

Briefing to the Incoming Minister

# Youth

January 2025

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# Welcome

Welcome to the Youth Portfolio.

You are supported in this portfolio by the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi which sits within the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) – Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora. MYD is a modest-sized business unit that is dedicated to supporting you and administering the Government’s investment in strength-based youth development. We focus on supporting young people in New Zealand (aged 12-24 years) through early intervention and prevention to develop their skills, increase their confidence and resilience, connect with their communities, and thrive. Our work is underpinned by our far-reaching networks in the youth sector with youth development providers, with the philanthropic and business sectors and Iwi, and collaboration across government.

MSD provides all corporate services for MYD. Other parts of MSD provide support for the portfolio with the agreement of the Minister for Social Development and Employment. This includes the MSD Child and Youth Policy and Performance and Reporting teams for particular pieces of work.

This briefing provides an overview of responsibilities within the Youth portfolio, explains how MYD and MSD support you, and outlines current areas of focus. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss how we can align the current work programme to your areas of interest and priority within the portfolio. We will follow up with more detailed briefings on significant aspects of the portfolio, and any matters you would like further information about. We will discuss with your Office the best way to do this at the earliest opportunity.

## Key contacts in the Youth portfolio

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Marama Edwards	Deputy Chief Executive, Māori, Communities and Partnerships, MSD	s9(2)(a)
John Robertson	General Manager, Youth, MYD	s9(2)(a)
Harry Fenton	General Manager, International, Disability and Generational Policy, MSD	s9(2)(a)
Paul Merwood	General Manager, Performance and Reporting, MSD	s9(2)(a)

## Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi

17 permanent staff, including four Regional Relationship Managers



**850,000**

young people aged 12–24 years were resident in New Zealand in 2022 (Statistics New Zealand's projection based on 2018 Census)\*.

### Vote Social Development – Partnering for Youth Development



In 2024/25, MYD is investing

**\$17.509 million**

into the youth sector.



**139** provider organisations delivered over **64,803** youth development and youth enterprise opportunities for young people in 2023/24.



**86%**

of participants reported they saw an improvement in their outcomes through participation in an MYD funded service in 2023/24.



**87%**

of participants reported they had improved their preparedness for the future work environment through participation in MYD funded **youth enterprise services** in 2023/24.



At the end of Term 3 2024, Ākonga Fund providers reported **75%** of ākonga (learners) achieved an education outcome.



**14**

young people in MYD's Youth Advisory Group providing input into our work programme.



Up to **143** young people will participate in Youth Parliament 2025 as Youth MPs and a Youth Press Gallery.

\*Population estimates based on the 2023 Census will soon be available.

## Context

There are approximately 850,000 young people aged 12–24 years resident in New Zealand, making up 17 percent of the total population<sup>1</sup>.

- 35% of young people in New Zealand are in the Auckland region, 12% in the Canterbury region, 11% in the Wellington region, 10% in the Waikato region, and 6% in the Bay of Plenty region. 77% reside in the North Island and 23% in the South Island. 11.7% live in the remote regions<sup>2,3</sup>.
- 25% are rangatahi Māori, 13% are Pacific young people, 19% are young people from ethnic communities<sup>4</sup>.
- 49% are young women.
- 14% of 18–24-year-olds identify as rainbow young people.
- 8.9% are disabled young people.

Young people are increasingly diverse, passionate, active, and capable of leading change, including social, health, education, disability, and environmental actions. They contribute as learners, educators, advocates, workers, employers, entrepreneurs, consumers, taxpayers, and volunteers.

### Key issues for young people

Adolescence is a time of physical and psychological maturation, changing social roles, and moving away from childhood towards greater independence and responsibility. It may bring increased exposure to risky behaviours involving sex, alcohol, drugs, and motor vehicles, as well as worries about body image, relationships, peer pressures, and educational achievements. From puberty, the incidence of mental health conditions increases, including depression, anxiety, psychosis, and suicidal ideation.

In recent years, the impacts of COVID-19 Lockdowns and severe weather events have also been especially tough on young people, as they lost valuable time at school and missed milestone social events.

Supporting young people is a shared responsibility and opportunity across government and there is a lot of work underway at various stages of their life

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<sup>1</sup> Based on data from the 2018 Census. Population estimates based on the 2023 Census will soon be available and we will provide you with updated statistics.

<sup>2</sup> Based on data customisation work commissioned by MYD to Statistics New Zealand in August 2022.

<sup>3</sup> As classified by Statistics New Zealand: If a region has both a Major Urban Area and at least 50% of population with at least 'high urban accessibility' then it is not Remote. If a region has at least 20% of population with 'medium' or worse accessibility then it is Remote.

<sup>4</sup> Young people from ethnic communities (in particular, former refugees and recent migrants) are estimated from over 160,000 that were born overseas (19% of the total youth population), including 50,000 young people that have been in New Zealand for less than five years (6% of the total youth population).

cycles and to help address what our young people are indicating as opportunities and challenges.

**Appendix One** contains a summary of key information and research collated over recent years that is used across government to inform the focus on policies and investment in outcomes for young people. It highlights key issues that our young people are seeking support for, such as social media and online safety, mental wellbeing, and whānau wellbeing.

## The Youth Portfolio

Supporting young people to be vibrant and healthy is a valuable investment for New Zealand, particularly when they are equipped with the skills they need to overcome challenges, progress to adulthood, and thrive.

Youth development is focused on providing targeted early interventions and community-led support which can help prevent young people from progressing towards remedial, highly intensive services targeting higher risk factors. The Youth portfolio's investment in youth development and youth enterprise programmes and services provides an opportunity to make a long-term difference for New Zealand's young people (including those who experience additional risk factors). While it is critical to support the most vulnerable young people with high and complex needs, it is also essential that investment supports early intervention and prevention approaches for young people to address moderate needs before they escalate.

The Youth portfolio has a preventative and empowering focus, which includes funding a range of community-based youth sector providers to deliver tailored programmes for young people with low to moderate needs<sup>5</sup>. The youth sector providers that MYD funds specialise in youth development approaches which improve young people's outcomes, and their preparedness as active and valued members of the future work environment.

A strong youth development approach works across a range of domains (education, employment, mental health, community connection, etc.). There is strong evidence investment in strength-based early intervention builds skills and capability in young people, through opportunities such as leadership, mentoring, and volunteering. Funded initiatives also contribute to developing young people's emotional intelligence and mental health (e.g., self-regulation, motivation,

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<sup>5</sup> Young people who have been identified as having low to moderate needs have one or more of the following: history of school absenteeism, or experience of alternative education; low household and community financial resources; family or individual dependence on Work and Income; mental health needs such as controlled anxiety or depression; low sense of identity/belonging; lack of social connectedness with peers, whānau, community; young people who identify with more than one of MYD's priority cohorts.

empathy) and soft skills (e.g., communication, problem-solving, interpersonal skills) which are crucial for them to be able to thrive and become achieving and participating adults.

