



The Federation of
Islamic Associations
of New Zealand (Inc.)

اتحاد الجمعيات الإسلامية النيوزيلندية

SINCE 1979



Social Cohesion Workplan

**OPERATIVE FRAMEWORK &
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME**

**A SEVEN-YEAR AGENDA
2023 TO 2029**

WWW.FIANZ.COM





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1.00 OUR COMMITMENT

The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ), established 1979, is the umbrella national organisation.

The following is an outline of the our social cohesion operative framework and implementation programmes to be implemented over the next seven years from 2023 to 2029.

Recognition, and indeed celebration, of diversity is a core aspect of Islamic teaching, made manifest to us by Allah SWT in the Noble Qur'an. Muslims are told to know one another in our differences, to cherish them, and to work together with a sense of unity while respecting our diversity for the good of humankind.

“O humankind, We have created you male and female, and appointed you races and tribes, that you may know one another. Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most God-fearing of you. God is All-knowing, All-aware”
(Qur'an 49:13)

The first Muslims in Aotearoa arrived on 28 November, 1769 on the French ship St. Jean Baptiste. The earliest Muslim settlers on record are the Hui Muslim Chinese gold diggers in the nineteenth century. It was in the mid and late 1900's that there was significant migration of Muslims. Our current population is about 60,000. Despite our small size relative to the population of Aotearoa New Zealand, the Muslim community is demographically diverse, containing upwards of 68 ethnicities and 43 languages.

This unique situation of being at once a minority and a broader umbrella under which a diverse range of peoples coalesce, therefore makes the Muslim community a prime window through which to view the diverse tapestry of social cohesion.

FIANZ has devised a social cohesion strategy which aims to

- enhance the Muslim community's civic participation,
- engender inter and intra community cohesiveness,
- foster inclusive harmony practices
- develop community leaders able to continue this important mahi into the future.

FIANZ recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand. We recognise Māori, as tangata whenua and our position as tangata tiriti.

KARAKIA

Kia hora te marino
Kia whakapapa pounamu te moana
Hei huarahi mā tatou I te rangi nei
Aroha atu, aroha mai
Tātou i a tātou katoa.

May peace be widespread
May the sea be like greenstone
A pathway for us all this day
Let us show respect for each other
For one another
Bind us all together !

2.00 SOCIAL COHESION: AN INITIAL PERSPECTIVE

Foundation

Diversity as a demographic reality and a foundational principle is grounded in the history of Aotearoa NZ. If we take Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the basis of our modern nation state, despite what has often been our failure over the decades to uphold its precepts or honour its spirit, then the acceptance of difference is at the very core of our national being.

How we manage such cultural, linguistic, tradition and religious difference is often a reflection of the value we place on diversity. Diversity has the potential to be a faultline running through the strata of land or a vein of gold waiting to be mined. It can break us or enrich us, it is a point of weakness or a mark of strength - and how we approach, manage and lead in this field will set the tone for our generations to come.

The concept of social cohesion is an attempt to reflect this core foundation, to affirm its value and to draw it into a reality we can live by. In the face of rapidly evolving national identities and social values, where unity is no longer based on outmoded ideas of homogeneity, reaffirming our core principles is a means of holding us all together in all of our diversity and coalescing a set of common goals – the recommendations of the Royal Commission Report are a starting point.

Immediately after the tragic events of 15 March 2019, there was an unprecedented response from the general NZ public – with a few notable exceptions this response occurred across all those points of difference that might otherwise have been considered divisive – race, colour, creed, political affiliation, age, ethnicity, urban/rural, education level, income strata, etc

In the face of atrocity we suddenly knew who were as a nation, who we were not and perhaps more importantly, who we wanted to be.

As a result in the post 15th March context the wider NZ society has become more sensitized to the ways in which social cohesion can be threatened and have indicated a lower social tolerance for such behavior by both individuals and institutions. This serves to provide a well supported, popular and grass roots grounded social impetus to see positive change enacted. The widespread and intricate network of nation-wide community based organisations, also serve as functioning agencies for social cohesion.

For many in the Muslim community, the Government's support for the Royal Commission of Inquiry and its commitment to implementing the recommendations outlined in the Commission's final report, indicate a strong political will to effect change. The governing context now means that such political will may more easily find its expression in concrete action.

Muslim Community as Case Study

Just as Te Tiriti may serve as a blueprint for an inclusive and pluralistic NZ society, likewise in the history of Islam there is the presence of the Madinah Constitution serving fundamentally the same purpose. Madinah was the first Islamic City State, established by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in 623CE it comprised a community made up of various peoples and tribes espousing different religious creeds (Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Pagan, etc). The Constitution referred to this fledgling society as – one ummah or one community. This has over the centuries formed a foundational principle that informed the development of Islamic civilisations that were both demographically complex as well as geographically expansive.

