



# Overview paper on the state of volunteering in New Zealand

Report from the Volunteer Reference Group

April 2017

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# Contributors

## Report reference group

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**Nicola Sutton** is Chief Executive of English Language Partners New Zealand, a national NGO delivering services with support from 2,000 volunteers. Her work in the community and voluntary sector spans two decades. She holds a Masters in Commerce with a thesis on non-profit partnerships, and a Graduate Diploma in Not-for-Profit Management.

**Garth Nowland-Foreman** is a Partner of LEaD Centre for Not for Profit Leadership. He taught graduate programmes in not-for-profit management for 18 years, has advised Statistics NZ and chaired the first efforts to measure the size and economic significance of the sector.

**Brenda O'Leary** works for the Ministry for Primary Industries as the Honorary Fishery Officer (HFO) National Coordinator. She has been involved with the HFO network for the past 24 years as both a regional coordinator and the national coordinator. She is also extensively involved with volunteers through the Wellington Branch of NZ Pony Club.

**Ken Allen** is the Senior Adviser Volunteer Strategy at Sport Wellington. His role is to promote best volunteering practice in the sporting community and he works closely with sports organisations on their volunteer management practices. He also holds several volunteer roles with non-for-profit organisations.

**Heather Moore** has been the General Manager of Volunteering Waikato for the past ten years. She has been in a volunteer management role for over 20 years including six years with Youthline Auckland and Manukau, and six years with LifeLine Waikato.

## Report writers

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**While the Department of Internal Affairs supported the Volunteer Reference Group, the findings do not necessarily reflect the official policy and the views of the Department.**



# Foreword

## He aha te mea nui o te ao He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

This Māori whakataukī reminds us that people are the most important thing in the world. Every day we see the positive impact that people have on their communities, and volunteering is an essential way to make a difference.

As a researcher, and as Chair of Volunteering New Zealand, I know the importance of having robust and accurate data on volunteering. Data guides how organisations attract, support, recognise and reward volunteers, and data also informs government policy making and support for the community and voluntary sector.

The release of the *Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account 2013* heralded positive news that between 2004 and 2013 that the number of volunteers in non-profit organisations had increased to 1.23 million (remembering there are also volunteers involved in government agencies, informal groups, and individuals participating in their local and cultural communities). But there was also some consternation: why a dramatic decrease in volunteering hours over the same period?

We likely all have personal hunches on the reasons behind these changes, but answering this question requires more than just anecdotes. Volunteering NZ and the Department of Internal Affairs therefore formed a *Volunteer Reference Group* and we thank the seven members for their time and dedication to picking apart this conundrum. This Report details their discussions and draws on New Zealand and international data and trends. The Recommendations should inform discussion and action within organisations, the sector and government.

Do join Volunteering NZ as they continue to promote, support, and advocate for volunteering in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ngā mihi

**Professor Karen Smith**  
**Chair, Volunteering New Zealand**



## 1. Executive summary

Volunteering is central to the social development, economy and environment of New Zealanders. Figures released in a report published by Statistics New Zealand in March 2016 showed that volunteer labour in organisations contributed \$3.5 billion (1.7%) to New Zealand's gross domestic product for the year ended March 2013.

The report, *Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account: 2013*, also found that while the total number of volunteers increased by 21% between 2004 and 2013 – from 1,011,600 to 1,229,054 – the total number of hours volunteered fell by 42% – from 270 million to 157 million.

This decrease in volunteer hours is one of a number of complex changes in volunteer engagement currently facing the community and voluntary sector. These changes make it essential that we have a good understanding of the state of volunteering and ensure it is well supported and future-proofed.

Given the crucial roles that volunteers play, it is conceivable that a continuation of a decline in volunteer hours will begin to limit the ability of some organisations to meet the demand for their services and programmes. This is in the interests of the community and the government.

Positive action and a multi-faceted approach are required to respond to the emerging challenges, which should include:

- proactive responses from the community and voluntary sector itself
- the provision of better support for volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations
- Government leading by example
- better information and improved research on volunteering.

## Recommendations:

The Reference Group recommends the following actions:

### 1. The Government recognises the contribution made by volunteering to community building and social cohesion through:

- An updated Government Policy on volunteering that recognises the important role of formal and informal volunteering in society.
- A secondment from Treasury (for example, to Volunteering New Zealand) to assess the economic costs and value added by volunteering to the individual, the sector and society.
- The inclusion of a weighting for added “social value” in Government competitive tendering for provision of services (recognising contributions to social capital, social cohesion and community building).

### 2. Exemplary Government policy and practice in its own volunteering through:

- The updated Government Policy on Volunteering also ensuring a stronger commitment from Government agencies to supporting their own volunteer-involvement.
- Leading by example through the modelling of excellent volunteer management by the Government agencies that engage volunteers (including exemplary data collection and reporting on their own volunteer related activities).

### 3. The Government and other funders increase funding for building the capacity of intermediary bodies

- For example, Volunteering NZ and volunteer centres directly support volunteering and volunteer management, especially to enable the sector to proactively take into account the changing nature of volunteering.

### 4. Investing in an improved knowledge base, including:

- Statistics NZ undertaking its Time Use Surveys (which includes crucial data on formal and informal volunteering) at least every five years.

- Statistics NZ convening a longer term strategic review of the information needs for volunteering data in New Zealand.
- Providing funding for New Zealand-based research, especially qualitative research around volunteer engagement and motivation, for example qualitative research focusing on volunteering trends.

## 2. Background to the report

Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ), with the Department of Internal Affairs' support, formed a reference group in December 2016 to develop an overview paper on the state of volunteering. This includes issues, opportunities, and broad areas for supporting volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations.

A specific issue for consideration was the 42% decrease in volunteer hours provided through organisations, when comparing the 2004 and 2013 Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account (NPISA). This recorded drop prompted the Hon Jo Goodhew (then Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector) to ask that the Department convene a group to assist with this work.

A range of experience and sector representation was achieved through a seven-member group. Many in the group drew on their current volunteer sector experience, as well as their experience in previous roles. The group comprised:

- Scott Miller (Chief Executive, Volunteering New Zealand)
- Heather Moore (General Manager, Volunteering Waikato)
- Garth Nowland-Foreman (Director, LEaD Centre for Not for Profit Leadership)
- Ken Allen (Volunteer Strategy Senior Advisor, Sport Wellington)
- Nicola Sutton (Chief Executive, English Language Partners)
- Matarora Smith (Chief Executive Officer, Tamaki Ki Te Tonga District Maori Wardens)
- Brenda O'Leary (Honorary Fishery Officer National Support Co-ordinator, Ministry for Primary Industries).

