

13 August 2009

## THINKING OF DONATING TO A CHARITY?

The Charities Commission is urging anyone thinking of volunteering or making a donation to a charity, to start by checking the information available on the Charities Register at [www.charities.govt.nz](http://www.charities.govt.nz)

The Register brings together comprehensive information about more than 23,000 charities on a publicly-searchable “live” database, including their rules, contact details, and a summary of their activities.

Trevor Garrett, the Commission’s chief executive, says that people interested in a charity’s finances should, as a starting point, look at the information in the Annual Return together with the financial statements of the charity – both are available on the Register.

“If it has filed an Annual Return with us, you can see how much income the charity received during the financial year and the sources of that income, as well as how much money it spent during the year, broken down into various categories, such as grants, donations/koha, membership fees and so on. It also shows expenditure broken down into categories such as salaries and wages, grants paid and so on.”

He says that it is important to remember that charities can present their financial accounts in any way or format they wish, though. “The Charities Act does not require any particular format or standard, so both documents should be read together to get a clearer picture.”

“The Register is a tool that people can use to help keep charities accountable and honest about what they are doing. If you need some very specific information that isn’t on the Register though, you may prefer to contact the charity directly, or check their website.”

ENDS