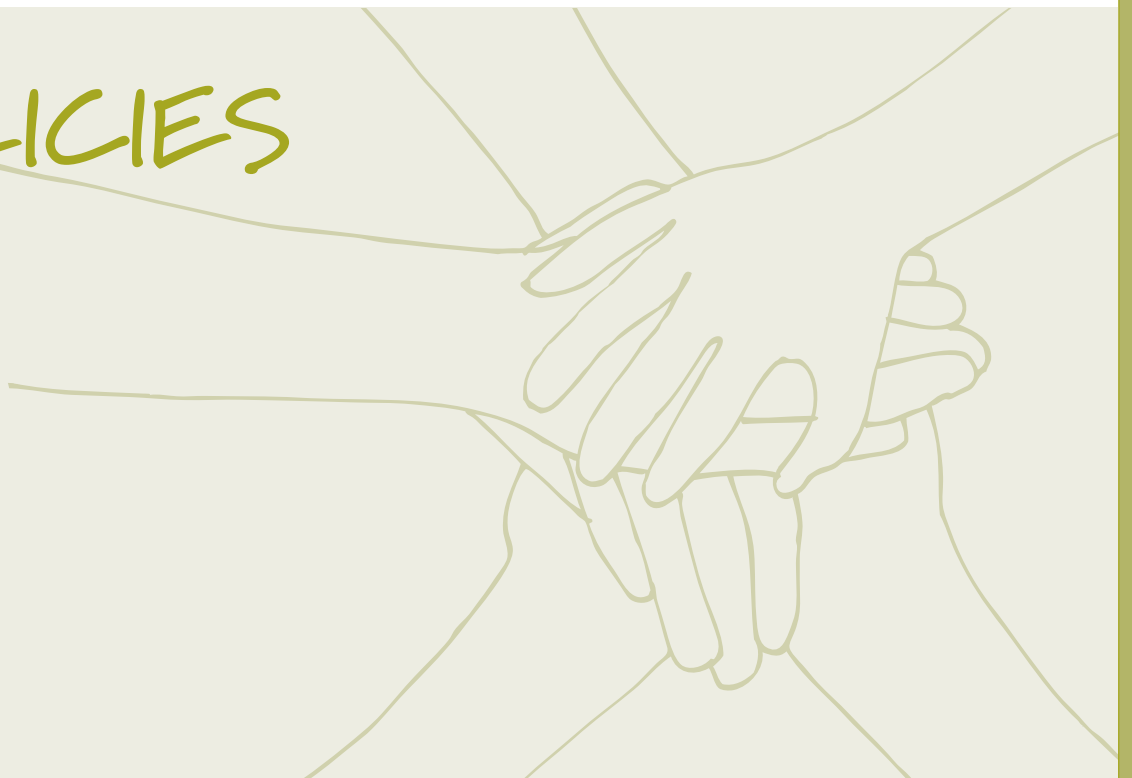


5

▶ POLICIES



community resource kit



For full details and contents of the kit please read the introduction at www.community.net.nz/how-toguides/crk.

FIRST PUBLISHED OCTOBER 2006 BY

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ISBN 0-478-29339-9

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As well as printed copies, the Community Resource Kit will be available on CD and online at www.community.net.nz. Any future updates to the kit and details of where to obtain further copies of it will also be posted on this website.

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introduction



what's in this section?

This section will cover:

- what policies are and why have them
- developing policies
- areas that must and should be covered in your policies
- some sample policies and procedures
- how to influence government policy.

words used

Community groups may be asked whether they have a set of policies and procedures. These terms are sometimes confused and are interlinked.

In general:

- **policies** outline the kaupapa and tikanga – they outline what needs to happen (or not)
- **procedures** outline the processes – the steps to follow to put the policy into action.

what are policies?

Policies are the guiding principles by which an organisation is run. They set out the kaupapa and the tikanga of the group – the core values and principles, and the processes by which the group operates.

Some other definitions or explanations of policies are:

Policies are statements that clarify an organisation's mission, values and strategic direction by providing instructions for action – or the way this action is carried out. Policies provide a consistent response to commonly occurring events.

Policies provide the boundaries within which you can act. Policies can be useful in controlling activity, ensuring accountability, or safeguarding an organisation from possible criticism.

