



Media Release
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Selwyn recognised as welcoming community

Selwyn has become one of the first places in the country to be recognised as a welcoming community for its efforts to support newcomers to the region.

Selwyn District Council was one of 10 Councils who were the first in country to gain accreditation as a 'Welcoming Community' by Immigration New Zealand.

The accreditation recognises councils and communities that value newcomers, and their work to build welcoming and inclusive communities. It gives access to further funding, support and advice.

Over the past two years figures from the Council's monthly citizenship ceremonies alone show Selwyn has welcomed 588 people from 56 nationalities around the world ranging from South Africa and India to Cambodia, Uzbekistan and Iceland.

Selwyn Mayor Sam Broughton says the accreditation recognises the hard work the Council and community are putting into being a welcoming place.

"We have many lovely people in our district who have moved from all over New Zealand and around the world. Helping one another feel at home here in Selwyn is important to us and we will continue to implement and support these type of initiatives."

Those initiatives include Selwyn libraries offering access to online English and other language learning systems and hosting programmes for newcomers and long-term residents to connect with each other. The Council and Christchurch Multi-Cultural Council also run the annual CultureFest event at Lincoln Domain where migrants share food, performances and crafts.

Some of these citizens have shared their stories through Faces of Selwyn, a series of stories which captures the diversity of Selwyn and how these residents have settled into the district.

The stories are on display throughout Selwyn libraries, on the Council's website and in Council Call.

Newcomers are being welcomed with many other activities in 2020.

Chinese lantern animals are on display at Selwyn Libraries and the Council headquarters, and the libraries are hosting Chinese New Year story times to celebrate the New Year festival.

The Council is working alongside Immigration NZ to provide information for businesses who employ people from overseas or are looking to employ people from overseas.

A new award will be presented at this year's Selwyn Awards in August, recognising businesses that accommodate people facing additional barriers, such as moving from another country, in their business plan.

Photos available on request

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