

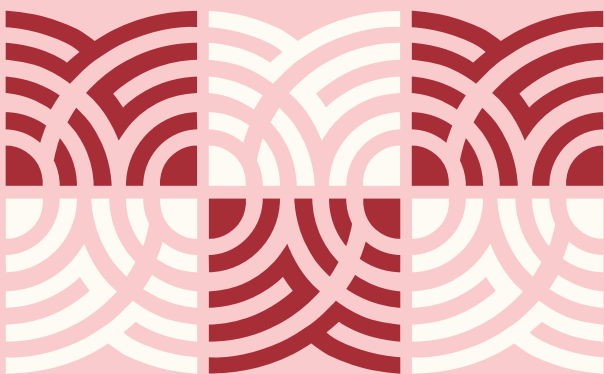


Ministry for
**Ethnic
Communities**

Te Tari Mātāwaka

Ethnic Advantage

United Against Headwinds



28 JUNE 2025 | AUCKLAND

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

We are excited to welcome you back to our flagship event, the Ethnic Advantage Conference.

Returning by popular demand, this flagship conference celebrates the significant contributions of our Ethnic Communities, especially in challenging times marked by global unrest, rising living costs, unemployment, and the threat of conflict.

Join us for a dynamic and inspiring event celebrating unity, resilience, and the power of diversity to build a stronger, more connected New Zealand.

Every session will help shape the future government initiatives, making sure Ethnic Communities are heard and at the heart of decision-making.

This event is sponsored by:



TECH
mahindra

SCHEDULE

**All sessions are held on Level 1, Hunua Room
apart from the breakout sessions in the afternoon.**

8.30–8.50 am	Registration – Opportunity to view stalls
8.50–9.05 am	Mihi Whakatau
9.05–9.15 am	Welcome
9.15–9.45 am	Panel: Ministers’ sofa interview (No Q&A)
9.45–10.45 am	Panel: Cultivating social cohesion – Multiple views on NZ’s social cohesion (Q&A with audience)
10.45–11.15 am	Morning tea – Opportunity to view stalls
11.15 am–12.10 pm	Panel: Foreign interference – Community experiences and governments’ responses (No Q&A)
12.10–12.15 pm	Sponsor remarks – Harshvendra Soin, President of Asia Pacific & Japan Business Tech Mahindra
12.15–1.25 pm	Lunch – Opportunity to view stalls
1.25–1.30 pm	Cultural performance
1.30–1.35 pm	Sponsor remarks – Professor Damon Salesa, Vice-Chancellor AUT
1.35–2.30 pm	Panel: United in crises – National emergencies and disaster management (Q&A with audience)
2.30–3.00 pm	Presentation: Ethnic evidence – Do we know our numbers? (No Q&A)
3.00–3.45 pm	Afternoon tea – Opportunity to view stalls
3.45–4.30 pm	Breakout sessions: Financial sustainability for community organisations (Q&A with audience) <i>Level 1, Hunua Room</i> Kai and discourse – Is it ‘food for thought’ or ‘food for action’? (Q&A with audience) <i>Level 3, Waitakere Room 1</i> Countering foreign interference and community resources (Q&A with audience) <i>Level 3, Waitakere Room 2</i>
4.35–4.45 pm	Closing remarks
4.45–4.50 pm	Farewell
4.50–5.30 pm	Networking

SPEAKERS & GUESTS

Welcome

Mervin Singham

**Chief Executive
Ministry for Ethnic Communities**

Mervin is a vastly experienced public servant and previously led the Office of Ethnic Affairs. Prior to becoming the new ministry's first Chief Executive, he was the executive director at the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Historical Abuse in State Care and in the Care of Faith-based Institutions.



Jehan Casinader

Master of Ceremony and Moderator

Jehan Casinader is an award-winning journalist, speaker, and mental health advocate. Named "Reporter of the Year" and "Best Political Columnist," he helps Kiwis share their stories. Jehan is one of New Zealand's most-booked personal development speakers and a thought leader in mental health, leadership, and workplace culture. He authored 'This Is Not How It Ends' and is an ambassador for Men's Health Week.



Panel: Ministers' sofa interview

Hon Mark Mitchell

Minister for Ethnic Communities, Minister of Corrections, Minister for Emergency Management and Recovery, Minister of Police and Minister for Sport and Recreation

Minister Mitchell joined the New Zealand Police in 1989, later starting his own security company. He entered Parliament in 2011 and has held various ministerial roles, including Minister of Defence.



Hon Simeon Brown

Minister of Health, Minister for State Owned Enterprises and Minister for Auckland

Prior to entering politics, Minister Brown completed Law and Commerce degrees at the University of Auckland and worked in Commercial Finance at the Bank of New Zealand, as well as serving as an elected Local Board member at Auckland Council.



Jehan Casinader

Master of Ceremony and Moderator

See above for Jehan's bio.

