



Volunteering Spirit Alive And Well

The spirit of volunteering is alive and well, according to the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector Rick Barker.

The Minister was appointed to the portfolio in September.

“Giving time to one’s community is very much the ethos of New Zealanders. People help each other out in all sorts of ways such as looking after the neighbour’s kids or coaching local sports clubs. New Zealanders like to be good citizens. We do all manner of things to make the world a better place. It’s a key ingredient of our national identity,” he says.

Minister Barker believes strong community and voluntary organisations are the key to neighbourhoods retaining their



Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector Rick Barker.

identity. “A strength of community organisations is the role they play in developing local solutions to local problems. The Government’s role is to support those organisations. This partnership is a vital part of making our country a better place to live.”

He says he is looking forward to meeting the challenges ahead in his

role as advocate for the community and voluntary sector. Being a former union leader, he is used to being an advocate for others, he says.

“I intend meeting with people from the sector when I travel around New Zealand, to get a feel for the vast work going on.” He says many people from the sector talk to him about their funding concerns, and in particular about compliance costs. To deal with the issue of compliance costs the Ministry of Social Development has set up a three-year action research project, Funding for Outcomes, to improve contracting processes for organisations funded by several government agencies.

For further information contact:
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Government Responds To Concerns About Charities Bill

The Government has agreed that there will be no registration fee for charities, in response to concerns about compliance costs that would have been imposed by the proposed Charities Bill.

In addition, charities earning less than \$10,000 a year will not be required to pay ongoing fees. Those with annual revenue of more than \$10,000 will pay an online annual fee of \$50, while paper-based annual returns will cost \$75 to file. Figures include GST.

The new Charities Commission will also have a stronger role in education and will contribute to

policy development for the sector.

The changes were recommended by the Social Services Select Committee after hearing submissions to the draft Charities Bill.

Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) Senior Analyst Sally Jackman represented the Office on the officials’ group that advised the select committee hearing submissions on the Bill.

“Many submitters made interesting and powerful presentations to the Select Committee. People from all over New Zealand put forward their views. Some were complex



OCVS Senior Analyst Sally Jackman.

and detailed and others were straight from the heart.

“I saw the process as democracy working – people helping to shape new law,” Sally says.

The Select Committee was expected to report back to Parliament with suggested amendments to the Charities Bill in early December.

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Volunteers' Contribution Acknowledged

The contribution of volunteers was celebrated around the world on 5 December 2004 – International Volunteers Day.

In Kingston, Jamaica, people joined forces to repair some of the damage caused by Hurricane Ivan. In Manila people exhibited photos on the theme of volunteering, and in Wellington, the City Council provided an official street sign for the Living Legacy garden created by volunteers for volunteers.

The day was designated in 1985 by the United Nations General Assembly to recognise volunteers working in communities.



Member of the International Year of Volunteers Co-ordinating Committee Ann Hodson, seen here in 2001 positioning one of the first plants in the Living Legacy garden, described the garden as a "special place of tranquillity and inspiration in the inner city".

Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) Director Brenda Ratcliff praised the hundreds of thousands of volunteers who

contribute to the volunteer workforce and provide community-based services and support at a local level.

"While we don't know the exact number of volunteers, we do know that there are nearly 15,000 charitable trusts and 22,700 incorporated societies registered with the Companies Office. These figures don't include Māori organisations registered under different Acts or organisations that don't have legal structures.

"Volunteers are very special. We really appreciate their time and energy. They give generously year after year and run services that meet the needs of local people in all sorts of communities.

"Many employers support volunteering by releasing staff to spend time working for local organisations. We would encourage more employers to get involved. One popular way is to spend a day or more working for a community organisation that cannot pay for labour," Brenda says.

Contact your local volunteer centre to find out what opportunities are available at www.vnz.org.nz

For information about OCVS work on volunteering issues contact: Joyce-Anne Raihania 04 918 9567 or email Joyce-Anne.Raihania001@msd.govt.nz

Advisory Committee For Research Project

An advisory committee to oversee a Non-profit Data Collection research project, jointly funded by community trusts, the Government and the Tindall Foundation, met for the first time in November.

A key component of the project is the collection of data which provides a picture of the non-profit sector. Statistics New Zealand will produce the statistical data.

The advisory committee will provide advice on the data collection. It will also support New Zealand's input into the Johns Hopkins project – an international study of the non-profit sector conducted by Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore).

The advisory committee, which is co-ordinated by the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS), consists of Ken Gordon (Trust Waikato), Tuwhakairiora Williams (contractor), Peter Glensor (Community Sector Taskforce member), Donna Matahaere-Atariki (Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu), David Robinson (NZ Social and Civil Policy Institute), Robyn Munford (Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University), Garth Nowland-Foreman (Researcher) and Bob Stephens (Victoria University School of Government).

Committee Chair Ken Gordon says the sector and



Advisory Committee members and government officials met recently. From left to right: Ken Gordon (Chair), Garth Nowland-Foreman, Donna Matahaere-Atariki, Elvie Yates and Jeff Cope (Statistics NZ), Diana Suggate (OCVS), Bob Stephens, Tuwhakairiora Williams, Chungui Qiao (Ministry of Social Development), Peter Glensor and David Robinson. Absent: Robyn Munford.

Government need to understand in more detail how the sector contributes to the economy. "Community-based organisations provide essential services and support to their communities at a local level, and on a national scale make a huge contribution to our economy and to our social wellbeing," he says.

When the project concludes in 2007 a fuller picture of the nature and extent of non-profit sector activities and volunteering in New Zealand will be available. Future issues of OCVS News will report on specific findings.

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