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Corporate Plan Output: Community Liaison, Assistance and Advocacy	

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee about the NZCFA funding cuts to NZCOSS, NZCCSS and NZFVWO.

### INTRODUCTION

The Associate Minister of Social Services, Nick Smith, has announced that the New Zealand Community Funding Agency (NZCFA) will no longer fund three voluntary sector umbrella groups: the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS), the New Zealand Council of Social Services (NZCOSS) and the New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations (NZFVWO).

### DISCUSSION

Nick Smith has stated that the Government wants to take funding away from bureaucracy and put it towards direct service provision. However, the organisations have responded by criticising the Government for taking vital support away from local community groups. Tina Reid, of NZFVWO, said in a press release, “community groups rely on national umbrella organisations to keep them informed, carry out research, and be a voice for them in the public arena”. A number of social service agencies have also responded to the cuts by questioning the Government’s motives in withdrawing funding from groups which are known for their criticism of recent Government policies and of NZCFA itself.

The Co-ordinator of the local branch of COSS, Sharon Torstonson, has appealed to supporters of the three organisations to write to Nick Smith to voice concerns about the loss of support for the community sector and the subsequent loss of representation of the concerns of this sector to the Government.

Details of the extent and implications of the funding cuts will be available at the Council meeting.

**Recommendation:** That the Christchurch City Council write to the Associate Social Services Minister expressing concern about the funding cuts and requesting that the NZCOSS, NZFVWO and NZCCSS have their funding for 1999 reinstated.