

Ethnic Communities

Feedback has been collated from community-led reports and previous publicly available community engagement activity across government and NZ Police. We have pulled the feedback into one place to identify themes that have helped inform the Standing Together Against Hate series and greater NZ Police work.

The community feedback has been grouped into the following themes: Identity, Engagement, Government, Law and Protection, Support, Data, and Communications and Media.



Te Raranga
Standing together
against hate



"In recent times, participants identified the persistence of negative attitudes such as racism, xenophobia, prejudice, and intolerance at workplaces when engaging and accessing public services."

"The notion that being "Kiwi" is embracing different facets of that identity, i.e. there are many ways of having a "Kiwi" identity."

Want to preserve their mother tongues and to evolve their ethnic identities in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Key themes

Being accepted as themselves and not consistently being othered is critical to a cohesive sense of identity in Aotearoa.

Creating connections is key for ethnic communities.

Need to understand residual trauma and the impact it has on settling in Aotearoa.

Discrimination compounds and comes from wider society as well as within their own communities.

Where there is low cultural acceptance of aspects of an individual's identity, they can find it hard to reconcile that part of themselves.

"whilst I fully accepted that fact that I was lesbian, I rejected the fact that I was Indian"

Erasure of other marginalised identities (e.g., LGBTQIA+ and disability) under the broad umbrella term of "ethnic communities".

The idea of home is multidimensional for most immigrants.

Wider social norms punish those who are different. This stigma and discrimination by society towards queer and rainbow identities worsens as we age, since older age already has negative connotations and expendability attached to it.

"We exist, we understand each other from where we came from. We are different but we are the same whether we are rich, poor, disabled, gay, transgender, Muslim, white, black or Asian."

Key themes

There is a need for government to engage more broadly and bring in more diversity in the voices they listen to.

Trust in the Government is particularly relevant for ethnic minorities. For the Government to be trusted to engage would mean:

- Government agencies are genuine and empathetic regarding the complexity of the issues many ethnic minorities face, including mental health, participation in employment and access to housing
- being genuine when engaging and collaborating with communities on issues and decisions that affect them. Good engagement includes the Government being inclusive in their discourse, having all groups represented and valuing everyone's opinions.

What we heard from Ethnic communities about

‘Government’

An Aotearoa that is more accommodating and welcoming would start with having greater diversity on public sector boards and in senior roles. People feel positions of power are getting better regarding gender balance, but the intersectionality with ethnicity, religion, disability, and sexuality is not represented.

When asked what they find difficult about living in Aotearoa New Zealand, the top response for former refugees was language. For migrants, it was the high cost of living. Racism was the second most frequently named difficulty for both groups.

Key themes

More diverse representation is needed to be more responsive to the unique needs of the communities.

While some are unsure how Te Tiriti applies to them, many stated the need for government to acknowledge their responsibilities to tangata whenua, Te Tiriti, and all minority communities.

Education is key as a long term strategy to raising awareness of discrimination and empowering people to hold others to account and understanding what actions they can take.

Communities continue to face barriers to employment, education, health, and housing at all ages, a culture shift is needed to change this.

“Legislation is essential and acts as a signal to bring society to account. However, education is a long-term strategy.”

“In 20 years time, success means there’s no need for a Ministry for Ethnic Communities.”

See Aotearoa New Zealand as a multicultural society based on the bicultural foundations outlined in Te Tiriti.

‘Law & Protection’

“Language barriers and distrust of authorities can discourage ethnic, migrant and former refugee communities from seeking help. Within these populations, there are those who exist at the intersections, for example, disability, trans and non-binary people, for whom systemic barriers make accessing appropriate services more complex.”

“education and social pressure enables people to speak out, hold perpetrators accountable, and bring about cultural change... Education also provides people with skills and tools to know what action they can take when they experience hate speech or discrimination. They concluded that legislation is essential and acts as a signal to bring society to account. However, education is a long-term strategy.”

Key themes

Real and perceived issues with Police / Justice and how communities of colour are policed.

Many choose not to turn to police as a first response, preferring community led organisations, due to lack of trust and confidence.

Increased barriers where ethnic and part of other communities (i.e. disabled, rainbow) or of a lower class.

Ethnic communities face distinct forms of cultural violence and need more clarity on rights, and understanding what happens when laws are broken.

Allyship between minority communities, with a greater understanding of the institutional racism experienced.

Communities conscious of re-affirming stereotypes about their communities reluctant to report even in situations that put them at risk.

“The desire not to affirm stereotyping of the community also constitutes a barrier for LGBTQIA+ people reporting to Police. This is an internal barrier and can be best conceptualised as a desire not to affirm existing beliefs that already exist in society (and therefore Police).”

“A woman, I think she was on meth, came up to me and I thought she was going to hit me... She made a threat and she left eventually. She was Māori and I thought it was not ethical to call the police on her.”

“even if a community member accesses Police services, that does not necessarily indicate a level of trust and confidence in their subsequent actions.”

The impact of hate speech is greater than the impact of the crime e.g. the content of hate speech graffiti is more damaging than the graffiti itself.

‘Support Services’

One of participants explains this struggle with service providers, including Police, more generally: “Nowadays service providers are more aware of providing culturally competent services. However, they seem to believe that it means to find someone from the same cultural background as you to talk to you, no matter whether you want it or not. Rainbow ethnic people are often discriminated against or persecuted by our cultural and religious communities”

Key themes

Improved services needed to address the varied needs of the diverse ethnic communities, one size fits all approaches are insufficient.

Shift needed in support services to provide culturally appropriate responses, needed to tackle root causes of issues, and providing tools within the community.

Discrimination compounded over many areas of people lives, and workforces in general needed to improve their capability to meet the needs of communities.

“Our families need education to be understanding, and they need to see this information in ‘official’ places.”

“A need for services that are culturally inclusive but last more than just a few weeks.”

“Police working in collaboration with community-based support workers is what ethnic and ethnic-rainbow communities need. We are used to reaching out to community organisations first as opposed to the police.”

Proactive collection of information around scams and issues in the community. Engagement with young people could be a useful tool to identify emerging trends in pop culture and social media. We need to be prepared for new challenges.

Key themes

The full picture of what ethnic communities experience is incomplete due to under-reporting.

Concerns around the way information is collected and the impact/ re-traumatisation.

Under-reporting, combined with a lack of specificity around ethnicity and immigration status in data has led to a lack of evidence and knowledge about the profile of family violence and sexual violence in different ethnic, migrant and former refugee communities, particularly those in for smaller population groups.