The group met three times over February to April 2017. This paper reflects the views expressed

during these discussions, with the group approving this final paper on 27 April 2017.

## 3. The current state of volunteering and volunteer-involving organisations

Almost one and a quarter million New Zealanders contribute to New Zealand society in almost every type of activity: including sports, recreation, arts, culture and heritage to emergency and social services, health, education, conservation and the environment; giving 157 million hours of their time per annum through organisations.<sup>1</sup>

Around one third of New Zealanders undertake voluntary work for an organisation, and about two thirds undertake unpaid work outside their home (such as helping in their neighbourhood).<sup>2</sup> Internationally, this places us consistently in the top five countries for donating our time.<sup>3</sup> This paper uses the Volunteering New Zealand definition of volunteering, which is volunteering that is “work done of one’s own free will, unpaid for the common good”.<sup>4</sup>

Volunteers are a crucial part of the non-profit sector and our wider economy, providing the equivalent of approximately \$3.5 billion to the country’s gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, only 10% of non-profit organisations employ any staff; 90% are totally reliant on volunteers.<sup>6</sup> More than a third of these volunteer hours are worked in culture and recreation non-profit organisations (mainly sports groups), followed by hours volunteered to religious bodies and social services.<sup>7</sup> This is

1 Statistics New Zealand, *Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account 2013*, p.20.

2 New Zealand General Social Survey: 2008 at [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/Households/nzgss\\_HOTP2008/Commentary.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/Households/nzgss_HOTP2008/Commentary.aspx) (accessed 12 April 2017).

3 Charities Aid Foundation (2016). World Giving Index 2016.

4 “Constitution of Volunteering New Zealand Incorporated”, 2014.

5 Statistics New Zealand, *Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account 2013*, p.8 and p.12.

6 Statistics New Zealand, *Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account 2013*, p.18.

7 Statistics New Zealand, *Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account 2013*, p.20.

even before we consider the impact of “informal” volunteering (outside of organisations), which involves twice as many New Zealanders, giving more than twice as much of their time.<sup>8</sup>

### **Volunteering as civic well-being**

Volunteering also has a much bigger impact than providing services and programmes. There is strong support for its role in strengthening “community connectedness and social cohesion”.<sup>9</sup> Volunteerism is also a mechanism that “deepens and broadens civic engagement”.<sup>10</sup> As described in the *State of the World’s Volunteerism Report 2011*, volunteering is a “basic expression of human relationships” and the social relationships developed during volunteer work are “critical to individual and community well-being”.<sup>11</sup>

As such, a key reason to support volunteering is its significant “social value” component, with volunteering contributing strongly to:

- communities<sup>12</sup>
- organisations (e.g. enabling some organisations to deliver services that they could not provide without volunteers)<sup>13</sup>
- volunteers themselves<sup>14</sup>
- the beneficiaries of the volunteers’ activities.<sup>15</sup>

The New Zealand volunteering landscape extends well beyond volunteers and the organisations through which they volunteer. Families and employers often play an important support role for volunteers. There are also volunteer centres spread around the country as a point of contact for local and regional volunteering issues and initiatives. From a national perspective, Volunteering New Zealand provides national coordination of promotion, support and advocacy activities for volunteering, on behalf of the wider volunteering sector.

### **Funding for sustainability is decreasing**

Funding sources vary from one volunteer-involving organisation to another and is often a patchwork of different kinds of funding, including funding from the Lottery Grants Board, as well as from community and other philanthropic trusts, all of which are becoming increasingly competitive. For example, despite a dramatic increase in registered charities, the amount of philanthropic funding has decreased. Between 2011 and 2014, personal donations fell by 4%, from \$1.42 billion a year to \$1.37 billion. Giving by voluntary trusts and foundations decreased by 4% and business and corporate donations dropped by nearly a quarter over the same period.<sup>16</sup>

The Crown administers the Support for Volunteering Fund, the one specific fund to promote and support volunteering, with annual funding of \$502,000 available. \$322,000 of this total is available for 17 volunteer centres, \$100,000 for Volunteering New Zealand, and \$80,000 for volunteering projects.<sup>17</sup> This fund has only had one increase of \$100,000 in 16 years, whereas the number of volunteer centres has more than doubled.

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8 New Zealand General Social Survey: 2008, at [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/Households/nzgss\\_HOTP2008/Commentary.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/Households/nzgss_HOTP2008/Commentary.aspx) (accessed 12 April 2017).

9 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (Australia), “National Volunteering Strategy”, 2011, p.11.

10 UN General Assembly “Integrating volunteering in the next decade” – Report of the Secretary-General A/70/118, 26 June 2015, p.22 (para 77).

11 United Nations Volunteers “State of the World’s Volunteerism Report 2011 – Universal Values for Global Well-being”, 2011, p.xx.

12 For example, see PricewaterhouseCoopers “Describing the value of the contribution from the volunteer fire brigade” December 2009, p.32.

13 Salamon, L., Sokolowski, S., and Haddock, M. “Measuring the economic value of volunteer work globally: concepts, estimates, and a roadmap to the future” in *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* 82:3 2011, p.219.

14 Department for Work and Pensions “Wellbeing and civil society – Estimating the value of volunteering using subjective wellbeing data”, Working Paper No.112, 2013.

15 Salamon, L., Sokolowski, S., and Haddock, M. “Measuring the economic value of volunteer work globally: concepts, estimates, and a roadmap to the future” in *Annals of Public and Cooperative Economics* 82:3 2011, p.219.

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16 See Philanthropy New Zealand “Giving New Zealand Philanthropic Funding 2014”, December 2015.

17 <http://www.communitymatters.govt.nz/Funding-and-Grants---Crown-Funds---Support-for-Volunteering-Fund---What-we-fund> (accessed 10 April 2017).

## 4. Issues affecting volunteering in New Zealand

### 4.1 The decline in volunteer hours

The reference group was tasked with considering the significant recorded decrease in volunteer hours in the Statistics New Zealand 2013 Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account (NPISA), compared to NPISA 2004. In summary, changes relevant to the voluntary sector that NPISA 2013 recorded included:

- a 42% decrease in volunteer hours
- a 21% increase in the number of people volunteering
- a 30% increase in paid staff working for non-profit institutions.<sup>18</sup>

NPISA measures and analyses the contribution non-profits make to the New Zealand economy, and includes measures of volunteering and unpaid work.<sup>19</sup> NPISA is confined to non-profit organisations (e.g. it does not include volunteering undertaken for government agencies, informal groups or individuals). It looks at organisations that provide goods and services or transfers to households and the community, are not profit-oriented, and operate both voluntarily and independently of government.<sup>20</sup>

NPISA 2013 noted that the reduction in time spent volunteering between 2004 and 2013 reflects a global trend, with other countries showing reductions over time also. In New Zealand, the average volunteer did three hours a week of formal unpaid work in 2013, compared with an average of 2.6 hours a week in Australia, and three hours in Canada.<sup>21</sup> In this respect it appears that New Zealand (with its previous

distinctively high rates of volunteering<sup>22</sup>) may now be falling back to the average of other OECD countries.

