

## Immigration related issues

- 2.1 A number of key points of interest emerged over the course of the delegation's visit to New Zealand, including:
- the current review of the New Zealand *Immigration Act* 1987;
  - the proposed amalgamation of appeal tribunals;
  - issues relating to the removal of unlawful non-citizens;
  - the recent changes to the skilled migration program;
  - the nature of New Zealand's overseas skills recognition framework;
  - the minimum English language requirements for skilled migration;
  - issues relating to the refugee program, including the role of volunteers in the provision of settlement services; and
  - the role and contribution of peak ethnic groups.
- 2.2 This chapter discusses each of these areas.

### **Review of the Immigration Act**

- 2.3 In May 2005, the New Zealand Government launched a comprehensive review of its immigration program. The review aims to ensure the effectiveness of labour migration, border security and migrant settlement.

- 2.4 The first part of this process involves a review of the *Immigration Act* 1987. The review is being undertaken by the government in light of greater global competition for skills and New Zealand's diverse population requiring effective settlement outcomes.
- 2.5 In April 2006, the Minister of Immigration, the Hon David Cunliffe MP, released a wide-ranging discussion paper on this area. The scope of the review includes the purpose and principles of the act, decision making processes, visas and permits, removals, appeals processes, compliance, enforcement and detention.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.6 The government has called for submissions to the review and it is anticipated that proposed revisions to the act will be considered by Cabinet in late 2006, with a bill to Parliament in 2007. This is the first major review of the act since it was established in 1987.
- 2.7 During its meeting with Immigration New Zealand (INZ), the delegation was interested to hear more about the review. Of note is that the new Immigration Act is intended to be framework legislation. It is perceived that the new legislation will provide a broad framework and not be as prescriptive as, for example, the *Migration Act* 1958 in Australia:
- In areas relating to detention, removal and deportation ... prescriptive legislation is useful. In other areas, prescriptive legislation can make it difficult to be responsive ... Australia has highly prescriptive legislation ... This means the legislation is very complex and the legislation and the regulations must be constantly updated.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.8 The proposed changes to the legislation include a simplified visa system for travel to and stay in New Zealand. New Zealand currently has a very different entry system for non-citizens compared with that of Australia. In New Zealand, there is a two-document system consisting of visas and permits, while in Australia entry is managed solely through a visa system. A visa provides the authority for a non-citizen to travel to New Zealand, while a permit provides the authority for a non-citizen to enter and remain in the country. Permits set the duration and conditions of stay, are granted onshore and expire when the holder leaves the country.

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1 Department of Labour, *Immigration Act Review Discussion Paper*, Wellington, April 2006, pp. 13-22.

2 Department of Labour, *Immigration Act Review Discussion Paper*, p. 29.

- 2.9 The discussion paper on the Immigration Act review comments that this terminology has proven 'confusing', with many people being 'unaware of the distinction between visas and permits'.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore proposed to bring the various elements of the visa and permit system together into a single visa-only system, as exists in Australia.
- 2.10 The delegation will be interested in the outcomes of the review and subsequent changes to New Zealand's immigration arrangements.

## **Streamlining the appeals tribunal system**

- 2.11 The delegation met with senior officers from the Refugee Status Appeals Authority, Residence Review Board and Removal Review Authority and heard more about the proposal, as part of the Immigration Act review, to establish a single immigration and refugee appeals tribunal, administered by the Ministry of Justice.
- 2.12 The new amalgamated tribunal will provide a single procedure for determining refugee and protection status and establish a single right of appeal, with all possible considerations being heard together. It is perceived that this will reduce multiple appeal routes, delays in awaiting determinations and the risks of backlogs, while improving the overall efficiency, fairness and transparency of the appeals system.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.13 The right to higher judicial review of tribunal decisions remains. However, to date there has been a low incidence of cases proceeding to the New Zealand High Court. New Zealand has significantly lower rates of judicial review in this area than Australia.
- 2.14 There are currently four immigration and refugee appeals authorities in New Zealand:
- the Residence Review Board (RRB);
  - the Refugee Status Appeals Authority (RSAA);
  - the Removal Review Authority (RRA); and
  - the Deportation Review Tribunal (DRT).

