
ETHNIC PERSPECTIVES IN POLICY
A RESOURCE

Helping ethnic people be seen, heard, included and accepted

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Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction	5
Part One: Policy Advice	7
1.1 Overview	9
1.2 Why Policy Needs Ethnic Perspectives	12
1.3 Policy Values	15
1.4 Outcomes	16
1.5 Realising Outcomes	19
1.6 About Ethnic Communities	21
Part Two: Appendices	25
Appendix One: More about Ethnic Communities	27
Appendix Two: Selected References	35
Appendix Three: New Zealand Legislation and International Obligations	36
Appendix Four: Key Government Goals	39
Appendix Five: New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils 2001 Conference Declaration	40
Appendix Six: About the Office of Ethnic Affairs Te Tari Matawaka	43
Part Three: Guidelines	45
Introduction to Ethnic Perspectives Guidelines	47
Policy Development Guidelines	48
Consultation Guidelines	53
Ethnic Responsiveness Guidelines	59

Foreword



I am delighted to release the '*Ethnic Perspectives in Policy*' resource document. This unique framework provides a comprehensive guide for government departments when they come to consider policy development that impacts on the needs of New Zealand's growing and diverse ethnic communities.

The Government is committed to meeting the needs of all New Zealanders when formulating government policy. We recognise that modern Aotearoa/New Zealand is becoming an increasingly diverse society. According to the 2001 census, ten percent of New Zealanders come from backgrounds other than Māori, Pacific Island, or Anglo-Celtic. As this population increases in number and diversity, it is important that policy-makers at all levels take into consideration the distinctiveness and special needs of ethnic peoples.

Ethnic communities comprise people born in New Zealand, established migrants, recent migrants, and refugees. Some ethnic communities have had an important presence in New Zealand for over a century. Early groups, such as the Chinese, the Lebanese, the Croatians, the Greek and the Indian communities have played a part in shaping New Zealand as a diverse, prosperous, and accepting nation. It is fair to say that New Zealand is a country that is built on immigration, whether from the Pacific in the earliest times, or from Europe, or, more recently, from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Ethnic people contribute to our society in every way - economically, socially and culturally. It is important that these contributions are recognised. It is also important that the Government, and all its departments, endeavour to talk to ethnic people, to listen to their needs, and to incorporate an ethnic perspective into the formation of policy.

The Government is committed to ensuring that ethnic New Zealanders are seen, heard, accepted, and included. This resource document, which has the endorsement of Cabinet, is a critical instrument in achieving that goal.

I want to acknowledge the hard work done by the Office of Ethnic Affairs and other government departments that provided advice during the preparation of this document. I want also to acknowledge the Hon George Hawkins, who spearheaded this initiative, and who had the honour of being our country's first Minister for Ethnic Affairs.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Chris Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hon Chris Carter
Minister for Ethnic Affairs

Introduction

Ethnic communities in New Zealand are diverse and dynamic. In the 2001 Census over 200 ethnic identities were recorded. Between 1991 and 2001 these ethnic groups doubled in size to 10% of the population. Some 356,000 New Zealand residents described themselves as belonging to an ethnic group different from the majority of people living in New Zealand, and who were not Māori or Pacific people. The trend has been for a high proportion of new migrants each year to come from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The composition and dynamics of ethnic communities have significant implications for the development of policies and services. Yet ethnic people are often not seen, heard, or included, in the policy process. This paper provides direction and some resources to help redress this situation.

Part I sets out an approach to policy analysis. It describes assumptions that underlie policy development for ethnic communities. It sets out the need to include ethnic perspectives in policy advice; government goals for the public sector and the values aligned with those goals. The goals and values define a framework within which all policies and implications for the ethnic sector can be commonly understood and developed. The policy section concludes with an outline of the key outcomes the government hopes to achieve for ethnic communities, and of the role of government. All government departments need to respond to the needs of ethnic people, and to coordinate their efforts, to achieve the government's goals and outcomes.

Part II, the Appendices, provides additional statistical information and reference materials about ethnic groups, including a summary of statutory obligations and key United Nations conventions.

Part III provides guidelines in three important areas: policy development, consultation and responsiveness. The guidelines will help agencies to identify, plan and evaluate policy and services for the ethnic sector. The policy guidelines pose questions that will identify and clarify issues for ethnic people. The consultation guidelines provide information about how to engage with ethnic communities to hear their views. The responsiveness guidelines provide a set of self-help standards to enable any agency to review its operations and services to determine how well it is responding to ethnic communities.

These papers provide a resource for those in government working with people from ethnic communities in policy or service delivery. They will also be useful to people in human resources. People from other fields may also find these resources useful.