We may be at risk of losing a key factor that has distinguished us as New Zealanders. Both the level and speed of the reduction in hours volunteered in New Zealand is significant; the reduction is more than twice the level which has occurred in Australia.<sup>23</sup> In addition, while the percentage and number of people volunteering has *increased* in New Zealand, in other countries the drop in hours has also been generally accompanied by a *drop* in the percentage and number of people volunteering.<sup>24</sup>

Overall, the group members that delved into NPISA 2004 and 2013 could find no reason to disregard or minimise the dramatic drop in hours identified by NPISA, which based its volunteering data on Statistics New Zealand's Time Use Surveys (TUS) 1998/99 and 2009/10. For example, there was no change in methodology that could explain the marked decline in hours. However, the vulnerability of relying on only two data points eleven years apart was noted.

### Could other New Zealand statistics explain the drop in volunteer hours?

The reference group considered a summary of other New Zealand statistics, to see if the drop in volunteer hours could be explained. This included consideration of Census data (for population and labour market changes, as well as volunteering data), and a detailed review of TUS data on volunteering.

Statistics from surveys of various volunteer-involving organisations were also considered. However, none of these data indicated any clear

18 Statistics New Zealand, The contribution of non-profit institutions in New Zealand (infographic), at [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/economic\\_indicators/NationalAccounts/non-profit-satellite-infographic.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/economic_indicators/NationalAccounts/non-profit-satellite-infographic.aspx) [accessed 20 January 2017]

19 Statistics New Zealand, *Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account 2013*, p.7.

20 Statistics New Zealand, *Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account 2013*, p.61-62.

21 Statistics New Zealand, *Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account 2013*, p.20.

22 Jackie Sanders, Mike O'Brien, Margaret Tennant, S. Wojciech Sokolowski & Lester M Salamon (2008). The New Zealand Non-profit Sector in Comparative Perspective. Wellington: Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

23 Jenny Onyx & Garth Nowland-Foreman, A Review of Third Sector Research in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand: 1990-2016. *Voluntaristics Review*, 2 (2), forthcoming 2017.

24 For example, this is seen in non-profit organisation and volunteering trends in Australia. See Jenny Onyx & Garth Nowland-Foreman, A Review of Third Sector Research in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand: 1990-2016. *Voluntaristics Review*, 2 (2), forthcoming 2017.

causal relationship with the recorded decrease in volunteer hours in NPISA 2013. Nevertheless, some interesting correlations were identified, which raise useful questions for further exploration, probably through more in-depth qualitative research.

More specifically, unofficial statistics included a VNZ survey asking whether organisations had noticed a drop in volunteering hours since 2004.<sup>25</sup> A total of 32% of respondents had noticed a decline in the number of hours being volunteered with their organisation. In a survey of the not-for-profit sector in New Zealand and Australia carried out by Grant Thornton in 2016, 30% of the 219 New Zealand respondents stated their primary reason for losing volunteers was work pressures.<sup>26</sup>

Even official statistics suffer from using different terms and questions, resulting in different reported numbers of people and hours volunteering. For example, the Census consistently reports a lower number of people volunteering compared to the TUS. According to the Census, since 2001<sup>27</sup> New Zealand's population increased 7%, or 270,000 people.<sup>28</sup> This population increase means the number of hours donated *per volunteer* (as identified by the TUS) has effectively decreased by around 52% since 2004. In the same period the number of people aged 65 or older increased by 147,000. This demographic is a major source of volunteers, devoting triple the time on unpaid activities than people aged 12-24 years.<sup>29</sup> In general, people were working longer hours in 2013 compared to 2006, reducing their available volunteering time. Between 2006 and 2013, the proportion of unemployed people who volunteered increased

by a fifth,<sup>30</sup> while the proportion of employed people who volunteered was unchanged, according to the Census.

When we disaggregate the TUS 1998/99 & 2009/10, on which NPISA 2013 is based, there are few detectable correlations between the drop in hours volunteered through an organisation and gender, age, ethnicity or workforce status. In fact, most are not statistically significant. When we look at "informal" volunteering (*not* through an organisation), there is actually an overall *increase* in time spent – up 23% over the same period that volunteering through organisations dropped by almost half.

Separately, the TUS 2009/10, showed unemployed people doubled the amount of time spent per day on education and training compared with 1998/99,<sup>31</sup> on which NPISA 2004 was based. This could have implications for time spent on volunteering, especially given the unemployment rate increased by over 50 per cent between 2006 (3.9%) and 2013 (6.2%).<sup>32</sup>

With the data providing few answers, reference group members' anecdotal experiences also supported further investigation of issues such as volunteering by unemployed, and the impact on time spent volunteering through organisations by older people that are spending time on informal caring.

### **Personal observations about volunteer hours by members of the reference group**

Most members of the reference group had noticed a reduction in the amount of time volunteers were willing to give. However, they acknowledged that many organisations may not formally measure their volunteer hours. In one case, when volunteer hours were measured they were found to be lower than previously estimated.

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25 Volunteering New Zealand, "State of Volunteering in New Zealand 2016", forthcoming 2017.

26 Grant Thornton, *The challenge of change: Not for Profit sector survey 2015/2016*, p.13.

27 Much of the data available to compare the NPISA 2004 with the NPISA 2013 are in census data. Where possible we used 2001 census data as an approximate reference point. Where 2001 data are not available we used 2006 data. We consider 2001 a more suitable reference point, as the NPISA 2004 volunteering hours were extrapolated from 1999 Time Use Surveys.

28 Statistics New Zealand, Census 2013

29 Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey

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30 Statistics New Zealand, Census 2013

31 Statistics New Zealand, Time Use Survey, 2009/10: Key Facts, at [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/time\\_use/TimeUseSurvey\\_HOTP2009-10.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/time_use/TimeUseSurvey_HOTP2009-10.aspx) [accessed 20 January 2017]

32 Statistics New Zealand, Unemployment Rate, at [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/snapshots-of-nz/nz-progress-indicators/home/economic/unemployment-rate.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/snapshots-of-nz/nz-progress-indicators/home/economic/unemployment-rate.aspx) [accessed 20 January 2017]

Most members had also seen a drop in the number of volunteers in their organisation. Suggested reasons for this drop ranged from people not having the needed skills, to a possible deliberate choice to use smaller numbers of volunteers.

