



Ministry for
**Ethnic
Communities**
Te Tari Mātāwaka



Engagement on the priorities of the Ministry for Ethnic Communities: What really matters to communities



**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government

Acknowledging Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Aotearoa New Zealand's ethnic communities acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the foundation for the relationship with Tangata Whenua. Ethnic communities place great importance of respect on Tangata Whenua and their status as indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand.



Minister's foreword

Kia ora,

I'm incredibly proud that from 1 July 2021 we will have a new Ministry for Ethnic Communities.

The elevation of the Office of Ethnic Communities to that of a Ministry has been a long-held ambition of our diverse ethnic communities.

With over 213 ethnicities represented across Aotearoa New Zealand, we are one of the most diverse countries in the world. We collectively speak over 160 languages and belong to many different faiths. Our ethnic communities make up around 20 percent of New Zealand's population.

This is the first time our ethnic communities will have had this level of representation in government. The new Ministry will increase the standing and mana of the agency, improve the leadership within the public sector and provide a greater ability to deliver on the ongoing work to better support and respond to the needs and aspirations of our diverse ethnic communities. It will have a Chief Executive who, for the first time, will be solely focused on lifting the wellbeing of our ethnic communities and will work with other government agencies to effect change through the Government's policy agenda.

I was determined that the vision and direction of the new Ministry should reflect the priorities of the communities it serves. However, virtually every issue affects ethnic communities and we can't change everything all at once. So where do we start?

To answer this, earlier this year we talked to ethnic communities to find out what was most important to them and where they wanted the new Ministry to start.



We asked a few key questions to determine what success looked like and what the immediate priorities are that the new Ministry should focus on.

A clear vision emerged. Our communities want “a socially inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand where ethnic communities are empowered to contribute their skills, culture and voice”

Several key priority themes also emerged from the engagement process. The need for diversity to be considered a strength and valued in various areas, including in education, employment and business opportunities. There was concern that our communities are under-represented at various levels of leadership and concerns that racism and discrimination were clear barriers that needed to be addressed. Many who responded were also clear that Government services need to be accessible and delivered in a way that’s relevant to ethnic communities.

We have come a long way since the Office of Ethnic Communities was established in 2001. Yet, there’s a lot more work to do. While it will take some time to embed all the new functions into the new Ministry, we will have a plan to achieve the change we collectively want to see.

Many of you took time out of your schedules to attend the face-to-face sessions or to have your say online. Your input has been invaluable and I’m delighted to share the summary of what we heard around the country, through this document. This is just the beginning - there will be many more opportunities to guide the work of the new Ministry and to hold us to account. But for now, thank you.

Nāku te rourou, nāu te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi

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

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Priyanca". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial 'P' and a horizontal line underlining the name. There are two small dots at the end of the signature.

Priyanca Radhakrishnan
Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities



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Background

In December 2020, the New Zealand Government announced that New Zealand would have a new Ministry for Ethnic Communities. There have been previous calls for the establishment of a standalone Ministry, and this was proposed again in the report entitled *Ko tō tatou kāinga tēnei - Report on the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019*.

A new ministry means that for the first time, anyone in Aotearoa who identifies their ethnicity as Middle Eastern, Latin American, Asian, African, and Continental European will have a great level of representation in government.

The Minister for Diversity, Inclusion, and Ethnic Communities wanted to ensure that the strategy and direction of the new ministry was shaped by the aspirations and priorities of the communities it serves. There are a number of policy areas the new ministry could focus on to lift the wellbeing of ethnic communities. The Minister wanted to ensure that the new ministry prioritised the areas of most concern to ethnic communities.

This document summarises what we heard from communities about what really matters to them.

Have your say

Between 17 April and 14 May 2021, ethnic communities were given an opportunity to have their say on the shape of the new Ministry. A range of options for providing feedback was made available, including in-person, online and via email. We heard from 645 people from across the country.

We held 29 sessions in 10 regions across Aotearoa and heard from a range of voices including recent migrants, long-time settlers, former refugees, international students, and community leaders and organisations. Some of you provided feedback in your personal capacities while others provided feedback in their organisational or community leadership capacities. All voices were heard, captured, and considered.

We were not starting from a blank page. What we heard through these conversations served to build on all that communities have shared with us over the years.

What we asked you

Throughout the engagements, we asked two key questions:

- 1. Standing in the future:** Imagine the new Ministry being the best it can be in the future. Describe what would have changed for you, your family or community. We asked you to write or draw it. All languages were welcome.
- 2. Priorities:** What is the most important thing for the Ministry to focus on in the next 3 – 5 years.



Who we heard from



29 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS
ACROSS NEW ZEALAND

FACE TO FACE ENGAGEMENTS

11 Drop-in sessions

08 Leader sessions

04 Women sessions

04 Youth sessions

02 Senior sessions

METHODS OF PARTICIPATION

531 Face to face engagements

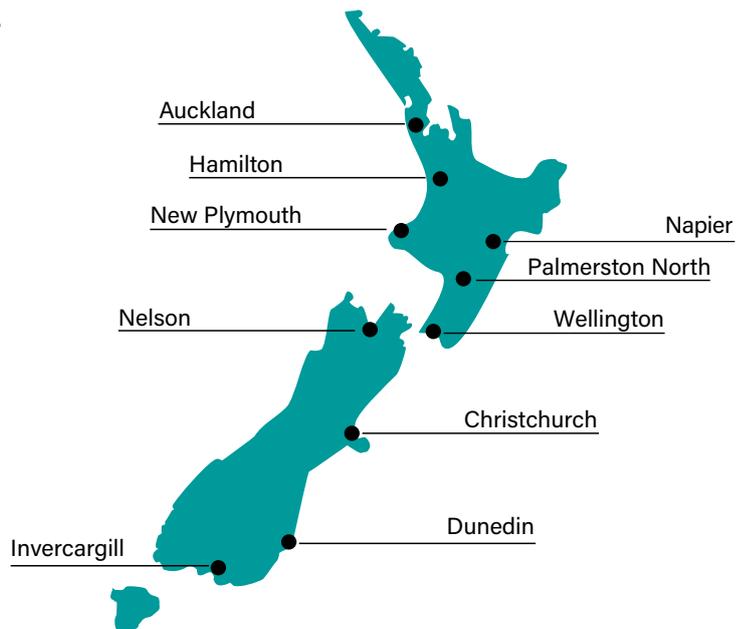
18 Email feedback

96 Online platform



645 TOTAL NUMBER OF
PEOPLE WE HEARD FROM

ENGAGEMENT LOCATIONS



What We Heard – A snapshot

1. Standing in the future

We asked community members to “stand in the future” and reflect on the changes they wanted to see for themselves, their family or their community if the Ministry for Ethnic Communities was being the best it could be.

