

# Barbara Ruth Nicholas

## ***Professional Strengths***

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**Policy and project leadership** at a senior level, in health, emerging technologies, bioethics, and 'future-watch'.

Skilled in **networking and engagement** with others. **Effective communicator**, experienced in interpreting material across disciplinary boundaries.

An **initiator, organiser, facilitator and manager**.

**Strategic and conceptual thinker**, able to integrate material from multiple disciplines (including integration of scientific and social knowledge), apply excellent analytical skills to a diversity of material, and translate to an operational context.

**Self-motivated, well organised, and results orientated**; demonstrated ability to independently and collaboratively, and in multi-disciplinary research or policy environments.

**Experienced researcher** in analytical and qualitative research methods, and a familiarity and ease with quantitative methods

## ***Recent Relevant Work Experience***

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**Co-leading and facilitating** the development of the draft Canterbury Energy Strategy for Environment Canterbury. Required working with complex reports and diverse communities of interest to draw together a strategic long-term regional policy.

**Leadership** of the **Navigator Network for MORST**, a future watch scanning network focussed on emerging issues in science. Required innovative thinking and design, building of collaborative and sustained relationships across research institutions and government ministries, programme and budget management, engagement with and synthesis of complex material, and strategic communication of findings.

Played key role, as **Research Consultant**, for **Inland Revenue** assisting it to network with research providers and businesses to clarify issues around policy interpretation and the implementation of the Research and Development tax credit.

**Foundational Senior Analyst for the NZ Bioethics Council**. Successfully established relationships across government policy sector, and with wider community stakeholders in biotechnology. Led innovative engagement processes with the wider community. Led provision of analytical and research support on cultural, ethical and spiritual aspects of biotechnology – requiring integration and synthesis of complex and emotionally charged material and early identification of emerging issues.

Demonstrated **peer recognition** through membership of the **International Board of the Feminist Association of Bioethics**, and appointment as 'ethics' member of the **Southern Regional A Ethics Committee**.

## ***Qualifications***

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PhD Otago University (Bioethics) 1996  
DipTch Dunedin College of Education 1988  
BD Otago University 1988  
BSc Otago University 1975

## ***Work History***

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### **1. Independent policy consultant and business**

#### **2005-08 Independent consultant**

##### **Key achievements:**

- Intellectual and project leadership and management of complex situations and projects
- Successful application of strong relationship management and networking skills

##### **Clients have included:**

- ***National Ethics Advisory Committee (2009)*** Scoping project on 'death and dying'.
- ***ESR (2009)*** Research paper on emerging food technologies,
- ***Environment Canterbury (2009)***. Consultant facilitation and drafting of a Regional Energy Strategy.
- ***Inland Revenue Department (2007-09)***. Consultant assisting in drafting taxpayer Guide for the R&D Tax credit.  
Responsibilities included
  - Initiating networks with the research providers and expanding networks with business
  - Policy development and analysis, and articulation to business community
  - Developing internal capacity to respond to technical work
- ***Ministry of Health (2008-)***. Upper South A ethics committee.
- ***Ministry of Research Science and Technology (2005-07)***. Project leader: Emerging Science and Technologies Scanning Network (Navigator Network). This work required project and intellectual leadership, and budget management, to establish an initiative that
  - brought together participants from the research and policy sectors to identify likely future developments and directions in biotechnology and nanotechnology, and
  - identified strategic issues requiring further policy analysis and development
  - delivered to tight timeframes.
- ***Ministry of Justice (2007)***. Project leader: Privacy implications of emerging technologies – briefing paper for the Strategic Policy Unit.
- ***National Ethics Advisory Committee (2006)***. Briefing paper

on Research and Related Use of Tissues From Fetuses and Stillborn Children

- **Toi te Taiao: the Bioethics Council (2006).** Briefing paper on Ethics of Neuroscience
- **Ministry of Health (2005).** Technical advice and workflow management with the Advisory Committee on Reproductive Technologies
- **Biotext Pty Ltd, Australia (2005).** Technical Writing for Legislation Review Committee: Review of Prohibition of Human Cloning Act 2002 and Research Involving Human Embryos Act 2002.

**2001-08 Own Business: BG Growers Ltd.** Joint Owner, Director and Manager.

This is an entrepreneurial venture in a young industry (Walnut Growing) requiring detailed project management, financial management, and proficiency and learning in specialist tree cropping knowledge.

