



Multicultural  
New Zealand

New Zealand Federation of Multicultural Councils

# Multicultural New Zealand



# Pānui 2025





IRITI-BASED  
TURAL DAY  
2025  
on Mark Mitchell  
Minister for Ethnic  
Communities

# Snapshot of 2025 MNZ Events



Whilst a challenging year financially with costs going up and funding going down, MNZ should be proud that there was no reduction in events held across the motu. This is due to prudence and caution on behalf of our Executive Team and the go ahead attitude and commitment to 'make things happen' by all of our Regional Multicultural Councils.



Q nine What type of tax made this to

	A	B	C
personal	50	50	66
corporate	30	16	27
GST	30	30	19
other	15		8
Total	\$128 bn	\$128 bn	\$120 bn

Source: Treasury, 2014. \*Rounding Error





# Multicultural Art Exhibition

This was the first event of its kind for Multicultural New Zealand. Organised by Whangarei Regional Council, with strong support from Pancha Narayanan (MNZ's President) and in conjunction with Whangarei's Reyburn House Art Gallery, a total of 83 artworks from 49 artists were submitted. These ranged from painting and sculpture to textiles and mixed media.

Art is a universal medium, which unites and connects. It transcends cultural, linguistic, and geographical boundaries, serving as a fundamental means of human expression and inspiration. What better way to support cross-cultural collaboration and encourage new talent. We hope that the success of this Exhibition will encourage and promote future multicultural art initiatives around the motu, showing how creativity can be a powerful bridge for unity in diversity.





# Vaccination Clinic in Johnsonville



## The Menu of Services:

Immunisations  
Hep C  
Health Promotions  
Healthy Homes  
Community Dietitian  
Respiratory Nurse  
Oral Health  
Bowel Screening



- Held on 12th July 2025, at Johnsonville Community Centre. MNZ coordinated with Tū Ora to organise a Health and Wellness Clinic.
- This focussed on reaching vulnerable ethnic communities. Due to language barriers and vaccine misinformation, these communities have lower vaccination rates than the national average.
- Our objectives were to raise vaccination rates in ethnic communities and meet national targets, provide accurate information about vaccines and dispel misinformation, and provide convenient access to vaccinations and vaccine education, together with the provision of general Health and Wellness information and advice.



*A prize draw was held for grocery vouchers donated by MNZ and Tū Ora*



# Matariki celebrations

Matariki celebrations were organised around the Motu by local Regional Multicultural Councils. Coordinated by Upper Hutt Regional Council, the four Wellington Multicultural Councils joined together for a collective evening of entertainment and kai at the Whirinaki Whare Taonga in Upper Hutt.

These photos show events from all over the Country, including a wonderful poster submitted in a Regional competition.



Matariki is the Pleiades star cluster and marks the celebration of its first rising in late June or early July. The rising marks the beginning of the new year in the Māori lunar calendar. Multicultural New Zealand sees this as another important New Zealand celebration.



Matariki is an important festival for Multicultural New Zealand, as it helps migrant communities embrace and understand New Zealand tangata whenua



"Ngā mihi o te Tau Hou Māori"  
means "Greetings of the Māori New Year"



Matariki traditional weaving workshop  
organised by Porirua Multicultural  
Council



# Auckland Waipapa Wananga - August 2025

This one Day Wananga at Auckland University's Waipapa Marae on 8 August proved very popular. We received more than 100 registrations from Auckland's Diverse community groups, demonstrating the high level of interest in learning more about New Zealand's indigenous culture.