Today Islam is the second largest religion in the world numbering approximately 1.8 billion adherents and is currently the largest growing faith group among the major world religions. In many ways the Muslim community of Aotearoa NZ is a microcosm of this global snapshot. With a population of 61,455 (approx 1.3% of the total population), the Muslim community has members from over 60 different ethnic groups including Maori, Pasifika and Pakeha.

The social cohesion required to hold together such a variegated and multi-layered community has had to be solid enough to provide a firm footing on which we can all stand, whilst at the same time allowing sufficient flexibility to incorporate a widely diverse and evolving society.

The preceding 2 years have been a tumultuous time for the Muslim community of Aotearoa NZ and at times the faultlines of difference threatened to break apart the very foundations beneath our feet leaving us bereft of solid ground with no place to stand securely and call home. But just as our world turned upside down, the rest of Aotearoa NZ stood firm.

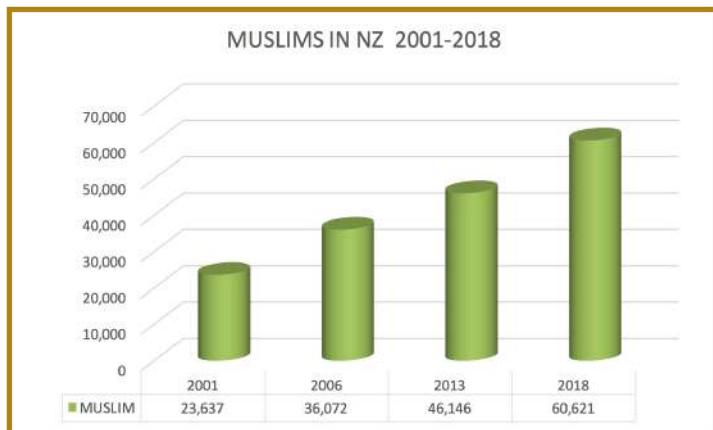
We are driven and compelled to undertake this work – to make sure that this never happens to our country again. On the 15th of March it was the Muslim community that was so brutally attacked but we know that it could just as easily have been someone else, some other minority community, some other marginalised group, some other vulnerable segment of our society.

And so together we are looking forward. We recognise that the changes that need to happen and the transformation that needs to take place to create a safe and inclusive country for everyone will require an all of Government approach alongside an all of Society approach. We are looking to Government to be our partners in this work and to take up the mantle of leadership for this vital mahi.

May peace be with us all.

3.00 MUSLIM COMMUNITY PROFILE

A changing demographic profile

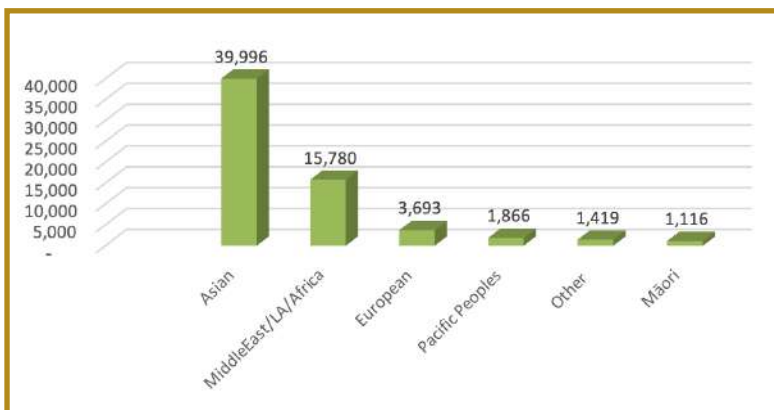


Based on the NZ Census, Muslims are one of the most rapidly growing religious group in New Zealand with the population increasing six-fold between 1991 and 2006. Another 80% growth from 2006 to present date. However, their national demographic footprint is very small. Muslims now constitute about 1% of the population.