An organisation's mission statement is policy at the highest level; at the other end of the scale might be a policy which outlines daily office procedures, such as locking the office door at night.

Organisations should have two levels of policy:

1. *Governance policies designed, endorsed and monitored by the board. e.g. an organisation's mission statement.*
2. *Operational policies designed, endorsed and monitored by management.*

An organisation's policies are developed to provide:

- *guidelines for action to achieve the mission*
- *general directives to ensure consistent decision-making*
- *a point of reference for precedent-setting decisions*
- *direction, membership priorities and standards.*

(From Running Sport – Policy Development, SPARC).

why have policies?

Some reasons for a group to maintain a set of policies are:

- so people working in an organisation can have a framework for action that helps them get on with the job they need to do
- so people in the organisation don't have to keep on discussing and re-discussing the same issues every time they arise – one thought-out decision can be applied to many similar cases – efficiency
- so legal and other requirements can be met
- to comply with accreditation standards.

(From Paul Bullen Management Alternatives website, www.mapl.com.au).

Policies are valuable to your group's stakeholders, and to the group itself. When a group has clear policies in place, people know where they stand. For example:

STAKEHOLDER	BENEFITS OF HAVING A CLEAR POLICY FRAMEWORK
Clients/service recipients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know what to expect and how to address any concerns they may have.
Staff (including volunteers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have clear roles and boundaries • know what is expected of them • can rely on the policies to say "no" when asked to do something that is outside policy (e.g. that may involve a conflict of interest).
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a framework for managing the organisation • are provided with a degree of protection when challenged about issues that are beyond their control and where people have been following proper procedures (e.g. if a child is harmed and a community agency working with the family may be "blamed").
Committee/board members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a way of setting and communicating the values of the organisation both internally and externally.
Other community members/agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know where the organisation stands and where other groups may link in with them.
Funders (including potential funders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can see whether (or how) a funding proposal fits in with the organisational mission and values • are provided with a degree of confidence that the organisation is able to undertake the project for which it is seeking funding.
The organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is able to present itself clearly • risks are reduced.

developing policies

A well-functioning organisation will develop its key policies, covering strategic (long-term/high-level) and operational (practical, day-to-day) matters. Once developed, the policies will be implemented and communicated throughout the organisation.

Policies will be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain current. Things change, both within the group and community. Policies need to be updated to reflect these changes. The process to review policies needs to be clear so that everyone who is affected will have the latest version of the policy.

Policies should be:

- maintained in electronic and paper formats
- contained in a policy manual with all the organisation's other policies
- available at all board meetings
- accessible at all times to all staff or volunteers
- regularly reviewed.

(From Family and Community Services website, www.familyservices.govt.nz).

Some risks or pitfalls with policies can be:

- "left on the shelf" – policies may be removed from the day-to-day operation or only used when problems arise or to show the funders or auditors
- "version control" – policies get updated in an ad hoc way without a clear process for identifying what is the "latest version". Staff (and others) may be operating from old versions
- policy developed in a vacuum
- "cut and paste" – policies are "borrowed" from another agency often to meet the requirements of a funding proposal or audit
- policies past their "use by" date – things change and the policy doesn't keep up

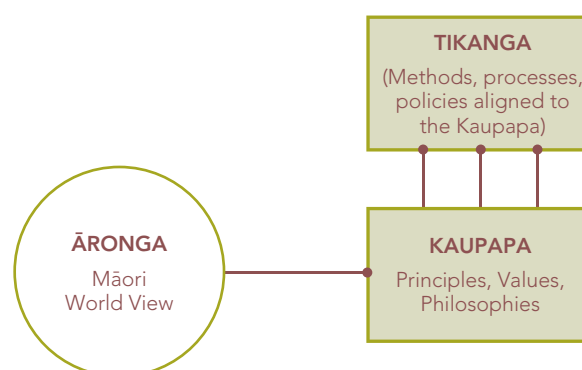
- ad hoc/reactive policy development
- funder-driven policy development.

tikanga framework for developing policies

An example of a Māori framework for "setting policies" or developing the kaupapa and tikanga of an organisation is provided by Te Wānanga o Raukawa:

The basic idea is that through Pūrākau, Karakia, Mōteatea, Whakataukī and Whākapapa our World View is described and a set of Kaupapa are drawn from which the culture is founded. These are the bedrock, the foundation of the culture. Growing from within the Kaupapa are our Tikanga, just like a tree springs from Papatūānuku. The tikanga are actions, methods, processes, policies etc that are aligned and consistent with the foundation Kaupapa. All tikanga purporting to be Māori should find their bases in Kaupapa.