ETHNIC PERSPECTIVES IN POLICY

Part One: Policy Advice

1.1	Overview	9
1.2	Why Policy Needs Ethnic Perspectives	12
1.3	Policy Values	15
1.4	Outcomes	16
1.5	Realising Outcomes	19
1.6	About Ethnic Communities	21





1.1 Overview

The ethnic population of New Zealand has grown steadily both in size and complexity, according to census data shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Ethnic Composition of New Zealand Resident Population¹

Grouped Total Responses to Ethnicity Question in Census Ethnic Groups	Census Year			Percentage of Total People Census Year		
	1991	1996	2001	1991	1996	2001
European*	2,783,028	2,879,085	2,868,009*	82.5	79.6	76.9*
Māori	434,847	523,374	526,281	12.9	14.5	14.1
Pacific	167,070	202,233	231,801	5.0	5.6	6.2
Asian	99,759	173,502	237,459	3.0	4.8	6.4
Latin American, Middle Eastern or African	6,693	16,422	24,924	0.2	0.5	0.7
People Stating an Ethnic Group	3,345,813	3,466,590	3,586,734	99.2	95.9	96.2
Ethnic Group Not Stated	28,113	149,052	143,598	0.8	4.1	3.8
Total People Resident	3,373,929	3,615,639	3,730,332	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Note in 2001, European included 94,868 or 2.6% who indicated a Continental European ethnicity.

While there are some differences in how ethnicity was recorded between each Census, most of the growth has been driven by migration from Asia and other areas that are traditionally non-English speaking.

In the 2001 Census, 10% of the population recorded an ethnicity that was different from the majority of people in New Zealand, including Māori or Pacific people in New Zealand.

- 6.4% of all Census respondents identified an Asian ethnicity
- 2.6% identified a Continental European² ethnicity
- 0.7% recorded an ethnicity from Africa, Latin America or the Middle East.

Information about the 50 most common ethnic groups is shown in Appendix One, Table 2.

Definitions

Ethnic group affiliation is self-determined. Ethnicity³ is a broad concept that includes elements of race, language, religion, customs and traditions as well as geographic, tribal or national identity.

The term “Ethnic” is used in this paper to mean that group of people whose ethnic heritage distinguishes them from the majority⁴ of other people in New Zealand, including Māori and Pacific people.

¹ Statistics New Zealand collects Census data on ethnicity using self-report criteria. Māori, Pacific and New Zealand European responses are recorded separately

² The majority of people in New Zealand have an ethnic heritage that can be described as Anglo-Celtic, that is it originates from the British Isles. People with a Continental European, ethnicity identify with an ethnic group that is European but not from Britain or Ireland (see note 4 below)

³ The New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils defines ethnic as ‘related to a segment of the population within New Zealand society sharing fundamental cultural values, customs, beliefs, languages tradition and characteristics that are *different* to those of the wider society’

⁴ See note 2 above. This is also regarded as the ethnic group in Australia, Canada, the United States and South Africa (unless an alternate ethnicity is specified)

This definition includes people from ‘well established’ ethnic communities, recent migrants, refugees and those people born in New Zealand who identify with their ethnic heritage. Te Puni Kōkiri and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs provide advice to government about Māori and Pacific people. These distinctions are in line with government policy and Census analysis of ethnicity.

Scope of Ethnic Perspectives

“Ethnic Perspectives” sets out the government’s approach to developing policies and services for ethnic people.

“Ethnic Perspectives” is a useful tool that can sit comfortably beside other policy frameworks, for use by policy analysts in their work, to ensure that differing perspectives are taken into account as policy advice and services are developed. “Ethnic Perspectives” is additional to requirements to consider Treaty of Waitangi implications in the preparation of policy advice. In certain circumstances it will be appropriate to consult with Māori or to seek advice on this from Te Puni Kōkiri.

