



ELECTION 2017 – BRIEFING FOR POLITICAL PARTIES

The responses from political parties to the three things that would make a difference to the sector

1. Make it easier for community organisations to work with Government

- Require government agencies to collaborate using a common set of tools, support co-design methodology that uses our expertise, formally support community service providers advocacy role.

GREEN PARTY

The Green Party will fund a sector-led review with Government of all funding and contracting relationships with the sector, with a view to developing a Code of Practice endorsed by the sector and Government. Community sector time is important, and it shouldn't be taken up having to jump through so many hoops. The Green Party will create and enact a best practice model for funding and accountability, with the community sector being involved in developing this model.

We recognise the independence of the groups which make up the sector, and their right to play an advocacy role for those individuals, communities and issues in whose interests they work. We will change the Charities Act to ensure NGOs are encouraged rather than penalised for their advocacy. We will remove the clauses in NGOs contracts that prevent them commenting on government policy and research.

LABOUR PARTY

Labour will:

- *Commit to investing in long term relationships with community and voluntary sector organisations to support the development of resilient communities looking for locally responsive solutions.*
- *Review the effectiveness of past efforts to develop relationship accords and identify how to progress more meaningful processes and/or agreements in the future, which can facilitate whole of government engagement with the community and voluntary sector and clarify the rights and obligations of both.*
- *Remove gagging clauses from government contracts and work with the sector to improve communication between sector organisations and government*
- *Prioritise the long-promised review of the Charities Act that National abandoned, updating and widening rather than narrowing the definition of charitable purposes.*
- *Ensure that community organisations are able to engage in advocacy without becoming disqualified from charitable status, or fear loss of government funding and support.*
- *Consult with the community and voluntary sector on whether the disestablishment of the Charities Commission and transfer of functions back to the Department of Internal Affairs has resulted in effectiveness and improved services and information for the sector*

MAORI PARTY

We support cross-organisation engagement that allows community organisations to work collaboratively with the government to better support whānau to lead their own aspirations; designing their own pathways to be self-reliant; creating their own prosperity and success; celebrating their identity, history and culture and planning their own future. The Māori Party's role is to work towards ensuring that the Crown honours its obligations guaranteed to Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Whānau living in poverty has been embraced as a critical issue for the Māori Party since we came in to Parliament. No child and their whānau should have to live in poverty. We have long campaigned for constitutional change that would properly recognise the Treaty partnership between Māori and the Crown. To that end, we need to do everything we can to provide people with warm and safe shelter. We know that in order to eradicate poverty we need better dialogue between community organisations, government, and whānau, hapū, and iwi.

NATIONAL PARTY

Our community organisations work hard to build strong and healthy communities, and the National Party is committed to continuing its strong partnership with the sector.

We know that community organisations have different operating models and motivations than other types of providers. That is, their primary goal is to improve outcomes for New Zealanders and not to make a profit. We recognise that they may require a different relationship management style than other sectors.

Some NGOs advocate for, and promote the rights of, members of their community. That advocacy and promotional role can hold considerable importance to a NGO, and form a core part of its reason for existing. It is my expectation that contractual relationships are not used to prevent community organisations from commenting on public policy matters, including funding issues.

In 2016, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment developed comprehensive guidelines for the procurement and management of social services. The National Party is committed to continuing to work with the sector to make accessing funding easier, so that community and voluntary organisations can get on with what they do best: delivering good outcomes for New Zealanders

THE OPPORTUNITIES PARTY (TOP)

As part of our Democracy Reset policy (top.org.nz/top4) we support removing gag clauses from government contracts. We believe that the advocacy role community providers have should be formally recognised as a critical part of their contribution. In order to devolve services to local communities effectively, government should use technology to streamline systems and tools to minimise bureaucracy. That way, different organisations can deliver different services to different communities using the same infrastructure.

2. We need good data – but it needs to be correctly managed

- Data collection is based on best practice principles and protocols, providers must be involved in decision and oversight of data collection, government to meet all data collection costs.

GREEN PARTY

New Zealand is data rich but information poor. We support using existing anonymous data to inform public policy. We do not support sharing individual's client data. The Government must realise that it will not achieve its social objectives by over-riding individuals' rights to privacy. Confidentiality is an absolute cornerstone of the work that community groups and NGOs do, and should be protected. The Government did not put sufficient consideration into the unintended consequences that could occur as result of ICLD. The Government should not be putting barriers up to people who are most in need and are reaching out for help from the community sector. The Green Party would push for discussion with the sector to see how to best manage information, and if further data was required, would ensure that the Government was able to fund all data collection costs. The Green Party are committed to rebuilding our communities rather than targeting individuals.

LABOUR PARTY

Labour wants to collect data that can be used to view wider patterns and inform positive and progressive policy, rather than deter people from seeking help and cause concerns about privacy.

Bigger and better data is claimed to be the crux of the current Government's social investment ideology, yet the privacy commissioner found that the private individual client level data-for-funding push could actually hinder this goal. Under fear of their data being used against them, people may stay away from social agencies or provide false information, creating more entrenched problems and long-term costs. Social services need to be able to provide a safe place for people who seek out their help.

Community organisations are already collecting valuable data that they share with Government agencies through their reporting. This is not identifiable client level data, but it is valuable. Government agencies have not had the analytical systems in place to best utilise this information. Labour will look at developing systems for analysing information so data can be used effectively to inform policy while protecting individual's rights and needs.

