

Nelson Multicultural Council

Annual Report Marie Johnstone

Chairperson May-October 2015

The first 6 months of 2015 continued the re-focusing of Nelson Multicultural Council to core services whilst streamlining some activities due to limited resources and tightening of community funds.

Despite the challenges, the commitment and passion of Volunteer Committee Members weathered through whilst a new Coordinator and funding streams are being sourced. Our collaboration and partnership with the wider communities and local authorities maintained strong.

In the interim, we hired temporary Administrator Pooja Thakkar with her volunteer partner Ashutosh Bensode to carry out daily office operations and reception. This move welcomed foot traffic back to the NMC office as the public saw it was opened and manned daily. Both are business and computer savvy and creative thinkers.

Eventually a humble multi-talent emerged, skilled in management and other key areas that would breathe new life and sustainability to NMC. We finally hit the spot and welcomed Sole Ighani as our NMC Coordinator. Sole, a former refugee himself, came from top management and business roles.

Acknowledgements:

- My sincere gratitude to the 2015 Committee Members, with special mention to Kim Chi Ngo, Diane Homer and Rennie Malwheniyo who have resigned and pursued other commitments.
- Our special thanks to Pooja and Ashu for temporarily holding the fort whilst we were in the process of recruitment; and to Sole for coming into NMC to carry out the important work of NMC and rebuilding network relations.
- Thank you very much to Lillian Li who brought skills & passion coordinating SONT.
- Our Funding providers: COGS, Nelson City Council, Lotteries, Canterbury Community Trust, Office of Ethnic Affairs Settling In, Tasman District Council; our community partners and loyal members who continue to believe and support NMC.

Achievements Highlights – Appreciation of Diversity:

- Race Unity Day a successful collaboration with Nelson City Council and World Cup Cricket,
- Participation in Kai Festival.
- Multiculturalism workshop by Joris deBrez held on 19th May
- Celebration with Ethnic communities' festivals, e.g. Dasain (Bhutanese Nepali), Burmese New Year, Diwali Indian festival.
- Strategic Planning workshop with Julie Varney (BDC) and Business Mentoring by Nigel Teal as part of Business Mentoring NZ and Office of Ethnic Affairs partnership capability building for community organisations.

NMC promotion, Volunteer engagement:-

- Representation by NMC Committee members to Citizenship Ceremonies held in both NCC & TDC, providing an opportunity to capture new membership.
- NMC & World Cup Cricket 2015 partnership: Bat for Race Unity (March 2015), a huge success

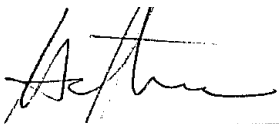
Challenges:

- Funding – retaining current providers, whilst continuing to source new funding streams.
- Capturing opportunities to grow membership / volunteers, collaborative projects / initiatives proactive to community needs.
 - Transforming to professional business approach to community service delivery
 - Review of current services, activities, policies and processes to streamline cost and maintain a sustainable future for the organisation.

NMC training and education services have continued despite the significant financial challenges involved in providing these services through difficult economic times. We worked with Multicultural NZ (NZ Federation of Multicultural Councils) to train and support other multicultural councils around the country, a testimonial to NMC's effectiveness and influence that goes beyond our local community.

The changes in my circumstance including full time work commencing January 2015 competed with my time commitment on the Chairmanship role, that I had to step down to allow another committee member to take the reins. My Vice-Chairman Priyani de-Silva Currie has competently continued with that role, with help from the experienced members – Luz Zuniga, Jessica Diaz and Barbara Bedeschi. Thank you to everyone for your passion and vision.

My personal heartfelt gratitude to everyone's significant contribution and support in helping build the Nelson Multicultural Council to what it is today. Feedback, innovative, creative ideas and active involvement with NMC are always encouraged. Kia kaha.



