

**FEEDBACK FROM DELEGATES
PASSION, PRAGMATISM, POSSIBILITIES
PHILANTHROPY NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE 2009
EXTERNAL SUMMARY**

The 2009 Philanthropy New Zealand conference was held at Te Papa in Wellington on March 18th & 19th 2009. Over the course of the 2 day event a total of 332 delegates attended, 68 of whom were speakers. 97 of the attendees were from the twelve New Zealand Community Trusts (compared to 120 attending the 2007 conference). Other delegates represented the breadth of the sector and were from family trusts and foundations, lottery boards and distribution organisations, Government (OCVS, DIA and others), energy trusts, local councils, sponsors, the financial sector and overseas delegates and speakers (from New Zealand and overseas).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

We received 84 feedback forms which were completed by delegates and collected at the end of March 19th and a few forms that were received in the post after the event. This return represents 31% of the sample. Forms were included within the conference handbook and had been designed to elicit how ‘useful’ the input of keynote speakers was to them, how they rated the concurrent sessions they took part in and how they rated aspects of the organisation of the event and the venue.

Overall the event was very positively rated with the majority (> 90%) rating the sessions 3-5 (good to excellent)

Wednesday 18th March

INCOME DOWN, DEMAND UP – HOW DO YOU RESPOND IN A CRISIS? SPEND UP, SPEND DOWN – WHAT’S THE TIPPING POINT

Bruce Bonyhady, Luc Tayart de Borms, Jennifer Gill

93% rated this session 3-5 (good to very good)

- “Excellent start to the conference. Value stimulation and challenge provided by these three great speakers – a very good opening session.”
- “Excellent food for thought – globally and nationally. Serious without being alarmist. Some excellent messages to take away.”

CRITICAL ISSUES FOR NEW ZEALAND’S ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FUTURE AND THE ROLE OF PHILANTHROPY

Craig Stobo, Murray Edridge

92% rated this session 3-5 (good to very good)

- “Timely and relevant. “
- “Craig’s presentation was surprisingly engaging and relevant – appreciate his forward focus and suggested actions. Murray’s material was considered, expected and appropriate. “

Prime Minister John Key

- “Getting someone like the Prime Minister was a real bonus- an outstanding effort. . . He is enthusiastic and believes in philanthropy. He was a breath of fresh air, fantastic energy, very inspiring.”

THE UNIQUE VALUE OF PHILANTHROPY – WHAT IS THE VALUE PROPOSITION FOR PHILANTHROPY?

Mark Cabaj, Rupert Myer, Kathleen Enright

80% rated this 3-5

- “Challenged us to new ways of thinking and working.”
- “Excellent panel – gave me confidence in the work we are doing. We are right on the button with our thinking and it is reassuring to be able to step out of ourselves and acknowledge that. We need to continue to be motivated and visionary.”
- “Some memorable quotes which I will recycle – not pay-back or give back but just give.”

CONCURRENT “A” SESSIONS

89% rated the attended A stream sessions 3-5

Keynote addresses on Thursday 19th March

KEYNOTE 1: NEW APPROACHES TO OLD PROBLEMS

Marion Webster, Pahia Turia

86% rated this a 3-5

- “These speakers continued to provide challenges and examples of work happening now done in ways that are driven by community or facilitate community programmes.”
- “Liked the idea of using old traditions to solve new problems – making family more responsible.”

INVESTING IN TROUBLED TIMES

Jeffrey Phlegar

93% rated this session 3-5

- “Clear presenter. Good overview of the situation.”

CONCURRENT “B” SESSIONS

92% attending the B stream sessions rated them 3-5

CONCURRENT “C” SESSIONS

All of those (100%) attending the C stream sessions rated them 3-5

INVESTMENT OUTLOOK FOR MAINTENANCE OF GRANTS

Andrew Hunt

100% of those attending this session rated it 4-5

- This was the best presentation. Excellent! Always first class. Fantastic, interesting, excellent style!
- Best paper at the conference!

