

The Voice of ethnic communities

Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel

Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel (EPAP) Our journey so far

By Dr Camille Nakhid

EPAP's beginning

For the past seven months since its establishment in March 2011, EPAP has actively sought to be the voice of ethnic communities. One of the earliest tasks for EPAP was to review and revise its Terms of Reference/ Relationship Agreement with council to better reflect, not only council's expectations of EPAP, but EPAP's relationship with council and ethnic communities.

Plans, presentations and progress

EPAP has set up four sub-committees—Economic, Youth, Communication and Engagement, and Social and Community Wellbeing based on priority areas of council and the activities of the panel's Work Programme reflects these key areas.

In May, EPAP held two forums with ethnic communities in central Auckland and Waitakere to obtain their input into the Auckland Unleashed document. Over 200 participants attended. The summary report of the feedback was given to council to incorporate into their Draft Auckland Plan. EPAP hosted an additional forum following the publication of the Draft Auckland Plan to gain the response of ethnic community leaders to the Draft.

EPAP members have made submissions to local board plans; dog control policy/ bylaw; waste management and minimisation plan; the alcohol plan; and the consultation for the elimination of racial discrimination draft document. The panel is currently working on the adult entertainment policy and the long term plan 2012-22.

Presentations have been made to EPAP by council and the public at its monthly meetings on the Economic Development Strategy, Draft Auckland Plan, Community Funding Policy, Local Board Plans, Rugby World Cup (ATEED), an Ethnic Mediation Panel (New Zealand Jewish Council and the Auckland Jewish Council), and Community Development in the Supercity (Dr John Raeburn).

In October, EPAP made a presentation to the Auckland Council's Social and Community Development Forum to highlight the need for culturally appropriate facilities and care for the aged. Currently, the Economic sub-committee is preparing a presentation to council on the idea of an ethnic business network that would develop the economic prosperity and relationships among ethnic communities. The chair and EPAP members from the African community met with the South African High Commissioner to identify ways in which Auckland's African communities can build their economic potential.



Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel with Cr Richard Northey

Members have attended a number of important events including the Diversity Conference in Hamilton, Te Kingi Tuheitia Coronation Celebrations, the launch of the Settlement.org website, India Independence Day, and the Hong Kong and Diwali Festivals.

EPAP is currently looking into the need for council policy on migrants and refugees. EPAP also needs to consider how it can best respond to incidents involving racism and discrimination.

Challenges

EPAP believes that in order for it to provide effective advice to council it needs to engage with ethnic communities. The council, however, considers the panel members as experts on the issues, needs and concerns affecting ethnic communities. The panel believes that a lack of proper consultation and engagement marginalises these communities and the panel should be expected and encouraged to engage effectively with ethnic communities.

The expectation that council policy will be EPAP's perspective has also posed some challenges. EPAP understands and does not expect that all their recommendations will be heeded by council. However, it is reasonable for EPAP to expect that a rationale will be given for the decisions made in relation to the advice given by EPAP to council. A further challenge is the brief time frame given for responding to submissions.

Future

EPAP is aware that ethnic communities will remain a visible presence in Auckland and looks to itself, ethnic communities and council to ensure that it is able to be a relevant and worthwhile presence.

Welcome to *The Voice*

Hello and welcome to *The Voice* – the first newsletter of the Auckland Council's Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel.

EPAP was established under the Local Government Act 2010. The role and purpose of the panel is to identify and communicate to council the interests and preferences of the ethnic peoples of Auckland. The term of the panel is from March 2010 to November 2013.

EPAP members are regularly requested by ethnic organisations to attend various functions and this provides an opportunity for all members to meet with and engage with people from various ethnic communities.

The Auckland Council's website provides information on meetings and other key activities. The agenda and minutes of the monthly meetings as well as a Frequently Asked Questions are available to the public on the website: www.aucklandcity.govt.nz.

The panel is aware of the wealth of skills, cultures, knowledge, and perspectives that ethnic communities have and are able to contribute to Auckland's peopescap. It is the intention of the panel that these contributions are recognised and play a part in the development and progress of Auckland so that Mayor Len Brown's vision of becoming the most liveable city in the world is, in part, due to the dynamic presence and involvement of the city's ethnic communities.

The panel intends that its work during the period of its term will be relevant and rewarding to ethnic communities, the Auckland Council and panel members, so that there is reason to sustain its existence beyond November 2013.

As Chair, I am grateful to the members for their commitment, enthusiasm, support and contributions towards ensuring the value and effectiveness of EPAP.

EPAP also appreciates the support of Mayor Len Brown and Deputy Mayor Penny Hulse and the ongoing assistance of councillors Richard Northey and council staff Rina Tagore, Rebecca McGarry, Abba Fidow and Raewyn Stone.

