



## Communities Count 2

### ComVoices 2014 Pre-Election Briefing

March 2014

ComVoices is an independent coalition of national organisations in the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector. A wide range of community organisations contributed to this briefing and assisted in identifying the current issues and concerns of the sector.

ComVoices was established to ensure that within Aotearoa New Zealand there is a strong collaborative voice reflecting and promoting the value and common concerns of the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector through information, advocacy and dialogue.

We actively promote the value that the organisations and people involved in the community sector, both paid and unpaid, add to New Zealand's economic and social wellbeing.

### **WHY COMMUNITIES COUNT 2**

The purpose of this briefing is to summarise key community sector issues and solutions.

#### Progress to date

Prior to the General Election in 2011 we identified specific and emerging issues and policy challenges. Three years later we recognise that together the government and community sector have made progress.

In 2011 we focussed on child poverty, income inequality and sector wellbeing. We acknowledge the progress made since then which includes:

- Supporting vulnerable children; a White Paper consultation, the development of Children's Teams, and greater collaboration amongst government departments.
- Government's work on investment in building the sector's capability.
- The recently announced increase in support for Social Enterprises.

- The changes in taxation and the Governments support of payroll giving that are helping to promote a culture of giving and generosity.

## **AREAS OF FOCUS 2014**

Our sector continues to play a vital role in building a strong New Zealand. We work alongside the Government and the market and offer a unique perspective as well as providing essential services.

We have identified three key areas of focus for the 2014 General Election. These are explained below. We value collaboration and the opportunity to work alongside Government to address these three areas.

The next term of Government is an opportunity to strengthen relationships between the sector and Government. A true partnership between Government and the community sector would enable us all to improve the value of services delivered to communities and achieve our mutual aim of building strong communities.

ComVoices members recognise and support the place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and tangata whenua in New Zealand. This document and our practice are underpinned by this commitment. We want the Government to continue to recognise the important place of Te Tiriti. Treaty based values and processes should be at the centre of all policy development and delivery, and should be measured and reported on by Government agencies.

## Summary of recommendations

### *1. Leave No One Behind*

- i. Acknowledge the underlying causes of poverty and inequality. We urge the Government to make the choice to reduce inequality by setting out aspirational goals, supported by long-term and short-term strategies.*
- ii. Address the barriers which hinder isolated and vulnerable people (such as disabled people, ethnic and rural communities) from fully participating in and contributing to our society.*
- iii. Ensure that the long-term impacts on people and the environment are taken into account when developing policies to ensure social, economic and environmental sustainability.*

### *2. Strong Communities need Strong Community Organisations*

- iv. Make a commitment that all planning work that involves community and community organisations is a "partnership planning process", and needs to engage all the partners in the design stage, as well as during the actual work.*

- v. *Formally declare that advocacy – “speaking for” – is part of the very essence of community organisations, and that this role is valued by Government as an essential element of a strong community and nation.*
- vi. *Place Treaty-based values and processes at the centre of all policy development and delivery, and measure and report on them.*

### **3. A Capable and Sustainable Community Sector**

- vii. *Recognise the difference between purchasing social services and purchasing capital items, and work with the community sector to develop a fair and value-focused approach to procuring social services.*
- viii. *Develop and implement a whole-of-government strategy to support and build sector capability, and provide the investment and resources to achieve this.*
- ix. *Develop and adopt fully-funded models for contracted work.*
- x. *Make a greater investment in research and evaluation so that individual organisations and the community sector as a whole knows what works and what is not working.*
- xi. *Recognise the value and scope of the community sector. We need a ‘go-to’ place within government to ensure cross-sector work happens within government, not just in our sector.*
- xii. *Commit resources to Statistics New Zealand to update the 2004 Non Profit Institutions Satellite Account.*

## **ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Leave No One Behind**

#### ***Issues:***

1. Continued inequality damages communities and our society. The gap between rich and poor is still growing in New Zealand and poverty is increasing. Income inequality is identified as one of the *Ten Global Risks of Highest Concern* in *The Global Risks Report 2014 (World Economic Forum, 2014)*<sup>1</sup>. ComVoices asks the Government to make the choice to reduce inequality by setting out aspirational goals and strategies to achieve them.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.weforum.org/reports/global-risks-2014-report>