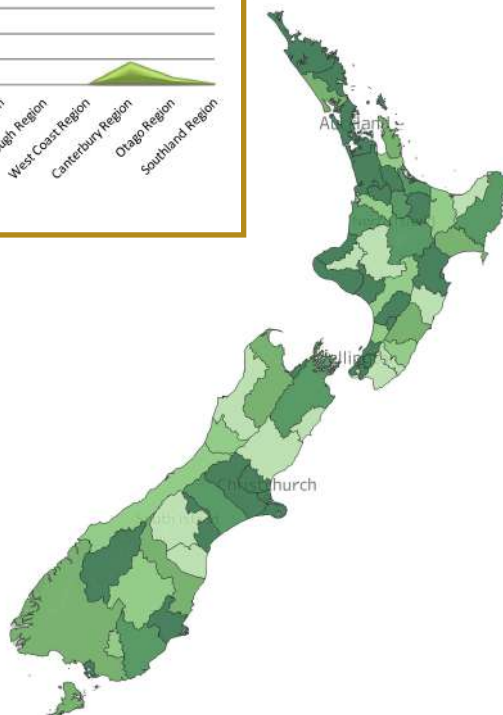
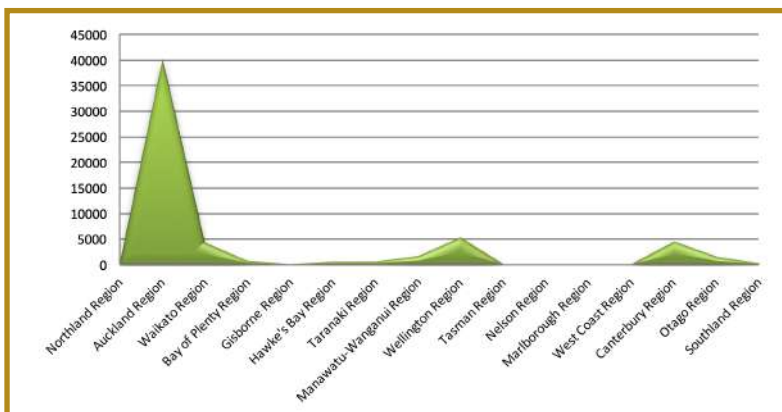
23% of the Muslim population are born in NZ. Immigration has resulted in significant numbers from Asia. This has been a demographic shift away from the Pacific (Fiji) as the main country of birth.

Our Ethnicity and Where We Live



Where We Live

Whilst the largest concentration of Muslims are in Auckland, the community is now all over the country (Source:2018 NZ Census.)



4.00 FIANZ - NEARING 50 YEARS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Our service paradigm includes

RESPECT FOR TANGATA WHENUA (Acknowledge Tiriti and cherish Manakitanga)

VOLUNTEERISM (Over 37,800 volunteer hours in 2020)

PROFESSIONALISM (Training, Benchmarked Best Practices, ISO etc)

SOCIAL COHESION (Ethnic/Religious, interfaith dialogue, etc)

STRUCTURAL SERVICES (Halal, Hilal, Scholarships, Seed Funding etc)

POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH STATE (8 Platforms)

CIVIL SOCIETY ADVOCACY (Social and national issues, work with tangata whenua etc)

SUPPORTIVE PLATFORMS FOR WOMEN (Work with IWCNZ)

LONGTERM VISION (Strategic Plan Consultation)

TRANSPARENCY (All financial audit; national programmes etc)

SUSTAINABILITY (Self reliance, build own finanacial base)

5.00 *OUR APPROACH TO ASABIYYAH*

FIANZ been part of the community engagement programme of the Ministry of Social Development on Social Cohesion .We fully concur with the referenced vision, the projected trajectory (outcomes), the key focus areas and the enablers for social cohesion. We have also framed our approach, taking into account the recent outline of the 2022-2025 Strategy of the Ministry for Ethnic Communities.

FIANZ has located our social cohesion approach noting the need for alignment between community practices and government policies. The importance of this nexus has been a pivotal need identified by the of the Royal Commission.

We recognise that the 15 March tragedy has been the catalyst for social cohesion Recommendations of the Royal Commission and our approach respects the legacy need for celebrating diversity and nurturing inclusivity. We have framed this within our faith-based approach of **Asabiyyah or Social Cohesion**.



