

## 1. ANTI-RACISM MARCH

During the past month there has been considerable debate in our city as a result of the anti-racism march "Say no to racism, say yes to harmony".

Councillors will recall that I had initially agreed to march, but then became alarmed when the organisers were promoting an open microphone for "victims of racism" to be able to come forward to talk about their experiences in this city. I attempted to get the organisers to give equal time to new residents of this city who had good experiences here. They were not interested in this and we then had a very public debate as the issues went to and fro.

In the end the organisers changed the march and restricted the speakers and it was a very low-key occasion. The issue of racism was handled in a very up-front way and any potentially damaging extreme statements were unsaid.

The purpose of this report is to address the matters which were raised during this debate and to plan for "what next".

The issues I believe that we have to address are:

1. Developing a multi-cultural Action Plan for the city;
2. Support for the international education sector in the city.

### MULTI-CULTURAL ACTION PLAN FOR CHRISTCHURCH

At present our Community Plan is pretty thin on our commitment to a multi-cultural society. Under "Outcomes" it is stated under A City of Inclusive and Diverse Communities that "we recognise our bicultural heritage in our multicultural society" in Volume 2. There is very little data or proposal on how exactly we will put this into action.

The city's cultural diversity provides major social and economic benefits for residents, workers, students and visitors. Cultural diversity is also a key feature in enhancing the city's prosperity and vibrant lifestyle.

It is time for this city to develop a multi-cultural Action Plan to:

- promote social harmony
- optimise the benefits of cultural diversity for the city
- ensure all our services are responsive to our culturally diverse population
- encourage participation in public and civic life by all our city's people

Addressing the matter of racism is a sub-set of this Action Plan, not an end in itself.

I would imagine the process for developing a Multi-Cultural Action Plan would involve:

- (a) Confirming the vehicle we would use to develop the Action Plan would be the Inter Cultural Assembly;
- (b) Agree on what would make up the elements of an Action Plan
- (a) **Inter-Cultural Assembly**

We have the ideal vehicle to work with the various cultural communities in our city in the Inter-Cultural Assembly. This was established by the former Race Relations Conciliator Dr Rajeen Prasad, the Kaihakaheari of Ngai Tahu, Mark Solomon, and myself. Over the past four years many of the communities which make up the diverse structure which our city has become (there are now over 150 different cultures in Christchurch), have slowly worked together to form the Inter Cultural Assembly. This Assembly meets quarterly and at the last meeting several weeks ago there were over 100 people, of many different races, at the meeting.

I would recommend to this Council that we confirm our commitment to the Inter Cultural Assembly and that we take a more active role with the Assembly to demonstrate our commitment to the promotion of harmony and celebration of diversity in city life. I will offer my services as we develop the Multi-Cultural Action Plan and I think we should have the Chair of the Community and Leisure Committee, Graham Condon, also as an official Council representative at the meetings. I have recommended Graham as many of the issues which the Action Plan will be addressing will involve how we integrate various communities into our city. We will be using basic community development techniques, and this all falls under the Community and Leisure Committee. I will ask their steering group to accept active participation by this Council on the Assembly.

(b) **Identifying elements of the Action Plan**

I suggest that the strategic intent of the Multi-Cultural Action Plan would be to:

- promote social harmony
- optimise the benefits of cultural diversity for the city
- ensure all our services are responsive to our culturally diverse population
- encourage participation in public and civic life by all our city's people

Elements of the Action Plan could include:

**How our community should welcome new residents;**  
**Methods of celebrating our different cultures;**  
**Issues relating to communication between cultures, eg "It's time to talk Programme";**  
**How new cultures engage in our economy, both through investment and finding a job;**  
**How we train up our new leaders in all of the ethnic communities;**  
**How we as a city relate, and trade, with the world, ie our International Relations Action Plan;**  
**How we address matters of race discrimination in Christchurch.**

There will be many other issues. To go through this in a measured way will ensure that we come up with something which is "owned" by all sectors and has a chance of significantly changing the perception that this is a "racist" city, which I believe that we are neither better, nor worse, than most others. It is a label which I personally would like to assign to the rubbish bin of history.

**Recommendation:** That the Christchurch City Council, in association with the Inter Cultural Assembly, facilitate and lead the development of a Multi-Cultural Action Plan for Christchurch and that Mayor Garry Moore and Councillor Graham Condon be the Council representatives on this project and that there be periodic reports to the Community and Leisure Committee on progress.