

National Action Plan Against Racism Submission

About Belong Aotearoa

[We're an innovation & social change hub](#), working together with others to address systemic barriers to positive settlement, integration and inclusion for people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

What is your vision for an Aotearoa New Zealand that is free of racism? (up to 300 words)

Sector Vision 2038: Aotearoa New Zealand is a caring, inclusive nation where many cultures are woven together in a celebration of diversity, connectedness, and belonging.

In April 2019 Belong Aotearoa, with support from Foundation North and the Centre for Social Impact, convened a sector hui to bring together leaders, groups, and organisations. It focused on belonging and inclusion, celebrating diversity, empowering, and privileging the voices of diverse communities, and supporting self-determination and tino rangatiratanga. The hui was also a call to action. The hui was held a month after the 2019 Christchurch Terror Attacks, when there was increased urgency and nation-wide momentum for addressing discrimination and racism. There was also an increased awareness and commitment to collective action to create a more inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand society.

Participants came up with a shared vision for the sector that the sector could work collaboratively toward (as shared above).

The Hui was designed to provide a starting point for conversation, offering a space to share collective experiences, exchange ideas, and begin to develop solutions that could be activated through collective action, to achieve long-lasting change towards a more inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand.

What difference would a racism-free Aotearoa New Zealand make to your life?

A racism free Aotearoa NZ would make a significant difference to the lives of people and communities marginalised by racism.

Through consultations with people from former refugee and migrant communities and at the sector hui we convened, discrimination and racism were identified as key pain points undermining equity and belonging across every system, including health, housing, employment, and immigration.

COVID-19 offered a pressing opportunity for Belong Aotearoa to further look at the plight of newcomer communities and amplify their voices. A first phase of our wider research, our [Migrant Experiences in the Time of COVID Survey Report](#) covered the findings from a

“COVID-19 Impact on Migrant Communities in Aotearoa NZ Survey” we undertook in September 2020. It focused on the responses of 160 people born overseas living in Auckland, including recent migrants, sharing their lived experiences.

The research supported what had been widely reported regarding the spike in micro-aggressions towards migrants and racially motivated attacks especially involving ethnic communities from Asian backgrounds due to COVID-19 (Chan-Green, 2020; Zhu, 2020). Racism, which was the primary driver of the Christchurch Terrorist Attacks, was re-rooted a year later in a time of extreme uncertainty.

Likewise, despite decreased face-to-face interactions due to physical social distancing, racism has been re-routed virtually, magnifying deep-seated intolerance and divisiveness that counters social cohesion in Aotearoa New Zealand.

What are your best ideas that would enable Aotearoa New Zealand to be free of racism?

Consultations with communities whose voices are often excluded from systems and structures that perpetuate racism must be deliberate and not take place after the National Action Plan Against Racism framework has already been formed. Tāngata whenua and communities that experience racism (including Pacific peoples, ethnic, migrant and former refugee) must be at the table to guide the development and application of the National Action Plan Against Racism and the plan be supported by Pākehā.

Over the last three years, Belong Aotearoa has convened a series of sector hui, undertaken research and prototyped initiatives for positive social change for people from migrant and former refugee backgrounds. Below are the insights we’ve gained via our research, prototyping and the collective ideas participants, community leaders, groups, and organisations have generated, for a racism free Aotearoa New Zealand:

Systems conditions – state sector agencies to address the following:

- Decolonising institutions, structures and systems
- New Zealand History and Te Tiriti o Waitangi education mandatory, with Te Tiriti principles practiced across all systems
- Transforming the cultural default from racism norms to honouring Te Tiriti and respecting all cultures in Aotearoa NZ
- Democratic systems that enable diversity of participation and representation to ensure local, regional and national decision-making responds to the needs and aspirations of diverse communities. While diverse representation is essential to reduce racism within organisations and institutions, intentional anti-racism action must be taken to enable Aotearoa New Zealand to be free of racism
- Normalising anti-racism programmes in all institutions and communities with accountability

- Policies/regulations that prevent and penalise egregious and bad faith reporting, the spreading of hate speech and racist and white supremacist ideologies
- Addressing income disparity as a key driver behind other inequalities that disproportionately affect diverse communities; particularly by addressing equity of employment outcomes and ensuring a living wage
- Political will for change – including local and central government policy settings (e.g. housing) that enable systems change in relation to equity, diversity and anti-racism