6.00 OUR 7-SCOPE FRAMEWORK

FROM MSD

Tracking all forms of discrimination at all levels

Fostering inclusive social norms that unite us and value diverse contributions

Encouraging and facilitating positive interactions between diverse groups

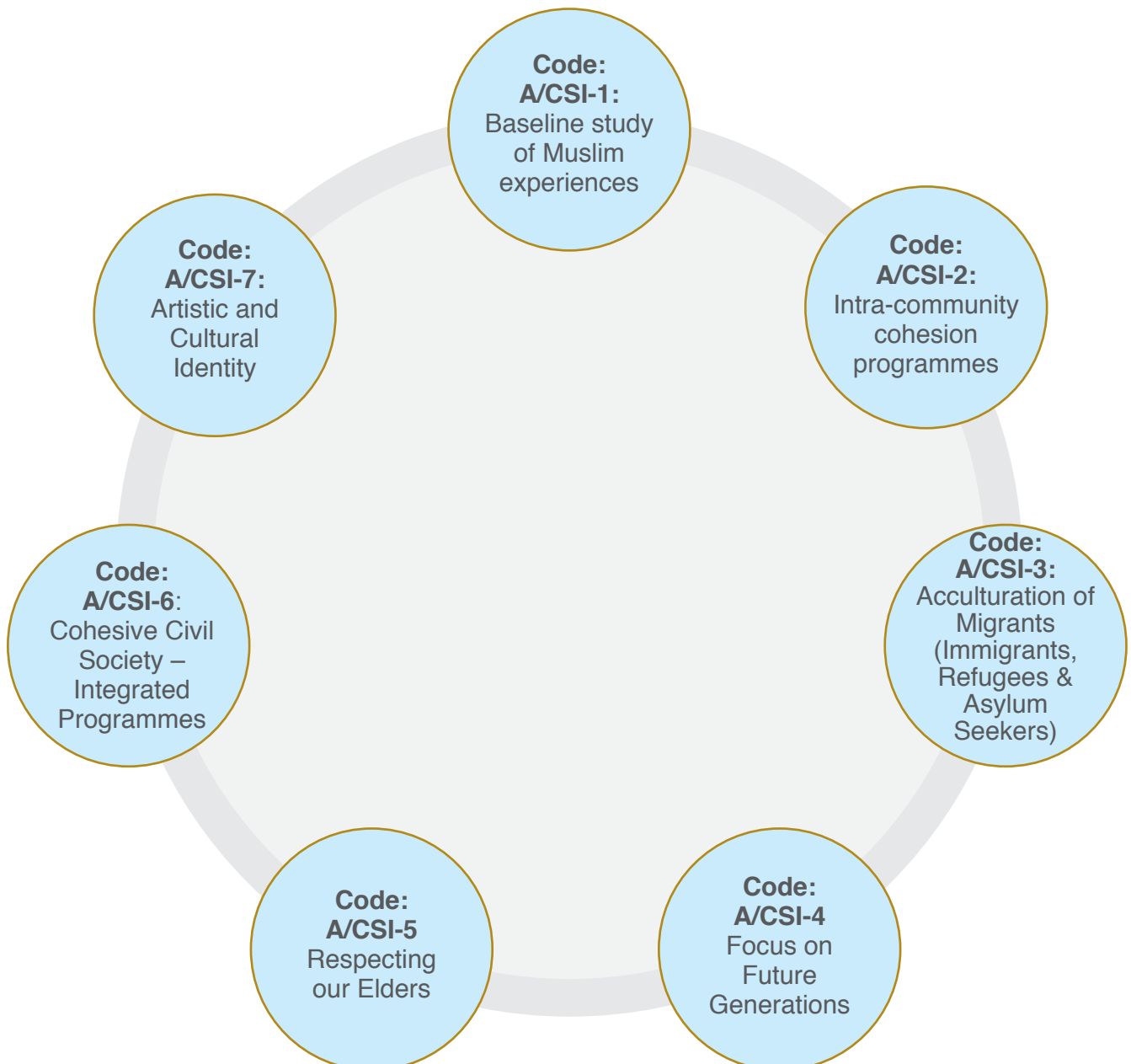
Supporting people to participate at all levels and influence change

Improve equitable access to the determinants of wellbeing for all

Protect our society and environment for future generations



7-SCOPE FRAMEWORK FOR ASABIYYAH (SOCIAL COHESION) – MUSLIM COMMUNITY



7.00 OUR PROGRAMME INITIATIVES

Code: A/CSI-1: Baseline Studies

Work scope:

- **Conducting an baseline study of community priority issues** including such concerns as access to community services, barriers to education and training , Islamophobia, unequal job access , access to community services and other such.
- **Research on Contribution of Muslim Community** to the national socio-economic and cultural fabric

Rationale: A baseline study shall provide the Muslim community and the Government, an evidence-based approach to guide policies, programmes and practices. The baseline shall also enable the development of monitoring metrics.

Latent racism, unconscious bias and discrimination which gives rise to inequities across multiple living spheres are viewed as some of the major challenges to genuine social cohesion. In Aotearoa New Zealand racism is often described as an ongoing series of microaggressions which prevent segments of the population from participating in society in a free and equitable manner. This can include areas as wide ranging as education, training, employment, public representation, arts and culture, politics and media. It also prevents fair and equitable access to the determinants of wellbeing which ideally should be available to all. This in turns puts the overall health of our society at a disadvantage as we look to progress outcomes for current and future generations. In 2019 , during a series of community hui across the country , the following were the ten priority issues . The hui identified the need for a formal baseline study to guide future policy and practice.

The contribution of migrants has been a major unwritten narrative of our social history. The distorted perceptions have given rise to both misaligned policies and negative stereotyping. There needs to be greater focus on the economic, scientific, professional, academic, cultural, literary, entertainment and other contribution to our national identity and history.

