

Health and Disability Sector NGO-Ministry of Health Forum

Annual Report from the NGO Working Group

1 July, 2005 to 30 June, 2006

1. Introduction

The Health and Disability Sector NGO-Ministry of Health (MoH) Forum process, aimed at promoting the relationship between the MoH and NGOs, has now been operating since March 2002. The Working Group, which has responsibility for the “executive” function, was first elected in September of that year.

1.1 Membership

During this reporting period there has been an election for Working Group membership, as noted in the Quarter Two Report. Membership of the Working Group at the end of the year is shown below:

Member	Organisation	Sector Represented
Carole Ingley- Maraku	Te Upoko o Nga Oranga o te Rae	Maori Health
Joanne Hayes	Taumata Hauora Trust	Maori Health
Donna Matahaere-Atariki	Arai Te Uru Whare Hauora (Dunedin)	Maori Health
Louise Carr	PACT Group	Disability
Jacki Richardson	Spectrum Care Trust	Disability
Marion Blake	Platform	Mental Health
(Vacancy)		Mental Health
Gill Greer (WG Chair)	Family Planning Association	Personal Health
Jenny Prince	Royal New Zealand Plunket Society	Personal Health
Jo Fitzpatrick	Women’s Health Action	Public Health
Kawshi De Silva	National Heart Foundation	Public Health
Dahlia Naepi	Pasifika Integrated Health Care	Pacific Health
Ida Faiumu-Isa’ako	Pacific Health Service (Porirua)	Pacific Health
Alan Chapman	Secretariat	
Anna Seatter (from April, 2006)	Ministry of Health	NGO Desk
Damian Zelas	Ministry of Health	NGO Desk

The Working Group held 7 meetings during the year, 2 of which occurred in the last Quarter, and convened 2 national Forums, the second being in April, 2006.

**Elected Working Group members' meeting attendance record
(for period July 2005 to June 2006)**

WG Member	Meetings attended	Proxy Sent
Carole Ingley- Maraku	5	1
Donna Matahaere- Atariki (from Oct 05)	1	1
Joanne Hayes (from Oct 05)	1	1
Lorraine Bailey (resigned Sept 05)	1	2
Louise Carr	6	
Jacki Richardson (from Oct 05)	4	
Marion Blake	5	2
Sue Lewer (resigned Feb 06)	2	1
MH sector vacancy (from Feb 06)		
Jenny Prince	3	4
Gill Greer	5	1
Jo Fitzpatrick	6	1
Kawshi De Silva	4	2
Alisa Lolohea (resigned Sept 05)		
Dahlia Naepi	1	4
Ida Faiumu-Ias'ako (from Oct 05, resigned June 06)	2	

2. Summary of Activities

2.1 For Quarter Four period, March to June 2006,

2.1.1 Introduction

This period featured a very rapid and exciting escalation in Working Group involvements, largely the result of the earlier efforts to promote NGO sector issues. Significant activities have seen considerable progress made with the invitations (reported on in the previous Quarterly Report) to contribute to Primary Health Care policy consultations, as well as input to the thinking about NGO participation in Pandemic response processes. The other prime tasks occupying the Working Group this Quarter have been the completion of the NGO Workforce Report, completing negotiations for the 2006-07 funding request and the holding of another national forum.

2.1.2 Policy Involvements

Background

The report on the Survey of NGO relationships with the MOH was finalised in March, 2005. This survey explored NGOs' perceptions of their relationships with

the Ministry. It was agreed with the Director-General that the Working Group should approach each Directorate to discuss the issues and agree on actions to address identified concerns.

As reported last Quarter, the Clinical Services Directorate has been generous in making opportunities available for NGO contributions to policy development/advice and workplan monitoring. Pandemic Planning has also become an issue on which NGOs have sought more information.

Update

Primary Health Care Strategy:

Following discussions with Manager of Primary Health Care Delivery, Sarah Turner, the Working Group has arranged to gather information from NGOs on their perceptions of the Primary Health Care Strategy Workplan and NGO participation in PHO governance. Additionally, after a request to the Directorate from the Minister for advice on the place of NGOs in a PHO environment, the offer was made to second a NGO representative to assist in the drafting of this advice.

