

# Briefing for Incoming Minister

## ETHNIC AFFAIRS

October 2005

THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS



*Te Tari Taiwhenua*

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# Introduction: Ethnic Affairs

## Introduction to Internal Affairs

The Department of Internal Affairs' purpose is to serve and connect citizens, communities and government to build a strong, safe nation. The Department's vision is to be a recognised leader in public service – known for innovation, essential to New Zealand, and trusted to deliver.

In 2005, the Department administered six votes:

- Internal Affairs
- Ministerial Services
- Local Government
- Community and Voluntary Sector
- Civil Defence
- Racing

(Ethnic Affairs is a separate portfolio within Vote Internal Affairs.)

The Department administers approximately 80 Acts and sets of Regulations, and approximately 1500 'local' Acts.

The Department employs around 1,100 people in 17 centres in New Zealand, plus small offices in Sydney and London. It has revenues of almost \$150 million per year from both Crown and external sources. It is the responsible department for many Crown entities and other statutory bodies.

## Introduction to Ministerial Role

### STATUTORY POWERS OF THE MINISTER

The Minister for Ethnic Affairs has no statutory powers.

### FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Department's activities under this portfolio focus on providing policy advice and support to you as Minister for Ethnic Affairs and on providing a point of contact between government and ethnic people, providing advice, information and community referrals to appropriate agencies.

## CROWN ENTITIES AND OTHER STATUTORY BODIES

There are no Crown entities or other statutory bodies associated with the portfolio.

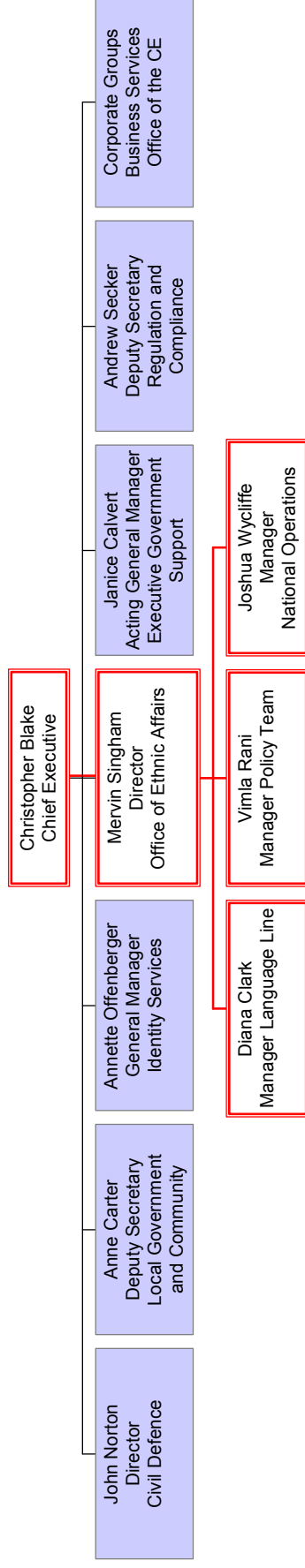
## KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Key stakeholders include government agencies, local government, community organisations and ethnic people themselves.

# Minister for Ethnic Affairs

## Department of Internal Affairs Accountability Arrangements

This chart shows the areas and people of the Department of Internal Affairs (in red) who report to you as Minister for Ethnic Affairs.





## 1. Sector Overview: Ethnic Affairs

The Ethnic Affairs portfolio was established in 1999 to give ethnic communities a voice in government. The Office of Ethnic Affairs was formally launched in May 2001 as a stand-alone unit within the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA). A policy and administration team, a network of ethnic advisors and a team promoting and managing Language Line support the Director<sup>1</sup>, who reports directly to the Chief Executive.

The Office contributes to the DIA intermediate outcome of well settled and included ethnic communities. For New Zealand to have thriving, safe and sustainable communities, ethnic communities must settle well, feel included and contribute to the prosperity of the country as a whole. The Office's primary functions are to provide information about and for ethnic communities, advise government and act as a point of contact with government for ethnic people and the community.

The Office works towards ensuring New Zealand's increasingly diverse ethnic population is able to achieve its full potential. Its vision is 'strength in ethnic diversity'. The purpose of the Office is: 'To contribute to a strong self-directed ethnic sector able to set its own priorities, and to promote the advantages of ethnic diversity for New Zealand'. This requires all New Zealanders to appreciate the benefits and opportunities created by ethnic (cultural and linguistic) diversity.