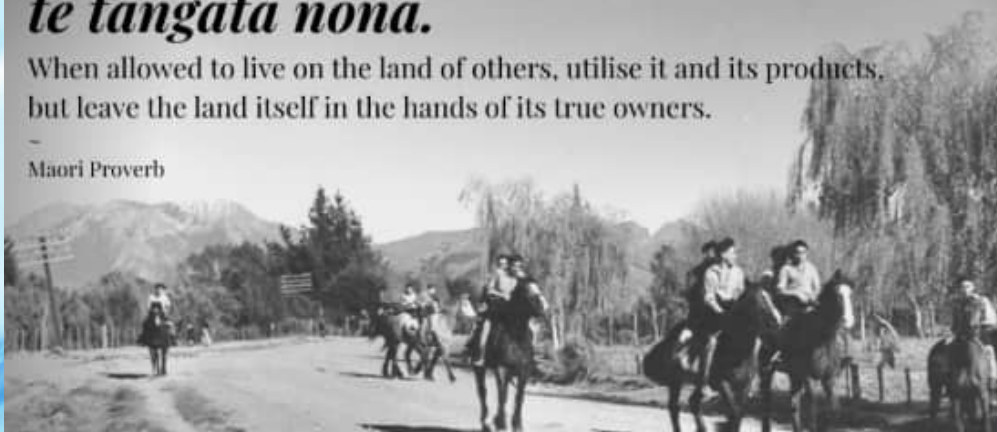
This event, together with our other Noho Marae events organised over the last few years, has provided MNZ with the opportunity to sit, listen, and learn alongside iwi and hapū leaders and those from other migrant communities. In these spaces, we are reminded that our role is not only to connect, but also to uphold our responsibility as tangata tiriti — to walk respectfully and purposefully alongside tangata whenua.



*Kāinga te kiko, waiho te whenua ki te tangata nōna.*

When allowed to live on the land of others, utilise it and its products, but leave the land itself in the hands of its true owners.

Maori Proverb





# Multicultural Day in Parliament

MNZ remains firmly at the forefront of promoting social cohesion and continues to uphold the last Friday of August as Te Tiriti-based Multicultural Day. Each year, communities around the motu mark the occasion in their own ways, reflecting the diverse expressions of culture and unity that enrich Aotearoa. In 2025, the national celebration took place at Parliament on Wednesday, 20 August, once again hosted by Paulo Garcia, MP for New Lynn. The keynote address was delivered by Hon Mark Mitchell, Minister for Ethnic Communities, underscoring the importance of building bridges across communities and affirming the role of Multicultural Day as a platform to promote connection, respect, and shared belonging.





# AGM 2025 - Brentwood Hotel Wellington



*Friday night get together following everyone arriving in Wellington*

**MNZ's 36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting, held over the weekend of 20-21 September 2025 at the Brentwood Hotel, was well attended by national regional multicultural council representatives and provided a welcome chance for everyone to catch up.**



*Pancha Narayanan, MNZ's President, gets the formal proceedings underway and opens the meeting*

**Not only does the AGM provide an annual opportunity to set MNZ's strategy and direction for the year ahead, it is also a celebration of the wins from the previous year. This includes honouring the efforts of our RMC's and volunteers across New Zealand and recognising individual volunteer efforts through our Gala Dinner Awards Ceremony and Community Awards.**

**MNZ could not do its work without the contributions of all our skilled and committed volunteers, and the Executive Team recognises that one way in which they can support member councils is by providing development opportunities through the year. The AGM is no exception and this year there were two panel discussions to open the AGM on Saturday morning.**

**Both sessions discussed 'Social Cohesion'. The first, entitled "Investing in Social Cohesion: A legacy for Future Generations" was chaired' by Marion Kerepeti-Edwards, MNZ's Executive Vice President. She was joined by Matiu Tahi, kaumātua at Waiwhetū Marae, Andy Coster, CE of Social Investment Agency, and Secretary for Social Investment and Fiona Thomson, Director of Analytics, Monitoring, and Evaluation at the Ministry for Ethnic Communities.**



**The second session, "Stronger Together: Community Led Pathways to Social Cohesion." was chaired by MNZ President Mr Pancha Narayan. From left to right, the guest speakers were Dr Ganesh Nana, (Economist), Dr Melissa Derby, Race Relations Commissioner and Supt Rakesh Naidoo, New Zealand Police.**





# AGM 2025 - The Gala Awards Dinner on Saturday 20 September

The AGM was held on Saturday afternoon and preceded the Gala Dinner the same evening. 2025 Kuan Goh Community Service Certificates were awarded to 22 recipients from a total of 12 Multicultural Regional Councils.

