

## **WHAT THE OFFICE DOES**

The Office of Ethnic Affairs advises Government on issues to do with ethnic New Zealanders and provides advice to ethnic communities. Its focus is on those who identify as African, Asian, Continental European, Latin American or Middle Eastern. Our work does not focus on the needs of Pākehā, Māori or Pasifika communities.

### **PURPOSE:**

To contribute to a strong, self-directed ethnic sector, and to promote the advantages of ethnic diversity for New Zealand.

### **THE OFFICE:**

- provides advice to government on ethnic sector issues, and trains policymakers to take account of ethnic sector perspectives in the policy development process
- works with ethnic communities and service providers to promote community development, better services to ethnic communities and better access to information
- manages the Language Line telephone interpreting service, enabling non-English speakers equal access to services
- promotes understanding of ethnic issues in the wider community and encourages discussion
- promotes and supports the development of intercultural competence.

## **ABOUT THE ETHNIC SECTOR**

Over 11% of New Zealanders identify as Asian, Continental European, African, Middle Eastern or Latin American. It is estimated that by 2021, ethnic people will comprise around 18% of New Zealand's total population.

Although the ethnic sector is diverse, there are common needs related to:

- settlement issues (employment, housing, access to information)
- the need to feel included and recognised as fully contributing participants in New Zealand society
- maintenance of culture, heritage and community for future generations.

## **ETHNIC ADVISORS**

### *Creating Sustainable and Self-directed Communities*

The Office of Ethnic Affairs has ethnic advisors in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. Advisors foster an environment in which ethnic communities feel safe expressing their identity, are included by the host community, and are able to participate in civic, community and social activities.

Advisors work:

- with ethnic community groups, to foster supportive social networks and an environment in which identity and heritage culture can be maintained
- with service providers (such as government agencies and local authorities), to promote better service delivery to ethnic communities.

Advisors facilitate:

- relationships between community groups and central and local government – the aim is to foster independent self-directed relationships with agencies
- inter-ethnic networking – different groups working on common issues.

Advisors also identify key and emerging issues in the ethnic sector.

## **POLICY**

### *Highlighting Ethnic Sector Views in Government*

The Office of Ethnic Affairs' policy unit is based in Wellington. An important part of its work is leading and communicating across government agencies, non-governmental agencies and communities on contemporary issues affecting the ethnic sector, using the Ethnic Perspectives in Policy Framework and the Strength in Diversity as key platforms.

The policy unit provides:

- advice and information to the Minister for Ethnic Affairs
- advice and information to other government agencies, non-governmental agencies and communities

The policy unit creates:

- better awareness of ethnic sector issues among policy analysts and planners, resulting in better services and outcomes for communities

The policy unit develops and implements:

- strategies to support and create safe and sustainable ethnic communities.

### **The Office of Ethnic Affairs is the Government Agency:**

- connected to communities
- advocating for improved services to ethnic communities
- improving host community understanding of ethnic New Zealanders
- providing leadership on ethnic issues.

### **LANGUAGE LINE Telephone Interpreting**

- Language Line provides equity of access to services for those who speak little or no English.
- Within minutes, a professional telephone interpreter is available, in 39 different languages. The service is free to the clients of participating agencies.
- Professional interpreters bring clarity, accuracy and confidentiality to your business discussions. For more information: [www.languageline.govt.nz](http://www.languageline.govt.nz) **0800 656 656**.

### **Raising the visibility of Ethnic communities**

Visibility initiatives are very important to the Ethnic Affairs portfolio as they demystify and breakdown stereotypes about people who may look and dress differently. These initiatives include supporting:

- the diversity stage at ASB PolyFest
- the intercultural soccer festival in Christchurch
- Race Relations Day
- exhibitions such as the Christchurch Art Gallery's Around the World in 30 Lounges.

OEA also delivers an Intercultural Awareness and Communication training programme (IAC) to staff across the public sector. This aims to enhance government employees' understanding of the influence of different cultures on our day-to-day workplace interactions. The training will also help to improve service delivery to ethnic communities.

### **Your Nearest Contact:**

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This Office of Ethnic Affairs also has its own website: please visit it at [www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz](http://www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz)