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The holes are getting bigger in the safety net provided by the Community Sector

“The second ComVoices State of the Sector Survey of the Community Sector shows that stresses on our organisations are increasing” says Scott Miller, Chair of ComVoices.

“We are facing greater demand for our services, are dealing with greater complexity with less funding from government, and have a greater reliance on alternative funding sources to support the delivery of services.

“The crisis in the sector is worsening and despite discussions with government and its agencies no one appears to be listening” he says.

Tess Casey, convenor of the Survey Working Group, says that the issues of cost, complexity and compliance were repeatedly highlighted in the survey.

“The survey shows that the financial pressures on our organisations are huge. Part of the issue is that most Government agencies do not pay the full cost of the services they contract from community organisations” says Ms Casey. “As well, many service delivery groups have had no dollar increases in contracts for the same or larger output targets for between six and ten years.

Of the over 280 organisations that responded to the survey, six are facing closure, 42% are worried about their financial viability and almost half are using their reserves to help fund their service delivery.

Compounding this is the increasing complexity of needs in the clients and communities that organisations are working with.

“Government compliance requirements have also increased. The organisations that responded to the survey mentioned having to work with new and more complex financial reporting regulations, more frequent external reporting and outcome reporting requirements, new data collection requirements, and new health and safety regulations. Regrettably, there are no funding increases to cover this” says Ms Casey.

Community organisations said that they are coping by constantly restructuring, reducing staff hours, not increasing staff wages and/or increasingly relying on volunteers.

“This is not a sustainable way for organisations to operate,” Mr Miller says. “The Community sector underpins much of the social service delivery to New Zealand communities, and the government relies on us to be there as the safety net for families and communities. If government really wants the sector to continue to do this work then it must urgently address the issues of “cost, complexity and compliance”.

ENDS

Document Links

2016 State of the Sector Survey – Snapshot Summary

<https://comvoicesdotwordpressdotcom.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/comvoices-2016-state-of-the-sector-survey-summary-final-25-oct.pdf>

2016 State of the Sector Survey - Snapshot

<https://comvoicesdotwordpressdotcom.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/comvoices-2016-state-of-the-sector-survey-snapshot-final-25-oct.pdf>

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