The 2025 Gala Dinner was a grand affair, with a festive feel and everyone dressed to honour the prestigious occasion. The entertainment helped everyone relax, before the highlight of the evening when the special awards were announced. Congratulations to all our Award Winners. These were: -

## Merit Awards

- Jeanie Holland from Waikato RMC
- Ligimamilli Pakieto-Johnstone from Porirua MC
- Selwyn Price, Christchurch RMC

## Lifetime Awards

- Mr Arish Naresh from Tairawhiti

## Ann Dysart Special Awards

- Kuia Peggy Wahataua Luke-Ngaheke
- Sir Anand Satyanand





# MNZ Focus on Education and Advocacy

## Huarahi Hou celebration in Schools

Huarahi hou represents MNZ's approach to incorporating an understanding of integrating tangata tiriti into the pathway toward becoming New Zealanders. This applies as much to migrants now arriving in the country as it does to well established multicultural communities. It starts with whakapapa and mana manaaki and teaching our children to understand and respect all cultures.

"The Treaty should be one that respects the rights of all cultures to be who they are and the right to live in their own skin, and share that culture amongst all of us."  
Wally Haumaha



MNZ, with the strong support of Upper Hutt Multicultural Council, once again marked Huarahi Hou as part of Multicultural Day. In 2025 the programme was hosted at Maidstone School on Friday, 29 August, filling the kura with colour, music, and celebration. More than 500 tamariki took part, proudly sharing their cultural heritage through song, dance, and storytelling. The day was anchored by a shared kai, where tables of food from across the world became a meeting point for friendship and discovery. What stood out most was the atmosphere of inclusion where students not only celebrated their own identities but also embraced the richness of their classmates' backgrounds. As a lasting reminder of the occasion, the children have also worked together on a mural that will be unveiled in collaboration with Upper Hutt City Council, adding a creative and enduring touch to this year's Multicultural Day.





# Education around the Motu

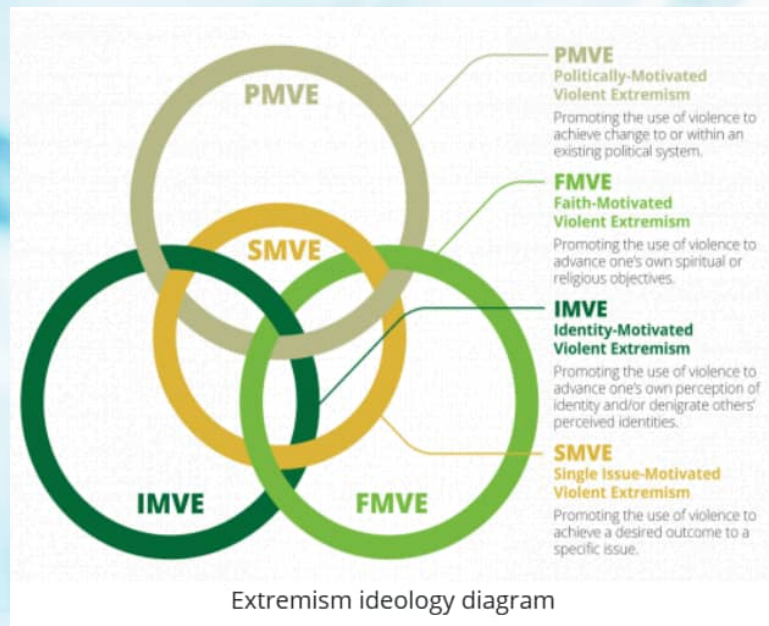
Multicultural New Zealand recognises the importance of providing training and support for Volunteers to ensure that knowledge and awareness is developed and shared and challenges and 'intelligence' from the Communities can be acknowledged, discussed and explored.

## National Training Events for 2025

Two online webinars were organised to support MNZ Regional Presidents and volunteers to raise awareness and increase understanding in the areas of Socioeconomics and dealing with the potential threat of Foreign Interference and Violent Extremism.

