



# Recommendations to the New Zealand Government 2020-2024

Multicultural New Zealand Advocacy

(8-point proviso from recent migrant and former refugee communities)

## A NOTE TO OUR MEMBERS AND COMMUNITIES

Multicultural New Zealand (MNZ)<sup>1</sup> is a pan-ethnic organization in Aotearoa with more than 30 years history as an independent advisor to New Zealanders and the Government. We are a non-political, community-based organization. We work with the incumbent Government to provide independent advice and advocacy for the voiceless volunteers who work hard to achieve better settlement outcomes for recent migrants and former refugees. This advice is provided prior to general elections through our manifesto.

MNZ encourages all of its members and community networks to consider the following items when voting in the Aotearoa 2020 general election. These items have been compiled as a representation of political priorities for Aotearoa's multicultural communities. It is crucial to make a well-informed decision when voting, and we urge individuals and groups to raise these matters during political forums and discussions. It is crucial that our politicians are aware of these issues when considering policy initiatives, and that the multicultural community is invited to provide input into policy directives.

Recent migrants and former refugees are some of Aotearoa's most vulnerable people, and many have experienced trauma, extreme hardship and discrimination. It is imperative that we take advantage of the upcoming general election to enforce positive change. The shooting massacre in Christchurch must never happen again. Our Government must be made aware of the disproportionate effects that the Covid19 pandemic has on asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants.

Our 8-point proviso provides expectations for the incoming Government, and a benchmark for recent migrants and former refugees to measure the achievements of the current Government during their term in office:

1. Establishment of an independent Ministry for Ethnic Communities.
2. Changes to legislation and regulation to prevent hate speech and crimes.
3. A Treaty-based approach to cultural cohesion.
4. Establishment of an independent governing body for religious matters.
5. Changes to immigration policy.
6. A Public Holidays Act.
7. Changes to education policy.
8. An equitable health system.

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<sup>1</sup> Formerly the New Zealand Federation of Multicultural Councils.

## 1. INDEPENDENT MINISTRY FOR ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

The continued growth of Aotearoa's ethnic demographic needs to be reflected in the composition of Government. It is no longer justifiable for policy decisions affecting the lives of more recent migrants and former refugees who need support for settling-in in NZ to be spread across multiple Government agencies without clear accountabilities for outcome measures and key result areas.

This call for an independent ministry, with appropriate powers, has gone unheard by successive government for the last 30 years. Promises made pre-election by political parties have not been carried through, implying that it has not been considered a priority during coalition negotiations in forming a Government.

### a. Main priorities for Government

- Create an independent and fully resourced Ministry for ethnic communities to facilitate policy directives, and consultation.
- Make this a non-negotiable item in their coalition arrangements.

### b. How Government will achieve this:

- Legislative reform including commitment to an independent Ministry highlighted in the respective political party Manifestos

### c. What this will achieve:

- Provide a strong voice, with sufficient clout, at the policy table to improved safety of migrant and former refugee communities, including issues of under-employment, exploitation.
- Facilitation of ethnic policy directives that ensures that more recent migrants and former refugees are better connected with tangata whenua.
- Increased consultation among community groups, and access to advice for individuals.

### d. Timeframe for commitment:

- Within the first 100 days in office.

### e. Reflections for communities:

- Why have successive Governments ignored our calls for an independent Ministry for 30 years?
- Why are recent migrants and former refugees expected to be self-sufficient during a crisis?
- How could an independent Ministry assist our communities to celebrate their cultures and traditions in Aotearoa without fear of discrimination and racism?

## 2. URGENT CHANGES TO LEGISLATION AND REGULATION TO PREVENT HATE SPEECH AND CRIMES

Current hate speech laws in Aotearoa are inadequate, limited in scope, and difficult to access and understand. Implicitly, the status-quo fosters a socio-cultural environment in New Zealand that supports statements and crime against Maori and other emerging communities. New Zealanders of all ethnicities must have ready access to their rights in Aotearoa; current structure of legislation prevents this,

### a. Main Priorities for Government

- Provide NZ with an inclusive and clear definition of 'Hate speech' and hate 'crime'
- Consolidate current hate crime laws into one legislative Act that will support the creation of stand-alone offences for hate crimes

### b. How Government will achieve this

- Reviewing penalties for hate-based crime, with harsher penalties where required.
- Regulate for increased data collection that provide a basis for monitoring strands of hate crime that are based on:
  - race and appearance
  - religion and belief.
  - homophobic, biphobic and transphobic values
  - disability

### c. What this will achieve:

- Reduced levels of hate crime.
- It will empower responsible Government agencies to enforce zero-tolerance of hate crimes.
- Increased accessibility and legibility of the law (a democratic right in New Zealand).
- Improved safety of emerging communities.
- Statistical research to improve social services and legislative developments.