Community Concerns Identified in 2019

Accountability
Affected Status
Education
Hate Speech
Islamophobia
Law and Order
Mental Health and Wellbeing
NZIC, SIS, NIP and Related
Racism
RWE
Social Cohesion and Inclusivity & Diversity

Code: A/CSI- 1:
Baseline study
of Muslim
experiences

Code: A/CSI-2 : Intra-community Relation Strengthening


Work scope :

- **Thematic Workshops** at Mosques and Islamic Centres on
 - o Inclusive Cultural Practices;
 - o Family-centred assimilation issues;
 - o Strengthening Core Faith-Culture Values ;
 - o Managing change process – individual, family and community level.
- **Community Social Counsellors** with appropriate language competency
- **Annual Hui of National Organisations** . Almost all nationalities/ethnicities have their own national organisations and a platform for them to meet and discuss issues.

Rationale: The Aotearoa Muslim Community is extremely diverse. While this is a major asset for the community and Aotearoa as a whole, it can present certain challenges. Bridging these divides helps create a more cohesive society for Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole, as well as limiting tensions which can come about over personal relationships, community leadership and wider international contexts.

It is community with diverse demographic tangents - recent and generational immigrants ; refugees ; highly professional migrants; diverse ethnicities including a growing tangata whenua and Pacific people; large youth population and growing elderly population.

The fabric of our society in Aotearoa New Zealand can be seen as a network of various collectives making up a coherent whole, held together by the principles of Te Tiriti and individual and communal commitments to mutual respect and inclusion. If at the community level this sense of collectivism fails to take hold, we risk tears appearing in this societal fabric.



Code: A/CSI-2:
Intra-community
Relation
Strengthening

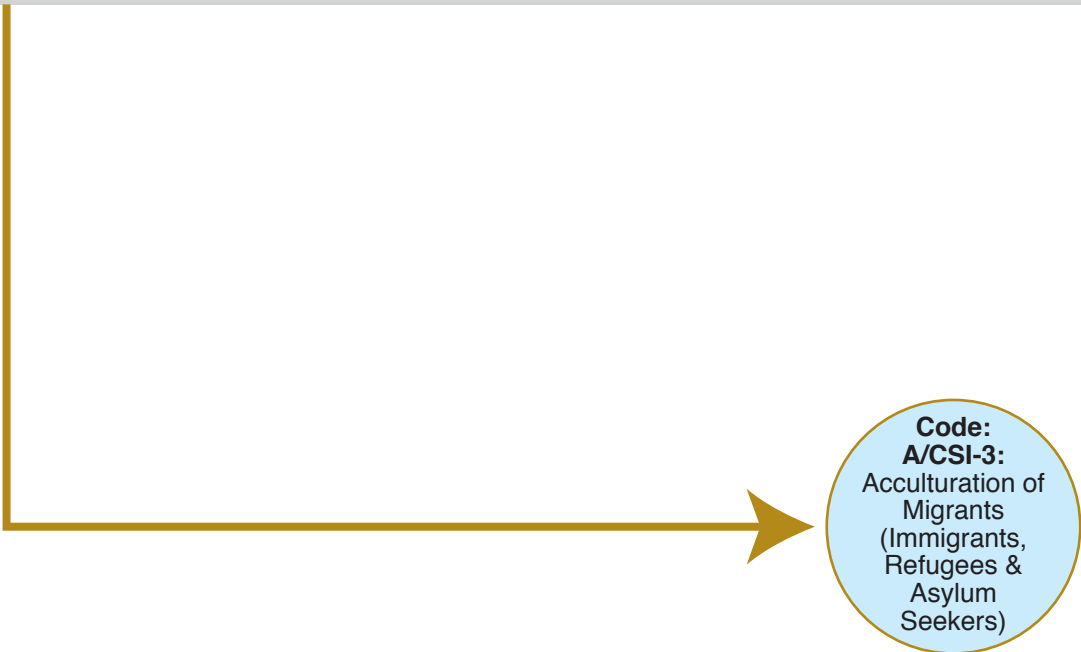
Code: A/CSI-3: Acculturation of Migrants (Immigrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers)

Work scope:

- **Language appropriate orientation sessions** at local mosques and Islamic centres across the country .
- **Resource booklet and on-line one-stop portal** which is regularly updated with access paths, contacts and user-need information

Rationale: Ensuring the acculturation of migrants into Aotearoa New Zealand society , whilst still retaining their own faith-culture is a key social cohesion priority. At issue is that many are not familiar with cultural mores and institutional structures in their new homeland and it is important to communicate and clarify these. Enabling inclusion and fostering the development of a positive identity also engenders a sense of hope, encouragement, pride and loyalty. This in turn builds a tangible commitment to the idea of multicultural Aotearoa New Zealand. Marginalisation occurs when people or groups are denied adequate access to full participation and belonging. FIANZ has worked in this area for over 40 years moving a vibrant and diverse groupings toward an increasingly coherent community with its turangawaewae firmly established in the Aotearoa experience.

