

MULTI ETHNIC COLLECTIVE

Terms of Reference



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Multi Ethnic Collective –Advisory Group *The Voice of Whangārei’s Diverse Communities*

1. Background

The Multi Ethnic Collective (MEC) is a proud partnership between Whangārei Police, Whangārei District Council (WDC), Multicultural Whangārei, Office of Ethnic Communities, Immigration New Zealand and ethnic people who live in the district.

This initiative is a result of Whangārei’s growing multi ethnic population; recent events in Christchurch and the need for communities and organisations to have a close positive relationship (Appendix 1).

The MEC will operate like an advisory group to these organisations.

2. Overarching Principles

The partners are strong believers in - Ma te kotahitanga e whai kaha ai tatou. In unity, we have strength.

New Zealand is a multicultural society underpinned by foundations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and has an established ongoing relationship between Maori and the Crown. MEC will have utmost respect for Te Tiriti o Waitangi, particularly in understanding the difference between Mana Whenua and Tangata Whenua; and the role that Mana Whenua has in welcoming those to Whangārei.

The MEC will work in a collegial, coordinated and collaborative manner cognizant that multi-ethnic communities are inclusive of all ethnicities in the community (Appendix 2).

3. Purpose

The purpose of the MEC is to establish a formal channel that enables different ethnic groups in Whangārei to provide advice to Whangārei Police, Whangārei District Council, Multicultural Whangārei, Office of Ethnic Communities and Immigration New Zealand to promote an inclusive, safe and vibrant city.

MEC will contribute to this by providing:

- Direct impartial information on matters of interest, views or issues of ethnic people
- A voice which raises awareness of the aspirations and goals of ethnic communities
- Advise from an ethnic lens on upcoming work

- Help us effectively engage with ethnic communities

4. Roles

All MEC members are to:

- Provide advice to the partners based on the communities they represent
- Consider issues on their merits to ensure the best advice is given
- Be openminded and display a willingness to listen to differing points of view
- Treat others, including staff, with respect at all times
- Actively engage with members of the communities they represent
- Establish and maintain relationships within their respective communities
- Follow the Code of Conduct as outlined in the Appendix 3 of this document

The chair or co-chairperson of MEC is to:

- Facilitate MEC meetings to enable considered yet efficient decision making
- Encourage open communication from all MEC members
- Work with lead officers to compile meeting agendas
- Work with members and the lead officer to develop the group's work programme
- Be the spokesperson and main contact for the group
- Represent the views and recommendations of the whole group
- Work with the partners to review the performance of the MEC

Lead Officers from Partnering Organisations:

- At least two partners must be present at every meeting
- Take minutes in formal meetings and community forums
- Take notes in closed workshops
- Support the chair on the strategic agendas
- Coordinate development of MEC strategic work programme
- Follow up on meeting actions and resolutions
- Act as a conduit with relevant parts of their organisation for the group
- Highlight potential issues and risks
- Ensure guidance and advice from the group is clearly captured
- Provide subject matter expertise
- Take key messages as identified by MEC to their governing body, organisation or community
- Report back to MEC through the Chair on any outcomes relating to the advice they have provided to the governing body

5. Membership

- MEC members will be selected through a robust process
- All three partners will have a representation on the MEC
- The MEC will comprise of between 10-15 individuals who either live in Whangārei
- Membership will reflect the multi- ethnic, and religious diversity of people residing in Whangārei including a gender and age balance
- Members will be appointed either as representative members of peak ethnic community organisations or as individual members. The representative members will have evidence-based links to their respective ethnic community organisations. The representative members and community members are not speaking on behalf of their particular organisation or community.
- All members are representing the views of ethnic communities throughout Whangārei and will engage in representing the views of the broader community

6. Strategic Work Programme

The MEC will develop a priorities programme. This is reflective of the key goals, needs of the community and work of partnering services. This will be a working document reflective of current times.

