# Challenges of Promoting Multicultural Understanding in the Mainstream News Media: New Zealand Experience

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There is no doubt that the mass media is enormously influential in informing and shaping public thinking. It is critical to building understanding between cultures and faiths. It shapes our sense of who we are, and what is important to us.

But how can the power of such an unwieldy, many-headed beast be harnessed and directed so that it connects rather than divides people, so that it articulates and promotes the vision of a peaceful, inclusive multicultural, multi-faith future, so that it fosters an environment in which that vision becomes possible?

This presentation discusses some of the challenges to that worthy ideal, in the New Zealand context. These include the increasingly competitive commercial environments, in which traditional news media organizations are operating, the undermining of public broadcasting through funding constraints and a disinterested government, and the still largely monoculture nature of most mainstream newsrooms.

The presentation will also briefly discuss some of the ways in which we might meet those challenges.

Source materials:2009 by *New Zealand Herald Newspaper; Broadcasting Standards Authority Maori*