The first webinar was presented by New Zealand Security Information Services (NZSIS) CEO Andrew Hampton. He explained how MNZ staff and volunteers might recognise potential threats within their multicultural communities.

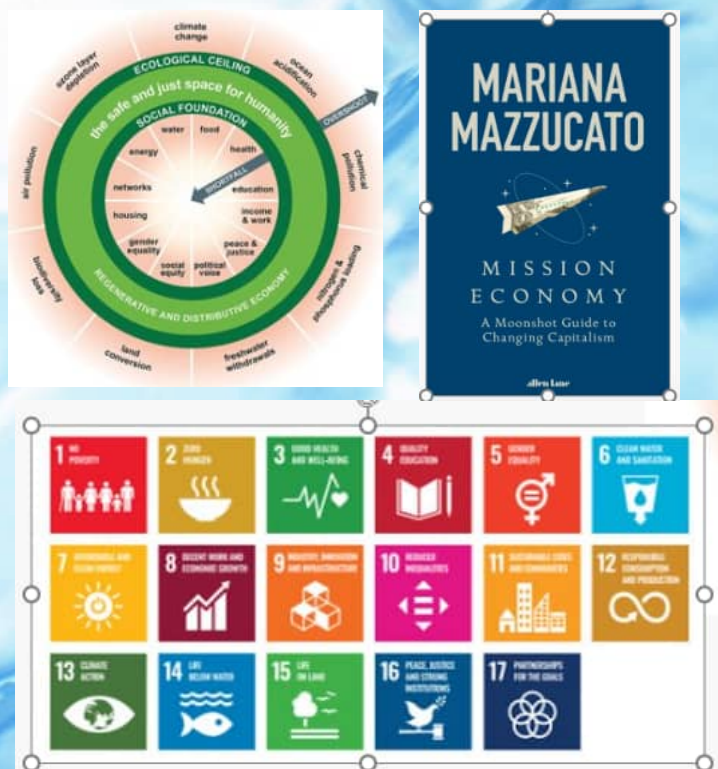
Whilst New Zealand's perceived threat level is currently 'Low', this does not mean that further terrorist threats are not a possibility and requires a vigilant approach by NZSIS.



Webinar two explored Socioeconomics. Presented by Dr Ganesh Nana, a respected New Zealand economist, this provided a thought-provoking exploration of the challenges and opportunities facing our Country's economy.

He argued that true economics considers resources including land, people, knowledge, and community structures instead of financial metrics only. Dr. Nana emphasised the need for investments to enhance long-term productivity and community well-being. Such insights underscore the importance of shifting our economic focus from short-term financial gains to long-term community well-being, so that Aotearoa builds a resilient and equitable future for all people.

## Other Economic Approaches





# Strategic Leadership Training



*South Island weekend - Held at Pavillions Hotel in Christchurch on 26-27 August 2025*



*North Island weekend - Silverstream Retreat, Upper Hutt on 26-27 August 2025*

Two consecutive weekend events in the North South Island provided three thought-provoking sessions. These covered Socioeconomics, led by New Zealand Economist Dr Ganesh Nana; Foreign Interference led by the Ministry of Ethnic Communities and Community Leadership in a fast changing world, led by Fraser Carson.



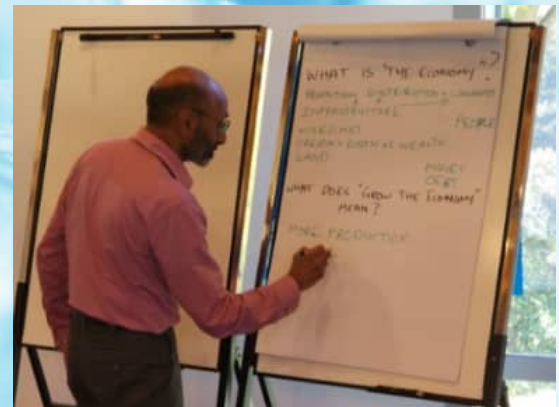
*Ministry of Ethnic Communities Session*



*Fraser Carson*



*The South Island Team*



*Dr Ganesh Nana*



*The North Island Team*

As well as providing opportunities for discussion and networking, these weekends built on topics covered during earlier webinars. The sessions were tailored to the MNZ communities and offered practical applications for both regional and executive MNZ.