We look forward to hearing from you and your community so that we can work together with council to grow the strongest ethnic communities for the wellbeing of Auckland and New Zealand. — *Dr Camille Nakhid*

Quiz

Here is an opportunity for our readers to win a prize while exercising their brain cells.

Please answer the following quiz and email your answers to: ethnicpanel@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz with Newsletter Quiz on the subject line. Entries close on Friday December 9.

Who said this?

"Of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none is so degrading, so shocking, or so brutal as his abuse of the better half of humanity; to me, the female sex is not the weaker sex."

- A. John Adams, second president of the United States
- B. Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of UK
- C. Mahatma Gandhi, Indian independence movement leader
- D. Gloria Steinem, journalist and women's rights activist

Message from the mayor



Great cities are built on strong local identities and cohesive communities, two elements which are critical to my vision of Auckland as the world's most liveable city.

It is important that our communities, be they geographical, ethnic, age or common interest groups have a voice in the development of Auckland.

That is why one of my first acts as Mayor of the new Auckland was to initiate the formation of the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel. This is a new model for Auckland, and I thank everyone who put their name forward for consideration to be part of the panel.

Like all of you, I want to build a better, stronger Auckland. Our unique blend of people provides us with a vibrancy, energy and diversity that is the wellspring of our cultural richness and future prosperity.

Our strength lies in our people and our variety, all contributing the ideas and enthusiasm that spark innovation. We do not all think the same way about the same things – which is one reason why this is such an exciting, innovative and entrepreneurial place to be.

The challenge of our new Auckland is to build on these foundations, to reach out, connect, and genuinely value each other. It's important that our diverse communities have a mechanism to communicate and engage with Auckland Council, and have a say in the future of Auckland.

The panel under the leadership of Dr Camille Nakhid is that mechanism for our ethnic communities and I am hugely encouraged in its progress to date. I know the panel will provide thoughtful and valuable strategic advice to me and the council, to help ensure our region embraces our differences positively.

This newsletter is one of a number of tools that will assist the panel and the council in the vital task of ensuring that the many diverse ethnic communities that make up Auckland have a means of communicating with the council and its representatives.

Len Brown
Mayor of Auckland



Mayor Len Brown with Korean leaders and some EPAP members

The first correct answer to be drawn will win two movie passes. The prize winning entry will be drawn on the 10 December at the EPAP monthly meeting and will be announced in the newsletter.

Introducing the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel

By Asoka Basnayake

The Mayor of Auckland, His Worship Len Brown, appointed the Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel (EPAP) in March 2011.

Twelve members were selected based on their individual skills, experience and relationships with their communities.



Dr Camille Nakhid (Chair): Dr Nakhid is from Trinidad and Tobago and is a senior lecturer at AUT University. She is also the chair of the Migrant Action Trust and an executive member of the Waitakere Ethnic Board and the West Indian/Caribbean Society.

Rev Amail Habib (Deputy Chair): Rev Habib is from Pakistan with many years experience as a school principal in Dubai. He has managed his own business, worked in real estate and is a reverend in West Auckland Anglican Parish. He is the Chair of the Waitakere Ethnic Board (WEB).



Ann Pala QSM: Ann is a Fiji-born community development consultant, an advocate for ethnic communities and a business woman. She was awarded a Queens Services Medal for her work with women and children in ethnic communities in 2007.

Asoka Basnayake (Media Spokesperson): Asoka is from Sri Lanka and has a background in research, journalism, communication and migrant settlement. She is an experienced community broadcaster and writes on migrant issues. She serves on the Asian Advisory Board of NZ



Police Auckland.



Bevan Chuang: Bevan was born in Hong Kong. Her background in the arts and culture has helped her to serve on the Chinese Community Centre and Asian New Zealand Young Leaders Network.

Grace Sook Ryu: Born in Korea, Grace works at the Waitemata District Health Board and leads the Asian Health Team. She also holds positions of governance with Ethnic Advisory Board of Waitemata Police and Waitakere Ethnic Board (WEB).



Jeet Suchdev QSM, JP: Jeet is from India and is well known for his work with the Indian community. He is the founder, chair and trustee of Bharathiya Samaj Charitable Trust which provides services to people of Indian origin. He was awarded the Queens Services Medal for his work.

John Hong: John is an English teacher, businessman, interpreter and translator from China. His expertise is in communication, community liaison and international relations.



Kafeba Pergoleze Alvis Mundele:

Kafeba was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo. A banker and a community development professional, he has qualifications in Social Practice, Theology, Linguistics and African Cultures. He is the pastor of Green Pastures Christian Centre. He is the president of the Congolese community and chair of the National Refugee Network.