The Youth portfolio also holds a key role to advocate for and champion young people and their voices across government and in the youth and non-governmental sectors. Young people have consistently told government they want their voices heard, listened to, and valued, and to contribute to decisions that affect them now and in the future. Increasing young people's participation in government decision-making is likely to lead to policies, programmes, and initiatives that are more representative, better meet the needs of our communities, and are more widely supported.

### **The Minister for Youth**

As the Minister for Youth, you hold a leadership role to advocate for and champion New Zealand's young people aged 12-24 years. Examples of leadership in this area include driving the use of a youth development approach, and sharing insights around what young people and the youth sector are saying in engagements with your colleagues, and when consulted on policy decisions.

You are accountable for the Partnering for Youth Development Multi-Category Appropriation (MCA) which sits within Vote Social Development.

- The overarching purpose of the MCA is to *improve outcomes for young people across Aotearoa New Zealand through youth development.*
- This is an appropriation that has been in place for over 30 years to support youth sector providers to deliver a variety of youth development programmes and services for young people (aged 12-24 years) across New Zealand. Approximately 50,000 – 70,000 youth development opportunities are delivered each year, across a range of different programmes and services.

In the **2024/25 financial year**, the MCA totals **\$22.929 million**. This comprises two MCA categories: Non-Departmental Output Expenses (NDOE) – Delivering Youth Development (allocated to youth sector providers to deliver youth development opportunities), and Departmental Output Expenses (DOE) – Administering Youth Development.

The below table displays the current breakdown and funding stream allocation under the MCA categories:

<b>MCA Category</b>	<b>\$ (million)</b>
<b>Non-Departmental Output Expenses (NDOE) – Delivering Youth Development, which includes:</b>	<b>\$17.509</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Youth Development Opportunities</b> for the delivery of a wide range of youth development programmes for young people (aged 12-24 years)</li> </ul>	\$9.664
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Expanding Youth Enterprise and Education</b> for youth enterprise programmes that support young people (aged 16-24 years) to develop enterprise skills (including work-ready skills)</li> </ul>	\$1.500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Partnership Fund</b> for partnerships with business and philanthropic organisations, iwi, government, and other funders to support an increase in quality youth development opportunities</li> </ul>	\$1.000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ākonga Youth Development Community Fund (Ākonga Fund)</b> – time limited to 30 June 2025. The Ākonga Fund supports 2,750 at-risk learners each year to re-engage in education, training, and employment, and strengthen connections to positive role models. This funding stream also includes the Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing and Upskilling Young Volunteers funds.</li> </ul>	\$5.345
<b>Departmental Output Expenses (DOE) – Administering Youth Development, which includes:</b>	<b>\$5.420</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MYD’s annual baseline funding</b></li> </ul>	\$2.665
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Delivering the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey</b> \$1.0 million annually and \$1.0 million transferred from 2023/24 to 2024/25</li> </ul>	\$2.000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Administration of the Ākonga Fund</b> (time-limited funding to 30 June 2025)</li> </ul>	\$0.755

## **The Ministry of Youth Development – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi**

MYD’s role and purpose is to encourage and support young people to develop and use knowledge, skills, and experiences to participate confidently in their communities.

MYD administers the Partnering for Youth Development MCA. This includes responsibility for achieving key performance measures associated with the appropriation. The current performance measures for the appropriation are provided in **Appendix Two**.



MYD is led by the General Manager, Youth, who is supported by a team of 17 permanent Full-Time Equivalent staff including four Regional Relationship Managers. The General Manager, Youth reports to the Deputy Chief Executive (DCE), Māori, Communities and Partnerships, MSD.

MYD staff provide Ministerial servicing for your Office, coordinate, monitor, and report on implementation of key deliverables, manage relationships and contracting with MYD-funded providers, develop operational policy, and lead and contribute to activities across government and in the youth sector.

MYD also supports and advises you on the views of young people in New Zealand to ensure you are informed about the key issues and trends and provides you with advice on opportunities for leadership. We support you to work with your Ministerial colleagues to advance youth issues across government and provide youth engagement expertise, experience, and systems across government, to ensure young people are confident and comfortable sharing their voice and expressing their concerns.

## **The Ministry of Social Development – Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora**

### ***Youth Policy***

With the agreement of the Minister for Social Development and Employment, the MSD Child and Youth Policy team within the Policy Branch of MSD provides you with advice and support on matters within the scope of MSD's responsibilities. MSD plays a role in supporting children and young people to have access to basic needs while contributing to their healthy and stable futures. This team is led by the General Manager, International, Disability and Generational Policy, MSD, who reports to the DCE, Policy, MSD and provides policy advice to support the Social Development and Employment portfolio. The Child and Youth Policy team has a focus on improving employment and educational outcomes for young people who are close to the benefit system and who may not be in education, employment, or training.

The Child and Youth Policy team works with MYD and other partners such as the Child Wellbeing and Poverty Reduction Group in MSD, on cross-agency strategic and policy initiatives related to young people, e.g., the Child and Youth Strategy. Working together, MYD and the Child and Youth Policy team provide comment on Cabinet papers and legislation that have implications for young people and provide you with advice on these as required.

Work that the Child and Youth Policy team currently has underway specifically in relation to your portfolio includes providing policy support for the Youth Plan, Voice, Leadership, Action and the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey (both pieces of work are explained further below).

## **Performance and Reporting**

The MSD Performance and Reporting Team has responsibility for the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey planning and implementation and provides you with regular updates on progress (further information provided below).

## **Corporate Services**

MSD also provides all corporate services for the MYD, and this can include advice to you on performance reporting and the structure of the Appropriation.

# **Government priorities**

## **Government Targets**

The Youth portfolio's investment in support for at-risk young people through high value, outcome-driven, early intervention and prevention youth development services plays a complementary role to the work underway to achieve the Government Targets, namely:

- Target 3: Fifteen percent reduction on the total number of children and young people with serious and persistent offending behaviour.
- Target 5: Fifty thousand fewer people on the Jobseeker Support benefit.
- Target 6: Eighty percent of students to be present for more than ninety percent of the term.