# Education around the Motu



*Aoraki RMC - Community Gardening*



*Nelson RMC - 'Starting your own Business'*



*Rotorua MRC*

Rotorua Multicultural Council secured funding from Immigration New Zealand and Te Tatau o Te Arawa to offer a Te Reo and English Learners examination. Thanks go to them, the Geyser Community Foundation and Literacy Aotearoa. The intensive course saw nine migrants from Chile, China, Colombia, India, Russia, South Korea, and Sri Lanka start their Te Reo and English Learners examination with a pepeha (traditional te reo Māori introduction)

As well as multicultural celebrations aimed at promoting social cohesion and networking, a diverse range of education in the Regions support adults and tamariki in making connections and building confidence, skills, and knowledge. Support for migrants and their families is key in ensuring successful integration into communities. This includes language support, schooling for tamariki, adult education and understanding New Zealand cultures, including Te Tiriti, Huarahi Hau.



*Health & Fitness Initiatives organised by Marlborough MRC*



*Tauranga Learning Hub*

Fostering parental confidence and school engagement in collaboration with Pāpāmoa College and the Ministry of Education, Tauranga launched a 6-part workshop series for migrant parents to provide guidance on navigating the NZ education system. This fostered parental confidence and engagement.



*Porirua RMC - Block Printing and Key Programming Concepts*

*Manawatu RMC*



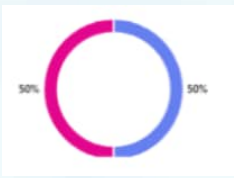
More than 7,000 individuals attended classes which included: English, Yoga, Tai Chi, Arts and Culture and Computer Skills. Employment, and wellbeing training, Parenting sessions, language exchange, and youth development workshops.

Waitaki RMC, organises Active Movement Classes including Latin Salsa Workouts and Qigong. These expanded from one to several sessions a week due to their popularity.



*Active Movement Classes in Waitaki*





# Analysis of 2025 Events - What did we learn?



MNZ recognises the importance of measuring and monitoring our work, to capture what communities need, what we are doing well and where improvements might benefit future performance. Of course, this must be balanced with associated costs and usefulness, especially in light of the reducing funding opportunities and spiralling operational costs for NGOs.

Several of the 2025 AGM panel sessions highlighted the importance of evidence-based monitoring and measurement for organisations. During this year, an external evaluation was commissioned for The Women's Group, together with MNZ's internal annual survey (available in our Annual Report) and also an internal satisfaction survey for The Strategic Leadership and Risk Preparedness Training Sessions.

## Strategic Leadership and Risk Assessment Training Sessions

### Positive Results



- A whopping 40% net promoter score!
- Sessions focused on tackling topical challenges
- Eager beavers ready to boost risk management and
- Revved up for more stringent approaches to vetting new members for foreign interference

### Ideas for Improvement

- Don't forget to send out digital reminders after the learning
- More time appreciated in the future to discuss sessions with colleagues



*MNZ Women's Council Group Meeting (at the AGM)*





# Memorials



***Dame Iritana Tāwhiwhirangi 21  
(March 1929 – 1 February 2025)***

**It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the loss of Dame Iritana Tāwhiwhirangi, who passed away on 1 February 2025 at the age of 95.**

**She was awarded many honours during her long career, but in the words of the Gisborne Herald, reporting on Dame Iritana's farewell, 'She was a servant of her people'.**

**Dame Iritana Tāwhiwhirangi, will be remembered as a founder of the Kōhanga Reo movement. She dedicated her life to ensuring Māoridom achieved independence and self-determination.**

**She began teaching in the 1940s and the first Kōhanga Reo was opened in April 1982 in**

**Wainuiomata. The Secretary for Māori Affairs at the time, engaged Dame Iritana to promote Kōhanga Reo throughout the country. At its peak, Kōhanga Reo had more than 300 active centres throughout the country.**

