

## 7. ETHNIC SERVICES

The Libraries Manager submitted a report informing the Committee of library and information services developed for ethnic minorities in Christchurch. The work to date has focused on new migrants and English speakers of other languages.

Ethnic Services work at the Library has focused on the following areas:

- **Networking with migrant agencies and ESOL providers**

Initiatives resulting from this networking include attending the Refugee and New Migrant Forums, working with Somali community leaders, liaising with Ken Cho (the Council-funded Asian Youth Co-ordinator) to help with promotional initiatives, cultural awareness training for staff and promotion of orientation tours of the library.

- **Promotions**

These include mail out of 'what's new' to ethnic groups, displays in the library, speaking at the Migrant Forum, providing copy for other organisations' newsletters, and tours of resources to students and tutors.

- **Staff cultural awareness and training**

The following activities have been designed to increase cultural awareness: presentation from Karolin Potter (Race Relations Office), encouraging all libraries to observe Race Unity Day, presentations from Zeinab Hussein (bilingual Somali community worker) and Ahmed Ali (Refugee education co-ordinator).

- **Collections assessment**

All libraries have ESOL collections and these have been assessed to gain an understanding of current/potential use and presentation. Central and Fendalton collections are the most heavily used, with about 50% of the collection out at any time. Visits to assess the ESOL resources at Polytech, Christchurch Home Tutor Scheme and the International Language Academy have also provided ideas for new resources.

Mother tongue collections fall into two categories: electronic and physical. Electronic foreign language newspapers available via the Web continue to be heavily used by new migrants and refugees. Adding sites and extending into more general informational sites is desirable.

### *Adult mother tongue collections at central*

The Library currently has small collections in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Thai. There is no Russian collection (about 3,000 Russian speakers in Christchurch), although there is a real desire for a good quality literary collection plus contemporary fiction in this language. Informal assessment suggests children's literature is a priority for Egyptian and Iraqi families, but more research is needed before any collections are established.

### *Children's collections*

New migrants often have a strong desire for their children to maintain the mother tongue. The library continues to strengthen the small collection of children's stories to include more Somali, Farsi, Arabic, Russian, Chinese, Korean and Japanese titles.

- **Service improvement**

In the Central City Library ESOL material, mother tongue collections, dictionaries and grammars in other languages have been co-located with an adjacent lounge, study and noticeboard area. This has become a very highly used area.

Improvements have been made to the process of joining the library and the 'Conditions of Membership' have been translated into eight key languages.

- **Employment opportunities for new migrants**

Several 'work experience' opportunities have been facilitated through the Pasefika Education and Employment Training Organisation (PEETO). Since July 2000 the Library has placed new migrants on work experience at Fendalton, Papanui, Bishopdale and Central. From this, two permanent placements have resulted at Central City Library. The Library now has access to fluent speakers of six new languages through staff working at the Library.

The Committee **decided** that:

1. Library staff be congratulated on the progress made on the delivery of new ethnic services within limited resourcing.
2. It be noted that, in view of the increasing ethnic diversity in Christchurch, the provision of appropriate Library services needs to be closely monitored.