A couple of group members had seen an increase in volunteers, or had been involved in an organisation with no shortage of volunteers. In both these cases, high turnover was expected, with volunteers keen to have an experience and to then move on. This was referred to as “cause-related” or “episodic” volunteering.

### **The effect of changes in volunteer hours and volunteer numbers**

In discussing members’ experiences with decreasing volunteer hours and volunteer numbers, a variety of effects were also identified. For example, the possible effect that tasks ordinarily performed by volunteers would shift to others in an organisation (volunteers or paid staff). Another effect identified was higher volunteer turnover, meaning increased recruitment, training and administrative costs.

### **4.2 Other observations about changes to the nature of volunteering**

A number of reference group members had observed that the way in which people seek to volunteer is changing. Rather than staying with the same organisation, people now have more options and are looking for meaningful roles with a high impact.<sup>33</sup>

Many volunteers are also unable or disinterested in committing long-term, resulting in a trend towards episodic volunteering. Additionally, group members reported an increase in corporate and other group volunteerism, which is usually only short-term and often limited to manual-labour intensive tasks.

## **5. Issues/barriers for volunteer-involving organisations and volunteers**

There are many complex changes occurring in the context of volunteer engagement in New Zealand which create challenges for the organisations that rely on them. These include:

- the rising cost of volunteer engagement
- inadequate resources
- increased compliance and reporting requirements
- organisational barriers.

### **5.1 Issues/barriers for volunteer-involving organisations**

The rising cost of volunteer engagement  
It was evident from group discussion that the cost of engaging volunteers has increased significantly in the last decade, especially as a result of the increased level of compliance required by the Government and by funding bodies. The high turnover of volunteers currently experienced by many organisations means they also face rising recruitment costs. If each volunteer is volunteering fewer hours, the expenses per volunteer are greater, presenting a major issue for volunteer-involving organisations.

#### **Inadequate resources**

The point was made among the reference group that while the cost of volunteer engagement has risen, levels of funding have not increased to match. For example, the Support for Volunteering Fund has only increased once in 17 years, while the demands on the fund have increased in volume and complexity. The group’s experiences indicate there is a lack of Government-funded support for volunteer programmes across most portfolios. The conflict between formal constraint (including reduced funding) and supportive facilitation is a significant issue for organisations. “There is an assumed expectation that volunteering will continue to flourish regardless of the capacity of national and local infrastructure”.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> For example, a desire for specific roles or tasks has been seen, with volunteers becoming more selective in what they do. See Michelle Wanwimolruk, “Volunteerism: Alive and Well or Dying Quietly? Learnings from New Zealand community-based organisations, volunteerism experts and social enterprises”, 2013.

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<sup>34</sup> Sue Hine, “Volunteer Management Training: The Missing Pieces”. *e-volunteerism: The Electronic Journal of the Volunteer Community*, Vol XV, Issue 4.

## Increased compliance and reporting requirements

The reference group noted the level of compliance required from Government regulatory and funding bodies has increased considerably over the last 10 years. This sense of burden associated with administration produces a barrier for volunteers as they are side-lined with indirect and overhead efforts taking them away from the constituents they seek to directly support. For example, it was recently reported that the Department of Internal Affairs found that over 40% of charities had not complied with their new financial reporting requirements which applied since April 2016.<sup>35</sup>

According to members of the group, legislative requirements such as those associated with health and safety, create perceived challenges for organisations who engage volunteers. The reference group reported that one consequence of this legislation is a bigger workload and higher costs.

Respondents to a 2016 VNZ survey on the state of volunteering noted concern that the need to comply with regulations slows down the recruitment process, deters volunteers and costs time and resources.<sup>36</sup> Members of the group explained that health and safety regulations have also led to a general fear of private liability which has caused some people to stop volunteering.

## Organisational barriers

The group identified a number of issues among organisations which affect volunteer retention. These included:

- Ineffective volunteer management. Recognised volunteer management qualifications and training opportunities are limited in number and not widely known about. Capacity-building opportunities have been disestablished rather than enhanced, for example

the Graduate Diploma in Not-for-Profit Management course at Unitec. There tends to be a focus on the administrative tasks of ‘managing volunteers’ in organisations and a failure to look at the big picture, which includes an understanding of the structure, climate and culture of an organisation.<sup>37</sup>

Failure to understand the changing nature and motivations of volunteers and to provide flexibility or innovate in design of volunteer roles, nor in recruitment and support strategies.

## 5.2 Issues/barriers for volunteers

Changes in the volunteering sector also affect volunteers. These changes include:

- financial pressures and costs of volunteering
- time pressures
- cultural changes
- increased compliance requirements
- rapid relocation and social dislocation
- increases in travel time.

## Financial pressures and costs of volunteering

It was clear from group discussion that rising financial pressures on individuals have taken a toll on volunteering in New Zealand. These include an increase in the number of hours being worked and more adults joining the paid workforce, which means that people have less time to volunteer.

A comparison of Statistics New Zealand’s Time Use Survey results from 1998/99 and 2009/10 showed that people aged 65 years and over almost doubled the amount of time they spent helping people outside their own household (informal volunteering), and halved the amount of time they spent volunteering for an organisation.<sup>38</sup> The reference group believes one possible explanation for this is that grandparents who might otherwise have been involved in formal volunteering are now busy taking care of grandchildren whose parents/caregivers are working longer hours.

<sup>35</sup> RadioNZ (23 Feb 2017) “Alarming number of charities breaking financial reporting rules”, at <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/325149/%27alarming%27-number-of-charities-breaking-financial-reporting-rules> [accessed 18 April 2017]

<sup>36</sup> Volunteering New Zealand, “*State of Volunteering in New Zealand 2016*”, forthcoming 2017.

<sup>37</sup> Sue Hine, *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Statistics New Zealand, Time Use Survey, 2009/10: Key Facts, at [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/time\\_use/TimeUseSurvey\\_HOTP2009-10.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/time_use/TimeUseSurvey_HOTP2009-10.aspx) [accessed 3 April 2017]

The costs involved with volunteering are a barrier for many, particularly those who are unemployed, retired or studying. Group members explained that even when they are offered reimbursement for expenses, some people cannot afford to volunteer unless expenses are paid for up-front.