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3 Department of Labour, *Immigration Act Review Discussion Paper*, p. 29.

4 Department of Labour, *Immigration Act Review Discussion Paper*, pp. 8-10

- 2.15 The RRB, RSAA and RRA are administered by the Department of Labour and consist of both full-time and part-time members. The DRT is administered by the Ministry of Justice and consists of part-time members only.
- 2.16 The delegation heard that each of these tribunals had been established for a single purpose, meaning that individuals can therefore appeal to multiple authorities. The availability of these multiple avenues of appeal has led to considerable delays in the final determination of matters, particularly in the appeals system against expulsion:
- Such delays generally decrease the justification for expelling the person due to humanitarian considerations and undermine New Zealand's ability to regulate immigration.<sup>5</sup>
- 2.17 Australia does not have separate tribunals for appeals against declined immigration decisions and decisions to remove or deport, as has New Zealand – although it does have separate tribunals for migration and refugee matters. The Migration Review Tribunal (MRT) deals with immigration appeals and the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) deals with refugee appeals.
- 2.18 While Australia does not have a single tribunal system, as is proposed in New Zealand, the MRT and RRT continue to implement joint management and staffing structures, as well as a joint case management system to deal with changing caseloads. They have established a Joint Management Board and other joint corporate governance arrangements and are co-located in Melbourne and Sydney. Members and staff are also cross-appointed to both tribunals.
- 2.19 Also of interest to the delegation was the proposal for the new single tribunal to report to the New Zealand Justice Department rather than the Department of Labour, as is currently the case for three of the tribunals. In Australia, the immigration appeals tribunals come under the Immigration portfolio. The delegation noted that it is envisaged that the single tribunal consist largely of full-time permanent members rather than a mix of part-time and full-time, as is currently the case across the existing tribunals.
- 2.20 Table 2.1 provides some statistics on the two countries' appeal systems, to give some indication of comparative caseloads.

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5 Department of Labour, *Immigration Act Review Discussion Paper*, p. 95.

Table 2.1 Appeals tribunal statistics, 2004-05

	New Zealand				Australia	
	RRB	RSAA	RRA	DRT	MRT	RRT
No. of appeals lodged	408	360	410	50	7 287	2 911
No. of decisions	418	570	300	28	8 308	3 033
Average time for decision-making	16.1 months	8.7 months	8.5 months	17.9 months	9 months <sup>b</sup>	5 months <sup>b</sup>
Cases on hand	440 <sup>a</sup>	302 <sup>a</sup>	227 <sup>a</sup>	74 <sup>a</sup>	4 685	1 115

a As at 31 October 2005

b Reports refer to weeks which have been converted here to months for comparison purposes

Source Department of Labour, *Immigration Act Review Discussion Paper*, p. 106; MRT, *Annual Report 2004-05*, pp. 2-3; and RRT, *Annual Report 2004-05*, p. i

2.21 For Australia, out of a total of 6,532 MRT cases in 2005-06, 3,366 (51%) were set aside (decided in the applicant's favour).<sup>6</sup> Out of a total of 3,287 RRT cases in 2005-06, 982 (30%) were set aside.<sup>7</sup> For New Zealand, the RRA published 303 decisions during 2005-06, with 53 appeals (17%) decided in the applicant's favour.<sup>8</sup> The RRB published 635 decisions during 2005-06, with 279 appeals (44%) decided in the applicant's favour.<sup>9</sup>

## Removal of unlawful non-citizens

2.22 The discussion paper on the review of the Immigration Act highlights location issues and concerns about how quickly removals are taking place, with tribunal appeal processes needing to be backed up by more robust procedures in this area.

