



Submission to the Governance and Administration Committee for the Public Service Legislation Bill

Contact details

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This submission has been prepared by Volunteering New Zealand

1. About us

Volunteering New Zealand

Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ) represents the ‘voice of volunteering’ in Aotearoa and the 1.2 million people who volunteer within our communities. We are the only national organisation in New Zealand that focuses purely on volunteering. We hold the ‘big picture’ and are in a position to liaise, work with, advise volunteers, members, community and voluntary organisations, government and business sectors. This helps ensure that volunteering occurs within a positive environment where it is encouraged and fostered.

Over the past 19 years, VNZ has raised the profile of volunteer groups, activities, and management. We promote volunteering and its value to New Zealand society through advocacy, sharing stories, and producing tools like the best practice guidelines and competencies for managers of volunteers.

VNZ represents all volunteers who participate in volunteering activities within Aotearoa. Our strategic plan 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.

We have a membership of over 80 national and regional member organisations that involve volunteers in their work programmes. Our membership organisations are typically associations or “peak bodies” that in turn represent a large number of local and regional volunteer involving organisations. We advocate on behalf of these organisations and for other groups that are not members but are aligned to our mission and values.

New Zealand’s Voluntary Sector

New Zealand has 114,000 non-profit institutions (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 and increases the contribution made by NPIs from 2.7 to 4.4 percent of GDP¹.

¹ Stats NZ, *Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account: 2013* (StatsNZ, 2015). Retrieved from http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/economic_indicators/NationalAccounts/non-profit-institutions-2013.aspx

In 2014, volunteers offered 11 million hours to social services and community development charities. Calculated at the minimum wage, this equals to \$151.2 million; or \$308.3 million with the average hourly earnings².

The most up-to-date data on the volunteer sector states that in New Zealand there are more than 1.2 million volunteers who give more than 60 million hours of unpaid labour to the sector³.

2. Introduction

Volunteering New Zealand appreciates the opportunity to make a submission to the Governance and Administration Committee for the Public Service Legislation Bill. VNZ also supports and endorses the submission made by Lyne Pringle of Volunteering Wellington.

Volunteers make a huge contribution to New Zealand in all kinds of activities: from sports, recreation, arts, culture, and heritage to emergency and social services, health, education, conservation, and environment⁴. Employee volunteering is becoming more popular with 15% of employees participating in volunteering in 2018 compared to only 3.7% in 2006⁵. With various benefits for the employee, the employer, and the community, employee volunteering provides an opportunity for enabling active citizenship while also contributing to the public good.

The state sector is a significant employer in New Zealand with a great potential for employee volunteering and therefore, we propose that employee volunteering be specially acknowledged in the proposed Public Services Bill. **This, combined with appropriate provisions, will enable the state sector to properly mobilize and utilize its employees in order to achieve better outcomes for the communities across New Zealand while achieving positive results for their employees.**

In this submission, we present robust evidence of the importance and benefits of employee volunteering. We trust that the Governance and Administration Committee will give this evidence due consideration.

3. Executive summary

VNZ is asking the Governance and Administration Committee that employee volunteering be acknowledged in the proposed Public Service Act, and appropriate provisions be included.

² MartinJenkins, Social service system: The funding gap and how to Brigit it (Martin Jenkins, 2019), p.25

³ StatsNZ, Statistics New Zealand Labour Market Quarterly (StatsNZ, 2019). Retrieved from <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/labour-market-statistics-september-2019-quarter>

⁴ Jo Goodhew, Volunteer sector worth billion to New Zealand <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/volunteer-sector-worth-billions-new-zealand> [accessed 27 January 2020]

⁵ Corporate citizenship and Volunteering Australia, *Corporate volunteering in Australia: a snapshot* (Corporate citizenship and Volunteering Australia, 2019)

New Zealand's volunteering landscape has changed over the years; the population is aging, and the number of volunteering hours are decreased. In response to these changes and to gain from the benefits of employee volunteering, the proposed Act should commit to employee volunteering for employees in the public sector.

VNZ asks that the Subpart 2 of the proposed Act, specifically the Clause 9 – facilitating active citizenship – and Clause 11 – service to the community – be modified with an explicit reference **to at least a minimum one day of paid leave for employee volunteering**, as an expression of active citizenship for the spirit of service to the community. VNZ also notes that a consistent framework across government agencies for employee volunteering would be useful either specified in the proposed Act, or subordinate regulations or policy

3. Employee volunteering: Contributing to public good and improving employees' well-being

Benefits of employee volunteering

Employee volunteering is defined as an employer's encouragement or promotion of volunteering activities done by their employees⁶. Employee volunteering provides an opportunity for public good as well as advancing strategic objectives⁷. Various advantages have been identified from employee volunteering. For instance, it can; improve motivation, commitment, and teamwork; provide opportunities for employee professional development; and organisational reputational gains among the public, investors, clients, and future employees⁸.