Sadiqa Hajee: Sadiqa who works for the Auckland District Health Board is from Bahrain. She has affiliations with the Al Mustafa Charity Centre and Iranian Muslim Association of NZ. She works with Middle Eastern communities.



Susan Zhu: Susan is a former teacher from China. She recently completed a law degree and has served the community on the Asian Police Reference Group, Waitakere Ethnic Board (WEB), and the Chinese Oral History Foundation Trust. As a social worker she works with many communities other than her own.



Tuwe Kudakwashe: A former human resources manager, Tuwe

was born in Zimbabwe. Tuwe currently works in health promotion among African communities and is a member of African Community Inc., Zimbabwe Association, and a board member of the Auckland Refugee Council. Tuwe is a passionate activist for social justice and human rights.



Join the 'It's Not Okay' campaign

By Ann Pala

Although we have many educational and awareness programmes, statistics on domestic violence still remain high. Family violence adds to the break up of families, children being the most vulnerable, and has detrimental effects on the lives of women. Violence and sexual abuse rates against women in New Zealand are among the highest in the OECD.

Broken Promises, Broken Brides, a recent documentary screened on TVone featured the plight of abused women. It was the tip of the iceberg, powerful enough to throw some light on the issues.

The documentary features Asian women's groups keen not only to draw attention to these issues, but to be involved in actual cases. The story about the woman I helped took 11 years of support and the scars still remain. Not all cases have good outcomes. Domestic violence results in missed opportunities, loss of economic equality and lack of personal development. Often due to family and self shame, violence is not reported and threats of death in foreign countries of families often add to non-reporting.

Violence against women includes but is not limited to: physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation. The term 'violence against women' means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women. This includes threats of coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Violence is not limited to intimidation at work, it is in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking and forced prostitution.

Violence against women is a manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women, and is often found in cultures that are traditionally patriarchal.

Settling in a new country brings its own challenges. Minority groups from all over the world, including refugee or migrant women, destitute women, women in institutions or in detention, female children, women with disabilities, elderly women and women in situations of armed conflict, are especially vulnerable to violence and New Zealand is no exception.

The annual White Ribbon Day March will be held on November 25, meeting at Waitakere Hospital at 12:30. The march starts at 1pm and ends at Falls Park. Please participate to support the elimination of all forms of violence against women.

Support services for migrant and refugee women:

- Shakti: www.shakti.org.nz
- Shine: www.2shine.org.nz
- Fatima Foundation: ph (09) 276 7680

Contact: Police at 111 or any of the above groups.
Seek help!

The NZ refugee strategy – a case for review

By Kafeba Pergoleze Alvis Mundele

New Zealand resettles around 1200 refugees yearly. How do refugees arrive in New Zealand?

- Annual Refugee Quota of 750 refugees referred by the UNHCR but operated by Immigration New Zealand.
- Family Reunification: Refugee families already in NZ sponsor up to 300 of their family members.
- Asylum: A small group of about 150 former asylum seekers who meet the requirements for protection under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

The most common settlement issues refugees face include: housing, employment, health (especially mental health), youth issues and gaps in the education provision.

For many years now, leaders of refugee communities have been very vocal in pointing out that there is a need to review the policies on how to deal with resettlement issues of refugees. About two years ago, the Department of Labour (DOL) initiated The New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy—a new move towards addressing past inadequacies in resettlement. The following summarises the goals for refugees arriving in New Zealand:

Refugees are participating and fully integrated socially and economically as soon as possible so that they are living independently, undertaking the same responsibilities and exercising the same rights as other New Zealanders and have a strong sense of belonging to their own community and to New Zealand.

According to DOL the five outcomes for integration are:

- Self sufficiency: All refugees who can work are employed
- Participation: Refugees have a strong sense of identity and belonging to NZ and are well connected to their families, their ethnic communities and the NZ communities in which they live
- Health and wellbeing: Refugees enjoy healthy independent lives
- Education: Refugees' English language skills enable them to participate in education and achieve qualifications, and support them to participate in daily life.
- Housing: Refugees live independently of government housing assistance in homes that are safe, secure, healthy and affordable.

The stakeholders who were consulted in the development of the strategy include various non government organisations (NGO), some territorial local authorities and central government agencies.

Refugees from all over New Zealand are enthusiastically waiting for the implementation of the strategy (when the immigration minister signs it) whether the strategy brings the long awaited relief to the refugees remains to be seen.

Disclaimer: While the views and opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the council appointed Ethnic Peoples Advisory Panel, they are not necessarily the views and opinions of Auckland Council.