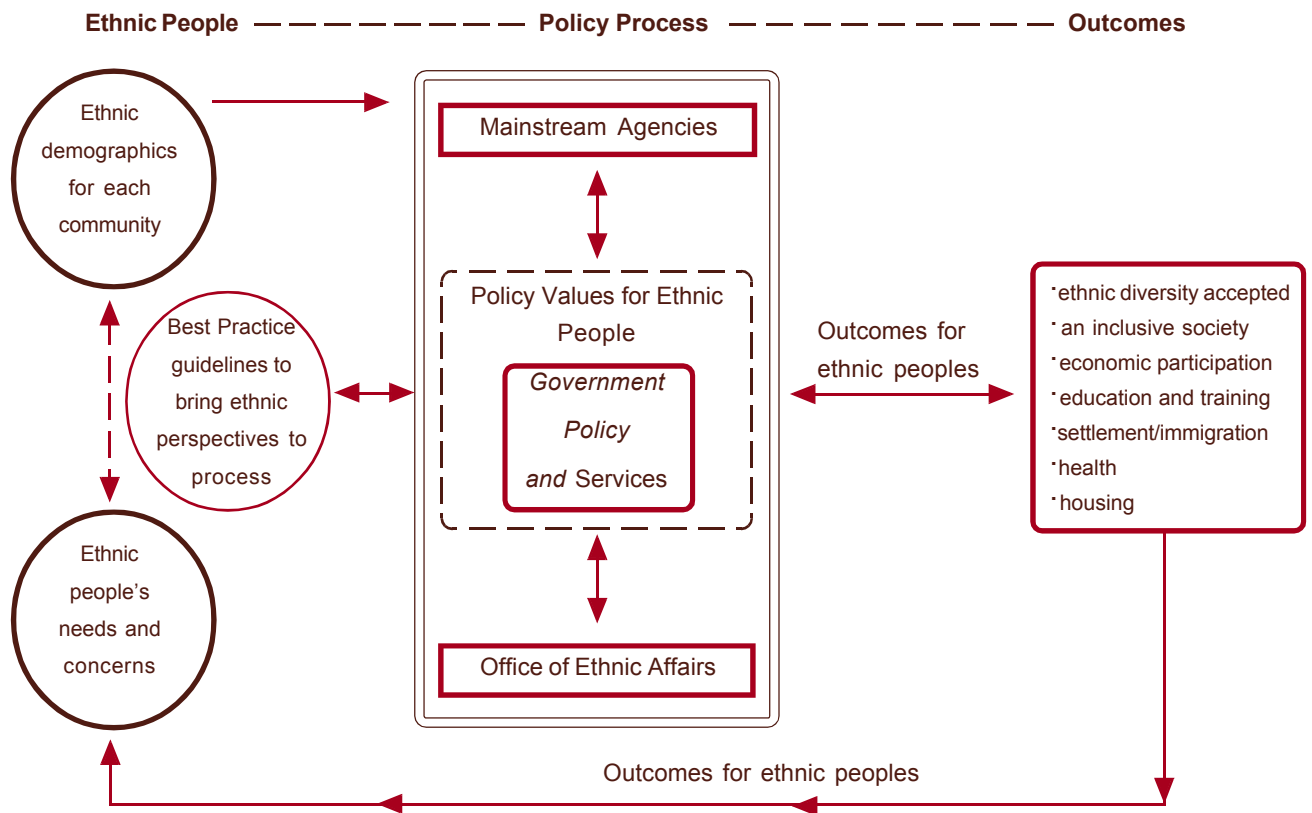
The diagram in Figure 1 over provides an overview of the ethnic perspectives approach described in this paper. All government departments are expected to take account of ethnic communities affected by their work. Policies and services for ethnic communities will be based on:

- identifying constituent ethnic groups, and component subgroups, and their respective needs. A summary of key policy issues is described in Section 1.2, and indicative demographic data is provided in Section 1.6 and Appendix One
- applying a set of high-level policy values and priority outcomes, described in Sections 1.3 and 1.4, as a frame of reference, to give direction to policy development.

To support this approach, guidelines are set out in Part III to illustrate how to bring an ethnic dimension to the policy process. They will be useful as a resource to help identify, plan and evaluate policy and services for the ethnic sector. These guidelines will be refined over time, and others may be developed.

The Office of Ethnic Affairs has a role to promote the use of ethnic perspectives in policy and to monitor this process.

Figure 1 Strategic overview of Ethnic Perspectives





1.2 Why Policy Needs Ethnic Perspectives

Linking ethnic communities to policy issues

Because the number and size of ethnic groups in New Zealand is growing relatively rapidly, a number of policy implications have been identified in the emerging New Zealand literature on ethnic issues and in other fora, e.g. as recorded in the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils' (NZFEC) 2001 "Vibrant Voices and Visions" conference declaration (Appendix Five refers).

Visibility

The ethnic communities are dynamic, complex, and growing in size, yet these changes have not been systematically recognised in policies and services. The composition of the ethnic sector should be visible to policy makers, so the needs of constituent ethnic communities can be identified and provided for.

Being aware of ethnic groups and the nature of ethnic diversity is the first step in developing effective policies for ethnic people. There is a growing demand for authoritative information in sufficient detail to inform the policy process about ethnic groups and how they compare across social and economic measures.

The most important sources of information are through research and official statistics. Research provides an opportunity to inform in depth on specific situations faced by ethnic groups in New Zealand. Ethnicity measurement is being reviewed to ensure official information about ethnic groups will contribute to more informed policy development, e.g. by highlighting areas of disadvantage that need to be targeted.

Making ethnic people more 'visible' in the policy process will provide better information about each ethnic community, and a stronger foundation upon which to develop policies and services.

Acceptance

New Zealand provides basic human rights in law for all of its citizens, and is a signatory to a number of United Nations instruments on the rights of refugees (Appendix Three refers). But the issue is not only a legal one. Ethnic people have a right to be treated fairly, with dignity and to feel willing and able participate in our society. New ethnic groups bring with them new languages, religions, cultures, and values. Ethnic diversity and cultures should be celebrated and valued, as part of our national identity.

In recent years, complaints to the Race Relations Office⁵ about racial discrimination have increased. Discrimination based upon personal traits or circumstances is corrosive, and contributes to feelings of social isolation from the community as a whole. Recent arrivals and refugees are particularly vulnerable. These tensions were exacerbated in the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Fortunately, the community as a whole responded positively to support those ethnic communities who were targeted.

Unless all New Zealanders make a conscious effort to promote understanding, and to value ethnic diversity, the ethnic communities risk becoming isolated and socially disadvantaged. The local or "host" communities need to be both willing and able to accommodate new arrivals into their social and economic structure.

