Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa (YDSA)

The YDSA provides the framework for a youth development approach as a way of understanding what needs to happen to

...ensure young people have safe, healthy relationships
...promote young people’s active participation in all areas of their lives.

The YDSA promotes the application of a “youth development” approach as a way of understanding what needs to happen for,

...a country where young people are vibrant and optimistic through being supported and encouraged to take up challenges.
The Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) promotes the interests of young people aged 12 to 24 years. We also encourage and assist the involvement of young people in the social, educational, cultural and economic development of New Zealand.

By listening and responding to young people, we actively seek ways to ensure that young people are valued, nurtured and challenged to realise their full potential.

We use a youth development approach … that's about how government and society contribute to whole of government initiatives in support of young people. To support our work we use research and information from our youth development services, as well as international best practice.

Our objective is to provide leadership, co-ordination and facilitation for youth development.

Our work programme is structured to:
- provide a regional presence to enable effective youth development work
- build a research base on youth development
- provide policy advice on issues affecting young people
- manage funding and contracts for youth development services
- provide young people with expertise and support
- support young people as youth voice advocates to get their voices heard in different ways in their schools, organisations, communities and government.

We believe that by increasing the ways young people are involved in decision making, they can be a part of making a real difference in New Zealand today.

We work to ensure that effective youth policy is making a positive difference to the lives of vulnerable young people.

We believe that young people have a right to be heard and that meaningful participation is essential for effective policy making.

Our work is structured to:
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- support young people as youth voice advocates to get their voices heard in different ways in their schools, organisations, communities and government.
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**Our work**

Our work programme is structured to:
- provide a regional presence to enable government and society to support young people to develop the skills and attitudes they need to take a positive part in society both now and in the future.
- build a research base on youth development.
- provide policy advice on issues affecting young people.
- manage funding and contracts for youth development services.
- promote youth engagement.

**regional development**

From 2000 we have developed a small regional presence. This enables us to support and achieve positive outcomes for young people in a local, regional and national level, and to contribute to whole of government initiatives in support of young people.

**research and evaluation**

We are committed to building the knowledge base for youth development in partnership with NZDS’s Centre for Social Research and Evaluation.

**policy advice**

Our specialised understanding of the youth sector allows us to provide advice on ways to accommodate youth interests and improve policies that impact on young people.

We do this by monitoring and researching issues and trends and using this knowledge to:
- advise on Minister of police, services and legislation affecting young people.
- work with other government agencies and the youth sector to keep them informed about key issues that affect young people.
- provide policy advice and/or lead initiatives to provide improved outcomes for young people in New Zealand.

We also lead and coordinate the Government’s work on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC).

**Youth development services**

We provide government funding and manage contracts for selected youth development services that allow local initiatives for national needs.

We specifically seek to fund innovative services that work across sectors to make a positive difference to the lives of vulnerable young people. To exploit our role in developing and guiding the youth services sector we seek projects and services that demonstrate youth people’s participation, inclusion and engagement.

We also administer the Youth Development Partnership Fund for youth work in emerging youth development, and to support youth young people through partnerships with local authorities, charities, voluntary organisations, and the corporate sector.

The fund aims to attract a diverse group of young people to get involved in their communities, through responsive, youth-friendly projects that focus on building young people’s life and learning skills. Each project must be responsive to local needs and situations and irreducible and sustainable for young people, and be developed by other agencies in the community.

**Youth engagement**

We ensure that effective youth policy advice is written into key policies and programmes in government, and for the development of youth policy advice that is relevant, responsive to local needs and situations and irreducible and sustainable for young people, and be developed by other agencies in the community.

We believe that by increasing the ways young people are involved in decision making, they can be part of making a difference in their lives, and in turn, in the lives of others in their communities.

The Aotearoa Youth Voice is the brand that houses our youth engagement work, for individuals and organisations that want to provide information and enable policies related to young people, as well as a discussion forum and resources.