Notes: This work would help to consolidate existing local initiatives and include cooperation with existing support networks who work primarily with refugees.



**Code:
A/CSI-3:
Acculturation of
Migrants
(Immigrants,
Refugees &
Asylum
Seekers)**

Work scope:

- **Annual Youth Camp** – Focus Issues Workshops
- **Funding Outward Bound** for Selected Youth Leaders
- **Specific Age-Cohort Workshops** (Regional and National) Based on Needs Identified
- **Social Media Responsibility** Programmes Healthy Social Media Management
- **Trained Youth Mental-Health Counsellors** Peer to Peer Support
- **Youth Counsellors** Trained in Anti-Bully and Islamophobia Mitigation
- **Youth Sporting Events** Encourage to join community sports – fund resources
- **Volunteerism** Join community organisations
- **Participating in wider youth community forum** Encourage joining other civic, multi-faith and issue based organisations.
- **Youth in Employment and Entrepreneurism** Workshops and dedicated programmes to facilitate and fund capacity development

Rationale: Muslim youth face significant and unique challenges in New Zealand related to questions of identity and affirming their faith amidst social pressures. This can especially impact mental health, with research showing that psychological approaches incorporating religious elements are most effective when supporting Muslims.

There are also ongoing issues related to the specific and general trauma related to the events of March 15. It is important that means of inclusive social counselling are facilitated through known and trusted community based organisations such as FIANZ. Healing and revitalisation are long term and ongoing objectives that require sustained input.

Such programmes also serve to acculturate youth to the history and culture of Aotearoa New Zealand and their own place within the national story. Correlations between Islamic values and those of tangata whenua and Pasifika also serve as robust building blocks of national identity.



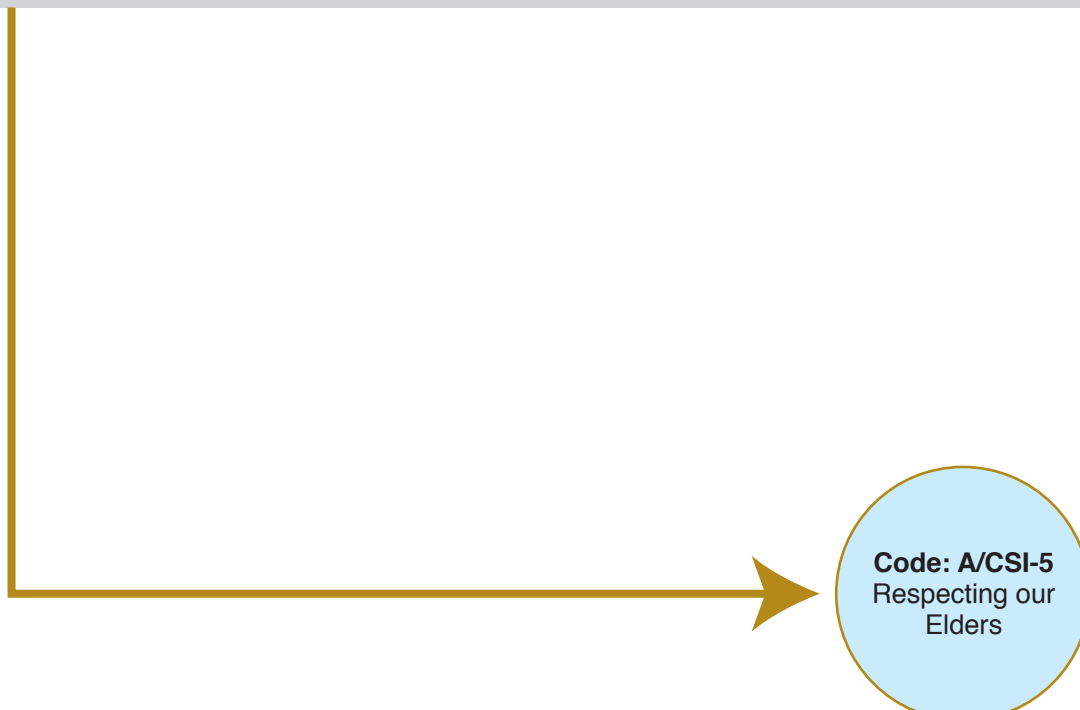
Code: A/CSI-5 Respecting our Elders

Work scope:

- **Survey of Needs** (Faith-culture needs of the elderly, immigration support, welfare support, transport and mobility , aged-care rest home services and others)
- **Orientation of rest-home and aged care services and facilities** with Muslim aged-care requirements
- **Aged Companionship** - Arrange visitation and related services including halal meals
- **Develop Aged Advocacy** – A grassroot -organised advocacy programme

Rationale: New Zealand has an aging population, and the Muslim community will follow the same trends. Existing aged care systems are not designed with Muslims in mind, meaning that shifts may be needed.

