



Volunteering New Zealand's

# Briefing to the Incoming Minister



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## 1. Why we exist

As the peak body for volunteering, Volunteering New Zealand's purpose is to be the kaitiaki of mahi aroha, empowering volunteers to enrich Aotearoa New Zealand. Volunteering New Zealand aspires to see volunteering is valued as part of who we are as a nation. Aotearoa New Zealand thrives, and is enriched, by the goodwill of volunteers in every community and Volunteering New Zealand strives for their contribution and impact to be recognised and supported.

Volunteering New Zealand is an association of volunteer centres, and national and regional organisations with a commitment to volunteering in Aotearoa New Zealand. We represent over 5,000 organisations, and the 2.5 million volunteers in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Flourishing communities are critical to New Zealand's economic, social, environmental, and cultural success. Volunteering New Zealand works collaboratively with Hui E! Community Aotearoa, Inspiring Communities, and Philanthropy New Zealand to facilitate this significant role of communities. Together we ask that you elevate community to a central role in supporting the Government agenda. We look forward to meeting with you collectively to discuss how we can realise this potential together.

## 2. The purpose of this briefing

Volunteering New Zealand is looking forward to forging a close and productive partnership that facilitates a strong and resilient Community and Voluntary Sector. Tangata whenua and community organisations are the backbone of New Zealand communities. They provide opportunities for people to get involved in a broad range of activities that they feel are important from social services and health care to education, arts, environment, conservation, and sport. Communities across New Zealand are unified by people and volunteering has a transformative impact on people within these communities.

The purpose of this briefing is to provide you with:

- An outline of how we can work to support you
- An update on Volunteering New Zealand's activities
- An overview of the Community and Voluntary Sector from our research
- An overview of the impact of the Covid-19 on the sector
- A perspective into the future challenges and trends of the sector
- Request a meeting with you in early to discuss the challenges and opportunities for the Community and Voluntary Sector, the contribution of the sector in rebuilding New Zealand together

### 3. How we can support you

Volunteering New Zealand has been a trusted voice for the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector. Due to our broad membership, extensive networks, and knowledge of the sector, we are uniquely positioned to provide collated information and feedback, as well as advice and support to you and the Government.

We will continue to support Government's decisions and collaboratively work to strengthen the sector. To do so, we suggest:

- Regular monthly meetings with Volunteering New Zealand to share sector activities and needs, research and insights.
- Bi-monthly joint meetings with Volunteering New Zealand, Hui E! Community Aotearoa, Inspiring Communities, and Philanthropy New Zealand.
- Regular bi-monthly meeting with a wider Core Reference Group to discuss cross-sector initiatives and shared experiences.

The Labour Party has previously committed to rejuvenating the Government Policy on Volunteering and working towards creating a recognised volunteering strategy across all of government. We understand this process has been slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic but is still under development. Growing and strengthening the social infrastructure scaffolding of mahi aroha and volunteering in all policy development and activities across all government departments and agencies. Volunteering New Zealand can assist with providing expert input and advice into this process and updating the Government Policy on Volunteering.

Collaboratively rejuvenating the Government Policy on Volunteering will underline the importance of the intersection between mahi aroha and volunteering to services in Aotearoa New Zealand. It will enable government agents that deliver, fund and contract to be more impactful in their decision making. An up-to-date policy on volunteering will enable better delivery of policy agendas impacting on the unpaid workforce as well as strategic investment into mahi aroha and volunteering.

Additionally, we can support you in developing a coordinated national strategy for volunteering which is required to address the challenges facing the Community and Voluntary Sector. A national strategy will ensure that volunteering is accessible, resourced and valued into the future, and the significant contributions of the sector to the New Zealand economy and communities are sustained.

