

Ministry for Ethnic Communities Strategic Intentions

Overview from the Chief Executive

New Zealand is changing.

Growing ethnic diversity is one of the defining demographic trends of our time. The experiences, aspirations and connections of Ethnic Communities are increasingly shaping New Zealand's social fabric, economic success and place in the world. This change is unfolding alongside rapid technological, geopolitical and social change, creating new opportunities and challenges for communities, institutions and society.

The Ministry for Ethnic Communities is uniquely positioned to help New Zealand navigate this change. As the Government's chief advisor on ethnic diversity, our role is to provide insight others do not have, make visible what might otherwise be overlooked, and help New Zealand to realise the full potential of its diversity.

Our Strategic Intentions for 2026-2030 focus on two impact areas where we can make the greatest difference: **strengthening social cohesion and building better evidence and data.**

Strong social cohesion underpins trust, belonging and participation across New Zealand. We will work with communities and partners to strengthen the relationships, leadership and capability that enable communities to lead progress themselves. Our goal is to help unlock the full potential of Ethnic Communities by enabling them to influence decisions that affect them, engage confidently with public institutions, lead progress within their communities and play a defining role in building a resilient and cohesive New Zealand.

Better evidence, data and insights help New Zealand understand its changing population. We will strengthen the breadth and depth of information available about Ethnic Communities, making visible the diversity, experiences and opportunities hidden within broad population groups. Our goal is to build deeper understanding of Ethnic Communities, ensuring their needs, aspirations and potential are reflected in the decisions, services and investments that shape New Zealand.

Delivering on these priorities requires us to be a focused and future-ready organisation. We will strengthen our analytical capability, deepen our partnerships and make better use of data, digital tools and emerging technologies, enabling us to respond to a rapidly changing New Zealand with insight, agility and impact.

The opportunity before us is significant, and so too is the potential of New Zealand's diversity.



Pratima Namasivayam

Chief Executive

Ministry for Ethnic Communities – Te Tari Mātāwaka

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Nature of scope and functions

The Ministry for Ethnic Communities is the Government's chief advisor on ethnic communities, ethnic diversity and the inclusion of ethnic communities in wider society. Our role is to lead the system to improve outcomes for ethnic communities through advice, community insights, data and evidence, and through building partnerships and engagement across communities, government, business and wider New Zealand society.

Our remit includes people who identify as African, Asian, Continental European, Latin American or Middle Eastern. These communities include former refugees, asylum seekers, new and temporary migrants, long-term settlers and multi-generational New Zealanders.

We work in the context of a growing and increasingly diverse population of ethnic communities. Ethnic communities are one of New Zealand's fastest-growing population groups and are becoming increasingly diverse. As communities grow and evolve, there is increasing demand for government, businesses, community organisations and other institutions to understand and respond to their experiences, needs and aspirations.

The Ministry has a range of roles and responsibilities that it delivers. Our key functions are:

- » Leading the system to improve outcomes for ethnic communities by working with government and public sector agencies to deliver practical change, support culturally responsive services, and improve outcomes for ethnic communities
- » Providing advice on improving outcomes for ethnic communities and supporting decision-makers to respond to the needs and aspirations of New Zealand's diverse ethnic communities
- » Monitoring, collating, analysing and using data and evidence to improve understanding of ethnic communities, monitor outcomes and evaluate the impact of government interventions
- » Partnering and engagement with ethnic communities to understand their priorities and experiences. This includes leveraging strategic partnerships and supporting meaningful engagement between communities and public agencies. It also includes administering programmes and funds that support community participation, capability and wellbeing, including the Ethnic Communities Development Fund and Language Assistance Services.

The Ministry is one part of a wider system that contributes to the wellbeing of ethnic communities. We work with central and local government, community organisations, businesses, employers, faith groups, researchers and community leaders to improve outcomes for ethnic communities and support their inclusion in wider New Zealand society.

Organisational Health and Capability

Delivering our strategic intentions requires a capable, connected and future-ready organisation. As the Ministry's role increasingly relies on influence, insight and partnership, we must continue to strengthen the capabilities that enable us to improve outcomes for Ethnic Communities and New Zealand. To achieve this, we will focus on strengthening the following capabilities.