FOOD FOR THOUGHT– GENEROSITY FROM THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY

Richard Till

92 % of those attending this session rated it 3-5

- “Passion, enthusiasm galore – generosity of giving – we all have it in us.”
- “Fabulous, laughed and laughed – loved his whole approach.”
- “Wow! Someone who embodies the whole spirit and meaning of philanthropy.”

PASSION AND PRAGMATISM

John Todd, Helen Henderson, Wendy McGuinness

100% of the attendees rated this session 3-5

- “Interesting, inspiring,”
- “Great way to round up the day and conference.”
- “I feel humbled by their giving.”

We asked delegates to tell us what their conference highlights were and have included these as a ranked list below.

Speakers (in general)	63%
Fellowship, networking opportunities & learnings	26 %
Content/choice (incl Maori input)	21%
The organisation, incl staff/booklets, venue, the MC	14%

The respondents rated the quality and variety of the speakers the highest with 63%. This was followed by the opportunity for networking, sharing information and learning new things (26%).

Quotes from the feedback forms:

- “The inspiration of the real stories by passionate people; sessions that were interactive; the organisation.”
- “The range of speakers & subject approaches; The quality of the information provided; much of it of practical use to our trust in the future; The organizational pizzaz which was directive, friendly, efficient.
- “The entire atmosphere created by so many amazing people being together in an awesome environment with huge passion, pragmatism and eyes open to the possibilities.”
- “Content; speakers; networking”
- “Permission to take more risks – failure is a part of innovation”
- “Outstanding speakers; variety of topics – very difficult to choose at times; informed, supported and networking opportunities were invaluable”
- “The workshops - ability to engage in smaller groups; case studies and examples talked about rather than just drawing on global themes; meeting representatives from other groups – learning about them and issues”
- “Opportunity to absorb new information & ideas, models and ways of working; opportunity to meet with people grappling with similar issues & concerns’ energy and vibrancy of the presenters, both local and from overseas.”
- “The Community – the ones we work with and for and the philanthropic sector; The Conversations – the networking (old and new); The Connections – to people, ideas and what’s happening on the ground.”
- “The progress of philanthropic relationships and possibilities for collaboration that will enrich giving in the country; Increasing openness to make changes to support the community and voluntary sector organizations that are doing the work; the wonderful participants and networking.”

We asked delegates what were the least useful aspects of the conference.

It is worth noting that of the 84 received forms 36 did not respond to this question. 13 responded positively – i.e. said that they had no comments; it was all good; all relevant; none; a well planned and friendly conference- congratulations to the organizers; enjoyed it all; I chose everything that I thought would be useful- and it was!; nothing was ‘least useful for me- it was a good conference; can’t think of any-timekeeping, food, etc all excellent.

Many commented on the confusion of the concurrent sessions, especially on the second day or too many sessions to be able to choose (10). This was a recurring issue from the forms and verbal feedback. Although this was noted elsewhere as a positive in that the number and richness of the sessions provided huge choice.

For a few (3), the comments were made that the conference would have been improved for them especially on the first day if there had been some breaks between the sessions – too much sitting and no real interaction. They also mentioned more downtime would have been helpful.

We asked whether there were any ideas or approaches that Philanthropy New Zealand might promote through future meetings, seminars and conferences.

Delegates made a number of suggestions.

Maori community development

Some mentioned they would like to see community development projects especially whanau to diagnose and design solutions for whanau. They mentioned they would like to confirm the development of the Maori Forum learnings & sharing of information with Maori trusts (also include Pacific Trusts). They also mentioned they would like to see a Maori affinity group for Maori and those interested in working with Maori.

