

# Lexicography in New Zealand

For more than 70 years, Victoria University has been the major centre for lexicography in New Zealand. A number of distinguished international lexicographers, many of them former students of the late Professor Ian Gordon, have been graduates of Victoria and have contributed to major works such as the *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* (Robert Burchfield) and *The Australian National Dictionary* (Bill Ramson). Other New Zealand born lexicographers include Eric Partridge, S J Baker, G W Turner, and Grahame Johnston.

Information on the history of major New Zealand lexicographical projects is available on the New Zealand Dictionary Centre website:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/research/nzdc/NZlexicography1](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/research/nzdc/NZlexicography1).

The New Zealand Dictionary Centre was established in 1997 at the time of the publication of the *Dictionary of New Zealand English*, which was the work of the late H O (Harry) Orsman over some forty years. The Centre is a joint initiative and partnership between Victoria University and Oxford University Press, and since its establishment, the publication of 14 New Zealand dictionaries or thesauruses have been associated with the Centre. Professor Graeme Kennedy, the inaugural Director of the Centre, retired in 2004, following the publication of the *New Zealand Oxford Dictionary*, which he co-edited with Professor Tony Deverson. The Centre supports fellowships for two PhD students, each worth \$20,000 per annum along with the provision of office accommodation and fees. John Macalister (a diachronic study of Māori loan words) and Dianne Bardsley (a diachronic study of rural NZE) were the Centre's first Fellows, followed by Cherie Connor (the contribution of the marine environment to NZE) and Kate Quigley (the lexis of public sector reform in New Zealand 1984-1994).

A database of approximately 42,000 general New Zealand English words and usages is maintained at the Centre, along with other specialist databases such as New Zealand English hypocoristics, Māori-English blends and compounds, Māori loan words, and New Zealand English acronyms and initialisms. Among the Centre's resources is an extensive reference library. The Centre maintains links with Dictionary Centres in Australia, Canada and the United States and makes contributions to the incomings of the Oxford English Dictionary. Such international links means that the origin and use of particular words are quickly checked or verified.

Some dictionaries compiled at the New Zealand Dictionary Centre:

## Dictionary of New Zealand English (1997)

Published in 1997, this unique historical record of New Zealand words and phrases was compiled by the late Harry Orsman, following 40 years of research. The dictionary, the winner of the supreme Montana Book of the Year Award, is based on historical principles, providing written citations (examples) of each headword in context. Here readers can discover and research the vocabulary of early European colonists, along with records of borrowed terms from te reo Maori and their English spellings, and are able to trace the routes which words have taken and changes that have been made until the end of the twentieth century. This dictionary is the most comprehensive published record of words and usages that are specific to New Zealand, those that originated in New Zealand, or those that have a specific historical significance in New Zealand. Upon completion of this work of Orsman's, an electronic database of the terms from this dictionary was established, and this is constantly updated with new entries and new citations of earlier entries.

In here, you will find the eleven various spellings of what is most commonly referred to as **pakuru** or **puckeroo**, you will discover its etymology and its applications since 1820.

## New Zealand Oxford Dictionary (2004)

Compiled over a number of years and published in 2004 from the NZ Dictionary Centre, this work was the winner of the 2005 Montana Award for Reference and Anthology. A unique dictionary of its kind, it contains significant New Zealand and international encyclopaedic material in addition to local and international lexical entries. To illustrate, you will find under **P**, not only **pakaru/puckeroo**, but also **Pacific rose, Paddy's lantern, Paganini, Paikea, Palmerston North, Peking, Picasso, pikopiko, Pillars of Hercules, Piltown man, PJ's, piupiu, plasmodium, Plimmer's Ark, and poozle**. The innovative and extensive appendices include grammar and usage notes, the Treaty of Waitangi in English and te reo, the national anthems of New Zealand, and principal traditional waka and iwi, along with national and conservation parks, principal mountains, rivers, lakes, and urban centres. In addition, there is a host of historical material such as the governors and governors-general of New Zealand, our Premiers and Prime Ministers, members of the Order of New Zealand, and New Zealand and Victoria Cross recipients.

