



MANAWATŪ DISTRICT COUNCIL **YOUTH ACTION PLAN**

Adopted: 17 December 2020





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Introduction

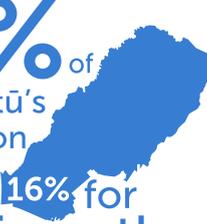
This Youth Action Plan responds to the key needs of youth aged between 12-24 years of age who live, study, work and play in the Manawatū. It provided a chance to explore opportunities and issues that affect youth, helping to give direction to Council's development of policies, plans and projects that will impact young people.

Our approach was to create an Action Plan that is owned and endorsed by youth. This involved going beyond just having youth provide their views, but also getting them engaged in shaping and delivering the work that underpins this Action Plan. Appendix 1 provides an overview of the work undertaken to develop the Action Plan.

Who are our youth?

A fuller set of statistics on our youth is provided in Appendix 2, Some of the highlights include:¹

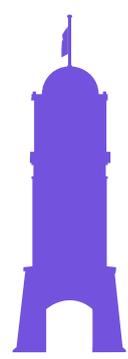
15-24 yr olds
make up over
11% of
Manawatū's
population
nearly **16%** for
māori youth

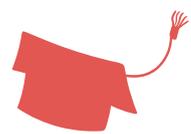


45%
of youth live
rurally



Māori youth
living in
Feilding
64%



Nearly **50%** 
of youth do not enrol in
tertiary Education

Māori youth are more
likely to achieve a
Level 3 
or above qualification

It is almost twice as likely that
rural youth will have
a manager role 

Manawatū youth between
15-29 earn more
than the national average 

Unemployment rates for youth aged
between 20-24 years old 
are slightly higher than nationally **12.8%** compared to **11.5%** nationally
Unemployment for māori youth is lower than nationally
20% compared to 25% 

¹ Information from Stats NZ is in age bands of 10-14 years, 15-19 years and 20-24 years. For this Action Plan we have used the statistics from the 15-19 years and 20-24 years age bands where relevant.

What we aim to achieve with this Action Plan

The vision for this Youth Action Plan is:

“A vibrant, inclusive, unified community that youth contribute to and are proud of.”

Council has identified three priority goals for this Action Plan that contribute to achieving this vision. These were developed with input from youth and with the assistance of the Manawatū Youth Council:



Goal 1: **We belong in our communities**

All youth are heard, valued and supported in the community with opportunities to be involved in Manawatū's future



Goal 2: **We are happy and safe in our communities**

Youth are given the tools and guidance to sustain their wellbeing including their physical and mental health



Goal 3: **We are given equal opportunities to learn and develop**

Empowering youth to make informed choices

What do youth currently value most about the Manawatū?

Two things stood out when we asked youth what they value the most about the Manawatū right now:

- Community – youth valued the people around them every day, from their friends and families through to the wider community that they are part of. The friendliness of the Manawatū and its relative safety and cleanliness meant youth found it an easy place to live in.
- Spaces and places – outdoor activities rated highly with youth, with access to the skatepark, beaches, Makino Aquatic Centre (MAC) and the Ōroua river all valued highly. Manawatū's rural environment was prized for its scenery and the recreation opportunities it provided.



Where are we now?

One of the main ways Council engages and supports youth is through the Manawatū Youth Council (formerly Manawatū Youth Ambassadors). The Manawatū Youth Council works on initiatives for youth in the community, helping ensure rangatahi voices and perspectives are listened to, valued, and embedded in Council decision making (a key focus area of the Ministry of Youth Development's Youth Plan 2020-2022).

Some of the initiatives undertaken by the Manawatū Youth Council include:

- Manawatū Young Achievers Awards - acknowledging the effort and success demonstrated by our youth.
- Feilding Colour Run - a free event aiming to encourage physical activity in our community.
- Designing the new Feilding Skate Park – opened in July 2020.
- Designing and assisting with the building of the Feilding pump track.
- Submissions to the Council on the Annual Plan as appropriate.

A number of Council services are heavily used by youth in our District – this includes our parks and reserves, the library, and the MAC. As key users, the views of youth are an important consideration in the delivery of these services. Both the MAC and library run programmes and events for youth, including junior lifeguards, holiday programmes, clubs and competitions for youth. Council also partners with groups to deliver programmes such as the Cactus challenge,² an eight-week programme that helps youth build leadership and physical skills. Council's Community Development Fund, Events Fund, and Representative Fund are also available for youth-related activities – the Representative Fund, for example, is available for youth to apply for support when representing Manawatū in national and international sporting events.