Further cross-sector, sector and community insights:

- A 'whole-of-society' approach to address pre-existing inequities exacerbated by the pandemic. This approach recognises the interdependency of systems and shifts towards solutions that involve everyone, not just those that hold power and privilege. Recognising diversity as a strength and harnessing the interlocked experiences and collective impact individuals, communities, organisations and governments have.
- Equitable and bias free media reporting, recognising the role that the media play in fuelling discrimination and racism through inequitable reporting
- The Ministry of Education to embed anti-racism strategies that create positive school norms and inclusive school environments, where diversity is valued and respected and where racism is rejected
- Supporting and celebrating young people exploring new cultural multi-identities through education
- Supporting and resourcing intercultural programmes at the neighbourhood level that tackle racism
- Improving the intercultural capability of central and local government
- Better representation of ethnic communities within government, and all aspects of organisations and institutions and that these environments and institutions have a clear anti-racism action plan in place to challenge and end racism
- Policymakers systematically and effectively integrate diverse voices in policymaking to meet the needs and aspirations of the communities the policies are designed to serve
- Creating a platform that brings the cross-sector together to discuss issues and opportunities, and co-create action-based solutions with community
- Supporting, resourcing and building the capacity of organisations that are working to challenge and/or end racism

Insights from #PassTheMic, a community-led anti-racism campaign

- At the sector hui convened a month after the 2019 Christchurch Terror Attacks and through a facilitated co-design process participants generated ideas for activating change. Aligned to existing or emerging opportunities with the potential to leverage energy and momentum, six prototype ideas that could be tested collaboratively to support the sector's shared vision for an inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand were generated by the participants. One of the solutions was a media campaign to promote inclusion.
- Following the call to action, Belong Aotearoa and Auckland Council brought the sector together for a hui focusing on the *role of media in promoting social inclusion*, in which a community-led media campaign was also brainstormed. Participants were asked what a media campaign promoting inclusion would look like and supported to come up with a campaign pitch including a hashtag and key messages, which sparked #PassTheMic.
- Belong Aotearoa brought together a working group with a mix of expertise, perspectives and worldviews across Māori, migrant, former refugee, Pacific and Pākehā communities to co-design #PassTheMic. The #PassTheMic initiative was funded through the Ethnic Communities Development Fund.
- The aim of the campaign was to challenge racism through allyship, and amplify the voices of migrant and former refugee communities in Aotearoa NZ, working towards an inclusive and connected Aotearoa NZ, where we all belong.
- Over its six-week course, analytics found that the #PassTheMic campaign had a wide reach with over 100k Instagram users, 15k Facebook users, 19k impressions on Twitter and 3k website page views. Engagement with the campaign was higher than average and the comments were largely positive. The campaign was also picked up by mainstream media such as Stuff and Breakfast TV1, further extending its reach and impact
- Māori leaders from Te Wānanga O Aotearoa opened and blessed the launch of the #PassTheMic campaign in recognition of the importance of allyship in creating an inclusive future. Meng Foon, the Race Relations Commissioner, was a guest speaker.
- #PassTheMic created a space for the community to share their stories themselves, beyond the negative stereotypes and inequitable portrayal of migrant and former refugee communities in the media. Former refugee and migrant communities are often underrepresented across sectors in Aotearoa NZ including media, and are far less likely to be seen in mainstream media (www.nzonair.govt.nz/news/media-release-diversity-report-2020).
- A survey was disseminated to the public on social media and to Belong Aotearoa networks. Respondents found the campaign very valuable. In addition to sharing #PassTheMic anti-racism resources, when asked what they were doing differently as a

result of the campaign, respondents said they were adding their name to anti-racism submissions and petitions, were sharing anti-racism content, and encouraging people to speak up. Respondents said the campaign had helped them find out more about the ongoing impact of systemic issues in Aotearoa New Zealand.

- #PassTheMic storytellers told us about their relationship with Māori and the Treaty of Waitangi, a sense of shared values and how this contributed to an increased sense of belonging. Some told us about their first-hand experiences of colonisation before moving to Aotearoa New Zealand. They were deeply moved by the ongoing impact of colonisation on Māori rights, customs and aspirations.
- #PassTheMic storytellers said the campaign gave them the opportunity to share their stories themselves, feel heard and inspire action for a racism free Aotearoa New Zealand.
- #PassTheMic was part of a broader Belong Aotearoa campaign designed to address the parts of the system which currently exclude the voices of people from migrant and former refugee backgrounds. We have subsequently prototyped and trialled a storytelling aspect of the campaign successfully with the Henderson-Massey Local Board. In early 2022 and in collaboration with Planet FM, Sport Waitakere and Storyo, a #PassTheMic podcast series will be launched with thanks to support from the Auckland Council Regional Development Fund.

