

# **Annual Report from the NGO Health Forum**

## **January 2003 - December 2003**

### **Introduction**

In December 2001, the Government signed a "Statement of Government Intentions" for an improved community-Government relationship. This Statement envisages "strong and respectful relationships between government and community, voluntary and iwi/Maori organisations". It articulates clear objectives for government agencies for an improved relationship with the community sector.

The Ministry of Health and Health/Disability Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) entered into a relationship in order to put that Government vision into practice. The relationship is outlined in a document called the "Framework for relations between the Ministry of Health and Health/Disability Non-Government Organisations.

The main objective of this "written handshake" is to build a strong and respectful relationship between the MOH and the health/disability NGOs that will provide a vehicle for improving the quality of health and disability services and health outcomes.

The 6 monthly Ministry/NGO Fora are an important part of the relationship. The Fora are an opportunity to discuss key issues for the NGO sector and to share these with the Ministry and other stakeholders. The Fora are also the opportunity for the NGO sector to set an "agenda" of work for the NGO Working Group (selected annually by the Forum) to progress between meetings on behalf of the Forum.

At the September 2002 Forum, the NGO Working Group was elected and seeks to:

1. Build a relationship between the Ministry of Health and Non Government Organisations that deliver Health and Disability services.
2. Provide a strong NGO voice which can inform Ministry of Health strategies and feedback to the Ministry of Health about key issues.
3. Establish an NGO relationship with funders and policy makers that includes:
  - Access and influence across the Ministry of Health's areas of policy development
  - Relationship building across the health sector
  - Identification of common issues, concerns and ways forward
  - Provide for communication and linkages between NGOs involved in Maori health, Pacific health, primary health, public health, mental health and disability support issues
  - Disseminate within the Ministry of Health and the NGO sector information that will enhance the relationship
  - Consultation and collaboration on areas of mutual concern such as policy development, needs assessment, strategic planning, annual planning, workforce and sector development, infrastructure issues and other emerging issues.

## Working Group Membership

Membership of the Working Group from 2002 was:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Sector Represented</b>
Liz McElhinney	Maori
Lorraine Bayley	Disability/Maori
Louise Carr	Disability
Dennis Paget	Older people
Carole Ingley- Maraku	Maori/Mental Health
Marion Blake	Mental Health
Alan Chapman	Mental Health
Liz Stewart	Public Health
Gay Keating	Public Health
Gill Greer	Public and Personal Health
Paul Baigent	Personal Health
Peter Glensor (resigned August 2003)	Personal Health

Meetings of the Working Group were held in February, April, June, August, September and November, 2003. There was a Forum held in both March and September 2003. The latter Forum was asked to either endorse or nominate members to the Working Group.

The Working Group selected at that meeting (and later supplemented by Working Group invitations to ensure a wide representation from the sector) was:

<b>Member</b>	<b>Sector Represented</b>
Liz McElhinney	Maori Health
Alison Green	Maori Health
Katherine Clarke	Maori Health
Wiremu Macrae	Maori Health
Lorraine Bayley	Disability/Maori
Louise Carr	Disability
Tanumafili Toso	Disability/Pacific Health
Bessie Ngau Chun- Marshall	Pacific Health
Carole Ingley- Maraku	Maori/Mental Health
Marion Blake	Mental Health
Alan Chapman (until October 2003)	Mental Health
Gill Greer	Public and Personal Health
Paul Baigent	Personal Health
Jo Fitzpatrick	Public Health
Alison Taylor	Public Health

Additionally, Joan Mirkin and Ruth Nichols represent the MoH's NGO Desk.

## **NGO Health Fora (held each 6 months)**

The major agenda item for the March Forum was service quality, audits and risk management and for the September Forum it was NGO-DHB relationships.

## **Progress Report**

### ***Audit and risk management***

- Audit is a key issue for the health and disability NGO sector and the March Forum was arranged around this theme
- Sue Kenny (Deakin University, Australia) presented material and participated in a stimulating debate. Her research, and that of her colleagues, speaks of the international increase of audit processes as a tool of risk management
- Following the Forum, the Working Group has raised a number of concerns with the Ministry of Health. As a result, awareness of the impact of audits for NGOs has increased in the Ministry and there has been a significant change regarding the size of samples for certification audits against the Health and Disability Standards. The Ministry has raised the issue with DHBs and is maintaining an interest in this area.
- The Working Group has also shared its concerns with DHBs and work is underway to progress a national workshop, hosted by Hawke's Bay DHB, on audit/risk management. The focus of the workshop is to explore, with DHBs, practical alternative ways in which both DHBs' and NGOs' needs in relation to audit can be met in a developmental rather than punitive way. This meeting is now scheduled for late in March 2004.

