

Community Sector Taskforce



Panui 018

28 February 2007

“Kia hiwa ra, kia hiwa ra kia hiwa ra – kia tu, kia oho, kia mataara”

Gung Hei Fat Choy! Gong Xi Fa Cai! Greetings for the Chinese New Year! May your communities be connected, informed and prosper in this, the year of the Pig. For the Taskforce, our Focus is on the upcoming forum and the first half of “Ding Hai” will be busy.

National Forum for Our Sector and Government

The Taskforce continues to work on a national forum between the Tangata Whenua, Community and Voluntary Sector and Government. The idea for this goes back to 1999 and the work of the community Sector working party. We have been keen to have this forum and now government is too. Relationships and resourcing are two big issues for us to tackle together and it is a good opportunity to see how we can strengthen our underlying relationships so that issues of importance to the Sector get better traction in the forums that they need to and also that groups and organisations in the Sector are better supported to do their work for communities.

We were originally planning to have this forum in November 2007, however, Government has signalled that we should consider holding it in June 2007. Day one is when the Sector representatives come together to discuss the issues. Day two will involve members of our Sector talking to Ministers and senior officials about the key issues, what relationship development means to the Sector and how to strengthen community/government relationships into the future.

“With us, not to us” – community driven process

Unfortunately, while the Taskforce had been working collaboratively with government to plan for this forum, the Government unilaterally appointed a steering group to take over forum organisation in spite of a collaborative process already in train with the Office for Community and Voluntary Sector. The Taskforce felt obliged to release a press statement reminding Government of the need for mutual respect, collaboration and benefits of a community-driven process.

In spite of the current difficulties, the Taskforce continues to work towards the June forum with government using a community-focused collaborative model of working as expected by the Sector. It is encouraging to note that there is interest and support amongst members of the government steering group for the work of the Taskforce and the forum planning that is already well advanced.

You may be aware that the Prime Minister’s office is promoting a series of community gatherings up and down the country to discuss education, housing and families. We hope to use the opportunity to further communicate the importance of Sector-wide issues and discuss those issues rather than respond again to a Government agenda without any assurance about forward movement. We will also use the opportunity to brief government about our Sector/government forum in June.

Taskforce Regional forums, Hui and Fono

In preparation for June 2007, the Taskforce is working with local groups and organisations across the country to hold regional forums during March and April.

These one-day forums will be held in the following combined regions: Far North, Waitakere/North Shore, South Auckland, Waikato/Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, East Coast, Taranaki/Wanganui/Manawatu, Wellington, Nelson/West Coast, Canterbury, Otago and Southland. As well as these 12 regional forums, Fono are planned for Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and meetings for national organisations and umbrella groups in Auckland and Wellington.

Calling all communities

The Taskforce is well aware of the issues many groups and organisations face. The issues are generally around how we work together, how we work with government and how we fund and account for what we do. The regional forums will be the place where these issues can be collectively discussed and where participants can decide who can best represent the diverse voices of the region at the national forum in June. The theme for the regional forums will be the four big R’s – **Regional Networks, Relationships, Resourcing and Representation.**

In a year when politicians seem keen to argue the concerns and issues of our Sector, it is vital that the voices of communities are heard and listened to. Our call is to the many groups, organisations and networks within our communities – be it arts, sports, recreation, health, social services, faith communities, the environment or education to come to the regional forums so that we can engage nationally with the Government to develop a sustainable mechanism for Sector/government relationship development and address a number of key issues of importance to the whole of our Sector.

Coming soon to a community near you – the regional forums, Hui and Fono – see you all there.