

9. MULTICULTURAL CENTRE - FEASIBILITY REPORT - UPDATE

Officer responsible Community and Recreation Manager	Author Lesley Symington, DDI 941-8879
--	---

The purpose of this report is to brief members of the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee following a request by the Committee for an update on a proposed feasibility study for an 'Everybody's Cultural Centre'.

BACKGROUND

One of the outcomes of the Mayor's Working Party (2000/01) on Ethnic Relations was the identification of the need for a multi-cultural centre. The concept of Everybody's Cultural Centre (ECC) was presented to the Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee and a community trust (ECC Trust) established in December 2001 to progress the project.

As a result of a report presented to the Arts, Culture and Heritage meeting on 19 July 2003 by Patrick O'Connor (Chair of Trust), an offer was made to the Trust to apply for funding for a feasibility study. The Council allocated a sum of \$5,000 to the trust to provide a feasibility report but this was not progressed.

EVALUATION OF THE REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CENTRE

This centre was established in 1997 and provides rent and administration support to the Refugee and Migrant Centre which houses three contributing agencies: Refugee Resettlement Support (provides social work, literacy and children's services for refugees, migrants, and asylum seekers), Refugee and Migrant Service (assists refugees brought into NZ through the UNHCR Programme in their first six months of settlement into New Zealand), Peeto Intercultural Development Trust (provides assistance to job-seekers).

The Community and Recreation Unit has contracted Dr Lesley MacGibbon to undertake an evaluation of the Centre which will include 'recommendations on the future of the Centre and a model that could best meet the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and new migrants in the city'.

Although this evaluation is only partially completed (completion date of the end of August), there is already some key feedback which is useful information with regards to the need for a multicultural centre:

1. A 'one-stop information shop' is preferred – key community and government agencies (for example WINZ, Housing New Zealand) co-located.
2. Some smaller ethnic groupings would like to have a base or meeting place in a multicultural centre.
3. Some groups want to have a base in a facility where they can also have a social worker/counsellor who speaks their own languages.
4. Larger groups want a hall where they can have events several times a year.
5. Groups want a facility that can be used for performances, but that also has good kitchen facilities for intercultural events that involve food.

CONCLUSION

The current review of the Refugee and Migrant Centre is indicating a preference for additional facilities than those currently provided and which the current location does not have the space to provide. While it is important to encourage refugee and migrant groups to use community facilities like any other group in the community, there also seem to be a core set of services (information, base/meeting space; location of social workers/counsellors; kitchen facilities; performance/events area) which could be located into a 'multicultural' centre which would provide ease of access to services and a gathering point for these communities.

It is therefore recommended that, following the analysis by staff of the final Refugee and Migrant Centre evaluation report, a project team of external agencies representatives, Inter Cultural Assembly Steering Group representatives, Everybody's Cultural Centre Trust members and Council staff be established to undertake a detailed analysis (definition of concept; site; size; scope; design; car parking; access; ongoing operational costs and potential revenue) for a potential 'one stop shop' multicultural centre.

It must be noted that there is currently no LTCCP budget allocation for this work to be achieved. This will need to be an in-house exercise by staff of the Community and Recreation Unit and external agencies. It should also be noted that if it is decided to proceed with the development of a multicultural centre, that the cost for this project will need to be found from external sources and possibly the Council.

Staff

Recommendation: That an analysis of the Refugee and Migrant Centre be carried out by staff and following this a further report be prepared for the Committee.

Chairman's

Recommendation: That the information be received.