Participation

As a group, ethnic people are increasingly seeking control over their own destiny, a stronger voice in policy formulation on matters that affect them, a desire to contribute and for greater involvement in the public sector (e.g. through statutory appointments), and better access to services generally. Ethnic communities represent an important resource of skills, knowledge, language, and culture. Ethnic people should feel able to participate

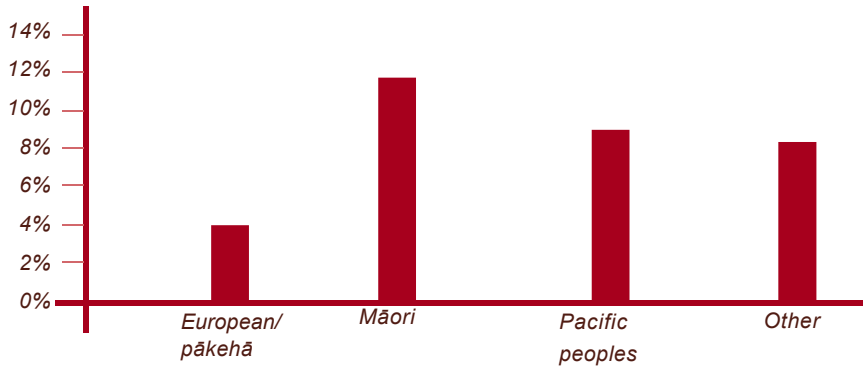
⁵ e.g. as noted in the former Office of the Race Relations Conciliator Annual Reports 1999 and 2000. This is now part of the Human Rights Commission

fully in all aspects of New Zealand society. There are signs that this does not often occur, e.g. as expressed in the Vibrant Voices and Vision Conference 2001 (Appendix Five refers).

Although immigration policies over the past 15 years have focused on people with high levels of education and skill, migrants still find it difficult to enter the workforce and to obtain work appropriate to qualifications and experience e.g.⁶

- a significant proportion of ethnic people unable to find work in positions for which they have been trained or have experience, even though they are twice as likely to have a university qualification than the average New Zealander (Census 1996 and 2001)
- the Household Labour Force Surveys show that while overall employment rates have improved over the past four years, the relationship between the main ethnic groups has remained unchanged: unemployment rates for “other” ethnic groups are twice those of the European ethnic groups (Figure 2 below refers)

Figure 2 Unemployment Rate by Ethnic Group for September 2002 quarter



- the Census 2001 confirms these trends of underemployment and unemployment e.g. ethnic groups made up predominantly of refugees reported very high unemployment rates (refer Appendix One Table 5 refers).

Identifying and including ethnic people more in policy development, together with improved coordination across government agencies, will also contribute to greater participation by the sector.

Accessibility

As signatories to various international agreements, and for humanitarian reasons, New Zealand cannot allow ethnicity to become a barrier to obtaining services. Nor should language be a barrier to obtaining information on essential services. Government policies should be responsive to need, and services should be accessible.

For the majority of ethnic people, any assistance or services, such as employment advice, housing assistance, income support, health and other social services, are provided on the same basis as for other residents. However, the trends are for some ethnic groups to fare poorly, e.g. in health, welfare, housing, education, and justice when compared to the New Zealand norms.

Policies and services that do not meet the needs of the ethnic people may compound these poor outcomes. New migrants and refugees have been identified as special groups who need more effective policies and programmes to target assistance to achieve better outcomes. Ethnic groups have identified a need for temporary

⁶ Department of Internal Affairs publications “Ethnic Diversity” (1999) and High Hopes (1996)

practical support to help new arrivals settle into their host communities and become self-sufficient.⁷ Over time, problems may arise due to issues associated with ageing communities or between generations.

There are also issues relating to non English-speaking residents, including difficulties in getting access to English language tuition, translation and interpretation services, and recognition of qualifications obtained overseas.⁷

The 2001 Census shows:

- over 50,000 people (2%) over 5 years of age could not speak English
- two out of three ethnic people reported they spoke at least one other language
- about one in seven ethnic people indicated they could not converse effectively in English
- about one in five of the Pākehā/European population indicated they could converse in one or more other languages.

In many ethnic groups, women were more likely than men to be recorded as not speaking English. Further data on languages is provided in Appendix One, Table 7. It is estimated 200,000 New Zealanders who were born overseas need assistance with English literacy.

The government is piloting a telephone interpreting service to facilitate access by people with limited English to services offered by the Department of Internal Affairs, Accident Compensation Corporation, New Zealand Police, Housing New Zealand Corporation, Ministry of Social Development and the New Zealand Immigration Service. More information about interpreting can be found on the Office of Ethnic Affairs website (www.ethnicaffairs.govt.nz).

Developing a better policy process

Government agencies need to work together to develop policies that better include ethnic perspectives. This means ensuring there is adequate information to inform policy, to give visibility in statistics, to promote acceptance and tolerance, to encourage ethnic groups to participate, and to ensure services are accessible to all groups.

Identifying issues for ethnic people will help to develop policy responses and service delivery that are more appropriate and effective in meeting the needs of a pluralistic society. Yet to date, most government policies for ethnic people have been developed in isolation, are uncoordinated or fragmented, and there are gaps in service delivery e.g. there should be a consistent approach across government policy development and service delivery to:

- identify the issues and concerns of the ethnic sector
- include ethnic communities in consultation
- monitor impacts of public policies and programmes on the ethnic sector.

