

# **Nelson Multicultural Council**

## **Annual Report April 2013 – March 2014**

2013 proved a very busy and challenging year for the Nelson Multicultural Council (NMC). Levels of income for the Council were stable, mostly because of a great deal of trust in NMC's ability to deliver services, and the goodwill of our funders.

We are very grateful to the hardworking NMC team who, in partnership with community agencies, continue to explore every avenue for growing the effectiveness of the organisation and supporting members while keeping a close eye on finances. The zeal and resourcefulness of our Coordinator, Evey McAuliffe, is a huge help in identifying these avenues and opportunities.

Achievements in 2013 were many and varied, and a full summary of our work within the community is contained in Coordinator's Annual Report. Just to name a few we did well in:

- Promoting Positive Race Relations through Race Unity Day, Rainbow Praise, World Refugee Day, TV1's Neighbourhood programme which featured some of our members to showcase New Zealand's cultural landscape from the perspective of Nelson's diverse ethnic minorities; organised Intercultural Awareness & Communication training workshops.
- Supporting Migrants and Former Refugees by taking part in local celebration of World Refugee Day, working closely with Red Cross Refugee Services assisting with refugee family reunification and delivering various training workshops through the Ignite Project designed to improve the lives of migrants & refugees settling in Nelson.

We celebrated 20 years as a registered organisation and excellent progress has been made in all Council activity areas; NMC has also looked to "strengthen the engine room" with the review of a number of policies and processes to better streamline the organisation. Later in 2013 NMC reviewed its staff and contractor roles to ensure the future viability of all its various activities.

NMC training and education services have continued despite the significant financial challenges involved in providing these services through difficult economic times. Membership numbers continue in a positive direction. 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 challenges continue for NMC and other non-government organisations that similarly rely on membership support and funding partners to succeed. And despite our Committees responsible decisions in 2013 to maintain NMC's financial sustainability going to the future, we still face uncertainty as the government focus shifts from social development to economic development which has a direct effect on local services:

1. As of 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014, Settlement Support (MBIE) coordinators will no longer exist. Settlement Support advice and information will be available on line. There is currently a tender process for face-to-face service delivery to be contracted at a national level (we, as a regional organization cannot submit to the tender) The NZ Federation of Multicultural Councils, of which we are one of the twenty, will be submitting a bid.

2. From the 1st April 2014, the Settling In programme transferred from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to the Office of Ethnic Affairs (OEA), part of the Department of Internal Affairs. Although we have been assured that the criteria for funding will not change, we are concerned at the disestablishment of the Top of the South Settling In Relationship Managers role. Settling In has worked in the Nelson community for the past 10 years and has been the catalyst for many effective initiatives involving partnering agencies and refugee communities to work collaboratively. It takes time to develop high trust relationships that enable this work to be done effectively.

The unexpected resignation of our former Chairperson, Priyani de Silva Currie, to undertake a job promotion in Palmerston North has our Vice Chairperson and long serving member, Baki Bakshi, stepping up to fill the void. NMC is very grateful and proud for their leadership that guided the governance Committee to provide a strategic direction and make better decisions collectively. We are thrilled to have new members joining our Committee, but saddened by the decision of highly valued members to exit – Dayanira Bakshi, Denise Hutterd, Lun Tan and Claire Keenan. The reality of the government’s funding “streamline” also saw some of our contractors finishing. Their successful project initiatives augmented the lifeline of NMC’s working relationship with the wider community. The end of their contracts leaves a dent in our effective service delivery.

Our deep heartfelt gratitude to all these members and contractors for their significant contribution and support in helping build NMC to what it is today. We hope to draw from their experience and wisdom in the future.

Parting message extracts from ex- Chairperson Priyani de Silva Currie (Chaired till Nov 2013):

*“..The opportunities to grow and the risks that go with social enterprise are an ongoing challenge that needs all the experience and knowledge we can muster to take our organisation forward, and I look forward to hearing about NMC’s continued success for the upcoming year.”*

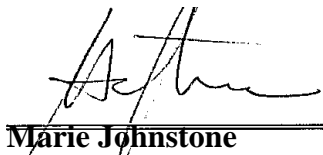
Parting message extracts from ex-Acting Chairman Baki Bakhshi (Chair Nov 2013-April 2014):

*“..I am certain with our proven track record in providing service and meeting the demands of growing migrant community we will win the trust and confidence of the powers that be to carry on with the work that we are so passionate and dedicated to.”*

**Priyani de Silva Currie** (NMC Chairperson up to Nov 2013)

**Baki Bakhshi** (NMC Vice Chairman and Acting Chair Nov 2013 – April 2014)

and



**Marie Johnstone**

**Chairperson (elect from April 2014-)**