



## DEEP DIVE WITH DECISION-MAKERS

INSIGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2023

### What did we want to know?

The Hive set out to better understand the barriers that decision-makers experience around youth engagement and where opportunities to do things differently may lie.

### What did we do?

#### #1 SURVEY

The Hive designed an online 'Youth voice & your work' survey for public servants. The survey was completed by 87 people working across 31 departments and ministries in the public service.

Survey questions explored:

- the respondent's role and the mission of their organisation
- their confidence around youth engagement
- how The Hive might support them in elevating youth voice across their work.

#### #2 IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS

Hivers designed and facilitated three in-depth workshops for decision-makers in Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington) in November 2023. The Hivers met with 50 public servants from 26 different organisations.

Workshops investigated:

- how youth voice is being included in the work of government departments and ministries
- the barriers preventing public servants from successfully engaging with taiohi (young people)
- how The Hive could support decision-makers.

#### #3 INTERVIEWS

The Hive interviewed seven senior public sector decision-makers.

Interviews investigated:

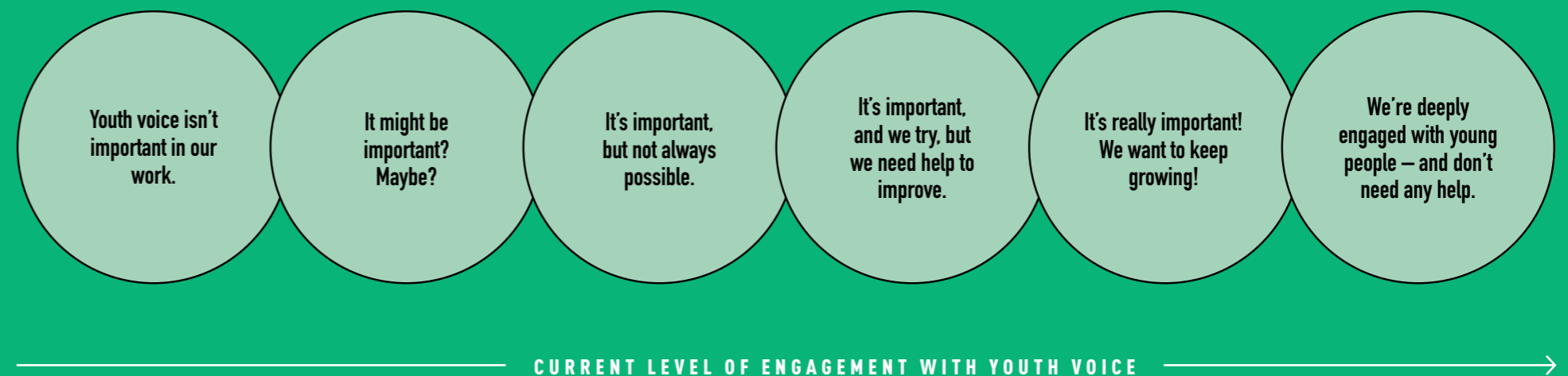
- the factors shaping strategic decision-making
- the role of youth voice within organisations
- opportunities for taiohi to influence their work
- the issues they most want to engage with young people about.

### What did we find out?

Decision-makers told us:

- youth voice is important in their work
- they want to make a difference
- they want to engage well with young people
- in-person engagement is strongly preferred when possible
- written research, case studies, and reports are also valued
- many are already connecting with youth voice in some capacity
- they acknowledge that youth engagement isn't always done well
- sometimes young people's voices aren't really considered at all.

However, we found that these insights from decision-makers exist along a continuum. We identified big differences within and across government agencies and crown entities in their comfort, capabilities, and confidence in engaging with young people. Participants' views reflect a wide spectrum of understanding around the 'why' of youth voice, and a range of capability in youth engagement practice. These differences can be mapped across a continuum.



### What's getting in the way?

Decision-makers named a series of barriers. Challenges fell into three categories.

#### 1. THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT OF GOVERNMENT

- Hierarchy and bureaucracy.
- Budgets and tight timeframes.
- Change moving slowly.

#### 2. CHALLENGES CONNECTING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

- Difficulties reaching some young people.
- Challenges translating between government and young people.
- A lack of confidence working alongside taiohi.

#### 3. WAYS OF WORKING

- Fixed mindsets and risk aversion.
- The impact of working in silos.
- An absence of mechanisms to 'close the loop'.

### Overcoming challenges

Decision-makers want help to address these challenges. They told us they want:

- guidance around when and how to engage with young people
- to deepen their understanding of what young people need and care about
- to connect with young people who are 'harder to reach'
- youth feedback on their plans, policy, projects, content, and events
- to understand how systems and services are working for young people
- to understand what youth voice insights mean for their work
- to reduce silos by forming connections across agencies.

Decision-makers also want to hear from The Hive regularly. In their view, these updates would help them:

- understand what working with The Hive looks like and involves
- learn from the data, insights, and outcomes generated by The Hive.

## What about decision-makers who are already engaging with The Hive?

### THEY SAY, "THE HIVE WORKS!"

Participants who knew a little more about us or have worked with us in the past reported that The Hive is already effectively addressing many of their challenges.

They value The Hive's ability to:

- connect decision-makers and young people
- translate language and processes between both audiences
- make public sector work feel real, relevant, and engaging for taiohi
- boost the reach and credibility of youth engagement initiatives.