The Office works with and for that 10% of the population whose ethnic<sup>2</sup> heritage distinguishes them from most other people in New Zealand and from Māori and Pacific people. This definition includes migrants, refugees, long term settlers and people born in New Zealand who identify with their ethnic heritage. It recognises that Te Puni Kokiri and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs usually advise on interests for Māori and Pacific peoples. The Office also recognises the implications of New Zealand as a host community that is home to many peoples and cultures, and provides advice on this broader intercultural setting. Within the ethnic sector, there are particular issues for ethnic women, older people, refugees, children and youth as groups that are most vulnerable or at risk.

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<sup>1</sup> Following new funding in Budget 2005 up to six staff are being recruited. This will bring the OEA complement to 19, made up of policy (4), ethnic advisors (8) (based around Auckland (4), Wellington (2) and Christchurch (2)), Director and administrative support (4), Language Line (3).

<sup>2</sup> Ethnicity is a broad concept of group affiliation based on elements of race, language, religion, customs, heritage and tradition as well as geographic, tribal or national identity. For administrative reasons, the scope of the Office of Ethnic Affairs primarily concerns people who identify with ethnic groups originating from Asia, Africa, Continental Europe, the Middle East and Central and South America; and includes refugees and migrants as well as people born in New Zealand who identify with these ethnic groups. In this sense, 'ethnic' is used to refer to people whose ethnicity is different from the majority of people in New Zealand, and from Māori or Pacific people.

The 2001 Census identified:

- 356,000 (10%) of people normally resident in New Zealand recorded an 'other' ethnicity (compared to 5% in 1991). Of these:
  - 237,000 people identified as Asian (6.6%), 94,000 (2.7%) Continental Europeans and 24,000 (0.7%) as Central and South American, African or Middle Eastern
  - most of the recent migration has been from Asia (now 6.6% of all Census respondents) and other non-English speaking areas
- the largest ethnic populations: Chinese (100,000) and Indian (60,000)
- 200 separate ethnic identities, of which 45 had a population of 2,000 or more
- an increase in recent arrivals compared to well-established communities (49% had arrived within the past 10 years and only 26% were New Zealand-born)
- growth has been greatest in cities, with highest concentrations in Auckland, Hamilton Wellington and Christchurch
- ethnic groups tend to have a greater proportion of people under 25 years of age, and a younger overall population compared with 'New Zealand European'
- ethnic people are twice as likely as Europeans to be unemployed
- 50,700 (2%) adults could not speak English at all and the Ministry of Education estimates that about 200,000 overseas-born adults speak English, but have less than adequate levels of literacy in English.

At any one time, there are also around 150,000 people temporarily in New Zealand from non-English speaking backgrounds (as tourists, students or on work visas).

The major issues facing ethnic communities centre around effective participation in society at all levels, fair and equal access to services to which they are entitled, and building host communities' understanding of the benefits of ethnic diversity and of the contributions of ethnic New Zealanders, to address the concerns evident in some quarters.

Ethnic community expectations<sup>3</sup> continue to be for a more responsive and supportive host community, greater employment and business opportunities, better access to information and services (with language support), opportunities to build community capacity and support to maintain heritage cultures, identity and languages. There is a strong demand for access to funding, better family reunification policies and acknowledgement of the contributions made by ethnic communities. There is also a demand for host communities to understand ethnic communities better, and to acknowledge the benefits of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity and the contributions of ethnic New Zealanders. This is also essential to counter negative perceptions.

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<sup>3</sup> See feedback outlined in OEA community listening forums and stakeholder feedback, and conferences such as Vibrant Voices and Visions, 2001.

Based on current trends it is estimated that the ethnic sector will comprise 18% of the resident population by 2021. This 18% will be in addition to the figures for Māori (17%) and Pacific peoples (9%).

## 2. Strategic and Legislative Framework: Ethnic Affairs

Discrimination against ethnic groups based on nationality, religion, race or colour, ethnic or national origin is prohibited under the Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993. The equal employment opportunity provisions of the State Sector Act 1988 also promote equal employment opportunities in the state sector for 'ethnic minorities'. Other agencies such as the Human Rights Commission, including the Race Relations Commissioner, have a role which links closely to that of the Office.

New Zealand is party to several United Nations conventions that serve to eliminate discrimination and to protect the interests of minority ethnic groups, refugees, women and children. These conventions include support for economic, social and cultural rights (including the right of indigenous and ethnic minorities to maintain their languages and cultures).