Volunteering and individual wellbeing

Volunteering has been shown to improve the well-being of employees. It is linked to a wide range of personal benefits including enjoyment, a sense of purpose and belonging within the community⁹ and higher levels of life satisfaction¹⁰. Volunteering improves health, subjective well-being, and social relationships¹¹. Research indicates that volunteers report improved physical health and reduced stress levels¹². Frequent volunteering has a positive and

⁶ Anne-Laure Gatignon-Turnau, Karim Mignonac, '(Mis) Using employee volunteering for public relations: Implications for corporate volunteers' organizational commitment', *Journal of Business Research*, 68, (2015), pp. 7-18.

⁷ Adam Grant, 'Giving time, time after time: Work design and sustained employee participation in corporate volunteering', *Academy of Management Review*, 37, no.4 (2012), pp. 589-615

⁸ Deloitte, *Impact that matters*, (Deloitte, 2017). Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/about-deloitte/us-2017-deloitte-volunteerism-survey.pdf>

⁹ Stats NZ, *Volunteering and Donations by New Zealanders 2016* (StatsNZ, 2017)

¹⁰ Stats NZ, *Fact sheet: New Zealand General Social Survey* (StatsNZ, 2009)

¹¹ Thomas Hansen, Marja Aartsen, Britt Slagsvold, & Christian Deindl, 'Dynamics of volunteering and life satisfaction in middle and old age', *Social Sciences*, 7, no. 5 (2018), pp.78-93

¹² UnitedHealth Group, *Volunteering Linked to Better Physical, Mental Health* (UnitedHealth Group, 2013)

sustained impact on individual well-being¹³. Volunteering contributes to well-being through an increase in personal well-being – something that is well established in research – as well as improving the well-being of communities, and Aotearoa as a whole.

Volunteering supports positive mental health

Furthermore, volunteering results in positive outcomes for mental and emotional health. Amongst people who engage in frequent volunteering, 76% feel healthier, 94% feel it has improved their emotions, and 78% report lowered stress level¹⁴. Volunteering is directly associated with reported levels of happiness; the more someone volunteers, the happier they are¹⁵. Volunteering improves self-confidence and sense of purpose which, in turn, result in expanding social networks and advancing professional careers. Other benefits of volunteering for mental and emotional health are due to decreased stress and anxiety, and decreased risk of depression. Therefore, volunteering, as a way to improve the well-being of employees, has been linked to the mental health well-being framework actions points: giving – tukua, connecting – Me Whakawhanaunga, taking notice – me aro tonu, keeping learning – me ako tonu – and being active – me kori tonu¹⁶.

Employee volunteering connecting employees with the real world

Some organizations have employee volunteering schemes that give their employees paid time off work to do volunteer work that helps them step into the community to do charity work or experience the ‘real world’ issues that their policies impact upon. Employee volunteering is increasingly viewed as a way for employees to get out of their offices, practice good citizenship in action, and actively participate in long-term public interest.

Employee volunteering for the public sector

Public sector employs over 400 thousand employees which accounted for 18% of New Zealand’s total workforce in 2018¹⁷. Therefore, Government can make significant contributions through employee volunteering as a **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** activity that offers many benefits for their employees, the public sector, and the communities. Several government departments are currently engaged in employee volunteering. Through **minimum one paid** day of volunteering, employees of these government departments are able to build teams that go out into the community to offer assistance and expertise. Action and connections through volunteering can also result in improving their sense of well-being and connections in their teams and across the departments. However, taking up the potential

¹³ Martin Binder, Andreas Freytag, ‘Volunteering, subjective well-being and public policy’, *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 34, (2013), pp.97-119.

¹⁴ United Healthcare and VolunteerMatch, *Doing Good is Good For You* (United Healthcare and VolunteerMatch, 2017)

¹⁵ LSE Volunteers, *Celebrating volunteering and fundraising at LSE in 2016-2017* (London School of Economics, 2016-2017)

¹⁶ *The Five Ways to Wellbeing, Ētahi ara e rima ki te ngākau ora, help people stay mentally well*, <<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing/>> [accessed 31 January 2020]

¹⁷ State Services Commission, *Public Service Workforce Data* (Wellington, 2018), p.1

for a day of paid leave to volunteer, at the moment, is at the discretion of department heads and varies across government agencies.

Conclusion

VNZ recommends that the proposed Public Services Act provides the government with an opportunity to acknowledge and promote volunteering as a part of government agencies' corporate social responsibilities. Including employee volunteering in the proposed Act ensures consistent approach across government agencies. The Act should acknowledge employee volunteering as a necessary component of good citizenship for government employees. There should be provisions for a national policy that requires the public sector to accommodate **minimum one day of paid** leave for employee volunteering alongside the appropriate resources for such initiatives.