Snapshot of key aspirations

- Embracing and celebrating diversity: 150 responses
- Immigration, reunification, and family belonging: 25 responses
- True multi-culturalism in a bicultural nation: 94 responses
- Culturally inclusive and respectful focus on health and wellbeing: 23 responses
- Every voice is represented and valued: 16 responses
- Equitable service access and opportunities: 90 responses
- Society and government design for diversity: 15 responses
- Dual identities are accepted and valued: 65 responses
- Empowered individuals and communities: 60 responses
- Equitable and authentic representation: 50 responses
- Alignment across multiple agencies and NGOs: 12 responses
- Data that tells the story of reality and success: 9 responses
- Equitable employment pathways and trade opportunities: 50 responses
- Access to warm, safe, and affordable housing: 10 responses
- Safe communities: 40 responses
- Opportunities for community interconnections: 9 responses
- Recognising and supporting intersectionality within communities: 8 responses
- Ministry for Ethnic Communities as a connector and influencer: 45 responses
- Society is truly accepting of diversity: 29 responses

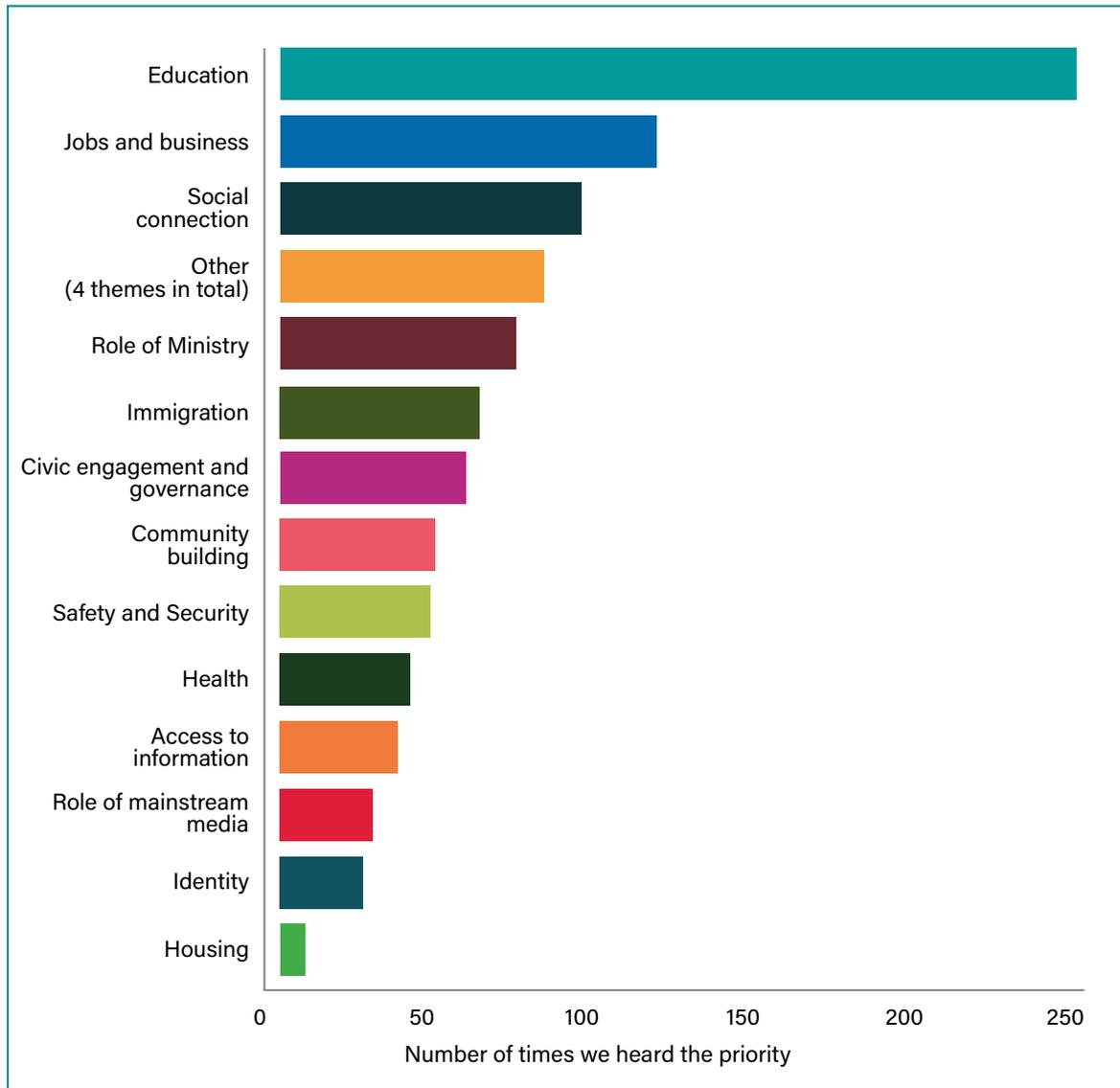




2. What would make the biggest difference now?

We asked community members to let us know what they think the new Ministry should focus on in its first few years to make the biggest difference to their communities.

Snapshot of key priority areas



What We Heard – In detail

We read every single submission, captured them into a single spreadsheet, and grouped them into themes.

The following pages outline what we heard from ethnic communities in more detail.

Quotes used throughout this document have been used to give voice to the experiences and views of people in their own words. The quotes are a mix of people’s own written words and of notes we made during our face-to-face conversations. They appear as they were recorded, other than correction of minor editing errors, and removal of any identifying information.



1. Standing in the future - in detail

This section outlines the key aspirations expressed by communities. Community members were asked to “stand in the future” and reflect on the changes they wanted to see if the Ministry for Ethnic Communities was being the best it could be.

Embracing and celebrating diversity

A strong aspiration expressed in over 150 responses was a desire for society to actively celebrate diversity. Tangible ways for undertaking this included embedding diversity awareness and education into the education system, events to facilitate cross-cultural connections, cultural recreation, and activity opportunities, and acceptance of diverse languages.

Celebrating diversity was seen as important for fostering a sense of belonging, especially for those who currently feel isolated or discriminated against.

Sub-themes included:

- Competent educators who can teach students to appreciate diverse cultures, from early education onwards, are increased.
- Cultural art and events are celebrated.
- Cultural recreation and activity opportunities are increased (e.g., singing).
- Smaller cultural communities are celebrated.
- Diverse languages are celebrated by society, including in the curriculum.

“My vision would be to have an inclusive community throughout New Zealand where all people have equal access to succeed. I would like to see New Zealanders have a better understanding of the diversity of all people, this will reduce racism, and reduce ignorance and enable people to appreciate what other people from all cultures can bring to New Zealand.”

“The sense of belonging and the respect to diversity make this country unique and very special and I believe that together [with] the new Ministry and our community we can make and achieve wonders.”



True multiculturalism in a bicultural nation

Achieving true multiculturalism in a bicultural nation was a significant aspiration expressed in almost 100 statements across all engagements. People aspired for New Zealand to be a role model to other nations, where people from many cultural backgrounds have created a society that moves beyond merely co-existing to one where true social inclusion has been achieved. This would be evident through unity and celebrating diversity. Respondents also respected the unique bicultural nature of New Zealand and expressed respect for tangata whenua and Te Tiriti.

In this future, an individual would be able to be their authentic self, including all expressions of who they are such as through language, dress, and food. This diversity of expression would be seen as a strength by fellow New Zealanders where all origins would be recognised, respected, and celebrated.

