

## **GRAEME FRASER**

One of the requirements for any social practice such as dispute resolution is to measure and evaluate that practice i.e. to conduct research. To what extent does it meet its stated values and objectives? How are these objectives affected by the social, economic and political pressures on mediation policies and procedures – the systems through which it is delivered.

Research is important in dispute resolution for a number of reasons. Mediators, for example, are working with human beings in a largely private and confidential context and therefore have a responsibility for ethical conduct and safety in their practice.

Research provides the basis not only for understanding existing practice but also for promoting standards of best practice – a basis for critical self-reflection as well as for challenges to current assumptions about models and of dispute resolution.

This session would seek to advance the contribution that systemic research would make to the examination and evaluation of the practice of dispute resolution in New Zealand.