

# Update

February 2009

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## Registration update

We have reviewed all the properly-completed applications that we received before 1 July 2008 - almost 20,000 of them have been registered, and are now on the Charities Register.

Some applications have raised issues that need a more experienced eye, to make absolutely sure that, like every registered charity, they have a charitable purpose and there is no possibility of private financial profit while the charity is operating, or if it is wound up.

We are working hard to finish processing all these applications by the end of the first quarter of this year – but, of course, whether we can achieve that depends on applicants getting back to us if we write to ask them for more information or clarification.

We have already received a very large number of responses to some of our letters, and are working through them as quickly as we can – we appreciate your patience.

## Snapshot

### Overview of types of charities registered as at 28 February 2009

The “big three” most common:

Sectors – Education/Training/research, Religious activities, Other Activities – Other, Provides services (e.g. care, counselling), Provides religious services/activities

Beneficiaries – General public, Children/young people, Other

Areas of operation were as follows (note: the total is greater than the total number of registered charities, as some organisations tick two or more categories on their application):

New Zealand	
Auckland – 3,365	Northland – 1,064
Bay of Plenty – 1,309	Otago – 1,330
Canterbury – 2,228	Southland – 730
Chatham Islands – 34	Taranaki - 643
Gisborne – 361	Waikato – 1,607
Hawkes Bay – 888	Wellington – Wairarapa – 2,070
Manawatu - Wanganui – 1,155	West Coast - 408
Nelson - Marlborough - Tasman - 866	Nationwide – 4,523
Overseas	
Africa – 353	North America - 212
Antarctica - 25	Oceania - 661
Asia - 717	South America - 191
Europe - 270	

**Email notification of Registration**

If you included an email address in your application for registration under the heading “Who can we contact if we have any questions about your application?”, please remember to keep an eye on that email address’s inbox.

The Commission is now emailing notification of registration to newly-registered charities who included an email address in their application.

In our email advising you that you have been registered, we will include links to information sheets you may find helpful, and a link so you can print out your Registration Certificate.

If, for example, you provided the name and email address of your accountant or lawyer as the contact person for your application, we will email the notification to them.

For applicants who don’t provide an email address, the Commission will continue to post out registration letters.

**Charity websites and email now “live” on Register**

Many charities on the Register have asked in their application forms for their email address and/or website to be shown, so potential donors and supporters can contact them easily.

We have now made all these addresses “live”, so you can simply click on them to open new windows and send an email or visit the charity’s website.

For example, you might like to look at the [40+ Community Support Trust](#), whose email and web addresses are published on the Charities Register.

## Information from Annual Returns on the Charities Register

With almost 20,000 charities now listed on the Charities Register, there is a considerable amount of information available to the public about charities and their work.

There is also an increasing amount of information about charities' finances available on the Register. More than 2,000 charities have filed Annual Returns with the Commission, which include information about their staff and volunteers, and summary information about their financial performance and their financial position.

Remember that the figures in the summary financials are just that – a summary.

Copies of financial statements are also available. Charities must file a copy of their financial statements with their Annual Return, and those are also published on the Register for the public to see.

As an example, you might like to look at the Annual Return and the more detailed financial statements filed by the [Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind](#).

It's also worth noting that, because different charities use different accounting methods, the figures in the summary might not always precisely match the way information is presented in a charity's financial statements.

In time, the Commission will be able to aggregate and report on information from the summaries compiled from Annual Returns forms.

## Improvements to Annual Returns on our website

The Commission will be working over the next couple of months to make some improvements to how we show charities' Annual Returns and other information on the Register, and to streamline invoices and acknowledgements for Annual Returns filed online.

We will let you know closer to the time when the changes are "live", but meanwhile, here is a preview of what to expect:

### **Annual Returns at a glance**

When the changes are made to our website, a table will show on the summary page for your charity, at a glance, the date the Return is due, a tick if it has been received by the Commission, and a link to the Return.

Each year, another row will be added to the table for the most recent Annual Return, so viewers will be able to click between current and past years' information.

For charities registered as part of a group that provide a consolidated Annual Return (that is, containing the collated information of all their group members), the Annual Return will be shown on the Group

Summary web page for the group (single entity).

For each member of the group, a table on their individual page will show a tick for the Annual Return for the year, and have a link back to the consolidated Return.

Individual group members' web pages will also make it clearer that they are a member of a group, and have a more obvious link back to their group's summary page.

#### **“Past and present” documents**

At present, only the documents associated with the original application for registration are displayed on each charity's summary page. We are making some changes so that charities' past and present documents can be shown in chronological order – as well as the changes showing Annual Returns year by year, a table will show any rule changes and notices of change made after registration.