## **The Child and Youth Strategy 2024-27**

The *Child and Youth Strategy 2024-27* (the Strategy) was released in November 2024 by Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Child Poverty Reduction. It sets out the Government's vision and desired outcomes for children and young people in New Zealand up to the age of 18 years old and young people aged 18-24 years who have been in State care. It refreshes the previous Strategy (published in 2019) to reflect the current Government's priorities, and as such has a particular focus on targeting government activities and investment in the following priority areas:

- supporting children, families and whānau in the first 2,000 days (from conception to age 5)
- reducing child material hardship, and
- preventing harm against children.

While the Strategy has been refreshed, it retains the overarching vision that *New Zealand is the best place in the world for children and young people*, alongside the Strategy's original six outcomes<sup>6</sup>.

The Minister for Child Poverty Reduction is the Minister responsible for the Strategy, however multiple Ministers and agencies play important collective roles in driving its implementation. The Youth portfolio has a particular focus on supporting the achievement of Outcome 6, *Children and Young People are Involved and Empowered*. This outcome highlights the Government's ongoing commitment to young people having a say and being involved in decisions that impact them.

MYD's investment in early intervention and prevention programmes is also aligned with the "early investment driving positive impacts across a range of later life outcomes" approach outlined in the Strategy.

Hon Louise Upston convenes a Child and Youth Ministers Group that meets regularly to discuss progress against the Strategy's priorities. You may be invited to attend these meetings, and officials will provide you with advice to support your attendance at these meetings.

## Current portfolio priorities

This section outlines current priorities in the Youth portfolio and the work underway to implement them. We would welcome an opportunity to discuss these priorities with you to ensure they align with your expectations.

### Investing in high-value, outcome driven youth development and youth enterprise programmes

In 2024/25, MYD is investing \$17.509 million into the youth sector, funding the delivery of a range of youth development and youth enterprise initiatives across New Zealand. A significant portion of this appropriation was allocated through multi-year agreements in 2023 which end 30 June 2025.

A map displaying the location of currently funded providers across New Zealand is attached as **Appendix Four**.

### Funding strategy from 2025/26

A strategy for funding to be allocated to providers from 01 July 2025 was agreed with the previous Minister for Youth and is currently being implemented via a

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<sup>6</sup> Outcome 1: Children and young people are loved, safe and nurtured; Outcome 2: Children and young people have what they need; Outcome 3: Children and young people are happy and healthy; Outcome 4: Children and young people are learning and developing; Outcome 5: Children and young people are accepted, respected and connected; Outcome 6: Children and young people are involved and empowered.

number of procurement processes for different funding streams. It was agreed that MYD would focus its investments on high value, outcome-driven, early intervention and prevention programmes that prevent young people progressing towards remedial and highly intensive services, and that, within the context of youth development principles, will complement work underway in the Mental Health ministerial portfolio to support young people's resilience.

An outline of the funding plan for 2025/26 is provided in **Appendix Five**. It is estimated that over 58,000 youth development and youth enterprise opportunities will be funded per annum through this plan.

The majority of funding in the MCA is expected to be allocated once current procurement processes are complete. However, MYD will provide you with a more fulsome briefing on the appropriation and identify opportunities for the MCA to best support your priorities for young people.

### ***Active procurement processes***

Current planning is for applicants to MYD's *Youth Enterprise Funds*, *Youth Development Contributory Fund*, and *Place-Based Youth Development Fund* to be notified of funding decisions between the end of February and mid-May 2025, and then contract negotiations with successful providers will commence. MYD will brief you on opportunities for you to announce successful providers, potentially in stages once contracts with providers have been signed. We anticipate the first opportunity will be towards the end of April 2025.

There is a possibility that you or your Office may be contacted by unsuccessful providers. Should this occur, we recommend that you refer any queries to MYD for a response as an operational matter. MYD can provide your Office with more information on this procurement process if required.

In the coming weeks, MYD is also expecting to open procurement processes for the s9(2)(j)

. We will keep your Office updated on the key dates for these as planning progresses.

s9(2)(f)(iv)



### ***Review of MYD's performance measures***

MYD is reviewing its performance measures and outcome agreements with new providers for 2025/26 to ensure the outcomes sought align with the Government's priorities. MYD regularly engages with current providers, supporting them with timely actions and activities that will help achieve performance standards and shared outcomes. MYD reports quarterly to the Minister for Youth on progress against appropriation performance measures, together with insights and feedback from providers, participants, and the youth sector.

### ***Building a cycle of evidence***

MYD has a programme of work to build youth development evidence, including research and evaluation on what works for cohorts of young people to inform its investment approach. For example, an external evaluation of MYD's Ākonga Fund in 2023 resulted in refinements to the last Ākonga Fund procurement approach and the outcome agreements in place with current providers. An internal evaluation of a Full-Time Equivalent Youth Worker/Practitioner funding model pilot with a small number of providers funded to deliver 1:1 coaching and mentoring programmes until 30 June 2025 has been completed and is due to be published in February 2025. The evaluation examined the design and implementation of the pilot, as well as outcomes for young people.

### ***Supporting young people impacted by the March 15 terrorist attack***

Following engagement with agencies, providers, and young people in Christchurch impacted by the March 15 terrorist attack, MYD is currently working alongside a group of affected young people to fund bespoke youth development programmes which will be focused on building young people's confidence and resilience, reintegrating them into their communities, and strengthening their social connections.

### ***Ensuring the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey is fit for purpose and delivered in a timely manner***

The Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey (YHWS) is New Zealand's largest, nationally representative survey aimed at understanding youth health and wellbeing. Occurring approximately every three years, the YHWS enables the tracking of youth health and wellbeing trends over time.

MSD is responsible for the delivery of the YHWS, and \$1.0 million annual funding sits in the Youth appropriation which you are responsible for. This budget is largely absorbed by the costs of an external supplier.

Data and insights from the YHWS informs policies and investment across government to help drive improved youth wellbeing. The YHWS 2021 surveyed 7,209 secondary school students (years 9 to 13) and 502 young people from the community (e.g., at alternative education). Findings informed 18 of 34 indicators in the 2022, 2023, and 2024 annual Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy reporting, which highlighted that young people felt positive when connected to their cultures, aspired to achieve in education, and their greatest concerns related to discrimination, material wellbeing, and mental health.

### ***YHWS 2025***

The YHWS 2025 is currently in the field, with findings expected by the end of the year.

In efforts to reduce costs and burden from delivering duplicate surveys, the YHWS 2025 represents the merging of the academic sector's Youth2000 survey series, with the YHWS 2021. It also doubles as the Ministry of Justice's Child Victimization Survey and the Ministry of Health's Child Health Survey.