## What do Hivers want?

As we look to the future, it's vital to also consider the perspectives of the Hivers.

Hivers have told us:

- they want to see the impact of their work
- they want to be able to work consistently
- they value engaging kanohi ki te kanohi (face-to-face)
- they view social media as critical for impact
- they feel the tension between different audiences of taiohi.

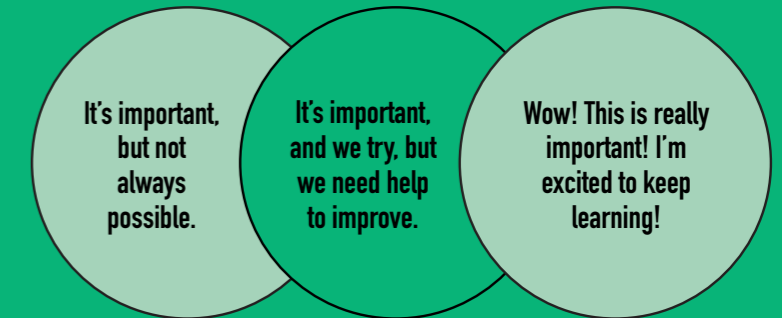
# OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE HIVE

## What does this all mean?

The insights generated through this process highlight four key opportunities to elevate youth voice in decision-making.

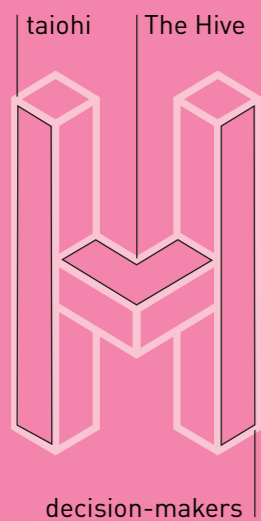
1. Help decision-makers develop confidence in their youth engagement practice.
2. Bring young people and decision-makers together in ways that stoke enthusiasm and build accountability.
3. Tell the story of what great youth engagement looks like.
4. Foster cross-agency relationships between decision-makers.

These four key opportunities reflect where The Hive can be most effective in supporting decision-makers across the youth engagement continuum.



## How might The Hive do this?

Based on the perspectives of decision-makers and Hivers generated through the insights-gathering activities, we recommend the following actions.



### RECOMMENDATION ONE:

#### Produce a quarterly e-newsletter

A Hive quarterly e-newsletter for decision-makers would:

- explore issues of concern to young people
- offer insights from Hive engagements
- provide examples of good youth engagement practice
- profile opportunities for collaboration.

### RECOMMENDATION TWO:

#### Host Hiver-led gatherings for decision-makers

Establishing regular Hiver-developed and -facilitated gatherings for decision-makers would:

- build confidence, capability, and skills for both Hivers and decision-makers
- foster cross-agency relationships and information sharing between decision-makers
- develop decision-makers' relationships with, and accountability to, young people
- keep everyone buzzing!

### RECOMMENDATION THREE:

#### Tell the story of The Hive

Development of a communications strategy for The Hive would:

- showcase the ways decision-makers can engage with us, and the associated costs
- articulate our approach to youth engagement
- name the expectations we have for those we work with
- help decision-makers sell The Hive to their teams and managers.

### RECOMMENDATION FOUR:

#### Grow and sustain The Hive's online presence through the development of a social media strategy

Developing a social media strategy would:

- strengthen The Hive's online presence
- help taiohi understand how government works
- deliver regular updates on what is happening within government
- promote opportunities to engage with The Hive
- report back to our social audiences on the outcome of their engagement with us.

### RECOMMENDATION FIVE:

#### Iterate The Hive recruitment approach

Updating The Hive's recruitment approach would:

- Enhance the youth development component of The Hive model through:
  - increasing the length of a Hiver season to two years, with a new cohort recruited each year
  - generate an overlap between seasons – allowing Hivers to explore a 'learning' and then a 'doing / teaching' phase within their journey.

## Get in touch

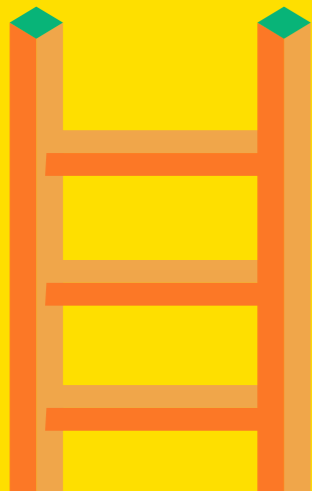
Interested in working with The Hive or want to learn more? Get in touch at [hello@thehive.nz](mailto:hello@thehive.nz), or visit our website, [thehive.nz](http://thehive.nz).



## WHAT DO DECISION-MAKERS WANT?

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- to understand what youth voice insights mean for their work
- to reduce silos by forming connections across agencies
- to understand what working with The Hive looks like and involves
- to learn from the data, insights, and outcomes generated by The Hive.



# SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Opportunities for The Hive:

1. Help decision-makers develop confidence in their youth engagement practice.
2. Bring young people and decision-makers together in ways that stoke enthusiasm and build accountability.
3. Tell the story of what great youth engagement looks like.
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## How might The Hive do this?

1. Produce a quarterly e-newsletter.
2. Host Hiver-led gatherings for decision-makers.
3. Tell the story of The Hive.
4. Grow and sustain The Hive's online presence.
5. Iterate The Hive recruitment approach.

## Get in touch

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