2.23 Current enforcement work by the Department of Labour results in approximately 1,200 people who are in New Zealand unlawfully being removed from the country each year.<sup>10</sup> However, the current

6 MRT website, <http://www.mrt.gov.au/statistics/MRT%20lodgements%20decisions%20and%20cases%20on%20hand%2005-06.pdf>.

7 RRT website, <http://www.rrt.gov.au/statistics/RRT%20lodgements%20decisions%20and%20cases%20on%20hand%2005-06.pdf>.

8 RRA, *Annual Report, 30 June 2006*, Wellington, 2006, p. 5.

9 RRB, *Annual Report, 30 June 2006*, Wellington, 2006, p. 5.

10 Department of Labour, *Immigration Act Review Discussion Paper*, p. 137.

Immigration Act makes it difficult to locate people who are subject to investigation for immigration fraud because immigration officers lack the power to access and obtain contact details and address information:

Officers do not have any powers to require information to assist them to locate a person here lawfully, but who may have obtained that status through fraud or misrepresentation. In order to investigate such cases, the officer must generally first locate the person and give them an opportunity to respond.<sup>11</sup>

- 2.24 Estimates of the number of over-stayers in New Zealand (people whose permits have expired), as highlighted to the delegation by different parties, varied considerably. The new Immigration Act seeks to improve the ability of immigration officers to locate people unlawfully in New Zealand.

## **Changes to the skilled migration program**

- 2.25 The delegation noted interesting differences between Australia's and New Zealand's skilled migration programs. In New Zealand, prospective migrants are required to complete an Expression of Interest (EOI) form, including a self-assessment against age, health and character, English language skills, employability and recognised qualifications or work experience.
- 2.26 Applicants are awarded points on their suitability and need to gain 100 points for their EOI to be placed in a pool. EOIs are selected on the basis of score attained. The information in selected EOIs is then verified and successful candidates are invited to apply for residence.
- 2.27 The New Zealand Government announced changes to its skilled migration program in December 2005. Under the new selection process, those who score 140 points or above on the points test on their EOI are automatically selected from the pool.
- 2.28 Additional places have also been made available for skilled migrants with job offers. Applicants scoring between 100 and 140 points who have a New Zealand job or job offer are ranked and selected in

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11 Department of Labour, *Immigration Act Review Discussion Paper*, p. 137.

sufficient numbers to meet New Zealand migration program targets.<sup>12</sup> Employers are therefore playing an increasingly important role as a job offer is a key component of New Zealand's skilled migration program.

- 2.29 If an EOI is not selected, it remains in the pool for six months, after which it is withdrawn. Applicants are notified that this has occurred and are able to submit another EOI.

## Overseas skills recognition

- 2.30 Like Australia, New Zealand is facing skills shortages in key employment sectors and similar issues in terms of integrating migrants into the labour market. Both countries have mandatory pre-migration qualifications screening as a condition of eligibility for skilled migration.
- 2.31 Assessing the skills of those who wish to migrate is a key element of the migration system. Skills recognition processes play a crucial role in assisting migrants to gain employment commensurate with their ability, thereby maximising their productive potential and contribution to the economy. Barriers to timely recognition of skills, occupational licensing and employment of overseas trained individuals result in lost productivity and skills 'wastage'.
- 2.32 As discussed earlier, the delegation was particularly interested in New Zealand's overseas skills recognition framework given that, at the time of the delegation visit to New Zealand, the Committee was finalising its inquiry into overseas skills recognition, upgrading and licensing.
- 2.33 The Committee looked at Australia's current arrangements for overseas skills recognition and the related issues of licensing and registration for skills stream migrants. As skills recognition can also be an important issue for people who come to Australia outside of the skills stream, the Committee examined the arrangements in place for other migrant groups needing post-arrival skills recognition, licensing and upgrading, as well as arrangements for Australian citizens returning to Australia with overseas qualifications.

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12 Hon David Cunliffe MP, Minister of Immigration, 'Skilled Migrant Category changes benefit NZ employers,' Media Release, 21 December 2005, <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=24681>.