Sub-themes included:

- Inclusion and diversity are normalised.
- The Ministry for Ethnic Communities achieved its objectives and will no longer need to be in existence.
- Te Tiriti/te ao Māori education opportunities are provided to ethnic communities.
- There is greater understanding and alliances between new migrants, current ethnic communities and tangata whenua.
- Recognition of the multi-ethnic fabric of New Zealand, both historical and present.
- Equity, discrimination and racism are tackled at a societal level, resulting in acceptance and inclusion.
- An inter-faith nation where there is respect for each other's faiths, and they can even be celebrated together.

"Pākehā New Zealanders understand and accept other cultures; [a] place I can speak my language in public freely and safely; more awareness/cohesion and less 'otherism.'"

"A multicultural nation is an interfaith nation and faith communities are in [a] wonderful position to celebrate [one] another and work together in race relations, climate change, ending poverty."

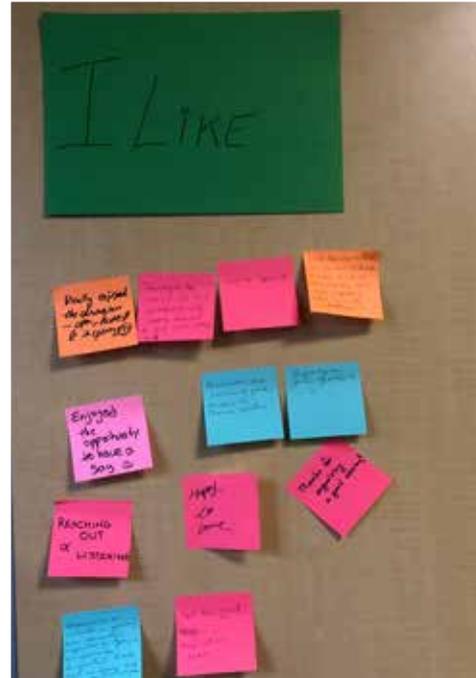


Equitable service access and opportunities

Expressed in over 90 responses was the aspiration for a culturally competent government that enables everyone, regardless of how they look, equitable access to government services and equal opportunities for participation. Such services include employment, housing, citizen's rights, health, mental health, literacy, disability, drugs and addiction and immigration services. Also expressed was the desire for greater awareness and information about how to access these services.

"All communities having a place to get support in the different areas of life, from family support (in their language, respecting their culture) to career support. Also, educating the population of NZ (all) on how to communicate in respectful ways, not making assumptions about others and giving opportunities to all. We are here to grow NZ, work with us!"

"The biggest barrier of accessing services (support) is not knowing what is available and then missing out and putting up with compromised life, living. It would be great if all services were clearly understood and promoted through community channels reaching all citizens."



Dual identities are accepted and valued

A consistent theme, shared by over 65 responses, was the desire of community members to express their cultural identities authentically and freely, without fear. This integration with society was seen as important to feel accepted and feel that they belong.

The community told us they want to feel included as part of Aotearoa New Zealand and have their differences valued and understood in society, and specifically in workplaces and schools. Society appreciating these differences adds richness to Aotearoa New Zealand and improves feelings of safety for the whole community.

Sub-themes included:

- The ability to be your true self.
- Freedom to wear religious or cultural clothing without fear.
- Children value and appreciate their parents' culture and heritage.
- No longer being considered 'other' or assigned labels.

"I have lived in NZ for 25 years and I'm still called a former refugee."

"My third or fourth generations in the country still speak the mother tongue. They do have the opportunity to maintain their relationships with the home country. They are proud of themselves."

Empowered individuals and communities

Many people had a strong desire for individuals to be empowered to support their whānau and their communities. This looks like women, men and older people being free of discrimination and given resources or training to excel, and younger generations being supported to excel and effectively participate in society too. This includes leadership training opportunities, closer ties between community and government, community funding and establishing community role models.

"Me - I would be performing to my best ability to excel in my professional and community role without any barriers, fears or discrimination while contributing to the NZ society and economy. My family - my children will be the best they can be in their chosen area, performing to their best ability. They will be the best citizens of NZ. Community - my community and all the ethnic communities will be able to fully participate and contribute meaningfully to decision-making at all levels."

Equitable and authentic representation

A common theme, expressed in over 50 responses, was the lack of representation and diversity for ethnic communities in media and leadership positions. The community expressed hope that institutional racism and discrimination would be lessened through greater diversity in leadership across all levels, more positive media representations of ethnic communities and stricter policies against racism and discrimination in media.

Sub-themes included:

- Positive media representation for ethnic communities.
- Stronger media protocols for racism.
- Diverse communities are reflected clearly in senior leadership positions, including the new Ministry, across central and local government, in the private sector and on boards.
- Ethnic women in leadership roles.
- Diversity is reflected in sports teams.



“Our ethnic MPs and local politicians are not just seen by their ethnicity but judged based on their competence. Support ethnic leaders onto state and private sector boards.”

“New Zealand is trying to leverage our diversity and differences for a much bigger purpose”

Equitable employment pathways and trade opportunities

Over 50 responses discussed the importance of gaining more equitable employment and trade opportunities. Many held a strong desire for overseas qualifications to be recognised more easily in Aotearoa so that migrants can further contribute their talents, fill skill shortages and be an integral part of society. Supportive training to help migrants transition into employment was a common hope from the community, a change that would enable them to contribute more effectively to society in a shorter timeframe. Many people in ethnic communities are also business owners, so support to grow their businesses, e.g. through access to international trade support, would leverage this natural trade relational asset that exists within ethnic communities.

The ability for employers and society to support ethnic communities to enter and flourish in workplaces was also cited as a key desire. This includes correct name pronunciation, education on the value of migrant workers and finding opportunities for migrant workers.

Sub-themes included:

- Overseas qualifications are recognised.
- Employers are educated on the value of migrant workers and how to support them.
- Improved training support to help new migrants, e.g., language.
- Business growth support.
- Opportunities for partners of migrants.

“All the qualifications and experience we had in our home country are ignored by the employers here in NZ. It makes finding a job really challenging, sometimes even our names prevent us from being employed because it is not “Kiwi”. To be engaged in the new country we need to be employed.”

“The skills, experiences and talents of first-generation migrants will be put into more productive use. As of now there is a glass ceiling and migrants are not able to fully share their talents to grow the economy.”



Ministry for Ethnic Communities as a connector and influencer

People were asked what they would see and experience if the new Ministry was performing at its best. 45 statements referred to attributes they believed would create a truly impactful and transformative Ministry. This included the Ministry having the power, respect, and influence to drive the change agenda. The Ministry's workforce would reflect the people that it serves, as they would come from a wide range of backgrounds and have lived experience and empathy for New Zealand's ethnic communities.

The Ministry would be respected within society and government for its effective and efficient functioning. There would be strong and bold Ministerial leadership which would be influential in challenging the status quo and driving an impactful agenda.

The Ministry would also act as a connector to increase connection across communities. This in turn would aid the progress of multi-culturalism, create more unity, and enable common goals to surface and be realised.

"The Ministry would be intentional about not turning into a bureaucracy and would have room for kōrero and not just being 'by the books'"

"I think this Ministry could be a blueprint for other countries asking 'how do we all live together?'"

