



Engaging YOUTH voice

Tēnā koe e hoa

▶ Youth are 17% of the population, but they are 100% of our future. Everything we do as decision-makers has an impact on young people.

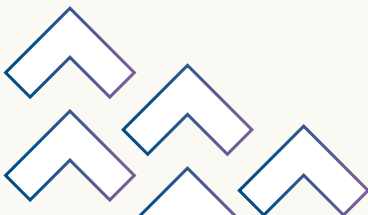
So, we need to hear from them.

A key priority for Government is enabling youth voice.



We want to ensure children and young people are listened to and taken seriously when decisions are made that affect them, including at school, in State care, and in decision-making more broadly. Children and young people deserve good, accessible information to help them make informed choices about their lives.

Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy



What is youth voice

Youth voice refers to the distinct ideas, opinions, beliefs, perspectives, knowledge, and lived experiences of young people. It can be expressed through engagements, such as focus groups and surveys, self-expression, like spoken word, poetry, and art – and more vocal campaigning, like the School Strike 4 Climate NZ.

Importance of youth voice

The future of Aotearoa New Zealand lies in the hands of our young people, and we can act on this today, by ensuring their voice is at the table in all of its diversity.

Youth voice is an essential part of modern democracies, yet young people under 18 years can't vote. It is our role to engage with youth voice to ensure equitable participation for all and create stronger, more inclusive communities.

Time and again, young people show their passion, capacity, and capability to contribute to and lead change – despite the unique barriers they face.

Engaging with youth voice

Engaging with youth voice will add value. The challenge for adults, Government, organisations, and communities is in deciding how they can best support young people to have a positive impact and affect change in their communities. There are existing groups you can engage with, including:

Youth Councils and Youth Advisory Groups

These groups provide ongoing youth representation in decision-making and advice on issues and events as they arise. A few Ministries already have their own Youth Advisory Groups, like the Ministry of Youth Development – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi and the Ministry of Education – Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga. Depending on the issue/topic, you might consider connecting with an existing council/advisory group or starting your own group.

One-off engagements

One-off engagements are good for when you need feedback into policy decisions and service design.





We are the future of Aotearoa. We inherit the good AND the bad, so we deserve to have a voice to speak out and have a hand in decision-making.

Ministry of Youth Development –
Te Manatū Whakahiato
Taiohi Youth Advisory
Group member

Respecting young people involved

These can include hui, focus groups, youth-friendly consultations, and in-person interviews.

Online engagements

Online engagements can be good because they allow a greater number of young people to get involved, and the time commitment tends to be smaller (however, because of this the quality of the support and development the young people receive does tend to be less). Some forms of online engagement include social media question call-outs, polls, and surveys.

The Hive

The Hive is a two-way communication channel that helps young people kōrero with decision-makers. Once decision-makers have contacted The Hive about a potential engagement and young people have agreed it's something they want to engage with government on, they follow a five-step process:

1. Relevant policy is translated into youth-friendly language.
2. Young people are invited to speak in safe spaces.
3. Everyone's unique voices are weaved into a collective view.
4. The Hive amplifies youth voice and creates relevant content for decision-makers.
5. Decision-makers are invited to close the loop and provide feedback on how youth voices were heard.

For more information, contact The Hive:

hello@thehive.nz

No matter the engagement type, you're bringing young people aboard your decision-making waka. It's important that you:

1. **Don't double-up** – consider what information/engagements might already exist. Who are the stakeholders in your space? Could you connect and/or collaborate with them?

Respecting young people involved

2. **Feed them** with knowledge, opportunities, connections, validation – and food.
3. **Use clear language** – don't overload young people with jargon and email attachments.
4. **Remove the barriers** – make sure the space, style, and timing of the engagement is accessible.
5. **Value their time** and provide consistent updates (even if it's to say the process has been delayed).
6. **Close the feedback loop** – be transparent and let them know how the decision was made, even if it's not what they suggested.

Other Resources and Tools

There are a number of easily accessible resources, tools, and reports you can use to support youth voice. Click [here](#) or scan the QR code to access them.



MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATU WHAKAHIAATO TAIOHI

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development



Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government