### d. Timeframe of initiation:

- Within the first 100 days in office.

### e. Reflections for communities:

- What have successive Governments done in this area?
- Why is the community still dissatisfied with the levels of hate crime in Aotearoa?
- The Harmful Digital Communications Act prevents and reduces the impact of hate speech online. Why do we not have these rights offline?

### 3. A TREATY-BASED APPROACH TO CULTURAL COHESION

Aotearoa is founded on Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty); therefore, it is Government's obligation to ensure that its principles are embedded within legislation and Government's policy-making framework.

**a. Main priorities of Government:**

- Implementation of a Treaty-based approach to migrant and former refugee settlement strategy in Aotearoa.

**b. How Government will achieve this:**

- Receive recommendations from *tangata whenua* and ethnic community peak bodies.
- Recognition of [Huarahi Hou](#) as the mainstream approach to welcoming migrants and former refugees in Aotearoa.
- Integration of *tikanga Māori* and *whakawhanaungatanga* (building relationships) within Aotearoa's settlement strategy for migrants and former refugees.
- Mandate local government New Zealand to develop Treaty-based multicultural strategies and implementation plans with all city and district councils.
- To create space for non-Western models of understanding and science in Aotearoa's academic and health spheres.

**c. What this will achieve:**

- Culturally cohesive communities with higher cultural awareness.
- Greater understanding of the history and bicultural nature of Aotearoa.
- A stronger sense of belonging and community participation.
- A modern identity for empowered communities contributing to a national identity that will be the envy of the world.

**d. Timeframe of initiation:**

- Immediately

**e. Reflections for communities:**

- Understand the political manifestos of individual political parties and their commitment to a Treaty-Based Multicultural New Zealand
- How can we invest in intentional engagement and *whakawhanaungatanga* (relationship building) with local iwi?

#### 4. INDEPENDENT GOVERNING BODY FOR RELIGIOUS MATTERS

The foundational separation of the Church (religious institutions) and State on which New Zealand stands has become evidently blurred. Our Government needs a transparent guiding strategy for working appropriately with religious bodies, as religious issues cannot be handled impartially by population-based Ministries and supporting government agencies.

**a. Main priorities for Government:**

- The establishment of an institution independent of Government that is appropriately funded and designed to address all matters of faith in a culturally and theologically sensitive way.

**b. How Government will achieve this:**

- Establish a guiding legislation for an independent institution to refer to and enforce.
- Consult religious/cultural institutions and communities to ensure an appropriately representative body is assembled.

**c. What this will achieve:**

- Eliminate confusion, bias and religious values filtering into government.
- Education for the wider community on religious awareness to facilitate a better understanding of the distinction between culture and religion.
- Enforcement of zero-tolerance policies for religious based discrimination and hate crimes.

**d. Timeframe of initiation:**

- Within the first year in office

**e. Reflections for communities:**

- How would an independent body allow us to resolve religion-based issues without compromising universal values of safety and togetherness as a society?
- Does religious freedom in Aotearoa mean that government or the state have the final say on what religious practices are appropriate in any given environment?
- Is it possible to achieve a mediation that will not compromise each religious groups' understanding of *tapu* (sacredness) through an independent body?

## 5. IMMIGRATION POLICY CHANGES

Political parties are requested to show their immigration policy directives clearly within their manifesto AND maintain those directives within coalition negotiations, to maintain transparency and democracy.

### a. Main priorities for Government:

- Migrant levy being made available for community use in a more effective way.
- Inclusion of tangata whenua, as first nation people, in immigration policy development, consultation and considerations.
- To build awareness in a New Zealand context among migrant communities of:
  - i. Safety concerns and rights of women.
  - ii. The bicultural nature of our Government, and the multicultural framework of society.
  - iii. Climate change.
- To expand legislation around:
  - i. Environmental migrants: ecological refugees and asylum seekers are increasing in number - Aotearoa has an obligation to increase capacity for environmental migrants from the South Pacific.
  - ii. Business immigration: Strengthen weak policies that are unable to access or provide sufficient intelligence around money laundering. Lack of intelligence is currently enabling stigmas toward certain migrant communities to grow.

