



Multicultural
New Zealand

New Zealand Federation of Multicultural Councils

Multicultural New Zealand Pānui 2024



Ngā mihi o te tau hou!

As 2024 draws to a close we reflect on another year of hard work from a Federation of deeply committed people, united by their dedication to enriching the lives of the people in their communities.

This past year has not been an easy one, and we have all been busy dealing with the many massive changes taking place in what can sometimes feel like a chaotic world. But we are hopeful people, and we are kind people, and we are all of us given to doing great things though our resources are few. We are generous people, and the gifts we give to our communities – our time, our aroha – count now even more than ever in these uncertain times.

*He iti hau marangai e tū te pāhokahoka.
After the storm, the rainbow appears.*

To our committed volunteers and community leaders, our funders and partner agencies, our fellow NGOs, our executive members, and our support staff, we extend our heartfelt thanks.

MNZ Seniors' Council Hui

On Saturday the 24th of February, delegates from 18 RMCs converged at the Brentwood Hotel in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington for the MNZ Seniors' Council Hui 2024.

The hui began with updates from across the motu. Common challenges were identified, such as social isolation and loneliness, which were being addressed through meetups, excursions, and collaboration with other elderly support organisations like Age Concern. The integration of modern technologies also poses a struggle, with some councils offering digital literacy training to help bridge the gap.



Several RMCs collaborate with external organisations to offer additional services, such as defensive driving classes and exercise programmes. A key concern was the increasing number of migrant seniors, particularly former refugees, living with their children and needing tailored services due to language barriers.

The hui heard a presentation from Age Concern's Hanny Naus stressing the importance of raising awareness and fostering public understanding of elder abuse, with Age Concern's "Break the Silence" campaign aiming to address this issue. Following this was an address by Hon. Casey Costello, Minister for Seniors, who commended MNZ for its work.

The final session of the day was a workshop on intergenerational communication and a discussion on DiSC behavioural self-assessment, facilitated by Tairāwhiti Multicultural Council President Arish Naresh.



The outcomes of this hui were formalised into the Brentwood Declaration, a document that will guide the Seniors' Council's efforts over the next three years, aligning with the NZFMC Strategic Plan to improve the well-being of ethnic elders across Aotearoa New Zealand.



Noho Marae

The success of MNZ's noho marae initiative continued in 2024 with three more noho and one marae visit. Personal perspectives and insights were shared, and similarities and connections between cultures were unveiled.

Our first noho of 2024 was organised in collaboration with Marlborough Multicultural Centre and was held at Omaka Marae in Waiharakeke Blenheim in March. Manuhiri (guests) from nine different ethnic backgrounds attended.



After the pōwhiri (the traditional welcome ceremony), the manuhiri were shown the carved panels of the marae and given insight into the stories held within. Discussion was held on historical injustices faced by Māori, the suppression of the Te Reo Māori language, and the importance of whakapapa (genealogy). The next day's focus was the acknowledgement of local history, fostering community-oriented citizenship, and the potential for expanding multicultural narratives beyond the confines of weekend gatherings.

In May we partnered with Tairāwhiti Multicultural Council for a visit to Te Poho o Rāwiri Marae in Tairāwhiti Gisborne. Despite unforeseen challenges not allowing a full noho, this event was a successful and enriching experience for all involved. Manuhiri from fifteen different ethnicities gathered for the pōwhiri and were treated to a performance by the Lytton High School waiata group.



Tangata whenua leaders shared local iwi history and stories offering valuable insights into the cultural heritage of the region before the shared kai.



Our next noho was in June at Murihiku Marae in Invercargill. After the pōwhiri came kōrero on the history of Māori-Pākehā interaction in the region from the 1790s onward, the impacts of colonialism on the Māori way of life, the Doctrine of Discovery, and Māori Sovereignty. Much local knowledge was imparted to the manuhiri, and stories of experiences living in the area were shared.



On Sunday the focus was on racism, with participants sharing personal experiences and examining responses to the challenges they have faced. Future directions were explored, concluding with a shared commitment to keep this important kōrero going through word and action.

For our final noho for 2024 we headed to Ashburton to work with Hakatere Multicultural Council in organising a stay at Hakatere Marae in August. Manuhiri were provided with an historical overview of Ngāi Tahu iwi and tales of the legendary figures Māui and Kupe before learning about te ao Māori (the Māori worldview), the pre-European Māori way of life.



