

WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Pacific Advisory Group Meeting on 19 August 2009

Present:

Ida Faiumu-Isa'ako (Chairperson - Samoa)
Pisa Alaifea (Deputy – Samoa)
Kolovula Murphy (Deputy – Tonga)
Mailigi Hetutu (Niue)
Mafi Katoa (Tonga)
Brenda Cottingham (Niue)
Malakai Jiko (Fiji)
Martha Ahmed (Tokelau)

Deputy Mayor Ian McKinnon
Marie Retimanu-Pule
Bessie Fepulea'i
Trudy Jenkins

Welcome:

- Warm pacific greetings and welcome from the Chairperson who thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Opening Prayer:

- Malakai Jiko

Apologies:

- Danny Kauraka; Titia Vaerua; Avia Liai; Lopati Tefoto; Ana To'o; Councillors Leonie Gill and Iona Pannett

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

- Change to the previous Minutes – change the wording of the final paragraph to read that the Tongan community are applying for a Creative New Zealand award and not a grant as recorded in the minutes.
- The amended Minutes from the previous meeting were moved as a correct record by Kolovula Murphy and seconded by Mailigi Hetutu.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- **Housing Upgrade** – Ida Faiumu-Isa'ako and Ana To'o attended the opening.

- **Statistics Presentation** – if anyone would like additional folders from Statistics New Zealand please let Bessie know.
- **Cook Islands Radiothon** - \$20,000 was raised for the Cook Islands to run their radio programme. If any other island nations would like Wellington City Council officers to speak on their radio programmes please get in touch with Bessie Fepulea'i.

REPORT FROM THE COMMUNITY GROUPS

- **Niue** – are getting ready for their annual constitution celebrations in October. They will be having a talent quest in Wellington to produce CDs of songs that can be played on their radio programme. They are also currently working on finding a social service provider for Pacific people. This Sunday will be a White Sunday for the children at St James.
- **Tonga** – noted that people are still waiting to identify bodies from the recent ferry tragedy. They presented their report from their meeting held on 3 August. One item of note from this meeting was a cheaper way of sending money overseas. The Department of Pacific Affairs is also working on this. Look on the website www.sendmoneypacific.org for more information.
- **Tokelau** – a date has been set for the Tokelau Day at Te Papa. This will be on Saturday, 28 November.
- **Fiji** – the community are currently working on preparations for their upcoming Fiji Day on 10 October to be held at St Patricks and Kilbirnie Park. Bessie will be meeting with the Events team at Council who are supporting this event.

PRESENTATION – Asotasi Va'a Makisi, Department of Labour

- Mr Makisi gave a presentation on immigration. This presentation included the role of the department; their legislative framework; key access categories for immigration; the quota process; the Pacific access category checklist; visa fees; where to find the immigration offices also noting their websites www.dol.govt.nz and www.immigration.govt.nz. Other services covered by the Department of Labour include health and safety; employment relations; small business information unit; partnership resource centre; work place productivity and settlement services.

Questions & Comments:

- What time of the year can people apply for visas? *You can apply from May to July.*
- People are scared to fill out the forms because they are already working here. Does the Department have any discretion on this? *This is a*

situation that would be brought before the Minister as the Department is required to start the deportation process.

- *What is happening about the situation with the Maori citizenship? The Border Security Group have held meetings in Auckland and Hamilton to discuss these issues and have reinforced the Department's position that this is not an official document. These meetings have been well attended and as a consequence the Department are considering running other sessions in other areas and will be developing a communication plan to raise awareness.*
- *It was noted that it is costly getting a visa and when applying and paying for a visa if you do not fit into the type of category you applied for you are not advised if you fit into another category. Where can you go to get this sort of information? This information is on line but it is important that you check and make sure that you chose the correct category to apply for.*
- *Mr Makisi suggested that PAG write to the Director to make a request for community workshops that would discuss these sorts of issues.*
- *Does the Pacific Division still exist? There is still a Pacific Division but it is a small unit as they were subject to a review and staff have been seconded to other divisions.*
- *Out of the quota of 1,100 people able to apply for visa from Samoa, how many people are successful? The only year that the quota was met was in the 2006-2007 intake. What happens to the remaining number of slots if the quota is not filled? We do not carry the number over from one year to the next.*
- *Where is the immigration office in Wellington? The office is in the Morrison Kent Building at 105 The Terrace.*
- *Will the new Government change the quota? Change is always possible but these figures have remained the same for the past five years and the Pacific access is a newly added category.*
- *Would you suggest going to a consultant or the Immigration Department? Specialists are there to provide a service but there are costs involved. You can use the website but the main thing is to understand meeting the different requirements.*
- *Are you allowed to stay in New Zealand while you are waiting for a response to your visa application? You can only stay in New Zealand if you have a valid visa.*
- *When people do not fit into certain categories and their salary is a bit low for the requirements can the Immigration Department fit them into the refugee category? The refugee category is a separate type of policy and has very black and white criteria.*
- *With regard to the salary requirements, if you can only get a salary of \$20,000 as a sponsor can we top this up? Sponsorship is only applicable for visitors if they do not have enough money then a sponsor can top this up but this is not the same for residency.*

Action: Bessie to send a copy of the presentation to PAG members.

- *Mr Makisi asked if would be able to attend another PAG meeting to talk to the group about the development of the Pacific Strategy as this is part of his job at the Department of Labour.*
- *PAG members agreed to Mr Makisi attending a meeting to discuss this.*

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- Ida Faiumu-Isa'ako presented her report. Topics covered included swine flu; the Housing Upgrade; the Cook Island radiothon fundraiser; the Samoan community meeting that discussed emergency procedures in the event of a disaster, youth gang(s) activity, grants/funding, the Pasifika Festival, the Kilbirnie town centre upgrade project and push play programmes.
- From this report it was requested that the PAG have presentations from Civil Defence and the Grants team at Council.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **Kilbirnie Town Centre** – it was noted from a recent meeting that for this development going forward there is a need for a younger voice to be represented. The next meeting is on 25 August and it was suggested that PAG members encourage their communities to attend this meeting. It was also suggested that information should be sent out to the nearby colleges to inform parents and pupils of the consultation process.
- **Department of Labour** – it was agreed that the PAG should write a letter in support of having a Pacific Division. Bessie Fepulea'i will make enquiries first on behalf of the PAG and then bring this information back to PAG to discuss further.
- **Pacific Providers** – Pacific providers in Wellington need support because the Ministry of Health is looking at putting these groups together in one place and people may lose their jobs or come under doctors and nurses. PAG members may be hearing from their communities about this soon.

Action – invite either Brenda or Api from the Ministry of Health to give a presentation on this at the September meeting.

Closing Prayer:

- Marie Retimanu-Pule

Next Meeting: 16 September 2009

Meeting Closed: 8:00pm