

OCTOBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

HON CHRIS CARTER'S UPDATE

The last two months have been a whirlwind of activity for the Ethnic Caucus with a packed Ethnic calendar keeping us busy at events, celebrations and meeting with many different sectors of our ethnic community.

My fellow Ethnic Caucus members, Dr Ashraf Choudhary, Dr Rajen Prasad and Raymond Huo, have been doing a great job strengthening bonds and making new ones with our vibrant and varied Ethnic Communities.

Recently we have joined in celebrations across the country to recognise Eid, Diwali, Moon Festival and China National Day.

Every year these events get bigger, brighter and are now becoming a fixture not just on the Ethnic calendar, but are also becoming increasingly important and meaningful to all New Zealanders.

I have continued to meet diplomats based in Wellington, on an individual basis, in my dual roles as the Labour Party's Ethnic Affairs and Foreign Affairs Spokesperson. So far I have had dedicated meetings with the High Commissioners for Canada, India, Malaysia and South Africa; the Ambassadors for Japan and Korea; and the Honorary Consul for Sri Lanka. In addition I have also had the privilege of having dedicated meetings with a number of visiting politicians, including a delegation of Australian Senators, the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands Hon Jim Marurai, Tonga's Prime Minister Hon Dr Feleti Sevele, ASEAN Secretary General HE Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Bangladesh's Health Minister HE Dr Rahul Haque and Special Envoy to the Prime Minister of Cambodia HE Mr Veng Sereyvuth.

I hope you enjoy this edition and please keep in touch by writing to us, or visit us online at labour.org.nz, read our blogs at redalert.org.nz, or find us on Facebook.

Chris and Labour's Health Spokesperson Hon Ruth Dyson, meeting with HE Dr Rahul Haque, Minister of Health of Bangladesh and his delegation

DR ASHRAF CHOUDHARY'S UPDATE

The months of September and October have seen major celebrations among the very diverse ethnic communities of New Zealand. The Eid Ul Fitr for Muslims, Diwali for Hindus and the Moon festival for Chinese and Korean community all occurred during this time. Ramadan, as one of the five pillars of Islam, holds special significance for Muslims. Eid is a day of

thanksgiving by means of distributing alms, gifts among the poor, the needy, children and loved ones and offering special prayers for peace and harmony around the world are the hallmark of Eid. Diwali, the Festival of Lights, is being celebrated all over the country with great fervour, gaiety and enthusiasm by all Indians.

A special groundbreaking event took place in Hamilton on Tuesday, 6 October under the recently formed umbrella of 'Koshish Charitable Trust'. Together the Indian and Pakistani communities jointly celebrated the 'Eidiwali'. I believe such joint celebrations are fantastic way of promoting community spirit.

Ashraf at the 'Eidiwali' celebrations in Hamilton

DR RAJEN PRASAD'S UPDATE

Indian communities across New Zealand are currently celebrating the most important festival on their calendar - Diwali.

Diwali celebrations (also known as The Festival of Lights) have grown exponentially over recent years as people of all cultures join with those in the Indian community to acknowledge this important festival.

Coinciding with Diwali is the Hindu festival Navarati - the Nine Nights.

I was fortunate to attend a number of Diwali and Navarati celebrations this year and was proud of the colour, togetherness and vibrancy on display as people of all cultures gathered to mark the occasion.

With over 100,000 people now identifying as Indian in New Zealand, these cultural celebrations are an important way of keeping traditions alive and passing on knowledge and understanding to those of different backgrounds.

Rajen at Diwali celebrations at Lynfield College

RAYMOND HUO'S UPDATE

September and October hold special significance for the Chinese community with Moon Festival and National Day celebrations, and every year these events seem to get bigger with people of all ethnicities getting involved.

I was honoured to attend a number of Moon Festival (AKA: Mid-Autumn Festival) events in Wellington, Auckland and Hamilton. The Moon Festival dates back over 3,000 years and is a colourful festival that is about togetherness, vibrancy and family.

These three virtues were celebrated at the 2009 Waikato Moon Festival Celebration show - hosted by Waikato Chinese Students and Scholars Association (WCSSA).

I was honoured to attend the celebration in Hamilton along with local MP Sue Moroney and was pleased to see Chinese culture being promoted and enjoyed by so many people.

National Day was even more important for Kiwi-Chinese this year, with 2009 marking 60 years since the founding of the People's Republic of China and celebrations took place all across New Zealand to acknowledge this Anniversary.

Along with these two important events, I was very busy in Parliament with my proposal to amend the Auckland Super City Bill to include an Asian Advisory Board.

Although the Asian Advisory Board was voted down 58:64 in the House, I was buoyed by the positive reaction I received from the public and will continue to fight for an Asian voice as part of Auckland's future.

My thoughts also go out to the victims of the Pacific Tsunami and South-East Asian earthquake.

I was pleased to be a part of a Relief Fund Performance and Auction on Saturday in Botany and witness the compassion of many in the Asian community who gave generously to help those affected by the disasters.

LEFT: Raymond at the Botany Disaster Relief fundraiser on Saturday 17 October. RIGHT: Raymond with Labour leader Phil Goff and HE Mme Liao Juhua, Consul-General of the People's Republic of China in Auckland.

EVENTS ATTENDED BY THE ETHNIC CAUCUS IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

- . 64th Anniversary of National Day of Viet Nam
- . Papatoetoe Family Festival
- . NZ Tamil Society Public Health Meeting
- . NZ Guangzhou Suburbs Chinese Association Dinner
- . Independence Day of Brazil event
- . Meeting with Indonesian Speaker and Delegation
- . Meeting with India New Zealand Business Council
- . Luncheon with of Mr Nong Duc Mang - General Secretary of Central Committee of Communist Party of Viet Nam
- . 199th Independence of Chile Day
- . Taste of Japan Festival
- . Italian Festival at Freemans Bay Primary School
- . Meeting with Cambodia's Minister of Culture and Fine Arts
- . The Goodwill Mission Taiwanese Dance Performance
- . Numerous Moon Festival and Chinese National Day Celebrations
- . 2009 Miss Chinese New Zealand Pageant 2009
- . Eid ul-Fitr Reception in Parliament
- . Pakistan Association of New Zealand Eid Function
- . Palmerston North Eid Function
- . Anjuman-e-Saifee (NZ) Charitable Trust Eid Function
- . 60th Anniversary of the founding of the Peoples Republic of China hosted by HE Zhang Limin, Ambassador of the PRC
- . Diwali Festival at Lynfield College
- . Navaratri Events in Auckland
- . Launch of Mo Li Hua (Aoteroa Jasmine) Music Video
- . National Day of Republic of Korea Celebration in Wellington
- . Meeting with HE Dr James Christopher Lukabyo, High Commissioner of Uganda
- . Long Yan Chinese Association Founding Ceremony
- . Manuakau Indian Association and Radio Tarana Diwali Festival
- . 49th Anniversary of the Independence of Nigeria
- . First New Zealand Hindu Elders Conference
- . Radio Tarana Fiji Day
- . Waitakere Diwali Celebration at Trusts Stadium
- . Auckland Therevada Buddhist Association 2009 Food Fair
- . AsiaNZ Diwali Celebration at the Viaduct Harbour
- . Botany Relief Fundraiser for Indonesian Earthquake and Pacific Tsunami
- . Hamilton Mela and Cultural Fest

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