Following consultation throughout 2023 and 2024 with the previous Minister for Youth and young people (including the MYD Youth Advisory Group), the YHWS 2025 has refreshed content to provide insights on important issues like:

- screen time and social media use
- access and barriers to accessing mental health care
- baseline mental health rates
- future aspirations and global citizenship.

The YHWS 2025 will continue to inform reporting on the Child and Youth Strategy. It will also:

- enable us to examine wellbeing trends over the last 25 years
- enable more frequent and consistent youth reporting across government agencies
- establish regular reporting on baseline mental health rates to complement the Ministry of Health's new Child Mental Health Prevalence Survey.

MSD officials will provide you with regular updates on implementation of the YHWS and would welcome the opportunity to provide a more fulsome briefing to you in due course.

## Other key deliverables

### Youth Parliament

Work is underway for the 11th New Zealand Youth Parliament to be held 2025. This unique youth development programme provides an opportunity to hear from young people from around New Zealand on what is important to them, and for Youth members of Parliament (Youth MPs) and Youth Press Gallery members to actively work on topics and issues they are passionate about during their four-month tenure.

As the Minister responsible for Youth Parliament, you provide direction to MYD officials to deliver the programme. MYD is the lead organisation for the entirety of the programme delivery, including a two-day event at Parliament, the pastoral care of participants, and the evaluation of Youth Parliament.

MYD will be supported by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives (OOC) – Te Tari o te Manahautū o te Whare Māngai and other partners across government to deliver Youth Parliament 2025 as required, as well as the Press Gallery who will support the appointment of up to 20 Youth Press Gallery members.

### **Multi-Party Reference Group (MPRG)**

A Multi-Party Reference Group (MPRG) for Youth Parliament 2025 has been established. The MPRG comprises the Minister for Youth as Chair, and a nominee from each Parliamentary party, and the Parliamentary Press Gallery Chair/their nominee.

Members of the Youth Parliament 2025 MPRG are:

- Hon Willow-Jean Prime, Labour Party MPRG representative
- Cameron Luxton, ACT Party MPRG representative
- Jenny Marcroft, NZ First MPRG representative
- Francisco Hernandez, Green Party MPRG representative
- Hana-Rāwhiti Maipi-Clarke, Te Pāti Māori MPRG representative
- Jason Walls, Chair of the Parliamentary Press Gallery.

The role of MPRG members includes:

- providing guidance and input into options for the organisational processes leading up to the two-day event, namely:
  - MPs' involvement and participation in the selection process, tenure period, and two-day event
  - design of the Youth Parliament community engagement period



- programme for the Youth Parliament two-day event.
- informing and updating their respective caucuses (MPs)/the Parliamentary Press Gallery (Parliamentary Press Gallery representative) on Youth Parliament 2025, as required.

### **Key dates in the Youth Parliament 2025 programme**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b>
Monday 18 November 2024	The previous Minister for Youth announced key dates for Youth Parliament 2025
From 16 December 2024	MP promotion and planning period
Monday 03 February to Friday 28 February 2025	Youth MP and Youth Press Gallery application period
Monday 03 March to Monday 31 March 2025	Youth MP and Youth Press Gallery selection period
By Tuesday 01 April 2025	Deadline for MPs to advise MYD of their preferred candidate
Wednesday 23 April 2025	All Youth MPs and Youth Press Gallery members announced by the Minister for Youth
Monday 28 April 2025	Youth Parliament programme begins, and training commences for Youth MPs and Youth Press Gallery members
Tuesday 01 and Wednesday 2 July 2025	Youth Parliament event at Parliament
Friday 29 August 2025	Youth Parliament programme ends

### **Next Steps**

MYD officials will work with your Office to provide you with a more detailed briefing on Youth Parliament at the earliest opportunity. This will outline the items requiring your direction, including finalising the programme, and an agenda and scheduling for the next MPRG meeting.

### **Youth Plan**

The first *Youth Plan 2020-2022: Turning Voice into Action – Rebuilding and Recovering* was released in July 2020. It set out actions government would take to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 for young people. A review found that it had successfully coordinated increased cross-agency collaboration and raised the profile of issues concerning young people across government.

The current *Youth Plan: Voice Leadership, Action* was released in August 2023, and its scope and direction was informed by engagement with over 1,400 young people and is strongly supported by the youth sector. The Youth Plan aims to ensure:

- the voices and perspectives of young people are listened to, valued, and embedded in decision-making at all levels
- the mana of young people is uplifted. Young people are enabled to lead their own lives, have their identities seen, valued, and respected, and have increasing influence in their communities and over government policy and decision-making.

The Youth Plan is made up of three interconnected documents: a Strategic Framework, a Rolling Suite of Actions, and a high-level Measurement Framework. The dynamic nature of the Rolling Suite of Actions enables actions to be added at any time<sup>8</sup>, ensuring they are responsive to new or emerging needs of young people and to the Government's priorities.

The Youth Plan provides a unique focus by specifically promoting young people's voice and leadership to inform, shape, and influence government policies focused on areas and issues of importance to young people. The strategic framework within the Youth Plan provides a core mechanism for you to champion the voices of young people across government and discussions with your Ministerial colleagues.

The previous Minister for Youth endorsed the Youth Plan in early 2024 and the foreword to the Youth Plan was updated.

### ***Implementation and next steps***

Work to support the Youth Plan, including implementation of the initial suite of six actions, monitoring of progress, and development of new actions, is led by MYD officials with policy support from the MSD Child and Youth Policy team.

This work is resourced through MYD/MSD baseline appropriations. Resourcing for implementing individual Youth Plan actions is expected to be met by the government agency, or agencies, assigned to 'lead' the action.

Officials will shortly provide you with a more detailed briefing, including advice and opportunities for the future positioning of the Youth Plan, given the current actions are due to be completed in 2025.

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<sup>8</sup> The current six Youth Plan actions are: Strengthen youth leadership and advisory groups; Continuation of The Hive; Realisation of a youth-centric YHWS; Embed Mana Taiohi across government; Provide development opportunities for youth mentors; Refresh and administer the Ākonga Fund.