The ethnic policy framework resulting from the values and outcomes for the ethnic communities identified in the following sections will enable all arms of government to identify common goals and outcomes. This policy framework will also provide a basis for transparency in evaluating policy and programme delivery.

⁷ e.g. as identified in research published by the New Settlers Programme, Massey University, 2001 (Occasional publications No 3 and No 4) and the Vibrant Voices and Visions conference



1.3 Policy Values

The purpose for the Office of Ethnic Affairs, based on the government's goals to guide public policy to achieve sustainable development (Appendix Four refers) and to grow strong communities, is:

“to create a climate so that ethnic people can fully participate in and contribute to all aspects of New Zealand life”.

Policy values for the ethnic sector

To support these goals, and to inform policy development, the government has agreed that policies and services affecting ethnic people should be based on the following values:

- **Acceptance of ethnic diversity.** Each ethnic community is celebrated as part of New Zealand society, and diversity in culture, language and religion is valued
- **Participation by the ethnic sector.** Each ethnic community is supported, and enabled to contribute to all aspects of New Zealand life
- **Accessibility.** Ethnicity, including language, should not be a barrier to obtaining information and services
- **Responsiveness.** Ethnic groups are identified, and their needs recognised and provided for, in policy, programmes and services
- **Equity.** Ethnic groups are treated fairly and the outcomes for ethnic groups should be no less favourable than the New Zealand norm, e.g. in education, employment, health, housing, justice and welfare.

These values are being achieved when ethnic people are seen, heard, accepted, and included in all aspects of New Zealand society. This will occur when:

- ethnic communities are strong and valued
- ethnic people have a sense of belonging and acceptance
- ethnic people are able to participate fully in all aspects of New Zealand life
- government policy and services respond to the needs of ethnic people
- ethnic people have equitable access to services.

Linkages to government goals

Policies that embrace these values will be in line with both ethnic communities' needs and the government's key goals e.g.:

- promoting acceptance, celebration and valuing of our diverse ethnic and cultural heritage, and more effective participation by ethnic people, will contribute to the goals to “strengthen our national identity, grow a more inclusive economy and develop stronger communities”
- ensuring ethnic people are able to access services, and to participate fully in all activities, will contribute to the goals to “reduce inequalities that currently divide our society, and offer a good future for all”
- promoting policies which remove barriers to employment, education and training will contribute to our goal of “improving the skills of all people in New Zealand”
- working more effectively in partnership with ethnic communities will contribute to our goals to “maintain trust in government, provide strong social services for all, and build strong, safe communities.



1.4 Outcomes for the Ethnic Sector

Applying the government's goals and policy values for the ethnic sector identifies outcomes that benefit not only ethnic communities, but also New Zealand as a whole. The government has agreed that as a priority policy and services affecting ethnic people should contribute to the following outcomes for the ethnic sector.

These outcomes are consistent with or drawn from existing policies and practices. They are presented here as a package for ethnic communities, to affirm the Government's commitment to the ethnic sector and to indicate government priorities and expectations of what it hopes to achieve for ethnic communities.

An inclusive society / ethnic diversity is valued

An inclusive society means that the value of ethnic diversity is affirmed, and ethnicity is not a barrier that divides society, in opportunities, access, or participation. The cultural richness of New Zealand society is enhanced through the free expression of heritage and traditions of diverse cultures, languages and religious beliefs. Human rights education helps to overcome any discriminatory attitudes.

Key outcome indicators are:

- ethnic diversity is respected, valued, and celebrated
- harmonious and safe communities, as evidenced by a reduction in cases of harassment or discrimination based on ethnicity
- ethnic communities are willing and able to participate in all aspects of New Zealand life
- information is provided about the Treaty of Waitangi and Māori as tangata whenua
- government policies and services are responsive, accessible, and appropriate for meeting the varied needs of people from diverse ethnic communities. Key areas are education and training (including English language instruction), employment, health, housing, settlement and welfare
- prospective migrants obtain comprehensive, accurate and practical information about New Zealand, ideally in their native language, before leaving for New Zealand
- immigration flows contribute to developing a strong economic and social foundation, and meet the family (re) unification needs of ethnic people
- the host community is willing and able to include the ethnic community
- interpreters and translations are accessible to those who require them
- ethnic community languages are developed and maintained.

Economic participation

Economic participation means that ethnic people enhance New Zealand's economic base through their contribution to building a diverse, innovative commercial sector with international links, conducive to a strong economy.

Key outcome indicators are:

- ethnic people find work appropriate to their qualifications and experience that they bring to New Zealand (or as a result of bridging education / training)

-
- ethnic people achieve equal employment opportunities, and are able to obtain and retain employment that is commensurate with their skills, knowledge and experience
 - cultural diversity is recognised as an asset in the workplace and is actively promoted
 - ethnic differences are recognised and accommodated in service delivery
 - viable business opportunities and work experiences are fostered in collaboration with the ethnic sector, business organisations and local government
 - the ethnic sector contribution to the economy reflects the ethnic diversity of New Zealand.

