

Charities Commission strategic framework

1. Purpose Statement

The purpose of the Charities Commission is to promote a strong, effective charitable sector in which the public has trust and confidence.

2. Goals

This statement of goals are drafted as ends to be achieved. A clear connection to the 'Purpose Statement' can be derived from each element.

We know we will be achieving our purpose when:

- The charitable sector is well governed and managed
- The Government is well informed about the needs of charities and the needs of the public in supporting charities
- The public has trust and confidence in the charitable sector
- The Charities Commission is knowledgeable about the charitable sector and has credibility with the charitable sector

3. Strategies

These are statements of what we are going to do to achieve our goals. The strategies will direct those things that the Commission does.

(a) The Commission effectively promotes public trust and confidence in the charitable sector by ensuring that:

- I. charities can register through an appropriate and straightforward process.
- II. the public is aware of the work of the Commission with respect to education in governance and management of charities;
- III. the public is aware of how complaints about charities can be made to the Commission;
- IV. The public is informed both about the requirements of a Registered Charity, the Register, and how it can be used.
- V. A monitoring process that has credibility with key stakeholders including those in the charitable sector is implemented.

(b) The Commission makes information available on the size and the components of the charitable sector, what the sector's needs are, and what are significant trends in the sector. The Commission:

- I. Engages with the sector, and relevant Government Departments to identify and develop research priorities
- II. Makes information on the Register available to other relevant government and non-government agencies for analysis.
- III. In conjunction with other agencies, develops and implements a pragmatic and relevant research programme.
- IV. Engages with other Crown agencies, tertiary education agencies, and private research entities for the carrying out of research projects.
- V. Publishes relevant and defensible research results to increase knowledge of the charitable sector,

(c) The Commission provides opportunities for charities to improve their governance and management to ensure best practice and facilitates the effective use of resources. The Commission:

- I. Acts as a broker and clearing house for information on management and governance relevant to the charitable sector

- II. Develops expertise in management and governance relevant to the charitable sector and makes that expertise available through publications, workshops, or advisory services.
- III. Provides services that educate and assist charities in matters of governance and management.
- IV. Utilises networks of other agencies to communicate with charities throughout New Zealand.
- V. In working with charities, promotes the effective use of resources in pursuit of their purposes.

(d) The Commission provides policy advice relating to charities. The Commission:

- I. Will provide policy advice and support on matters relating to charities, and information on the charitable sector as sought by government agencies.
- II. Provides timely and accurate advice to Government on issues that will assist the charitable sector to be more efficient and effective.
- III. Assists policy makers and others to have a clearer understanding of the charitable sector

(e) The Commission will be an effective regulator by promoting compliance with the Charities Act and maintaining an accurate and up-to-date register. The Commission:

- I. Provide education and information to assist charities to fulfil their obligations under the Charities Act.
- II. Processes applications for registration as a charity and maintains a Register of Charities.
- III. Receives annual returns from registered charities.
- IV. Monitors registered charities.
- V. Responds to complaints about registered charities.
- VI. Inquires into registered charities about conduct that may constitute a breach of the Act or serious wrongdoing.
- VII. Develops relationships with other enforcement agencies so that enforcement activity is coordinated.
- VIII. Develops relationships with other agencies so that New Zealand's international obligations with regard to charities are met.

Our principles

The Charities Commission's work will be guided by these principles:

1. *Fairness and impartiality* - All individuals and organisations with which the Commission has dealings will be treated impartially and reasonably, following the principles of natural justice;
2. *Consistency* – The Commission will ensure that people in similar circumstances or with similar issues will be treated similarly in the way the law is applied, the processes that are followed, the way policy is applied and the decisions that are made;
3. *Transparency* – The Commission will explain requirements in plain terms, set out the criteria by which decisions are made, explain what is expected from charities and provide reasons to explain and justify all decisions. The Commission will be able to demonstrate that practice and process is 'fair and reasonable' and to display appropriate openness in the circumstances;
4. *Legitimacy* – The Commission will only use powers that it is authorised to use and will ensure that these powers are used properly;
5. *Independence* – The Commission will act in the interest of the public in carrying out its role and will ensure, consistent with the obligations of an Autonomous Crown Entity, that others, unless authorised to do so, will not interfere with, direct or control the Commission;
6. *Accountability* – The Commission will inform Parliament of its intentions and outline how its performance can be assessed each year in the Statement of Intent. The Commission will also publish an annual report, which includes an audit report. The Commission is accountable for its decisions through the High Court, which can overturn them. The Commission will provide information and explanations of its important decisions on its website and will engage with its stakeholders prior to introducing major new policies or practices;
7. *Responsibility and respect* – The Commission will act with an understanding of the consequences of its actions and show respect to others in all its dealings.
8. *Collaboration* – the Commission will use its best endeavours in working with other agencies to achieve benefits for the sector.
9. *Responsiveness* – the Commission will be responsive to the sector and will endeavour to provide assistance to the sector that adds value.