**Projects include**:

- PROVIDE—supporting young people as youth voice advocates in communities to develop their leadership skills and work with their schools, organisations, communities and government.
- Activate Youth Advisory Group—youth champions in our cities and towns to become local champions for different youth issues and communities.
- Youth parliament—youth parliament represents an opportunity for young people to have a voice in a real setting that can be seen in a real parliament setting.
- Local government—supporting local councils in youth participation in relation to lots of different kinds of council work and services.

We are also involved in programmes that assist young people to think, speak and be heard internationally including the Commonwealth Youth Programme.
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Our work
Our work programmes are structured to:
- provide a national resource to enable young people to reach their full potential
- build a research base on youth development
- provide policy advice on issues affecting young people
- manage funding and contracts for youth development services
- promote youth engagement.

Our regional teams are based in MSD regional offices in:
- Auckland (covering Auckland and Northland)
- Christchurch (covering the South Island)
- Rotorua (covering Bay of Plenty Waikato)
- Wellington (covering the lower North Island including the East Coast).

Our work programme is structured to:
- promote youth engagement
- research and evaluation
- policy advice
- provide leadership, co-ordination and facilitation for youth development
- provide advice and/or lead initiatives to provide improved youth participation in relation to lots of different kinds of council work and services.
- Activate Youth Advisory Group
- gives youth representatives an opportunity to have youth issues and concerns taken seriously in a formal, parliamentary setting.
- Local government — supporting local councils in youth participation in relation to lots of different kinds of council work and services.
- Youth parliament — gives youth representatives an opportunity to have youth issues and concerns taken seriously in a formal, parliamentary setting.
- PROVIDE — supporting young people as youth voice advocates to get their voices heard in different ways in their schools, organisations, communities and government.
- Aotearoa Youth Voices
- provides information and resources of particular interest to participation projects, and our website: www.youthvoices.govt.nz
- Commonwealth Youth Programme.
- provides information and resources of particular interest to young people, as well as a discussion forum and opinion polls.
- PROVOKE — supports young people as youth voice advocates to get their voices heard in different ways in their schools, organisations, communities and government.
- Aotearoa Youth Voices
- provides information and resources of particular interest to young people, as well as a discussion forum and opinion polls.
- Commonwealth Youth Programme.

We work to ensure that effective youth policy advice is being given at a central, community, local council and community level.

We believe that by increasing the ways young people are involved and mobilising their ideas, young people can be part of the solution to providing information and resources of particular interest to young people, as well as a discussion forum and opinion polls.

Projects include:
- PROVIDE — supporting young people as youth voice advocates to get their voices heard in different ways in their schools, organisations, communities and government.
- Aotearoa Youth Advisory Group
- gets young people involved in our projects and helps them to engage with their fellow peers, other young people, their schools, the community, the political system.
- Youth parliament — gives youth representatives an opportunity to have youth issues and concerns taken seriously in a formal, parliamentary setting.
- Local government — supporting local councils in youth participation in relation to lots of different kinds of council work and services.
- Young people.
more information

We have a wide range of publications on policies and issues that affect young people, the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa and our Aotearoa Youth Voices projects, which are all also available on our website. We can provide information about our youth development services and put you in touch with a local organisation providing a programme.

The Government's vision for young people is presented in the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa:

- a country where young people are vibrant and optimistic through being supported and encouraged to take up challenges

To make this vision a reality, we believe that all individuals, groups and organisations that work with young people need to be aware of youth issues and interests and also need to understand and apply a youth development approach in their work.

The YDSA provides the framework and tools to help us understand and apply a youth development approach as a way of understanding what needs to happen in our work with young people.

Launched in 2002 as a long-term direction for supporting and developing young people, the YDSA aims to shift thinking from a focus on youth problems to understanding young people's strengths and contributions in all sectors of society.

The four regional offices are located in MSD offices at Auckland, Christchurch, Rotorua and Wellington. Contact our national office for local details.

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The approach:
- enhances the protective factors in young people’s lives, as well as addressing risk factors
- supports young people’s ability to and connecting with key social environments (families, schools, training, work, communities and peer groups)
- builds young people’s self-confidence, self-esteem and confidence
- promotes young people’s active participation in all areas of their lives.

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The Government's vision for young people is presented in the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa:

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