

▶ **Submission to the New Zealand Police regarding the  
Cost Recovery for Certain Police Services proposal**

(Submitted on-line)

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▶ **About Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ)**

VNZ is an association of 100+ organisations including Volunteer Centres and other national and regional organisations that have a commitment to volunteering.

Our vision is for a New Zealand that promotes, values and supports effective volunteering for the benefit of individuals and communities – and our mission is to promote, support and advocate for volunteering.

We are the only national organisation in New Zealand that focuses purely on volunteering and volunteer management. As the “voice of volunteering”, we hold the ‘big picture’ and are in a position to liaise and work with organisations across the sector, and to advise government and business sectors on matters related to volunteering. We work to ensure that volunteering occurs within a positive environment where it is encouraged and fostered.

In 2008, 67% of the Community and Voluntary Sector workforce was made up of volunteers; 90% of New Zealand non-profit organisations employ no staff, and rely solely on volunteers<sup>1</sup>.

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▶ **Submission**

1. We do not agree with the proposed schedule of fees for the Police vetting service, and cannot see how a fee system will encourage efficiency.
2. VNZ has conducted a brief survey of members about the proposed changes. Results from a small sample are included in this submission.

▶ **Background**

3. We appreciate the burden of the Police vetting service in the light of the huge increase in demand for this service. We point out that any increase in these services from the community and voluntary sector is likely because of government contract requirements which give due attention to risk management.
4. Volunteer organisations request Police vetting services as a means to minimise risk to services. The organisation can thus have confidence in their staff and volunteers.

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<sup>1</sup> *The New Zealand Non-profit Sector in Comparative Perspective, 2008*

5. We believe the service should continue to be free to community and voluntary sector, especially for organisations, staff and volunteers working with vulnerable people.

## ▶ Survey conducted by Volunteering New Zealand

6. Volunteering New Zealand conducted a brief survey of members about the proposed changes. Results from a small sample (44 organisations) indicate:
  - Use of an even spread between Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Criminal History Checks and Police Vetting
  - Only 12% of VNZ member organisations request 24 or less checks per annum; 30% requested 25-100 checks per annum; and another 30% requested more than 100
  - Online checks were made by 63% of respondents.
7. Comments on the importance of Police vetting included:
  - Protection and risk management for the organisation, its property and staff, volunteers and service users
  - Police vetting is especially important for vulnerable people (children, young people, elderly and disabled) and for at risk clients
  - Government agencies include Police vetting and CHCs in contract requirements.
8. Comments on the impact of fees were received from 54% of the sample; all were negative:
  - It is an added compliance cost which is unaffordable to organisations.
  - It would add to the burden of fundraising
  - Organisations cannot absorb extra costs, which would add to overheads at the expense of service delivery and support for volunteers
  - Changing criteria for requesting checks would reduce standards and raise the level of risk, to service users and to organisation credibility.

## ▶ Additional suggestions

9. Volunteering is defined as per the 2002 Government Policy on Volunteering:  
<http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/publications/index.html#PoliciesThatApplyToThePublicSector2>
10. VNZ applauds the proposed exemptions for volunteers and charities, but would like this to become a blanket exemption for all organisations that involve volunteers whether they are a registered charity or not.
11. Due to the current issue with the Charities Act around the definition of charitable purpose, we do not support only providing current registered charities an exemption to this work. Organisations registered under the current DIA Charities Register only equate to 25,500+ of over an approximate 97,000 organisations in the wider New Zealand community and voluntary sector.
12. Community and voluntary sector organisations would likely have to re-negotiate contracts with government agencies to recoup the cost – in which case, it remains a cost to government.
13. It is always going to be the volunteer programme that suffers when compliance costs go up within organisations, programmes which generally have low budgets and little value research about them.