

Foreword

"Kotahi te kohao o te ngira e kuhuna ai te miro ma, te miro pango, te miro whero. I muri, kia mau ki te aroha, ki te ture, ki te whakapono."

"Through the eye of the needle pass the white threads, the black threads, and the red threads. Afterwards, looking to the past as you progress, hold firmly to your love, the law, and your faith."

This whakatauki was gifted by the late Tamehana Tai Rakena of Tainui to individual leaders in the disability and then wider community sector to support us in our work. It originated with Potatau Te Wherowhero, the first Maori King, who, at the birth of the Kingitanga movement, spoke of strength and beauty through both unity and diversity, by alluding to the beauty and the strength of the woven tukutuku. Individual threads are weak, but the process of weaving makes a strong fabric. Individual colours tell no story, but woven together they become beautiful, and can tell a story.

ANGOA, the Association of Non-Governmental Organisations in Aotearoa, is a unique network of organisations from across the range of NGOs in Aotearoa New Zealand, including national, regional and local groups. Our member organisations are active in the areas of health, education, international development, volunteering, human rights, welfare and social services, the arts, the environment, youth, women, ethnicity, culture and heritage.

One of the ways our core purpose, Strengthening the Community and Voluntary Sector in Aotearoa New Zealand, is expressed is in the community roundtable and research forums we provide for members of the Sector to meet together to increase their information base, on the Sector and on current issues. Opportunities for collaboration and for innovation develop in and evolve from these forums, as diverse groups recognise the issues they have in common.

Working with Government on strengthening the relationship between Government and the Sector is also a focus for ANGOA. We welcomed the Statement of Government Intentions for an Improved Community-Government Relationship in 2001 as an acknowledgement of the potential for significant positive change in government-sector relationships and have noted with interest, in ANGOA forums, any indication of the Statement's impact. We have also been keen to document any outcomes in a more formal survey, having long had concerns about the lack of research both on the Sector and on the impact of changes in government policies.

When representatives of the diversity of organisations across the Tangata Whenua, Community and Voluntary Sector met at the government-community sector forum in Wellington in June 2007, there was a strong call from the community sector that it was now time the Statement of Government Intentions moved from being just "good intentions" to become a formal basis for action and accountability and a reflection of genuine partnership.

The extent of our 'official' knowledge of the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector is very much greater now than it was when the Statement of Government Intent was released. Data from the VAVA report indicate that for every dollar invested by government in the sector, there is a \$3-5 return. Data from Statistics New Zealand's Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account: 2004 inform us that there were 97,000 non-profit institutions in this country to which over one million volunteers contributed more than 270 million hours of unpaid labour. Even though only 10% of those organisations had paid staff, they employed 105,340 people. In other words, our assertion that the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector is integral to the nation of Aotearoa New Zealand, and to the nation's well-being, is based on fact.

In mid-2008, the then Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, Ruth Dyson, made funding available to ANGOA for the review of the Statement of Government Intentions for an Improved Community-Government Relationship. The economic environment prevailing then was rather better than the circumstances in which we now find ourselves. This makes it even more important that the Recommendations which have emerged from the review of the Statement are eminently implementable; they build on structures and processes that are already in place. They do not require radical structural change or vast amounts of money. What they do require is good will and government recognition of the role of the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector in all our communities, and the role we will be required to play – are already playing – in addressing the fallout from the current and worsening economic situation.

The relationship between government and the community sector, as expressed in the Statement, should be an enduring partnership, transcending changes of government. Before the 2008 election, ANGOA welcomed the statements of commitment to the community sector, which included those from the National, Maori, and United Future parties; we eagerly anticipate the uptake of the recommendations that follow, as enacting those commitments.

For our communities to flourish, we need to enter a new phase of relationship between the government, and the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector. We need, simultaneously, to be diverse, holding on to what makes us each unique and different, and to work together on our shared vision. Then we will be weaving a strong and beautiful "fabric of society", a strong and beautiful tukutuku.

Recommendations

This review has found that from the perspective of the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector, the *Statement of Government Intentions* has continued value as an affirmation of government's recognition of trust and respect as the essential underpinning of its relationship with the community and voluntary sector.

- 1. The Government note the value of having such a statement of government intentions and formalise the way in which it is implemented by individual government agencies, by including it in the Chief Executives' accountability documents.***

The relationships of government with the many voluntary and community organisations that have a Maori kaupapa in any form cannot be disentangled from the general nature of government relations with Maori.

- 2. The recommendation in the Report of the Community and Voluntary Sector Working Party (2001) to establish a Treaty of Waitangi Commission to consider the Crown/iwi relationship should be addressed in dialogue, by government with iwi and hapu and with the sector as a whole.***

Government has few levers to influence the extent of coordination across government agencies in many matters that are of genuine and significant importance to it, the tangata whenua and community and the voluntary sector. A routine process for monitoring and evaluating processes, strategies and managerial practices could be readily established, for periodical application by government agencies, as well as by organisations in the community and voluntary sector who wish to build knowledge of ways to continuously improve practice.

- 3. The Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector works with ANGOA and other national and umbrella bodies representing the diversity of the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector to collaborate with government in developing an evaluation process for government agencies.***
- 4. The Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector be given the role of managing an annual survey of government agencies as part of the evaluation process.***

Government agencies have the potential to achieve considerably improved relationships with and outcomes from the community and voluntary sector through the designation of a high level management role responsible for their relationships with the sector. The role should be designed to build continuity and integration (ideally, the same person retained in the role, if the person proves to have the relationship skills). The obligations and resources required for nation-wide contacts will need to be recognised when developing the person specifications for the position.

