

Briefing to the Incoming Minister

Youth

2020



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



**MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO TAIOHI
Administered by the Ministry of Social Development

Ministry of Youth Development – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi

21.5 FTEs, including four regional
relationship managers



12-24

800,000

young people aged 12 to 24 years
were resident in New Zealand in 2020
(based on 2018 Census)

Vote Social Development – Partnering for Youth Development



\$22.989 million

Multi-category appropriation
funding for 2020/21



over

100 provider organisations

delivering at least 62,000
youth development opportunities
for rangatahi in 2020/21



50%

of funding for youth development
opportunities is targeted at rangatahi
Māori, Pacific young people, rainbow
young people and disabled young people



\$1 million

in the 2020/21 Partnership
Fund for co-investing in youth
development opportunities



79%

of school leavers achieved NCEA
Level 2 or equivalent in 2019



11.1%

of 15- to 24-year-olds were
unemployed in 2020
(almost three times the rate of the next highest
age group, 25- to 34-year-olds – 3.8%)

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Welcome to the Youth portfolio

You are supported in this portfolio by the Ministry of Youth Development – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi, as well as by the Child and Youth Policy team within the Ministry of Social Development – Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora.

The Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) is administered by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). It is a small agency with far-reaching networks, supporting you to enable rangatahi¹ (young people) aged 12 to 24 years in New Zealand to strengthen their wellbeing, build their resilience, connect with their communities, and thrive.

MYD has a sole focus on youth matters, and a strategic leadership role across the youth sector, in government, and as a champion of New Zealand's rangatahi.

MSD's Child and Youth Policy team provides the strategic policy advice function to support you and MYD on issues relevant to the Youth portfolio.

This briefing is provided as an introduction to your portfolio. We would also like to provide more detailed briefings on significant aspects of the portfolio, and we can discuss with your Office the best way to do this at the earliest opportunity.

We are looking forward to working with you over the coming term and discussing the most effective ways we can support you, and your priorities and responsibilities.

¹ The term 'rangatahi' is used throughout this document interchangeably with 'young people'.

The Youth portfolio

Overview

There are approximately 800,000 rangatahi aged 12 to 24 years resident in New Zealand, making up 17 percent of the population². Accountability for young people is a shared responsibility across all of government.

Young people are active, increasingly diverse, passionate and capable of leading change. They contribute as workers, employers, entrepreneurs, consumers, taxpayers, learners and volunteers. They have consistently told government over the last decade that they want to be heard, listened to and valued. The Youth portfolio has a strategic role in championing young people across government and the youth sector.

A lot of work is under way to support the youth population at various stages of their life cycles³. It is important, as we collectively rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19, that rangatahi are supported and enabled to be part of the conversation about shaping a productive, sustainable and inclusive New Zealand.

The operational focus of the Youth portfolio is to maximise opportunities for the positive engagement and contribution of New Zealand's youth population. This is achieved through funding holistic and strengths-based initiatives, which are of particular benefit during these uncertain times, as young people increasingly face adversity and unusual challenges.

Mitigating the social and economic impacts of COVID-19

COVID-19 will have a significant, wide-ranging and lasting impact on rangatahi. This is due to a range of factors, including rangatahi navigating normal development stages during a pandemic, and a reliance on adults who may be facing extraordinary challenges. School closures, social distancing and confinement all increase the risk of poor nutrition, exposure to domestic violence, and heightened anxiety and stress⁴ among young people, as well as reducing access to vital family and care services.

The number of young people on the unemployment benefit has increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic⁵. Many young people work in cyclically sensitive sectors and/or in part-time casual employment and are particularly vulnerable to job loss during economic downturns. They also tend to work in sectors such as hospitality and retail which have been more severely impacted by COVID-19.

Across all age groups, rangatahi Māori, Pacific, rainbow, and disabled young people are particularly at risk of negative economic impacts. Evidence shows that young people in these priority groups experienced disadvantage and marginalisation prior to COVID-19, and that the impacts of COVID-19 are likely to increase existing barriers faced by these groups.

² Based on data from the 2018 Census.

³ For example: the Youth Employment Action Plan, Disability Action Plan and Oranga Tamariki Action Plan.

