



No. 5, 2006

December 2006

## Huge volunteer contribution valued

The recent International Volunteer Day (IVD) saw New Zealanders around the country show their collective appreciation to all the volunteers who keep our communities going.

Certificates were presented to many loyal volunteers, while other groups hosted special events and activities to show their gratitude. The ways of celebrating IVD and acknowledging the hard work of volunteers were as varied as the volunteers themselves, but it was very clear that volunteers contribute to every facet of New Zealand life, from sports and the arts, to emergency services, the environment, social services and human rights.

“Helping others and contributing to our communities is part of who we are as New Zealanders,” Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) Director Brenda Ratcliff says.

“Research with different communities in New Zealand has shown us that there are many ways that people support their communities, and we use a range of terms to describe these good works and our reasons for helping.

“Some people talk of just doing what’s needed, or being part of the community. There are formal activities through organised groups and informal help between neighbours. Some talk of unpaid work or active citizenship, while others say it is simply part of their culture or that there is an expectation that they will help out and give back to their communities.

“However we refer to these gifts of humanity, I believe International Volunteer Day is about celebrating all these exchanges of kindness and recognising the contribution of volunteers in the broadest terms,” Brenda says.

“Even when volunteers don’t recognise themselves as volunteers, we value what they do and acknowledge and support their efforts – a philosophy that is endorsed in the Government Policy on Volunteering, and the existence of OCVS itself,” Brenda says.

International Volunteer Day was instigated by the United Nations in 1985, and is celebrated in 125 countries.

Read the Government Policy on Volunteering at <http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/publications/#policies>



Volunteers keep our communities vibrant and growing – pictured are some of New Zealand’s wonderful volunteers.



# Help is at hand

A range of resources and information is available to help people working with the community and voluntary sector. The Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) has a mandate to

encourage good relationships between the government and the sector, and part of its work is to promote those resources. If there are any information gaps then OCVS works collaboratively with the sector to develop useful resources. Listed below are some key resources.

## For non-government organisations (NGOs)

- *Keeping it Legal E Ai Ki Te Ture* – an online resource featuring simple, accurate information to help community groups understand and meet their legal obligations.  
[www.keepingitlegal.net.nz](http://www.keepingitlegal.net.nz)
- *The Community Resource Kit* – a resource for small or emerging community and voluntary groups, especially those just setting up or undergoing change. It includes information on 12 topics from planning and governance, through to financial management, employment and information technology. It is available free in print (limited numbers), on CD and online at [www.community.net.nz](http://www.community.net.nz)
- *CommunityNet* – an information-sharing resource for community

and voluntary groups consisting of guides, news and tools for and by clubs, trusts, hapu and iwi.  
[www.community.net.nz](http://www.community.net.nz)

## For government

- *The Good Practice Participate website* – for public servants to engage successfully with community, voluntary, iwi and Māori organisations. It supports active involvement in decision-making as a sign of a healthy, participatory democracy.  
[www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz](http://www.goodpracticeparticipate.govt.nz)
- *The Good Practice Funding website* – covers why government funds NGOs, the importance of healthy relationships with NGOs, funding processes and NGO perspectives on government funding.  
[www.goodpracticefunding.govt.nz](http://www.goodpracticefunding.govt.nz)

- *Treasury's Guidelines for Contracting with Non-Government Organisations for Services Sought by the Crown* – guidelines to help government agencies deal with NGOs on funding issues. This is not a set of definitive instructions that cover all situations and scenarios.
- *Principles to Underpin Management by Public Entities of Funding to Non-Government Organisations* – a good practice guide that sets out the principles the Auditor-General expects public entities to consider, and act in keeping with, to manage funding arrangements with NGOs.

See [www.ocvs.govt.nz](http://www.ocvs.govt.nz) for more information on how to access these key tools.

## OCVS on international stage



Kat Paton.

The importance of collaboration was a key theme of a presentation given to the recent International Association of Volunteer Effort Conference in

New Delhi, India, by Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) Policy Analyst Kat Paton.

The theme of the conference was Volunteering for Peace in Multicultural Societies and Kat's presentation, *Community-Government Partnering to Support Volunteering in New Zealand*, highlighted efforts to encourage community participation in a way that is inclusive and relevant to all New Zealanders.

Kat highlighted collaborative examples such as OCVS's ongoing work with the NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations and Volunteering NZ, and the work underway to address the lack of data on volunteering in New Zealand.

She also tackled definitions of volunteering and how these may impact on government policies and practice.

"Should our definitions of volunteering be remoulded by New Zealand's many cultures, or should unpaid activity driven by obligation be left to stand and be recognised in its own right, and within its own context," Kat asked.

*Kat's paper is available at: [www.ocvs.govt.nz](http://www.ocvs.govt.nz)*

## First Funders Forum



The first Regional Funders Forum was opened by the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, in October. OCVS is working with Philanthropy NZ and the Department of Internal Affairs to hold a series of up to 12 events around New Zealand in 2007. Pictured in Wellington with the Minister (right) were OCVS Director Brenda Ratcliff (left) and Philanthropy NZ Executive Director Robyn Scott.