Education and training

Achieving good educational outcomes requires ethnic people to be able to participate and to realise their full potential, through access to education and training services that are appropriate and targeted to meet their needs.

Key outcome indicators are:

- education and training opportunities are accessible and responsive to the varied needs of people from the ethnic sector
- english language programmes are targeted to meet the needs of people with different levels or types of language
- procedures for evaluating and recognising overseas qualifications by relevant government and professional bodies within New Zealand are co-ordinated, and provide consistent and accurate information to the applicant.

Immigration and settlement

Achieving good settlement and post settlement outcomes requires ethnic people to contribute to developing a strong economic and social foundation in New Zealand. Expectations generated during the immigration process sow the seeds for successful settlement. Host communities are inclusive and able to absorb new people. Ethnic people are willing to call New Zealand home.

Key outcome indicators are:

- ethnic residents consider themselves part of the New Zealand community, and are willing to take up citizenship wherever practical
- skilled immigrants are attracted to and retained in New Zealand
- settlement meets the host community's capacity to provide access to housing, employment and social interaction
- the host community is welcoming, supportive and inclusive. Local government assists settlement – e.g.: through community events, access to community venues and resource centres, and one-stop information shops
- assistance provided during the immigration and settlement phase is appropriate, and fosters the

development of strong ethnic communities in the post settlement phase

- health, welfare and employment indicators are positive and indicate that ethnic people fare no worse than national average.

Health

Achieving good health outcomes requires all ethnic people, including those with disabilities and community care needs, to have access to services that are timely, appropriate and culturally sensitive. It also requires equal access to material resources such as income, education, employment and housing. Services for ethnic people take into account the effect of social networks, culture and language on ethnic people's understanding and access to information or services.

Key outcome indicators are:

- health policies and services are responsive to ethnic peoples' needs identified in consultation with ethnic communities
- health services are accessible to all ethnic people (including those with disabilities)
- each ethnic community has the same opportunity for good health as those experiencing the best health.

Housing

Achieving good housing outcomes requires ethnic people to have access to housing that is culturally appropriate (e.g. it is able to accommodate extended family groupings as appropriate) and is non-discriminatory. Housing quality should have a positive effect on health status, education and employment outcomes.

Key outcome indicators are:

- housing policies and services are responsive to needs identified in consultation with ethnic communities; including cultural requirements
- ethnic people can access housing that meets their diverse needs, and is non-discriminatory.



1.5 Realising Outcomes for the Ethnic Sector

To achieve the outcomes described above requires public policies to be developed in an environment that is aware and responsive to the ethnic sector. The Government has agreed that policies and services for ethnic people should be based on the values, and as a priority contribute to the outcomes, described above.

The Office of Ethnic Affairs will continue to provide information and support to ethnic communities to assist them to participate in public policy development.

In addition to targeting departments, the Office of Ethnic Affairs will encourage public sector agencies, crown entities, local government, community and voluntary organisations as appropriate to use the approach to ethnic perspectives described above, and to make use of the accompanying guidelines.

To foster a responsive public service

To foster an aware and responsive public service, each government department will:

- reflect the values and outcomes identified above in the preparation of policy advice and services
- identify ethnic groups significantly affected by the work of that department
- formulate specific responses to achieving the outcomes described above that are appropriate to their own situation, that recognise those ethnic groups and their needs.

And where the department's work has significant impact on ethnic people, or is likely to be of significant interest to them, the department will:

- consult the Office of Ethnic Affairs
- make information concerning that work publicly accessible. This will lead to a better information base to inform future policy
- identify existing sources of information to the Office of Ethnic Affairs, to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of progress towards implementing ethnic perspectives and achieving the goals and outcomes identified above.

There is a strong demand for authoritative information on the well being of 'other ethnic groups', as they increase their share of New Zealand's total population, to provide a sounder basis for policy decisions to be made. This information may come from a variety of existing sources including surveys, administrative data and official statistics.

Using the framework described above, each department will be able to identify and assess the impact of their activities on ethnic groups. Departments whose activities have a significant impact on ethnic groups will make such information accessible.

There is also a need for information to be reported consistently across government. Statistics New Zealand is currently reviewing the measurement of ethnicity. Adoption of this standard, when the review is completed in March 2003, would help to improve the relevance and robustness of official ethnicity statistics for policy development, monitoring, and evaluation.

The Office of Ethnic Affairs

The Office of Ethnic Affairs works both within the policy arena and with ethnic communities to help realise the government's outcomes and goals for ethnic communities. To promote the application of the ethnic perspectives, the Office of Ethnic Affairs will:

Advise agencies on how to bring an ethnic perspective to their work

The Office of Ethnic Affairs will contribute to developing well-rounded policy by promoting the use of policies and practices that bring an ethnic perspective to the policy process. It will advise other agencies how to develop policies that will enhance ethnic peoples' development and well being e.g. by promoting this policy framework and the supporting Guidelines:

- the policy guidelines pose systematic questions to identify and clarify issues for ethnic people
- the consultation guidelines provide information about engaging with ethnic communities and hearing their concerns
- the responsiveness guidelines show how an agency can review its operations to determine how well it is responding to ethnic people and communities.