² Cactus is an acronym for Combined Adolescent Challenge Training Unit Support.



What do youth want to see in the future?

We asked youth what it would take to make the Manawatū the best place for youth in the future, with a particular focus on services, activities, and places. We then explored what the drivers behind these responses were.

Focus	Top responses	Drivers
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental health• Uber Eats• Career support	<p>Mental health was seen as an issue for two main reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty in accessing information to obtain help.• Accessing the help they need. <p>The wider issue of transport for youth was the driver behind Uber Eats being raised. Until youth have their licence, they find the District difficult to get around. Mobility around the town needed creative solutions.</p> <p>All youth discussed the lack of career support, and there were two key areas where they felt they needed the most support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pathway planning (career planning, subject selection).• Work-ready skills (including access to assistance for CV creation, interview skills).
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sports events• Community events• Concerts	<p>Youth thought there were plenty of main-stream sports provided and they wanted to see more diverse events such as dodgeball, BMX, boxing, paintball, skateboard comps and swimming. There was a need for more non-competitive and just “fun” events</p> <p>The success of a recent cultural event at the high school was seen as a model for what wider community events could do. With the loss of the longstanding wearable arts event, EVENTO, there was a gap in art events in the Manawatū.</p> <p>Rather than big events, youth preferred having smaller events and more frequently.</p>
Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sports centre• Youth-friendly spaces• Skatepark (another one)	<p>The need for a sports centre was raised due to the difficulty of getting around the District and youth wanted facilities centred close to one another. They wanted to participate in multiple activities, but the distance between them made this difficult.</p> <p>Youth friendly spaces encompassed two main ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A YOSS³ -type service that focuses on youth health issues.• Multiple spots for youth to ‘hang out’ that offer shelter and WIFI (such as at the skatepark or sports fields), rather than a dedicated single ‘youth space’. <p>The success of the recently completed skatepark meant youth wanted to see another one of these (or to have it expanded). This showed how well youth respond that are designed and have input from youth, for youth.</p>

³ YOSS are a Youth One Stop Shop that offers free information, support, advocacy, counselling, health services, preparation or life skills programmes and holiday programmes. Primarily based in Palmerston North with some services available in Horowhenua.



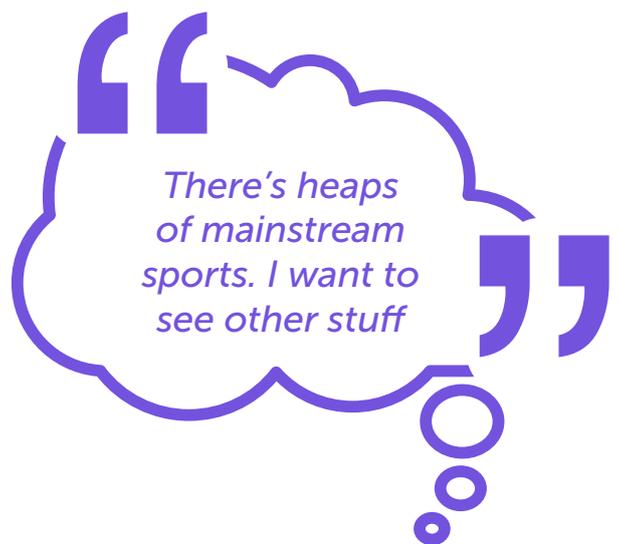
We are not allowed to access some services in Palmerston North because we are from Feilding



The sports grounds are so spread out and we have to carry our gear around



I want to see more non-competitive events, we just want to have fun



There's heaps of mainstream sports. I want to see other stuff



A lot of people don't want to go through a load of people to get the help they need



Only Gateway students get help with job skills at school but those of us going to Uni will have part-time jobs too

Objectives

Based on what youth told us they want to see in the future, we co-designed a set of objectives for each of the goals. These provide a longer-term focus for the individual actions that have been identified – think of them as what success looks like if the actions are achieved.