This Māori framework is represented as follows:



(From Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa Charter 2003).

policy and procedures development process

To develop policies and procedures you can follow the following steps:

1 SET OVERALL POLICY OBJECTIVES

These are the overall objectives, or guiding principles that underlie your policies – what you need to keep in mind when developing the details of your policies. They link to the mission and values of the organisation.

For example, the objectives of XXX Group's policies are:

- XXX's services are accessible and appropriate to its community

2 DEVELOP DETAILED POLICIES

- XXX supports the Treaty of Waitangi and the rights of Māori as tangata whenua
- XXX is accountable and responsive to its community
- XXX has effective management and governance arrangements
- XXX has co-ordinated, planned and reliable services
- XXX values the role of its various stakeholders, including staff, volunteers, clients, and community members
- XXX will represent, and where appropriate, advocate on behalf of its community
- XXX welcomes feedback, including complaints, which it will address in a timely, fair and equitable manner.

STEP	TIPS
1. Describe the issue the policy needs to address.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep it simple.
2. Consult key stakeholders, "experts" or conduct research as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who will be/may be affected by the policy, or the issue? what do they have to say? • don't just consult the "professional" experts.
3. Identify the ranges of policy options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keep this practical.
4. Consider the internal and external environment (e.g. vision statement, government rules).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider, for example, legal requirements (such as health and safety) and any relevant standards (e.g. Child, Youth and Family (CYF) <i>Standards for Approval</i>).
5. Draft policy (in written form).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use clear, simple and unambiguous language • have a set format for your policies.
6. Present to board for consultation/adoption.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • board (governing body) is responsible for approving the policies.
7. Set up systems to ensure policy is applied on an ongoing basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it is management's responsibility to make sure the procedures are in place so that the policy is communicated, understood and followed • have an up-to-date policies and procedures manual • include policies in staff (including volunteer) induction training.
8. Review at an agreed date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set an achievable review cycle e.g. 5 years, unless circumstances change which require an earlier review • some policies may need to be reviewed more frequently than others due to changes in the external environment.

3

DEVELOP/REVIEW PROCEDURES

It is a management responsibility to develop and circulate the procedures that give effect to the policy. In practice, the procedures are often developed at the same time as the policies and need to be reviewed at the same time as the policies.

(From *Running Sport – Policy Development*, SPARC).

**Checklist of policies and procedures**

Below is a full checklist of suggested policies and procedures a group may wish to have.

Governance

- Board/committee terms of reference
- Conflict of interest
- Cultural responsiveness
- Treaty of Waitangi
- Board
- Cost of governance
- Board committees
- Chief executive performance evaluation policy
- Board delegation to the chief executive policy
- Protection of assets
- Financial management
- Reserves
- Investments
- Treatment of staff and volunteers
- Reporting to the board
- Protection of intellectual property
- Public affairs/relations
- Compliance with legislation

Recruitment and employment

- Recruitment and appointment policy
- Remuneration policy
- Time in lieu policy
- Disciplinary procedures
- Leave recording procedures

- Parental leave policy
- Wage and time recording procedures
- Equal employment opportunity policy

Staff

- Personal grievance procedure for employees
- Annual performance appraisal procedures
- Training and development policy (including study support)
- Employee code of conduct
- Anti-harassment policy
- Supervision policy
- Volunteer management policy

Provision of services

- Privacy and confidential information policy
- Internet/email and phone use policy
- Complaints procedures for clients
- Vehicle policy
- Travel Policy (including use of credit cards and reimbursement)
- Child protection policy and abuse notification procedures
- Organisational monitoring policy

Health and safety

- Health and safety procedures, fire, earthquake, accident
- Smoke free policy
- Workplace injury prevention policy
- Health and safety policy

Financial management

- Expenditure and receipting procedures
- Petty cash and reimbursement procedures
- Misappropriation of funds policy
- Financial management policy

(Adapted from Family and Community Services website, www.familyservices.govt.nz).

template for writing policies

Below is a useful template for actually writing the policies for your organisation.