Integrated generational systems of whanau and family units are a general feature of most Muslim communities. Often experiences associated with dislocation, migration and geographic distance mean that these relationships are played out differently within the contemporary social context. The input of valued community elders is a proven benefit in terms of community cohesion, stability, leadership dynamics, and quite critically youth counselling. Such programmes will also serve to lessen the generational gap that can occur between younger and older members of migrant groups. Such fractures can often lead to a loss of positive social control and frameworking for youth and has a detrimental isolating effect on seniors.



Work scope:

- **Grassroots inter-faith and inter-ethnic interactions** (whilst there is existing leadership forum there needs greater communal programmes)
- **Develop Volunteerism** - participating in the many community programmes, environmental and charitable organisations
- **Developing Leadership Competencies-**
- **Facilitate Civic Representation** - in community and local boards, school boards and similar
- **Advocacy and Interest Representation Competency** – Greater usage of media , including social media for cohesion programmes, media training , community advocacy capacity development.
- **Seeking funding for community programmes and enterprises** – Identify and seek ‘halal’ funding, researching and writing proposal, sponsorships of programmes and events

Rationale: Though on both a national and regional level, significant initiatives exist to grow interfaith and inter-ethnic relations, these currently operate only at the leadership level with community leaders meeting. Though valuable, these interactions do not always trickle down to general community members who have less opportunity to interact with members of other communities.

In the immediate aftermath of the tragic events of March 15, some of the most comprehensive and grassroot based systems of support were activated on this basis. Growing and extending this locally-based but nationally spread network of support, cooperation, inclusivity and values based community work will only serve to ensure longterm sustainability.

A key part of social cohesion is moving from being accepted in society to participating and engaging with societal power (decision-making) structures. Currently, Muslims are insufficiently active in local volunteering spaces outside of community initiatives. Rectifying this situation will have the dual benefits of adding people power to local civic organisations and ensuring that Muslims feel able to act not as Muslims in New Zealand but simply as New Zealanders.

Barriers to social cohesion are often related to a lack of access to means of civic participation coupled with an overwhelming sense of disempowerment. Such programmes are designed to directly work towards establishing core beliefs related to trust, belief in fair treatment, participation in decision making, expectations of service delivery to meet primary needs, and understanding and valuing key institutions and systems.

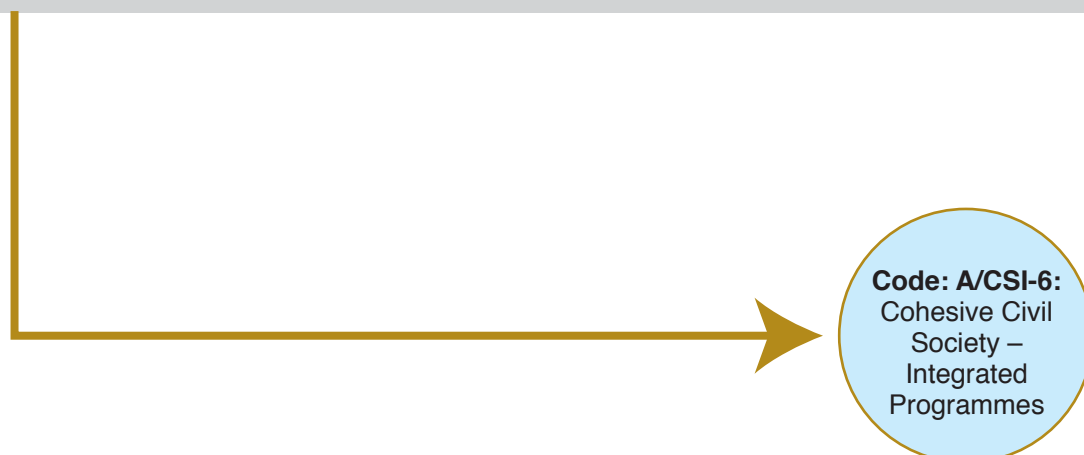
The portrayal of Muslims in media has been identified as a primary vector for Islamophobia, which in turn fuels violence against Muslims. Conversely, such portrayals limit Muslim trust in media, thereby limiting integration into society and fuelling experiences of discrimination and marginalisation.

