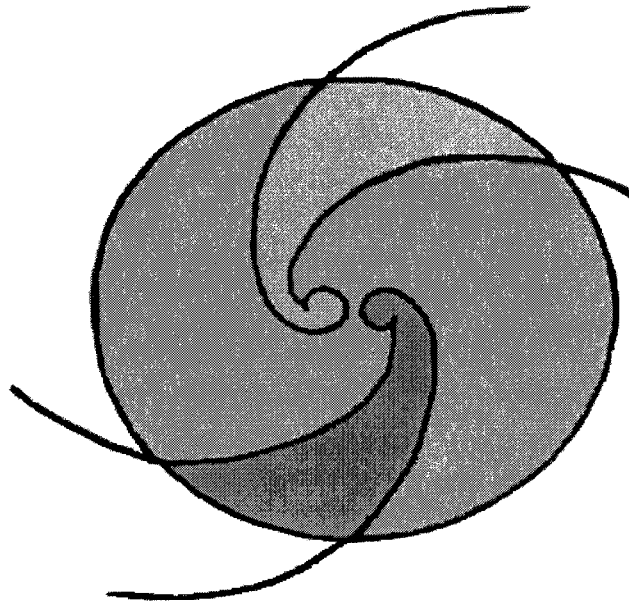


Waitakere Ethnic Board



Report to Waitakere City Council
17th December 2003

INTRODUCTION

The Waitakere Ethnic Board, a registered incorporated society, was established after calls from ethnic groups in Waitakere to establish an Ethnic Advisory Body that could identify and meet the needs of the ethnic communities in Waitakere.

The Waitakere City Council, in its LTCCP , and as part of the active democracy vision, has already identified that a process for engagement with ethnic communities be put in place.

After receiving numerous submissions and calls for Council to establish an Ethnic Advisory Board, the issue was referred to the City Development Committee in Nov 2002. The City Development Committee recommended that the issue of an Ethnic Advisory Board be considered as part of the WADCOSS project, and early in 2003 New Out West (NOW) was commissioned to look into the project.

The Waitakere Ethnic Board (the WEB) was formed as a result of a NOW Democracy project following the launch of NOW in May 2003, where ethnic communities present gave a clear mandate to go ahead with the process of forming an Ethnic Advisory Board for Waitakere.

It was agreed that the development of the board would greatly enhance ethnic communities ability to engage with Council and central government on issues of interest and concern. It was felt that for the first time Waitakere will have a mandated ethnic forum that can speak with legitimacy on behalf of Waitakere's migrant and refugee communities.

WEB is all about working together in harmony and to finally see that a platform is in place for migrants, refugees and early settlers to work together on common issues.

Since May 2003, an interim executive committee comprising of eleven members from different ethnic organisations in Waitakere undertook the task of putting together a draft constitution and a name for the board. A target date for launch of the WEB in September was also set. A large number of local ethnic organisations were consulted on the draft constitution and the interim executive committee was mandated at a community meeting to make the final decision on the constitution.

Two options for the structure of the WEB were offered for consultation. Option one included having the members elect the executive and Option two was three tiered with a council consisting of representatives elected by each ethnic community and an executive committee elected by the council.

Option one was chosen as a more workable option as it was regarded as important to get the WEB up and running, given the ethnic community's expression of need for such a body.

The Inaugural AGM of the WEB was held on 20th September 2003 at the New Lynn Community Centre. The election was supervised by Daryl Griffin, Electoral Officer Waitakere City Council and attended by about 200 people. This was then followed by the official Launch of the WEB. Guests included the Minister for Ethnic Affairs, the Race Relations Conciliator, Councillor Annette Fenton , Mr Taha Fasi Chair PIAB and ethnic community leaders.

The current membership of the WEB comprises of ethnic community leaders with a wealth of experience and expertise. They come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, such is the diversity of the WEB.

WEB is still in the development stages and the executive members are committed to working together as a group and establishing a relationship with both our members and service providers. We will consult regularly with our member organisations and continuously seek feedback.

We will endeavour to accommodate suggestions and criticisms in a positive frame and use these to improve ourselves.

Currently we have 45 different individuals and organisational members (see list attached).

We are in the process of developing a regular meeting schedule for our members whereby we will share information and seek input on issues and proposals that the WEB has an interest in pursuing.

We have also established a good working relationship with Waitakere City Council, WCC Libraries, CAB's, North Shore Ethnic Council, Office of Ethnic Affairs , various government departments, Ministry of Social Development, Auckland Regional Migrant Services Trust, Relation ship Services, Auckland New Ventures, Auckland Refugee network and other service providers.

Waitakere City Council has already focused on meeting the information needs of the ethnic communities through:

- Multicultural Services Librarian
- Migrant Information Coordinator
- CAB Funding
- WADCOSS project
- Migrant Partnership and Advocacy

WEB wishes to help Council identify ethnic community needs and facilitate the establishment of processes, mechanisms and resources for meeting those needs.

It is finally time for both Council and WEB to engage and start working together.

We would like to congratulate and thank WCC for being the first Council to put such an initiative in place.

