

MEDIA RELEASE

Embargoed until 8am, Monday, November 29

Community organisations struggling to keep pace with demand for services

Community organisations are running on empty after 18 months of pandemic pressures, new research from Volunteering New Zealand and Hui E! Community Aotearoa shows.

The survey of more than 600 organisations in the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector showed the sector is experiencing increased demand for its services from stressed communities.

But the demand has not been met with increased funding from government and the philanthropic sector, and the challenges are starting to wear down workers and volunteers.

“The ongoing pressures of a pandemic environment are starting to take their toll on organisations and their people,” says Rochelle Stewart-Allen, Pou Kaiārahi for Hui E! Community Aotearoa.

“They are delivering more, but with static or decreased funding. The labour of love shown by people in our sector is starting to feel like hard toil.”

The research was conducted in June-July 2021, just before Aotearoa New Zealand went into its second national lockdown in August. It was a follow-up of a 2020 survey which showed similar trends, and included focus groups with organisations caring for Māori, Pasifika, migrant and refugee-background, and disabled communities.

More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents expressed some level of concern for increased workloads of paid staff and/or volunteers since the Covid-19 restrictions began.

Michelle Kitney, Chief Executive of Volunteering New Zealand says volunteer-run organisations are feeling the pressure.

“While volunteer numbers initially fell at the beginning of the pandemic, younger volunteers stepped up to fill the gap. However, pressures on volunteer-involving organisations have increased, meaning better management support and training for volunteers is a priority.”

The research showed people in the sector have shown tenacity and flexibility in response to the challenges COVID-19 has presented. They have collaborated with others and extended networks and relationships more widely.

The research highlighted the support needed from the government and funders:

- Incentives for collaboration, within and between community organisations, government and funders

- Competitive funding models must be replaced with trust-based models that respond to local need
- Resourcing for wellbeing and salaries is needed to support paid staff and volunteers, not only projects.

Hui E! and Volunteering New Zealand will now discuss the report findings within their networks, make recommendations for action and work with key influencers to promote change.

The full report will be available at www.huie.org.nz from November 29 or on request from media.

MORE INFORMATION

Rochelle Stewart-Allen
Pou Kaiārahi (General Manager)
Hui E! Community Aotearoa
rochelle@huie.org.nz
027 363 8665

Michelle Kitney
Chief Executive, Volunteering New Zealand
michelle@volunteeringnz.org.nz
027 681 4956

About Hui E! Community Aotearoa

Hui E! is a peak body for the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. It champions the sector for a fair and just Aotearoa through hui, āwhina and kōrero. You can find out more about Hui E! at www.huie.org.nz.

About Volunteering New Zealand

Volunteering New Zealand is the kaitiaki of Mahi Aroha, empowering volunteers to enrich Aotearoa New Zealand. Its aspiration for Aotearoa New Zealand is that volunteering is valued as part of who we are as a nation. We thrive and are enriched by the goodwill of volunteers in every community, and their contribution and impact is recognised and supported. To find out more visit our website: www.volunteeringnz.org.nz