kind of knowledge. Paper presented at the *conference of the La Trobe School of Law and Legal Studies*, Melbourne.
- Papps, E. & Olssen, M. (1997) *Doctoring Childbirth and Regulating Midwifery in New Zealand*, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Peters, M. (1999). *After the Disciplines? The Emergence of Cultural Studies*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.
- Peters, M. (ed.). (1999). *After the Disciplines? Disciplinary, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies*, Westport, Conn. & London, Bergin & Garvey.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Peters, M., Fitzsimons, P., & Marshall, J. (1999, March). Postmodern science and the new theology of the curriculum: a poststructuralist critique. Paper presented at the *Louisiana State University Curriculum Theory Project*, Baton Rouge.

Fitzsimons, P. (1999, November). Globalisation, electronic technology, and the philosophy of education in 'postmodern' times. Paper for the *Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia annual conference*, Melbourne.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Trustees have conducted conferences on topics such as MVA technology, AMAT's investments, the future of the Trust, computers, and adoption.

Visit by P. Fitzsimons at the 'Glebe' Abortion Clinic in Sydney, July 1997.

Attendance by P. Fitzsimons at the Abortion Providers Conference in Melbourne, October 1997.

Visit to Dr. Peter Bayliss's Greenslopes Fertility Clinic Brisbane, October 1997.

As a result of AMAT's experience on-line, computer technology at AMAC will shortly be upgraded to form a direct link to the AMAT web site. This will provide access internationally for both service contact and education.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

AMAT now has conferences to allow for debate and invited speakers. This idea needs extending to more public type gatherings with subsequent publications.

The website needs rethinking and development to reflect the expanded philosophy of the trust.

The paper on human reproduction on the website needs to be made into user friendly information. This will be done by setting up a range of simplified presentations using Microsoft Power Point to provide the information.

The same process needs to be repeated for the article on 'sex abuse'.

The adoption debate needs to be posted, including the experience of trustees on their recent adoption project.

AMAT needs to investigate other discourses on human reproduction, such as sex education and AI F technology.

Consideration must be given to ethnic (and other) differences in the AMAT focus.

AMAT's position as a not-for-profit organisation needs researching. This will allow us to consider more seriously our role as a charity in the economy. This could include research into applications to major overseas funding agencies, including private ones. The Institute has already done some background research on this topic and started a related research paper.

In the light of reforms across the Western world, AMAT needs to rethink itself as a research and education culture rather than as simply a social welfare agency.

AMAT needs to focus on global issues, discourses, and networks for the benefit of New Zealand citizens. If we stay *focused* purely on New Zealand we will miss these trends. In our global focus, we have already made a start on this issue..

AMAT needs to research the human development discourse as governed by global bodies such as the World Bank, the IMF, the OECD, and others. This is quite a different approach to human reproduction in medical models. This approach, nevertheless, governs us in ways AMAT does not yet comprehend. Some recognition of this approach can be found in my publication:

Fitzsimons, P., & Peters, M. (1999, forthcoming). Human capital theory and the government's industry training strategy. In S. Ball (Ed.), *Education Policy*, London/New York: Routledge.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that AMAT:

- accept this report;
- continue its research and education policy focus and extend its value to the people of New Zealand through this means.; and
- note that the services provided by AMAC Ltd. benefit from the research conducted by the AMAT Research Institute. This research provides a quality service in New Zealand in line with world best practice.

Patrick Fitzsimons (Ph.D).