Within this context, the Office contributes to the major challenges by:

- empowering ethnic people to participate in all aspects of New Zealand life
- strengthening the positive image of diversity by raising awareness of ethnic diversity, and highlighting the contributions and positive benefits that ethnic communities bring to New Zealand
- improving the access to key services for ethnic communities
- developing a better-informed and more responsive public service that is interculturally aware
- contributing to sustainable settlement and social cohesion.

It is important to develop whole of government strategies, and for agencies to work together to meet the needs of the community. This collaborative, service-driven approach is acutely important to the work of the Office, which is not an operational agency, and relies on traditional service providers being more effective in responding to ethnic peoples' needs. To facilitate this approach, the Office has developed a strategy to incorporate ethnic perspectives into government policy and services, using these goals and an analysis of ethnic issues to develop a set of policy values and outcomes for ethnic people.

### ETHNIC PERSPECTIVES

The government's Ethnic Affairs framework, 'Ethnic Perspectives in Policy', is a strategic policy tool that sets out government expectations and provides a whole of government

response to the provision of policy advice and services for ethnic communities. The functions are:

- identifying ethnic groups likely to be affected by a policy or service
- applying a set of government-endorsed high-level policy values<sup>4</sup> and priority outcomes<sup>5</sup> as a reference, to give direction to public policies and service development
- fostering an aware and responsive public service
- requiring ethnic perspectives to be considered in the preparation of policy, and consultation with the Office where policy is likely to significantly impact on ethnic people
- improving the quality of information available to the public by requiring information about ethnic people and the impact of policies and services to be published annually.

## STRENGTH IN ETHNIC DIVERSITY

The Office is developing its vision of strength in diversity as a strategy to achieve the goals established by government in adopting Ethnic Perspectives in Policy. We seek the following outcomes:

- a strong supportive policy and operational environment, backed up by a strong monitoring and evaluation role
- strong, self-reliant sustainable ethnic communities
- public appreciation of the value (including benefits and opportunities) of cultural and linguistic diversity for all New Zealanders.

The Office has a role as a facilitator and catalyst for change, to develop strategic partnerships with key agencies and groups to achieve the vision. Its policy work focuses on issues that require a coordinated or whole of government response, and it provides expert advice about intercultural matters and ethnic communities' issues. The focus of work is to implement policies that strengthen ethnic diversity, to help ethnic communities be seen, heard, included and accepted, and to create a climate where ethnic communities are able to fully participate in and contribute to all aspects of New Zealand life.

To support this approach, we have identified the following key areas of leadership:

- training in intercultural awareness and competency, as an additional tool alongside promotion of Language Line and Ethnic Perspectives in Policy
- initiating research into best practices for research and monitoring that will lead to better quality information and administrative data about ethnic communities

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<sup>4</sup> The values are acceptance, participation, accessibility, responsiveness and equity.

<sup>5</sup> The key outcomes focus on inclusion/acceptance of diversity and economic development supported by sector specific outcomes for education, settlement, health and housing.

- proactive community forums and community development support
- raising host community awareness about ethnic diversity and its value, and the celebration of ethnic diversity and positive role models.

The Office will support these areas by further promoting ethnic perspectives to the public service, building intercultural competence, facilitating ethnic community development, extending community outreach, and providing information about ethnic communities and the benefits they bring to New Zealand. It is also contributing to the National Settlement Strategy, led by the Department of Labour. Priorities for the short term are promoting policies to achieve strength in diversity, good settlement and greater commitment from central government to ethnic responsiveness.

The Department of Internal Affairs is developing a strategic priority on cross government leadership in the area of ethnic diversity. The initial focus will be to support the Office's work on intercultural awareness and best practice research methods.

### 3. Minister's Role: Ethnic Affairs

The Minister for Ethnic Affairs' role is to give a voice and advocate in government for ethnic people. Ethnic Affairs has many issues in common with Ministries dealing with Māori and Pacific peoples. There are strong linkages with Ministerial portfolios such as Community and Voluntary Sector, Education, Employment, Immigration, Police, Health, Housing and Social Development.

## 4. Department's Role: Ethnic Affairs

In 2004 the government consulted key stakeholders about the location for the Office of Ethnic Affairs either within the Department of Internal Affairs or within the Ministry of Social Development. The decision was to retain the Office as a business group in the Department of Internal Affairs. The Office has offices in Wellington, Auckland and Christchurch. Our Ethnic Advisors primarily work with communities and organisations in these cities, but they also provide limited outreach services in areas such as Hamilton, Palmerston North and Dunedin.