## Strengthening youth voice and youth engagement

Current initiatives MYD has underway to support bringing youth voice to the table, in addition to implementing the refreshed Youth Plan, include:

- **MYD Youth Advisory Group (YAG):** MYD established a YAG in September 2022, as a departmental advisory group to provide advice on specific projects to help to embed youth voice in government decision-making, which included the review and refresh of the Youth Plan. The current iteration of the MYD YAG consists of a group of 14 young people from around the country. This group includes five members who have been in the YAG since 2022 that have played a mentoring role with new members recruited in 2024. Currently, the YAG has a particular focus on supporting the preparation for Youth Parliament and the implementation of some of the Youth Plan actions, including an action titled: '*Strengthening Youth Voice and Leadership Groups*'.
- **The Hive:** The Hive is delivered through an MYD provider contract with a creative agency, Curative NZ. It aims to increase young people's participation in the policy development process by building a relationship, trust, and two-way communication between young people and government agencies through the use of social media, and an innovative technological platform. It has so far facilitated three seasons (cohorts) of young people as 'Hivers' and a 'Hive All-Stars' season, where former Hivers were brought back to engage with decision-makers from across 30 government agencies to understand the barriers and opportunities to amplify youth voice in decision-making. It is now in its fourth season, consisting of 16 Hivers. The Hive has worked with different agencies, engaging with large numbers of young people on different pieces of policy, including adoption law reform, an emissions reduction plan, content regulation reform, and housing.

## Suggested early areas of focus

As noted above, we look forward to discussing how we can support you to achieve your priorities. We suggest the following matters would benefit from your early attention, in order of priority and ideally over the coming weeks.

- **Youth Parliament 2025:** A meeting of the Multi-Party Reference Group (MPRG) is due to be scheduled in mid-to-late February 2025. MYD would welcome the opportunity to brief you on progress to date and matters that require your input prior to the next MPRG meeting and all MPs opening applications for their Youth MPs on Monday 03 February 2025. This is also an opportunity for you to commence some promotional communications as Minister responsible for Youth Parliament.

s9(2)(f)(iv)

- **Procurement processes for youth development and youth enterprise programmes:** As described above, MYD is currently undertaking procurement processes to allocate funding from 01 July 2025. Applicants to procurement processes currently underway (Youth Enterprise Funds, Youth Development Contributory Fund, and Place-Based Youth Development Fund) will be notified of funding decisions between the end-February and mid-May 2025, and then contract negotiations with successful providers will commence. Once contract negotiations are complete, we will provide you with options for announcing those decisions and anticipate these opportunities will be towards the end of April 2025.

You or your Office may receive queries about these procurement processes, and we recommend that you refer them to MYD for a response as these are operational matters.

Following consultation with the MSD Procurement Board, MYD is also expecting to open procurement processes over the coming weeks for the

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s9(2)(j) We will keep your Office updated on the key dates for these as planning progresses.

### ***Meeting with key stakeholders***

- Youth portfolio stakeholders, including MYD-funded providers, will want to meet with you to brief you on their work and the key issues facing young people and the youth sector. MYD can provide advice to your Office regarding options for you to meet with stakeholders, prioritising invitations, and can support you with written briefings ahead of any meetings.
- As the Minister for Youth, you will have regular engagement opportunities to hear from a diverse range of young people. MYD will support you with this through a range of options including meetings with the MYD YAG, visits to MYD-funded providers and/or attendance at events, and leadership and involvement in Youth Parliament.

Attached as **Appendix Six** is a calendar of key events in 2025 for the youth sector and your portfolio. You are likely to receive an invitation to many of these, often including delivering a keynote speech or presenting awards. MYD will provide advice regarding prioritising invitations and briefings ahead of any events.

## Appendix 1: Youth Overview

This appendix provides an overview of findings about the youth population in New Zealand (centred in youth voice), with a particular focus on some of the current challenges and opportunities that are being faced.

### **“You need to get in early, as soon as you see people struggling”: Understanding the life-course journey – Mana Mokopuna (November 2024)**

This report, based on engagement undertaken by Mana Mokopuna – Children and Young People’s Commission, captures the voices of 101 children and young people aged between 8 to 23 years who shared what’s important to them, what gets in the way, and what helps at different stages of their life journey. Their insights and perspectives were sought primarily to inform the review of the Child and Youth Strategy. Examples of key themes include:

- **Having the basics:** Those engaged with said one of the most important things for children and young people as they grow up is having all their essential needs (e.g., warm clothes, food, healthcare, hygiene products, school uniforms and shoes) met. For 11-14-year-olds, the report describes an increasing emphasis on the less tangible essentials for wellbeing, such as emotional and physical health and hygiene. Concerns impacting young people aged 15 to 18 years included not being able to find work, and prohibitively high costs of school, sports, and other activities.
- **Support to learn and grow:** As children age, their school life becomes more central to wellbeing. In particular, "opportunities for freedom" was a theme when considering priorities for 15-18-year-olds transitioning to adulthood. For this age group, having opportunities to plan and be ready for adulthood, was seen as critical, as were adults in their lives who were supportive and non-judgmental.
- **Healthy friendships and relationships:** As young people get older the quality of their friendships becomes more important for their mental health and social/emotional wellbeing. Young people talked about having good friends they can trust, friends they can talk to and who are supportive, as well as healthy romantic relationships.
- **Sports and recreation in the community:** Young people across all life stages talked about the importance of playing sport, participating in activities, and generally having fun. The young people engaged with talked about older age-groups (11-18 years) needing affordable, safe, and welcoming spaces, as well as the need for more cultural activities.

## The Aotearoa Youth Declaration (April 2024)

The Aotearoa Youth Declaration event, organised by UN Youth, brings participants aged 13-18 years from all over the country together to write a policy document called the Aotearoa Youth Declaration. Young people participating in the event work in one of 12 targeted committee groups to create policy solutions on a broad range of problems. In April 2024, the previous Minister for Youth attended the Closing Ceremony of the event and accepted the Declaration which was formed by 170 young people. The Declaration contains a wide range of recommendations and solutions, a few of which have been summarised at a high-level below:

- **Economic Development:** Recommends facilitation of population growth and immigration policies; prioritises reducing the cost of living; encourages reform of Tax Policies.
- **Education:** Advocates for the reformation of curriculum to produce well-educated members of modern society; calls for schools to implement accessible, safe and supportive learning environments.
- **Media and Communications:** Urges action to improve transparency and safety on the internet/social media; encourages intervention from Government and private companies to tackle mis/disinformation.
- **Youth Development:** Calls for the promotion of advocacy and accessibility of equitable mental health services for youth and endorses the quality of these services for youth, their families, and wider support communities.

The Declaration also consists of a Regional Engagement section which summarises local issues raised in the engagements around the country. Information in this section will also likely be applicable to your role as Minister for the South Island. Officials can provide your Office with a copy of these findings.

