

# Government Policy on Volunteering

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Given that volunteers make a vital contribution to social development, the economy and the environment, government endorses the following policy on volunteering:

## Vision

A society with a high level of volunteering, where the many contributions people make to the common good through volunteering and fulfilment of cultural obligations are actively supported and valued.

## Recognition

Government recognises that:

- volunteers are found in wide-ranging spheres of activity, including sports, arts, heritage, emergency services, social services, health, education, recreation, human rights, tourism, conservation and the environment
- volunteers offer their time and expertise of their own free will, out of commitment to their community, and to fulfil cultural obligations
- the nature of volunteering varies widely depending on different cultural expectations and the nature of the task
- volunteers give their time unpaid and should have the opportunity to gain benefits in return, such as new skills, and a sense of belonging and achievement
- volunteers should not replace paid workers
- volunteering is an essential element of civil society.

## Commitments

To support this vision, government is committed to:

- valuing and celebrating the contributions of volunteers
- recognising the contribution that tangata whenua, Pacific and ethnic peoples make to their communities through fulfilment of cultural obligations
- ensuring that volunteers have appropriate protection under law
- ensuring good practice in volunteer programmes which government directly manages
- encouraging community and voluntary organisations to develop and maintain good practice in supporting and involving their volunteers
- reducing barriers associated with volunteering in legislation, policy and practice
- supporting initiatives to increase understanding of, and to disseminate information about, volunteering.

## Implementation

Government expects all government agencies to:

- take into account the needs of volunteers and their organisations, and the costs associated with volunteering, when developing policies and delivering services
- consult volunteers and their organisations on policy and operational changes that impact on volunteering
- have policies in place that support the private volunteering activities of staff while ensuring that public servants continue to fulfil their professional obligations.