2. Currently not everyone is able to participate in and contribute to our society. Wherever people and groups are left out, we are all weaker. A healthy society is one which values diversity and enables the full participation of all its members. ComVoices wants to see policies that reduce the barriers hindering groups such as rural communities, ethnic communities and vulnerable people from participating and contributing to society.
3. Community organisations are already dealing with the impact of an increasingly aging population. Many older people suffer from the impact of reduced income and isolation, and families can struggle to cope with the demands of supporting older family members. The demands for aged care services, health provision, and retirement housing will also continue to increase. It is important that this is taken into account by Government and that strategies are developed to ensure older members of our community are supported.
4. New Zealand's child poverty rates are unacceptably high. Child poverty has long term national consequences, and the underlying causes need to be addressed. Government must undertake remedial interventions that will have an impact on a child's life now, and result in positive impacts on a child's future. We encourage the government to take immediate steps to reduce child poverty by addressing the underlying causes, so that fewer children will experience any degree of poverty in the future and the nation's long-term prosperity and well-being will grow.
5. It is clear that today's actions and inactions will impact on those who follow us and on the environment they live in. It is vital that today's decisions do not leave behind future generations. ComVoices believes that the long-term impact on people and the environment must be taken into account as present day decisions are made.

### *Recommendations:*

- i. Acknowledge the underlying causes of poverty and inequality. We urge the Government to make the choice to reduce inequality by setting out aspirational goals, supported by long-term and short-term strategies.*
- ii. Address the barriers which hinder isolated and vulnerable people (such as disabled people, ethnic and rural communities) from fully participating in and contributing to our society.*
- iii. Ensure that the long-term impacts on people and the environment are taken into account when developing policies to ensure social, economic and environmental sustainability.*

## 2. Strong Communities Need Strong Community Organisations

### *Issues:*

1. Partnership between government, communities and their allied organisations must be central to all planning and programmes. Community organisations want to work closely with government to understand and address the issues that concern us all. Co-design of outcomes and solutions (community-led development) should be the norm for every Crown entity, not reliant on the goodwill of individuals within a department.
2. A partnership approach must include continued recognition of the important place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and tangata whenua in New Zealand.
3. Strong communities and organisations draw on the input of active citizens, many working as volunteers. This input is vital in a healthy society, and must be promoted, valued, and resourced.
4. Implicit in Kia Tutahi is respect for the distinct identity of community organisations, and recognition of the role we play in conveying and responding to messages from the 'frontline'. The Government regularly asks for, and relies on, advice from the sector, yet groups fear being penalised for speaking out. Advocacy is part of who we are as a sector.
5. Funding priorities are leading to a shrinking of the 'on-the-ground' presence of community organisations in many towns and cities. It is important that the role of our sector in being the 'social glue' of society is taken into account, as well as the specific work being done.
6. Working with communities of place and communities of interest to develop their own solutions is the way ahead – we want to see action to promote this way of working. We encourage the Government to lead the way and put processes in place to ensure this happens.

### *Recommendations:*

- iv. *Make a commitment that all planning work that involves community and community organisations is a "partnership planning process", and needs to engage all the partners in the design stage, as well as during the actual work.*
- v. *Formally declare that advocacy – "speaking for" – is part of the very essence of community organisations, and that this role is valued by Government as an essential element of a strong community and nation.*

- vi. *Place Treaty-based values and processes at the centre of all policy development and delivery, and measure and report on them.*

### 3. A Capable and Sustainable Community Sector

#### *Issues:*

1. Morale in the community sector is low. Contributing factors include uncertainty about government contracting, increased pressure on resources and mixed messages from government. For example:
  - The continued call for more collaboration between community organisations is undermined by competitive tendering processes.
  - Local solutions are encouraged but funding pressures have led to the closure of community organisations, and tendering processes favour cost-saving efficiencies over local community relationships.
2. We are concerned that a focus on pre-determined and narrowly focused targets fails to address complex and inter-connected issues and will stifle the innovation that can lead to positive outcomes.
3. Community organisations want to do work that contributes to positive outcomes for individuals and communities. We are concerned that government agencies often look for a 'quick fix' approach that seeks to draw a direct line of attribution from a contract for service delivery to a result. This ignores the complex nature of many of the issues that we deal with, and fails to make the long-term change that we are all seeking.
4. Organisations funded to provide services understand the need to be accountable and to report on the outcomes we are achieving. This requires a substantial investment in research and evaluation, including good data management systems. Many community organisations are seeking guidance and resource to help them build this infrastructure.
5. The move to tendering for social services through GETS has created competition and places smaller community based organisations at a disadvantage. The preparation of tender documents is expensive and moves resource away from front-line services. Calls for tenders have, to date, focused on efficiencies and cost-saving, rather than added value and community empowerment.
6. It is increasingly difficult for organisations to carry out work that is only partially-funded. This places at risk both the work and the sustainability of organisations.