## Findings from the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey 2021

The Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey 2021 identified areas of strength, resilience, and challenges for young people in New Zealand:

- **Most young people feel loved and connected.** Many young people had strong friendships, felt safe and loved with their whānau and partners, and were connected to their culture. The majority of young people were connected to their communities. Overall, two-thirds of young people were in a group, club, or team. Around half said they help others in their neighbourhood.
- **Many young people have a strong sense of identity.** The Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey asked young people whether they felt accepted for who they are in different parts of their life. Young people felt most accepted by their friends, partners, and those they lived with. Rangatahi Māori, Pacific young people, and Asian young people had stronger connections to their

culture when compared to other ethnic groups. They were most likely to know their whakapapa and rate as important the values of their ethnic groups and maintaining their family traditions and cultural heritage. Pacific young people had high levels of pride in who they were.

- **Most young people have a stable home base.** While most young people lived somewhere warm, dry, and free from mould, others lived in poorer-quality housing. One-third of young people (34%) said they or their family worried about paying for at least one essential item (kai/food, power/electricity, rent or mortgage, or petrol or transport). Worry about these basic items was more of a burden for rangatahi Māori, Pacific young people, and disabled young people.
- **Young people aspire to achieve and contribute.** Nearly two-thirds of young people wanted to achieve a university degree. Smaller percentages of rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people aimed to achieve a university degree. Rangatahi Māori rated most aspects of their school life experiences lower than other young people. Young people were positive about their workplaces, felt they were being treated well, paid fairly, and know their rights. They were less positive that their work provided them opportunities to develop skills and knowledge for their future.
- **Some young people were more likely to have experienced discrimination.** Rangatahi Māori, and young people from Pacific, Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African (MELAA) ethnic groups were more likely to have experienced discrimination because of their ethnicity. Rangatahi Māori were more likely than other ethnic groups to experience discrimination because of their gender or sexual identity, or something else about them. Disabled young people and rainbow young people felt less able to express their identity than other groups of young people. Rainbow young people gave the lowest ratings for feeling they belonged in their communities and were more likely to feel treated unfairly. Those with intersectional identities report unique forms of discrimination, for example, rainbow rangatahi Māori who feel unable to express their identity with their families may be denied cultural connection that can otherwise be a strength for the Māori cohort.
- **Young people in community settings reported wellbeing challenges more often than those in the school sample.** They gave lower mean ratings to life overall, hope, and good wellbeing. Many reported access to healthcare and education was challenging and they reported less stability in their home base with concerns for high living costs. It is important to note that rangatahi Māori, rainbow young people, disabled young people, and young people with experience with Oranga Tamariki were over-represented in the community sample.

- **Young women were less positive than young men about many aspects of their lives.** Young women gave lower ratings for measures of overall wellbeing and hope for their future and were more likely to have thought about or attempted suicide.
- **Mental wellbeing overall for young people appears to be deteriorating.** A proportion of young people are experiencing poor mental health, and this appears to be higher than measured in previous surveys. Concerning indicators in this area were based on the WHO-5 and Kessler 6 metrics<sup>9</sup> of mental health, as well as questions related to suicide and self-harm.
- **Young people at lower decile schools were more likely to worry about their whānau not being able to pay for essentials.** Although the Ministry of Education's Equity Index is being implemented, the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey was taken while the decile system was in place. Analysis of survey results within the decile system showed differentiating outcomes. Young people at lower decile schools gave consistently lower ratings in measures of physical and mental health, experience of work and education, and higher ratings of exposure to harm. A higher percentage of rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people attend lower decile schools. While they had greater strength in their connection to their values and whakapapa and felt accepted by their friends, they had negative outcomes across some Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey results associated with economic wellbeing.

### **'Assessment of Youth and Rangatahi Wellbeing and Access to Services' Infographic (June 2024)**

Te Hiringa Mahara – The Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission collated wellbeing data available across government, including the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey 2021. The following are key findings from this work:

- **Households with young people were less likely to have enough income to meet everyday needs:** 60% of households with 15-24-year-olds present had enough or more than enough income to meet everyday needs, compared with 65% of households with no 15-24-year old present.
- **Young people were much more likely to experience loneliness and discrimination:**

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<sup>9</sup> The World Health Organisation-Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5) is a short self-reported measure of current mental wellbeing. The results from the five individual questions asked in the survey can be reported separately but the WHO-5 is commonly aggregated to produce an overall derived score reported as a percentage. The Kessler 6 is a simple measure of psychological distress. The scale involves questions about emotional states each with a five-level response scale. The measure can be used as a brief screen to identify levels of distress.



- 28% of 15-24-year-olds felt lonely some, most, or all of the time, in the last four weeks (at the time of the survey), compared with 16% of 25-plus-year-olds
- 24% of 15-24-year-olds experienced discrimination in the last year (at the time of the survey), compared with 20% of 25-plus-year-olds.
- **Young people experienced higher rates of psychological distress, and this has increased over time:** One in five 15-24-year-olds experienced psychological distress in 2022/23. This is higher than other age groups, and it has risen over time.

## Appendix 2: Performance measures for the Partnering for Youth Development Multi-Category Appropriation

As Minister for Youth, you are responsible to Parliament for reporting on a series of performance measures for the fiscal year. For 2024/25, the Partnering for Youth Development Multi-Category Appropriation (MCA) performance measures are:

- MCA overarching measure:
  - The percentage of participants who report they have seen an improvement in their outcomes through participation in a Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) funded programme or service will be no less than [standard = 85%].
- MCA category – Administering Youth Development measures:
  - The percentage of total funding for youth development opportunities targeted at young people from the priority cohorts<sup>1</sup> will be no less than [standard = 60%].
  - The percentage of providers reporting that interacting with MYD was a 'good' or 'very good' experience will be no less than [standard = 80%].
  - The percentage of partners involved in funding services through the Partnership Fund reporting that partnering with MYD was a 'good' or 'very good' experience will be no less than [standard = 80%].
- MCA category - Delivering Youth Development measures:
  - The percentage of participants who report they have seen an improvement in their wellbeing through participation in MYD funded youth development programmes or services will be no less than [standard = 85%].
  - The percentage of participants who report they have improved their preparedness for the future work environment through participation in MYD funded youth enterprise programmes or services will be no less than [standard = 85%].

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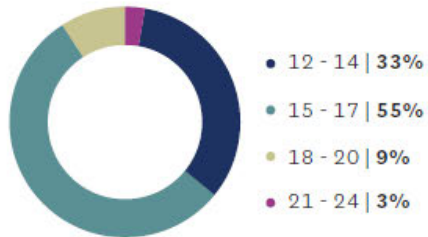
<sup>1</sup> The identified priority cohorts are young Māori, young Pacific peoples, young women, young people from the Rainbow community, young people with disabilities, young people from ethnic communities (in particular those from a refugee and migrant background), and young people living in the regions (the regions are defined as the non-urban, more rural and often isolated regions across New Zealand).

