



**PSA Submission on the  
Ministry for Ethnic  
Communities' draft  
strategy**

**to the Ministry for Ethnic Communities**

**November 2021**

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## About the PSA

The New Zealand Public Service Association Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi (the PSA) is the largest trade union in New Zealand with over 80,000 members. We are a democratic and bicultural organisation representing people working in the Public Service including for departments, Crown agents and other crown entities, and state-owned enterprises; local authorities; tertiary education institutions; and non-governmental organisations working in the health, social services and community sectors.

People join the PSA to negotiate their terms of employment collectively, to have a voice within their workplace and to have an independent public voice on the quality of public and community services and how they're delivered.

We are committed to advancing the Tiriti o Waitangi of partnership, protection and participation through our work. Te Rūnanga o Ngā Toa Āwhina is the Māori arm of the PSA membership. The PSA is affiliated to Te Kauae Kaimahi the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, Public Services International and UniGlobal.

## This submission

This submission responds to the four priority areas identified in the draft strategy, with a particular focus on questions for consideration in relation to actions planned for the next four years. The PSA has members that not only work with people of diverse ethnic backgrounds through the services they provide, but also belong to a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. References to *public and community services* in this submission should be read to include the core public service, community public service, state sector, District Health Boards and local government.

## PSA response to the consultation questions

### Priority 1: Taking action to promote the value of diversity and improve inclusion of ethnic communities within wider society.

As a package, do you think the proposed actions (new and existing) will help make a tangible impact for communities?

Yes, we believe this is a comprehensive set of actions that will assist in making a tangible impact for communities.

Which of the actions do you think would make the biggest and most tangible impact for communities?

Given our representation of workers in the public and community service, we believe **that improving the representation of people from ethnic communities on public sector boards and committees;** and the **establishment of a measure of organisational Cultural Intelligence as a standard self-assessment practice within the public and community service** will be valuable for our members.

**The PSA has a strategic goal around Equity in the Workplace** which aims at seeing workplaces within the PSA's coverage that are *free from bias, discrimination and racism at the organisational and system level* and the proposed actions support this.

What excites you about this proposal for Priority 1: Promoting the value of diversity and inclusion? What worries you about this proposal for Priority 1?

Many public service agencies and departments make concerted and successful efforts to both diversify their workforce and support development in areas of cultural competency. However, **these initiatives need to be developed and managed in a way that supports workers in the public and community service** in their individual journeys to gaining greater understanding and knowledge of diverse communities. For this to occur, it is our view that **workers and their representatives should be co-designers of policies and practices deployed in agencies and departments to increase cultural capability.**

### Priority 2: Ensure equitable provision of, access to, and outcomes from government services for ethnic communities

As a package, do you think the proposed actions (new and existing) will help make a tangible impact for communities?

Yes, overall we believe this is a comprehensive set of actions that, if done well, would assist in making a tangible impact for communities.

**Which of the actions do you think would make the biggest and most tangible impact for communities?**

PSA supports the development of evidence-based policy and strategy in the public sector.

Developing an approach to **improved official data gathering and reporting on the outcomes from government services for ethnic communities has the potential to provide insight to develop more meaningful and successful interventions** that would benefit diverse ethnic communities in Aotearoa. However, as is highlighted in much international literature, reliability in ethnic data collected, protection of this data from abuse, and involvement of minorities themselves in data collection processes are key to ensuring ethnic communities' interests are respected.<sup>1</sup>

**What could be changed or what is missing?**

**Culturally safe employment practices for people working within the public and community service is vital also.** Although this priority area focuses on ethnic communities that access services, it is also important to ensure that public service management approaches consider the needs of their own increasingly diverse workforce. This could be in areas such as Human Resource and management practices for things such as culturally safe performance discussions, considerations for leave applications that take into account different worldviews, professional development required to support people of different ethnic backgrounds, and so on.

Fostering inclusive, diverse and culturally safe workplaces should, in turn, enhance the quality and accessibility of services provided to ethnic communities.

