

STAFF REPORT

TO: Community Services Committee
FROM: Community and Recreation Advisor
DATE: 2 February 2005
SUBJECT: Migrant and Refugee Social Services Project (MARSS)

PURPOSE

Inform and update the Community Services Committee about the MARSS project and its progress.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of MARSS, a project of the Ministry of Social development, is to develop and enhance community based services to migrants and refugees by:

- Researching the numbers and profiles of migrant and refugees and issues of concern to these communities; and
- Working with migrant communities to build capacity and capability.

The project was piloted in Auckland, Hamilton and Christchurch during 2003. It is now being implemented in Wellington, Nelson/Tasman and Napier/Hastings.

The Community Recreation Coordinator agreed to support the project for the purpose of learning more about the migrants and refugees living in Tasman District.

COMMENT/DISCUSSION

A MARSS Working Party has been established. Members include the Nelson Multi Ethnic Council, Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council (Mike Tasman Jones and Mary Honey).

Currently, the number and profile of migrants and refugees living in Nelson/Tasman is being determined. Statistics New Zealand data indicates that between 1991-2003,

5,080 permanent or long term migrants came to live in Nelson/Tasman. This represents a ratio of 14 migrants per 1,000 residents, in comparison to the New Zealand national average of 23 migrants per 1,000 residents. In this region there are few refugees. Accordingly, the project will focus on the needs of migrants rather those of refugees.

Migrant community leaders have been identified and trained to facilitate focus group discussions on the issues facing migrants. No less than 14 focus group discussions are being held with different migrant communities living in Nelson/Tasman over the course of the next two months, namely: Philipino, Russian, British, Burmese, Indian, American, Italian, Japanese, Chinese/Cambodian /Vietnamese, Israeli/Thai/Moroccan/Indonesian, South African, German elderly and Germans/Europeans in Golden Bay.

The results of the statistical research and focus group discussions will be reported back to stakeholders and community leaders during April 2005.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Nelson Multi Ethnic Council submission to the draft LTCCP 2004–2014 requested Council recognition and support for its work with ethnic groups in the District. This initiative responds, in part, to that request.

RECOMMENDATION

The Community Services Committee receive copies of the final MARSS report for information and planning purposes.

Mike Tasman - Jones
Community and Recreation Advisor