In the latter part of the Quarter, the Working Group facilitated a series of consultations with NGOs in the main centres. Through these four meetings information was gathered which will be provided in the form of a report to the Directorate. Although the meetings were not well attended, other information suggests that the opinions shared are generally representative of the wider health and disability NGO sector's perceptions. The report that will go to the Directorate (due in July, 2006) will need to complement, rather than duplicate, the very similarly themed consultations with the whole health and disability sector that has been developed as part of the secondment involving project.

Pandemic Planning

Early in 2006 the Working Group became aware that centrally initiated Pandemic Planning had limited consideration of NGOs or the part NGOs could and/or would play in the national response.

Subsequently, the Working Group received a presentation at one of its meetings by the Ministry's Principal Advisor Quality Improvement & Audit, Gillian Bohm on the potential impact of influenza pandemic, the planning that has taken place and Key Messages for NZ.

Working Group involvement now covers membership of the Pandemic Emergency Group and the Chair's presentation to the Pandemic Influenza Reference Committee, following earlier representations on behalf of NGOs about their exclusion from planning (other invites to speak to groups involved in the pandemic response have followed). Given the high importance of this issue, the Working Group made a late decision to include a pandemic presentation at the April forum. The National Co-ordinator, Steve Brazier's paper ("Avian Influenza: what NGOs need to know) helped NGOs be updated.

There are still significant issues to resolve, including the impact on contractual obligations, in the light of pandemic-forced service delivery stoppages, and clarity about the response role of NGOs. The Working Group will continue to monitor this process and look to facilitate NGO participation.

2.1.3 NGO Workforce Report

Background

Following the September 2005 Forum on Workforce issue, the Working Group has been preparing to undertake a research project. This has involved the engagement of a research contractor.

Key intentions were that the report produced would ensure the strategic advancement of NGO workforce issues. It was to include a stocktake of workforce projects already underway, focus on NGO issues and identify any gaps in current planning with respect to the NGO sector.

Update

The finalised Report was provided to the Working Group at its June meeting. This had followed feedback on the earlier draft, which has received much commendation from those who had been consulted as part of preparing the Report.

The key findings include:

- identifying the disparities between DHB and NGOs funding resources for staffing
- noting the lack of an adequate NGO infrastructure to support sector wide activities
- the need to define the role of the Working Group to progress the issues, and
- the impact of variable quality monitoring processes.

To ensure maximum usage is obtained from the Report, it has been agreed by the Working Group to ensure presentations to key stakeholders, including NGOs, DHBNZ, Ministry Workforce Champions group, and the Ministry's Executive Team. The Working Group will endeavour to ensure there is comprehensive and timely feedback from Ministry staff.

2.1.4 Contracting Principles

Background

Since clauses in NGO contracts concerning lobbying were questioned in Parliament 2 years ago, the Ministry and NGOs have been trying to find solutions to the perceived conflict between public servants' political neutrality and the right of NGOs to lobby/advocate using government funding for this purpose. A number of government agencies have become involved in this discussion.

From September 2005, the Working Group has produced a number of versions of a draft Set of Principles for consultation with NGOs. Feedback from NGOs on the Working Group's draft Principles for contracting with the Ministry have generally been positive, though the need for their existence has been questioned.

Update

Following the formal presentation of the Ministry's statement on contracting at the April Forum, the Working Group has continued to express its concern at the lack of ability to negotiate a more satisfactory resolution that, amongst other things, would ensure NGOs retained their autonomy to make Select Committee presentations.

It was noted, however, that the provisions of the Ministry's statement apply only to fully funded NGOs working in the health education field. The Working Group is also keen to ensure that DHBs apply the terms of the Statement appropriately.

The Working Group is still considering what further responses to the Ministry's position might be appropriate.

2.1.4 Engagement with DHBNZ

Background

The relationship between the Working Group, the Forum and DHBNZ/DHBs has been on the Working Group's agenda for some time and has been substantially progressed over recent months, particularly by a presentation to the DHB Chairs meeting by the Working Group Chair in March. .

Update

The closer relationship being fostered with DHBNZ, which is identifying projects in which NGO participation could appropriately be included, has more recently been focusing on the shared workforce planning projects. The contractor preparing the NGO Workforce report had extensive discussions with DHBNZ workforce project staff and there is likely to be close ongoing co-operation as a follow-up, over coming months.

Some conversations with DHBNZ about the strategic direction of the Forum and the Working Group have occurred and will require further discussions with the Working Group, DHBNZ and the Ministry's NGO Desk.