Panel: Cultivating social cohesion – Multiple views on NZ’s social cohesion

Dame Jenny Shipley

Former Prime Minister of New Zealand

Dame Jenny Shipley is a Company Director and speaker on global mega trends. She has extensive experience in governance across various sectors and the Asia Pacific region. Dame Jenny promotes inclusive leadership and shared societies, and co-chaired the 2019 Tuia 250 Commemoration.



Rahul Watson Govindan

Chief Executive – Philanthropy New Zealand

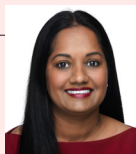
Rahul has a 25-year international career with Fortune 500 companies, SMEs, public sector, and Not-For-Profits. He co-founded five companies in three countries and is a recognised strategy and governance professional. Rahul is the CEO of Philanthropy NZ, a father of two, and a former NZ hockey player and coach.



Ireen Rahiman-Manuel

CEO – Impactdev360

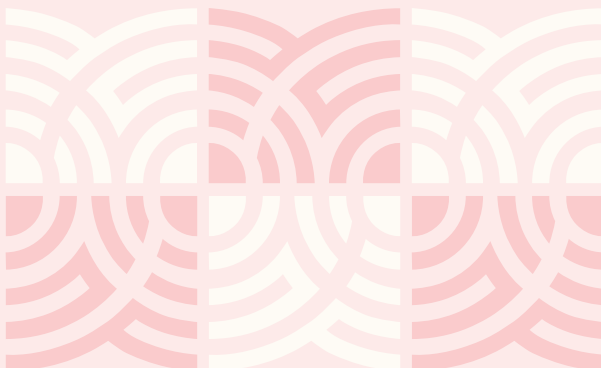
Ireen Rahiman-Manuel is a thought leader and founder of ImpactDev360. She is highly respected for her work in multi-country impact strategy, systems thinking and change. Ireen is a champion for maternal and child wellbeing, women’s empowerment, and climate action.



Jehan Casinader

Master of Ceremony and Moderator

Refer to page 3 for Jehan’s bio.



Panel: Foreign interference – Community experiences and governments’ responses

Andrew Hampton

**Director-General of Security New Zealand
Security Intelligence Service**

Andrew Hampton is the Director-General of the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service. Before this, he was Director-General of the GCSB for seven years. He has held various roles in the justice sector, including Director of the Office of Treaty Settlements and Deputy Secretary for Courts. Andrew grew up in Ashburton and studied at the University of Canterbury.



Nathan Smyth

**Deputy Secretary General for National
Security & Resilience – The Department
of Home Affairs Australia**

Nathan Smyth was appointed Deputy Secretary National Security and Resilience on 17 July 2023, and concurrently serves as the Commonwealth’s Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and National Counter Foreign Interference Coordinator. He leads efforts to enhance national security and resilience. Previously, Nathan held senior roles in employment, health, infrastructure, finance, and foreign affairs. He holds degrees from UNSW and the University of Sydney.



Pratima Namasivayam

**Deputy Chief Executive for Advisory, Analytics,
Ministerial – Ministry for Ethnic Communities**

Pratima joined the Ministry in March 2022 from the Ministry of Defence. With a background in policy, law, and management, she has held roles in the Ministry of Justice, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, ACC, and Ministry of Fisheries. Pratima has also consulted for Crown Law, Ministry of Education, and Waka Kotahi. She holds post-graduate qualifications in health sciences and law, and is an enrolled Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand.



Ziena Jalil (Moderator)

**Commissioner at The Natural Hazards
Commission**

Ziena is an award-winning business and public sector leader, focused on deepening New Zealand’s engagement with the Asia Pacific, and improving outcomes for those with diverse cultures, abilities and experiences. She is a Commissioner at the Natural Hazards Commission, Toka Tū Ake, Deputy Chief Executive at Te Pūkenga, and a keynote speaker, facilitator and MC.



Panel: United in crises – National emergencies and disaster management

Dave Gawn

Chief Executive – National Emergency Management Agency

Dave Gawn has been the Chief Executive of New Zealand's National Emergency Management Agency since September 2021. He has extensive experience in managing and leading organisations, including roles as Chief Executive of the Pike River Recovery Agency, Head of Mission at UNTSO, Chief of Army, and Commander Joint Forces New Zealand.



Red Tsounga

President – Aotearoa Africa Foundation

Red Tsounga, originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, arrived in Auckland as a refugee. He actively contributes to the Albert-Eden-Puketāpapa community, supporting vulnerable populations. Red holds degrees in Conflict and Terrorism Studies, Anthropology, and Linguistics, and is the President of the Aotearoa Africa Foundation, promoting youth mentorship and migrant assistance.



Sarah Stuart-Black

Secretary-General – New Zealand Red Cross

Sarah, known as 'Norm', joined New Zealand Red Cross as Secretary General in December 2020 and was made a Companion of the Queen's Service Order in 2021. Previously, she was Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management. Sarah has worked in various roles in New Zealand, England, Ethiopia, Niue, and the Solomon Islands, and is an UNDAC member.



