

NGO Council Chair's Update – August 2014



Our August NGO Council meeting saw us refining our 2014-15 Work Plan to build on progress made during the past year. A highlight of 2014 has been our free [Good Governance workshops](#), which were attended by more than 175 board members from over 100 NGOs.

You can see a report on [last year's Work Plan on our website](#) – if you have suggestions for projects or workshops for the year ahead, please contact an [elected NGO Council member](#) or the [Secretariat](#) to share these.

Workforce planning and development

We recently met with Ruth Anderson (*Group Manager, Health Workforce NZ*) who told us about HWNZ's expanded mandate to oversee planning for the whole health workforce, including allied health and care and support workers. Ruth said HWNZ is very keen to work with others, such as NGOs on this and welcomes approaches from organisations or sectors that want to take a lead on initiatives.

Ruth also encouraged NGOs to make contact with any of the [four regional training directors](#) who support health training to meet local community needs and make better use of resources. (The directors are [South Island](#): Kate Rawlings, [Central region](#): Nicola Smith, [Midland](#): Michael Bland, [Northern](#): Cecilia Lynch).

An example of an agency taking a lead on workforce planning and development is Careerforce's joint project with HWNZ on the [Kaiawhina workforce](#) (previously referred to as the unregulated or non-regulated workforce), which includes many care and support workers across the community health sector.

Daria Martin (*Programme Manager, Careerforce*) and Tania Hayes (*Project Co-ordinator, Careerforce*) met with the NGO Council this month to talk about the [Kaiawhina Action Plan](#), which some of you may have heard about at the [Careerforce conference in May](#).

This work will be far-reaching and involve many NGOs in the seven steering groups or the Taskforce, which will oversee the project. A workforce development approach is being taken with the project and progress will be tracked on the www.workforceinaction.org.nz website – so check it out and get involved where you can.

Streamlined contracts

We also had an update about Phase 2 of the [streamlined contracts project](#), which is designed to simplify government contracts, move to more sensible reporting and reduce the number of audits for NGOs. Phase 1 of the project was working with just a small number of larger NGOs, but Phase 2 will start to reach many more NGOs from October onwards as contracts come up for renewal.

While the changes are positive and should bring greater efficiencies and less of a compliance burden for most of us, the changes will take a bit of getting used to. Watch for more news from the Ministry on this soon.

Vulnerable Children Act & Child Protection Policies

As I've mentioned before, the new [Vulnerable Children Act](#) is wide-ranging legislation that will impact on many providers in the community sector.

NGOs with contracts to provide children's services ([as defined in Section 15 of the Act](#)) should be prepared for both the Ministry of Health and DHBs to vary their contracts with NGOs to include a

clause requiring the adoption of child protection policies. A Child Protection Policy must cover matters related to the identification and reporting of child abuse and neglect (including physical, emotional or sexual harm, ill-treatment, neglect or deprivation).

A cross-government group, which includes the Ministry of Health, has recently produced an interim [Child Protection Policy template](#) and development [guidelines](#). These are [available on our website](#). While final approved versions may differ slightly, if you make a start now with the interim template and familiarise yourselves with the guide, you will be better placed to have your Policy ready around October when contract variations are likely to start.

We will continue to share more news and guidance from the Ministry as it becomes available on this and other aspects of the Act, such as the [vetting and screening](#) checks for community staff working with children.

Other sources to check are <http://childrensactionplan.govt.nz/legislation-/> and the free [Child Protection Policy Guide](#) on the Child Matters website.

Upcoming elections

As a country we are just one month away from electing our next government. Many communities and non-government organisations are taking this opportunity to raise important issues, such as housing, inequality and child wellbeing, with candidates to gauge how their policies may impact on these. Your NGO Council is working on a briefing document for the incoming Health Minister to identify key NGO sector priorities and expectations. If you have cross-cutting issues or examples that you think relevant, please contact an [elected NGO Council member](#) or the [Secretariat](#) to share these asap.

Of course, the NGO Council will have our own [election process](#) in October, so please consider if you or a leader in your NGO wishes to stand. We have Council members up for re-election in all categories except mental health. I intend standing down as Chair due to expansion of my NGO, and Pacific representative Key Frost has recently resigned after taking up a new role in a government agency – so there are ample opportunities for fresh faces and ideas to join our NGO Council. Nomination forms will be distributed in September, but you can learn more about the role now in the [Council member guidelines](#) on the website.

Until next time,

Kathryn Jones

Chair, NGO Health & Disability Council

www.facebook.com/HealthDisabilityNGONZ

<https://twitter.com/NZHealthNGOs>

www.ngo.health.govt.nz