Developing and delivering resources for government agencies to increase cultural capability and intelligence is valuable but we would like to ensure that this is extended beyond the core public service, including local government. The PSA has a strategic goal around universal access to public and community services based on need. **Partnering with local government to improve services for local ethnic communities will help ensure all people in New Zealand have access to services at a local level.**

**Finally, what excites you about this proposal for Priority 2: Improve outcomes from government services? And what worries you about this proposal for Priority 2?**

While we acknowledge the provision of secondary policy advice to public service agencies to ensure the voice of ethnic communities is reflected in government policies would likely be valuable, we also see an opportunity here for **workers of diverse ethnic backgrounds within the public and community services themselves to be able to shape policies from within their organisations.** There is potential to capitalise on the institutional knowledge public servants hold of the services they

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<sup>1</sup>Negrin, K. *Collecting Ethnic Data: An Old Dilemma, the New Challenges.* (2003).  
<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/uploads/12dd2ecb-fc3e-4d38-a1b5-0116539325d0/ethnic-data-20030403.pdf>

provide, coupled with the diverse range of ethnic backgrounds public servants are likely to come from, in order to support policy decisions within agencies.

### Priority 3: Developing and supporting initiatives to improve economic outcomes for ethnic communities, including addressing barriers to employment.

As a package, do you think the proposed actions (new and existing) will help make a tangible impact for communities?

While the planned actions outlined here for the coming four years look appropriate, the PSA believes that **issues relating to settlement, including visas and pathways to residency, are areas that ought to be considered in the package of initiatives.** While some good job support is often provided for refugees, these do not extend the support to, for example, their families brought to New Zealand under the family reunification category. There is more that could be made available to other visa holders (particularly those on various forms of partners' visas).

Which of the actions do you think would make the biggest and most tangible impact for communities?

**PSA is pleased to see specific reference to the reduction of the ethnic pay gap in this strategy document.** This is an area that PSA has been, and continues to be, involved in with Te Kawa Mataaho's taskforce. The pay gap in New Zealand continues to widen and Māori, Pasifika and smaller ethnic minorities bear the brunt of this inequity.

What could be changed or what is missing?

As mentioned above and outlined in more detail below, migrant exploitation in New Zealand has proven to be of real concern. While this may not be as prevalent in many of our core public and community services, there is potential in industries, including health care services, for workers from different ethnicities to face precarious residential situations which not only become barriers to ongoing employment and job security, but also sow the seeds for exploitation of workers who have limited employment choices. **It would be good to see some consideration of immigration issues as barriers to employment for ethnic communities** included in the Ministry's strategy.

We also believed the proposal to expand the Ethnic Communities Graduate Programme should extend into the local government and state sectors.

Finally, what excites you about this proposal for Priority 3: Improve economics outcomes for ethnic communities? And what worries you about this proposal for Priority 3?

The PSA has concerns around the **vulnerability of workers of diverse migrant and ethnic communities in relation to the world of work in New Zealand.**

Overseas trends show an association between migrant communities and precarious work, in more recent times, in platform-type employment sometimes viewed as self-employment.<sup>2</sup> **It is important that the supports referred to in the strategy in relation to self-employment aim to educate and protect workers navigating employment of this nature<sup>3</sup>.**

Past inquiries, such as the *Caring Counts Inquiry*<sup>4</sup> in New Zealand, also found evidence of migrant exploitation in the residential aged care sector as well as nursing with reports of migrants being more likely to be on shorter contracts, have irregular hours and be working broken shifts, be undertaking lower classified functions, and work additional shifts whenever they are asked, without negotiation. In the same report, the New Zealand Nurses Organisation cited many cases of Filipino-registered nurses being lured to work in New Zealand and placed on two-year contracts only to find out on arrival they would be working in caregiver roles, enabling employers to access trained nurses on caregiver pay rates.