Policy area	(e.g. governance, employment)
Policy title	(e.g. "Recruitment")
Policy detail	The actual policy statement – the kaupapa, value, or position that the organisation is taking.
Procedures	How the organisation will give effect to the policy – the actual steps to take.
Context	Optional – sometimes it is useful to give some background about the policy.
Effective date	
Version/review date	
Links	e.g. professional body standards, <i>CYF Standards for Approval</i>

Some matters to include in policies



health and safety

All organisations **must** comply with the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992. This Act promotes the prevention of harm to all people at work and to others who are in, or in the vicinity of, workplaces. It requires employers and others to maintain safe working environments and to implement sound practices (see sample policy and procedures).

The essential responsibilities of a community group under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 are to:

- identify and remedy any hazards
- provide and maintain emergency supplies and equipment
- ensure evacuation and emergency procedures are made available to employees and users of the premises.

Employees and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure they are aware of the evacuation and emergency procedures for the premises. An emergency warden should be appointed who is responsible for evacuating the building in case of emergency. Wardens need to be aware of any people with disabilities present on the premises.

It's important to note that there are other policies that groups **MUST** have by law. Refer to *Keeping it Legal* (Brochure 3: Laws You Need To Know About People, Activities, Premises and Environment and Fact Sheets 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17) available online at www.keepingitlegal.net.nz for further details.

TIP

Sample health and safety policy and procedures

Rationale:

The Community Centre and employed staff need to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of everyone on the premises.

Purposes:

1. To provide and maintain a safe working environment.
2. To ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, any hazards are corrected, repaired, removed or made inaccessible.

Procedures:

1. The co-ordinator regularly performs a hazard check in the building, ideally monthly.
2. Employees and Community Centre users are to notify the co-ordinator/committee immediately of any hazard they notice so that action can be taken to eliminate or reduce the hazard.
3. Any hazards not dealt with immediately are reported and discussed at the earliest monthly committee meeting and steps taken to eliminate, isolate or minimise the hazard.
4. Emergency evacuation plans are clearly displayed in the Community Centre and the emergency and evacuation policy is adhered to.

complaints

All community organisations need a complaints policy and procedures for their users (see sample policy and procedures). Ideally complaints will be resolved between the parties without involving others. However, a written procedure for the resolution of complaints made against employees of the organisation or of the organisation itself, is essential.

The complaints procedure should be displayed on the wall of your organisation and written copies available to anyone who requests it. The procedure should state that:

- the client has a right to complain
- any complaints will be taken seriously
- both parties in the complaints procedure will be given a full and fair hearing
- there is a system in place to deal with complaints that must be followed
- an independent mediator can be called in if needed
- confidentiality of the complaint will be maintained – only the parties involved and the designated committee/managers will be notified.

Sample complaints policy and procedures

Rationale:

The ABC Community Centre recognises the importance of having a policy and set of procedures relating to any complaints that are made against it or people working for it.

Purpose:

To have a fair policy and set of procedures for situations where complaints cannot be resolved between the parties themselves.

Procedures:

These procedures are to be worked through step by step. At the completion of each step, if both parties are satisfied, the procedures can be ended. If parties are not satisfied, continue to the next step. At any point of intervention, all parties have the right to have their supervisors and/or advocate and/or whānau/family support present. The complaint will remain confidential to the parties involved. This grievance procedure will be exercised in a way that will ensure any person/organisation complaining has the opportunity to be heard and treated fairly.

Step 1.

Approach the person/organisation directly about the problem.

Step 2. If not satisfied:

Give a written description of the grievance to the chairperson of the ABC Community Centre's committee. The chairperson will notify the person/organisation making the complaint that the complaint has been received. This written grievance is a private document and will be seen only by the committee, the independent mediator and the person/organisation the complaint is directed at.

Step 3.

The committee will read and discuss the complaint at their next meeting.