This will help each agency to identify, plan, implement, and evaluate policies and services relevant to the ethnic sector.

Community liaison and information

The Office of Ethnic Affairs promotes acceptance of ethnic diversity, consultation with the ethnic sector, and ethnic communities' participation in the policy process. The Office does this through providing information and support by making linkages with appropriate government agencies.

The Office's community liaison work forms a crucial link with the ethnic sector, and provides a basis on which better policies and services can be developed. This will enable each ethnic community to engage more effectively with government and the wider community to meet their own needs. By promoting the involvement and participation of ethnic peoples within New Zealand, ethnic communities in New Zealand will grow stronger.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Office of Ethnic Affairs will develop a monitoring strategy based on the values and outcomes described in this paper, in consultation with agencies whose work is likely to contribute to their achievement.

The purpose of monitoring will be to determine the extent to which these outcomes are being achieved, and to identify any areas where ethnic community needs are not being met. It is important that information about ethnic groups' well being is collected, and that data is reported consistent with the Statistics New Zealand standard on the measurement of ethnicity.

Develop strategic priority areas

The Office of Ethnic Affairs will provide a leadership role for policy and community development in key areas e.g. it will identify emerging policy issues and trends, such as the needs of older ethnic people and ethnic youth, further work on settlement and 'post settlement', and policy in relation to fostering community languages and interpreting services.

The main focus will be on policy issues that transcend other agencies' roles and functions. It will also support ethnic communities to participate effectively in their own right. An example is the pilot telephone interpreting service described earlier.



1.6 About Ethnic Communities

Characteristics of ethnic communities

All ethnic groups are not the same. Different ethnic groups may have different views and needs. Policy advice that does not recognise this diversity is not in line with accepted best practice. E.g. long term New Zealand residents who might be expected to fall into a useful policy category of “established migrants” may still have need of interpreters (particularly as they grow older), or for services to be provided with some flexibility to enable them to maintain treasured and valued aspects of their culture and ethnic identity.

The most common means of considering this diversity are set out below.

Ethnic identity

As discussed in Section 1.1 there were over 200 ethnic groups identified in the 2001 Census. Each ethnic group has its own identity. The largest ethnic communities are Chinese (100,000), Indian (60,000) and Dutch (27,000). Appendix One Table 2 lists the most common ethnic groups from the 2001 Census compared with 1996 and 1991.

The changing composition of ethnic communities also needs to be considered, as this has significant implications for policy and services. E.g. the ethnic sector increased by 100% between 1991 and 2001 mainly due to immigration. Asian groups showed the greatest increase (140%).

Trends in age composition of ethnic populations are also useful indicators, e.g. when planning for services. Ethnic groups have their own unique population profiles. The proportions of youth and children, retired and working age people vary between groups (Appendix One, Table 6 refers). These differences can have implications for policy and service delivery e.g. it is projected⁸ that by 2016 Asian groups will make up 9% of the New Zealand population but will maintain a relatively younger age structure. By 2016 the proportion of Asian children will increase from 6% (in 1996) to 11% of all New Zealand children, the proportion of Asian people of working age is projected to increase from 5% to 9%, and the proportion of those aged 65 years and over would increase from 1% to 4%. The 2001 Census data confirmed 1996 trends that most Asians and Asian born residents live in the Auckland region.

Settlement history

The needs and views of ethnic people vary according to their background and time spent in New Zealand. ‘Push’ and ‘pull’ factors may have a big influence on migration and refugee patterns, compared with ethnic people who are well-settled and integrated in New Zealand (and may have been born here).

Refugees are the most obvious group who have been subjected to ‘push factors’. They often have a background characterised by extreme violence and trauma of war. In contrast, migrants are mostly attracted by pull factors, such as the hope of work, New Zealand’s clean environment and our ‘way of life’. Nearly all of the new arrivals in New Zealand are migrants who have chosen to come here.

Refugees and recent migrants are two groups who need to have policies targeted to specific needs, to facilitate effective settlement and their access to mainstream services. The recent migrants group has grown steadily following changes to New Zealand immigration laws in the late 1980s. By 1996, more than one quarter of people in ethnic communities had arrived within the previous five years. In 1996, more than 50% of

⁸ Statistics New Zealand medium projections series, 2000

recent migrants lived in Auckland. This pattern has continued since 1996, according to 'recent arrivals' figures. The 2001 Census shows that one in five New Zealand residents are born overseas. In the Auckland region, one in three people were born overseas and one in nine were born in Asia. Most of the people born in Asia live in Auckland. Almost one in four people in the Wellington region were born overseas, while fewer than one in 15 people in the Southland region were born overseas.

The third settlement group are people we can consider as 'well settled'. This group includes New Zealand born generations who chose to retain their ethnic identity. This group has its own needs, e.g. to maintain and celebrate ethnic heritage, culture and language, and to be acknowledged as a distinct and valued part of New Zealand society. Further information is provided in Appendix One (Table 3 refers).

Special groups

There are also other ways of defining subgroups within ethnic communities. It is important to realise there is no one worldview covering every ethnic community.