Leadership and Workforce Capability

We will continue to strengthen leadership capability, strategic thinking and system stewardship across the organisation. We will support our workforce to build and enhance skills and expertise needed to understand emerging issues, facilitate participation and discussion across different perspectives on those issues, provide trusted advice and influence across the wider public sector system. Our investment in people capability supports delivery across our strategic outcomes and ensures we are equipped to operate effectively in an evolving environment.

Data, Evidence and Insights

We will continue to strengthen and develop our analytical capability and improve how we collect, integrate and use qualitative and quantitative information. This will support the development of stronger evidence, deeper community insights and more effective advice for decision makers.

Digital and Technology Enablement

We will increase the effective use of digital tools, data technologies and artificial intelligence to improve productivity, strengthen knowledge management and enhance the quality and reach of our work. We are working with our host agency to maximise and leverage opportunities in this area.

Partnerships and Engagement

We will continue to strengthen our capability to build trusted relationships across Ethnic Communities, government agencies and external partners. This includes improving how we gather and use community insights and supporting meaningful participation in decisions that affect communities.

Organisational Performance and Resilience

We will strengthen our organisational systems, planning, risk management, assurance and performance measurement practices. We will continue to monitor and evaluate our performance, building organisational maturity and resilience so we can respond effectively to changing priorities, emerging risks and a dynamic operating environment. We will continue to operate in a tight and rapidly changing fiscal environment. This requires a focus on efficiency and a disciplined and transparent use of public funds, directing funding to activities that deliver the greatest impact and value.

Assessment of Ministry Performance

We use performance measures to demonstrate the contribution our work makes toward improving outcomes for Ethnic Communities and New Zealand as a whole.

Our performance measures assess the impact we have achieved across key functions, including:

- » the provision of information, advisory and support services to ethnic communities
- » the provision of policy advice and services to support Ministers in discharging their portfolio responsibilities relating to ethnic communities.

These performance measures are set out in the Estimates of Appropriations and are reported on each year through our Annual Report.

We regularly review our performance framework to ensure our measures remain relevant and meaningful. We see an opportunity to strengthen our performance measures to better reflect the value of the Ministry's contribution in two strategic impact areas: strengthening social cohesion and building better evidence and data to inform government decision-making. These impact areas guide our work and help us understand the difference we are making for ethnic communities and New Zealand as a whole.

We have developed a set of shadow measures which we will monitor and report on to better demonstrate progress against both impact areas. An integrated set of indicators will be used from our 2027/2028 Annual Reporting.

Strategic priorities

Our strategic priorities reflect the areas where we believe we can make the greatest contribution to New Zealand. Together, they support our two strategic impact areas of strengthening social cohesion and building better evidence and data to inform decision making. Through these priorities, we help ensure that Ethnic Communities are connected, included and able to contribute fully to New Zealand society, while improving the evidence, insights and advice that enable government to respond effectively to their needs and aspirations.

We work with communities, other government agencies, and a range of organisations to help increase social cohesion and to ensure that New Zealand is a place where everyone feels welcome, valued and empowered.

Our mandate comes from the communities we engage with and their priorities are ours:

- » Promoting the value of diversity and improving the inclusion of Ethnic Communities in wider society
- » Ensuring government services are accessible for Ethnic Communities
- » Improving economic outcomes for Ethnic Communities, including addressing barriers to employment
- » Connecting and empowering ethnic community groups.

The Ministry is the chief advisor to the Government on Ethnic Communities and does not directly provide services to Ethnic Communities. Recognising our mandate, size and levers for impact, we focus on the areas where we can make the greatest difference:

- » Influence changes in policy by providing advice to government agencies and decision makers on issues that impact on Ethnic Communities
- » Analyse data so that we can demonstrate where government policies are not working well for Ethnic Communities. This includes analysing evidence to identify systemic issues
- » Work with ethnic businesses, economic development agencies and government to realise the economic potential of Ethnic Communities so they can make a stronger contribution
- » Work to build capability within government and communities on a focused set of issues that leads to positive change for all New Zealanders
- » Use our connections into Ethnic Communities who see us as impartial, to bring communities together
- » Provide funding and other support to enable communities to grow their skills, celebrate their culture and take part productively in society.

These areas will be our focus now and into the future.