



**MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO TAIOHI

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROJECT:
PHASE 2 RESEARCH SUMMARY**

Summary

This summary outlines the findings from a nationwide youth participation needs analysis of youth councils.

In September 2005 copies of the survey were sent to all youth councils in New Zealand. Three separate instruments were used with two target groups: youth councils that are established as part of a local authority and independent groups who have a high level of interaction with local council.

The survey was sent to all 44 youth councils in New Zealand. Out of these eight youth councils (18%) contacted us to advise that they were no longer active and 27% completed surveys were returned. The final response rates are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Final responses from youth councils

| Response | n | % |
|--|----------|----------|
| Returned all required surveys | 12 | 27% |
| Returned some required surveys | 1 | 2% |
| No returned surveys – youth council no longer active | 8 | 18% |
| No returned surveys – reason unknown | 23 | 52% |
| Total | 44 | |

The average age of youth councillors was 16.9 years with a standard deviation of 2.1 years. The ethnic make up of respondents is summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Ethnicity

| Response | n | % |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Asian | 8 | 6% |
| Pākehā/European | 96 | 75% |
| Māori | 20 | 16% |
| Middle Eastern/Latin American/African | 1 | 1% |
| Pacific peoples | 9 | 7% |
| Other | 7 | 5% |
| Did not answer | 0 | 0% |

The typical length of service for a youth councillor was between 6 months and 1 year, the length of service for respondents is summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Length of service

| Response | n | % |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| Less than 6 months | 15 | 12% |
| 6 months - 1 year | 65 | 51% |
| 1 - 2 years | 27 | 21% |
| More than 2 years | 5 | 4% |
| Did not answer | 16 | 13% |

The main activities conducted by youth councils were organising recreational events for young people in their area, responding to consultation requests from their council, making submissions and recommendations to council and advocating young people's issues in their area.

The areas of council that youth councils most frequently worked with were strategic planning, environmental issues, recreation and community.

The most important decision that youth councils had been involved in the last 12 months were:

- contributing to the long terms council community plan (LTCCP) process
- community outcomes consultation
- late night buses/ transport issues/ road safety
- consultation around council initiatives, eg liquor ban, physical activity plan
- running events, eg youth awards, interschool competition, after ball functions
- establishing a web presence.

Youth councils were also asked what council initiatives they has been involved in the last 12 moths, their responses centres on the following themes:

- regional hui for youth councils
- submissions to parliament
- youth awards
- youth week activities
- youth website
- assisting at council events
- development of a youth bank
- development specialist youth forum, eg environment forum
- development of specialist programme, eg recycling programme
- LTCCP process
- opening of youth centre/ one-stop-shop
- developing youth council and processes
- youth radio station
- developing youth strategy/policy.

A majority of youth councils (83%) have their own budget which is usually provided by council (75%) and through applying for grants (50%). Most youth councillors (83%) do not receive any financial assistance for bring on their youth council.

Just over half of youth councils (58%) received training as part of their role. The areas indicated by youth councillors for wanting further training are summarised in Table 4.

Table 23: Training for youth councillors

| Response | n | % |
|---|----------|----------|
| Leadership training | 70 | 55% |
| Tips on how to represent young people in your community | 67 | 52% |
| Project management | 62 | 48% |
| Training on local government services and procedures | 60 | 47% |
| Dealing with conflict | 56 | 44% |
| Public speaking | 54 | 42% |
| Presentation skills/ media work | 54 | 42% |
| How to run good meetings | 52 | 41% |
| Working in a formal adult meeting environment | 52 | 41% |
| Negotiation skills | 51 | 40% |
| Working with a group | 31 | 24% |

Other suggestions provided by youth councils to enhance their effectiveness were:

- being better resourced/ more funding
- having access to stronger networks
- raising the awareness of their youth council amongst council officers
- greater support from elected members and senior managers
- having more schools or young people involved

- creating a sense of continuity
- training
- more regional meetings
- a youth facility.