Jehan Casinader

Master of Ceremony and Moderator

Refer to page 3 for Jehan's bio.

Presentation: Ethnic evidence – Do we know our numbers?

Deb Potter

Principal Analyst Ministry for Ethnic Communities

Deb Potter is a principal analyst for the Ministry for Ethnic Communities and part of the team which produced Ethnic Evidence. Deb has had a long career in government data and evidence including 25 years at StatsNZ.



Breakout session: Financial sustainability for community organisations

Jenny Wang

Founder – The Chinese New Settlers Services Trust (CNSST) Foundation

Jenny Lingjuan WANG QSM is the Founder and Executive Director of CNSST Foundation. Since 1998, she has built an NGO providing services to Asian/Ethnic migrant communities in Auckland. Jenny received the Queen's Service Medal in 2008 and other awards for her contributions to local migrant communities.



Dr Anwar Ghani

Director – Amanah Ethical and NZI Products & Services

Dr Ghani is a leading environmental scientist and community advocate. He served as President of the FIANZ and chaired the Ministry for Primary Industries Halal Food Advisory Council, shaping national halal standards. He is Director of Amanah Ethical and NZI Products and Services Limited, promoting ethical investment and halal exports. A panel member of the ECDF and a respected international speaker on interfaith dialogue, social cohesion, and sustainable leadership.



A.K. Yap

**Asian Engagement Advisor
CLM Community Sport**

A.K. Yap is a strategic advisor and equity advocate with extensive experience in community development, funding, and governance. She leads inclusive initiatives that empower Ethnic Communities and advance equitable outcomes across Aotearoa at community and governance levels.



Rahul Watson Govindan

Chief Executive – Philanthropy New Zealand
Refer to page 4 for Rahul's bio.

Berlinda Chin (Moderator)

**Chief Advisor and Acting Deputy Chief
Executive for Strategic Engagement
and Stakeholder Insights
Ministry for Ethnic Communities**

Berlinda joined the Ministry in August 2021. Before this, she worked in leadership roles at the Office of Ethnic Communities and in other jobs focused on diversity. She also led community engagement for the Royal Commission looking into abuse in state care.



Breakout session: Kai and discourse – Is it ‘food for thought’ or ‘food for action’?

Manjit Grewal

Co-Founder – Ekta New Zealand

Malaysian. Sikh. First came to NZ as a postgraduate student in 1976. Worked for a Singapore company for 30+ years. Posted to several countries. On retirement in 2013 settled in Wellington. Co-founded Ekta NZ Inc in 2017 along with two other Malaysians.



Tony Green

Co-Founder – Mahia te Aroha

The public response to the 2019 Christchurch terror attacks was instinctive and compassionate. A small group from the Muslim community and friends initiated “Mahia te Aroha” – to “Action the Compassion.” Tony Green, co-founder of Mahia te Aroha, continues this work through the “Christchurch Invitation” podcast.



Aram Wu

Food rescuer – Fair Food

Aram Wu, originally from Taiwan, is a food rescuer and Te Tiriti o Waitangi educator. He has spent many years working in urban garden spaces – growing kai, teaching, sharing knowledge, and nourishing the community. Aram is a people weaver, known for bringing people together.



Kimberley Wu (Moderator)

Director of National Operations Ministry for Ethnic Communities

Kimberley joined the Ministry in July 2023. She has extensive experience in engaging and working with diverse stakeholders through her 25-year professional career that spans across the media (printed and TV), tertiary education sectors and local government in Asia and New Zealand.



Breakout session: Countering foreign interference and community resources

Sean Hansen

Director of National Security & Detective Superintendent
New Zealand Police

Blair W

New Zealand Security Intelligence Service

Ruksana Shaikh (Moderator)

Director of Security & Resilience
Ministry for Ethnic Communities

Sponsors remarks

Harshvendra Soin

President of Asia Pacific & Japan Business
Tech Mahindra

Harshvendra Soin is the President of Asia Pacific and Japan Business at Tech Mahindra. With over 30 years across global industries, he blends business and HR expertise, having held CXO roles and driven strategic growth, innovation, and leadership development.



Professor Damon Salesa

Vice-Chancellor – Auckland University
of Technology (AUT)

Professor Damon Salesa, Vice-Chancellor of AUT, is a Rhodes Scholar and historian focused on the Pacific and Auckland communities. He champions inclusive education, leads AUT's AI task force, and chairs Universities New Zealand's International Committee, advancing equity, innovation, and inclusion.




NOTES


STALLS


Stalls will be open during registration, morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea.


Stallholders include:


- Department of Internal Affairs
- Inland Revenue Department
- Auckland Council Local Elections
- Auckland Council Emergency Management
- Diversity Counselling
- Foundation North
- New Zealand Police
- Electoral Commission
- Te Whatu Ora Asian and Ethnic Health Services
- She Sharp

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