7. Community organisations deliver many more services beyond those funded by Government. When government ceases to fund a programme or service, they risk losing the value-added activities that a community organisation can provide.
8. Accurate and up-to-date information is important in ensuring that the value and scope of the community sector is understood. It has now been 10 years since the Non Profit Institutions Satellite Account was published and it needs to be updated.

### *Recommendations:*

- vii. Recognise the difference between purchasing social services and purchasing capital items, and work with the community sector to develop a fair and value-focused approach to procuring social services.*
- viii. Develop and implement a whole-of-government strategy to support and build sector capability, and provide the investment and resources to achieve this.*
- ix. Develop and adopt fully-funded models for contracted work.*
- x. Make a greater investment in research and evaluation so that individual organisations and the community sector as a whole knows what works and what is not working.*
- xi. Recognise the value and scope of the community services sector. We need a 'go-to' place within government to ensure cross-sector work happens within government, not just in our sector.*
- xii. Commit resources to Statistics New Zealand to update the 2004 Non Profit Institutions Satellite Account.*

## APPENDIX ONE

### COMMUNITY SECTOR – VALUE, SCALE AND SCOPE

1. There are approximately 97,000<sup>2</sup> non profit organisations in New Zealand with only quarter of those currently registered as charities.
2. It is estimated that, only 10 -20%<sup>3</sup> of the 97,000 receive any funding from Government.
3. With about 105,000 paid staff, the sector represents a major industry in New Zealand of significant economic value.
4. Non-profit institutions contributed 2.6 percent to New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2004<sup>4</sup>.
5. When volunteer labour is included, non-profit institutions' contribution to GDP increases from 2.6 percent to 4.9 percent. This is similar to the contribution of the construction industry.
6. ComVoices recommends that Government commits resources to update the 2004 Department of Statistics Satellite Accounts for non-profit organisations.
7. The voluntary sector represents significant value for money. Voluntary groups return between \$3 and \$5 worth of services for every \$1 they receive in funding<sup>5</sup>.
8. The volunteer contribution in 2012 was estimated to be 270 million hours, which is calculated at approximately \$3.5 billion.
9. Volunteering is not restricted to the community sector. Considerable core central and local government work is also supported by volunteers, for example the Police, Prisons, Civil Defence, Conservation and Fire Services.
10. Community sector organisations make an enormous contribution to all sections of New Zealand society. It includes support for and services to: the arts, culture and heritage; sport and recreation; environment and conservation; education and employment; faith communities; social services and housing; law, advocacy and human rights; philanthropy; international development; health; disability; professional associations; Māori; Pacific and other ethnic communities.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.charities.govt.nz/faqs/general/> on 06/03/2014

<sup>3</sup> The Chair of the *National Committee for the Study of the Nonprofit Sector*, Garth Nowland Forman. (Personal communication 22.3.14)

<sup>4</sup> The Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account: 2004 – Statistics New Zealand

<sup>5</sup> Value Added by Voluntary Agencies (VAVA) Project 2004 - New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations and PricewaterhouseCoopers

11. The community sector is distinct and different from other sectors, particularly the Government, in terms of:

- Structures
- Accountabilities
- Decision-making processes.

12. The majority of the work carried out by the sector falls outside the processes and structures controlled and funded by government. The sector values its independence.

## APPENDIX TWO

### COMVOICES MEMBERS AND KEY CONTACTS

#### ComVoices members

- Adult and Community Education (ACE) Aotearoa
- ANGOA (Association of Non-Government Organisations of Aotearoa)
- Birthright NZ
- Cancer Society New Zealand
- CareNZ
- CCS Disability Action
- Community Housing Aotearoa
- Community Research
- Council for International Development (CID)
- Disabled Persons Assembly (DPA)
- English Language Partners New Zealand
- Funding Information Service (FIS)
- IHC New Zealand
- Local Government New Zealand (LGNZ)
- NZ Federation of Family Budgeting Services
- NZ Federation of Multicultural Councils (NZFMC)
- NZ Federation of Vocational and Support Services (VASS)
- NZ Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS)
- NZ Council of Social Services (NZCOSS)
- Philanthropy New Zealand
- Presbyterian Support New Zealand
- Prison Fellowship New Zealand
- Public Issues Network
- Social Development Partners (SDP)
- Social Service Providers Aotearoa (SSPA)
- Volunteering New Zealand (VNZ)
- YMCA

#### **ComVoices key contacts**

Social Development Partners  
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