- 2.34 The Committee also compared Australia's overseas skills recognition arrangements with those of other major immigration countries, including New Zealand, and sought to identify areas where Australia's procedures could be improved.<sup>13</sup>
- 2.35 The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) assesses international qualifications against New Zealand qualifications for migration purposes. NZQA can provide prospective migrants with a Pre-Assessment Result and a Qualifications Assessment Report.
- 2.36 A Pre-Assessment Result is a report that compares an applicant's nominated qualification to a level on the New Zealand Register of Quality Assured Qualifications. When an application for residence is made, a full assessment, a Qualifications Assessment Report, is required to determine whether a qualification or group of qualifications will qualify for points.
- 2.37 A Pre-Assessment Result would normally be submitted at the initial Expression of Interest stage of the skilled migration program. A Qualifications Assessment Report is formal, binding and a requirement of the final stage of residence application.<sup>14</sup>
- 2.38 The delegation heard that NZQA receives approximately 12,400 applications for overseas qualifications assessment each year. The main countries making applications to NZQA are the UK (22.8%), the Philippines (20.4%), South Africa and Zimbabwe (9.2%), USA and Canada (6.1%) and India (5.9%).<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, INZ provides a list of recognised qualifications for immigration purposes from a range of institutions across a number of countries that do not require assessment by NZQA.<sup>16</sup>
- 2.39 There is no national coordinating body, like the NZQA in New Zealand, for overseas skills recognition in Australia. Instead, Australia has a range of assessing authorities for overseas skills across the trades and professions.

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13 The report of the inquiry by the Joint Standing Committee on Migration, entitled *Negotiating the Maze: Review of Arrangements for Overseas Skills Recognition, Upgrading and Licensing*, was tabled in the Australian Parliament in September 2006.

14 NZQA website, <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-international/qual-eval/international/faq.html>.

15 Presentation by NZQA, Wellington, 30 August 2006.

16 INZ website, <http://glossary.immigration.govt.nz/Listofrecognisedqualifications.htm>.



## Licensing and registration

- 2.40 There are 32 regulated professions in New Zealand, covered by 10 registration authorities.<sup>17</sup> Unlike Australia with its federal/state structure, New Zealand is a unitary state and does not have to deal with issues of different state and territory jurisdictional bodies regulating the same occupations. One of the terms of reference for the Committee's recent report on overseas skills recognition was to identify areas where Australia's procedures can be improved in terms of 'achieving greater consistency in recognition of qualifications for occupational licensing by state and territory regulators'.
- 2.41 For regulated professions in New Zealand, professional associations and registration authorities have their own requirements for membership or registration and individuals need to have their qualifications assessed by NZQA as well as by the appropriate professional body. NZQA assists applicants in making contact with professional bodies.<sup>18</sup>
- 2.42 Skills recognition for the purpose of registration in certain professions in New Zealand is therefore a separate process to that for the purpose of migration. Accordingly, migrants to New Zealand may experience similar frustrations to those experienced by some migrants to Australia, as is discussed in the Committee's report, as a result of there being a 'gap' between migration and registration skills recognition outcomes.<sup>19</sup>

## English language requirements for skilled migration

- 2.43 English language proficiency is a key factor in determining the ease of settlement and labour market success of migrants. However, there is some debate in New Zealand about the level of English language currently set for skilled migration and its effect on migration patterns. The delegation heard a range of views on this matter, with some suggesting that there is 'an overemphasis on the standard of English' and that 'the level of English is pitched too high'.

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17 NZQA website, <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz>.

18 NZQA, *Guide and Application for Assessment of International Qualifications*, Wellington, 2006, p. 8.

19 Joint Standing Committee on Migration, *Negotiating the Maze: Review of Arrangements for Overseas Skills Recognition, Upgrading and Licensing*, pp. 95-97.

