

Newspaper surveys show lack of Maori journos

A national survey of New Zealand newspapers has shown that 2% of editorial staff are Maori, that is twenty five out of a total of approximately 1200.

And those 25 hold predominantly junior reporting positions, which means they are unlikely to significantly influence coverage of Maori news.

The newspaper survey undertaken for Tu Tangata is part of a planned wider review of Maori journalists in the media incorporating television and radio.

The survey asked how Maori news was covered and the number of Maori journalists employed in relation to total editorial staff.

The other significant information to come from the survey was how defensive and even aggressive some newspaper editors were in reply to the mail questionnaire.

About half stated that Maori news was covered like any other news and many of these refused to say how many Maori journalists they had on their staff.

"I do not, and will not, survey my staff to find out who is a Maori, who is an Australian, who is English or who is Samoan, etc. Equally I do not know who is a Catholic Protestant, Jewish or Buddhist," said one editor.

Some editors claim they would like to hire more Maori journalists but cite lack of applications from well-trained people.

"First and foremost they have to become competent journalists, and the Maori aspect is an added dimension that makes them very valuable. But until they can get past that first hurdle not a lot of papers can afford to take them on," said Mr Mayston of the Rotorua Daily Post.

The editor of the "Ashburton Guardian", Mr Rhys Mathias, said he had requested a journalist for work experience from the Waiariki Journalism course, with no success, and had so far not received a single application from a Maori journalist.

Another South Island editor, Mr Michael Day, of Gore, says that attempts made by his newspaper to



Rawiri Wright & Vern Rice interviewing Don Ahipene.

improve coverage of Maori news in The Ensign, had not been very successful.

"I am not placing any blame here, but

am pointing out that the Maori renaissance does not yet seem to have reached the level here as it has in the North