

7. COMMUNITY LIAISON

| | |
|--|---|
| Officer responsible Community Relations Manager | Author Julie Macdonald, Community Adviser |
| Corporate Plan Output: Community Liaison Assistance and Advocacy | |

The purpose of this report is to provide an update for the Community Services Committee about two of the community forums supported by the Community Relations Unit.

BACKGROUND

One of the Outputs of the Community Relations Unit is Community Liaison, Assistance and Advocacy. An activity which is included in this output is support for metropolitan networks and forums. The purposes of such forums include the co-ordination of services, networking and the development of ideas to address problems.

Two metropolitan forums are the Refugee and New Migrant Forum and the Christchurch Housing Forum.

REFUGEE AND NEW MIGRANT FORUM

The Community Relations Unit co-convenes this forum with Crown Public Health. The forum meets every six weeks and its membership comprises individuals and organisations who work with refugees and new migrants. Forum meetings are held at the Refugee and Migrant Centre, which is home to three of the main organisations working in this area.

The forum has a sub-group structure to ensure that issues are dealt with in more depth than a single large meeting allows. The sub-groups are Education, Health, Employment and Media. Two new sub-groups have recently been formed; the Asylum Seekers sub-group and the Refugee and New Migrants sub-group. The formation of this last group reflects increasing involvement from members of the resettling communities and this is regarded as an extremely positive development.

At the last meeting of the forum (Friday 21 July), the guest speaker was the Minister of Immigration, Hon. Lianne Dalziel. The Minister talked about the need for a stable immigration policy framework and also discussed the link between settlement issues and ethnic affairs. The forum has an on-going role in the development of national policy through the quarterly tripartite meetings hosted by the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission on Refugees).

CHRISTCHURCH HOUSING FORUM

The Christchurch Housing Forum arose out of a city-wide forum held by the Tenants' Protection Association (TPA) in 1999. The Community Relations Unit now takes joint responsibility for convening this six weekly forum with TPA. The forum is an informal meeting which generally has a guest speaker as well as time for information sharing and discussion of current issues.

The purposes of the forum are to:

- Identify Christchurch housing issues
- Share information
- Work on problem solving where appropriate

The forum meetings are attended by a variety of individuals and organisations interested and involved in Christchurch housing issues. These range from Community Housing and Housing New Zealand to a variety of community groups. The Christchurch City Council Housing Manager, Rob Dally, attends the Forum to ensure there is information available to Forum attendees about the CCC's housing policies and practices.

At the last meeting (Wednesday 19 July) Phil Clearwater from the Hereford Centre gave a presentation of his work on mental health and housing. A small group has been formed to try and address some of the issues raised in this presentation.

CONCLUSION

There are a variety of community forums working in Christchurch which aim to increase co-ordination and work to advocate and find solutions to problems. The Community Relations Unit has a role in providing resources to assist these forums to operate effectively. The Refugee and New Migrant Forum and the Christchurch Housing Forum are two well-established groups which have been effective in bringing their respective sectors together to progress these goals.

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairman's

- Recommendation:**
1. That the above recommendation be adopted.
 2. That Rob Dally, Property Manager (or his nominee) continue to represent the Council at the Refugee and New Migrant Forum.