

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

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Youth Engagement in Local Government

Many Councils are doing great things around youth participation and engagement that are effective and have positive benefits for Councils, communities and young people.

Young people have a stake in local government, use services provided by Councils and are an integral part of the community.

It is about:

- creating opportunities for young people to be involved in, and add value to your Council's activities
- supporting young people to develop as leaders, advisors and decision-makers.

Youth engagement can mean a number of different things. Each council needs to ask what it is they want from young people, or to provide young people.

Effective engagement

Is about young people:

- being informed
- organising themselves
- making decisions or being involved in the decision making process
- influencing outcomes on issues which affect their own lives and their communities
- continuing to be involved in monitoring and follow up.

How to undertake youth friendly consultations

- Run youth forums and focus groups with different young people from across the community.
- Consult with existing youth advisory groups on how to consult other young people.
- Partner with young people to do the listening and talking with other young people.

How to contact young people

There are many ways to directly contact young people. These could include:

- local schools and alternative education programmes
- public notices, online forums and social networking sites eg Facebook
- youth groups
- sports and recreation centres
- parents
- places of employment
- marae, churches, ethnic clubs and societies.

“A benefit of youth engagement is a strengthening of representative democracy by giving a voice to those unable to vote”

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Ways to engage with young people

There are many ways to engage directly with young people in your community. Examples include:

Surveys	Youth friendly consultations
Youth newsletters	Advisory/reference groups, youth forums and surveys
One off engagement with young people on a particular issue	Youth Councils

Establishing a successful Youth Council

It is important that:

- the Council is committed
- young people are involved from the beginning when planning your Youth Council
- a designated Council staff member works alongside the Youth Council
- support Council members and staff to work with and alongside young people
- there is an adequate budget, meeting resources and staff support
- the focus is on real issues and have an opportunity to facilitate change and provide timely feedback
- they be given the opportunity to assist with implementation of youth programmes.

Youth Advisory/Reference Groups

These may be organised on an “as needs” basis to advise Council on issues and events as they arise.

They provide a youth perspective and the opportunity for young people to develop a range of skills and abilities.

They work best with a designated staff member working alongside young people.

“Youth participation means young people sharing in decision making which affects their own lives and the communities”

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Youth-friendly consultations

Youth friendly consultations with young people can occur in a number of ways:

- collaborate with schools to carry out certain parts of the consultation
- run youth forums and focus groups
- consult with existing youth advisory groups
- partner with young people to do the listening and talking with other young people.

Youth friendly consultations have a clear purpose in ensuring young people are:

- given the choice to participate
- fully informed and aware of the purpose of the consultation
- listened to and taken seriously
- involved in the design and implementation of the consultation
- are kept informed of the results and outcomes.

Contacts

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MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO TAIOHI

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development

The Ministry of Youth Development is a small government agency administered by the Ministry of Social Development. We promote the wellbeing and development of young New Zealanders.

We have a regional presence based in: Auckland, Rotorua, Wellington and Christchurch.

We can support organisations, government agencies and the youth sector to promote youth issues, and provide training and guidance.