WEB'S OPERATING FRAMEWORK

Thanks to Waitakere City Council for giving birth to the Waitakere Ethnic Board (WEB). The Board was established to promote and represent the interest of all ethnic communities within Waitakere City Council boundaries. It aims to fulfil the following objectives:

- To provide a forum to discuss issues that are common across Waitakere's different ethnic communities.
- To provide feedback and influence policies and service delivery where these have an impact on ethnic communities.
- To support the integration and sentiment of Waitakere's ethnic communities into society.
- To encourage ethnic communities' participation and involvement in democratic processes at the local and central government level.
- To be non-political and non-religious.
- To develop and maintain good relationships between ethnic communities and other relevant organizations.
- To acknowledge the Treaty of Waitangi and to develop and maintain good relationships between ethnic communities and Maori.
- To ensure that ethnic communities have access to relevant information and resources.
- To advise and liaise with Waitakere City Council and central government bodies on issues relating to Waitakere's ethnic communities in order to ensure that support is given to all ethnic groups in Waitakere City and that the Waitakere City Council and central government are enabled to recognise both the adjustments and contributions all ethnic groups have made and we are able to make to the New Zealand society in general and to Waitakere City in particular.
- To initiate and support programmes that advance the social and economic development and well being of the individuals and families who make up Waitakere's ethnic communities.

To achieve these goals, an Executive Committee, consisting of following members was formed in September 2003.

Executive Committee:

President:	Praveen Chandra
Vice President:	Peter Chan
Secretary:	Jacqueline Singh
Treasurer:	Keshwar Ikram
Elected Members:	Kamal Prasad Shrestha , John Hubscher Abdul Rafik , Sam Poonitinun Indra Pokhrel , Patchi Pornsrichun
	<u>Coopted Members</u> Amina Daud Hassan Hosseini

The following Sub-Committees were formed to implement and execute various activities.

Finance Sub-Committee:

Chair: Peter Chan

Committee: Praveen Chandra, Jacqeline Singh, Kishwar Ikram, Abdul Rafik

Activities:

- Making applications for funding
- Preparing goals and action plan for WEB
- Preparing governance document for WEB
- Preparing procedures and policy for meetings

Public Relations Sub-Committee:

Chair: Sam Poonitinun

Committee: John Hubscher, Indra Pokhrel, Patchi Pornsrichun, Lisa Lee

Activities:

- Preparing name tags, logo, letterhead
- Publication of newsletter

Projects and Programming Sub-Committee:

Chair: Kamal Prasad Shrestha

Committee: Kishwar Ikram, Abdul Rafik, Hassan Hosseini, Amalaini Legge, Amina Daud

Activities:

- Publication of Calendar of Events of ethnic communities living in Waitakere City
- Organise ethnic food festivals
- Organise arts and cultural festivals
- Initiatives for Partnership Building / Relationship Building
- Radio Programme with all ethnic communities to be given opportunity on a rostered basis
- Workshops / Training (work based), computer training, etc.
- Minority groups to be approached e.g. Afghanistan
- Networking with all communities

Forth Coming Programmes:

- EXPO Exhibition of all social service providers, including CAB, ESOL, IRD, WINZ, community organisations, etc. in last week of February 2004
- Cultural programme – all ethnic communities in the Waitakere City will be contacted to participate.

All sub-committees are working hard to achieve their objectives. Each committee has met regularly since being established and key decisions are being progressed already.

CONCLUSION

We shall have one vision and that is for the betterment of this city and the country. We will integrate our communities so that we can all live in harmony side by side and share each other's culture and better understand each other.

The WEB will be a vehicle that will help the ethnic communities settle better in this country. It will provide us with opportunities:

1. The WEB will be seen as the next level of entry for attaining some of our goals and creating a path for us to achieve our vision.
2. We can provide a potential model for other local bodies in NZ.
3. Council will have an in-house approach to understanding the different ethnicity of its people and their socio – economic needs.
4. We can help develop strategies for the betterment of Waitakere City.
5. To create economic and business opportunities whereby the whole community could benefit.
6. To create cultural awareness and promote and respect other fellow NZ cultures.
7. Work together with key local bodies such as the Pacific Island Advisory Board and Te Taumata Runanga.
8. We can help disseminate information rapidly through our network of ethnic communities and reflect their opinion back to Council.
9. We will encourage ethnic communities to work together by promoting diversity training programs and provide them with a network of services and assistance programs available nationwide.
10. Creating investment and job opportunities – through overseas connections for Waitakere.

These are just some of the opportunities available to us and I am sure the list will get longer as we unfold.

We are here today to ask the Waitakere City Council for help. We need the support and encouragement of our council and therefore we ask for the following:

1. We seek formal recognition from the Council and also ask that we be recognised as a sitting body within the framework of Waitakere City Council in a similar role to the Pacific Island Advisory Board
2. We be involved in the strategic planning and consultation on higher issues for the city
3. We seek funding assistance from the Council for our projects and initiatives
4. We be invited to participate in community dialogue and policy formation procedures
5. We be offered a seat in the citizenship ceremony and on community funding committees
6. We ask to have in place a Memorandum of Understanding with Council

We hope that the council will view this proposal in a positive manner.

This is our country, our home and we would like to share and contribute equally.

**Let us work together across cultures and bring peace
and harmony amongst all races in Aotearoa.**