Goal 1: **We belong in our communities**

All youth are heard, valued and supported in the community with opportunities to be involved in Manawatū's future

Objectives

Youth contribute to Manawatū's creativity, vibrancy and sense of community

Youth are able to access spaces and places for education, work and leisure

Opportunities exist for youth to be involved in decision-making and to develop responses to matters of importance to them



Goal 2: **We are happy and safe in our communities**

Youth are given the tools and guidance to sustain their wellbeing including their physical and mental health

Objectives

Youth have the resources to identify and access health services relevant to them

A range of places and spaces are accessible to youth that meet their physical and social needs



Goal 3: **We are given equal opportunities to learn and develop**

Empowering youth to make informed choices

Objectives

Youth have relevant information about careers, training opportunities and further education when they need it

A range of volunteering or fundraising opportunities are available which enable youth to 'give back to the community' and develop skills



Actions for 2021-2024

As well as continuing the things Council already does with youth, between 2021 and 2024 Council will undertake a number of actions in support of the identified objectives.

We belong in our communities

- Provide a range of sporting and community events that reflects the diversity and vibrancy of the Manawatū, with a focus on fun, social and participation-based events.
- Ensure the LGBTQ+ community feel supported and included within their community, places they learn, study, work and play.
- Identify transport solutions that more effectively meet the needs of youth in the urban areas and within the outlying rural areas.
- Increase participation by groups under-represented in community programmes, services and facility usage (e.g. Māori and Pasifika youth, those with disabilities and the rainbow community).
- Ensure an effective representation and communication platform between youth and Council continues to exist and provides the means to make effective contributions on relevant topics and issues.
- Work closely with schools to create an effective communication platform between educational leaders, youth and Council

We are happy and safe in our communities

- Increase the availability of youth-specific health services (either introducing new services or extending existing ones).
- Investigate having a youth-specific space for the delivery of health and wider youth services.
- Create Manawatū-relevant resources that help youth access the health services they need.
- Look to centralise sporting and recreational activities as a way to make it easier for youth to engage and participate.
- Ensure any new Council facilities and updates to existing facilities are youth-friendly (e.g. Wi-Fi is available, provide space to hang-out when waiting for transport).

We are given equal opportunities to learn and develop

- Ensure locally-delivered support is available to get youth into education, employment and/or training.
- All youth leaving school will have a career plan to identify further education, training or employment.
- Make opportunities available for youth to engage with local businesses and help to them grow their own business ideas.
- Develop opportunities for youth to volunteer in the community to develop their skills and to provide assistance to local individuals, groups and initiatives.

Partnerships and the efforts of other organisations and groups will be important for delivering on a number of these actions. In many cases Council will take an advocacy and supporting role, rather than directly delivering on the actions due to the issues not being within Council's control.

Our primary partnership will continue to be with the Manawatū Youth Council. We are also committed to continuing to engage with the other organisations and agencies – such as health providers and sports groups – to not only deliver on these actions but also periodically review and improve them.

A full listing of the actions is provided in Appendix 3.

Appendix 1

How did this strategy get developed?

Council adopted its Community Development Strategy in 2019. This strategy focuses on strengthening our social and cultural wellbeing using the Te Whare Tapa Whā framework which seeks to balance physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing. One of the actions in this strategy is to develop a local action plan for youth that links to national strategies.

In developing the Youth Action Plan we considered the relevant strategies and plans of national organisations such as the Ministry of Youth Development and Ministry of Health, and also looked at how several other local authorities approached youth engagement and development.

While we took notice of these other plans and strategies, the core approach to our Youth Action Plan was one of co-design with youth. This means more than just hearing the voice of youth, but also involving them in the planning, analysis and development of the action plan. We wanted to make sure this was not a plan developed solely by non-youth. Youth, especially the Manawatū Youth Council, helped us by:

- Designing the engagement with youth, including messaging and where it should take place.
- Worked alongside us when doing the engagement, talking to their peers.
- Were part of the analysis workshops, sharing their ideas with Councillors and representatives from other groups.
- Helped write the goals, objectives and actions, and the presentation of these to Council.

Methods

We employed two main methods to gather the views of youth:

- **Investigative workshops** – these were designed to allow for the free-flow of information from youth with little prompt or direction from our team. The goal was to obtain high level answers that could be used to formulate targeted workshops later in the project.