Finally, Volunteering New Zealand can assist you in addressing key issues facing the community and voluntary sector. We conduct regular research, surveys, and environmental scans of the sector to identify issues and opportunities. The findings of Volunteering New Zealand's State of Volunteering 2020, and the feedback received from volunteer-involving organisations highlighted several issues facing the Community and Voluntary Sector just before the Covid-19 pandemic; for instance, aging volunteers and necessity of engaging with

younger volunteers, recognition of volunteering and volunteers, and funding. Volunteering New Zealand's research and insight into the impacts of Covid-19 on the sector can also help you in facilitating collaboration between the government and the sector to support communities to recover and rebuild Aotearoa's social infrastructure after the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **4. About Volunteering New Zealand**

Volunteering New Zealand has a membership of over 90 national and regional member organisations that involve volunteers in their work programmes. These organisations can in turn represent up to 200 local community organisations. Current member organisations include emergency services, health, welfare, education, culture, faith-based services, community support, ethnic groups, sport and recreation, conservation, special interests, advocacy and international volunteering. Our member organisations are typically associations or "peak bodies" that in turn represent a large number of local and regional volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs). We advocate on behalf of these organisations and for other groups that are not members but are aligned to our mission and values. Volunteering New Zealand's large and diverse membership and its strong partnerships with government, iwi/Māori, communities and business enable us to transform volunteering in Aotearoa New Zealand. Volunteering New Zealand makes a difference through:

##### **a) Volunteering New Zealand's State of Volunteering Survey 2020**

Volunteering New Zealand's flagship research is the State of Volunteering. This involves surveys and other research to determine a snapshot of the State of Volunteering (SOV) and highlights the challenges and opportunities facing volunteering.

Our latest report was released in July 2020. In a two-month period from December 2019 to February 2020, over 3000 respondents (both volunteers and volunteer-involving organizations) participated in the Volunteering New Zealand's SOV 2020. The findings illustrate the states of volunteering in New Zealand just before the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic/lockdown.

The data indicated a change in the landscape of volunteering. These changes bring about challenges as well as opportunities that need to be addressed and seized upon. Ageing volunteers are noted as a concern by 35.8% of respondents, with a lack of younger volunteers also cited by many. While 82.3% of volunteers intend to continue their current volunteering role in the long term, 36.6% of VIOs report a lack of volunteers as their biggest challenge. The findings of the State of Volunteering Survey 2020 are promising though. Participants rated the state of volunteering in New Zealand as 6.8 and 6.9 (out of 10), by volunteers and VIOs, respectively which is higher than the score of 6.0 in the State of Volunteering 2017 survey.

## **b) Research and advocacy for volunteering and volunteers**

Volunteering New Zealand conducts regular research and surveys to collect up to date and relevant data of the New Zealand's Community and Voluntary Sector. The findings are distributed to a wide range of stakeholders and are used to portray an evidence-based picture of the sector. These findings also inform Volunteering New Zealand's (and other stakeholders') strategic and long-term planning. Through working collaboratively with volunteer centres, Volunteering New Zealand advocates for volunteering and volunteers, supports a safe volunteering environment, develops best practices for the sector, and provides volunteering resources. Volunteering New Zealand regularly updates its website in order to provide the sector with the most up-to-date research, resources, guidelines, and best practices.

## **c) Evaluating and improving the impact of the volunteer workforce**

Evaluation of volunteer involvement and effectiveness plays an important role in developing volunteers' capacity and contribution to sustainable and resilient communities.

Volunteering New Zealand has developed tools and resources to help volunteer-involving organizations with evaluating and improving the effectiveness of their volunteers. Best Practice Guidelines Toolkit, LeadMe, InvolveMe, and InvolveMe 360 have been specifically designed for helping volunteer managers to evaluate and improve their management structures, transform the way they utilise their volunteers' capabilities, and provide volunteers with a pleasant volunteering experience.

## **d) Thought Leadership for volunteering in Aotearoa**

Our role at Volunteering New Zealand is to foster volunteering for our nation, observe progress and develop initiatives that will support the community sector landscape. These initiatives facilitate the engagement of people to give their time to volunteer. Through closely monitoring the international and domestic trends of volunteering, Volunteering New Zealand identifies the impacts of changing global and national environments on volunteer-involving organisations, on volunteers, and how the sector can be supported through policy and investment. In doing so, Volunteering New Zealand plays a critical role as the thought leadership for the Community and Voluntary Sector in New Zealand.

## **e) Being the voice of volunteers to achieve an inclusive, ethical, supported and impactful volunteering**

Being uniquely positioned to identify, measure, and respond to issues and trends in volunteering in Aotearoa, Volunteering New Zealand is committed to being the voice of volunteers to make volunteering inclusive, ethical, supported and impactful. We have a strategic focus on diversity and inclusion in volunteering which is reflected in our National Strategy to Support Volunteering for Recent Migrants. We are committed to developing a national strategy and action plan to achieve inclusive and ethical volunteering.