The Office takes a strategic, population-based approach to its work and focuses on issues that apply across government. It

- provides policy advice, information and referral services for government, non-government agencies, ethnic communities and groups on issues for the ethnic sector
- works closely with central and local government, ethnic communities and non-government organisations, including multicultural resource centres and migrant and refugee centres
- provides a point of contact between government and ethnic people, providing advice, information and community referrals to appropriate agencies.

It also provides capacity building advice and promotes and manages the Language Line telephone interpreting service. It works collaboratively with host and ethnic community agencies, through government and community-based processes, to inform about ethnic diversity and its benefits, and to help address host community misconceptions about people from different ethnic groups.

## 5. Key Issues and Themes: Ethnic Affairs

The Office will continue to develop its vision of 'strength in diversity' (priority leadership areas are listed under the heading 'Strength in Diversity' in Section 2, Strategic and Legislative Framework). There is a high demand on the Office for specialist training, information and advice on different ethnic communities.<sup>6</sup>

### Priority issues

#### ETHNIC PERSPECTIVES IN POLICY

'Ethnic Perspectives in Policy' is designed to help government agencies identify implications for ethnic communities in their work and be more responsive. Launched in 2003, it sets out government's direction for policy and services for ethnic communities across the whole of government. In 2004 a review found progress was inconsistent across agencies, and additional resources were needed for the Office to help agencies achieve responsiveness. A progress report is expected in late 2006.

#### PUBLIC EDUCATION RESOURCES

The success of *Portraits: Youth* (a book of photographic essays), and a poster promoting "Strength in Diversity" reflects high public demand for resources that raise the visibility of ethnic New Zealanders and that address mainstream assumptions about who a New Zealander is and what they look like.

#### ADVICE AND EDUCATION FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- The Office is increasingly asked to facilitate other departments' consultations with communities and provide expert advice on intercultural community engagement. This is a positive development as agencies work to improve services for all New Zealanders. The growing demand highlights the need for greater intercultural skills within agencies. These include working with multicultural work teams, and service

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<sup>6</sup> This work is also closely linked with and would complement aspects of the Human Rights Commission's Plan of Action arising from its Status Report on Human Rights in New Zealand.

delivery to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

- Employment barriers may be partly attributed to employers' inexperience with different cultures. Improving intercultural competence should improve both public sector employment opportunities, and enhance agencies' service responsiveness. It will also lead to better public sector EEO outcomes through improving recruitment techniques and retention.
- The focus this year will be to develop a training package to enhance intercultural skills within the public sector (in addition to bicultural competence). A priority outcome will be to improve agency services to ethnic communities in traditional areas of community development (such as advice on getting organised, forming organisations and how to access funds).

## LANGUAGE LINE AND INTERPRETING

Language Line provides quick, cost-effective interpreting services to people with limited English who need to transact business with government agencies. It has supported over 30,000 calls since April 2003. Following a successful evaluation report for the pilot telephone interpreting service last year, the service has been made permanent.

The focus over the next three years is for managed growth of the service. A report is due in 2008 on the feasibility of the participating agencies meeting the full costs of Language Line (currently the Crown meets the administration and development costs).

There is also a need to increase the number of New Zealand-based interpreters and translators as New Zealand suppliers are not able to meet demand. The Office is working on projects to attract people into the industry.

## INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

Information about ethnic groups is essential for informed public policy. The development of quality information and datasets about ethnic groups is a critical issue. At present, detailed ethnicity data is not readily available or accessible.

The Office has identified a need for a strategic framework to promote research on ethnic communities and improve accessibility of information. The immediate aim is to foster development of best practice tools and models for statistically small population groups, and address gaps in the availability and quality of information.

A priority for the Office will be to work with Statistics New Zealand to ensure that the importance of ethnicity recording is understood for the 2006 Census and onwards.

## COMMUNITY BROKERAGE, FORUMS AND EVENTS

The Office brokers relationships between ethnic communities and central and local government. This service encourages agencies to improve responsiveness of services (often around accessibility of information and language support), and encourages independent community relationships with agencies, promoting community capacity building. There is demand to expand this service to ethnic communities outside Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch (areas in which ethnic advisors are based).

Public events raise awareness and build networks with the wider host community. In the coming year, workshops will be held in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch to help build community capacity, help people build better cross-community networks, and inform them about the Office's and other government initiatives. The Office will also gain feedback on key issues.