Some expressed a future where the Ministry did not need to exist at all, with the aspirations of ethnic communities achieved. Others spoke of the need to ensure the Ministry had sufficient mandate and funding to achieve its purpose over time as it would require a continuity of commitment, focus and resourcing.

"I'm really worried that the Ethnic Ministry funding resources is going to slowly trickle down and have little activity 'till another tragedy hits us, until it's too late."



Safe communities

Being safe and secure was mentioned in over 40 statements. The assurance that individuals from ethnic communities can go about their lives without the fear of physical or emotional abuse was considered important. When imagining the future, people often expressed this as *feeling safe and secure*. One person stated that even though she had not experienced racism, she had heard from others who had. This created the possibility of experiencing it and therefore a feeling of not being safe and secure at all times. This could be summarised in the following way – if just one of our community does not feel safe, then a safe environment has not been achieved.

A sub-theme was that casual racism would not be tolerated by society, or by mainstream media, who are seen as having an important influencing role.

"I feel safe...and proud of being part of NZ community."

"My community and all communities feel safe and comfortable with their ethnic identities."

"I can walk down the street without the fear that someone is going to yell abuse at me for the colour of my skin."

"Confidence in our safety and security and freedom to gather and worship and express our religious beliefs."

Society is truly accepting of diversity

This theme speaks in part about a pathway to true multi-culturalism; participants highlighted a future where people accept different cultures, and all forms of racism have been addressed. This is a future where society has educated and changed itself. Society has not required ethnic communities to take on the responsibility of advocating for diversity, intolerance to racism and discriminatory practices.

"People understand each other's culture so there's no unknown/what others say is 'weird.'"

"Cultural unity with an emphasis on overall social unity rather than racial unity."

"None of this will be seen as a matter of altruism as diversity also brings social and economic benefits"



Immigration, reunification, and family belongingness

Clearer, more equitable and supported immigration pathways were expressed as future aspirations in 25 responses. People spoke about the ability to gain and renew visas, as well as the pathway to citizenship. The onus would shift from the migrant navigating and making sense of the immigration procedures, to the procedures being clear and empathetic.

"All roads lead to family."

"I dream of a NZ with clear and open pathways to migrate and build a life where the people can see options and opportunities to plan for the future."

An important sub-theme to these responses was that of families being together and the importance of this for wellbeing.

Just as strong, connected, and healthy family bonds are valued as an essential foundation of a healthy, thriving New Zealand, this was also expressed by ethnic community families, who often find themselves settling in multiple countries. For ethnic community members with families living outside of New Zealand, this future would see them having the same rights as any other citizen – equal rights to have family arrive without discrimination. This would be evidenced by the ease of families connecting whether it be experienced as family visits from other countries or more permanent family reunifications.

"How can I be well when I'm not with my family?"



Culturally inclusive and respectful focus on health and wellbeing

A more holistic and inclusive approach to health and wellbeing was expressed in 23 responses. The ability to easily find and access competent and culturally respectful counsellors and resources, that do not create language barriers, was highlighted as important to wellbeing.

"Many counsellors did not understand the extent of the March 15 effects and many youth did not feel comfortable receiving counselling that would help manage their struggles because the counsellors did not understand the patient's experiences and often give non-suitable recommendations."

An important sub-theme was the ability for older people to feel at home with care in place, and language and cultural barriers eliminated. Culturally competent aged care, the ability to access multi-generational homes, and social activities for older people were shared as ways of addressing this.

"Elderly care which supports and recognises everyone's ethnic background – this is especially important for people with Alzheimer's, so they do continue to feel 'at home' and not alienated. This would mean access to (support) people with different language skills."

Additionally, the community expressed a desire to be reflected in health and wellbeing outcomes, through specific targets and programmes.

Sub-themes included:

- Culturally competent healthcare for senior citizens.
- Accessible, respectful, and appropriate mental health services for ethnic communities.
- Health services and materials that are culturally inclusive.
- Health outcomes that are inclusive of ethnic communities.
- Multi-generational housing.
- Social activities for senior people.



Every voice is represented and valued

16 statements imagined a future where both individual and collective voices were heard and considered in decision-making. This would include their aspirations, needs and contributions. They saw a future where their contribution was valued and sought out.

"Ethnic communities feeling they are an asset to the country and valued. Their voices are heard in the policymaking process within government."

"An inclusive, pluralistic, safe, equitable, (in representation and opportunity) society with mutual respect for one another where all voices are heard, important for all silent communities to be heard, strength of contribution to NZ, not victimisation, we are at the table and all."

Society and government designed for diversity

Some people expressed that diversity is often an additional consideration for services and education. In this future, all parts of society but especially government would intentionally design to accommodate diverse communities and needs as business-as-usual. It would be a natural part of policy development, service design and day-to-day practice. For some, this may be expressed as prayer rooms in main centres and facilities, information in different languages, or easy access to interpreters.

Sub-themes included:

- An education system inclusive of other cultures such as Islamic, Chinese, etc.
- An education system inclusive of various languages.

"For a time that English will not be a basis of intelligence."

"Cultures would be a bridge and not a barrier for social harmony and the bricks of foundation for future Aotearoa NZ."



Alignment across multiple agencies and NGOs

The migrant settlement process and access to government support can be challenging. Responses from 12 community members said that to improve this, a coordinated effort across government and NGOs is needed to support the community's aspirations for streamlined, accessible and equitable services. Additionally, we heard there are existing programmes in government and NGOs that could be strengthened by taking a more coordinated approach.

Sub-themes included:

- Coordinated settlement process across government.
- Coordinated efforts with NGOs and charities who are already doing great work.
- Cross-cultural leadership.
- Policies that are inclusive of ethnic communities' needs.

Access to warm, safe, and affordable housing

The ability to own a good home was a shared aspiration. We heard that this goal is impacted by the high costs of living and poor housing stock in Aotearoa New Zealand, which further impacts migrants' ability to adjust, settle and integrate.

"I would hope that ... housing is no longer a privilege but affordable."

Opportunities for community interconnections

Nine statements saw a future where inclusiveness would also be expressed in meaningful intercultural exchanges between ethnic communities, whether it be between leadership, women, or youth.

"I find many people in my community that have spent years trying to find groups that exist and would have changed their lives."

"There is a major need for better cultural integration – this should be resolved by the heads of communities conversing with one another so there can be better communication."



Recognising and supporting intersectionality within communities

The need to recognise the intersectionality within and across communities was noted. They saw a future that recognised this diversity within their communities and stated that it may be expressed as support for the rainbow community or inter-faith communities.

“Shift from a multicultural to an intercultural vision.”

Data that tells the story of reality and success

An important theme expressed by nine responses was the need to communicate strengths-based truths and to be reflected positively, through accurate data and balanced storytelling. Changing the narrative to show the valuable contributions of ethnic communities to Aotearoa was highlighted as key to combatting hate speech, racism and discrimination.

“People would have a great impression of ethnic communities, the narrative would be different, people would value diversity.”



