



Volunteering New Zealand Conference 2026

Real Voices. Real Impact. Real Change.

Friday 16 October

Conference themes:

Future Leadership

Innovation, thought leadership and shaping the next era of volunteering

Research to action

The latest evidence, insights and trends affecting volunteering

Inclusion and Diversity

Culturally grounded approaches, and engagement with diverse communities

Strengthening the System

Developing volunteer management skills and capability

Storytelling for change

Approaches to volunteer stories for greater impact

8:45am

Conference welcome and opening

Haka Pōhiri

MC: Eddie Rakanui, Love – Life – More

9:15am

Opening keynote: The Human Side of Leadership: Leading with Belonging, Autonomy, Purpose

Future

Leadership

True leadership is not about matching a specific personality type or holding a formal title; it is about influence, connection, and understanding the human side of how we work together.

Dr Ellen Joan Ford

9:45am

Opening keynote: Social Cohesion in New Zealand

**Research to
action**

Aotearoa is more diverse, and less cohesive. Volunteering is not just about filling gaps or delivering services. It meets a deeper need for association, participation and belonging.

Shamubeel Eaqub, Chief Economist, Simplicity

10:15am

Morning tea

10:40am

Positive Youth Development in Aotearoa

Future

Leadership

The Positive Youth Development Aotearoa framework designed to strengthen how we work alongside young people.

Penny Prescott and Angelina Tivalu, Youth Development Champions Project

10:55am

Giving and social enterprise - Panel discussion

A discussion with Rotorua-based, Māori run non-profit and community organisations.

**Inclusion and
Diversity**

- Miraka Davies (Ngātiwai, Ngāpuhi, and Ngāti Porou), Rumaki Trust Board and Cafe
- Marcus Powell (Ngāpuhi, Te Ātiawa), Digital Natives Academy
- Chris Joseph, (Ngāti Porou, Tūhourangi-Ngāti Wahiao, Ngāti Kinohaku, Te Aitanga a Mahaki, Rongowhakaata, Ngāti Patu Moana), Volunteer Kāpiti

11:40am

Launching the new Volunteer Leadership Skills Matrix

**Strengthening
the System**

A new development tool for volunteer leaders by Volunteering New Zealand to map your skills and choose where to grow.

Alison Marshall, Volunteering New Zealand



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11:50am	Workshop sessions – three options		
	Main room <i>Flexibility: the beating heart of volunteering in Aotearoa</i> Jane Treadwell-Hoye, Good Bitches Baking Strengthening the System	Tōtara room <i>Who is not getting invited? Design volunteer experiences where everyone belongs</i> Moumita Das Roy Inclusion and Diversity	Kauri room <i>Selfish volunteering: redefining volunteerism</i> Shawn Fitzgerald and Jane Sharman, parkrun Asia Pacific Storytelling for change
12:35pm	Lunch		
1:25pm	New Zealand Volunteering Awards, supported by Rosterfy Recognising the nominees and winners in both categories: Volunteer Programme of the Year and Leader in Volunteer Engagement. Includes presentation from Community and Voluntary Sector Minister Louise Upston, followed by presentation of awards.		
1:55pm	Workshop sessions – three options		
	Main room <i>Bridging communities and systems: leading change from the ground up</i> Dr Anmar Taufeeek Inclusion and Diversity	Tōtara room <i>How to tell a great volunteer story</i> Amanda Ashby Storytelling for change	Kauri room <i>Using the Volunteer Leadership Skills Matrix</i> Alison Marshall Strengthening the System
2:40pm	Afternoon tea		
3:05pm	Spotlight on Capability Development tools and frameworks Volunteers' role and development opportunities in the Emergency Management System, Rich Downey, NEMA Health Check capability tool for volunteer programmes, Kelsey Mulcahy, Rosterfy How Lottery funding can lift communities, Garth Clarricoats, Lottery Grants Board Strengthening the System		
3:35pm Future Leadership	Unlocking the value of experience: a smarter way to recognise and develop capability Professor Maihāroa provides strategic Māori leadership for conference sponsor Capable NZ and iwi cohorts throughout Aotearoa. Professor Kelli Te Maihāroa (Waitaha whānui, Ngāti Rārua Ātiawa, Taranaki, Ngāti Maniapoto, and Ngāti Āpakura) - Kaihautū: Te Kāhui Whetū Executive: Capable Māori at Otago Polytechnic		
3:55pm Future Leadership	Final keynote: Reimagining Volunteering: engaging Gen Z beyond recruitment The challenge isn't that Gen Z doesn't want to volunteer, but the way young people want to contribute, belong and lead is changing. What are we enabling our young volunteers to become Aditi Tiwari, Voice of Aroha		
4:45pm	Conference closing		
5:00–7:00pm	Seek Volunteer Networking event		