- 5. Government agencies with significant relationships with the community and voluntary sector be asked to consider the appointment of a senior executive of the agency to the role of prime contact with organisations and leaders in the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector.***

The Office of Community and Voluntary Sector is a key resource in collaboration across government agencies and organisations. Given the extent of the Tangata Whenua, Community and Voluntary sector relations across government, and their shifting significance, monitoring and review of the size and location of the office will assist in increasing its effectiveness. The office should be located within an agency where its activities are of genuine interest to the senior leadership team. Were any of the central agencies of government to have such a high level of interest, then OCVS should be located there.

- 6. A periodic review be carried out to consider the resources and location of the Office of Community and Voluntary Sector and to develop a process for routine monitoring and evaluation of its effectiveness.***

The spirit and intent of the Statement of Government Intentions should be reflected in all major policies and programmes that involve the community and voluntary sector. The implementation of new programmes should be an opportunity to bring whole-of-government practice closer to that which is best reflected in the Statement.

- 7. Ministers note that all community sector initiatives can reinforce the aims of the Statement of Government Intention, enhancing the cohesiveness of public sector relationships with the community and voluntary sector. The Pathways to Partnerships programme, for example, provides a significant opportunity to do this.**

The full potential of managing for outcomes has yet to be realised, because of the fragmented responsibilities of agencies. The partial adoption of managing for outcomes has slowed the shift away from inconsistent approaches by individual agencies, despite the recognised potential benefits to government and the sector.

- 8. A range of vehicles like Pathways to Partnerships should be adopted by government agencies to help managing for outcomes more effectively across those agencies.**

The NGO sector is often richly informed about the characteristics and position of individuals and households, through the depth and breadth of engagement. This provides an opportunity to ensure that policy meets the huge variety of circumstances in which people live.

- 9. Ministers and government agencies recognise the value of the information and insights of the community and voluntary sector and its potential contribution in policy development and in evaluation studies of programmes.**

Community and voluntary sector organisations are generally built to reflect the aspirations of their community, and these are usually expressed in the organisation's constitution or other founding document. Government agencies should recognise that the constitution of the organisation generates the prime obligations for governance in the community and voluntary sector, and not the expectations of the funders or part-funders of services.

The initial responses of government agencies to the contractual environment resulted in an intensity of accountability processes that far exceeded that which would apply in a normal commercial context. Although there is much variation in the experiences and responses of government agencies, considerable learning has occurred since. That learning enables a greater emphasis to be placed on trust and managing compliance costs.

- 10. The government agencies responsible for the community and voluntary sector further improve the ways in which funding**

allocations can be made simpler within the broader constraints brought about by public sector obligations of accountability.

There is a complex web of relationships between agencies and the sector, involving myriads of transactions. The ombudsman concept has provided good models for dispute resolution in cases where there is much public concern that resolving disputes can have a disproportionate cost on individuals, given the overwhelming power of the service provider.

11. The Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector should work with the sector and the Ombudsman's Office to establish a Disputes Resolution service in respect to all agencies having a relationship with the sector.

The information that the community and voluntary sector accumulates through local and regional experiences is both unique, and of considerable value in policy evaluation. To benefit fully from this information, a small, professionally resourced and adequately funded NGO focused on the experiences of the sector, fully independent of government, could bring together the extensive and rich information that community organisations gather through their activities. To be fully effective in this particular role, any such NGO would research and publish information from NGO experiences that had relevance to public issues of concern. (e.g. Tangata Whenua Community and Voluntary Sector Research Centre). It would have the Treaty of Waitangi as its foundation.

12. A sector-wide research and information service in the form of an independent NGO focussed on this work should be supported and resourced.

The recent analytical and statistical studies by Statistics New Zealand and the John Hopkins Comparative Study richly inform our understanding of the scope, scale and value of the community and voluntary sector. Such analysis enables the impact of policy to be assessed at a national level, complementing the institutional responses that are often more visible. The studies enable us to assess both the strengths and vulnerabilities of the community and voluntary sector as we enter a period of extraordinary demographic change, within the context of increased inequalities resulting from globalisation, complexity in household forms and living arrangements, and growing diversity of communities. This initiative can be developed, building on informal initiatives, which continue to be the mainstay of innovation in quantitative studies of the form and nature of the sector.

13. Statistics New Zealand needs to be supported to work with the sector to extend and update the initial work it has published, and research into the community sector should be recognised as of significant merit in the grant allocation processes of funding bodies.

The relationship between government in its many forms and the great variety of community and voluntary organisations has a major influence on the scale, adaptability and spirit of those

in the community who bring an extraordinary motivation to their engagement on matters of community concern that are beyond the reach or capacity of governments. Many actions influence that relationship, often with unintended consequences.

14. Ministers should fund a second review within three years, of the relationship between government and the community and voluntary sector.

To implement these recommendations in a meaningful way, on-going high level engagement needs to occur between the government and the community sector. Precedent exists in forums such as the Prime Ministerial/ Local Government Forum.

15. The Prime Minister should work with the Sector to establish a Prime Ministerial/Community Sector Forum to provide a mechanism to discuss strategic issues that face our communities and community organisations and to move the Government/Sector relationship to one of engagement.