Migrants across industries in New Zealand, including professional sectors, on temporary visas are often tied to specific employers on which they rely for continued employment which can lead to situations of exploitation. **Monitoring is needed to ensure that exploitation of workers on temporary visas is prevented and that migrants recruited into these industries have realistic pathways to residency<sup>5</sup>.** Lack of a well-resourced labour inspectorate and other adequate resources also plays a role in relation to employment conditions for ethnic communities.<sup>6</sup>

#### Priority 4: Connecting and empowering ethnic community groups

**As a package, do you think the proposed actions (new and existing) will help make a tangible impact for communities?**

Yes, we believe this is a comprehensive set of actions that will assist in making a tangible impact for communities.

**Which of the actions do you think would make the biggest and most tangible impact for communities?**

The PSA has a strategic goal focussed on Strong Public and Community Services. It is our view that

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<sup>2</sup>Van Doorn, N. et al. (2020). *Migration and Migrant Labour in the Gig Economy: An Intervention*. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm/SSRN\\_ID3622589\\_code4220429.pdf?abstractid=3622589&mirid=1](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm/SSRN_ID3622589_code4220429.pdf?abstractid=3622589&mirid=1)

<sup>3</sup> ACTU. (2021). *Organising CALD Workers in the Gig Economy*. [https://vimeo.com/637243738/4c797b03d0?s=bsuifc6oefpeu378tdb8&utm\\_source=drip&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=ATUI%3A+Institute+October+Newsletter&utm\\_content=What%27s+been+happening+at+the+Australian+Trade+Union+Institute](https://vimeo.com/637243738/4c797b03d0?s=bsuifc6oefpeu378tdb8&utm_source=drip&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ATUI%3A+Institute+October+Newsletter&utm_content=What%27s+been+happening+at+the+Australian+Trade+Union+Institute)

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Commission. (2012). *Caring counts: Report of the Inquiry into the Aged Care Workforce* [https://www.hrc.co.nz/files/1214/2360/8576/Caring\\_Counts\\_Report.pdf](https://www.hrc.co.nz/files/1214/2360/8576/Caring_Counts_Report.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> NZCTU. (2019). *Submission of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment on the Temporary Migrant Worker Exploitation Review*. <https://union.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/MBIE-Temporary-Migrant-Worker-Exploitation-Review.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Collins, F. & Stringer, C. (2019). *Temporary migrant worker exploitation in New Zealand*. <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/7109-temporary-migrant-worker-exploitation-in-new-zealand>

adequate funding is required to provide services that meet the needs of all communities. **Ensuring initiatives to connect and empower ethnic community groups are properly funded will be key to the success of the actions in this priority area**, including for capability development, and supporting community-led capability development initiatives and initiatives to celebrate diverse cultures.

#### What could be changed or what is missing?

Many ethnic communities in Aotearoa have a strong community-centric ethos that requires physical spaces to meet, engage and connect. Community centres that are intended to meet a wide range of community needs are not always able to provide such hubs; and while some communities have access to faith-based facilities, this is not the case for all ethnic communities. **It would be useful for resourcing of initiatives in this focus area to include consideration of physical spaces for ethnic communities to use.**

**Partnering with local government on all the initiatives under this priority area with local government is important as they are likely to have community-led capability development initiatives underway, or ideas for initiatives that need funding.** Local government are also likely to be funders.

The proposals for an Ethnic Young Leaders and Women Leaders programme, and capability development, will be important in growing ethnically diverse leadership at a local government level.

#### Finally, what excites you about this proposal for Priority 4: Connect and Empower Ethnic Community groups? And what worries you about this proposal for Priority 4?

The PSA has a strong commitment to wellbeing in the workplace and the communities that our members serve. Our organisational structures include networks that encompass a wide range of people-focussed groups including our Rūnanga and Pasefika Network. **The PSA acknowledges and supports the value that ethnic communities bring to Aotearoa New Zealand and our union.**

**For further information about this submission, please contact:**

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