## Appendix 3: Overview of MYD investment in 2023/24

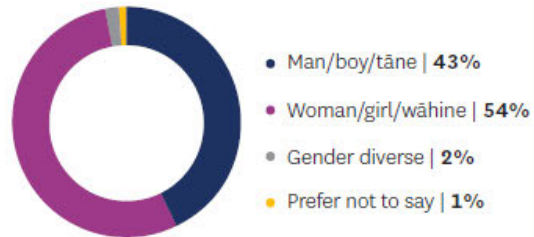
During financial year 2023/24, MYD funded **139** that delivered a total of **64,803** opportunities to young people aged 12-24 years.

Providers reported the following breakdown (proportion) of participants.

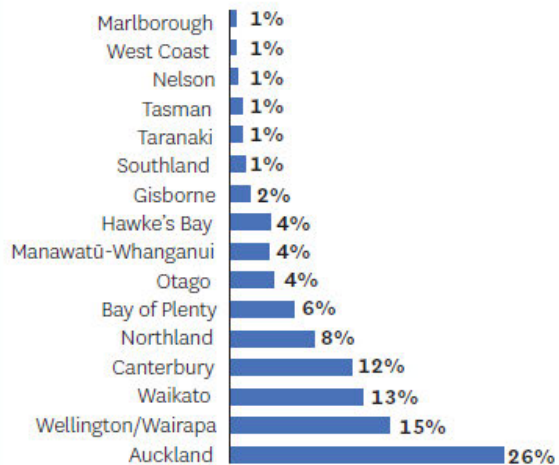
### Age



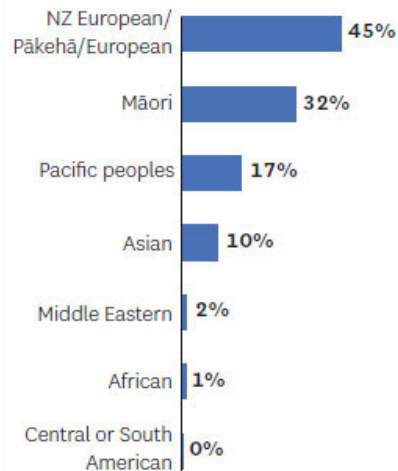
### Gender



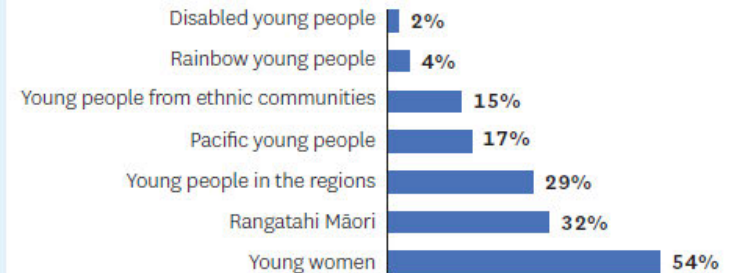
### Region



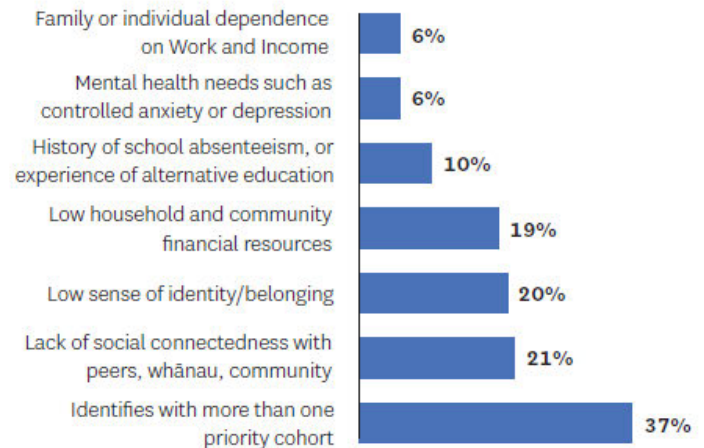
### Ethnicity



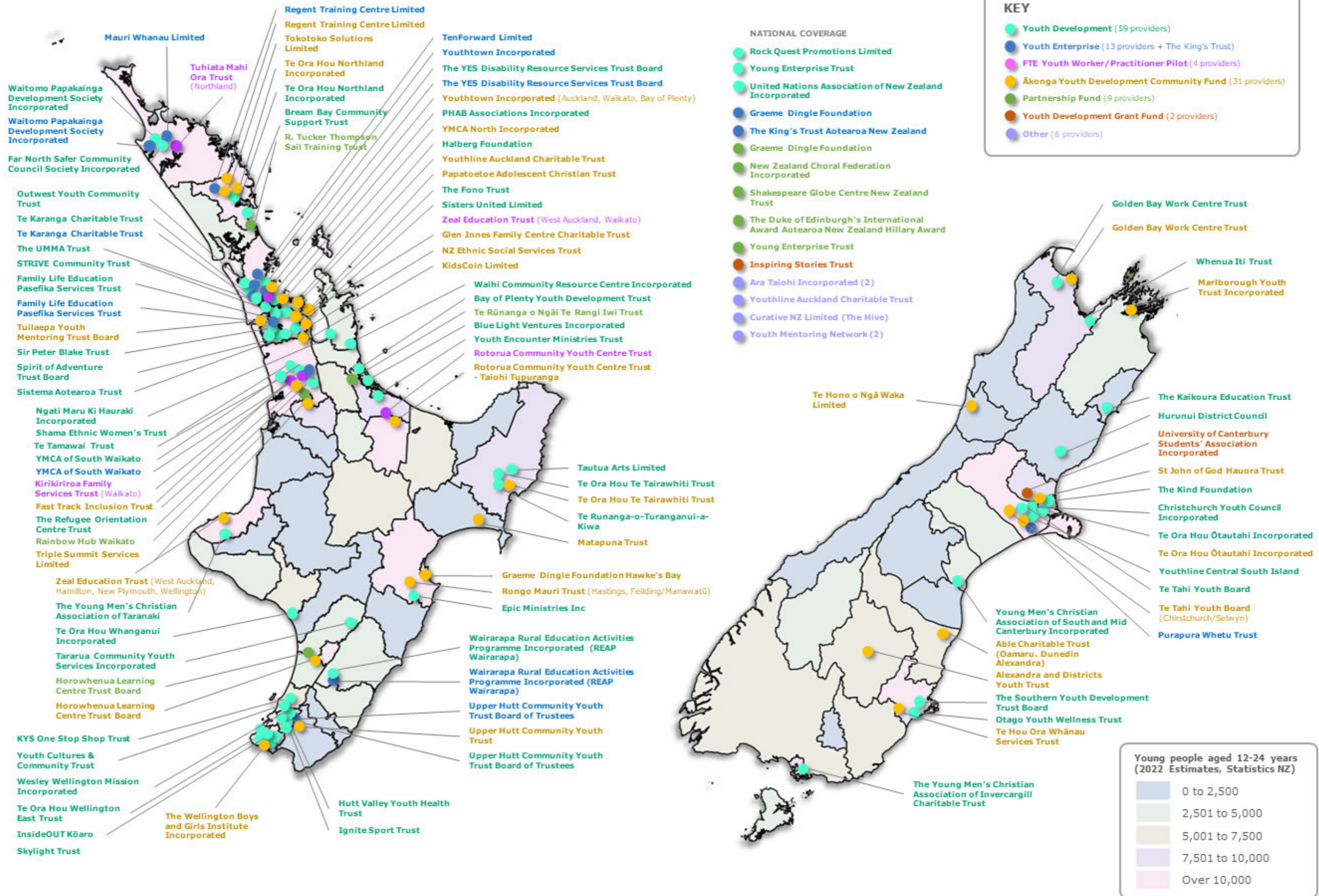
In 2023/24, the proportions of participants by priority cohort were:



