



5 April 2019

Via email to: vocationaleducation.reform@education.govt.nz

Submission on Reform of Vocational Education

Volunteering New Zealand and Volunteering in Aotearoa

1. Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ) represents the 'voice of volunteering' in Aotearoa and speak for the 1.2 million people who volunteer within our community.
2. We are the only national organisation in New Zealand that focuses purely on volunteering and the volunteer workforce that powers New Zealand. We hold the 'big picture' and are in a position to liaise, work with, and advise volunteers, members, non-profit institutions (NPIs), government and business sectors. This helps ensure that volunteering occurs within a positive environment where it is encouraged and fostered.
3. We promote volunteering and its value to New Zealand society through advocacy, promotion, and the creation of sector assessment tools like the Best Practice Guidelines and Competencies for Managers of Volunteers.
4. We are a membership organisation with over 80 national and regional member organisations that involve volunteers in their work programmes. Our member organisations are typically associations or 'peak bodies' that in turn represent a large number of local and regional volunteer-involving organisations.
5. VNZ is also part of a network of Volunteer Centres throughout New Zealand that in turn offer professional development and capacity building within the community sector. This network is known as the VCNA.
6. New Zealand has 114,000 NPIs. NPIs contributed \$5.96 billion to GDP in 2013, the last year this was calculated. This was 2.7 percent of New Zealand's total GDP. The same year, the value of (formal) voluntary labour in New Zealand's NPIs was estimated to be \$3.46 billion. This is on a par with the construction industry.
7. Over 90 % of these NPIs are run entirely by volunteers.

8. VNZ represents all volunteers who participate in volunteering activities within Aotearoa. Our new strategic plan effective from July 2019 has a new focus to recognise, support and measure the contribution of Mahi Aroha. Mahi Aroha is the unpaid activity performed out of caring for others in accordance with the principles of tikanga to maintain mana and rangatiratanga, rather than for financial or personal reward. For many Māori, mahi aroha carried out for the benefit of whānau, hapū and iwi is often seen as an essential part of fulfilling their cultural obligations to the wider collective. It is also central to their own sense of identity and for maintaining their culture and traditions.

Training and development expertise for the volunteering sector

9. VNZ has worked to raise the profile of volunteering and volunteers. We have actively promoted professional development within our sector for the last 10 years. Alongside the sector we co-created Best Practice Guidelines and Competencies for Managers of Volunteers. These provide the sector with standards to benchmark and assess volunteer management and volunteer involvement.
10. VNZ and the national network of Volunteer Centres work with members and others to promote professional development opportunities for their workforce of both staff and volunteers. These services are extremely diverse, from providing homes for those who are currently without a home or are facing homelessness to community sports clubs. Sometimes the people they work with are vulnerable and have complex needs.
11. There are currently no programmes offered in the New Zealand tertiary system that provide specific qualifications or training specifically required by managers or leaders of volunteers. Our sector needs training that is specific to the Voluntary/Volunteer Management Sector, as well as all the other general training. We know through our work with existing stakeholders and members that there is huge demand for this sort of training, but constraints in the current system and lack of funding make it hard for us to get this training out as widely as it is needed.
12. We are currently participating in a pilot with Careerforce to offer a Level 4 'Certificate in First Line Management', which is a framework based business qualification that overlaps with our Competencies for Managers of Volunteers. We are working together to offer this to our network of member organisations.
13. We have built a network of trained workplace assessors.

Feedback on consultation and process

14. Our submission is focused on the particular characteristics of the voluntary sector. We want to ensure that our sector is clearly understood in this context and catered for specifically in the solutions that are designed and implemented.
15. Our main focus is on the industry bodies and funding changes at this stage, rather than the ITP sector. This is because we feel there is not enough detail for us to comment on the implications of proposed ITP changes for our sector.

16. We are concerned with the short timeframe for consultation. With the large number of learners, organisations and employers involved it is hard to see how the time allowed is adequate (even with the extension provided).
17. We are concerned to ensure that the voice of volunteering and value of volunteering to our economy and the needs of volunteer learners are properly considered and represented throughout the consultation process and any proposed changes.
18. VNZ welcomes the Government's review of the vocational education sector. We welcome the proposed change of focus from the employers and their employees to that of the learners. We feel that there is opportunity to better support learners that are also volunteers.
19. Workforce transitions between paid and volunteer roles are likely to increase in the future as careers become more transient and fluid.
20. We want to see more funded training and professional development for managers and leaders of volunteers (be they paid or in volunteer roles).
21. Volunteers represent a multi-billion dollar contribution to the economy; as much as the construction industry. It is vital that they have access to training so that this contribution and its impacts are maximised.
22. It is important to us that all views are feedback into this review process and that you specifically take into account the voices, needs and aspirations of Māori and Pasifika learners.