## SETTLEMENT

Settlement issues have been a central focus for the Office. The rapid growth of significant and diverse ethnic communities has resulted in a number of public policy issues that are expected to dominate over the next three years. One difficulty is that policies and programmes have arisen ad hoc and largely in response to the experiences of earlier immigrants.

The Office plays a significant role in settlement work through promoting ethnic responsiveness, intercultural awareness and its work with ethnic communities themselves. It also works with local government bodies as they develop ways of responding to the community component of the new Local Government Act 2002, and with strategic regional settlement initiatives.

There is a need for greater clarity in agencies' respective roles, and for coordination to ensure migrants and refugees experience a seamless transition in service provision throughout the settlement process. This work will be a priority for the Office in the coming year.

There is also a need for stronger linkages between new, settled and host communities, to provide the supportive environment within which new migrants can find work, make new friends and settle into New Zealand life.

## LONGER TERM SETTLEMENT

Beyond initial settlement needs, there are issues common to all ethnic communities in New Zealand, including those whose families migrated here several generations ago and have a long history in New Zealand. These issues include: experiences of discrimination and being undervalued, recognition and acknowledging the historical contributions of ethnic communities, maintaining heritage languages and cultures, and our collective identities as New Zealanders.

There are also issues surrounding integration and care of older people and youth. In addition, the Office has identified a range of potential issues surrounding refugees who have a high degree of need for support beyond the initial assistance offered.

This post-settlement work will need to be developed by the Office in conjunction with the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the Department of Labour, who also have lead interests in settlement.

## Medium-term issues

### COMMUNITY FUNDING AND REPRESENTATION

Although all communities report difficulty obtaining funding, ethnic communities report particular difficulty getting funding that addresses their needs. The Office does not give out grants, but it does advise ethnic communities on how to access funding and services from other agencies. It is also promoting better understanding of ethnic community needs in agencies.

There is a range of issues around representation. Many new communities are still developing a voice, and may not be organised or have the infrastructure to present “a community view”. These communities may also have the high-need demands of settlement and be handling an increasing number of consultation requests from official agencies.

There are communities that are well-settled and in some cases, have been in New Zealand for over 100 years. These communities are now looking for ways to increase their civic participation at a higher level.

An attribute of ethnic communities is their internal diversity. There are often multiple groups representing sections of the same community. Each may wish to have its voice heard. This may pose a challenge for officials working to tight deadlines.

## A DIVERSITY STRATEGY

Building positive messages around diversity contributes to the Human Rights Commission Plan of Action, and several government objectives for strengthening national identity and culture, for example those set out in “Ethnic Perspectives” and “Opportunities for All”. Ultimately the issues for ethnic diversity will need to be cast into a broader strategy around maximising the benefits of diversity. It is possible that the foundations for this work can be developed within current resources under the “Strength in Diversity” initiatives, but additional resources for the Office and a whole of government approach would be required to realise the benefits for all New Zealanders.

Elements of such an approach might include developing a productive diversity strategy including, among other things, policies on languages<sup>7</sup> and cultural maintenance, and public education about the value of cultural and linguistic diversity. It will also involve promoting positive role models and distributing information about the contributions of ethnic peoples to the wider host community.

This strategy needs to be supported by promoting intercultural awareness and ethnic responsiveness (to build up the capacity of the state sector to work effectively with ethnic peoples and to value ethnic diversity). There also needs to be an emphasis on capacity building and skill-transfer to ethnic groups, improving the flow of information to ethnic communities and their integration.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> There is a need to develop a comprehensive language strategy that brings together and supports interpreting and translating as careers, English as a second language and ethnic community languages. This would require the involvement of a number of agencies.

<sup>8</sup> Integration is used here to mean a “best of both worlds” situation where a high value is placed on retaining treasured elements of one’s ethnic heritage/culture as well as on adapting by taking on distinctive elements of the dominant host culture.

## 6. Key Stakeholders: Ethnic Affairs

Key stakeholders include government agencies, local government, community organisations and ethnic people themselves:

- ethnic organisations – there is a wide range of community-based groups that may represent new migrants, refugees and/or one or more well settled communities, for example the Federation of Ethnic Councils and Regional Ethnic Councils, the New Zealand Chinese Association, the Refugee Council, etc
- central government - particularly the Immigration Service, the Police, the Human Rights Commission, the Ministries of Education, Health, Housing and Social Development, the Department of Labour and, within Internal Affairs, Identity Services and the Community and Local Government Branch
- local government at all levels
- community-based organisations and non-government agencies
- service providers at national, regional and local levels.