Youth were asked to view the questions and add answers by using the provided post-it notes and pens. Our high school workshop was further broken down into approximate ages by using a different coloured post-it note in relation to their year-group. Wider youth engagement occurred at key places in Feilding and also Hīmatangi (helping ensure a spread of ages and location).

- **Static feedback stations** – these were placed in the Makino Aquatic Centre and Manawatū District Library for one week and were similar to the investigative workshops with participants able to enter feedback with no engagement from our team. This also meant the ages of those responding was not known. We had good success from the feedback station in the Makino Aquatic Centre as it was placed in a highly-visible and high-traffic area with good staff oversight. The Manawatū District Library feedback station was less successful due to being in a less-visible location.

The investigative workshops and static feedback stations meant we were able to obtain input from nearly 200 youth.

We presented youth initially with the following main questions:

- **Right now...what do you value most about the Manawatū?**

This was designed to encourage youth to share what they value about the Manawatū currently. It served as an icebreaker and also served to get them thinking in a more aspirational mode. It was a free-response question, with no prompting in terms of area of focus.

- **In the future...to make the Manawatū the best place for youth: What actions? What services? What spaces?**

These questions were designed to get youth to share their vision for the future. We shaped their responses in terms of focusing them on:

- **Actions** – what activities did youth want to see happening in Manawatū?
- **Services** – what support would they like to see available?
- **Spaces** – what spaces and places did they want to see available for youth?

An important part of the information gathering was to avoid a deficit-based approach. Our questions were not about identifying what was wrong or missing – youth were free to identify issues and contribute feedback as many times as they wanted.

Additional analysis and input was provided through two stakeholder workshops which mixed Councillors, organisations and groups involved in youth services, and youth themselves. We also worked with members of the Manawatū Youth Council to examine specific issues and develop up the goals, objectives and actions.



Appendix 2

A statistical view of youth in the Manawatū

Information obtained from Stats NZ is in age bands of 10-14 years, 15-19 years and 20-24 years. For this Action Plan we have used the statistics from the 15-19 years and 20-24 year age bands.

Population

- 15-24-year-olds make up 11.1% of the Manawatū District's population. This is slightly lower the national figure of 13.2%.
- 15-24-year-olds make up 15.5% of the Manawatū District's Māori population. This is slightly lower the national figure of 17.3%.

Where do we live

- 45.5% of 15-24-year-olds are rural, 54.5% are urban.
- 35.7% of Māori 15-24-year-olds are rural, 64.3% are urban.

Schooling

- 21% achieved Bachelor and above. This is lower than the national figure of 31.9%.
- 49.7% did not enrol in tertiary education. This is higher than the national figure of 40.3%.
- 46.2% of school leavers achieved Level 3 or above. This is less than the national figure of 53.4%.
- 43.9% of Māori school leavers achieved Level 3 or above. This is much better than the national figure for Māori of 35.6%.

Employment

- Within the age band of 15-24 years from the 2018 census, European and Māori are earning slightly more than the National median:

	European	Māori	Pacific
National	\$18,800	\$15,000	\$13,500
Manawatū District	\$20,800	\$16,800	\$12,600



Occupation

- The common occupation for employed 15-24 year-olds in the Manawatū District was “Labourer”, making up 26.7%. Nationally, Labourers make up only 19.6% of employed 15-24 year-olds.
- “Sales Worker” was only 13.1%, whereas nationally that is the most common occupation at 19.9% (just beating Labourer).
- It is almost twice as likely that rural youth will have a “Manager” role.
- A significantly higher number of urban youth are sales workers.

From the 2018 census (in the 15-24 year age band):

Occupation	National	Manawatū District	Manawatū District Urban	Manawatū District Rural
Managers	7.9%	10.9%	7.8%	14.9%
Professionals	11.6%	8.1%	8.1%	8.6%
Technicians and Trades Workers	12.1%	14.2%	13.6%	14.9%
Community and Personal Service Workers	15.6%	14.8%	14.5%	14.9%
Clerical and Administrative Workers	8.0%	5.6%	6.1%	5.0%
Sales Workers	19.9%	13.1%	16.2%	10.3%
Machinery Operators and Drivers	5.1%	6.6%	6.7%	7.0%
Labourers	19.6%	26.7%	27.0%	25.2%

Unemployment/Benefits

- Unemployment rates for 20-24 year-olds is 12.8%, slightly higher than the national figure of 11.5%.
- For 20-24-year-old Māori the unemployment rate is 20.0%, significantly higher than the overall figure, but also significantly lower than the national figure of 25.2%.