I am a member of the Walnut Industry Research Group, which shapes the industry's research agenda, and manages research contracts. This has included work funded by the Sustainable Farming Fund, and collaborations with the Australian Walnut Industry

**2000-02 Independent consultant, bioethics**

**New Zealand Royal Commission on Genetic Modification**

February – June 2001, Analyst

2000, preparation of briefing paper on Bioethics of Genetic Modification

## 2. Policy sector employment

**2002-05 Senior Analyst, Toi te Taiao: Bioethics Council, Ministry for the Environment**

### **Key achievements**

- Provided high quality information, analysis and advice to ensure a successful establishment of a new Independent Advisory Committee
- Built strong relationships with key stakeholders with interests in the work of the advisory committee
- Provided intellectual leadership in an emerging field, and mentored younger staff
- Successfully project managed a large public engagement project

### **Responsibilities included:**

- Leadership and provision of strategic advice, and analytical and research support to the Independent Advisory Committee, on cultural, ethical and spiritual dimensions of biotechnology
- Scanning of developments in biotechnology to identify and brief Bioethics Council on emerging issues
- Drafting of discussion documents and public reports for the

Bioethics Council

- Development and maintenance of (national and international) networks with stakeholders in biotechnology, including researchers, community groups, policy and business
- Project management of major public dialogue project
- Membership of cross-departmental officials groups
- Management and mentoring of staff

**2000 – 02 Senior Advisor (Services Research), Ministry of Health (part time for period February – June 2001, while contracted to the Royal Commission on Genetic Modification)**

**Key achievements**

- Acted as catalyst in the development of biotechnology policy capacity within the organisation
- Managed large evaluation contracts, including a cross-departmental contract
- Provided pro-active advice on developments in biotechnology and lead initiatives in preparation of submissions on government policies of relevance to my own Ministry
- Strengthened ministry networks with the research community

**Responsibilities included**

- Provision of analytical and research support to policy developments and service reviews
- Development and management of evaluation contracts
- Ministry of Health representative on the *National Ethics Committee for Assisted Human Reproduction*
- Internal ethics consultant

**2000 Team leader, Service Research, Service Strategy, Personal Health, Health Funding Authority**

**Key achievements**

- provided leadership of a complex service review involving multiple stakeholders, and took the project through to public consultation and final policy proposal
- developed networks and linkages between research community and operational policy development, and led contract negotiation process for evaluation of elective services
- successfully managed a team through a period of re-structuring

**Responsibilities included**

- Management and mentoring of staff
- Leadership of policy development associated with a service review
- Provision of analytical and research support to policy developments and service reviews
- Development of contract for major policy evaluation

### 3. Research and teaching experience

- 1998-00 Research Fellow, New Zealand Health Technology Assessment Clearing House, Christchurch School of Medicine
- 1998-00 Lecturer, Department of Public Health and General Practice, Christchurch School of Medicine
- 1996-98 Lecturer, Bioethics Research Centre, Otago University
- 1993-96 Lecturer/assistant to the Director, Bioethics Research Centre, Otago University
- 1992-93 Junior Research Fellow, Bioethics Research Centre, Dunedin
- 1989-91 Science and maths Teacher, Queens High School, and Kaikorai Valley High School, Dunedin
- 1984 Teacher, Northern Southland College, Lumsden
- 1976-77 Teacher, Columba College, Dunedin

### 4. Other Relevant Experience

**British Council grant** to attend seminar "Exploiting Genetic Knowledge: fifty years on from Crick/Watson" UK 2003

**Work Placement** with Crop & Food (a New Zealand Crown Research organisation), working with research groups in emerging technologies, 2004

**Consultation:** Centre for Bioethics and Health Law, Utrecht Universiteit The Netherlands. Think piece to inform project on "Genomics: Knowledge Triggering Responsibility" 2002

#### **Committee Experience**

Upper South A Regional Health Ethics Committee 2008-

International Feminist Association of Bioethics, member of International Board, 2006-08

National Ethics Committee on Assisted Human Reproduction, Ethics adviser, 1995-7; Ministry of Health representative, 2001-02

Member, working party for review and development of Royal Society code of ethics, 2001

Member, Health Research Council Ethics Committee, 1996-98

July 2009