### ***DHB Relationships/Key messages to DHBs***

- Another of the key issues identified as requiring the Working Group's attention has been the relationship between NGOs and the MoH's current funding arm, DHBs
- The Working Group has refined the initial set of "messages" to best present the sectors concerns to the DHBs. These modifications have incorporated ideas workshopped at the September 2003 Forum.
- A questionnaire has been sent to all NGOs on the MoH email list (and circulated further via networks) seeking views on NGOs' experiences of DHBs, including the service audit/risk management processes. Once the material has been adequately analysed, it will form the basis of ongoing work with DHBs and will also inform the Ministry of Health's monitoring of DHB performance
- The Working Group has planned a presentation of these issues to DHBs . It is proposed to make a formal presentation to DHB CEOs at the Hawkes Bay meeting in March, 2004.

### ***Relationship with the Ministry of Health***

- A close working relationship has been developed between NGO Desk staff of the Ministry of Health and the Working Group. MoH staff attend all Working Group and Forum meetings.

- The Ministry has acknowledged the work of the Working Group by increasing the funding for this work from \$15,000 per annum to \$60,000. This will enable the Working Group to more effectively manage projects arising from the Forums and to fund some key aspects of those projects
- The increased funding has allowed the employment of a contractor to provide Secretariat support to the Working Group and the wider Forum
- The Working Group has met with identified people in the Ministry to either discuss or progress issues raised by the Forums or to pass on concerns identified at the Forums. These have included meetings with John Marwick (PHOs), David Chrisp (DSS devolution), Gill Grew and Gina Lomax (Audit), Gillian Bohm and David Press (quality strategy).
- The Working Group has provided input into the Ministry's NGO web page which has been developed to encourage better NGO/Ministry communication
- There are now regular emails from Ministry of Health to the NGO email list regarding developments, training opportunities, calls for submissions, key media releases from Ministers and others.

### ***Financial Report***

- Please find attached

### ***NGO Sector Questionnaire***

- As indicated earlier, the Working Group has sent out the first questionnaire to Health and Disability NGOs to gather information on key issues, such as relationships with DHBs and audit/risk management
- The results of this survey will inform the Working Group's dialogue with DHBs and assist in MoH monitoring of DHBs.

### ***Primary Health Organisations***

- The Working Group has maintained a close interest in the evolution of PHOs and their impact on NGOs
- Some members of the Working Group have been actively involved in engagement with PHOs and as a result have identified some key topics for NGOs.
- The Working Group has organised that the March 2004 Forum is devoted to PHOs and that this form the basis for further work on this issue.

### ***Participation in wider Government, public sector and NGO activities***

- The Working Group forms a useful conduit for information sharing regarding other collaborative projects in the sector
- Peter Glensor, while also one of the Working Group members, was on the Community Sector Taskforce. The work done in our health sector is being used as a positive model in other sectors. The "key messages" work is also being watched with interest, and may be picked up by others sectors
- Paul Baigent has been working with CEO's from a number of social sector NGOs on the Government's baseline review of Child, Youth and Family Services. The social sector NGO group will continue to seek to influence Government proposals for cross-department and NGO coordination of family services.

- The Working Group was approached by the MoH to provide a NGO perspective on lobbying and advocacy as part of the Ministry's review of NGO contracts compliance with public service standards. Several Working Group members attended a meeting to explain the role that these activities have in the functions of Health NGOs. The resultant MoH report contained redefinitions of acceptable NGO activities that give rise to continuing concern. These matters are the subject of on going discussions within the NGO sector and with the MoH.
- As part of a drive to keep MPs informed of the Forum's activities (in addition to the opportunities available when Ministerial speakers attend the Forums), the Working Group met with Labour MPs in November
- The Working Group has regularly discussed a number of legislative and policy matters. These include:
  - The Charities Commission Report
  - Establishment of the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector
  - Treasury's NGO Contracting Guidelines and their revision
  - Community Sector Taskforce
  - CYFS Review.

## **Conclusion**

We believe that we have succeeded this year in developing strong and respectful relationships with the Ministry of Health as outline in the "Statement of Government Intentions" mentioned in the introduction to this report. This has been achieved due to the willingness of the Working Group and key people within the Ministry to engage, in a timely fashion, over the issues as they have arisen during the year. We have also benefited by the attendance of key officials at both the fora and working group meetings to explain and discuss government policies and future directions.

While we haven't as yet evaluated the success of such encounters to improve the quality of health and disability services and health outcomes, we believe it is a good start and bodes well for the future of this group and consequently the sector we represent. Our efficacy has been enhanced by the increased funding that the Ministry has provided which has enabled the appointment of secretariat assistance. We are grateful for this indication of the Ministry's ongoing commitment to this relationship.

The fora held this year were extremely valuable to the sector to discuss key issues and relationships. They also provide invaluable networking opportunities and we hope to cast the net even wider next year to include a more comprehensive representation. We will continue to hold fora to discuss relevant developments for the sector, with the March 2004 Forum focussing on PHO relationships. We will also scope and instigate a research project, which is yet to be defined.

We believe we have succeeded in fulfilling the aims of the Working Group as outlined earlier in this report. This success is due to the strong partnership between the Working Group and the Ministry of Health representatives which, among other things, has enabled timely communication on key issues.

We look forward to a continuing this positive relationship in 2004.