Population	Age Group	No Income	Jobseeker Support	Sole Parent Support
National	15-19	38.1%	4.4%	1.8%
	20-24	4.8%	11.5%	3.1%
National Māori	15-19	37.5%	9.3%	1.3%
	20-24	3.1%	25.2%	5.1%
Manawatū	15-19	38.1%	4.7%	0.8%
	20-24	2.0%	12.8%	2.8%
Manawatū Māori	15-19	41.2%	8.1%	0.7%
	20-24	1.8%	20.0%	3.6%

Appendix 3

Goals, objectives and actions for Manawatū District Council Youth Action Plan

Goals	Objectives	Actions
All youth are heard, valued and supported in the community with opportunities to be involved in Manawatū's future	Youth contribute to Manawatū's creativity, vibrancy and sense of community	Provide a range of sporting and community events that reflects the diversity and vibrancy of the Manawatū, with a focus on fun, social and participation-based events
		Ensure the LGBTQ+ community feel supported and included within their community, places they learn, study, work and play
	Youth are able to access spaces and places for education, work and leisure	Identify transport solutions that more effectively meet the needs of youth in the main urban areas and outlying rural areas
		Increase participation by groups under-represented in community programmes, services and facility usage (eg. Māori and Pacifica youth, those with disabilities and the rainbow community)
	Opportunities exist for youth to be involved in decision-making and to develop responses to matters of importance to them	Ensure an effective representation and communication platform between youth and Council continues to exist and effectively contributes on relevant topics and issues
		Work closely with schools to create an effective communication platform between educational leaders, youth and Council
Youth are given the tools and guidance to sustain their wellbeing including their physical and mental health	Youth have the resources to identify and access youth-specific health services	Increase the availability of youth-specific health services (either introducing new services or extending existing ones)
		Investigate having a youth-specific space for the delivery of health and wider youth services
		Create Manawatū-relevant resources that help youth access the health services they need
	Youth have access to a range of places and spaces that meet their physical and social needs	Look to centralise sporting and recreational activities as a way to make it easier for youth to engage and participate
		Ensure any new Council facilities and updates to existing ones are youth-friendly (e.g. Wi-Fi is available, provide space to hang-out when waiting for transport)
	Empowering youth to make informed choices	Youth have relevant information about careers, training opportunities and further education when they need it
All youth leaving school will have a career plan to identify further education, training or employment		
Make opportunities available for youth to engage with local businesses and help to grow their own business ideas		
A range of volunteering or fundraising opportunities are available which enable youth to 'give back to the community' and develop skills		Develop opportunities for youth to volunteer in the community to develop their skills and to provide assistance to local individuals, groups and initiatives.



Council's role	Examples of groups to be involved
Deliver directly & work with others to deliver	MYC, MDC, Iwi, Sport Manawatū, Feilding and District Promotion, Community Groups, Schools
Advocate & support	Community Groups, MDC, Schools, MYC
Lead & advocate	MDC, NZTA, Horizons, MYC, Community Groups
Lead & advocate	Iwi, Community Groups, MDC, Schools, MYC
Support MYC to lead	MYC, MDC, Community Groups
Lead	MDC, Schools, MYC
Advocate	Health agencies, MDC, Iwi, MYC, Community Groups
Lead	MDC, Health agencies, MYC
Advocate	Health agencies, MDC, MYC, Community Groups
Influence through policies & plans	MDC, Community Groups, MYC
Influence through policies & plans	MDC, Community Groups, MYC
Advocate	Schools, Talent Central, Businesses, MDC
Advocate	Schools, Talent Central, Businesses, MDC
Lead & advocate	Schools, Talent Central, Feilding and District Promotions, Businesses, MDC
Lead & advocate	Community Groups, Iwi, MDC, MYCBusinesses, MDC

Acronyms:
MDC
MYC
LGBTQ+
NZTA

Manawatū District Council
Manawatū Youth Council
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, transgender. The plus represents - questioning, intersex, and asexual people.
New Zealand Transport Authority

