



The fourth and final networking event for 2017 was held on 26th of October at the Mt. Pleasant Community Centre. The event was generously hosted by Avon Heathcote Estuary Ihutai Trust (AHEIT) and attended by 35 people representing community based/Third Sector Organisations (TSO), government agencies and philanthropic organisations.

The topic for the day was “Sharing knowledge and lessons learned” with the objective of sharing tips for working smarter to reduce administrative burden. Big Thanks to Bill Simpson and Tanya Jenkins of AHEIT, Harald Breiding-Buss of Christchurch Community Accounting (CCA), Olivia Smith, Chrissie Williams and Shelley Washington of Environment Canterbury for their contributions.

Introductions and Announcements:

Bill Simpson, Chair of AHEIT opened the day and provided an overview and bit of history on the organisation. Participants introduced themselves and had an opportunity to make brief announcements about upcoming events and other items of interest to the wider group. There were many great projects and events mentioned, far more than can be listed in this brief summary. Groups were encouraged to list their events on the ECO Canterbury Calendar: <http://ecocanterbury.org.nz> Note: someone mentioned issues with adding events. This will be addresses by ECO.

Presentations:

All the PowerPoint presentations and example strategic action plans are available in the Networking for the environment- Event 4 page of the ECan website: <https://www.ecan.govt.nz/your-region/your-environment/our-natural-environment/networking-for-the-environment/>

1. **Working Smarter-** Tanya Jenkins took us on a journey through her 15 years with the AHEIT. Her lessons learned and tips for running an efficient and effective organisation, everything from how to find and tack volunteer contributions to writing reports that hit the mark for funders. **Tanya has generously offered to share her templates. Please email her at info@estuary.org.nz**
2. **Environmental Groups and Money, what you need to know-** Harald Breiding-Buss talked to us about financial reporting and the importance of financial literacy for sound decision making. Christchurch Community Accounting provides affordable access to accounting services for about 310 not-for-profit organisations. They offer training/education in accounting, administration and financial management. **To get assistance from CCA please email info@commaccounting.co.nz**
3. **Setting Meaningful Goals-** Shelley Washington and Chrissie Williams co-presented on this topic. Shelley started talking about the importance of setting meaningful goals. Goals can also be called strategic actions or objectives. She outlined some general principles and emphasised the importance of defining a group’s purpose. Because if it’s not clear, everything else will be difficult. Chrissie provided stories and examples from her own experience as a founding member of AHEIT and the importance of the Ihutai Management Plan to the development and longevity of the organisation. Five strategic action plans (or equivalent) from groups who were happy to share are available at the ECan website – either their strategic action plans or a website (link provided under “Presentations’ above). Thank you to the following community groups for providing these: Banks Peninsula Conservation Trust; Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network; Cashmere Stream Care Group; Avon

Ōtākaro River Network; and Styx River Living Laboratory Trust. To get more information on goal setting please email shelley.washington@ecan.govt.nz

Interactive Session:

Top Tips for working smarter. Olivia guided participants through a session in which each table compiled tips, ideas and experiences from their own organisation and shared with the wider group. Listed below are the gems from each table categorised into 5 broad topics:

Administration	Membership	Communication	Events/Volunteers	Miscellaneous
Saving money- do what you have to (e.g. Do you have to audit accounts?)	In the epic context of inter-generational membership (not reinventing the wheel)	Still a place for sending a newsletter - no stress about quarterly	ECO Canterbury calendar	Having a landscape plan already ready from Council makes it easier for the community groups to get funding & get people involved
Email can be a failed info/communication technique	Refresh, go over barriers, policies - make sure you're aware of changes	Facebook posts - simple, see the # people who read & look. Must have photo or video content. Good for reaching younger demographic	Engage people in responsibility of maintenance	Working with Council - benefits
Learn how to delegate. Providing roles that allow ownership and contribution	Knowing the expectations of your membership	Digital - young people	Projects where folks can see their achievements	Learn from experience however harness energy
	Committee members to have a position description	Digital media - variety of ways to get message out	Work where the community energy is at	Sometimes open to old ideas reinvented. All about the timing. Just because it didn't work previously doesn't mean it won't work now

Administration	Membership	Communication	Events/Volunteers	Miscellaneous
FUNDERS - keep things simple	Board members contract committed	Readability - aim for 12-14 yrs. Make it easy to understand. Google "readability" for a translation to a score of readability	Focus on a key idea. Focus on purpose and keep simple for volunteers	Value of working together - networking with other groups/trusts
Create, Once. Publish, Everywhere (COPE)	Succession Plan – if your board is made up of mostly older people, allow younger people to also be involved in a way that meets their needs	Use pictures	Set up small cells of volunteers	Profiling new initiatives (e.g. OVTRK register)
Many groups don't have paid workers. How do we support them?	Clarity expectations, define roles and delegations		Different volunteers want different things	Student research projects, finding gaps
Google Docs - folder available to everyone, collaboration. Doodle Poll	Everyone needs a role or portfolio/area of responsibility. Helps prevent burnout		Child friendly events	Tapping into Agencies expertise? Who to contact and how. Use this knowledge
Microsoft 365 - free to charities. Techsoup.net.nz	Keep it manageable - one step at a time		Keep volunteers involved and interested	Put on training on good governance
Have paid employee(s) for stability, continuity, etc.	Walk before you run		H&S - Conservation Volunteers New Zealand (CVNZ) have good handbook. ECan & CCC can review H&S plans	Being seen
Trouble entering info into calendar of Env. Events Canterbury			Check if you need liability insurance	Weekly newsletter (free) at ECO
Accurate minutes are your only			Do drivers really have a license?	



Administration	Membership	Communication	Events/Volunteers	Miscellaneous
record/history retain it				

What next for the Network:

The group applauded the news that there will be 4 events in 2018. A survey will be sent out to get a steer for the new programme. In the meantime, please contact me at any time alison.bower@ecan.govt.nz . Thank you for your enthusiasm and participation in this programme. Ngā mihi, Alison (Ali)