As the peak body of volunteering in New Zealand, Volunteering New Zealand continues to promote volunteering opportunities to engage volunteers and reach out to potential volunteers. To do so, a diverse range of events are being organized and promoted throughout the year. These include webinars (both general and specialised), presentations, conferences, and public campaigns. Some of this year's events included the annual Pivot Conference, National Volunteer Week, Student Volunteer Week, "#AotearoaOfKindness: Mobilising the kindness DNA", International Volunteer Day, International Volunteer Managers Day.

Coming up soon is International Volunteer Day (5 December 2020, theme: *Better Together*). This year, Volunteering New Zealand is working with our members to identify suitable opportunities for yourself to engage with volunteers during this event.

#### **f) Consultation support to government**

As the national volunteering peak body, Volunteering New Zealand supports various government departments in volunteering related matters. Due to its expertise and experience, Volunteering New Zealand is frequently invited by government agencies to provide feedback and advice on a range of topics. For instance, the Health Volunteer Awards at the Ministry of Health, and the development of volunteer manuals at the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Services. During the Covid-19 pandemic/lockdown, Volunteering New Zealand was closely collaborating with Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Services in coordinating volunteer centres, identifying and mobilising volunteers, and developing guidelines for safe and compliant volunteering.

## 5. Voluntary and community sector before the Covid-19

The Community and Voluntary Sector is comprised of myriad entities – diverse in size and scope – that contribute to their communities in many different ways. In 2018, there were 115,770 non-profit institutions (NPIs), compared with 114,110 in 2013<sup>1</sup>. Of these, 51,820 are classified into the culture, sport, and the creation activity group. The second largest activity group belongs to social services with 14,130 institutes. In 2018, 45 percent of NPIs were engaged in arts, cultural, sporting, or recreational activities. Social services, and development and housing made similar contributions to the total number of NPIs with 9 and 8 percent, respectively. Religion was the third largest group by number of institutions and contributed 9 percent of institutions in 2018. Together, these four activity groups made up almost three-quarters of the total NPI population<sup>2</sup>.

### 1. Contribution of non-profit institutions to New Zealand's economy

The Community and Voluntary Sector plays a significant role in New Zealand's economy. Due to the nature of voluntary contributions, traditional measures of GDP do not account for the value of volunteer labour for non-profit institutions. Accordingly, NPIs contributed \$8.1 billion to GDP for the year ended March 2018. This was 2.8 percent of New Zealand's total GDP. In 2013 they contributed \$6.2 billion (2.9 percent)<sup>3</sup>.

In 2018, Statistics New Zealand extended traditional GDP measures to include the value of volunteering in the contribution of NPIs to the economy. The value of voluntary labour (or formal unpaid work) in New Zealand's NPIs was estimated to be \$4.0 billion in 2018, compared with \$3.5 billion in 2013. Including this value significantly increases the NPI contribution to GDP – from 2.8 percent to 4.2 percent, compared with 4.5 percent in 2013 and 4.9 percent in 2004<sup>4</sup>.

### 2. Volunteers and volunteer hours

A common link between the diverse actors in the Community and Voluntary Sector is the role of volunteers. In 2018, 89 percent of NPIs did not employ staff and were powered entirely by volunteers. This is down 1% compared with 2013<sup>5</sup>.

The number of volunteer hours worked at NPIs in 2018 was 159 million (1,008,000 volunteers) compared with 157 million hours (1,229,054 volunteers) in 2013. The number of hours has remained stable while the number of volunteers has dropped from 29% of the population in 2013 to 21.5% in 2018. This indicates there are fewer people volunteering but they are working more hours.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics New Zealand (2018), Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account (Wellington: Statistics New Zealand)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



It is noteworthy that the above figures only reflect the formal volunteering – which is done through an organization – and they do not include informal volunteering, defined as volunteering done outside formal organisations. When the informal volunteering was accounted for, 49.8% of people 15 years of age or older reported having performed formal and/or informal volunteer work in the last four weeks<sup>6</sup>.

