

Youth Plan

Engagement 2019

What we heard from rangatahi



Throughout October 2019, the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi **heard from over 1,200 rangatahi** on the development of the Youth Plan.

One young person wrote on the online survey

“we tell adults stuff like this all the time and nothing happens or changes”.

We think this should change and have published this document to let rangatahi, their whānau, the community and youth sector organisations know what we heard.

A huge thanks!

Your voice has helped to shape the work government does. Thank you for sharing your time, thoughts, expertise and ideas.

We owe a massive thank you to the youth sector organisations who were crucial in setting up hui with rangatahi. Without you, we could not have done it! Thanks also to those who attended sector hui and shared their voices in these forums.

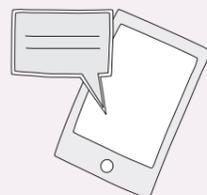
Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.

A bit about the process we used

By numbers:



Over **600 rangatahi** attended **30 hui**



Over **600 rangatahi** responded to the online survey



Over **90 youth sector** representatives attended **3 hui**

We talked to rangatahi in person and via an online survey.

In total, **we held 30 hui** with rangatahi throughout the country. We worked with youth development providers to set these up. Most of the rangatahi we met with are from seven groups.

These are rangatahi Māori, Pacific young people, young women, disabled young people, rainbow young people, young people from ethnic communities (particularly those from a refugee or migrant background), and young people in the regions.

We ran an online survey throughout October 2019, which was sent to groups MYD works with, asking them to distribute the survey. This was also promoted online, for example through MYD's Facebook page.

We asked questions under the three focus areas: voice, mental wellbeing and leadership.

We asked you about how you understand each of these three focus areas and what actions we could take to create positive change. We tried to give you space to tell us what you really think. From there, we read through all the information you gave us so that we could understand what you were telling us, what was common between all the different groups and which parts were unique. A summary of what we heard is on the right.

We thought these two quotes captured the overall feedback well.

“...young people are always trying to give the government their thoughts, views and opinions...”

“I believe the Government should meaningfully co-design the solutions with young people and work with youth in partnership.”

What will we do with this information?

The information that you and youth sector representatives gave us will help to inform the Youth Plan. This is an action plan that sets out the action's government will take, in partnership with others, to support rangatahi to thrive and succeed.

What we heard throughout October 2019 will help us to decide what actions government should take to work towards Aotearoa New Zealand being the best place in the world to be a young person.

Final thoughts

Throughout the process of hearing from you, we were reminded time and time again of how passionate, informed and creative you all are.

We saw a deep desire from many of you to contribute to your communities as well as the future direction of our nation. Actions taken as part of the Youth Plan will help us amplify your voices and support you to thrive and succeed.

Summary of what we heard

Voice

You overwhelmingly told us that government needs to change how it works with and for you. You want to be heard, but the process can be challenging. You told us that it is hard to participate when meetings are held in the middle of the day, when government documents are long and when language is not accessible.

Many of you told us that you want a real person to talk to, more use of youth-friendly language and to share your voice in places where you spend time and feel comfortable (including social media, libraries, marae and schools).

You told us that you don't really get to hear about how your voice was used. One young person told us

“... why would we share with government when they never listen to what we say...”.

You want to know that you were heard and how that information was used to inform decisions.

Mental wellbeing

Many of you told us that mental wellbeing could not be separated from physical and spiritual wellbeing and having strong relationships and connections.

For many of you, mental wellbeing was wrapped up in a sense of purpose, identity and connection to culture. You told us you want to be connected to the whenua, know your whakapapa and learn your language. Many of you who identify as rainbow talked about the importance of having your identity accepted and respected.

“Knowing who you are and where you came from is important to help you feel happy, healthy and confident.”

You told us that to be mentally well, the places you are in need to be safe and supportive. You need your basic needs to be met, and for your homes to be free from violence, drugs and alcohol abuse.

You told us you want accessible, affordable and appropriate mental health supports and for these to be more readily available in the spaces you are in. Some of you were deeply concerned about long wait times and we heard about you or your friends being turned away when in need of help. Services need to have people who understand your culture, gender and other identities, and what you are going through. We also need to work to reduce the stigma associated with asking for help.

Leadership

You described leadership broadly, noting this could be anything from formal opportunities or positions to being a positive role model for friends and whānau. One rangatahi told us

“... leadership is making a choice to help your community...”.

Many of you talked about wanting space to lead in the way that works for you, with some of you using the recent School Strike 4 Climate as an example. Many of you talked about concepts such as mana and identity when telling us about leadership.

Some of you felt that current leadership opportunities are not widely available or promoted and that only a select group get to participate. You told us there should be less barriers to entry and that you want support through schools, leadership programmes and mentors. You also spoke about the need to have more diverse leaders who you could aspire to. You told us that it's important to see people like yourselves in positions of leadership or influence.