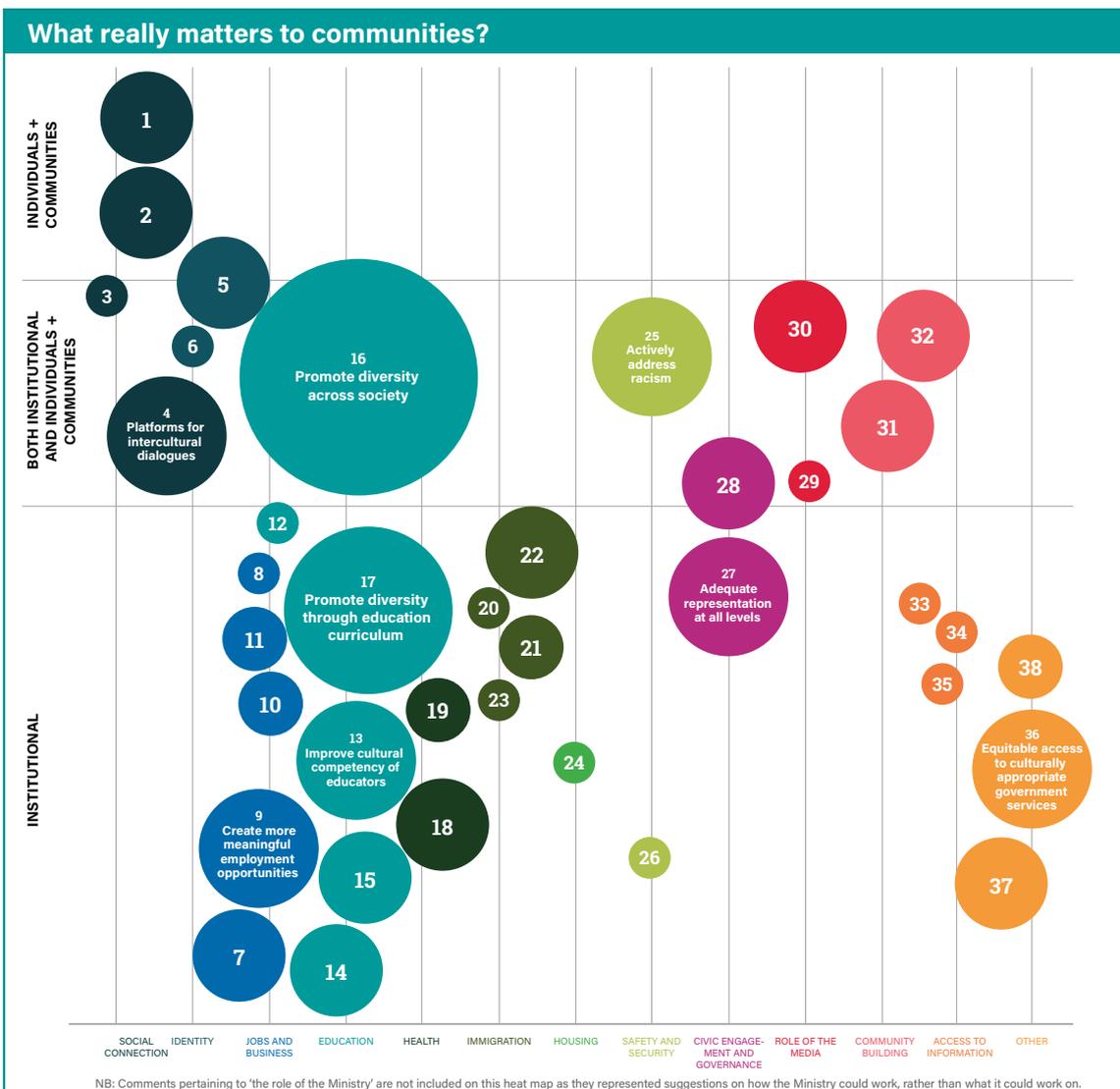
2. What would make the biggest difference now - In detail

We received hundreds of suggested priorities from ethnic communities. We coded all suggestions and came up with thirteen themes to describe what communities thought were key priority areas for the Ministry.

Within each theme, communities also provided suggestions about specific initiatives that could be done first to make a difference in the priority area. For example, under the education priority theme, promoting diversity through the education curriculum was a suggested initiative.

The following heatmap snapshot gives an indication of the initiatives we heard most frequently. The bigger the circle, the more frequently the initiative was mentioned. Refer to the key on the next page to understand what the numbers in the circles correspond to.

High-level heatmap of the most frequently heard themes and initiatives



Key for the heat map image

Social Connection

1. Connection with tangata whenua, Te Ao Maori and Te Tiriti
2. Connections between communities
3. Physical spaces for communities to connect
4. Platforms for intercultural dialogues

Identity

5. Celebrate different cultures/events
6. Initiatives to support belonging and confidence to express oneself

Jobs and Business

7. Address bias in employment decisions
8. Address workplace discrimination
9. Create more meaningful employment opportunities
10. Promote diversity in workplaces
11. Recognise overseas experience and qualifications

Education

12. Initiatives to address unconscious bias
13. Improve cultural competency of educators
14. Improve cultural competency in government and for employers
15. Provision of special language support
16. Promote diversity across society
17. Promote diversity through education curriculum

Health

18. Culturally and linguistically appropriate health services
19. Culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health support

Immigration

20. Immigration settings (policies)
21. Family reunification
22. Provision of better post-immigration support
23. Immigration process and timeframes

Housing

24. Address the cost, financing, and quality of housing

Safety and Security

25. Actively address racism
26. Initiatives to support being safe to express oneself

Civic Engagement and Governance

27. Adequate representation at all levels
28. Leadership opportunities for ethnic communities

Role of the Media

29. Address bias in the media
30. Promote positive representation in mainstream media

Community Building

31. Empower community groups and leaders
32. Support community groups and leaders

Access to Information

33. Provide better quality official data
34. Better information about support and services available
35. Official information provided in more languages

Other

36. Equitable access to culturally appropriate government services
37. Better support for specified groups (e.g. refugees, seniors)
38. Equal access to opportunities

In the following sections, we present the themes in the order of how often we heard them.



Education

Of all the suggested priorities, we heard most frequently that the Ministry should first focus on education. Statements around education were focused on one key goal: promoting the value of diversity both through the formal education system (e.g. through the education curriculum) and informally across society.

Comments were largely focused on:

- Improving the cultural competency of educators and within government.
- Providing specified language support.
- Developing initiatives to address unconscious bias.
- Improving pathways to higher education.
- Providing options for more languages in the curriculum.

What we understood

- Communities wanted to see more education in its various forms focused on reducing discrimination, improving understanding of each other, and enhancing social cohesion.
- Respondents talked about a three-way educational journey. They wanted to see education about the diversity that exists within and between ethnic communities, and across society with Māori, Pākeha, Pacific communities, and others.
- Communities suggested that exposure to different cultures, ethnicities, religions, and languages from pre-school upwards is important to build acceptance and a sense of belonging among all children. Related to this, participants wanted to see options for languages taught in schools to better reflect the social fabric of New Zealand.
- Creating awareness of different cultures in schools including improving the cultural competency of educators was a recurring theme among respondents.
- Many suggested the provision of teaching resources to support teachers to better understand different cultures, and to be able to provide better growth and advice to students from ethnic backgrounds.
- Bullying and racism in schools both by teachers and students emerged as an issue that communities wanted addressed through more accountability in the education system and deliberate action to address unconscious bias, racism and discrimination.
- Suggested approaches to promoting diversity across society included showcasing the contribution of ethnic communities to the social and economic fabric of New Zealand.
- There were also suggestions that informal education could happen through encouraging public discourse about ethnic diversity in New Zealand, and the use of influencers in society.
- Some respondents thought there was a need for better representation of all ethnicities in the teaching workforce and within government. There were suggestions for incentives to promote diverse workforces.