**In 2010 Dame Iritana told Waka Huia her greatest wish was that the movement was carried by all Māori.**

**"There is a mutual ground where Māori and Pākehā can meet to resolve past issues; there are benefits there for us all but first we have the massive task of unifying our people," she said.**

**The Insignia of a Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to Māori education was awarded to Dame Iritana in 2010. She was also awarded an Honorary Doctor of Literature from Victoria University of Wellington, 2007 and received the Te Tohu Tikeike a Te Waka Toi award for Māori artists from Creative New Zealand in 2008.**





# A new Executive Secretary for 2025-26

Maria Buldain, from Waitaki RMC, retired as MNZ's Executive Secretary this year due to ill-health and other commitments. Thank you Maria for your exemplary service and congratulations on receiving the Waitaki Citizens Award for 2025. The Photo below shows Maria (mid front row) at the Ceremony with the Waitaki Mayor (right front row).



Maria leaves big shoes to fill, but we warmly welcome Dr Hero Modares from Christchurch RMC as her replacement and extend our congratulations and support for the year ahead. Hero is a Kurdish Iranian New Zealander and established the Canterbury Kia Ora Academy as a charitable organisation to promote the continuation of different cultures in New Zealand through music, sports, arts, entertainment, and education.



*MNZ's Executive Team for 2025-26: From left to right, President Pancha Narayanan, Secretary Dr Hero Modares, Treasurer Prem Singh and Vice President Marion Kerepeti-Edwards*

## Closing Words from our President

In today's turbulent economic and political times, where global foreign it seems fitting to include these words of wisdom from Pancha Narayanan, our Leader and President.

They epitomize the importance of MNZ remaining united and committed to advocating against hate speech or racism in a peaceful and non-political way.



Let us stand together for safety and Harmony in communities and show that we stand by

1. Aroha
2. Mana-Manaaki
3. Korero-Awhi
4. Tikanga
5. Whakawhanaungatanga
6. Whakapapa

Let us continue doing what we have always done- Hourahi Hou.

\*Kia noho haumarū me mahi kia noho haumarū nga hapori  
Let us keep safe and work to keep the communities safe

*This photo shows the MNZ Team attending the 36th AGM.*



# Looking to 2026

As Aotearoa New Zealand looks toward 2026, **social cohesion** is no longer a background issue but a defining national priority. Rapid demographic change, global uncertainty, and growing polarisation are placing pressure on trust, belonging, and everyday relationships. Experience shows that cohesion cannot be engineered from the centre. It grows locally, through communities that are supported rather than directed, and through policies that recognise cohesion as a long-term national investment rather than a short-term programme.



*Social Cohesion through Community Partnership: Multicultural New Zealand President Pancha Narayanan (seated, centre) with community leaders in Auckland on December 6, 2025*

Looking ahead, Multicultural New Zealand sees the need for stronger community-led approaches, funding that reflects demographic realities, and clearer distinctions between ethnicity and religion in public policy. By 2026, cohesion efforts must move beyond competition and fragmentation toward collaboration, inter-faith understanding, and inclusive civic participation. When communities are trusted and resourced to lead, cohesion strengthens not only social wellbeing, but New Zealand's resilience, productivity, and shared sense of belonging.





# Multicultural New Zealand

New Zealand Federation of Multicultural Councils

## Ngā mihi o te tau hou!

The last few months of 2025 provides a good time to reflect on another year of hard work from the dedicated Volunteers who lead and contribute to our mahi across New Zealand.

This past year has presented us with unique challenges. Despite less funding being available to NGO's, Multicultural New Zealand has continued organising events across Aotearoa to support our ethnic communities. We could not achieve this without the unwavering and enthusiastic support of our volunteers.

To everyone who generously donates their time, aroha, expertise, leadership and other skills too numerous to mention, we say "Thank you, thank you, thank you". To our volunteers and community leaders, our funders and partner agencies, our fellow NGOs, our executive members, and our support staff. We could not do what we do without each and every one of you. Thank you!

*"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless" Sherry Anderson*

