

Statement of Intent now available

The Charities Commission's Statement of Intent (2007-2010) sets out our strategic direction for the next three years. It explains how our planning will contribute to achieving our objectives, and how we will measure our progress. You can access a copy online at

http://www.charities.govt.nz/news/statement_of_intent07-10.pdf. Alternatively, you can request a copy by emailing info@charities.govt.nz or call our free information line 0508 242 748.

Website offline briefly late August/early September

We will be doing some maintenance and installing some planned improvements to the website around the end of August or early September. We will let you know the exact timing closer to the date. We apologise for any inconvenience, but we are sure you will enjoy the benefits of our upgraded system!

Guidance notes now available in six languages

The Charities Commission is pleased to offer guidance notes in Korean, Maori, Samoan, Tongan, Chinese (traditional) and Arabic for Forms 1 (Application by entity for registration as a charitable entity), 2 (Officer Certification Form) and 3 (Notification of Changes to Charitable Entity). We also have copies of 'A Guide to the Charities Act' in these languages. To obtain a copy of any of these translations please email info@charities.govt.nz or call our free information line 0508 242 748.

Registration required for resident withholding tax exemptions

After 1 July 2008 organisations must be registered with the Charities Commission to remain eligible for the exemption from resident withholding tax (RWT) that Inland Revenue (IRD) allows for organisations that have a charitable purpose.

- If your charity currently has an IRD certificate of exemption from RWT because IRD have already accepted that you have a charitable purpose, you don't need to get a new certificate if you are on the Charities Register.
- If your charity doesn't have a certificate, you must apply to IRD for a certificate of exemption using their form IR451.
- At some point after 1 July 2008, IRD will review and may cancel certificates of exemption from RWT for organisations that IRD had accepted as charitable prior to 1 July 2008, but that are not registered with the Charities Commission.

Online applications – common errors

- *Loading mandatory documents (rules and officer certification forms) as 'other' documents.* Some people are mistakenly loading their rules and officer certification forms as 'other'. Documents such as Trust Deeds, for example, are charity rules and should be loaded as such. If they are not loaded as 'charity rules' our system won't recognise that we have received your rules.

- *Listing officers who are no longer current.* Your application won't be processed until Officer Certification Forms for all listed officers have been received. We do check in case explanatory letters arrive with other hard copy documents, but there is always a risk of these being overlooked.
- *Creating but **not submitting** an online application.* Don't forget to click the final submission button! And remember that your application needs to be certified and submitted by a listed officer.
- *Ticking both boxes when certifying that you are able to fill out Form 2 - Officer Certification Form.* Many people are ticking both boxes by mistake. The second box **very rarely** needs to be ticked. You should only tick the second box if you have been appointed as an officer under an Act of Parliament, by the Governor-General, by the Governor-General in Council, or by a Minister of the Crown' (but not a Minister of religion).

Corrections to Annual Return form

We have made some minor corrections to Regulation wording of *Form 4 – Annual Return for a charitable entity*. If you are about to fill out your Annual Return we suggest that you download the new version at

http://www.charities.govt.nz/news/forms/form_4.pdf. On page 9 the heading 'Statement of financial performance' has been changed to 'Statement of financial position'. The text accompanying the final text box has been changed from 'Total liabilities' to 'Total liabilities plus equity'.

These changes have been made for clarity, but the overall meaning remains the same. We won't reject your annual return if it's on the old form!

Mark the Commission's annual meetings in your diary now!

The Commission's annual meetings will be held during November and December this year, to present our Annual Report and

answer your questions. All charitable organisations are welcome to attend. Dates are:

Monday 19 November – Wellington
 Wednesday 28 November – Christchurch
 Thursday 29 November – Dunedin
 Monday 3 December – Manukau
 Tuesday 4 December – Tauranga

Venues will be advised closer to the time. If there is anything in particular you would like us to consider including at the meetings, please email your suggestions to info@charities.govt.nz or call our free information line 0508 242 748.

Current application timeframes

Our last Update newsletter took you through the 'life cycle' of an application. Currently, a correctly completed, straightforward application takes at least eight weeks to process, with more complex applications taking longer. Each application is carefully analysed to ensure the application meets the criteria of the Charities Act.

There are 11 members of our registration team, and all the analysts have legal backgrounds.

To date, more than 800 charities have been registered. Approximately 2,800 further applications have been received and will be analysed to make sure they meet the Charities Act's criteria. We strongly recommend that charities apply as soon as possible to avoid uncertainty around tax exemptions.

Contact Centre here to help

Our friendly and helpful Contact Centre is here to help you with your application queries, or any other questions you might have. At present, the team is receiving more than 300 calls a week, most of which are requests for information packs and various registration enquiries.

According to Call Centre team leader Kylee Baker, their busiest times are generally between 9 and 10am and between 11am and 12pm. "The Contact Centre generally picks up all calls within

20 seconds and we try to deal with your question in the same call,” says Kylee. “For more complex questions though, we ask for advice from the Commission and get back to you within 5 days.” The Contact Centre has had considerable training about the Charities Commission and registration process, but it does get the odd tricky question, which takes a little longer!

You are welcome to call our free information line 0508 CHARITIES (0508 242 748) any time from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm on Saturday.

Choosing a name for your registered group of organisations

If you are registering as a group you are required to choose a new name that belongs to the group – the single entity – and no other organisation. It cannot be the same as the name of one of the

members of the group. The Charities Act says that each registered charity must have a name that is not offensive, not misleading and does not belong to any other organisation. An easy way to choose a name is simply to add ‘group’ to the end of the name, eg if the individual members are known as the Animal Protection League Tauranga, Te Puke etc, the group name could be the ‘Animal Protection League Group’.

If you'd like to read this newsletter on our website, or print it out in its 2-column format, please visit http://www.charities.govt.nz/news/update_newsletter.htm.

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