☀ In here, you will find more than 2000 encyclopaedic entries from New Zealand together with a host of different entries, all with pronunciation guides, etymology, and, where appropriate, usage notes

### The New Zealand Oxford Mini Thesaurus (November, 2005)

Produced in a compact and portable format with a durable flexicover, this thesaurus is compiled especially for the New Zealand market. Alphabetically organised in a modern thesaurus format, it contains more than 150,000 similar and related words to choose from. Distinctive New Zealand English words, such as **bach** with both its senses, and terms from te reo Maori, such as **karakia**, are included. Parts of speech are clearly labelled and written in full. Labels such as informal, slang and poetic are used, with distinctive identification for New Zealand and Australian English words and phrases.

- Under **poor** (adjective) with its five senses, you will find 1. bankrupt, broke, destitute, hard up, impecunious, impoverished, indigent, needy, penniless, penurious, poverty-stricken, skint, stony-broke, 2. deficient, lacking, low, wanting, 3. barren, infertile, sterile, unproductive, useless, 4. bad, crummy, defective, faulty, imperfect, inadequate, inferior, mediocre, rotten, rubbishy, second-rate, shoddy, slipshod, substandard, unsatisfactory, 5. hapless, miserable, pathetic, sorry, unfortunate, unlucky, wretched.

### The New Zealand Oxford Mini Dictionary (2006)

This compact but extensive dictionary contains more than 22,000 headwords which include specifically-labelled and distinctive New Zealand English terms, such as **hiwihiwi, hokey-pokey, hoki, holding dog, and homebake**, along with many Australasian vocabulary items. Useful appendices include lists of terms for word games, rules of English spelling and punctuation, and countries of the world, with their related adjectives. Usage notes are provided for spelling, style, and easily confused terms.

### The New Zealand Little Oxford Dictionary (2003)

This compact but easily-read dictionary of 432 pages provides an accessible word list of both New Zealand and international English terms, both formal and informal, together with an appendix. Terms from te reo Maori are included and colloquialisms, such as **rock-bottom** and **slap-up**, are succinctly defined. Variable spellings like estrogen and oestrogen are noted, along with common abbreviations like ODI (one day international).

## The New Zealand Pocket Oxford Dictionary (2005)

This extensive and versatile dictionary for use in secondary school, home and office provides authoritative information on both New Zealand and global English. This third edition contains over 1,000 new headwords and several hundred new senses and idioms. Its New Zealand coverage includes terms of historical importance together with borrowings from te reo Maori and appendices containing the New Zealand National Anthem and the Treaty of Waitangi in both English and Maori, and Governors-General and Prime Ministers. Guidance on grammar, syntax, punctuation, and style is provided, and pronunciation is given.

- In this dictionary, you will find the name of the person after whom **Peggy square** is named, and you will be shown that **pelargonium** is pronounced pel-uh-**goh**-nee-uhm, is often erroneously called 'geranium', and comes from the Greek *pelargos*, stork.

This dictionary was awarded a Premier New Zealand Bestseller Award.

## The New Zealand Oxford Paperback Dictionary (2006)

This large, comprehensive encyclopaedic dictionary, in its second edition, provides a clear reflection of the influence of technology, and the social and political realities of the twenty-first century, on English vocabulary, both in its New Zealand and its global entries. Terms of geographical and historical significance are also included, while detailed appendices are provided.

- In this dictionary, you will find information about **G8**, **Gabriel's Gully**, **Gadaffi**, **gadolinium**, **galah**, the New Zealand Governor-General **Galway**, the **garden city** (Christchurch), the significance of **Gate Pa**, **gazpacho**, **GDP**, and Lloyd **Geering**.

## The New Zealand Oxford School Dictionary (2006)

A fully revised and extended fourth edition with a new format, this dictionary for secondary school students contains a middle section of 40 pages, covering a wide range of helpful word lists, study aids, and literary content. Common abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms are listed, foreign food terms are categorised and defined, and common descriptive music terms are provided in the section. Also listed together are Roman and Maori numerals, days of the week and weeks of the year in Maori, and common New Zealand birds, fish, and trees in both English and Maori. Terms, such as **cowcocky**, **CPI**, **cracker**, **cape fern**, **crawler**, and **crib**, with a distinctive New Zealand origin or sense, are included in the main headword list. Easily discernible pronunciation guides and usage notes are provided, along with word origins.