⁴ Statistics from Youthline covering the early lockdown period show a marked increase in demand for its support, with suicide, depression, and fear and anxiety ranking as the top three presenting issues. There is a similar trend for Healthline calls (which include mental health – 1,737 calls).

⁵ From July 2019 to July 2020 the number of 18- and 19-year-olds receiving the Jobseeker Work Ready benefit increased by 85 percent, and by 82 percent among 20- to 24-year-olds. Note that these figures are based on Jobseeker Support, while Youth Service administers the Youth Payment, which ends at 18 years, and the Young Parent Payment, which ends at 19 years.

Youth sector providers are reliant on approximately 50 to 70 percent of non-government funding. This has been significantly reduced as a result of COVID-19, further exacerbating the impact of the pandemic on young people.

The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy

The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy⁶, a whole-of-government strategy launched in August 2019, sets out a shared understanding of what is important for child and youth wellbeing, and provides a framework to align the work of government and others. Its policy priorities remain critical and its actions have a strong focus on lifting the wellbeing of disadvantaged groups. The Strategy's age range is generally 0 to 18 years, but in some cases extends to young people up to the age of 25 years.

Multiple Ministers and agencies have accountabilities under the Strategy and play important collective roles in driving its implementation. The Strategy is supported by more than 75 actions and 49 supporting actions, led by 20 government agencies.

The role of the Minister for Youth

You are both the portfolio Minister and the Responsible Minister for MYD and are accountable to Parliament for the following matters.

As *portfolio Minister*, you have an important leadership role in advocating for and championing New Zealand's rangatahi aged 12 to 24 years. Ensuring their voices are valued across government is crucial to improving outcomes for rangatahi. Examples of leadership in this area include driving the use of robust evidence and youth development best practice, and sharing intelligence around what young people and the sector are saying through MYD channels. In the role of portfolio Minister, you are accountable for:

- the Cabinet-mandated Youth Plan 2020–2022: Turning Voice into Action – Rebuilding and Recovering (the Youth Plan), which sets out the actions that government is taking, in partnership with others, to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 for rangatahi. This is a key lever for driving increased collaboration between government and the wider youth sector on cross-sectoral issues affecting young people. It aims to ensure that rangatahi have a say in decisions about recovery and beyond, to support the wellbeing of rangatahi and whānau, to enable leadership and transformational change
- the ministerial-appointed Partnership Fund Board (the Board), which reports directly to the Minister for Youth on investment decisions for the Partnership Fund. The Board's role is to develop partnerships through co-investment with philanthropic organisations, business, iwi and other funders to increase the number of youth development opportunities. Further information, including a list of the current Board members, is attached as Appendix 1
- the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey – whataboutme? (the Survey) is an action under the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, and will be used to inform progress on 15 of the 36 wellbeing indicators contained within the Strategy. It will collect information from 14,000 young people in schools, kura kaupapa, alternative education units, and Youth One Stop Shops throughout New Zealand. Information from the Survey will help us to understand things that are and are not working in young people's lives to enable us to better support young people through the development of policies, programmes and services⁷.

⁶ The Minister for Youth is accountable for three actions under the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy: the Youth Plan; the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey – whataboutme?; and the Youth Voice Project. For delivery purposes, the Youth Voice Project has been amalgamated into the Youth Plan.

⁷ Due to COVID-19, data collection has been postponed until 2021.

As *Responsible Minister*, you are answerable for the Partnering for Youth Development Multi-Category Appropriation. This includes:

- overall responsibility for the Partnering for Youth Development Appropriation in Vote Social Development, administered by MYD. This has an annual appropriation of \$10.96 million, of which over \$8.50 million is allocated through the Delivering Youth Development non-departmental funding stream. The current performance measures associated with the appropriation are provided in Appendix 2
- responsibility for the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey – whataboutme? administered by MSD. The \$1.90 million funding in 2020/21 includes \$0.85 million allocated to the child survey business case
- the additional one-off increase to the Partnering for Youth Development Appropriation of approximately \$11.72 million for the Strengthening Ākonga Resilience to Achieve Better Education Outcomes Community Fund, of which \$10.46 million is allocated through the Delivering Youth Development non-departmental funding stream⁸.

