

LTCCP 2006-16 SUBMISSION

Submissions close on 5 May 2006

I do NOT wish to present my submission at the hearing, and ask that this submission be considered.

I am completing this submission:
On behalf of a group or organisation

Number of people you represent:
144

My submission refers to:
Full Version of the LTCCP

Page Number:
77

I also want to respond to:

Name: Lee Ayaz or Deb Lam

Organisation: Refugee & New Migrant Forum

Daytime Phone: 3795893 or 3538316

Evening Phone:

Email: lee.ayaz@cdc.org.nz

Address: PO Box 2962
Christchurch

Your Submission:

Do you have any comments on the major projects in our Draft Community Plan?

Submission to the LTCCP from the Refugee and New Migrant Forum: 5 May 2006.

Introduction:

The Refugee and New Migrant Forum is a network comprised of refugees, migrants, practitioners and agencies who work to support Christchurch's ethnically diverse communities. It meets 6-weekly as a forum to share knowledge and discuss issues related to meeting the needs of refugee and migrant communities. The Forum has a number of sub-groups (eg: employment, health and education), who meet monthly to design collaborative interventions related to their sectors. The Forum has a mailing list of 144 individuals and organisations, with meeting attendance in 2006 averaging 45 participants per meeting. Forum participants come from government departments (eg: Office of Ethnic Affairs, Department of Labour, Immigration; Work and Income, CYF, Police, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, etc), local government (eg: CCC, Canterbury Development Corporation), NGOs (eg: Christchurch Resettlement Services, PEETO, Refugee and Migrant Centre, Refugee and Migrant Service, etc) and ethnic associations (eg: Afghani Community, Refugee Council, Intercultural Assembly, etc). The Forum is politically and commercially neutral.

The Forum has received significant support from the Christchurch City Council over the 10 years of its existence, and for the first 9 years, the Christchurch City Council in partnership with Crown Public Health convened the Forum. The Forum is now co-convened by the Canterbury Development Corporation and the Office of Ethnic Affairs, with administrative support continuing to be provided by Christchurch City Council.

**Your Submission
(Cont'd):**

The Forum wishes to present a submission to the LTCCP on the following issues as they relate to refugee and migrant peoples who reside in Christchurch:

1. The proposed expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre
2. Housing

Expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre

The Refugee and New Migrant Forum advocates that the expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre be moved to the priority list for new projects in the 2006/07 year.

The new Refugee and Migrant Centre currently has a 'green' light and is assessed at being strategic priority 4, with a level of service gap at level 4 .

The current Refugee and Migrant Centre does not have the physical capacity to provide a comprehensive service as demanded by refugee and migrant peoples. It has no space to accommodate offices for ethnic groups, to hold large functions/gatherings or to provide all the services requested by refugees and migrants and has limited parking,. The current Refugee and Migrant Centre receives over 8000 visits per year, and fields additional enquiries relating to housing (681), immigration (2236), health (1060), education (642), employment (1292), interpreting and translating (1680) and general services (5148) . It is often the first port of call for refugee and migrant peoples seeking information, advice and support.

Several options for an expanded centre have been discussed, including a redevelopment of the existing centre, or consideration of other sites. The development of an expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre relates to all current community outcomes, as outlined below:

. Safety

o The Refugee and Migrant Centre provides networks and support. It enables communication amongst communities and support to people from diverse communities. An expanded centre would have scope for other agencies, including the Police, to become involved in the education of people around safety issues.

. Community

o An expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre would provide more efficient services to the community through networking and offering a diverse range of services.

. Environment

o An expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre would provide an increased number of orientation programmes and ongoing learning to highlight the importance of the environment in and around the City. An expanded centre would be a multilateral facility with both a teaching and a learning role. While teaching people about the environment in Christchurch, it may also act as a mechanism to learn about the environment from a range of cultural perspectives.

. Governance

o An expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre would enhance the inclusion of new settlers in the decision making process. It would provide the capacity to organise consultations, meetings, orientation and ongoing training to allow people to contribute to the community.
o An expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre provides a central link to enable more people to vote and to be involved, eg providing interpreters at the Centre for the census and involvement in facilitating and arranging support for the national election. Much of this work is already happening, however the issue of the capacity of the current Centre to cope with demand remains.

**Your Submission
(Cont'd):**

. Economic

- o The centre contributes to the practical and social prosperity of the city by offering practical assistance for employment and social support to contribute to family environment and the economy.
- o An expanded Centre working cohesively toward achieving social and economic prosperity would allow the centre to focus on building up individuals' practical and social abilities.

. Health

- o Having an expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre would allow for improved mental health outcomes, with better services, communication and a facility for communities to come together under one roof. The centre provides an opportunity for health promotion and knowledge as well as an opportunity for improving family and social health.
- o An expanded and supported Centre could provide the opportunity for a development facility, working in conjunction with other services to provide an effective learning facility.

. Recreation

- o At present, successful exercise classes are run at the centre on Fridays. With an expanded Centre, there would be an opportunity to increase capacity and meet the increasing demand as well as an opportunity to expand these classes and provide a place where people feel comfortable and can improve health and wellbeing.

. Knowledge

- o An expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre would provide more learning opportunities and advice, more service provision and more variety and diversity in creating a range of lifelong learning and qualifications, contributing to the wellbeing of the city

. City Development

- o An expanded Centre would further allow minority groups to have a voice and input into decisions affecting the city.
- o It would allow a chance for people to come together and interact to contribute collectively and would provide assistance to ensure Refugees and Migrants are productive members of society, by increasing involvement by Refugee and Migrants and recognising the host community.
- o An expanded Refugee and Migrant Centre would assist the vibrancy and celebrate the diversity of Christchurch.

Housing

The Refugee and New Migrant Forum advocates for increased resources to be allocated towards housing for refugee and new migrant families. Housing is an issue that needs to be acknowledged and addressed through forward planning, accountability and multi-party collaboration.

An issue relating to housing for refugee and migrant families is the current lack in Christchurch, of housing with 5 or 6 bedrooms. At the time of writing, 5 refugee families are due to arrive in Christchurch in 2 weeks time, and no suitable accommodation has been sourced for them as yet. Previous intakes of refugee families have seen accommodation become available only one day before families were due to arrive in the city. Forward planning and increased resources will ensure families have a place to live from the moment they arrive in Christchurch and the variety of demographics and diverse range of physical and social needs of each new family in the city will be recognised.

**Your Submission
(Cont'd):**

Conclusion:

The Refugee and Migrant Forum holds the view that the Christchurch City Council should take a lead role in enabling access to services by refugee and migrant populations. The Council is instrumental in aiding social inclusion and facilitating the integration of people and families who settle in this city. The Christchurch City Council needs to clearly state its intentions and/or capacity to take a lead role in a strategic sense, to enable proactive action to occur for this growing section of our diverse community.

Do you have any comments on groups of activities (The activities and services the Council provides?)

Do you have any other comments or suggestions you want to make?