In your own words

"A school is a very large community so teaching about acceptance should start there to give opportunities to kids to ask questions and develop their views about the world around them from a young age - a generation of children will grow up into more understanding adults."

"The confidence and feeling of belonging that the diverse youth would experience would help them learn and reach their potential."

" [if teachers better understood the children they teach] ...ethnic groups will not hide who they are, they will feel respected, and give respect in return."

"Kids will feel more like they belong and that they are valued in the community and that their voices do make a difference."

"[Addressing unconscious bias] ...by educating leaders, HR, and the public how migrants can help businesses grow, giving diversity of perspectives, which improves innovation and wellbeing for all communities."

"The education curriculum should reflect the kind of Aotearoa we aspire to and an inclusive curriculum should...be weaved in with social inclusion."

"[for example] ... teachers and principals, etc, being educated about Ramadan and Eid so that even if you have one Muslim child in the school, recognition and understanding of what this means for them and their whanau is very important."

"We need to acknowledge the contributions and history of all in New Zealand."

"Being asked to wear shorts at school for girls makes them feel uncomfortable - it doesn't align with their values."



Jobs and Business

Statements under the 'jobs and business' theme centred around structural barriers in the labour market as the most significant challenge for communities' economic empowerment.

About forty percent of statements related to addressing discrimination and bias in employment decisions, recognising overseas experience and qualifications, and promoting diversity in the workplace. Fewer statements were related to supporting communities to either start or improve their businesses.

What we understood

- Respondents wanted equitable opportunities to meaningful employment and business opportunities, including fair hiring practices and culturally competent workplaces.
- Communities shared their desire that employment decisions be based on merit rather than on networks, personal connections, or ethnicity. They wanted 'equal chances to get the right person in the job'
- Respondents expressed that though they come to New Zealand with significant experience, they struggle to access relevant opportunities due to the unconscious bias of employers and structural barriers such as overseas qualifications not being recognised in Aotearoa.
- They suggested incentives for employers to hire New Zealanders from ethnic communities, and for the Ministry to set the standard, and have oversight for diversity and inclusion in the public sector.
- Many also talked about challenges faced by ethnic communities once they enter the workplace including a lack of opportunities or support for progression. They wanted better representation in leadership, including senior leadership positions.
- There were suggestions that new migrants need better information about their rights and obligations in the workplace as there were many migrant workers being exploited.
- There were concerns specific to international students. These included the challenges of converting their temporary immigration status to residency, as well as difficulty for qualified graduates to secure employment after graduation.
- Though people mentioned that access to education was available, there were concerns about the pathway from education to relevant employment. Submitters suggested relevant internships and workplace experience opportunities, and potential collaboration between the ministry and education institutions to develop these pathways to employment for migrants.
- Some respondents wanted to see cross-agency and cross-sector coordination to understand labour market outcomes of ethnic communities and addressing the gaps. Collecting meaningful information about diversity and inclusion in the workplace and ethnic pay was proposed.
- Some community members shared that they had the skills and financial resources to start a business but had no idea where to begin. They suggested business support with interpretation services as a potential way to address this gap.



In your own words

"Job job job - we are facing many challenges but if I want to choose one with no doubt it would be migrants employment."

"[we want to see] ...equality of opportunity (in employment), normalising being different and [that] it's okay to be you."

"We want jobs, we don't want to come here and end up on social welfare."

"Allow migrants to get into the workforce without facing 'institutional racism', many people qualified but not Kiwi enough."

"People would not have to pretend being someone else just to get the job, [and] be accepted in the workplace."

"[getting meaningful employment opportunities] would prevent family issues, prevent stress, and our families will be safe."

"Migrants will feel grateful, settled, committed, integrated, proud and will be able to contribute to economic growth."

"Highly educated migrants will not be doing small jobs to survive. This hampers their confidence and well-being."

"[meaningful opportunities] will allow migrants to be economically successful - they can support their community and employ others from community to help others."

"As many jobs in NZ are not advertised and employers use their networks to employ people it would be of great help if the ministry provided migrants with volunteering opportunities. Ministry can act as our network to be a volunteer in related industries to have some "kiwi" experience."

"People won't have to wonder whether changing their name to a Anglo name on their CV would give them a better chance."

"People really like my skills when they are not paying for them, they like me as a volunteer."



Social connection

We heard about 100 statements about the value of social connections centred around four key aspects:

Comments were largely focused on:

- Platforms for intercultural dialogues.
- Connections between communities.
- Connections with tāngata whenua, te Ao Māori, and te Tiriti.
- Physical spaces for communities to connect.

What we understood

- The essence of this theme was about breaking down barriers that prevent people from connecting with other people that may seem 'different' from them. There was also acknowledgement that pan - ethnic communities are not always connected with each other.
- Participants wanted opportunities to connect within and between communities. They spoke of breaking down barriers that prevent groups from engaging with people from different backgrounds, faiths, and cultures.
- The connections were however not just about 'understanding each other' but there was a desire to celebrate together, share knowledge, share skills and resources, as well as to have healthy debates and dialogue.
- People wanted platforms, including physical spaces and media, to enable 'ethnic people to express their identity and New Zealanders to explore and understand other groups'
- Connection with te Ao Māori, te Tiriti, and tāngata whenua was frequently mentioned as an important element of social inclusion. Participants thought it was important to 'find similarities between te Ao Māori and ethnic communities to build fusion and collaboration' and 'to collaborate'. They wanted to know more, and one participant said a priority should be to "Educate people and get them to understand how the Treaty relates to all communities"
- Participants wanted the Ministry to "assist in facilitating more opportunities to provide safe spaces to connect with difference"



In your own words

"(MEC) will lead to better alliance building between ethnic communities & tangata whenua."

"I believe in developing ethnic relations based in a treaty-based multiculturalism. This means to understand and embrace biculturalism, from a migrant perspective."

"Through this [connection], we – as a society – can begin to break down stereotypes about each other."

"Ethnic communities will feel they are an integral part of Aotearoa New Zealand, respecting and working with tāngata whenua to create safer, more collaborative and creative communities across Aotearoa New Zealand."

"Community cohesiveness is important - being able to come together over shared concerns and celebrations would help foster closer ties."

"Support community engagement, pay community connectors who organise events and create opportunities for greater engagement. As a migrant, making friends with New Zealanders can be quite difficult, so finding ways to break down those barriers is essential. Centering te ao Māori as a way to connect all parts of our community may make this easier because of shared collective values and ideal."