As *Minister for Youth*, and given the shared responsibility for young people across government and related cross-cutting issues, you may also have particular interests in the following portfolios:

- Education (including Tertiary Education), Employment, Health, Housing, Justice, Pacific Peoples, Social Development and Te Puni Kōkiri.

The role of the Ministry of Youth Development – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi

MYD is accountable for:

- achieving its role and purpose: *MYD encourages and supports young people, aged between 12 and 24 years old, to develop and use knowledge, skills and experiences to participate confidently in their communities*
- implementing the Government’s policies and priorities in the Youth portfolio, and the effective and efficient administration of the Vote Social Development – Partnering for Youth Development appropriation:
 - MYD administers over \$8.50 million funding a year, which includes \$1.0 million allocated to the Partnership Fund. This funding is invested in the development, promotion and delivery of a wide range of community-based youth development and/or youth enterprise programmes and services across New Zealand that nurture capable and resilient rangatahi. These activities use a strengths-based approach when working with young people, deliver wellbeing outcomes, and develop youth sector workforce capability
 - MYD also administers \$10.46 million for the Strengthening Ākonga Resilience to Achieve Better Education Outcomes Community Fund. This is one of seven initiatives sitting within a tagged contingency of \$36 million that has been created from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, and is in partnership with the Ministry of Education. This fund is targeted towards at-risk ākonga (students) aged 12 to 21 years who need additional support to stay engaged in their education journey

⁸ Additional funding of approximately \$1.262 million has also been provided for 4.5 FTEs to administer the fund over the two-year period.

- achieving key performance measures such as improvements in rangatahi outcomes, wellbeing, and preparedness for the future work environment. Measures also exist around priority cohorts, positive experience and the Partnership Fund (refer to Appendix 3).

MYD is responsible for:

- providing the critical expertise, experience and systems to ensure young people are confident and comfortable sharing their voice across government and expressing their concerns
- developing its leadership role in the youth sector through chairing a Youth Sector Leaders Group, comprising key stakeholders in the youth sector, providers who bring the voice of rangatahi, and people who work directly with young people
- leading or co-leading five actions in the Youth Plan in addition to obligations for monitoring and reporting on the actions in the Youth Plan
- administering the Partnership Fund and supporting the Minister for Youth's Partnership Fund Board in both an advisory and secretariat capacity
- funding youth development and youth enterprise opportunities for rangatahi
- administering the Strengthening Ākonga Resilience to Achieve Better Education Outcomes Community Fund in partnership with the Ministry of Education.

The role of the Child and Youth Policy team

MSD's Child and Youth Policy team sits within the broader Policy branch of MSD. While the team is accountable to the Minister for Social Development, with agreement from the Minister for Social Development they can also support your portfolio and provide you with policy advice on key issues. Work that this team currently has under way in relation to your portfolio includes providing policy support for the Youth Plan, the Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey – whataboutme?, the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy and the Partnership Fund Board.

The Child and Youth Policy team works with other teams in MSD including Employment, Income Support, Housing and the Youth Service, and is involved in several cross-agency strategic and policy initiatives.

Decisions that require your early attention

This section outlines matters that require your earliest attention between now and the end of 2020.

Youth Plan

As Minister for Youth, you are accountable for the delivery of the Youth Plan, which is an action under the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. This is being led by MYD and supported by a Cross-Agency Working Group which is collectively responsible for delivering the 16 actions over the next two years.

Cabinet agreed that the Minister for Youth would provide six-monthly progress updates on the Youth Plan, the first of which is due in late January or early February 2021.

A measurement framework is being developed for the Youth Plan that will inform the review of the Youth Plan in 2022. MSD is leading this work, supported by a cross-agency working group. MSD will report back to you on the proposed framework by **Section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information**

Strategic session with officials

Officials would welcome the opportunity to discuss various strategic matters with you at your earliest convenience. The following are suggested topics for this session:

A. Current MYD work programme

Amplifying Youth Voice

Young people in New Zealand have consistently told government that they want a say in the decisions that impact them and their future. In advocating for and championing youth across government, you may wish to consider ways in which you can hear from rangatahi so that you can amplify their voice.

We are keen to discuss what options for hearing the youth voice you would like to explore. For example, a Youth Advisory Group could be established or alternatively a forum, either online or face to face, could be designed to hear from rangatahi about the things that matter to them.