After kōrero on Māori cultural concepts and the impacts of colonisation, there was a group discussion on identity and how best to foster better connection between tangata whenua and migrant communities.



Sunday was a time for personal reflection, and it was here that one participant summed up the kaupapa of the MNZ noho marae initiative better than we ever could:

My family and I arrived in New Zealand more than a decade ago. For the first time, I visited Hakatere Marae and was received through a pōwhiri. It was a very moving ceremony. It felt as though the tangata whenua were calling me to finally come into the land my family and I call home. Before that day, I was physically present in the land but not mentally or spiritually. For years, I felt that something was always missing, and I never felt that I belonged. The citizenship ceremony and the certificate I received did not evoke the same feeling. I never felt at home until that day when we were welcomed by the people of the land.

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland Office

MNZ reached an exciting milestone in June with the establishment of an office space in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland, marking our commitment to serving the community and providing support throughout the Auckland region, and to seeking an Auckland perspective on national issues.



This initiative has also led to MNZ's first engagement with Ngāti Whātua, and we were blessed to have Te Runanga o Ngāti Whātua Iwi Chair Dame Naida Glavish join us for the occasion. Special thanks and acknowledgement go out to MNZ Vice President Marion Kerepeti-Edwards for her work towards forging that relationship.

The office is a one-year trial and was made possible through the generosity of Honorary Consulate of Nepal and MNZ Auckland Navigator Dinesh Khadka.

Matariki



Across the country RMCs once again embraced Matariki this year with celebrations infused with their own cultural flavours.

Christchurch Multicultural Council gathered for their Matariki Festival in Halswell to share cross-cultural stories about the stars, while Waikato Multicultural Council partnered with Earth Diverse to plant 4,000 native saplings at Waiwhakareke Natural Heritage Park.

Hutt, Upper Hutt, Wellington, and Porirua Multicultural Councils banded together again this year, with Porirua taking the lead in organising a fantastic night of storytelling, cultural performance, and kai at Te Rauparaha Arena.



MNZ Police Hui



To coincide with the signing of our refreshed memorandum of understanding, NZ Police invited MNZ to provide feedback on the NZ Police Ethnic Strategy.



Meeting at the Royal New Zealand Police College in Porirua, RMC leaders were asked to provide insight on which aspects of the strategy were currently working, to identify new opportunities, to voice concerns from their communities, and discuss those areas in need of improvement.



There was discussion on the need for local leaders to meet regularly, to connect with their regional Ethnic Liaison Officers (ELOs), and to share their findings with other RMCs. Emphasis was placed on the need for ELOs to get to know the multicultural groups in their regions and to maintain a consistent dialogue.



This hui was a valuable chance for MNZ leadership to engage with Police and strengthen our existing partnership.

Te Tiriti-based Multicultural Day

First launched in 2021, Te Tiriti-based Multicultural Day is a day for bringing your cultural heritage into your daily life through the wearing of cultural attire, the sharing of traditional food and music, the speaking of your mother language, or in any other way you wish to celebrate and acknowledge your whakapapa. Although still young, this event has gone from strength to strength each year.

This year saw a major step forward with Multicultural Day celebrations taking place at Parliament.



The celebrations began with a karakia led by respected young Māori leader Atarau Hamilton, and esteemed equality and human rights champion Vanisa Dhiru was our MC for the evening.

We heard speeches from Minister for Ethnic Communities Hon. Melissa Lee, Chief Executive of the Ministry for Ethnic Communities Mervin Singham, MNZ President Pancha Narayanan, and our host for the evening, MP for New Lynn Paulo Garcia.

The cultural performances were the true highlight of the event, with rousing kapa haka from our friends the Ngāti Pōneke Young Māori Club, beautiful and soulful singing from the Guru Kripa School of Music and Sloka, and the earth-shattering rhythms of the Narukami Taiko Drummers gracing the stage. The evening concluded with shared kai, accompanied by Ras Judah and his band's infectious joyful sound.



Thank you to everyone who made this evening possible, and to all who joined us in attendance. We do not yet know what is in store for Tiriti-based Multicultural Day 2025, but we do know that it's going to be good!

Multicultural New Zealand AGM 2024

2024 marked the 35th Annual General Meeting for MNZ, with our Rangatira gathering once again at the Brentwood Hotel in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington.