Insights from the Belonging Through Employment Internship Pilot

- For newcomer migrants, employment is one of the most important factors in settling well. The 2018 MBIE National Migrant Consultation found that newcomer migrants felt employers were reluctant to employ them due to discrimination (among other factors). The 2019 NZ Workplace Diversity Survey by Diversity Works found that 54% of employer respondents said there was bias in their recruitment, promotions and pay (up from 19% in 2018) and 41% said there was unconscious bias in their organisation. Furthermore, the 2019 New Kiwis survey of employers found 51% said employing migrants had a positive impact on their attitudes (or the attitudes of their staff) towards employing migrants.
- Belong Aotearoa's Belonging Through Employment Internship Pilot was a cross-sector initiative funded through the Ethnic Communities Development Fund. It successfully bridged the gap between employees and employers, supporting seven skilled migrants (primarily partners of skilled migrants) to achieve positive employment, mental wellbeing and sense of belonging outcomes and re-establish their careers in Aotearoa NZ, while enabling employers to tap into an underutilised talent pool and embed their commitment to creating more diverse and inclusive workforces.
- All seven Belonging Through Employment Pilot interns had faced significant challenges before entering the internship pilot. Many experienced forms of racism while looking for work for example, some recruitment agencies, potential employers, and colleagues implied they would be 'taking jobs' from New Zealanders. They felt

many people assumed migrants were predominantly in NZ as unskilled workers. Most of them (6 of 7) had internalised experiences of racism which impacted their confidence, identity, wellbeing, sense of belonging and potential income. Six interns had changed their first name to avoid mispronunciation of their given name and wanting to make it easier for others.

- However, during their internship, interns regained their confidence, improved their mental wellbeing, increased their sense of belonging and gained ongoing employment.
- The internship and anti-racism capacity building workshop supported host organisations to actively build more diverse and inclusive workplaces into the future. The evaluation found that the pilot made managers more aware of the often unconscious cultural norms present in society and in their workplace.
- For one host organisation, the anti-racism workshop and its focus on addressing individual and systemic bias in the workplace, supported them on their diversity and inclusion journey and they have subsequently reviewed their recruitment processes which have facilitated equity in the area of recruitment. Other workshop participant feedback included that it gave people an opportunity to reflect on their own practice and how they can improve in the future. People also wanted to report on the workshop to their organisation to create more inclusive opportunities.
- Following the internship, host organisations reported that they were committed to supporting skilled migrants into employment and creating a more diverse workforce.
- Four of the seven interns had their contracts extended by their host organisation. Two of the interns went on to full time employment with other organisations. For the final intern, her 3 month internship role has turned into a permanent role for her.
- Whilst the impact of this project is limited to seven skilled migrants and five workplaces, it is hoped that the key insights generated from this pilot will inform future work to improve employment pathways for skilled migrants and support the creation of diverse, inclusive and racism-free workplaces in Aotearoa New Zealand.

REFERENCES

- [Belonging Through Employment Internship Pilot: Insight Report \(2021\)](#), Point & Associates
- [Migrant Experiences in the Time of COVID: Survey Report \(September 2020\)](#), Belong Aotearoa
- [Understanding Social Work Provision to Former Refugee and Marginalised Migrant Communities in Auckland: An analysis of need, effective models of provision and opportunities for increased impact \(July 2020\)](#), commissioned by a collaborative group of NGOs (Aotearoa Resettled Community Coalition, Asylum Seekers Support

Trust, Belong Aotearoa, Family Action, NZ Red Cross, Refugees As Survivors NZ and UMMA Trust)

- [Engaging Diverse Voices in Policymaking: Cross-sector Hui Report \(August 2019\)](#), Belong Aotearoa
- [Creating an Inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand: Sector Hui Report \(April 2019\)](#), Belong Aotearoa with support from Foundation North and the Centre for Social Impact

LINKS

- [#PassTheMic Anti-Racism Resources](#)