

## 5. MULTICULTURAL CITY UPDATE

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The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the work to date of the Community Adviser, Multi-cultural.

### BACKGROUND

This part-time position is a new one, arising from the work of the Mayor's Working Party on Ethnic Relations and the Multicultural City Subcommittee.

The purpose of the job is to 'add value by; helping the Council implement its strategic statement' to provide a focus for all communities and contribute to the Council's vision that: 'All people - of whatever background - feel welcome here'.

The role is about working with agencies and ethnic groups, developing effective relationships, capacity building and implementing Council projects aimed at increasing understanding of ethnic and cultural diversity.

I have been in the position since 14 January 2003, working three days a week. A significant proportion of my time has been spent on engaging the refugee and migrant sector within Christchurch.

### INFORMATION GATHERING

1. Relatively speaking, Christchurch's refugee and migrant population is **strongly supported by certain key agencies** that include leaders with significant and long-standing experience in the sector:

- Refugee and Migrant Service - Annemarie Reynolds,
- Refugee Resettlement Support - Felicity Jardine,
- PEETO Multi-cultural Learning Centre - Patrick O'Connor,
- Human Rights Commission, in particular the Race and Ethnicity Team - Karolin Potter,
- Ministry of Ethnic Affairs - Cecilia Guridi,
- Ethnic Council,
- Crown and Public Health, in particular Annie Davey.

These agencies and the refugee and migrant communities value the City Council's support of the Refugee and Migrant Centre and the Refugee and New Migrant Forum, which plays a valuable role in networking and information sharing across the whole sector.

2. The **Christchurch City Council** already offers significant support to the refugee and migrant communities through the work of:

- City Councillors and Community Board Members,
- Community Development Advisers in the Ward areas,
- Recreation Advisers in the Ward areas,
- City Libraries, Information Specialist, Jill Richardson,
- Funding Adviser, Michael McNabb,
- Healthy Christchurch,

to mention just a few.

### OVERVIEW OF SOME ISSUES

Attached are two recent and well-written documents that provide a good overview of some key issues.

1. "*Current Issues in Race Relations in New Zealand*", transcript of a lecture given last week, 20 March 2003, by Joris de Bres, Race Relations Commissioner.

Joris de Bres discusses some key issues, and three key challenges, namely:

- A shared contemporary vocabulary,
- Our national history,
- Our national identity.

2. "*Since I have come to New Zealand I have faced a lot of difficulties: A report on the resettlement experiences of refugees in Christchurch*", by Lesley MacGibbon, October 2002, research done for the Refugee Resettlement Support.

The Committee is referred to, in particular the short executive summary where the following barriers to refugee resettlement are identified:

- Family reunification,
- Access to English language classes – the gap for pre-literate learners,
- Social isolation,
- Poverty,
- Housing,
- Employment,
- Viability of the communities,
- Mental health issues.

### **INTERCULTURAL ASSEMBLY**

The Intercultural Assembly (ICA) is an initiative that arose from the Mayor's Working Party on Ethnic Relations and the Multi-Cultural City Subcommittee. The concept of the ICA is about information sharing with the aim of strengthening existing organisations involved in multicultural issues through enhanced communications.

The launch of the ICA took place in the Civic of Canterbury on Monday 24 March 2003, tying in with Race Relations Day.

Guest speakers included Mark Solomon, Kaiwhakahare, Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu, Garry Moore, Mayor of Christchurch, Hon Lianne Dalziel, Minister of Immigration, Joris de Bres, Race Relations Commissioner, and Weng Kei Chen, President, Federation of Ethnic Councils.

Approximately 90 people attended, including representatives from 26 of the approximately 50 organised cultural communities in Christchurch, representatives from central government, local government (Councillors from the Arts, Culture and Heritage and Community and Leisure Committees), and non-government agencies.

### **NEW CHRISTCHURCH INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS**

1. **Canterbury Development Corporation** is in the process of employing 15 researchers from refugee and migrant communities to spend six months identifying the employment needs and solutions of their own member communities.
2. **Education Christchurch** is researching the international student industry in Christchurch with the aim that key stakeholders can manage projected growth, including infrastructure requirements, economic benefits, potential impacts on the surrounding community and environment. Marie Lopez, Coordinator Central City Projects Information and Planning Directorate, is assisting with the research, as is Toni Brownie with Canterbury Development Corporation.
3. The **Canterbury Employers Chamber of Commerce**, recognising skills shortages identified by employers and skilled migrants experiencing difficulties finding work, has been piloting a new project. A Migrant Employment Coordinator assists skilled and job-ready migrants into appropriate employment.

### **FUTURE PLANS**

1. The next meeting of the Intercultural Assembly has been set for Wednesday 14 May 2003, 5.30pm. I will be involved in facilitating that meeting.

2. Developing relationships with the organised ethnic communities, and continuing to identify with them their issues and possible responses, is my priority for the next period.
3. The Hon Chris Carter will hold a consultation with all refugee and migrant communities on 16 April 2003, and this will be a further opportunity to hear from them.

**Staff**

**Recommendation:** That the information be received.

**Chairman's**

**Recommendation:** A process be undertaken to identify the issues that the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee would want to see in the intercultural assembly agenda be undertaken.