THE MAORI PARTY

The Māori Party acknowledge that data collection is a fundamental part of planning for any organisation and information sharing is critical to achieving those goals. While we agree that it is necessary to collect data – whānau privacy should be of primary importance and they should have a say concerning the control or limits to their data's use and in what circumstance. The way data and technology work is constantly changing and the Māori Party support the development of necessary infrastructure that protects the individual's information from being infringed upon while at the same time being of use to policy makers, funders and providers – in order to improve the services offered to clients and their whānau.

THE NATIONAL PARTY

Individual client level data is about getting the best results for social sector clients and taxpayers. It means that we can target social services to the individuals, families and communities who face the greatest need and the highest long-term social and economic costs.

The social investment approach does mean that Government agencies, and non-government organisations would be required to collect precise data to inform our understanding of the root causes of negative social outcomes. However, understanding these causes gives the Government the opportunity to intervene early, leading to improved outcomes in terms of welfare dependency, education and criminal activity.

Providers will not be required to collect client-level data until the purpose and the use of that data has been agreed, and until a safe and secure system for collection has been identified. Providers of specialist sexual violence services will be exempt from collecting and providing client-level data for at least 12 months, allowing time to co-develop and implement the new sexual violence services, and to ensure the secure collection and storage of this sensitive information.

THE OPPORTUNITIES PARTY (TOP)

Good data is essential, but it must be handled carefully so that public trust in the government and community providers is not eroded. Any researcher knows that there are ethical concerns whenever we collect data about individuals and the government must take these issues seriously. The Open Data Partnership is a good initiative on this issue as long as governments listen to their recommendations. As an evidence-based party we will always support initiatives to collect good data to support policy development, but this must be carefully balanced against the right to privacy of those providing the data.

3. Services will close if Government doesn't improve funding

- Increase funding to recognise cost of living increases and wage movement, implement a collaborative funding mode to reduce compliance and transaction costs. Establish a community organisation development fund to ensure effective service delivery linked to community needs.
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GREEN PARTY

The Green Party is committed to increasing funding to the community and voluntary sector. The community sector has had a nine year funding freeze by Government, not to mention the large increases in demand many organisations are also facing. Travelling around the country talking to people working in the community, I have been increasingly concerned at the visible stress on the faces of so many staff. They have been telling me they are concerned that their caseloads have become unmanageable because of funding pressures and they are worried their practice is being compromised and that something might go wrong. The community sector is not just a cheaper form of government, their value is in their independence, community connection and responsive practice. To be effective, they need ongoing certainty and proper funding. The Green Party is committed to increasing COGS funding.

THE LABOUR PARTY

- *Will work with the community and voluntary sector to establish long-term funding cycles and transparent decision-making processes and criteria and so that the sector has more certainty around planning and delivering its programmes.*
 - *Work with the C&V sector to identify the resourcing required to fund stronger networking organisations able to build sector capacity and provide an independent voice.*
 - *Review the impact and content of the State Sector Act and the Public Finance Act on Community and Voluntary Sector funding with a view to creating mechanisms which are more suited to the culture and working methods of the Sector, and which would enable community development and client-determined mixes of services.*
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THE MAORI PARTY

The Māori Party supports engagement between community organisations and the government.

We acknowledge that there is a highlighted need for improved funding in order for community organisations to work more efficiently and continue to enable wellness in our whānau and communities.

We have no reason not to support collaborative funding models to reduce cost and establish community organisation development funds to support service delivery to those whānau in need. We want to see much greater emphasis on resources directed through Whānau Ora Commissioning Agencies, in order to provide greater support for whānau to lead their own transformation.

THE NATIONAL PARTY

A strong and resilient community and voluntary sector contributes to a productive and competitive economy, and improved social outcomes for all New Zealanders.

Budget 2017 allocated an extra \$6 million to support communities. This increases the Department of Internal Affairs baseline and provides significant additional funding for the community-led development programme and the Support for Volunteering Fund. I was also pleased to announce recently a \$5.55 million social enterprise market development programme that will ensure the impact of this innovative business model continues to grow.

In addition to lottery grants, and other funding sources, community organisations may also apply for a share of \$12.5 million of funding through the Community Organisation Grants Scheme, which distributes grants according to the decisions of local committees. The National Party remains committed to continue working with the sector to make accessing such funding easier.

THE OPPORTUNITIES PARTY (TOP)

Increase funding to recognise cost of living increases and wage movement, implement a collaborative funding model to reduce compliance and transaction costs. Establish a community organisation development fund to ensure effective service delivery linked to community needs.

Our health policy has not yet been announced, but it will focus on prevention, primary care, and community based care (including mental health). It is better for people's health, and much cheaper, to provide care early and keep people out of hospital. Our justice policy will also support community providers of prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration services. Our housing policy supports community housing associations. We also support more devolution of services to local communities more generally. This would be an important way to meet our Treaty obligations, but all communities would benefit from having more say in their local services.

TOP links to relevant policies:

Democracy Reset www.top.org.nz/top4

Social Housing http://www.top.org.nz/top_s_social_housing_policy

Health Policy will be available on www.top.org.nz/policy once it is released.
