



Community and Voluntary Sector Policy

Vision

Community and voluntary sector organisations play many different roles, including direct provision of services to individuals, families and whānau, groups and to the environment; offering mutual provision of support and self-help by members to members; advocacy; education and research; and community business.

The community and voluntary sector plays a key part in the economic, social, cultural and environmental life of our country, locally, regionally and nationally. Individuals, families and communities often come together to form organisations to carry out purposes that have not been recognised by any other institution, or which may oppose existing government policy or social norms. This risk-taking and innovation is a key characteristic of many community organisations. It puts them at the cutting edge of our social, political, economic and environmental development and can often be controversial. This function should be recognised and cherished.

The community and voluntary sector brings many benefits that are often unfunded but are as important - if not more so - than the official roles. These include the building of civil society; the strengthening of our democracy through the spreading of information, the discussion of topical affairs - and taking of action on issues; contributing to the economy; supporting people who are affected by social, economic, environmental or health problems; job creation; skills development; research and development; and building culturally diverse and connected communities, including addressing isolation.

The Green Party envisions a strong and independent tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector within Aotearoa New Zealand that contributes in ecologically and socially sustainable ways to enhance our social, environmental, cultural, physical, spiritual, mental and economic wellbeing. Central and local government play a constructive, enabling role and the sector is genuinely respected and supported for its contribution.

Key Principles

1. Encourage greater Government trust and recognition of, and respect for, the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector.
2. Build partnerships between the Government and the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector.
3. Honour all Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations to the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector.
4. Create and enact a best practice model for funding and accountability relationships.
5. Support a tax regime which assists the sector to thrive while reducing compliance costs.
6. Recognise the independence of the groups which make up the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector, and their right to play an advocacy role for those individuals, families and whānau, communities and issues in whose interests they work.
7. Improve the capacity of local government to understand, resource and work with tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector organisations.
8. Support research, education, and capability building in the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector.
9. Recognise and support the role and worth of volunteers in the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector.
10. Support community economic development through creating an enabling environment in which community enterprise can thrive.

Specific Policy Points

1 Encouraging Government recognition, trust and mutual respect

Policy Positions

- 1.1. Strengthen the role of the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, including through giving the Minister:
 - a) Higher standing within Cabinet
 - b) The ability to have responsibilities in relation to a range of Government departments, especially where there is purchasing, services and/or active engagement with the community and voluntary sector

- 1.2. Reduce the functions of the Charities Commission so that it focuses on registration and associated tax issues. The education and capacity building role of the Commission will be shifted to sector-led initiatives.
- 1.3. Improve the capacity of Government Departments to understand, resource and work in partnership with the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector.
- 1.4. Enhance mechanisms and resourcing to allow policy input from community organizations to all levels of Government.
- 1.5. Encourage and support Tiriti-based practice at all levels of the Government relationship with the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector.

2 Strengthening Government relationships with the sector

Policy Positions

- 2.1. Fund a sector-led, independent group to work with Government on strengthening the NGO-Government relationship.
- 2.2. Promote a whole-of -government culture shift in the way Government works with the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector, aiming for relationships based on genuine two-way mutual respect and accountability, including Te Tiriti based genuine partnerships with iwi and Māori organisations.
- 2.3. Support initiatives which deepen and strengthen the relationship between business, Government, Local Government and the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector, including for example the Community Internship Programme.
- 2.4. Involve community and voluntary sector representatives in training and education for public servants, where appropriate.

3 Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations

Policy Positions

- 3.1. Recognise cultural differences around concepts of 'volunteering', and acknowledge the right of tangata whenua of each hapū to define what 'community and voluntary sector' means to them.
- 3.2. Recognise the diversity of tangata whenua rōpū within the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector, from Māori defining themselves as working within the community and voluntary sector to hapū and iwi based tangata whenua activity based on tikanga and rangatiratanga.

- 3.3. Support hapū and iwi based initiatives through the Community Organisations Grants Scheme (COGS) and Lotteries.
- 3.4. Resource ongoing work within the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector to continue consultations and development work around Te Tiriti models.
- 3.5. Ensure the Crown meets its Te Tiriti obligations in the sector, and support tangata whenua-led dialogue with the Crown on how the relationship should be developed.
- 3.6. Ensure Māori can define which tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector organisations are entitled to receive kaupapa Māori funding.
- 3.7. Ensure Māori maintain ownership over taonga created by Māori within tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector organisations, including intellectual property, regardless of Government funding.
- 3.8. Ensure tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector organisations can be evaluated and accredited according to frameworks from te ao Māori.