2.1.5 April Forum: "NGOs and contracting in today's health and disability environment"

Update

The ninth NGO-MoH Forum in April was held in South Auckland. The theme for the meeting was contracting and both Minister and the Director-General addressed the approximately 150 participants. There contributions included acknowledgments of the Working Group's and Forum's growing role in informing policy and process. Also, the Minister shared some of his thoughts about the PHO environment with respect to NGO involvement.

As this was the last Forum Dr Poutasi would attend, due to her imminent relinquishing her Director Generalship, the meeting took the opportunity to farewell her and acknowledge the part she had played in helping the Forum find its place in the Ministry's policy development processes.

This Forum provided NGOs with further information on a number of aspects of contracting. This started with the Chair's overview of the place that Treasury's Contracting Guidelines and the Government's 2001 "Statement of Government Intentions for an Improved Community-Government Relationship" have in setting the contracting "culture" for NGOs.

Other presenters covered DHBNZ's wish to build NGO capabilities, what to look for in the contracting relationship (obligations and responsibilities) and concluded with a thoughtful presentation on the future of contracting. This latter paper, from Peter Glensor, explored alternatives to contracting, based on the premises that

contacting invited a focus on clauses rather than communities needs and was based on the assumption of human selfishness, which necessitated constant monitoring. His conclusions were that we need “work towards new funding relationships where the focus is (on):

- outcome-based funding
- relationship-based funding
- no lawyers!
- a greater stress on personal accountability, on the part of the people who are involved.”

Earlier in the proceedings, the Chair spoke to the Political Neutrality (Lobbying/Advocacy) issue, specifically by talking about the Contracting Principles prepared by the Working Group. NGOs were invited to consider how they might use these principles in their own contracting processes, to assure funder of their ethical behaviour.

Dr Don Matheson (DDG Public Health) addressed the Forum on the Political Neutrality statement the Ministry had produced, which had been made available to the NGO sector prior to the Forum. While acknowledging the original error had been in the Ministry’s drafting of some contract clauses, he reiterated that there is a perceived risk of fully funded NGOs interfering in policy development, by behaviour which is contrary to that which the Ministry is permitted to do, ie compromising their political neutrality. The clauses refer to NGOs who are fully funded and have “an element of public education.”

As indicated earlier in this Report, there were late additions to the Forum’s agenda, necessitated by the need to inform the NGO sector on some key current issues. This included presentations on the Primary Health Care Strategy’s Workplan and Pandemic Planning.

The Forum follow-ups will include ensuring NGO participation in Ministry activities, notably the Workplan feedback and Pandemic planning activities mentioned above.

2.2 Summary of previously reported activities for Quarters 1 to 3

The quarterly reports already submitted during 2005 and 2006 refer to the genesis of many of the topics covered above. These include:

- the follow-ups to the 2005 Survey of relationships between NGOs and the Ministry
- subsequent meetings with the various directorates to address the findings of the survey
- the Working Group’s response to the concerns at lobbying clauses in Ministry contracts and the drafting of Contracting Principles
- developing a working relationship with DHBNZ
- the ministerial briefing provided to the Incoming Minister in December 2005
- meetings with both the Minister of Health and the Director-General of Health early in 2006, and
- the national Forum held in September, 2005.

3. Feedback on Sector Performance

The Working Group has again asked the NGO sector to contribute feedback on the health and disability sector for this Report.

It is pleasing to be able to report that feedback for this period includes some positive responses to a number of Ministry activities that have been inclusive of NGOs. As already discussed, the Clinical Service Directorate's invitations have been perceived as examples of the co-operative undertakings that NGOs have long been wanting to participate in. Similarly, it was encouraging to have NGOs invited to join the NZ delegation to the United Nations HIV/Aids Summit and to witness NGOs perspectives being reflected in government statements. CSSITO has also expressed the view that they have witnessed greater and more effective consultation and engagement amongst sector stakeholders involved with workforce. Certainly the experience of the contractor preparing the Working Group's Workforce Report and the Working Group's own experience with DHBNZ would lend weight to this view.

There continues, however, to be some similar concerns to those that have often appeared in these Reports. Currently, NGOs are experiencing, in both the Mental Health and the Disability Support sectors, variability in the way both DHBs and the Ministry are applying purchasing frameworks and services specifications. It appears that while some DHBs are able to interpret these directives flexibly to ensure that services are provided to meet community needs, other DHBs adhere rigidly to requirements with the result that there develops a mis-match between funding and service need. Similarly there appears to be a disparity between DS policy and practice around 24 hour home support.