In *A Survey of the Effects of Direct Financial Costs In Volunteering*, based on data from a survey of New Zealand volunteers in 2007, 17% of respondents viewed out-of-pocket expenses as a significant barrier to volunteering more frequently, and 19% of respondents indicated that out-of-pocket expenses have caused them to change or reduce or consider changing or reducing their volunteering.<sup>39</sup> While a VNZ survey in 2015 found that only 26% of responding organisations offered reimbursement of expenses or other financial support to volunteers.<sup>40</sup>

### **Time pressures**

Lack of time is generally the most common reason given for not volunteering.<sup>41</sup> The group discussed how people are increasingly time-poor, contributing to the trend of moving away from long-term volunteering towards episodic volunteering. This might particularly be a factor among the younger and middle-aged population, who are balancing a combination of study, work, family and many other commitments and need to be selective in the roles which they take on. Families with young children have traditionally been one of the major sources of volunteers, especially for schools, sports and other after-school activities.

### **Cultural changes**

There was agreement among the group that a cultural shift is occurring in society, leading to an erosion in social capital. There is much competition for leisure time and the community benefits of volunteering are not always understood. The needs and expectations of

volunteers are changing, particularly among the younger generation. While lack of time is often given as a reason for not volunteering, probably more important is a change in priorities. People appear to be less willing or able to give a long-term commitment to volunteering, and are constantly looking for new and meaningful experiences.

### **Increased compliance requirements**

Regulation and red tape acts as a deterrent for volunteers as well as creating a barrier for the organisations who engage them. In many cases volunteers are having to complete more paperwork due to increased compliance requirements. This is a disincentive for volunteers who offer their time because they consider an activity is worthwhile and are not interested in such administrative tasks, even more so where it is increasingly short-term or episodic.

### **Rapid relocation and social dislocation**

The group considered the issue of rising house prices and rental housing instability and concluded that this plays a part in the growing trend towards episodic volunteering. For some individuals, it is increasingly difficult to make long-term commitments. Consequently, many volunteer-involving organisations are experiencing low retention rates among volunteers. This was evident among respondents to a VNZ survey, who expressed frustration at the tendency for volunteers to move on quickly, citing relocation as a common reason for leaving.

<sup>42</sup>

### **Increases in travel time**

It was noted by the group that increasing traffic levels, particularly in Auckland, act as a barrier for volunteering. Travel time can add significantly to the amount of time involved in a volunteering role.

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<sup>39</sup> Carolyn Cordery & Letisha Tan (2010). *A Survey of the Effects of Direct Financial Costs In Volunteering*, *Third Sector Review*, 16 (1): 105-124.

<sup>40</sup> Volunteering New Zealand, “*State of Volunteering in New Zealand 2015*”, 2016, p.10.

<sup>41</sup> Karen Smith and Carolyn Cordery, “What works? A systematic review of research and evaluation literature on encouragement and support of volunteering”, 2010, p.11.

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<sup>42</sup> Volunteering New Zealand, “*State of Volunteering in New Zealand 2015*”, 2016, p.11.

## 6. Looking to the future: possibilities for support, and other opportunities

Due to the complexity of the volunteer environments, the group agreed there is no “one size fits all” approach to address the challenges currently faced by the community and voluntary sector. A number of options need to be explored together to make a significant impact. The options were identified and grouped into four categories:

- proactive responses
- better support for volunteering
- the need for the Government to lead by example improved research.

### 6.1 Proactive responses

The group discussed how best to support volunteer-involving organisations to take new and proactive approaches with a longer-term focus. One positive outcome would be stemming the negative impact of the drop in hours volunteered. Proactive responses that recognise and respond to the changing nature and motivations of volunteers could potentially support the sector to different sources of involvement and would lead to more opportunities to volunteer. These actions are largely in control of the sector and include:

- understanding the reasons for the decline in hours volunteered
- better support to share and use information already collected by the sector (for example, for Charities Services)
- ensuring awareness of societal and technological trends and the capability to respond
- giving schools and other education providers a role in promoting volunteerism.

### Sharing data to understand the changing needs of the sector

VNZ have a role in informing volunteer-involving organisations about different ways of collecting data which are appropriate for their organisation and/or the sector. Some examples include:

1. tools for measuring impact, such as
  - [The Volunteer Resources Balanced Scorecard](#)
  - Opinion surveys
2. tools for effectively collecting volunteers' hours, such as
  - Timely and Harvest.

Sharing data would assist organisations in understanding the current environment of volunteer engagement. This could be used to answer questions for the sector on how to improve and develop its services. Resources would be required to bring stakeholders together to design, develop, test and provide feedback on innovative responses, and to identify where support is needed.

### Responding to emerging societal and technological trends in volunteering

Volunteer-involving organisations need to be aware of societal and technological trends in order to take advantage of current opportunities in volunteering. Examples include episodic volunteering, corporate or other group volunteering, and virtual volunteering. The potential contributions of technology to volunteerism are far-reaching. Virtual volunteering (volunteering online) provides freedom and flexibility for volunteers, eliminating the need for volunteerism to be tied to specific times and locations.<sup>43</sup>

Taking advantage of the opportunities provided by technology can assist with volunteer recruitment, provide the ability to deliver training electronically and also offer tools to enable volunteers in their work. Utilising social media (such as Facebook and Twitter) can be an effective method of connecting with the younger population, along with raising awareness of issues and mobilising campaigns.<sup>44</sup> Other online tools include: productivity apps (such as Trello and Slack) and video conferencing (such as Skype and GoToMeeting).

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43 United Nations Volunteers “State of the World’s Volunteerism Report 2011 – Universal Values for Global Well-being”, 2011, p. 27.

44 Volunteer Canada “Bridging the Gap: Enriching the Volunteer Experience to Build a Better Future for Our Communities”, 2010, p. 4.

Unlike businesses, increased productivity and effectiveness among volunteer-involving organisations does not have a direct relationship to increasing income, so investment in these areas is often difficult without external support.

## 6.2 Better support for volunteering

The group identified the following ways in which volunteering could be better supported:

- a renewed commitment from the Government and greater cross-government support
- more funding to help link volunteers with volunteering opportunities and to support volunteer management
- more effective infrastructure to support volunteer training and management
- looking after the welfare of volunteers
- implementing effective conflict management procedures
- providing resource materials to promote and support volunteering.