"My family's history as migrants would be cherished, our contribution as residents would be valued and our community would feel as though they are welcomed, valued and respected for their contributions to the wider community."

"[The connections will lead to] safer neighbourhoods, mixing and mingling of people who are 'different' from me, my family and my community."



Immigration

Over 70 statements related to immigration as a priority area, and a majority were related to the support that people receive once they arrive in New Zealand. The second most common sub-theme under immigration was 'family reunification.'

Comments were largely focused on:

- Immigration processes and timeframes.
- Immigration policies and settings.
- Pathways to residency.

What we understood

- We heard that migrants wanted better support once they arrive to New Zealand as they are not always aware of the support available to them. Suggestions to improve this included better coordination among service providers and having regional one-stop hubs for new migrants that support them with all their needs in the initial settlement period.
- Ethnic communities expressed frustration with changing immigration policies related to pathways to residency. They expressed that many come to New Zealand having understood what it would take to obtain residency, but that once here, policies change often and sometimes without notice. Participants shared that this caused stress and uncertainty for them and their families.
- We also heard that migrants found immigration policies for temporary or long-term visas challenging, especially when their families are still abroad. Some shared that the financial requirements for obtaining residency or having their families join can be significant.
- Immigration processes and timeframes were also outlined as an area of concern for communities. Some shared that significantly long processing times cause financial strain for them – especially when their documentation (for example medical certificates) expire while they wait for their applications to be processed.

In your own words

"Change the inhuman immigration process, can't keep breaking promises and rules as you please. People's lives are on hold and on the line, if immigration say after 2 years you get residency that's what it should be, not now you fall in the back of the line, you get approved in the beginning, why should you prove yourself again after 2 years."

"Like Plunket - provide social support to migrant women/families for a few years after they've arrived, to help keep in touch with appropriate services."



"Information brochure provided to new migrants at the airport; government websites have ethnic language information; train public servants to use language support lines."

"How can we say these people are healthy when they are worried about their families back home? They are worried whether their child has eaten; or their wife is healthy."

"Please make it possible for us to bring our older parents here. Currently the salary bands at which this is possible effectively means that very few people can. Yes, I understand the strain on the health system but surely if we can prove that we can invest in health insurance for them and access private health care, the policy can be amended?"

"Current Immigration settlement support is not good. Ministry should capture data of people coming into New Zealand and have a triage system to connect them with right local support."

Civic engagement and governance

About 60 statements referred to civic engagement and governance as a priority area for the Ministry to focus on.

Comments were largely focused on:

- Adequate representation at all levels.
- Leadership opportunities for ethnic communities.

What we understood

- Communities wanted to be represented in decision-making processes. Many desired training and support to build capability so they can be part of these processes.
- Some members no longer wanted to hear about 'being the first ethnic person' to be in leadership or in certain positions.
- The need to collect representation data was mentioned '*to ensure the voice of all society is represented democratically*'.
- Related to the collection of data, communities thought it important to identify the barriers that make it difficult for community members and organisations '*to come forward and speak up and to participate*'.



In your own words

"Provide resource to educate young generation on civic participation via arts."

"Invest in building capacity of the community members to enable them to contribute meaningfully in their communities and in government"

"Identify pathways for women and encourage those interested to take opportunity."

"Leadership development for everyone - across the broad spectrum of ethnic people - Young, Senior, Women and Men."

"We want to be in, not out – let us help in policy development"

Community building

About 60 statements referred to community building as a priority area for the ministry to focus on.

Comments were largely focused on:

- Empowering community groups and leaders.
- Supporting community groups and leaders.

What we understood

- Community leaders want their work in the community to be recognised and compensated.
- Communities want resources and tools to support and build their capacity to do a good job with their communities.
- There was a clear desire for communities to be empowered so that they can be self-sufficient. One participant summarised an approach to empower communities as 'educate, inform, empower, and encourage' so that "...communities will take ownership and more responsibility in helping themselves and their communities to achieve whatever they want"



In your own words

"The Minister cannot do it alone, she needs the community leaders as liaisons".

"Empower and educate leaders so we can keep supporting our communities".

"The ministry can only be successful if community representatives function well. [if we are supported] ... we will be better able to balance our duties and do a good job for our communities".



Safety and security

Almost 60 statements related to safety and security as a key priority for communities.

Comments were largely focused on:

- Actively addressing racism.
- Being safe to express oneself.
- Culturally appropriate policing.

What we understood

We heard that for many people, being safe to express themselves without fear of racism and discrimination is crucial. Most feedback related to concerns that people do not always know how to recognise racism, or what to do when they observe or experience racism.

Participants wanted to see more explicit consequences for hate speech and acts of hate against people based on ethnicity, culture, or faith. Some community members felt that the law did not sufficiently address racism in public places/workplaces and were concerned that some people abuse their freedom of speech at the expense of other people's freedom of expression.

We heard that for some, being safe looked like having security at their places of worship and at faith-based schools.

In your own words

"I've been here for 28 years and I've never felt so frightened as I have been since March 2019 - The sense of feeling secure because you look different, behave different became most urgent."

"We do not feel safe living in New Zealand - Asians get abused."

"Safety, safety, safety. Racism is normalised in Christchurch and the lower South Island - a lot of the time these people haven't had the chance to experience new cultures."

"NZ is far behind the developed world and its insulting after the Christchurch attacks there's no hate crime legislation. In addition, police need to be screened, trained and subject to hate crime charges themselves. NZ police are the worst I've dealt with as a black woman."

"Hate speech isn't taken seriously enough by the police. The Islamic Women's Council have warned of increasing levels of threat from white supremacists for years prior to the Mosque shooting event. If we could focus on just one thing - this would be it."

Health

About 60 statements referenced health as an area of priority.

Comments were largely focused on:

- Culturally and linguistically appropriate health services.
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health support.
- Affordable health care and services.

What we understood

Ethnic community members wanted to experience a health care system that truly understood and responded to their needs. They wanted health workers, including frontline staff, to be knowledgeable about services and supports available to ethnic people, such as interpretation services. There was also mention of the need to educate communities about their rights within the health care system.

Communities wanted to see improved cultural competency within the health care workforce, as well as greater representation of ethnic people in the workforce. With regards to the latter, people talked about more support such as scholarships for diverse people to pursue careers in the health sector.



Many people specifically called out for investment in culturally, religiously, and linguistically appropriate mental health support. Under this sub-theme, people suggested initiatives to raise awareness about mental health challenges in the community and to change the negative stigma associated with mental health.

In your own words

Communities wanted to have 'open conversations in mental health – role models who speak about mental health.'

"[If we are healthy] we will enjoy life and focus on growth in order to pay back to this country."

"Wellbeing, mental and physical for all ethnic communities will improve - they are able to contribute to society more fully."

Access to information

About 40 comments mentioned access to information as a priority area.

The comments were largely focused on:

- Better quality official data.
- Better information about rights and obligations.
- Better information about support and services available.
- Official information being available in multiple languages.

What we understood

Many respondents expressed a sense of being overwhelmed with information, and suggested initiatives to develop centralised approaches to providing and accessing information. Some people suggested a stocktake of all available services, while others suggested the potential of a one-stop space where new migrants can go to receive all the information they need.