7. Meetings

- The MEC will aim to meet bi-monthly
- Meetings are likely to be two hours long
- No meetings will fall on statutory days
- Meetings will be at a safe and secure location
- Each member can bring one support person along. Support members are not able to take part in the meeting discussions
- Support will be given to members to ensure that they are able to participate in meetings
- Meetings and minutes are noted in English language
- Scheduled meetings will be a mix of open meetings, closed workshops, site visits community forums and, where it makes sense
- Half of the current number of members, not including vacancies, must be present for the group to have a quorum. No resolutions without a quorum
- Should conflict occur, the Chairperson / Co-Chairperson and group will work with the partners to resolve the conflict

8. Selection Criteria

Selection will be based on, but not limited to, the following criteria

- An understanding of multiculturalism and a commitment to this through a treaty-based lens where the role of mana whenua is understood
- Ability to contribute to the MEC processes and consultation activities
- Ability to reflect on the diverse range of experiences and views of Whangārei's population

Applications are open to people living in the Whangārei District.

- Able to represent more than one ethnic group in the community
- Lived experience with relevant diverse communities
- Individual competencies
- Ability to offer advice
- Ability to communicate the needs of their ethnic community within the group
- Understanding of the range of ethnic communities within the Whangārei District
- Understanding of Biculturalism and Multiculturalism

9. Application Process (Steps)

1. Interested applicants can either nominate themselves or be nominated by an organisation
2. Applicants will be shortlisted
3. Shortlisted applicants will be asked for at least 2 references
4. An interview will be conducted by partners
5. Successful applicants will undergo a Police Vetting check

10. Terms of Appointment

The standard term of appointment will be one year. Some members may serve an extra two terms (3 years total).

The term of appointment will be re-evaluated if a member moves out of the district boundaries or misses more than three consecutive meetings.

If an MEC member resigns, a replacement will be sought through the current selection process. Members may request a leave of absence of up to three months due to sickness or injury. To ensure continuity from the existing MEC structure, members terms will be staggered

11. Resignation

Members are required to notify the Partners in writing of their intention to resign from MEC. Vacancies due to resignation will be filled by the partners from a shortlist of people obtained through the selection process.

Membership will be revoked if:

- The members term of appointment has expired
- The member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without an apology
- The member resigns from the MEC or;
- The members appointment is terminated due to break of Code of Conduct

12. Operation and Other Matters

- The MEC is an initiative that will sit outside of the partners organisations.
- Their role is to provide advice and information only.
- Governance bodies of the partnering organisations will have a close relationship with the MEC through their staff.
- Advice should only come from an ethnic lens.
- Partners will oversee the administration of the MEC.
- Chairs/Co-chairs will be elected annually by secret ballot. A Chair/Co-chair may stay the same for up to 3 years.
- Other agencies or organisations may wish to approach the group to either consult or engage with MEC members on matters relating ethnic people in Whangārei. The Chair will make the ultimate decision.
- Members of MEC may also be members of the Partnering organisations other advisory groups.
- Supporting documents are provided in English language.
- The maximum time a member may stay on this group is 3 years. Members can leave and return after at least 3 years of absence.
- Each member must sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Agreement. Other documentation may also be required.
- If a situation arises where the MEC is not functioning effectively, or there is a disagreement about membership eligibility, Partners will have final approval of the membership and composition of the groups.
- All members must follow the Code of Conduct as outlined in the Appendix 3 of this document. Members will also create their own set of ground rules.
- Members are expected to take part in group communications such as email between meeting dates.
- Staff members including, employed, contractors, cadets and/ or volunteers of the partnering organisations who have a conflict of interest in their role may be unable to apply, this will be on a case by case basis.

Appendix 1

Definitions

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups that people identify with or feel they belong to. Ethnicity is a measure of cultural affiliation, as opposed to race, ancestry, nationality or citizenship. Ethnicity is self-perceived, and people can belong to more than one ethnic group.

An ethnic group is made up of people who have some or all the following characteristics:

- a common proper name
- one or more elements of common culture which need not be specified, but may include religion, customs, or language
- unique community of interests, feelings and actions
- a shared sense of common origins or ancestry, and
- a common geographic origin
- Race/ancestry/citizenship/ethnic origin

Ethnicity should not be confused with other related terms. Race is a biological indicator and an ascribed attribute. Ancestry is a biological and historical concept and refers to a person's blood descent. Citizenship is a legal status. These terms contrast with ethnicity which is self-perceived and a cultural concept. Ethnic origin is a person's historical relationship to an ethnic group, or a person's ancestors' affiliation to an ethnic group, whereas ethnicity is a person's present-day affiliation.

