

Update from the Chair – May 2011



After several months without a secretariat, the Health and Disability NGO Working Group was pleased to welcome Grant Aldridge to this role at its 28 April meeting. Grant takes up this revised role after several years with the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector. He will provide support to the working group, as well as assist with project work and update the website – so watch for news on the group's activities over coming weeks.

At our April meeting we also set our work programme for the next 12 months. We identified three key areas of work where we believe the wider health and disability NGO sector can add value, influence policy and improve health outcomes for our communities.

These are:

- Primary Healthcare
- Older People's Health/Aged Care
- Future Health Workforce Planning

Our initial focus will be on Primary Healthcare and we welcome your input as this project progresses. We intend to be solutions-focussed – identifying what works and looking for practical ways to ensure wrap-around services take a holistic, person-focused approach – to improve overall well-being, and not simply address clinical symptoms. The NGO sector is well placed to assist the government to improve effectiveness and efficiency across health and disability services in primary health – so your help, experience and insights will be vital to help us identify changes that can have a real impact.

To progress this project, we needed to fill our Public Health vacancy, which resulted from Jo Fitzgerald's resignation from the group earlier this year. We went back to a person whose name was put forward at the elections, and I am pleased to advise that Judi Clements from the Mental Health Foundation has agreed to join the working group in this role.

Elections for other group members will be needed later in the year, so we will be in touch to seek nominations and update your voting details at a later date. We are keen to engage with you more widely as our work progresses and want to hear from you on key issues, so please contact us via secretariat@ngo.health.govt.nz.

Primary Healthcare is such an important issue, and one that the NGO sector is an integral part of, that it will be the focus of our next Health and Disability National NGO Forum – in March 2012. We will let you know the precise date as soon as we confirm a venue.

At our April meeting we also learned that Marie Day was moving from the NGO Desk to a new role in the Ministry of Health, and shortly after our meeting we heard that Kelvin Moffatt was leaving the Ministry to join Work and Income. Both Marie and Kelvin have been valued contacts in the Ministry, and we wish them well in their new roles – their replacements will have big shoes to fill!

Jackie Edmond
Chair, Health & Disability NGO Working Group