Step 4.

The person/organisation complained about will be notified of the complaint and will be given an opportunity to read the written complaint and respond to the committee. If the committee is unable to resolve the complaint at this stage, it will move to Step 5.

Step 5.

The committee will bring in an independent mediator to enable both the person/organisation making the complaint and the person/organisation the complaint is against, to be heard. The person/organisation making the complaint will be given two dates to choose from, and the meeting will take place within two weeks of the committee meeting.

Step 6.

If mediation is not successful, three members of the committee, including the chairperson, will meet with both parties together with an independent mediator as facilitator. From this meeting the three committee members will make a final decision and direct any action to take place. This meeting will happen within two weeks of the previous meeting. Again, the person/organisation making the complaint will be able to have two dates to choose from for the meeting.

Step 7.

The three members will report the decision to the committee, the person/organisation making the complaint and the person/organisation complained against within one week of the previous meeting.

volunteers

As volunteers have a significant role to play in any community organisation, it's important to have a volunteer policy in place (see sample policy and procedures).

Sample volunteer policy and procedures

Policy:

The XYZ Group Trust recognises the valuable contribution to the service made by volunteers and actively encourages their participation, which:

- enables volunteers to contribute to their community
- provides the opportunity for work experience and the development of new skills in volunteers
- enhances the range of services available through the XYZ Group Trust
- allows for wider community participation in the service.

Volunteers will not be used to replace paid workers in the service.

Procedures:

Job Descriptions for Volunteers: As with paid staff, all volunteers will be provided with a job description for their job. Up-to-date job descriptions for volunteer positions are included below.

Agreement of Employment for Volunteers: All volunteers must sign a Volunteer Agreement before commencing work.

Code of Ethics: Volunteers are expected to conform to the XYZ Group Trust's Code of Ethics.

Volunteer Recruitment Process: The process used for the recruitment of volunteers is as follows:

1. Requests for volunteers will be widely advertised in the region and amongst the cultural group/s of the consumers as required.
2. Interested volunteers should complete an Application for a Volunteer Position. (A copy should be included).
3. The XYZ Group Trust will arrange an interview with the volunteer which will cover the following areas:
 - name, address, telephone number
 - other languages
 - area(s) of interest
 - experience
 - current driver's licence, insurance and vehicle registration if volunteer driver
 - health record (in case of emergency)
 - times available
 - commitment
 - policy for reimbursement for expenses
 - names and contact details of two referees
 - police clearance.
4. The XYZ Group Trust will inform the volunteer as soon as possible of the decision.
5. If the volunteer's application is rejected, they should be given the reasons why.
6. If the application is accepted, the volunteer should be given a copy of the Volunteer Worker's Agreement, the relevant job description and an induction package.
7. Sufficient time should be allowed for the volunteer to read the information and ask questions before signing the Agreement.
8. The co-ordinator will match the volunteer with appropriate consumer(s), where possible, taking into account the consumer's wishes and their language spoken, culture and interests.

Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi (the Treaty) is primarily a document ensuring social justice for all New Zealanders and as community work is also concerned with social justice, recognising and actively promoting the principles of the Treaty is an important part of being an effective community organisation.

Policy development in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi must be given appropriate consultation from the beginning of the process. Organisations should involve Māori board members, general members and other experts.

To follow are some guidelines (from the Hutt City Council's *Community Development Good Practice Guidelines*) for writing Treaty of Waitangi policy.

WRITING A TREATY POLICY – SOME FOCUS QUESTIONS

- why do we want a Treaty of Waitangi policy?
- what will be achieved by having this policy?
- who will benefit from it?
- what is the purpose of our organisation?
- what are the main issues on which we need to consult with Māori?
- who are the iwi in our area?
- how would we go about consulting with local iwi?
- what is the local Māori kaupapa (needs, plans) for our organisation?
- what services already exist for Māori in our area?
- how can we work alongside these services to benefit our community?

UNDERSTANDING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE TREATY

- **Kāwanatanga** – the First Article gives the Crown the principle of governance or the right to make laws and to govern in accordance with its constitutional process on the condition that appropriate priority is given to the interests of Māori as set out in this Article.

What does it mean?