After the mihi whakatau and housekeeping we began the weekend with a governance training session, Whai Wāhi Pai (positive and thoughtful engagement and civic participation).

This session was led by Matua Tiipene Philip, the kaumātua who had so warmly welcomed us onto Hakatere Marae in Ashburton in August.



Next was a panel session with partner agency updates featuring Disability Rights Commissioner Prudence Walker from Te Kāhui Tika Tangata Human Rights Commission, Pratima Namasivayam from the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, and Imogen Prickett from Welcoming Communities.



After lunch was our second panel, working together, featuring NZ Police Superintendent Rakesh Naidoo.



The afternoon commenced with the AGM proper, where the incumbent Executive Committee were re-elected, and the Professor Kuan M. Goh Community Service Award recipients were announced.

Professor Kuan M. Goh

Community Service Awards 2024

Christchurch Multicultural Council
Nancy Goh, Archana Tandon, and Emmie King

Hakatere Multicultural Council
Selwyn Price

Hutt Multicultural Council
Saritha Shetty and Lesley Chu

Marlborough Multicultural Centre
Clare Bowes and Wendy Iguaran

Murihiku Southland District Multicultural Council
Tushnica Dissanayake

Multicultural Nelson Tasman
Mary Bronsteter

Multicultural Council of Rangitīkei/Whanganui
Sandiya Bandara and Carla Donson

Tairāwhiti Multicultural Council
Kathleen Labardo and Thaveet Kumar

Upper Hutt Multicultural Council
Jane Braun and Yuko Kondo

Waikato Multicultural Council
Jeanie Holland

Multicultural Council of Wellington
Ras Judah Seomeng and Luiggi Riccio

MNZ Grand Community Dinner & Awards 2024

On Saturday evening the Grand Community and Dinner & Awards were held. Outstanding volunteer work was recognised with the MNZ Merit Awards and MNZ Life Memberships.





MNZ Merit Awards 2024

**Hakatere Multicultural Council
Thelma Bell**

**Hutt Multicultural Council
Prachee Gokhale**

**Tairāwhiti Multicultural Council
Meredith Stewart**

**Waikato Multicultural Council
Anil Gupta**

**Waitaki Multicultural Council
Socorro Laraga**

**Multicultural Council of Wellington
Rehan Badar**

MNZ Life Membership 2024

**Multicultural Council of Rangitīkei/Whanganui
Pushpa Prasad**

**Taupō Multicultural Community Council
Elena Conaglen**

**Multicultural Council of Wellington
Channa Ranasinghe**

Ann Dysart Distinguished Service Award

This year the Ann Dysart Distinguished Service Award was bestowed upon four exceptional community members:

Aroha Award

Saunoamaali'i Doctor Karanina Sumeo

Kōrero Awhi Award

Professor James Liu

Mana Manaaki Award

NZ Police Commissioner Andrew Coster

Tikanga Award

Waikato Multicultural Council President
Ravinder Powar



In Memoriam

It is noted with sadness that Professor James Liu's award was bestowed posthumously. We would like to offer our condolences to his whānau, along with thanks for the work he has gifted to the Federation in the past few years.



We also mark the passing of Panth Daroch of Auckland City Multicultural Council. Panth was due to attend this AGM as a delegate, and his sudden loss was a shock to us all. We offer our condolences to Panth's whānau and to his friends at APMC.

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata
What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people

Wairarapa Multicultural Council

The July meeting of the MNZ Regional Multicultural Councils unanimously approved a request for affiliation from Mr Harpal Singh of the newly incorporated Wairarapa Multicultural Council.

Wairarapa is already an active Council with their first major event - Diwali celebrations in Masterton - featuring 16 cultural performances entertaining a crowd of 600 people.

We can't wait to see more from this latest member of the MNZ whānau, and we look forward to working together in the new year.



As we look toward 2025, the Multicultural New Zealand Executive Committee thanks you all for your commitment to our shared vision of a safer and more prosperous Aotearoa New Zealand.

We wish you and your whānau a joyful, peaceful, and restful holiday break, and we look forward to working with you all again in the new year.

Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi.

With your food basket and my food basket, the people will thrive.



President
Pancha Narayanan



Vice President
Marion Kerepeti Edwards



Secretary
María Buldain



Treasurer
Prem Singh

MNZ National Executive Committee 2024/2025