Marie Johnstone
Chairperson (May-October 2015)

Annual Report Priyani de Silva-Currie **Chairperson October 2015-April 2016**

As we celebrate the 23rd anniversary of Nelson Multicultural Council, I would like to use this opportunity to acknowledge the pioneering members whose initiative it was to set up this wonderful organisation with a strong reach throughout the Nelson and Tasman community promoting diversity, unity and a positive multicultural society. As it was in the beginning, creating opportunities for migrants, sharing our cultures and unique stories, and presenting a voice issues affecting our migrant communities continues to be our foundation. To Siri and Soma Wettasinghe, Penny Molnar, Marie Johnston, Margaret Belton and the late Hein Kolff we dedicate to you thanks and gratitude.

I would also like to recognise the hard work and passion of present volunteer members and our staff and contractors for strengthening the organisation and making it relevant and timely in supporting migrants in the community. Not to forget all our funders, sponsors, and supporters for their trust, encouragement and support - you believe in us, what we do and who we represent; without you all, Nelson Multicultural Council would not exist.

I believe that all these years later, we have evolved through successes, failures and redefinition. Sometimes we are stronger, sometimes weaker, but always a continued presence in the community. It's important that we take an active leadership role in demonstrating our continued relevance and effectiveness to our members, communities, funders and stakeholders. This involves clearly communicating and implementing our case, vision and goals and ensuring that our organisation has the capacity and resources to deliver its updated strategic priorities.

There have been noticeable changes in 2015-2016 including the implementation of our governance strategy – separating the governance from day to day operation of the organisation and the restructuring of the staffing operations, we also changed our Chairperson late last year. Unfortunately at the same time we had to make the hard decision to discontinue with two operational roles, our Fieldworker Megan Riddell and our Nelson Newcomers Network Coordinator Jettie Zeestraten effective early in 2016. We farewelled Bridget Thompson mid last year, and welcomed Sole Ighani into the Coordinators role in November 2015. We also farewelled Lillian our SONT coordinator in 2016, and incorporated this task into the coordinators functions. To all our outgoing staff and contractors, we are enormously thankful for their continued support and wish them well in the future.

Another important decision was to seek the support of a business mentor and fundraising consultant as committee advisors. Our organisation continually aims towards a sustainable and resilient model, seeking stability financially and looking beyond the traditional funders for its growth and development.

Our team worked hard in the background to ensure the usual activities and events were held, and services were constant. Race Unity Day was a highlight in early 2016. Professional Speaking for Migrants Train the Trainers and Migrant Self Defence Courses were funded and held. We contributed to Multicultural New Zealand Cluster and Strategic Planning Meetings and a Settlement Summit and Local Community Meetings each month. Our presence at Citizen Ceremonies is constant and we also held a spring pot luck dinner. We have a number of planned activities for the rest of this year including a Night Noodle Market and Harvest Festival Celebration and Professional Speaking for Migrants courses in the region.

As we take another journey into 2016-2017, I expect Nelson Multicultural Council to play a stronger role with other established groups and service providers within the migrant support space, these activities include:

- celebrating cultural diversity
- eliminating domestic violence in our communities;
- promoting education and learning opportunities for migrants;
- promoting community languages and professional speaking;
- advancing Treaty Based Multiculturalism;
- supporting and advocating for robust settlement support pathways;
- ensuring intercultural awareness and competency;
- developing community capacity development and resilience; and
- providing networking and fun opportunities for migrants.

Once again, in celebrating our achievement over the past 23 years, it wouldn't have been possible without the hard work, support and contribution of our friends and sponsors; past and present members and leaders; and most importantly the selflessness and ongoing support of our recent executive committee members; Luz, Jessica, Lainey, Barbara, Marie, Rennie, Ashutosh, Pooja, Kim Chi, Diane, Sally; our diligent hardworking and committed staff and contractors Sole, Megan, Jettie, Bridget, Lillian, and of course our brilliant volunteers – of which we could always have more please!

Priyani de Silva-Currie
Elected Chairperson (October 2015-April 2016)