Volunteers aged 65 and over play a significant role in the sector and run the majority of community groups. These volunteers often find volunteering a substitute to social roles they have lost, such as work and active parenthood. Volunteering helps older people to eliminate isolation, strengthen community participation, enhance self-esteem, change stereotypes, and promote social and political consciousness<sup>7</sup>.

Volunteering New Zealand recognises that voluntary work by Māori may not be fully represented in the available data. Although Māori regularly engage in unpaid work, the Western concept of “volunteering” does not accurately reflect the Māori worldview, experiences of, and motivations for carrying out unpaid work for whānau, hapū, iwi and other Māori organisations and individuals<sup>8</sup>. For Māori, mahi aroha (volunteering) is based on the notion of whanaungatanga (kinship) and the benefits, both for individuals and the wider community, derived from contributing to the common good.

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<sup>6</sup> Statistics New Zealand (2019). Quarterly Labour Market Statistics March, 2018 Quarter. (Wellington: Statistics New Zealand)

<sup>7</sup> Dury, Sarah., De Donder, Liesbeth., De Witte, Nico., Buffel, Tine., Jacquet, Wolfgang. and Verté, Dominique. To Volunteer or Not: The Influence of Individual Characteristics, Resources, and Social Factors on the Likelihood of Volunteering by Older Adults. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (2015), 44, 1107-1128.

<sup>8</sup> Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (2007). Mahi aroha: Māori perspectives on volunteering and cultural obligations.

## **6. Impact of the Covid-19 on the sector and how we made a difference**

The Community and Voluntary Sector has significantly changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic/lockdown. A sizable portion of the sector has seen its business as usual disrupted due to challenges and restrictions of the pandemic. For the volunteering sector, these restrictions mean an immediate change in the way the operations are conducted. Although several volunteer-involving organisations were able to register as essential businesses and resume their activities, many organisations had to completely shut down their operations during levels 3 and level 2 lockdowns.

From the beginning of the pandemic/lockdown, volunteering sector and community organisations worked collaboratively to address challenges and adapt to temporary and permanent changes. The Volunteer Centre Network had regular meetings to explore avenues for volunteering and community work as well as possible mechanisms to adapt to new circumstances.

### **6.1. Sector's response to Covid**

The Community and Voluntary Sector established new communication channels (and improved the existing ones) to coordinate volunteers with volunteering activities. A strategic collaboration was formed with the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group to coordinate volunteering activities. Besides focusing on the health and well-being of volunteers and providing them with more support and resources at such stressful and uncertain times, there was also a special focus on older adults as volunteers and vulnerable community members relying on volunteer services.

A distinctive initiative on behalf of the sector was to develop facilities and rearrange some activities for remote and online operation. Although volunteering events were postponed, an increase in communication across sector – using online platforms and social media – facilitated reaching out to volunteers and making connections with communities to support impacted areas (for instance, retirement villages) and ensuring access to the most up-to-date, relevant, and reliable information.

### **6.2. Actions from Volunteering New Zealand**

In anticipation of restrictions resulting from the pandemic, Volunteering New Zealand had early preparations for remote working arrangements. One week before the lockdown, Volunteering New Zealand's staff started working from home. As soon as the government announced the lockdown, the Volunteering New Zealand team did a series of actions and initiations as a response to COVID-19.

We incorporated new pages to our website (Volunteering New Zealand's Response to COVID-19) where we provided up-to-date resources, advice, and information for

volunteering organisations and volunteers, including volunteers' health and safety, and virtual volunteer management during the pandemic.

In close collaboration with the National Crisis Management Centre (NCMC) and the National Emergency Control Centre, we supported a co-ordinated national response to Covid-19 and volunteering, and contributed to developing guidelines for volunteering activities during different alert levels. This resulted in drafting and publishing of the volunteering guidelines for alert levels 4&3. These guidelines clarified how volunteers could keep contributing to communities, where volunteers were more needed, and what resources were available for them. We also contacted the Ministry of Health and sought clarification and advice on using complete PPEs for those volunteering activities that require close public interaction (for instance, collecting donations).

Volunteering New Zealand conducted a snapshot survey – to evaluate the status of the voluntary and community sector – and developed a data collection framework to collect feedback from Volunteer-Involving Organizations in order to identify emerging challenges, opportunities, and trends in the sector. Volunteering New Zealand documented these developments to be used for future analysis, planning, and reporting. The collected feedback was used to analyse the sector's status and response to the COVID-19 pandemic/lockdown. [The findings](#) were regularly distributed to various stakeholders in the volunteering sector. This communication was much welcomed by multiple stakeholders and received great feedback.