#### **Invoices and acknowledgements of Annual Returns**

For online Annual Returns, we are also making some changes. We will generate an invoice as soon as the Annual Return is submitted, and (where applicable) the acknowledgement we send you will also include the invoice details.

For groups where the terms and conditions mean that the parent submits a return on behalf of all the members, a table on the Charity Dashboard (after logging in) will help the parent to manage all the returns due for the group members. (Fees for filing Annual Returns vary from group to group – check your terms and conditions to see how they apply to you).

#### **Reminder**

All charities registered with the Commission must file an Annual Return. If your organisation has an annual gross income of less than \$10,000, you still have to file an Annual Return but you do not have to pay a fee. The fee for filing an Annual Return online is \$50. It is \$75 if filed on paper.

### **Telling us about changes to your charity**

We have recently noticed an increase in the number of people simply sending us emails or letters when something important about their charity changes, instead of using one of our required forms.

Remember, once you are registered, if anything about your charity's name, address for service, balance date, rules, purposes, or officers change, you must tell us using either the *Notification of change Form – Form 3* or the *Annual Return Form – Form 4*.

A copy of the form will be uploaded to your charity's summary page on the website.

Our information sheet [What to do when something about your charity changes](#) has more detail – and remember, you can also complete *Form 3* (or *Form 4*) online.

Simply log in to your account, and you can complete and send the forms to us electronically.

### Hazard handler to help staff and volunteers stay safe

The Department of Labour has developed an online tool to help small organisations to manage health and safety and potential hazards in their workplace.

The online tool, available on the Department's [website](#) will take about an hour to complete, and will help you to identify any potential issues and provide you with a comprehensive, tailored Hazard Register, complete with hints and tips for keeping your staff and volunteers safe and healthy in the workplace.

### Donations toolkit

The Charities Commission has worked with Creative New Zealand and other agencies to help develop an online donations toolkit. Although developed primarily for arts organisations, it is also likely to be useful to the broader charitable sector.

It includes an explanation of the changes to tax rules, how you can benefit from them, and suggestions on how to find the right donor. Useful links to resources, downloads for the correct forms and a glossary that unravels the 'tax language' are also featured.

The toolkit also has a forum, on which you can post questions or comments.

### Events – mark your diary!

The Commission will be making presentations and available to answer your questions at the following events – details are also available on the events page on our [website](#).

Funding Expo, Community House, Hereford Street, Christchurch, Wednesday 11 March, 9am - 5.30pm, contact [fundingexpo@cch.organisation.nz](mailto:fundingexpo@cch.organisation.nz)

DIA Roadshow, Forum North, Rust Avenue, Whangarei, Wednesday 18 March, 10.30am - 2.30pm, contact [vanessa.furze@dia.govt.nz](mailto:vanessa.furze@dia.govt.nz)

DIA Roadshow, The Centre, 43 Cobham Road, Kerikeri, Thursday 19 March, 10.30am - 2.30pm, contact [vanessa.furze@dia.govt.nz](mailto:vanessa.furze@dia.govt.nz)

Funding Expo, Hamilton Gardens, Hamilton, Thursday 26 March, 9am-3pm, contact [Rachael@envirocentre.org.nz](mailto:Rachael@envirocentre.org.nz)

### Your opinions count – five minute Update survey

*Update* has more than 4,200 subscribers, and we value your opinions!

We'd like to invite your feedback on its content, frequency and usefulness. Please consider completing our readership survey by Friday 3 April – it takes just five minutes and will help us to ensure we are meeting your information needs.

We are very receptive to your thoughts and suggestions.

Following your feedback, we now include a brief index in every issue, and have changed the layout to make the newsletter easier to read online.

We will let you know the survey's results once they have been compiled.

Why not complete the survey now? Click [here](#) to have your say!

### Information sheets and annual returns – your views

The Commission has published a considerable amount of “plain language” material to help organisations decide if they wish to apply to register, and to complete their application. As well, we have also developed information about the Charities Act, and the thinking (and the law) that guides our decision-making.

Over time, we have regularly reviewed all of our information materials, guided by feedback from the sector, and our learning as we began receiving registration applications. From comments given to us in a survey in 2007, we also made changes to our information sheets, help notes, and forms, to make them clearer, and easier to use.

We also made considerable changes to our applications review processes, after receiving feedback to a survey we sent the first 1,800 people who registered with us.

Over the next few weeks, we will be inviting people who have used our information sheets and those who have filed annual returns with us to tell us about your views and experiences.

If you visit the information sheets on our website during the next few weeks, or receive an email from us with a link to one of our surveys, we hope you will take a few minutes to give us your feedback.

### Want to print Update?

If you'd like to read this newsletter on our website, or print it out in an “easy to read” format, please click [here](#).

### No longer want Update?

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