Responsibility to consider the interests of Māori in the decision-making process.

- **Rangatiratanga** – the Second Article guarantees iwi the principle of self-management or Māori control and enjoyment of those resources and taonga they wish to retain.

What does it mean?

Responsibility to actively protect Māori rights to rangatiratanga in your actions and decisions.

- **The principle of equality (Article 3)** – guarantees legal equality between Māori and all other New Zealand citizens essentially ensuring equal access to resources and participation in systems and processes.

What does it mean?

Responsibility to ensure Māori have equal access to your service and in your decision-making processes.

- **The principle of co-operation** – the Treaty establishes New Zealand as a bicultural country and values cultural differences while encouraging the development of a common purpose and co-operation.

What does it mean?

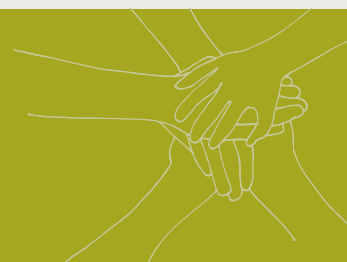
Responsibility to actively consult and ideally to work in partnership with Māori, to create shared understandings and work together for common goals.

- **The principle of redress** – the Crown has accepted the responsibility of providing a process for the resolution of grievances arising from the Treaty through the Waitangi Tribunal and Māori Land Court.

What does it mean?

Responsibility to provide opportunity for redress of past injustices through current actions, in particular, by ensuring no further injustice occurs.

influencing government policy



One of the roles of community groups is to bring issues to the attention of Government in order to influence government policy.

government policy development cycle

The overall pattern of government policy development is represented in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Government Policy Development Cycle



community sector involvement

With reference to **Figure 1**, the two points where community organisations can be involved in this policy development process are:

- *Defining the Problem* (stage 1) and *Developing and Analysing Alternatives* (stage 2). These are the stages where the government policy analysts consult with the relevant stakeholders. This should include community consultation on issues that affect you.

- *Evaluation* (stage 5). This is the stage where the government agencies will seek feedback on how well the policy worked.

In many areas, government agencies may establish joint working parties or advisory groups that include representatives of community organisations. Some examples of significant policy projects that involved community sector representatives are:

- the Ministry of Social Development's *Te Rito New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy*, and a number of projects which flowed from the strategy
- the revision of *Child, Youth and Family's Standards for Approval*.

timeframes for policy development

There are no absolute timeframes for government policy development. Cabinet may introduce new policies or programmes at any stage, often in response to a particular issue, or overall strategy that they are following.

ANNUAL BUDGET CYCLE

There is, however, an overall Annual Budget cycle that can provide a general timeframe for people who want to influence government policy:

- the government financial year is from 1 July to 30 June
- the Budget is usually announced in May for the following year
- the two stages up to *Developing and Analysing Alternatives* (see **Figure 1**), will be going on up to a year earlier. By August/September the previous year, the "budget process" will be underway, with officials developing proposals. (Note: there are always

many more proposals than available funding. This means that many worthwhile proposals will not make the cut).

Government officials are able to discuss policies in general terms, and may work with community organisations to develop options (see **Figure 1**, stage 2). However, where the policy may involve the allocation of funding in the Budget, officials are not able to discuss the progress or decision-making processes with community groups. There are practical reasons for this – the decisions are made by Cabinet who may not adopt the recommendations from officials, or may seek further information before making a decision.

TIP

Refer to *Section 9 – Communication* for more details on lobbying government.

where to go for more information



1. *Community Development Good Practice Guidelines*, Hutt City Council. See Hutt City Council website – www.huttcity.govt.nz/council/services/community/gp-guidelines.html.
2. Family and Community Services (FACS) website – www.familyservices.govt.nz.
3. Paul Bullen Management Alternatives Pty Ltd website – www.mapl.com.au. This is an Australian web-based tool kit developed mainly for small and medium-sized community organisations.
4. *Be Prepared: A guide to preparing a Child Protection Policy*, Anthea Simcock, CPS Training, 2005.
5. *Running Sport – Policy Development*, SPARC, 2001. See SPARC website – www.sparc.org.nz.
6. *Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa Charter 2003*. See website – www.twor.ac.nz.