### b. How Government will achieve this:

- Integrate an awareness package into migrant and former refugee settlement processes for migrants working toward permanent residency.
- Transparent distribution process of Migrant Levy with a community focus.
- Legislative reform.

### c. What this will achieve:

- Improve the recognition of New Zealand as a Treaty-based nation.
- Greater capacity to lead multicultural integration initiatives within communities.
- Greater multicultural community cohesion, wellbeing and contribution.

### d. Timeframe of initiation:

- Immediately

### e. Reflections for communities:

- What approaches to immigration policy have political parties currently made explicit?
- What is the view of your local constituent MP?
- What are their strategies for rapidly growing issues such as environmental migration?

## 6. PUBLIC HOLIDAYS ACT

Aotearoa's public holidays currently demonstrate a eurocentric disposition. Migrants from other parts of the world do not have the same given right to acknowledge the significant milestones in their cultural year.

### a. Main priorities for Government:

- To demonstrate cultural inclusivity in national holidays.
- A referendum of how to implement these changes.

### b. How Government will achieve this:

- Introduce *Matariki* (Māori New Year) as a public holiday.
- Introduce a floating Cultural Day where communities or individuals can nominate (through appropriate consultation) a day of cultural significance to their respective communities to have as a holiday.
- Legislate to include two cultural days into all employment contracts over and above mandated annual leave.

### c. What this will achieve:

- Equal and inclusive support for our multicultural society.

### d. Timeframe of initiation:

- First year in office

### e. Reflections for communities:

- How will they influence community members to demand for all employment days with or without legislation?

## 7. CHANGES TO EDUCATION POLICY

Aotearoa's education system does not reflect the multicultural spirit of its people. First and second-generation New Zealanders are losing their knowledge of ancestral practices and mother tongues because they are not supported or encouraged outside of the home. Economically, this hinders the mobility of skills and talent. Many New Zealanders leave school without a working knowledge of a second language and some loss of identity.

### a. Main priorities of Government:

- Support a world-science focus to NZ's education policy

- Promotion and celebration of mother-tongue as second languages.

**b. How Government will achieve this:**

- Ensure that NZ's education policy is open to encouraging young minds to science from their cultures and ancestral homelands.
- Ensure that at least one second language is made compulsory within schools.
- By providing resources to facilitate a wide range of languages.

**c. What this will achieve:**

- Unites diversity' and strengthens intercultural understanding.
- Enhances employability and mobility and improves the competitiveness of the NZ economy.
- Greater awareness and engagement of migrant communities within the education system.

**d. Timeframe of initiation:**

- Within first 100 days in office

## **8. EQUITABLE HEALTH SYSTEM**

The discrepancies of Aotearoa's current health system were highlighted during the covid-19 pandemic. The New Zealand Government needs to ensure access to timely, acceptable, and affordable health care of appropriate quality to every resident in New Zealand. This includes, providing for the underlying determinants of health, such as safe and potable water, sanitation, food, housing, health-related information and education, and gender equality.

Health services must be provided without discrimination on the grounds of race, age, ethnicity or any other status. Non residents and visitors to NZ must be required to carry health-insurance. Recent migrants and former refugee communities in NZ have been excluded, by implication, from meaningful consultation because of eurocentric thinking and bias in our health care system.

**a. Main priorities of Government:**

- An equitable health system to improve the wellbeing of children, mental health, general health, and wellbeing through a preventative approach.
- Evaluation of unacceptably long patient waiting lists.

**b. How Government will achieve this:**

- Increased funding for medical services so that all New Zealanders can access health services that they need without incurring financial hardship, resulting in negative health outcomes that require further treatment.
- The Ministry of health involving recent migrants and former refugee communities in all phases of programming: assessment, analysis, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

**c. What this will achieve:**

- Healthy and productive citizens contributing to the economy of the country.
- Improved quality of life for some of our most vulnerable citizens.
- Less burden on the health system and therefore, the taxpayer.

**d. Timeframe of initiation:**

- First year in office