Open dialogue, information sharing, education and professional development are all tools which are able to facilitate work in this area. As long as the lived experience of communities is informed in large part by media engendered constructs, the need to undertake work in this area remains of key import. In order to promote belonging, wellbeing and connection there is a need to examine, analyse and appraise portrayals which directly affect these fundamentals of social cohesion.

Without strong leadership at the local, regional, and national levels as well as for groups such as women and youth, gains will be ephemeral and subject to varying committee engagement. Developing leadership is an investment in the future which will help build self-sufficiency of community organisations.

Strong leadership serves as an enabler for greater inclusion and participation by community members. It provides a framework where members feel culturally, spiritually and physically safe. It establishes role models, not only in terms of leadership structures but also of robust social networks and systems of support.

Such programmes will also be a means of strengthening the resilience of a number of highly marginalised communities as well as serving as a means of creating local allegiances.



Code: A/CSI-7 : Artistic and Cultural Identity

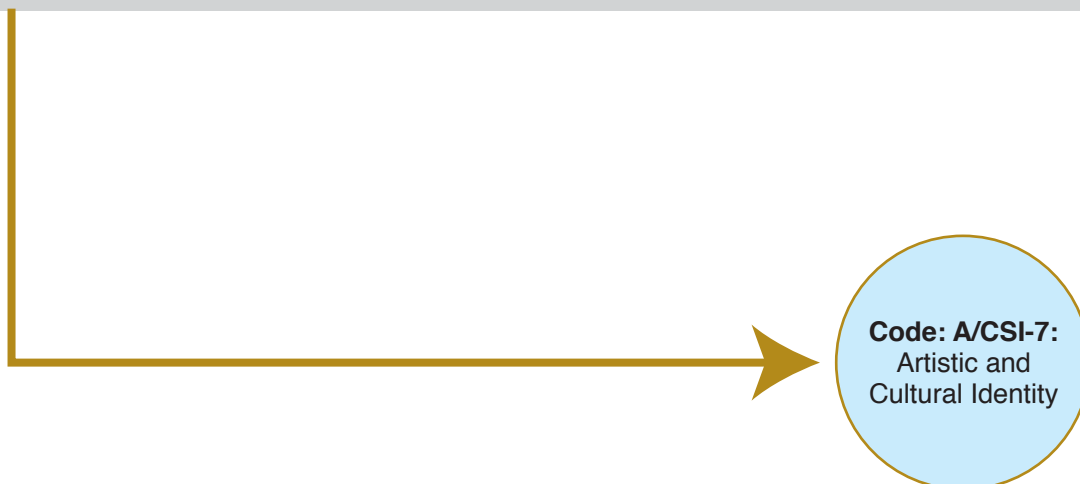
Work scope:

- **Regional and Local Exhibitions (Arts, Crafts , Calligraphy)**
- **Poetry and Plays (faith community narratives)**
- **Religious Celebrations (welcoming the wider community)**

Rationale: In a post March 15 environment and with the added dislocation that has resulted from the Covid pandemic, the need for strong social cohesion as a core component of a healthy and robust society has become increasingly apparent.

Arts and cultural based practices have benefits both within and between communities, enhancing well-being, identity and positive visualisation of marginalised groups in the public space. Additionally they provide an outlet for community creative responses to experiences of loss, discrimination and trauma. They also serve as important means of learning and communication through a “soft” uptake medium.

Aotearoa New Zealand prides itself on a wide participatory approach to both formal and informal leisure based activities. However marginalised communities often find themselves facing barriers of access, participation and inclusion. Programmes that facilitate and promote involvement in this sector will serve to enhance social cohesion outcomes through inter-group contact and intra-group activity.



8.00 FORMATIVE EVALUATION

FIANZ is a strong adherent of evidenced based decision-making for resource allocation. There is also the added fiscal responsibility to ensure probity of expenditure and value generation of the social investment. In this respect, we intend to develop purpose specific metrics to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed work-scope. Formative evaluation is to ensure that the lessons learned lead to the necessary improvements. In this respect, we shall use a modified.

BROAD INDICATORS	METRICS TO BE DEVELOPED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive visions of the nation and community: shared norms, values, acceptance, and tolerance • Trust in the other: perceptions of belongingness or isolation • Attitudes: recognition, tolerance and affirmation of minorities; social distance • Symbolic communication: common narratives in arts and culture that reinforce a sense of commonality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of active discrimination • Levels of intergroup anxiety/fear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures of cultural distance • Importance of belonging to a religious • Perceptions of people of other ethnic groups • Perceptions of people of other religious groups • Association with or loyalty to an inclusive national identity • Support for racial tolerance • Support for affirmative policies to advance marginalized populations



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