

MASTER OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE (M.PROF.PRAC.) – GRADUATE CASE STUDIES

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with Malcolm Macpherson**

These case studies are products of the Master of Professional Practice (MProfPrac) curriculum: a deeply self-reflective review of learning (course one, 30 credits); the development of a learning agreement, with a literature review, statement of methodology, ethics approval, Maori (Treaty of Waitangi) considerations, and process reflection (course two, 30 credits); and a work-based project report and presentation (course three, 120 credits). Most graduates complete the three courses in about 18 months, working with capable NZ facilitators and academic mentors, and with professional workplace support. There is an expectation that candidates for this qualification will add significant new knowledge to their workplace, organisation and industry sector.

Why select these three cases? Apart from the common involvement of the junior author (Macpherson) as academic mentor, they coincided with significant inflection points in the lives of each graduate. For Bezett, it was his project management role in a major ski field development, and his emergence as a role-modelling leader; for Dawson it was a transition from a governance practitioner to an advisor and mediator (and author of a practical guide book, and at the time of writing this material, a local government officer with governance support responsibilities); and for Murray it was about generational change in her family business, making explicit a range of hard-won implicit skills, and a recognition that she had insights to offer her profession and New Zealand SMEs in general.

These three studies traverse three quite different takes on the transformational nature of the mid life, mid career, deeply reflective reframing that commonly occurs with Capable NZ's bachelor and masters candidates. They also illustrate how the attributes of the qualification's graduate profile – the generic description of what a candidate brings to assessment – can be expressed in quite different fashions. Bezett's project report was about function and process, supported by an array of spreadsheets and outcome analysis – a very 'concrete' piece of work, undertaken in a challenging alpine environment. Dawson's report was output focussed, predicated on the need for a practical guide to good governance, and his evidence centred on a description of the process, and the artefact itself – a published guidebook. Murray's portfolio of evidence was a composite of the enquiry process – the thematic analysis behind the how of making sense of primary interview data – and enquiry outputs – a package of advice to business owners with succession planning interests.

These studies also foreshadow a rich opportunity to systematically explore the nature of work-based learning as constituted and evidenced at Capable NZ, drawing from a growing collection of assessment material, from diverse candidates, across a wide range of work experiences and life contexts. It is an editorial intention that future editions of *Scope – Professional Practice* include original findings drawn from that pool of knowledge.