Youth Voice Project

We've heard through engagements with young people, youth-led initiatives and student-led movements that young people want their voices to be listened to and taken into account. Incorporating a youth voice into policies, programmes and services supports meaningful engagement and youth development, and enables government agencies to better meet the needs of young people.

Over the next few years, MYD is looking to increase engagement mechanisms across government for young people and provide training and resources for other government agencies to upskill in this area.

We will provide you with a more detailed briefing on our youth voice work programme in the coming weeks, and we are keen to discuss this work with you to ensure it aligns with your priorities.

Youth Parliament

The triennial Youth Parliament programme has been running since it was established by Cabinet in 1995 and is due to be held again in 2022.

The Minister for Youth has been responsible for delivering the programme and chairing the Multi-Party Steering Committee (the Committee).

MYD provides the operational policy support for the programme and secretariat support for the Committee, and has led a cross-agency working group of officials from the Office of the Clerk, Ministry of Education and Parliamentary Service.

An evaluation of the current Youth Parliament model has been carried out, involving in-depth interviews with Youth MPs, Youth Press Gallery members and stakeholders. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify whether the current model is achieving its outcomes and recommend initiatives to improve the implementation and widen youth engagement.

The Office of the Clerk is interested in developing a more formal partnership with MYD for the delivery of Youth Parliament.

Section 9(2)(f)(iv) of the Official Information Act

Partnership Fund Board

The Partnership Fund Board (the Board) is accountable to you. The Board's role is to draw on its members' expertise and networks to generate new ideas and forge new partnerships with philanthropic organisations, business, iwi, government and other funders to support quality youth development and/or youth enterprise opportunities for rangatahi. You may wish to engage with the Board in the very near future to discuss your expectations and priorities.

The previous Minister for Youth requested a review of the Board's governance arrangements to consider whether these are the most appropriate and effective for delivering results. The review is also expected to consider whether the Board has the appropriate level of resources and funding to deliver on its objectives.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the Board's governance review with you to ensure it aligns with your portfolio priorities and objectives for the Board.

B. Current MSD Policy work programme specific to the Minister for Youth

Youth Health and Wellbeing Survey

Funding for the Youth and Health Wellbeing Survey – whataboutme? to be undertaken every three years was granted as part of Budget 2018. The Survey will enable young people to have their voice heard on subjects such as whānau wellbeing, their education, work and plans for the future, quality of relationships and friendships, recreational activities and safety, and how they feel about life overall. Due to COVID-19, the Minister for Youth and the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction agreed to postpone data collection for the Survey until 2021.

Following the postponement of the Survey, Ministers agreed that the Social Wellbeing Agency⁹ (SWA) would use the underspend to develop a business case for a new national child and youth wellbeing survey to capture a wider range of children and young people than whataboutme?.

MSD Policy and SWA welcome the opportunity to provide you with an update on whataboutme? and the progress of the business case.

C. Opportunities to strengthen the Youth portfolio

Refining MYD's remit

The Youth portfolio will play an increasingly important role in the recovery efforts, as our youth development approach builds on young people's strengths and increases their resilience and capabilities to thrive, even in challenging circumstances.

In 2015 MYD was refocused to:

- ensure more effective and efficient operations
- increase the number of youth development opportunities available for young people aged 12 to 24 years from approximately 50,000 to 100,000, with a focus on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (from 18 to 30 percent)
- encourage stronger partnerships with business and philanthropy [SOC-15-SUB-0034 refers].

The impact of COVID-19 will continue to affect young people in the years ahead.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss any alternative measures that you may want us to explore, in particular any that are more clearly aligned with achieving outcomes for young people to ensure their resilience through the COVID-19 recovery phase.

⁹ The Social Wellbeing Agency supports decision-making across the social system by providing insights through data and analytics, and people's lived experiences through engagement with the social sector.

Appendix 1: Partnership Fund Board

The Partnership Fund Board (the Board) was established in 2016 to grow youth development opportunities by partnering with the business and philanthropic sectors, iwi, government and other funders, as well as having the power to make decisions on the administration of a Partnership Fund.

The Board is a non-statutory advisory board appointed by the Minister for Youth. The current members were appointed in July 2020, for terms ending either 30 June 2021 or 31 December 2021.

