

**New Zealand Association of  
Citizens Advice Bureaux Inc**  
Ngā Pokapū Whakahoki Pātai mai i te Iwi Whānui

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**Media Release**

**March 2007**

**Diversity the Secret to Success for Citizens Advice Bureaux**

Citizens Advice Bureaux National Awareness Week starts on March 12 with a focus on Diversity. Chief Executive Kerry Dalton says the focus recognises that “increasingly, bureaux are serving communities made up of lots of different groups needing a wide range of services. Every client is different and it’s our job to work out the best way to provide help and advice so that no one misses out.”

Over the past year the Citizens Advice Bureaux has introduced two initiatives in direct response to community need. The Multi Lingual Information Service has been expanded to become a national interpreting call centre offering free information, advice and advocacy in 26 languages and the first on campus bureau has been established at Waikato University staffed by trained student volunteers.

During Awareness Week many of the Citizens Advice Bureaux 2,600 volunteers will be promoting their services to communities from the Far North to Invercargill through a wide range of activities. Citizens Advice Bureaux volunteers will be celebrating the successes of the past year as well as encouraging people to take up the opportunity to become a part of their local bureau by volunteering a few hours a week.

“Our volunteers are skilled, trained and experienced and come from all walks of life. They represent thirty-seven nationalities and are therefore well positioned to meet the needs of all in an increasingly diverse New Zealand,” says Ms Dalton.

Last year was a big year for the service with almost 600,000 client enquiries from people seeking advice on issues ranging from immigration, health and housing to taxation, budgeting and employment. This was the highest number of enquiries recorded in one year and equates to one enquiry every twelve seconds of the working week.

The thousands of enquiries handled by volunteers on a daily basis provide a solid base of evidence on issues affecting New Zealanders. By gathering data, Citizens Advice Bureaux can have considerable input into social policy, in order to achieve positive change. Kerry Dalton says this is a particularly satisfying aspect of their work.

Citizens Advice Bureaux is an independent community organisation offering free, impartial and confidential service of information and support. Specialist services offered by bureaux include Justice of the Peace, legal and tax clinics.

Citizens Advice Bureaux Awareness Week is being launched on Monday March 12<sup>th</sup> by Hon Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, Minister of the Community and Voluntary Sector, at St James Church Hall, Lower Hutt.

**To contact Citizens Advice Bureaux phone 0800 367 222 or visit the website [www.cab.org.nz](http://www.cab.org.nz)**

**Or For more information on the New Zealand Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux Awareness Week contact:**

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