### A renewed commitment from Government and greater cross-government support

The group considered the “Government Policy on Volunteering” from 2002, which recognises volunteers as making a “vital contribution to social development, the economy and the environment”.<sup>45</sup> It was acknowledged the policy says all the right things in terms of valuing and supporting volunteering but in reality, there is little practical evidence of government agencies being committed to this policy. It was suggested the policy should be updated to reflect the realities of the current social and economic environment, and to provide the support and resources necessary for effective volunteering, while also recognising and promoting the significant social and career benefits.

The group believes that cross-government support is required to meet the needs of the sector through positive messaging about the benefits of volunteering. It is important that government agencies take a holistic view of volunteering and understand that volunteers are

not just unpaid service providers; they also have a key role in helping build social cohesion and stronger communities.

Specific cross-government commitments could also be made to review any unintended policy or regulatory barriers to volunteering, and to encourage government agencies to be exemplary practitioners of best practice when they engage volunteers themselves (see below).

### More effective infrastructure to support volunteer training and management

United Nations Volunteers defines volunteer infrastructure as “the systems, mechanisms and instruments needed to ensure an environment where volunteerism can flourish”.<sup>46</sup> Volunteer infrastructure can refer to a variety of interventions, such as volunteer centres, networks, services, management systems, movements, platforms, and coordinating bodies.<sup>47</sup>

More support is needed for the intermediary bodies that are a vital part of volunteer infrastructure. For example, volunteer centres are instrumental in linking volunteers to volunteering opportunities and play an important role for people who are less connected in community, such as people who have recently moved into an area, migrants and students. One of the specific outcomes of volunteer centres addressing these groups is greater social cohesion and social capital. As well as providing more funding for the intermediary bodies, it is also important that funding for any activity undertaken by a non-profit organisation, in all portfolio areas, includes consideration of the costs of volunteer management tasks.

This investment in volunteering infrastructure is required, through intermediary organisations such as VNZ and volunteer centres, and within organisations (for example appointing and

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45 Department of Internal Affairs, “Government Policy on Volunteering”, December 2002, at [https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Government-Policy-on-Volunteering/\\$file/Government-Policy-on-Volunteering.pdf](https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/Files/Government-Policy-on-Volunteering/$file/Government-Policy-on-Volunteering.pdf)

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46 As cited in Sue Hine, “Volunteer Management Training: The Missing Pieces”. *e-volunteerism: The Electronic Journal of the Volunteer Community*, Vol XV, Issue 4, July 2015.

47 Sue Hine, “Volunteer Management Training: The Missing Pieces”. *e-volunteerism: The Electronic Journal of the Volunteer Community*, Vol XV, Issue 4, July 2015.

training a volunteer manager, and adopting volunteer related policies) to enable more effective and responsive volunteering. The reference group observed that non-profit organisations tend to under invest in infrastructure which results in less effective outcomes. For effective volunteering to take place, organisations need adequate infrastructure and to have the elements of good volunteer management practice in place, including:

- support and communication
- written policies and procedures
- recruitment and efficient screening
- orientation and training for volunteers
- risk management
- support
- recognition of volunteers.<sup>48</sup>

The group identified a need for accessible training and funded support for volunteer management. The ability to build capability is also currently limited due to a lack of formal volunteer management qualifications and training.

### **Looking after the welfare of volunteers & effective conflict management procedures**

Having an organisational culture that welcomes, values and respects volunteers and emphasises the cultural and social rewards of volunteering, plays an important role in retaining volunteers.<sup>49</sup> There was much discussion among the group around the importance of effective volunteer management, which includes looking after the welfare of volunteers.

In some cases managers or coordinators of volunteers may be lacking the skills and/or knowledge to be effective in their roles. Volunteer-involving organisations must aim to understand the motivations of volunteers and consider individual skills and experience when matching volunteers to roles. Developing a philosophy on volunteering around a set

of related beliefs would allow a greater understanding and appreciation of volunteers and their input, across the whole organisation.<sup>50</sup>

Looking after volunteers includes having appropriate complaints, grievance and dispute resolution procedures for volunteers to access when needed. These protect the wellbeing of volunteers and encourage further contribution. VNZ undertook a survey of volunteer-involving organisations in 2016, which found that 79% of respondents had experienced challenges in conflict management involving volunteers in the previous 12-month period. Encouragingly, 70% of respondents indicated they had policies and procedures in place to deal with such incidences. As was identified by the reference group, if a strong infrastructure exists within an organisation then conflict can be dealt with efficiently and constructively, before it escalates.

### **Providing resource materials to promote and support volunteering**

It is vital that resource materials, training and support are available to assist with the promotion and support of volunteering and provide volunteer-involving organisations with information on effective volunteer management. VNZ has an important role in disseminating material of this nature, such as the *Best Practice Guidelines for Volunteer-Involving Organisations*.<sup>51</sup> Local and regional intermediary organisations have a key role in providing local resources, training and support to volunteer-engaging organisations in their area. If appropriately supported, VNZ could also provide a useful train-the-trainers role. There is also a need for resources, training and support that is culturally appropriate, especially by and with Maori and Pacific organisations, where definitions or understandings of concepts like 'volunteering' may have different cultural roots (and fruits).<sup>52</sup>

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48 Karen Smith and Carolyn Cordery, "What works? A systematic review of research and evaluation literature on encouragement and support of volunteering", 2010, p. 27

49 Smith & Cordery, *ibid*, p. 28

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50 Sue Hine, *ibid*.

51 Volunteering New Zealand "*Best Practice Guidelines for Volunteer-Involving Organisations*", 2015, at <http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/best-practice/>

52 Karen Smith and Carolyn Cordery, "What works? A systematic review of research and evaluation literature on encouragement and support of volunteering", 2010, p. 6.

### 6.3 The need for Government to lead by example

The reference group believes that some of the problems facing the sector could be addressed if the government agencies that engage volunteers modelled good volunteer management practices themselves. To demonstrate the crucial role of volunteering, such Government agencies could be expected to report on their volunteer management among their key performance indicators. Government agencies would have the responsibility of not only demonstrating 'best practice' in how volunteers are recruited, supported and retained, but also in undertaking exemplary data collection and reporting on their own volunteer-related activities.

A number of (inadvertent) "anti-volunteering policies" which work against volunteering were identified by the reference group. Examples include the lengthy delays in getting police vets back (regularly up to 8 weeks), taxation on honorariums and fringe benefits for volunteers, and onerous compliance requirements which get in the way of volunteering. The group proposes when the government is considering any policy it looks at whether it will support or increase the barriers to volunteering and citizen participation.