4 Creating and enacting a best practice model for funding and accountability

Policy Positions

- 4.1. Implement a Code of Practice for funding and contracting relationships with the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector that is developed and endorsed by tangata whenua, the sector and Government, and put into practice through social services procurement guidelines and other relevant areas. Such a Code could also be used as a guide by other funding bodies such as the philanthropic sector, as deemed practicable or appropriate.
- 4.2. Promote the following principles and actions in Government funding relationships with the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector:
 - a) Full and part funding - when funding is initiated by the funder and/or includes a high degree of specification, 100% of funding of an activity or programme will be provided. When the funder is responding to an applicant proposal or providing general support, part contribution can be made.
 - b) Overheads - both part and full funding should cover an equitable share of all necessary overheads, recognizing that projects and programmes must have infrastructure support to be sustainable.
 - c) Multi-year funding - where a project or programme is ongoing, the default position should be at least three year funding, subject to normal

accountability requirements being met, and to changes that may occur in the external situation.

- d) Government-led creation of NGOs - should be avoided, as it counters one of the key characteristics of community and voluntary sector organisations - that groups are the voluntary coming together of people to deal with a problem or issue.
- e) Funding for new groups and initiatives should not unduly replicate existing organisations.
- f) An increase in the Community Organisations Grants Scheme (COGS) funding.

4.3. Adopt the following principles in relation to accountability expectations:

- a) Monitoring and reporting requirements should be kept to a minimum, and should bear a direct relationship to the amount of money funded. Expectations should be realistic and flexible, and outputs should cover the actual work done, including innovation, as appropriate.
- b) Where accountability requirements are more than minimal, the costs of meeting them should be met by the funder.
- c) Government recognises that important learning comes from the acknowledgment and understanding of problems and mistakes, both on the part of government and of organisations receiving funding.
- d) Funders should regularly undertake reverse evaluations through an independent intermediary to obtain feedback from applicants on how they are performing against the Code of Practice and Statements of Government Intention.
- e) Sector organisations should be encouraged to develop their own evaluation methods, including social and environmental auditing and evaluation based on tikanga Māori.

4.4. Establish a fund to fully replace grants funded by gambling, administered through the existing range of government grant making bodies, directed by community consultation, and covering all parts of the sector (see our [Gambling](#) Policy).

5 Supporting a tax regime which assists the sector to thrive

The Green Party believes there is a need to balance the encouragement of charitable donation to build a strong not-for-profit sector against the risk of scam charities being set up as tax avoidance devices and the diversion of taxation funding for essential public services such as education, health and welfare into private philanthropy.

Policy Positions

- 5.1. Ensure there is a limit on tax-deductible donations to registered charities, initially to be set at \$20,000 and reviewed after one year and then triennially. In the cases of companies and Māori Authorities, tax deductibility will also be limited to 10% of corporate taxable income.
- 5.2. Work to reduce tax compliance costs for not for profit organisations.

6 Recognising the independence of the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector

Policy Positions

- 6.1. Require all Government departments and agencies to accept the right of the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector to advocate for those individuals, communities and issues in whose interests they work, without prejudice in regards to funding, contracting or tax status.
- 6.2. Significantly increase funding and infrastructure support available to the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector that provide quality support and advocacy services for people dealing with Government departments.

7 Improving the capacity of Local Government to understand, resource and work with tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector organisations

Policy Positions

- 7.1. Support and strengthen the community development and community and voluntary sector support functions of Local Government on principles of empowerment, participation and mutual respect.
- 7.2. Ensure that Local Territorial Authorities provide information and resources to enable community and voluntary sector organisations to fully participate in their Long Term Plan and annual planning processes.
- 7.3. Ensure Local Territorial Authorities adopt best practice in funding, contracting and accountability arrangements as developed by the sector and Government (see section 3 above).
- 7.4. Encourage and support Tiriti-based practice in Local Government's relationship with the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector.

8 Supporting research, education and capability building in the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector

Policy Positions

- 8.1. Substantially increase Government investment in research about and for the sector, including sector-led initiatives.
- 8.2. Support quality education and training programmes which increase sector capacity at all levels, both within and outside the formal education system.
- 8.3. Increase funding for research and development and policy creation carried out by the sector.

9 Recognising and supporting the role and worth of volunteers

Policy Positions

- 9.1. Ensure Government policy across all departments recognizes the contribution of volunteers, and foster a culture which promotes and supports volunteering as a key part of community life.
- 9.2. Recognise cultural differences in definitions of 'volunteer'.
- 9.3. Ensure that voluntary work is not used to replace paid work, and that those participating in voluntary work are valued in their role by:
 - a) Acknowledging that people doing voluntary work are contributing to the community.
 - b) Supporting people to participate in voluntary work.
 - c) Opposing 'workfare' or compulsory schemes as these can reduce paid work opportunities.
 - d) Support an allowance paid to all beneficiaries who carry out a minimum number of hours of approved "activity in the community" with organisations undertaking work of value to the community or the environment.
- 9.4. Increase and sustain funding to local and national organisations which support and promote volunteering.

10 Supporting community economic development

The Green Party is committed to supporting the development of local and regional economies across Aotearoa New Zealand, which would have a positive impact on the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector. This includes the development of cooperative, worker-owned and community-owned models of business ownership

alongside the more traditional business models prevalent in Aotearoa New Zealand.
See our [Sustainable Business](#) Policy for more details.