

Ekta NZ Newsletter

Issue 1, 2026 Q1

As we welcome the Lunar New Year, I'm delighted to share the very first edition of our newsletter with you.

The New Year in every tradition is a time of renewal, reflection, and hope — values that sit at the heart of Ekta. Across cultures and communities, it is a time to look forward and to begin again with generosity and resolve.

Ekta was founded on a simple but powerful belief: that everyone deserves dignity and a sense of belonging. In our work providing food, support and arranging shelter for those experiencing hardship, we see every day how compassion crosses language, faith, and cultural boundaries. What unites us is not where we come from, but our shared humanity.

This newsletter is a new way for us to stay connected with you — our supporters, volunteers, partners, and friends. Through it, we'll share stories from the community, reflect on the impact of your support, and highlight the collective effort that makes our work possible.

As we step into the Year of the Horse, we thank you for standing with us and wish you and your loved ones a year of good health and shared hope.

Warm regards,

Manjit Grewal



Looking back

Shamubeel Eaqub on NZ's Economy

On 4 November, well-known economist Shamubeel Eaqub arrived from Auckland to present his outlook on the state of New Zealand's economy and the trends shaping the road ahead.

The event was open to the public, and a filled hall confirmed Ekta's sense that this was a topic of keen interest. Attendees heard analysis on the decisions and pressures influencing households, businesses and communities across the country.

By creating space for informed public discussion on complex issues, Ekta continues to support a more connected and economically literate community.



Asia in Focus: Perceptions of Asia Report



Ekta was pleased to host a presentation of the latest New Zealanders' Perceptions of Asia and Asian Peoples survey by the Asia New Zealand Foundation at St Peter's on Willis Street on 2 December.

Members of the public, Wellington City councillors and representatives from community associations gathered to hear insights from this nationally significant research. The findings highlight the growing importance of Asia to New Zealand's future – economically, socially and culturally – and the evolving ways New Zealanders understand our region.

The conversation did not end with the presentation. Dozens remained afterwards to share kai and continue discussions, reflecting Ekta's belief that dialogue, hospitality and connection go hand in hand.



Looking back

Interfaith Service in Solidarity with Bondi Beach Victims



Wellingtonians came together in solidarity at an interfaith service to honour the victims of the shootings during a Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach on 14 December.

People of many faiths and cultures gathered, united by our shared humanity. Mervin Singham, Chief Executive of the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, opened with heartfelt remarks. Melissa Derby, the Race Relations Commissioner, followed with her reflections on the importance of inclusion and social cohesion.

Faith leaders from the Jewish, Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities offered prayers. The Australian Deputy High Commissioner, Ben Milton, and Reverend Stephen King concluded the service.

The gathering was a powerful reminder that social cohesion requires continual collective effort as we build a better future together in New Zealand.

Seven Tonnes of Care: Christmas Food Distribution



Across six days in December and January at four Wellington venues, nearly 40 Eka volunteers came together to support families in need.

Volunteers collected, picked, packed, sorted, and delivered more than 600 food parcels – each weighing around 12kg and containing over 20 essential items including rice, pasta, cooking oil, tea, flour, sugar and tinned goods. In total, more than seven tonnes of food were distributed.

Every recipient also received a separate bag of fresh produce, ensuring families had both pantry staples and fresh, nutritious food for the festive season.

Looking back

A Shared Start to the Year: New Year's Day Picnic

On 1 January 2026, More than 120 people gathered at St Peter's on Willis Street to welcome the New Year with a public BBQ picnic hosted by Ekta.

Open to all, the event brought together neighbours, families and friends for food, conversation and connection. It was a simple but meaningful way to begin the year – strengthening relationships and reinforcing the everyday work of social cohesion.

At Ekta, we believe that community is built around shared values, shared connections and shared tables.



Wellington Welcomes the Year of the Horse



Johnsonville Mall was filled with colour, music and celebration last week as more than 200 people gathered to welcome the Lunar New Year and the arrival of the Year of the Horse.

A six-day programme, organised by Ekta NZ, ran from 11-16 February and featured hands-on classes in dumpling-making, calligraphy, mahjong and dance. The main celebration on 12 February showcased a traditional Chinese painting of the horse zodiac symbol, performances by the Ekta Chinese Aroha group, music on the ancient guzheng, a Thai mother-and-daughter dance, a pipa and ruan duet, and vibrant Vietnamese and Chinese costume parades.

The festivities culminated in a traditional lion dance – a centuries-old custom believed to usher in good fortune for the year ahead, with drumbeats to drive away negative energy.

Wellington Deputy Mayor Ben McNulty and Councillors Diane Calvert, Ray Chung and Tony Randle attended, alongside representatives from local and national community organisations.

Get Involved

Ekta NZ was established as a not-for-profit, non-political, secular, non-religious and community-based charity organization in July 2017. Ekta is the Hindi word for unity/oneness. Our objective is to contribute to building a more inclusive New Zealand through volunteerism to support society's vulnerable.

Ekta has run weekly food distributions since 2017 throughout Wellington. From October to December 2025, we gave out over 2300 grocery bags to over 4550 people. This year, a new operation has just begun in Johnsonville.

If you are interested in helping with donations of cash, kind, effort or skills, please contact us at:

contact-us@ekta.nz

021 131 7644

<https://ekta.nz/>



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Photo Wall - Lunar New Year