### 6.4 Improved Research

The reference group agreed a proactive public investment should be made in volunteer research to help fully understand the state of volunteering and enable more evidence-based policy making. Data should be collected at more frequent intervals to gain a timelier picture of trends.

The group also recommends that Statistics New Zealand's Time Use Survey be undertaken at least every five years, ideally with a larger sample. It is useful that since 2009/10 unpaid work for organisations is being categorised by equivalents to the major fields of activity used in the NPISA (the NZ Standard Classification of Non-profit Organisations). This enables some useful disaggregation, and more so in identifying trends over time, as it is regularly collected.

However, even with data already collected (age, gender, ethnicity, labour force status and geography) the small sample size severely restricts its use, with high relative sampling errors – frequently over 50%. The group understands this can only be addressed with an

increase in sample size. While acknowledging the expense and practical difficulties of increasing the TUS sample size, a first step could be a comprehensive review by Statistics NZ of information needs for volunteering data, as is currently being undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).<sup>53</sup> Some key information needs for volunteering, from the Australian review are listed in Appendix A.

Like the ABS, Statistics NZ collect or have the potential to collect various data on participation rates, the nature of the voluntary work undertaken, characteristics of volunteers, and barriers to volunteering – primarily through the Census, TUS, General Social Survey, and Household Labour Force Survey. Much like our current situation, the ABS review was initiated in response to evidence of declining volunteering, and in acknowledgement that:

"...there is a need to broaden our understanding of what is currently happening in the sector because the nature of volunteering is changing – it is increasingly being done through online platforms, is more cause-based, more one-off, and often needs to fit around people's busy lifestyles."<sup>54</sup>

While much research exists internationally around volunteer engagement, research on the benefits of volunteering and barriers for volunteering from a New Zealand perspective are few and far between. Improved investment in New Zealand based research would assist with better understanding of the trends, barriers and issues of concern, help in finding solutions, and allow more efficient allocation of resources in response to emerging trends.

Exit interviews are a good way of gaining information from volunteers, though people are often reluctant to share negative feedback in person. Another option would be to set up a website or blog where volunteers could

53 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2017). Discussion Paper: Information needs for Volunteering data, April 2017 (Cat. No. 4159.0.55.004) at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4159.0.55.004main+features1April+2017> [accessed 19 April 2017]

54 ABS (2017), *ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

report on their experiences. As was found in Australia<sup>55</sup>, there is a growing amount of survey and administrative data collected by volunteer-involving organisations, but there is little collaboration, some data are left unanalysed (as a result of lack of skills, time or resources) and individual organisation's findings are generally not well shared. Increased support for data literacy among volunteer-involving organisations could help release valuable information.

## 7. Recommendations

The Reference Group recommends the following actions:

### 1. The Government recognises the contribution made by volunteering to community building and social cohesion through:

- An updated Government Policy on Volunteering that recognises the important role of formal and informal volunteering in society (community building and promoting social cohesion, as well as service provision), the costs of volunteering, and commits Government agencies to review policies to reduce inadvertent barriers to volunteering, and to appropriately resource the engagement, support and reimbursement of costs of volunteering.

As noted above, the Government Policy on Volunteering is over 15 years old, and lacks specific policy commitments against which it can be accountable. Now is a good opportunity for the current Government to up-date the Policy, give strong government messaging on its support for volunteering and its crucial role in society, and give the policy real teeth that can make a difference for the sector.

- A secondment from Treasury (for example, to Volunteering New Zealand) to economically assess the costs and value added by volunteering to the individual, the sector and society.

Volunteering NZ lacks the staff time and specialist expertise to undertake this task without assistance, but it is well-placed within

the sector to bring in sector engagement and support for the task. This could provide a good example of a collaborative approach to putting into practice the Government's commitment to an evidence-based approach to social investment.

- The inclusion of a weighting for added "social value" in Government competitive tendering for provision of services (recognising contributions to social capital, social cohesion and community building).

This has been practised in the United Kingdom since the introduction of the Public Services (Social Value) Act of 2012, which "places a requirement on commissioners to consider the economic, environmental and social benefits of their approaches to procurement before the process starts".<sup>56</sup> Factoring in the social value to a bid for service delivery would ensure the proper assessment of value for money and enable volunteer-involving organisations to be on a more level footing.

### 2. The Government reinforces its commitment to volunteering through:

- An updated Government Policy on Volunteering also ensuring a stronger commitment from Government agencies to supporting their own volunteer-involvement.
- Leading by example through the modelling of excellent volunteer management by the Government agencies that engage volunteers (including, for example, exemplary data collection and reporting on their own volunteer related activities).

If the Government fails to set a good example, it is difficult to communicate this is a crucial issue for New Zealand society, in part going to the heart of our identity and what distinguishes us as New Zealanders. The advantages of the platform a Government has in attracting media and public attention is needed for this important cause.

<sup>55</sup> ABS (2017), *ibid.*, p 5.

<sup>56</sup> "Social Value Act: information and resources", updated May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/social-value-act-information-and-resources/social-value-act-information-and-resources>

### **3. The Government and other funders increase funding for building the capacity of intermediary bodies**

- VNZ and volunteer centres directly support volunteering and volunteer management, especially to enable the sector to proactively take into account the changing nature of volunteering.

There has been a chronic under-investment in the intermediary bodies who support volunteering, including funding for volunteer management. Resourcing levels have not kept pace with rising costs and must be increased if organisations are to continue engaging citizens and providing effective and relevant services to their communities to help achieve positive societal outcomes. Better trained, informed and supported, organisations can respond more positively and flexibly to the large-scale changes currently occurring in the nature and motivations of volunteers. This is a key strategy in stemming the dramatic drop in volunteer hours.

### **4. Investing in an improved knowledge base, including:**

- Statistics NZ undertaking its Time Use Survey (which includes crucial data on formal and informal volunteering) at least every five years, so as to produce more timely trend data.
- Statistics NZ convening a longer term strategic review of the information needs for volunteering data in New Zealand.
- Targeted funding for New Zealand based research, especially qualitative research around volunteer engagement and motivation, for example qualitative research focusing on volunteering trends.

Research is an important tool for understanding the state of the volunteering environment. It also provides a platform for gaining support, and better responding to long term trends and emerging changes. To maintain an up-to-date picture of what is happening around volunteering, current data are required.

To date reviews of volunteering data collection has been piecemeal and not taken a strategic overview of public policy and sector information needs. Time series surveys can provide much useful data, but some of the more in-depth qualitative information needs will be more efficiently met by targeted research.