There are, however, some common factors e.g. each ethnic community will highly value its own spiritual beliefs, cultural traditions, and language. There are also likely to be cultural differences between different ethnic communities. Within the ethnic sector, there will be different practices and beliefs concerning religion and church, marriage and the family, and in attitudes to gender, children and young people, childcare, ageing and caring for older people, health and well-being, and people with disabilities.

These worldviews and demographic subgroups are important for policy development because they often highlight areas or people who have special needs, and that may require specific attention when policy or services are developed.

Some of the demographic groups are described below. In some cases, such as for women and children, the government has endorsed specific policy analysis requirements to be considered (such as gender analysis for women). Ethnic perspectives should be used alongside these other tools.

Refugees

New Zealand accepts 750 refugees each year. Since 1980, 16,500 people have been accepted as refugees, the majority being Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Iraqi, Somali, and Ethiopian.

Refugees have needs additional to those of the 'general immigrant'. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) identifies most of the quota refugees who come to New Zealand. Usually, refugees have had no choice about their new home, and present as vulnerable and traumatised people with special needs: including women at risk, medically disabled, and protection cases.

As well as those refugees who come in as part of the quota programme, there are also asylum seekers who ask for asylum on arrival or after entering New Zealand under a temporary visa or permit. In 1999 asylum refugees made up about a third of the 750 refugees who came to New Zealand that year. Both quota and asylum refugees are eligible to have members of their families join them in New Zealand either under the family policy or through the refugee family quota.

Women

There are a number of potential policy issues surrounding ethnic women. Ethnic women, and refugees in particular, may have special needs to be considered. They may be vulnerable and most at risk.

Ethnic women will have different worldviews across a range of fundamental topics such as childrearing through to the role of women in the workplace and the family. These views may conflict with mainstream expectations, which are often difficult for new arrivals to learn about.

The Office of Ethnic Affairs has identified the following needs from discussions with groups of ethnic women. A need for:

- information and education about the host society, including obligations and rights and what is expected in New Zealand
- acceptance of cultural diversity and education for the host society, including service agencies, to be more aware and responsive
- better information about ethnic women's well being, e.g. in employment statistics.

The health and well being of refugee women is vital for the future well-being of their families e.g. some refugees have suffered sexual and other forms of violence before arriving in New Zealand.

The ethnic perspectives approach will be useful to inform the issues for ethnic people, and is complementary to government's requirements for gender analysis. Most ethnic groups have a gender composition that is consistent with New Zealand as a whole i.e. 51% are female. In some ethnic groups this may vary slightly.

Children and young people (0-24 years of age)

There are a number of potential policy issues associated with this group of people including different customs and practices towards childcare, discipline and the age at which young people can take responsibility for themselves.

The following factors should be considered when responding to ethnic issues for children and young people (including reporting and evaluation mechanisms):

- measures taken to identify population groups of children and young people belonging to an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority
- measures which include action taken in schools, in the mass media, in communities, in legal proceedings, in local government
- goals and indicators of progress.

Young people (12-24 years of age)

There are issues that can arise as teenagers cope with the transition to young adults in a new and for some an alien culture. Young people face a variety of challenges and they need to be supported to be positive and comfortable with their own identity. This presents specific challenges for those who are trying to reconcile and balance their ethnic values with those of their parents and the country in which they now reside.

The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa outlines a policy direction for effectively supporting and addressing the issues, rights and needs of young people in New Zealand. It provides a consistent approach to enable agencies to work across the 12-24 inclusive age range in the design and delivery of policies and programmes to reflect young people's ethnic backgrounds and the competing pressures that may impact upon their lives.

In relation to the different needs of young people from different ethnic backgrounds, it may be useful to incorporate a gender analysis to identify the different needs of young women and young men. Recognition of these different needs adds value to a policy framework and may be particularly relevant in terms of young people's sexual and reproductive health and the effect that a young person's family background may have on decision-making in this and other areas.

In September 2002, the NZFEC held a young persons' forum to discuss issues that were important to young ethnic New Zealanders. Issues identified included: cultural sensitivity, freedom of expression and choice, including language and culture, family, discrimination, employment and education.

Older people

There are a number of potential policy issues associated with older people, including different customs and practices towards older people and those with disability, and their care.

Policies and services need to be accessible, and responsive to the needs of these people and, when appropriate, their caregivers. Wherever practicable, there should be the flexibility to accommodate ethnic customs and practices, e.g. those that recognise the value of care in the family, and to enable all ethnic people to live in their community with dignity. With ageing, for some there is an increased focus on traditions and use of mother language.

People with disabilities

There are a number of potential policy issues associated with people with disability, including different worldviews towards disability.

Policies and services need to be accessible, and responsive to the needs of people with disability. Wherever practicable, there should be the flexibility to accommodate ethnic customs and practices, e.g. those that recognise and value the ability of ethnic people with disability to live in their families and community with dignity.

Culturally responsive social services

The provision of culturally appropriate social services is emerging as an issue in New Zealand. The challenge will be for mainstream services to become more attuned to the cultural needs of the ethnic sector. In addition pressure for the support of separate population based services is beginning to emerge.

Additional information about the ethnic sector is provided in Appendix One.