MYD-funded programmes and services were focused on supporting young people with low to moderate needs. Young people's needs, as assessed by providers, were:



# Appendix 4: Map of MYD-funded providers as at 24 January 2025



## Appendix 5: 2025/26 Funding Plan

As Minister for Youth, you are responsible for the Partnering for Youth Development Multi-Category Appropriation (MCA) within Vote Social Development.

The overarching purpose of the Partnering for Youth Development MCA is to improve outcomes for young people, aged 12-24 years, through youth development.

MYD's baseline **Non-Departmental Output Expenses (NDOE) – Delivering Youth Development** budget is \$12.062 million.

### **2025/26 Funding Plan**

The funding plan for the NDOE budget in the 2025/26 year is as follows:

#### **Positive Youth Development Promotion Funding Stream - \$9.062 million**

From 2025/2026 Financial Year, the following funds will be available within this funding stream:

- The **Youth Development Contributory Fund - \$1.25 million (per annum)** will provide contributory funding to organisations providing short-term (minimum 15 hours of engagement) youth development programmes.
- The **Place-Based Youth Development Fund - \$5.912 million (per annum)** will provide funding to locally based organisations to deliver community-led youth development programmes (minimum 15 weeks of engagement) that build trusting relationships with young people through consistency of care.

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***Expanding Youth Enterprise and Education Funding Stream - \$1.5 million per annum***

The Expanding Youth Enterprise and Education funding stream prepares young people for future employment, supporting economic participation and work-readiness through youth enterprise opportunities.

From 2025/26 Financial Year, the following funds will be available within this funding stream:

- The **Introduction to Enterprise Fund (\$0.475 million per annum)** will support skill-building (including financial literacy, digital/computing skills, and problem-solving and communication skills) to enhance young people’s access to, and success in, future business or employment opportunities.
- The **Building Entrepreneurial Capital Fund (\$0.725 million per annum)** will provide young people with enterprise experiences and knowledge needed to create a business.
- The **Developing Youth-Led Businesses Fund (\$0.300 million per annum)** will offer seed funding and mentoring for young people who have businesses ready to take to the next level.

## Appendix 6: Key 2025 Youth Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Notes</b>
22 March	Canterbury Polyfest	Christchurch	An opportunity for Canterbury secondary school students to celebrate and showcase their Pasifika traditions, languages and identities.
02-05 April	ASB Polyfest	Auckland	The Auckland Secondary Schools Māori & Pacific Islands Cultural Festival, and this year they will be celebrating 50 years of Polyfest.
TBC April	Aotearoa Youth Declaration	Auckland	UN Youth's Annual civics conference during which young people research and debate issues facing the country. Participants' findings are collated into a declaration, which is often handed over to the Minister for Youth.
19-25 May	Youth Week 2025	Nationwide	<p>Youth Week is a festival of events celebrating young people and the youth sector. It is organised annually by Ara Taiohi with funding support from MYD and Sport NZ.</p> <p>Previous Ministers for Youth have hosted a Youth Week opening event for Youth Week in Parliament's Banquet Hall, visited MYD-funded providers, and/or attended events organised through Ara Taiohi's Grant programme (funded by MYD and Sport NZ) to celebrate the week.</p>
30 June	Youth Parliament Orientation	Parliament	An orientation day with all Youth Parliament participants held the afternoon prior to the Youth Parliament two-day event.
01-02 July	Youth Parliament	Parliament	<p>Youth Parliament two-day event.</p> <p>The Minister for Youth has usually attended the Opening, Social Event, Question Time, and Closing event.</p>
TBC August	Murihiku Polyfest	Southland	Miharo's biggest annual event, and a week-long festival for cultural performing arts.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Notes</b>
07-08 August	INVOLVE Conference	Te Pae Convention Centre, Christchurch	INVOLVE is the national conference for youth development in Aotearoa held every two years. It is the biggest event in the youth sector's calendar.  The Minister for Youth is usually invited to open the conference or as a keynote speaker.
12 August	International Youth Day	N/A	An annually observed day across the globe.
30 August	The Big Sing Finale Gala Concert	Dunedin Town Hall	An annual event celebrating and showcasing the top 24 secondary school choirs selected from over 200 choirs who have competed at the regional festivals earlier in the year.  The Big Sing Regionals take place across New Zealand from 30 May to 19 June 2025 – a full list can be supplied.
TBC September	Smokefree- rockquest National Final	Auckland	Smokefreerockquest is an annual music competition for intermediate and high school bands throughout New Zealand.  The Minister for Youth was invited but unable to attend in 2024. Other Ministers attended to present awards.
TBC Mid- October	National Excellence Awards	Auckland	These Awards acknowledge the achievements and work of children, young people, mentors, volunteers and staff of the Graeme Dingle Foundation programmes.
TBC Early December	YES National Awards Gala	TBC	The YES Awards are an annual event that provides an opportunity for young people that have participated in the Young Enterprise Scheme to be recognised for their achievements and experiences as business and entrepreneurship students.