## The New Zealand School Thesaurus (2005)

This comprehensive and easy-to-use thesaurus of antonyms and synonyms is specifically compiled for New Zealand secondary school students. It reflects the creative and sometimes playful and distinctive nature of New Zealand English, with example sentences and phrases to identify the different senses of headwords. At the same time, formal usage and origins are provided.

- In this thesaurus, under the verb **to discard** you will find: *They discarded their old clothes.* cast off, chuck out, dispose of, ditch, dump, get rid of, hiff/hiff out, jettison,

reject, scrap, shed, throw away. Under the verb **to fossick**, you will find: *He was fossicking in the pile for anything useful.* ferret, fish, forage, hunt, poke around, poozle, rake through, rummage, scavenge, scrounge, search.

## The New Zealand Integrated School Dictionary & Thesaurus (2008)

This large and comprehensive 731-page combined dictionary and thesaurus is compiled in a useful way with both dictionary and thesaurus entries on one page - dictionary definitions and parts of speech at the top half, and thesaurus synonyms and parts of speech at the bottom. Word origins are given for dictionary headwords where indicated (e.g. **manchester**). **Manaia** is defined and given a part of speech or word class, and we see that **mana** has at least seven similar meanings: authority, control, honour, influence, integrity, power, and prestige. On the same page, we find that the noun **mania** has 2 senses, each with several synonyms : 1 dementia, derangement, insanity, lunacy, madness, mental illness. 2 craze, enthusiasm, fad, obsession, passion. We also find that the term **manicure** comes from the Latin: manus (hand) and cura (care).

## A Dictionary of Maori Words in New Zealand English (2005)

This dictionary of approximately 1,000 Maori terms incorporated and used commonly in New Zealand English is prefaced by an essay explaining the beginnings of **te reo Maori** in English, noting how the term **Pakeha** was only one of a number of terms for early European New Zealanders, who spelled terms from **te reo** in a variety of ways. Useful in schools, the introduction sets out clearly the history and development of borrowing of terms from **te reo**, and the degree to which this borrowing makes New Zealand English distinctive amongst the major varieties of world English.

Dictionary entries include Maori-English blends and compounds such as **kiwify**, **Kiwipop**, **Tapanui flu**, **Taradise**, and **wakajumper**. Other entries vary from the familiar terms for flora and fauna, to the Maori names for places such as Napier and New Plymouth.

## A Dictionary of Modern New Zealand Slang (1999)

Compiled over a number of years by the late Harry Orsman, editor of the *Dictionary of New Zealand English* (1997), this dictionary captures the informal vocabulary of New Zealanders since the beginning of the Second World War. It differs from earlier compilations of New Zealand slang in that it consists of terms of a more urban origin and use. The illustrative citations offer a socio-historical commentary, showing that people from **The Long White Cloud/the long white shroud/the wrong white crowd** are far from being a 'passionless people'.

## A Dictionary of New Zealand Political Quotations (2000)

A small but valuable 130-page dictionary, this compilation of political anecdotes is an important historical document. It shows politicians taking themselves seriously as well as in fun, and it captures something of the Kiwiness in those who stand for public office. The senses of malevolence, egotism, and idealism in the political character are conveyed in this thematically-organised collection, in which Winston Peters is cited as saying of his control over his parliamentary office: 'I run a tight operation, as tight as a drum. I'm the only person who knows what is going on there'.

Future publications:

*New Zealand Oxford Primary School Dictionary* (Intermediate level) (4<sup>th</sup> ed)  
(2009)

*Oxford Dictionary of New Zealandisms* (2009)

New Zealand English resource material for school research projects is available from the Centre or from the website [www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/research/nzdc/activities](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/research/nzdc/activities). The annual newsletter, *NZWords*, is published annually and is available as downloaded pdf files from [www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/research/nzdc/newsletter](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/research/nzdc/newsletter) or posted free of charge. Archived copies since 1998 are available on the website.

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