



Media release

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Community and voluntary organisations continue to make a difference in our communities

The country's community and voluntary organisations are delivering services where they matter – to New Zealanders in need – even as they continue to grapple with a number of significant challenges.

That's one of the key findings from a survey of community and voluntary sector organisations carried out by their network ComVoices (<https://comvoices.org.nz>). The survey is carried out biennially to provide a snapshot of how community organisations are faring.

ComVoices Chair Chris Glauzel says community and voluntary organisations provide many essential social services to individuals and whānau in communities around New Zealand.

"We help people and their communities flourish, often in the face of some tough times, and we're proud of the contribution our member organisations are making to the wellbeing of this country," he says.

"At the same time, there's no doubt that we're operating in an increasingly complex environment with some challenges around funding and other resourcing, and we're working with people who often have high or complex needs, and in communities that can really do with a hand.

"We're continually adapting to the requirements of the environment we're in as we're committed to providing valuable social services to our communities, while continuing to advocate for more resources with the people able to make these decisions."

The main survey findings include:

Service delivery

- 69 percent of organisations report more people are using their services than two years ago (65 percent in 2016), but only 31.5 percent (34 percent in 2016) have more staff than two years ago.
- 73.5 percent are doing more work than specified in contracts (68 percent in 2016).
- The needs of clients and the community are becoming increasingly complex. As a result, service provision is becoming more challenging and time-intensive.

Financial pressures

- 34 percent of organisations were unable to offer staff a wage increase in the last two years (42 percent in 2016).
- One organisation is facing closure and 10 are worried about their financial viability. Nearly half the organisations are struggling to make ends meet – an increase from 33 percent in 2016.
- Half the organisations are using their reserves to help fund service delivery, and half of those will only be able to sustain this for one more year or less.
- The sector is highly reliant on grants, donations and central government funding. Nearly 45 percent of respondents are seeking to support themselves by generating their own income.

Organisational pressures

- The sector continues to undergo restructuring, with 44 percent of organisations saying they have restructured in the past two years. Restructuring is often carried out to change or improve the way an organisation works, or to improve its financial position.
- Half the organisations say the specifications in their government contracts have changed significantly over the past two years. This can result in additional compliance requirements and costs, without additional funding.
- Forty percent of organisations say the contract changes have not benefitted them.

A full list of ComVoices members is available at <https://comvoices.org.nz/about-us/#who>.

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