Grantmakers Forums

Several mentioned that they would like to see regional funders forums or separate sessions for funders that are broadly based. Some suggested that PNZ explore and developing new thinking through training and regional half day speaker sessions and sector forums. Themes suggested included:

- More exploration of the idea of loans as an alternative to grants.
- PNZ could look at the potential for training for trustees of philanthropic organizations, on outcomes and evidence based funding as well as some of the other concepts highlighted at the event.
- reviewing/auditing processes for grants
- It would be helpful to hear of the things that need working through, rather than just hearing about the ones that worked; discussions on what causes project failures and obstacles they who fund face
- Investment issues

Research/Evaluation

Many suggested that there was a need to develop and share research and evaluation processes/models. The need to review projects and look at what was successful and wasn't is more important than ever in this environment. Linked to regional gatherings discussion of case studies and barriers to success would be welcomed. Also mentioned was the need to share research and evaluation techniques however no suggestions were made as to how this could happen.

We asked whether participants would do anything differently in their work as a result of coming to the conference and have included their own words from the feedback sheets.

- “I will continue to develop our work in partnership funding (5 yr grant).”
- “Review our investment strategies”
- “I will improve evaluation and ongoing relationships with organisations we support.”
- “I have learnt a lot about consultation and knowledge gathering and have listened to new ideas and perspectives.”
- “More emphasis on connecting with and getting feedback from grantees”
- “Better advocate for non-programmed, non-service based funding.”
- “Practice better governance”

- “Yes, everyday I will be rethinking old ways and actively applying new learnings.”
- “Review strategic plans and governance on a regular basis.”
- “I will be pulling together a most excellent group of social change agents (it had been planned but not given priority).”
- “Talk more/question more/clarify more/help more/collaborate more with communities and applicants.”
- “Absorb and reflect on ideas re evaluation & decision-making re investments. Have an increased role in governance.”
- “Involve the community more in the process of grantmaking. Be confident and ensure that vital grants are maintained.”
- “New approaches – especially Luc’s point of view to not be reductionist and look for one true way! Also try to inject more humour into work!”
- “Be strengthened in the messages that I give to my board. Be more focused on looking for opportunities.”
- “The passion of the people was very inspirational.”
- “A fantastic couple of days, the best conference yet”

We asked whether participants had any other comments about the conference and have grouped the responses under issues and included their own words from the feedback sheets.

Overall organization and view of conference:

- “All the Board members being involved throughout the conference was a great thread throughout sessions”
- “Congratulations on a great 2 days. I liked the big choice of concurrent sessions”
- “My first conference and I found it both fun and very educational. Well done & thanks.”
- “Well done! PNZ provides me with a framework for intelligent funding, that really helps my work. Also liked the extended C sessions.”
- “So many good workshops – we will bring more family members next time so that we can get around to more of the discussions.”
- “Well done! Better & Better!”
- “Great conference, can’t wait for the next one.”
- “Congratulations to the organizing committee – the best PNZ conference I have attended”
- “Unobtrusive, good organization of sessions – good venue-enjoyed the style of the MC.”

Networking:

- “Great opportunity to mix with like minded groups to challenge and share thoughts and processes.”
- “Wonderful to catch up with old friends and meet new ones.”

Suggestions:

- “Great to have more focus on the environment at future conferences/ carbon-neutral conference.”
- “Would be good to hear about successful campaigns such as ribbon campaign, month of november.”
- “Would be good to think about throw away stuff such as coffee cardboard. Notepaper in the books was a good idea.”
- “The timing – 2 days was fine but perhaps a little too tightly packed – a longer lunch hour might help to be able to get in a walk as well as networking or maybe 3 days.”

Constructive feedback:

- “The existence of concurrent sessions on the second day should have been clearer.”
- “Having Richard Till and Andrew Hunt concurrent was disappointing as it hard to choose.”
- “We were spoilt for choice in our concurrent sessions. It might be helpful to limit the number of sessions run concurrently.”
- “The AGM should be at a time that doesn’t clash with another session. I wanted to go to the AGM and Andrew Hunt.”