There are currently nine members on the Board, with one vacant position. The Board has strong youth representation with three current members aged under 25 years.

The Board elects its own chairperson, currently Shana Malio.

Current Board membership

Shana MALIO (Chair)

Duncan MATTHEWS (Deputy Chair)

Stevie DAVIS-TANA

Rachel HOPKINS

Bilal NASIER

Ezekiel RAUI

Terry SHUBKIN

Kii SMALL

Paige SULLIVAN

Appendix 2: Appropriation responsibilities

You are the appropriation Minister for the Multi-Category Appropriation (MCA) Partnering for Youth Development, within Vote Social Development.

This funding is administered by MYD, and largely through a contestable funding stream each financial year called the Youth Development Funding Stream (YDFS). You set the direction and priorities for this funding, which may for instance include targeting it at particular cohorts of young people.

In the 2020/21 financial year, you are responsible for overseeing total funding of \$22.989 million, which includes:

- **\$19.929 million Non-Departmental Output Expenses (NDOE) for Delivering Youth Development.**

The MCA NDOE budget category is intended to achieve an improvement in the wellbeing of young people aged 12 to 24 years, through their participation in quality, positive youth development initiatives (including through partnerships with businesses, iwi, and the philanthropic and youth sectors, and other government organisations) and/or an improvement in young people's preparedness for the future work environment through enterprise education and skills development.

This includes an allocation of:

- **\$6.062 million for Positive Youth Development Promotion**

MYD operates a contributory funding model, supporting providers to deliver strengths-based and holistic youth development and youth enterprise services and programmes that will increase the capability and resilience of young people and support them to participate confidently within their communities and whānau.

Including an allocation of:

- **\$1.0 million for the Partnership Fund**

Established in 2015, the Partnership Fund is overseen by a Partnership Fund Board (the Board), whose role is to increase the number of youth development opportunities through co-investment with philanthropic organisations, business, iwi, government and other funders. You are responsible for the Board and set the priorities for the Board's investment decisions.

- **\$10.467 million for Strengthening Ākonga Resilience to Achieve Better Education Outcomes Community Fund** in partnership with the Ministry of Education.

Established in 2020, this funding will support and empower rangatahi aged 12 to 21 years who need additional support due to the impact of COVID-19 to stay engaged in their education journey.

- **\$1.5 million for Expanding Youth Enterprise and Education**

Established in 2014, this funding supports young people to be better prepared for the future work environment through the provision of strengths-based enterprise education and skills development opportunities, supporting young people to learn and develop entrepreneurial knowledge, skills and competencies (including directly funding young people).

- **\$1.9 million for Child and Youth Wellbeing Survey.** This funding includes \$0.85m allocated to the child survey business case.

- **\$3.06 million Departmental Output Expenses (DOE) for Administering Youth Development.**

This includes the provision of a policy advice and support function in MYD and MSD, and the cost of other support services associated with the administration of MYD within MSD.

Appendix 3: Performance measures for the Partnering for Youth Development Multi-Category Appropriation

The Minister for Youth reports on a series of performance measures to Parliament for the fiscal year. For 2020/21 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 MYD-funded services will be no less than (Target = 85%)
- 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 services will be no less than (Target = 85%)
 - The percentage of participants who report they have improved their preparedness for the future work environment through participation in MYD-funded youth enterprise services will be no less than (Target = 85%)
- MCA category Administering Youth Development measures:
 - The percentage of total funding for youth development opportunities targeted at young people from the priority cohorts¹ will be no less than (Target = 50%)
 - The percentage of providers reporting that interacting with MYD was a 'good' or 'very good' experience should be no less than (Target = 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 should be no less than (Target = 80%)

¹ Priority cohorts are young: Māori, Pacific peoples, women, people from the rainbow community, disabled people, people from ethnic communities (in particular those from a refugee or migrant background), and people living in the regions (the regions are defined as the non-urban, more rural and often isolated regions across New Zealand).

Appendix 4: Organisation structure and key contacts

MYD is led by a General Manager, Youth, who is supported by a team of 17 FTEs based in Wellington, and four Regional Relationship Managers.

MYD staff provide ministerial servicing for your Office, manage relationships and contracts with providers, lead and contribute to activities across government and in the youth sector, and provide secretariat and advisory support to the Partnership Fund Board.