- 2.44 Under their respective skilled migration programs, both Australia and New Zealand have mandated pre-migration English language screening for principal applicants based on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS).
- 2.45 The delegation was interested to note that New Zealand currently requires a higher minimum standard of English than that required by Australia. Principal applicants in New Zealand require an IELTS overall band score of at least 6.5 whereas in Australia the minimum required standard under the General Skilled Migration program is generally 'vocational' English – an IELTS band score of at least 5.
- 2.46 However, in Australia, additional points are awarded under the points test if the applicant demonstrates higher than 'vocational' English, and a number of Australian professions, such as the health professions, have mandated IELTS band 7 as the lowest allowable standard.
- 2.47 The delegation also noted that, under New Zealand's skilled migration program, if non-principal applicants (partners and dependant children aged 16 or over) do not meet the minimum standard of English they must pre-purchase English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training.

## **Refugee program**

- 2.48 New Zealand's annual resettlement quota is 750 places, comprising:
- women-at-risk (75);
  - medical/ disabled (75); and
  - United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) priority protection (600, including up to 300 places for family reunification).<sup>20</sup>
- 2.49 The delegation received a detailed presentation on New Zealand's refugee program while visiting Mangere Refugee Reception Centre. Tables 2.2 and 2.3 set out some of the statistics provided to the delegation on the refugee quota composition and some of the major source countries for refugees accepted by New Zealand.

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20 Department of Labour, *Refugee Quota Programme*, Wellington, August 2006, p. 2.

Table 2.2 Refugee quota composition, 2001-06

Quota categories	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Women at risk	33	10	53	9	73
Medical/disabled	28	23	17	16	14
Protection	432	535	243	46	409
Family reunification	107	32	459	682	232
Emergency	150	4	40	8	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>812</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>741</b>

Source Statistics from a presentation to the delegation by Ms Christina Fordyce, Branch Manager, Department of Labour, 28 August 2006

Table 2.3 Refugee quota source countries, 2001-06

Countries	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Afghanistan	257	72	386	324	67
Ethiopia	134	12	48	67	16
Iran	42	47	8	24	152
Iraq	116	355	88	59	76
Myanmar	30	4	26	2	174
Republic of Congo	0	0	0	0	96
Somalia	159	25	38	69	13
Sudan	0	11	74	76	54

Source Statistics from a presentation to the delegation by Ms Christina Fordyce, Branch Manager, Department of Labour, 28 August 2006

2.50 Officers from the Department of Labour based at Mangere highlighted to the delegation some of the main barriers to refugee resettlement, including:

- a lack of English;
- trauma experiences affecting resettlement;
- needing to retrain or change career;
- a lack of information about their new country;
- change/loss of role; and
- separation from family and friends.<sup>21</sup>

21 One recent study has set out the results of a three-year research program on the experiences of refugees resettling in New Zealand – see *Refugee Voices: A Journey Towards Resettlement – Refugee Resettlement Research Project*, Department of Labour, Wellington, June 2004.

- 2.51 Newly arrived refugees undergo a six-week orientation program at Mangere. The program is conducted in the refugee's own language and provides general information about life in New Zealand and relevant institutions and services. The Auckland University of Technology coordinates the English language and cultural components of the orientation program. Health and social services are other important components of the program.
- 2.52 The delegation visited the facilities at Mangere, including the accommodation blocks, classrooms, and general living and recreation areas. The centre can accommodate approximately 160 refugees and there are six intakes of refugees each year. On leaving Mangere, refugees are settled in locations across New Zealand.
- 2.53 For the duration of their stay at Mangere, resettled refugees receive a weekly allowance. On leaving the centre, they are eligible to receive an emergency benefit at the same rate as benefits provided to unemployed New Zealanders. A special grant for re-establishment costs is also provided to assist with acquiring household items.
- 2.54 Persons accepted for resettlement to New Zealand under the refugee quota program are granted a residence permit on arrival. As New Zealand residents, they are entitled to live in New Zealand permanently and enjoy similar rights to New Zealand citizens in terms of access to education, health care, employment and social welfare. After a qualifying period of five years residence, resettled refugees are eligible to apply for New Zealand citizenship.
- 2.55 Finding a job is one of the greatest challenges for resettled refugees and a number of agencies in New Zealand work to support refugees in this process. Resettled refugees are given priority consideration for government-funded work placement and training programs. NZQA also provides free evaluation of overseas qualifications for quota refugees.
- 2.56 Delegation members were interested to hear from officials about the need to balance UNHCR priorities with New Zealand's own resettlement objectives – the importance of growing existing small refugee communities in New Zealand, for example. Some officials spoke of 'targeting' New Zealand's refugee program, based on past settlement outcomes, to focus on particular communities and regions, such as Burma.
- 2.57 The discussion document on the review of the Immigration Act suggests that legislative change, in enabling New Zealand 'to control