Feedback related to current system

23. We note that the current system does not incentivise joined-up thinking and delivery and much-needed leadership on workforce planning in our sector. VNZ has spent a number of years focusing on the professional development needs of our sector. We have done this without the support of MOE or TEC monies. Although in the last year, approximately 25 trainees have enrolled into a level 4 certificate.
24. No single ITO currently represents our sector's training needs. We know that there a large number of training opportunities that could potentially be accessed by learners and organisations within our network, but the current system does not incentivise organisations to provide that to the voluntary sector.
25. The current employer-focused system creates barriers and hurdles for learners in our sector. Learners can enroll into a training programme with an employer and ITO, but if they were to change roles or employers their training may halt. A learner-centred model could help alleviate this.
26. More importantly, we know that volunteers struggle to access vocational training in the current system. Training is targeted at people currently in employment.
27. We note that currently TEC funding is hard to access for those who are deemed to be volunteering for an organisation. TEC states that trainees who are eligible for funding include:

“Volunteers who are in arrangements with organisations that are in the nature of employment, with clear contractual obligations between the parties, regular or rostered hours of duty, commitments to attend work on a regular or when required basis, that form part of a command and control structure and that can be subject to termination for unsatisfactory performance”.

This interpretation does not reflect how most volunteers interact with an entity they are volunteering with. We also note that this is being interpreted increasingly tightly and resulting in for example Youth Work training for volunteers not being able to be funded, despite high demand.

28. We are also concerned about the potential disruption to existing programmes delivered in our network through Careerforce. Our sector has a small number of trainees enrolled in the system and we note that from the documentation that ITOs will no longer exist and will need to substantially re-organise themselves to provide a continuity of services. This seems likely to impact on the level of service currently offered by ITOs and the retention of current learners. In addition, there will be a period of uncertainty around recruiting new learners. This will negatively impact currently-enrolled learners and their training progress.
29. We also note that the current ITPs do not offer any targeted training in Not For Profit Management. Previously there was a Post-graduate diploma in Not For Profit Management through Unitec, but currently a large gap in training deliver exists in this area.
30. We note that the current funding system promotes adhoc decisions regarding training for this sector. We note the announcement last year of there being \$500,000 training going into the sector to fund training of volunteers for emergency evacuation of animals. Consultation with VNZ on the allocation of funding into our stretched sector would have been welcomed for a more strategic response. See: <https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/political/365126/animal-evacuation-volunteers-secure-access-to-better-training>

Feedback on the proposed future state

31. We encourage the decision-makers to take the time needed to engage more fully and to carefully consider the implications of the proposed changes for all areas of the voluntary sector workforce. In particular, as the discussion document does not provide any sense that our sector is recognised or understood, we request specific engagement to remedy this before changes are agreed.
32. Focusing on a learner-centred model could better support volunteers accessing training or transitioning struggle to access vocational training in the current system. Training is targeted at people currently in employment.
33. We are concerned that the proposed Industry Skills Bodies as proposed will not provide a level playing field across industries. In particular, we are concerned about the non-profit sector’s ability to adequately invest in an ISB at a level commensurate with some of the construction trades, for example.

34. We would like to see consultation opportunities extended. Māori and Pasifika learners views need to be at the forefront to ensure that their training needs are met.

Industry Skill Bodies to support community sector training needs

35. While the proposals overall pose significant changes and we have outlined some reservations, there is also an opportunity to create a set of mechanisms that will support the wider community and voluntary sector to thrive, drawing on existing positive factors.
36. We believe that a community and voluntary ISB could be established, which would need, at minimum, the following to be successful:
- Crown funding to support its operations
 - Recognition and inclusion of existing expertise in the sector
 - A qualifications and learning framework with a focus on a broad foundation of the required skills together with recognition of the many and varied specialist areas requiring specialist qualifications
 - Drawing on the work within our sector already completed to provide assessment and practice guidelines
 - Clear interfaces with the related professional and peak bodies to facilitate career pathways
 - Support for community sector organisations to provide well-supported workplace learning
 - Strategic focus on the allocation of funding resource which could better support the sector to be informed by sector peak bodies.
37. We request that the Ministry undertake specific engagement with the community sector about the impact of the proposals and the potential to establish a community sector ISB.

Centres of vocational excellence

38. Volunteering New Zealand has been leading the delivery of excellence in the practice of volunteer management and leadership, leading this through the development of our Best Practice Guidelines and our Competencies for Managers of Volunteers.
39. The VCNA network of volunteer centres throughout New Zealand currently delivers a range of training that delivers training to these guidelines.
40. The current system does not provide funding, support or recognition for the work we have led in the area of volunteer management and leadership.
41. Our national network is expertly placed to provide or contribute to a Centre of Vocational Excellence. We would need to be funded and supported to do this.

Summary

42. In summary, we support change that brings a more comprehensive delivery of effective training that supports and recognises the significant learner needs of volunteers, as well as those of the managers and leaders of volunteers that support 1.2 million volunteers in Aotearoa.

Volunteering New Zealand welcomes the opportunity to make a verbal submission in support of the above.

Dr Katie Bruce

Chief Executive

Volunteering New Zealand

Katie@volunteeringnz.org.nz