A number of people suggested that the most important aspect is to collect better official information about the outcomes for ethnic communities, and for the Ministry to use this as a baseline against which to measure progress and to influence change across the public sector.



In your own words

"[We need] better access to free interpreting and translated materials, especially on topics affecting elderly generation who often don't have fluent English."

"To improve access to health including Mental health, the ministry needs to gather enough data, evidence, this is missing greatly. The information should help identify the barriers to better access, is it literacy, understanding etc. From there more actions can be taken to improve not only access but also engagement (ethnic people want to be active, take ownership when it comes to their health and well-being but don't know how to do so here) especially in this time of world-wide pandemic."

Role of media

About 35 statements related to the role of mainstream media. Media was referenced as a tool to shape a society and public opinion, and that it should be used to achieve harmony in society. Respondents wanted responsible reporting as well as positive representation of ethnic people in the media.

What we understood

Respondents talked about the power of storytelling to shift narratives about people. They wanted media to be held accountable for responsible reporting and not to use 'ethnic' descriptors to aggravate prejudices and negative stereotypes. Instead, communities wanted the media to portray all people fairly, and to cover positive and success stories about ethnic people's contributions and achievements in New Zealand. Some respondents thought there was an element of educating the media to do this better. Communities also wanted opportunities, support and resources to tell their own stories in mainstream media.

In your own words

"Through the power of story there will be a cultural shift in NZ- different communities understand each other better and interact more."

"Encourage the media to portray a positive image of diversity."

"Regularly publicise successful stories of migrant/refugees who contribute and integrate in the communities via local and national news outlet."



Identity

Community members said they want to express themselves freely and confidently and to celebrate their cultures and special events.

What we understood

We heard that communities want opportunities to showcase their identity instead of hiding it. Communities felt that platforms to celebrate cultural and other festivities are one way of embracing their identity while sharing these aspects with others. There was a common view that through such platforms, better understanding and more acceptance of ethnic people in New Zealand will follow.

In your own words

"I don't want to leave my culture at the door to get through the door."

"The use of words of "tolerance" has been removed. Tolerance and acceptance has been replaced with "embrace" and inclusion. We know about each other and no one is playing each other, and no one is playing victim but everyone gets equitable support."

"some ethnic people will not hide who they are anymore." "I find that bias is based on people's lack of knowledge. If there was part of the curriculum based on diversity and an appreciation of such including showing real life Kiwis who are not native but have adopted NZ as their home this would go a long way to improving cultural tolerance."

"Culture, Mana, Respect for ALL. No mocking of accents and a positive mindset.

"Really value diversity and be inclusive intentionally. Encourage people to be themselves not just to be kiwi due to pressure."



Housing

Comments about housing largely related to the accessibility of affordable and quality housing.

What we understood

Access to homeownership was seen as a way of improving a sense of belonging and economic independence in New Zealand, but there are barriers to achieving this. Pay inequalities and faith-based reasons meant that some of our ethnic community members were locked out of the housing market. Muslim communities suggested financial institutions consider interest-free loans for their communities.

We heard that collating quality information to understand the concerns and aspirations of ethnic people in relation to housing would be important.

In your own words

“Community have tangible asset of home which give them sense of security and belonging to country.”

“ [interest-free] loans would allow more people to invest without fear.”

Other

There were several suggested priorities that we heard less frequently and therefore grouped them as ‘other’. The most common were:

- Better support for specific groups (e.g. former refugees, senior citizens).
- Equal access to opportunities.
- Equitable access to culturally appropriate government services.
- Empowering youth.

What we understood

We heard clearly that communities wanted access to all opportunities across all sectors in New Zealand, and to experience successful outcomes. Communities wanted to be recognised *‘as a group worth investing in, ...be involved in more decision making that will affect communities and make opportunities open for ethnic people.’*

We understood that it was important to fulfil the basic needs of everyone, and particularly for people with unique needs such as former refugees and senior citizens. There were suggestions to address basic needs specific to former refugees once in New Zealand to



ensure they can quickly integrate into their new country. Suggestions included sending the communities to their resettlement city on arrival rather than being taken to the resettlement 'camp' in Auckland so they can begin to feel at home sooner. Success for them also looked like having identification documents valid for longer to make it easier to open bank accounts or obtain a driver's licence, for example.

We understood that communities wanted to see opportunities for youth and women to participate and to share their insights, not only within their own communities, but in wider society as well.

In your own words

"if woman are being treated with respect and dignity they can bring a great change in her home, work place, community, country and the world."

"Try to involve more young people to public speech, promote the state of society to ethnic youth."

"If I look and sound different, where do I go?"

Role of the Ministry: Act as a bridge, advocate for us, and educate us

While the April to May engagements were focused on 'what' the Ministry should focus on first, many people also shared their views about 'how' the new Ministry should operate to make the changes communities desired.

Many comments can be captured by insight from participants in a women's session who agreed that the Ministry should "act as a bridge, advocate for us and educate us".

The common themes were related to the Ministry being:

- Strategic and with a clear vision.
- Data-driven and evidence-based.
- Visible, influential, well-funded, and impactful.
- Well connected to communities and with other government agencies, including other population agencies.
- The voice of all communities, including small and emerging communities.
- Approachable with a regional presence.



What we understood

Some talked about the Ministry being a system leader that should hold other agencies to account for delivering equitable outcomes for all New Zealanders, including ethnic communities.

Those who wanted the Ministry to be the voice of all communities were interested in ensuring that the Ministry represent the interests of all communities, not just those with resources and tools to mobilise.

Others wanted to see the Ministry develop a strategic investment framework clearly aligned with the needs of the communities.

A smaller number talked about the desire for a Ministry for Ethnic Communities not to exist at all, or at least not for too long. These members were of the view that having a separate ministry 'others' ethnic communities and sets them apart from the 'mainstream' New Zealand society, and that the job of 'inclusion' rests on all government agencies.

Some members also wanted the Ministry to understand the difference between ethnicity and religion but most importantly to clarify its role in faith communities.

In your own words

"Two-way communication between the communities (including the smallest) and the Ministry"

"Work with other population agencies to understand what works and what doesn't"

"Also be visible as a Ministry. Ethnic communities do not know that you exist we don't see you anywhere where ethnic leaders are speaking up. You are as invisible as we are"

"Get to the tables where these decisions are being made. Challenge them to consider us"

"Don't assume that because government heard from big communities, you've heard from the community"

"Government departments are reluctant to do anything if they don't have data. They also don't see a problem if there isn't data telling them so"



What's next?

The feedback gathered from ethnic communities is already making a difference. It has been used to inform the interim Strategic Framework for the new Ministry for Ethnic Communities. This will help guide the Ministry's work from 1 July.

The Ministry, led by the newly appointed Chief Executive, will be working to embed the framework and align the Ministry's work programme with the agreed priorities over the coming months.

A key element of aligning the Ministry's work programme (both now and over the next few years) will be to engage with communities on the specific strategies and actions that will support progress in each of the priority areas.

We expect this engagement will commence in the months following the Chief Executive stepping into their new role.





Ministry for
**Ethnic
Communities**
Te Tari Mātāwaka



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