the recognition of refugees selected offshore', could allow it 'to enter into regional or global refugee resettlement programs other than the current UNHCR program' and enable New Zealand 'to work closely with like-minded countries in the future to address humanitarian crises within [the] region'.<sup>22</sup> The delegation will be interested to note the outcomes of the review in this area.

## Refugee settlement services

- 2.58 The reception and settlement of refugees is conducted through partnerships between government and non-government organisations, including New Zealand's major agency in this area, Refugee and Migrant Service (RMS) Refugee Resettlement. Its professional staff include social workers, cross-cultural workers and trainers of community volunteers.
- 2.59 RMS provided the delegation with a detailed overview of its refugee resettlement program. RMS is concerned with refugee resettlement on three levels: service provision, public education and refugee policy. Since its establishment in 1975, RMS has helped over 40,000 former refugees settle in New Zealand.<sup>23</sup>
- 2.60 RMS provides support from the time of the refugees' arrival through to the first 12 months of their resettlement within local communities. RMS staff interview each adult to ensure appropriate resettlement locations, taking in account the location of friends and family, ethnic groups, essential services and personal needs.
- 2.61 The delegation noted New Zealand's structured approach to refugee resettlement, including the initial orientation program provided at Mangere. Interestingly, the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) recently released a discussion paper on ways to improve settlement outcomes for humanitarian entrants in Australia, seeking views from the public.<sup>24</sup> The discussion paper looks at case support, youth support and the role of volunteers, and notes the need for a cooperative approach in this area because of the range of agencies involved.

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22 Department of Labour, *Immigration Act Review Discussion Paper*, p. 239.

23 Presentation by RMS Refugee Resettlement, Wellington, 30 August 2006.

24 DIMA, *Measures to Improve Settlement Outcomes for Humanitarian Entrants: Discussion Paper*, Commonwealth of Australia, October 2006.

Figure 2.1 Delegation members with Mr Brett Denham, Acting Chief Executive, and Ms Jenni Broom, National Manager, Client Services, RMS Refugee Resettlement



## Volunteers program

- 2.62 The delegation heard that refugee resettlement services in New Zealand are strongly underpinned by volunteers and the support of the community.
- 2.63 RMS spoke highly of its volunteer training program. It provides a nationally recognised certificate course, a Certificate in Refugee Resettlement Support, designed to equip volunteers with the knowledge and skills needed to assist newly-arrived refugees with the challenges of early settlement.
- 2.64 After successfully completing the training program, up to four volunteers are assigned to support each refugee family/individual for the first six months in their new community. The delegation was interested to hear that volunteers assist with setting up homes, as well as providing general practical support in relation to education, health and community facilities. RMS monitors the resettlement progress of quota refugees through a series of home visits by its trained social workers.

## Ethnic representation and government policy

- 2.65 The delegation was very interested in the comments from the peak ethnic groups it met with in New Zealand – the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils, the Refugee Council of New Zealand and the Auckland Regional Ethnic Council. The councils play an important role in contributing to the development of settlement policy and improving settlement outcomes for migrant communities across regional areas of New Zealand.
- 2.66 Representatives from the peak ethnic groups were generally very positive about New Zealand’s ethnic affairs policies, particularly the government policy manual, *Ethnic Perspectives in Policy*.<sup>25</sup> The manual provides guidelines to assist agencies in identifying, planning and evaluating policies and services for New Zealand’s growing and diverse ethnic communities. As Table 2.4 indicates, the ethnic population of New Zealand has grown steadily in size and complexity over recent years.