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## Appendix A: Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) review of information needs for volunteering data

To date the ABS review has affirmed the importance of collecting information on all aspects of volunteering and giving. With respect to understanding volunteering it suggests we need to know:

- who's spending time on what (looking at characteristics of volunteers such as age, sex, employment status, level of education, marital status, religion; as well as the type of voluntary work being done)
- who they're doing it for (for example, the Scouts, friends, the local church, hospices and hospitals). Besides providing a measure of formal and informal volunteering, this could measure people's contribution to their community and neighbourhoods)
- why they're doing it (motivations; whether people are volunteering as part of a workplace volunteering program (and the leave provisions around this activity); whether the volunteering is obligatory or conditional, whether it's spontaneous or planned; rates of spontaneous volunteering, especially in emergency management)
- when they're doing it (looking at the times of day or night people are volunteering; what days, weeks and months activity is taking place)
- how often they're doing it (whether activity is ongoing or one-off, how long the person has been volunteering)
- how long they're doing it for (number of hours people spend, which enables economic contribution to be estimated; whether it's done in small bursts or longer sessions)
- how they're providing their services (including whether face-to-face or online)
- what their levels of digital literacy are (how easy is it for people to receive information or participate in online activity or training)

- whether the work they're doing is skilled or unskilled, and what skills they have (including whether professionals are volunteering their skills, whether volunteers have the appropriate skill set to undertake the services they are volunteering for)
- why people are not volunteering (barriers to voluntary work such as costs, lack of skills, lack of time, health reasons; reasons why previous volunteers are no longer volunteering)

The ABS are also aware of the need to collect information in a way that is relevant to different cultural understandings of volunteering; contributes to an understanding of the economic impact of volunteering (from individual pathways to paid employment, to numbers of unpaid carers, to macroeconomic contribution to GDP); and understands motivations and barriers to volunteering (including financial, regulatory, and training, etc).<sup>57</sup> We would anticipate similar requirements to arise in a New Zealand review of information needs.

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<sup>57</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2017). Discussion Paper: Information needs for Volunteering data, April 2017 (Cat. No. 4159.0.55.004) at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4159.0.55.004main+features1April+2017> [accessed 19 April 2017]

## Appendix B: Terms of Reference

### Role of reference group on volunteering

#### Purpose of the group

Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ), with support from the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), is convening a group of experts to help understand the implications for the community and voluntary sector of an apparent fall in the number of hours offered by volunteers. The group will also investigate ways of considering how volunteer-involving organisations can respond effectively to the trend towards lower hours being volunteered by individuals.

#### Mandate

The Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector has asked DIA to bring together a group of expert stakeholders to help develop an overview paper on the state of volunteering and issues facing community and voluntary sector organisations that rely on volunteers.

#### The problem to be considered

The Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account 2013 (NPISA) noted:

- a 21% increase in the number of volunteers since 2004;
- a 42% decrease in volunteer hours; and
- a 30% increase in paid staff working for non-profit institutions.

Based on these data, the problem of a marked decline in volunteer hours forms the basis for bringing the group together. The problem statement will likely evolve when tested with the group.

#### Rationale for convening the group

The group will bring together knowledge from a range of perspectives. This will increase the credibility of the work and provide deeper insights into the challenges and opportunities facing volunteer-involving organisations. Bringing together a group to help government specifically with this work also aligns with the focus on “collaboration, discussion and more meaningful engagement” from the 2015 review of the Kia Tūtahi Relationship Accord.

#### Output

The group will assist DIA in the production of a discussion paper that accurately reflects issues and opportunities facing volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations. While the document will be approved by the group, the primary writing task may be undertaken by DIA and VNZ.

#### Questions for the group to consider

VNZ, with DIA’s input, will develop questions for the group to consider. Initial topics for discussion could include:

##### the extent of the problem

- e.g. what impact does the measured decline in volunteer hours have?

##### addressing impacts and supporting volunteering

- e.g. what impacts of the decline in volunteer hours can be addressed?
- Are there other ways Government/VNZ can support [perceived] “time poor” volunteers?
- What other support would make a difference?

##### other factors/issues faced

- e.g. aside from a decline in volunteer hours, what other issues do volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations face?

##### what opportunities exist in order to maximise the contribution/impact of volunteers?

- e.g. maintaining volunteer engagement
- assistance with volunteer recruitment

The discussion from the group’s first meeting will likely influence the direction and focus of subsequent meetings.

#### Group size and membership

A group of around seven members will provide a diversity of views, while still enabling the group to have in depth discussions. Members will be sought to balance sectors, sex, and degree of direct engagement with government.

### **Role of members and time commitment**

Where appropriate, members are expected to have a deep understanding of volunteering-related issues experienced by their organisation, but are not expected to be qualified to speak on their sector's behalf.

Three full-day meetings are envisaged between late-January 2017 and late-March 2017, plus email exchanges between meetings, reading, and commenting on papers. Members are expected to contribute to drafting the discussion paper.

### **Volunteering New Zealand's role**

VNZ will run the reference group, but will work closely with DIA. VNZ will:

- prepare agendas, and draft papers for the group;
- since the group would first meet in January, DIA will prepare statistics and a draft literature review, which it will work on with VNZ, to help inform the first meeting;
- arrange meetings of the group (including travel arrangements), and liaise with the group between meetings; and
- work with DIA throughout on the direction of/plans for meetings and papers.

### **Department of Internal Affairs' role**

DIA will work closely with VNZ to establish and convene the group. DIA will:

- prepare statistics and a draft literature review, which it will work on with VNZ, to help inform the first meeting;
- update the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector at appropriate points; and
- will draft the outputs in close collaboration with the group (including working closely with VNZ).

### **Communications/wider engagement, and what happens after the reporting date**

The discussion paper will be presented to the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector by 30 April 2017. It is expected more in depth consultation with the community and voluntary sector, including receiving feedback on the discussion paper, would take place after the 2017 election.

### **Reimbursement**

Members of the group will be reimbursed for expenses, including flights, taxi fares and meals (as applicable).

### **Scope**

The scope covers the problem identified above (i.e. the measured decline in volunteer hours), as well as matters that would fall within the final output (i.e. the overview paper on the state of volunteering and issues facing community and voluntary sector organisations that rely on volunteers).

Broadly, the scope includes:

- Volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations (i.e. organisations run solely by volunteers, and organisations with paid staff and volunteers, including government organisations that involve volunteers).

### **Out of scope**

This list is not exhaustive, but indicates some matters falling outside scope:

- Community organisations that do not involve volunteers;
- Charities and/or a review of the definition of "charitable purpose".