NGOs still report difficulties in being able to establish useful connections with Ministry staff, through regular meetings and communications. There is also a perceived lack of feedback to NGOs on any specific contributions made or to routine reporting, which lends further evidence to a sense of exclusion.

Multiple auditing and RFP processes (which promote secretive and divisive relationships) remain factors which NGOs see as inhibiting to the development of co-operative, cross sector ventures.

The Working Group requested sometime ago that, in the midst of the media focus on non-performing NGOs, it would have been useful for a Ministry statement which recognised the number of high performing NGOs that continue to deliver quality services to the public. Such a response is still considered desirable.

The Working Group notes that the Ministry's Cross Directorate NGO Interest Group is now meeting more regularly. The Working Group has previously reported on this development as being crucial to ensuring a Ministry wide awareness of NGO roles and contributions. We applaud the NGO Desk's efforts to energise this Group and appreciate the recent invitation received to address the Interest Group on Working Group activities and current concerns.

The number of new requests for the Working Group to meet with Ministry groups is also welcome. This will shortly include discussions on input to training programmes and a presentation on our Workforce Report.

The following response to our request for feedback was received on behalf of the Community Sector Taskforce:

“The Community Sector Taskforce is immensely grateful for the many ways in which the Health and Disability NGO Working Group has been collaborating with us in our work.

In terms of dollars, Health and Disability NGOs receive the largest amount of central government funding – and they are hugely important in the provision of practical services throughout the country.

Our Taskforce aims to promote a Tangata Whenua Community and Voluntary Sector which is sustainable, connected, informed, and able to do its work. So many of the cross-sector issues we deal with are important within the health and disability sector as well. It has been great that the Working Group has turned up to meetings, and contributed strongly to our work, and we thank you for it.

An emerging issue where we will need to work together even more closely is “Alternatives to Contracting” – an exploration of what those alternatives are, and how the financial relationships between the government and our sector can be more equal, honest and transparent. We look forward to working with you on this and other priority issues”

Peter Glensor and Tony Spelman”

Such a message confirms that the Ministry’s leading role in sponsoring an engagement with NGOs is a robust example for other government-NGO relationships to use as a model, as is presently being discussed between the Ministry of Social Development and NGOs.

4. Financial Report

See attached as Appendix I.

The only significant variance continues to relate to the underspending on Projects. Expenditure on this item was nearly at the maximum of the level we could sustain, though well short of what had initially been planned. This year has exhausted any of the accumulated funding reserves retained from previous years. The recently updated Working Group’s strategic plan will be used to determine the priority project tasks to be undertaken by the same contractor engaged for the Workforce Report.

The Working Group did not access any funding from other sources apart from that contributed “in kind” by the members own agencies in supporting their participation.

The Working Group appreciates the decision by the Ministry’s Purchasing Board to approve funding for the 2006-07 year which more accurately reflects anticipated Working Group activity in the coming year. This level of funding should enable the Working Group to progress a number of tasks

that will contribute to our ability foster the relationship between NGOs and the Ministry by providing more evidenced based feedback.

5. Conclusion

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Gill Greer', written in black ink on a white background.

(Dr)Gill Greer
Chair
Health and Disability Sector NGO Working Group

**NGO Working Group
Operating Statement
as at 31 March, 2006**

	Full year budget* planned for the 12 months to 30 June 2006 (\$)	Budget Year to date (\$)	Year to date actuals** (\$)	Variance (\$)
Revenue				
MoH Funding	55,111	55111	55111	0
Other Funding	0	0	0	0
Interest	400	400	916	516
Total Revenue	55,511	55511	56027	516
Expenditure				
WG Travel	21,600	21600	21650	50
WG Expenses	1,200	1200	2032	832
Forum Expenses	12,000	12000	11591	(409)
Secretariat	26,700	26700	26700	0
Administration Fee	3,200	3200	3600	400
Project Costs	22,000	22000	7866	(14134)
Total Expenditure	86,700	86700	73439	(13261)
Net (Deficit)/Surplus for Year	(31,189)	(31189)	(17412)	(13777)
Accumulated Funds Brought Forward	22,694.31	22694	22694	22694
Closing Balance of Accumulated Funds	(8495)	(8495)	5282	13777

* Planned expenditure only, actual may vary.

**Comments on any significant variance between the planned and the actual figures to be included in the quarterly written reports.