



▶ **Submission to Statistics New Zealand on  
Proposed content of New Zealand General Social Survey 2016**

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▶ **Contact Details**

This submission is by a group.

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▶ **Background**

**Volunteering New Zealand**

1. Volunteering New Zealand is the “voice of volunteering” in Aotearoa. We are the only national association that focused on volunteering and volunteer management. In 2001 through request by organisations in the community and voluntary sector, the New Zealand Government determined the need for a national organisation to lead, promote, support and represent volunteering in New Zealand.
2. Over the past 13 years, VNZ has raised the profile of volunteer management, volunteering and its value to New Zealand society through sharing stories, producing tools like the *Best Practice*

*Guidelines and Competencies for Managers of Volunteers.*

3. We can see the big picture when it comes to volunteering in New Zealand as we work with numerous organisations across the voluntary and community sectors. This big picture view means we are best placed to give advice on matters related to volunteering.
4. We work to ensure that volunteering occurs within a positive environment where it is encouraged and fostered. We envisage a society that promotes, values and supports effective volunteering for the benefit of individuals and communities.
5. We have a membership of over 60 national and regional member organisations that involve volunteers in their work programmes. We advocate on behalf of these organisations and other groups that are not members, but are aligned to our mission and values.

### **New Zealand's Voluntary Sector**

6. New Zealand has more than 97,000 not for profit organisations, contributing 2.6% to GDP. This increases to 4.9% of GDP when taking into account the volunteer labour contribution and is similar to the contribution of the entire construction industry.
7. The most up-to-date data on the volunteer sector state that in New Zealand there are more than 1.2 million volunteers who give more than 270 million hours of unpaid labour to the sector<sup>1</sup>. In 2008, 67% of the Community and Voluntary Sector workforce was made up of volunteers; 90% of New Zealand not for profit organisations employ no staff, and rely solely on volunteers<sup>2</sup>.

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## **► Submission**

8. Our **first preference** for the supplementary module content for NZGSS 2016 is 'Option 1: Civic and Cultural Participation'. We would require this information **every year ideally** and it would be detailed enough for us to understand behaviours between different **ages, genders, ethnicities and regions**.
9. The New Zealand Government is committed to valuing and celebrating the contributions of volunteers and supporting initiatives to increase understanding of, and to disseminate information about volunteering. It is essential for the Government to fulfil this commitment to have access to up-to-date data and research that describes size and the value of the civic and volunteer contribution.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics New Zealand, 2013

<sup>2</sup> From the *The New Zealand Non-profit Sector in Comparative Perspective*, 2008

10. As the volunteer sector is reliant on the participation of individuals, understanding the factors that enhance or inhibit this participation would be very useful for tailoring how we support both the wider community and organisations that undertake volunteers. There is also scope to undertake more comprehensive projects, targeted at identified needs of specific age, gender, region, occupation, interest-base or ethnicity. This data would also help our regional volunteer centers to provide evidence-based project proposals or funding applications. It is important then that the data is accessible for all not for profit organisations.
11. More comprehensive and regularly updated data will provide us with a better insight as to the scale and value of the volunteer contribution in New Zealand. Eventually this may lead to an increased focus on public policies and initiative that support and enhance volunteering within New Zealand, which we believe will benefit organisations such as Cancer Society of New Zealand, that could not undertake its current role without the contribution of volunteers and the community sector as a whole.

### ► **Specific Areas of Interest**

12. Numerous overseas studies indicate that regular volunteering impacts positively on individual well-being. As the NZGSS is a multi-dimensional survey of well-being, it would make sense to include volunteer contribution to the survey on a regular basis. Access to this dataset will allow New Zealand researchers to investigate whether the relationship between volunteering and an individual's subjective well-being relationship also exists within our borders and if there are differences between different ages, genders, occupations and regions.
13. To encourage a cohesive and inclusive society, information on civic and cultural participation across specific ethnic or cultural groups is vital. This information can help us understand the shared norms and values which underpin New Zealand society and allow us to understand the drivers behind sense of belonging and national identity.