Business, family and household

Ethnicity is a personal attribute and therefore it is not valid to attribute an ethnicity to a business, family or household based on the ethnicity of an individual within that business, family or household.

Ethnic group changing over time

The ethnic group or groups that someone identifies with may change over time. This may impact advice given at one time, but actions implemented later. The decision on what is appropriate to use at what time needs to be decided on a case by case basis.

Ethnic group changing with context

A difficulty that is not easily overcome when collecting ethnic group advice is the possibility that a person may give a different response depending on the context. For example, when Also, the social or cultural setting may affect the ethnicity response reported. A decision on what is appropriate to use for integrated data sets needs to be decided on a case by case basis.

Ethnic Lens

A view that someone who has had an ethnic experience by being in or from another country and can provide and describe information based on those experiences.

Local Government

As defined in the Local Government Act 2002, the purpose of local government is: to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and to meet the current and future needs of communities for good-quality local infrastructure, local public services and performance of regulatory functions in a way that is most cost-effective for households and businesses.

Multi Ethnic Collective (MEC)

The Multi Ethnic Collective or MEC is the name given to this Advisory Group. Primarily to avoid confusion with partners own advisory groups and to give this group its own identity.

Mana Whenua

A customary authority exercised by an iwi or hapu in an identified area. In this context, mana whenua means the indigenous people (Māori) who have historic and territorial rights over the land. It refers to iwi and hapu (Māori tribal groups) who have these rights in Mana whenua interests. Here in Whangārei these are represented by 14 iwi (tribal) authorities in Whangārei.

Tangata Whenua

In New Zealand, tangata whenua is a Māori term that literally means "people of the land". It can refer to either a specific group of people with historical claims to a district, or more broadly the Māori people as a whole. Tangata whenua (in relation to a particular area) includes the iwi, or hapu, that holds mana whenua over that area.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is the Te reo version of the Treaty of Waitangi. The Treaty of Waitangi is New Zealand's founding document. It takes its name from the place in the Bay of Islands where it was first signed, on 6 February 1840. This day is now a public holiday and has great significance to the people of New Zealand. The Treaty is an agreement, in Māori and English that was made between the British Crown and about 540 Māori rangatira (chiefs).

Appendix 2

Code of Conduct

Aim

The aim of the code of conduct is to:

- Support the development of mutual trust and respect amongst MEC members and partners
- Clarify the standard of behaviour expected from members of MEC

Relationships

Members are expected to conduct their dealings with each other, visitors, presenters and partnering staff in ways that:

- Are open, honest and maintain integrity
- Focus on issues rather than personalities
- Maintain confidence in their group
- Keep focus on issues of their respective communities that relate to their strategic programme.
- Should conflict occur, the Chair/Co-Chair and group will work with the lead officer to resolve the conflict. If necessary, mediation can be requested.

Public comment

All media enquiries will be directed to the partners. Where appropriate a view may be expressed by an MEC member, in these circumstances:

- Only the chair or co-chairs can represent the group to the media
- The chair will work with partners communications team in relation to any public comments
- Members must support the official view of the group and refer any further enquiries to the lead officer. Members are free to express a personal view in public. When doing so, they should make it clear that:
 - They are expressing a personal view
 - Their comments do not represent the views of the MEC. Public comments should follow all other expectations as outlined in the Code of Conduct. MEC members are expected to report any conflicts of interest to the partners as soon as possible.

General Conduct

MEC members are expected to:

- Act with honesty and integrity always
- Be prepared for meetings and arrive at meetings on time
- Provide apologies in advance when attendance at a meeting is not possible
- Abide by the direction of the chair
- Maintain a positive public image and not bring the partners into disrepute
- Avoid criticising any partners employees in any way

- Any translation by a member must be as true to the meetings and minutes as possible.
- Raise concerns about partners employees through the employee's employer
- Ensure that any confidential information received remains confidential.

Review of position

Any behaviour that is deemed to be in breach of the Code of Conduct may result in a review of MEC membership and will be required to go through partners process for a decision to be made.

The group member in question may represent themselves, with or without support, but the partners will have the final say and no further discussion will be entered into.

Members will be required to create their own set of ground rules, which each member must acknowledge and abide by.