



Report from the Dunedin Multi Ethnic Council, June 2008

The year 2007/2008 was a year of many ups and some downs for the Dunedin Multi Ethnic Council (DMEC).

On the positive side, we had lots of fun getting together at our monthly meetings, and also helped to organise and support a number of events and projects.

- A pilot programme of a Reflective Writing and Storytelling Workshop, "Telling Our Stories", was launched in early October 2007 and ended in December. We received some Creative Communities funding to help run one more set of workshops in 2008, which ended this month. We have some wonderful stories to include in the book that we plan to publish this year, which we will share with members and the wider Dunedin community.
- Our Women's Forum, held in November 2007 with the theme "Networking into Employment", was found to be very useful and helpful by the participants.
- Diwali Concert, the IndiaNZ group held a very successful Diwali concert in November 2007. The concert included a folk dance troupe, Kalanjali, from Andra Pradesh in India, (brought to New Zealand by ASIA NZ) as well as dances and music from the local Indian community. IndiaNZ was able to obtain funding towards the event because they applied under the DMEC.
- In December 2007, we met for our end of year break-up at the *Arai-te-uru Marae*. The gathering began with an informal *powhiri* and was followed by a wonderful pot-luck lunch, music, dancing and talking.
- We helped support the Race Unity Speeches event in March 2008, which was organised by the Baha'i Community in Dunedin, and look forward to providing more support in 2009.

While we were involved with monthly meetings, projects and events, we also struggled with falling numbers for our Executive Committee. Our two youngest members left Dunedin for jobs in Auckland and Wellington and a number of the remaining Executive members, while committed to the DMEC, were unable to continue for the year 2008/2009.

For a time we were not sure whether we would have the numbers to continue. However, the unanimous support from our members as well as from our support networks, has enabled us to continue. After our AGM in May we have a new Executive Committee for 2008/2009 (with a few 'older' members to provide continuity), enthusiastic to continue to work to make Dunedin a city that celebrates and supports all communities.

The DMEC would like to gratefully acknowledge the support of the Dunedin City Council for their funding and resources, our Settlement Support Coordinator, the Dunedin Council of Social Services, the Otago Pacific Peoples Health Trust, the NZFEC, COGS and Lottery Board funding, and all our members.