In partnership with the Centre for Social Impact, Hui E! Community Aotearoa, and Philanthropy New Zealand, Volunteering New Zealand conducted a comprehensive Covid-19 impact survey that explored the experience of the Community and Voluntary Sector during the Covid-19 lockdown. [The findings](#) of this survey are particularly important as they uncover unique capabilities of the sector that have previously been unknown. These capabilities are mostly related to the sector's flexibility and innovation, its adaptive response to changed circumstances, and how technology was utilised as a powerful tool to connect, communicate, and deliver services.

## 7. The way forward

The findings of Volunteering New Zealand's research and environmental scans revealed challenges as well as opportunities for moving the Community and Voluntary Sector forward. Some of the more significant issues and concerns are as follows:

- Maintaining the volunteer workforce over the foreseeable future.
- Maintaining and improving the well-being of communities and volunteers in the face of increased level of stress and anxiety, and more complex operating environments.
- The rapidly changing and evolving situation has resulted in unprecedented challenges and issues in planning, recruiting, coordinating, and utilising volunteers.
- Uncertainty around how volunteering should be reshaped as a result of COVID-19 pandemic/lockdown.
- Continued funding and fundraising are challenging in the face of people's jobs/income insecurity, and when the usual level of services are not carried out.
- The impacts of losing employment, funding, and decreased use of services.

Various stakeholders of the sector have also highlighted the need for more funding, guidelines and best practices, and extra support from government such as logistics, technology, health and well-being, and information. Similarly, the Covid-19 impact survey participants believed the sector needs to undergo a series of changes including collaboration between organisations, funding to cover salaries and operational costs, sector-wide leadership to provide voice and influence, access to information and data in one place, strengthening governance knowledge and skills in the sector, and strengthening financial management knowledge and skills. This insight will enable the sector to learn from this event, strategically plan, and improve its capacity to adapt to unexpected situations.

In addition to more funding, the sector needs a better information, data, and governance framework. This framework will address the difficulties resulting from a general lack of access to up-to-date and consistent volunteering information and data. Additionally, a National Volunteering Strategy is required to provide a sector-wide framework that governs and coordinates the collection and sharing of data, best practice tools, as well as portraying a strategic roadmap for the future of the sector. A National Volunteering Strategy will be of critical importance in implementing lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic/lockdown in strengthening and future proofing the community and voluntary sector.

It has been inspiring to see the generosity of New Zealanders over 2020 as individuals and communities worked together to navigate the coronavirus pandemic. Our team of 5 million strived to work together to keep each other, and our communities safe. Every day we witness the potential of volunteering in making a difference, and how volunteers positively contribute to their communities. By caring for others and contributing to change, volunteers improve the lives of other people while at the same time enhancing their own lives. The impact and outcome of this contribution has been highlighted in recent months, and so has

its power. Volunteers come from all walks of life, representing all ages, demographics and cultures, volunteering for many different reasons. Volunteering builds strong, sustainable and connected communities. It builds social capital; it is the glue that binds our communities, our culture, and our identity. Whatever we call it, be it unpaid work within our communities, volunteering, mahi aroha, or social action, it is a taonga we must all treasure, nurture, and recognise as integral to us as a nation.

## **8. Suggested discussion points for a meeting**

We kindly request a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss the challenges and opportunities for the Community and Voluntary Sector, the contribution of the sector in rebuilding New Zealand together, and how we can assist you in achieving better outcomes for the sector. Amongst other things, we are interested in discussions around the followings:

1. Collaboratively rejuvenating the government policy on volunteering
2. Funding a sector-led national strategy and action plan for volunteering
3. Collaboration between the government and the sector to support communities to recover and rebuild Aotearoa's social infrastructure after the COVID-19 pandemic

Volunteering New Zealand will assist you to empower communities to engage in and lead the recovery and rebuild phase through community development and community capacity building initiatives. In doing so, Joint initiatives between government and the sector are necessary, so are robust performance measures of vital social outcomes, decision-making based on reliable data, and strong yet agile governance allowing for rapid community adaptations. This will be the only way to achieve lasting outcomes for communities.

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