Table 2.4 Ethnic composition of New Zealand resident population (census data)

Ethnic groups	Percentage of total people (census year)		
	1991	1996	2001
European	82.5	79.6	76.9
Maori	12.9	14.5	14.1
Pacific	5.0	5.6	6.2
Asian	3.0	4.8	6.4
Latin American, Middle Eastern or African	0.2	0.5	0.7
People stating an ethnic group	99.2	95.9	96.2
Ethnic group not stated	0.8	4.1	3.8

Source Office of Ethnic Affairs, *Ethnic Perspectives in Policy: A Resource*, p. 9

- 2.67 The New Zealand Police were highlighted as having worked particularly successfully with ethnic communities to develop comprehensive policies in this regard. For example, the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils pointed to a New Zealand Police guide

25 Office of Ethnic Affairs, *Ethnic Perspectives in Policy: A Resource*.

on religious diversity, drafted to assist police in carrying out their duties.<sup>26</sup>

Figure 2.2 Delegation members with representatives of the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils



- 2.68 The councils also commented on projects under way concerning volunteers, youth and women. Some representatives emphasised, for example, that the successful ethnic migrant women's project was not about 'women for women' but about 'the community as a whole taking responsibility for the success of women'. Many of the regional ethnic councils also now have a youth representative to increase the visibility of younger people in council decision-making processes.
- 2.69 Interestingly, the New Zealand Federation of Ethnic Councils highlighted a Canadian online career mentoring program, called CanadaInfoNet (Canadian Information and Networking Services), that assists in the integration of migrants into the workplace.
- 2.70 CanadaInfoNet provides mentoring and information resources to assist workers considering migration, or those who have already

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26 New Zealand Police, *A Practical Reference to Religious Diversity*, Wellington, June 2005.



migrated, make the most of their expertise.<sup>27</sup> Prospective and settled migrants interact with volunteer mentors through an online forum. In its recent report, the Committee noted the potential value of this program and made a recommendation to the Australian Government on this area.<sup>28</sup>

- 2.71 The delegation was impressed with the ethnic councils' work, seeing it as providing an excellent model for other groups.

## Migrant settlement services

- 2.72 In 2004 the government boosted settlement services for migrants, refugees and their families by launching the New Zealand Settlement Strategy. Effective settlement services for migrants and refugees, particularly at the initial settlement stage, are essential in ensuring that these groups establish themselves successfully in local communities and contribute positively to social and economic life.

- 2.73 The peak ethnic councils commented on the implementation of the strategy and the importance of ethnic community networks being involved in this process to ensure successful outcomes. The strategy seeks to ensure that migrants and refugees:

- obtain employment appropriate to their qualifications and skills;
- are confident using English in a New Zealand setting, or can access appropriate language support to bridge the gap;
- are able to access appropriate information and responsive services that are available to the wider community (for example housing, education, and services for children);
- form supportive social networks and establish a sustainable community identity;
- feel safe expressing their ethnic identity and are accepted by, and are part of, the wider host community; and
- participate in civic, community and social activities.<sup>29</sup>

- 2.74 Both Australia and New Zealand use survey information to track settlement outcomes of migrants and refugees – Australia through its Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Australia<sup>30</sup> and New Zealand

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27 CanadaInfoNet website, <http://www.canadainfonet.org/about%20us/default.asp?s=1>.

28 Joint Standing Committee on Migration, *Negotiating the Maze: Review of Arrangements for Overseas Skills Recognition, Upgrading and Licensing*, p. 205 and p. 255.

29 INZ website, <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/community/stream/support/nzimmigrationsettlementstrategy>.

30 DIMA website, <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/research/lisia/index.htm>.

through its Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand (LisNZ).<sup>31</sup> This information is used to inform the development of immigration policy and settlement services and enable evaluation of current immigration selection policies and settlement programs.

Don Randall MP  
Chair

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31 INZ website, <http://www.immigration.govt.nz/community/general/generalinformation/research/lisnz>.