MSD's Child and Youth Policy team provides the strategic policy advice function to support you and MYD on issues relevant to the Youth portfolio. This team also provides policy advice to support the Social Development portfolio, which has a focus on employment and education outcomes for young people who are close to the benefit system and who may not be in education, employment or training.

MSD also provides the portfolio's corporate services. This includes: advice regarding performance reporting and the structure of the Appropriation; as well as Ministerial Services, which includes managing the Private Secretary seconded to your Office, and the co-ordination of ministerial reporting and correspondence.

Name	Title	Contact Number
Juanita Te Kani	General Manager, Youth	Section 9(2)(a) of the Official Information Act
Marama Edwards	Deputy Chief Executive, Māori, Communities and Partnerships ,MSD	
Debra Tuifao	Director Youth	
Simon MacPherson	Deputy Chief Executive, Policy	
Molly Elliott	General Manager, Social Development, Child and Youth ,MSD	
Shana Malio	Chair, Partnership Fund Board	

Appendix 5: Youth overview

The youth population

As at 2018 there were an estimated 800,000 young people aged 12 to 24 years resident in New Zealand¹. This proportion of the total population (17 percent) is expected to fall as the population ages.

The ethnic make-up of young people is changing, with growing Māori, Asian and Pacific populations. As of 2018 half of the Māori population was under 25 years of age, and half of all Pacific peoples in New Zealand were under 23 years of age. By comparison, the median age of the New Zealand European/Pākehā population was 41 years, and the Asian population was 31 years².

New Zealand's ageing population and shrinking working-age population accentuate the economic risks of not improving outcomes for all young people in New Zealand. This will have serious implications as today's young people become tomorrow's workers, innovators, parents and taxpayers. Increasing ethnic diversity in the youth population will also mean changes to the way youth services are targeted and delivered.

While most young people are doing well, social and economic issues persist for some:

- In 2019, 78.8 percent of school leavers attained NCEA Level 2 or above. By ethnicity, this was Asian (89.7 percent), New Zealand European/Pākehā (82.0 percent), Pacific (73.7 percent) and Māori (64.7 percent)³.
- The youth unemployment rate is generally much higher than for other age groups, with Pacific and Māori disproportionately affected. The unemployment rate for the year ended June 2020 for 15- to 24-year-olds was 11.1 percent. By ethnicity it was: Māori 15.5 percent, Pacific peoples 15.2 percent, Asian 10.9 percent, and New Zealand European/Pākehā 9.4 percent⁴.
- Accessing safe and stable accommodation is a key challenge for young people and addressing their housing needs is often necessary to help improve other outcomes. Nearly 50 percent of the severely housing deprived population is aged under 25 years, and are disproportionately Pacific and Māori⁵.

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.

¹ Based on data from the 2018 Census.

² Statistics NZ – median age by ethnic group, 2018 Census. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/2018-census-ethnic-groups-dataset>.

³ <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/indicators/data/education-and-learning-outcomes/3664>.

⁴ <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/labour-market-statistics-june-2020-quarter> (ethnic data from: Labour Force Status by Total Response Ethnic Group and Age Group (Annual-Jun); total from: Labour Force Status by Sex by Age Group (Annual-Jun)).

⁵ <https://www.hud.govt.nz/assets/News-and-Resources/Statistics-and-Research/2018-Severe-housing-deprivation-estimate/Severe-Housing-Deprivation-2018-Estimate-Report.pdf>.

Young people in New Zealand have one of the highest rates of suicide in the developed world⁶. Efforts to address our suicide rate include the Suicide Prevention Strategy 2019–2029 and Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2019–2024, a Suicide Prevention Office, and significant investment in frontline mental health services.

In addition, factors such as globalisation and the advancement of technology are transforming the way we live and work. Digital, entrepreneurial and enterprise skills will be increasingly important, along with greater flexibility, problem solving, critical thinking and communication skills. Young people will need these skills for personal success, but have also shown in the past they can be leaders in these fields.

The Youth 19 Survey⁷ provided an update of the key issues and concerns of secondary school students:

- The proportion of teenagers with ‘significant’ symptoms of depression (23 percent) has almost doubled in 20 years, with a concerning equity gap between rangatahi Māori and New Zealand European/Pākehā.
- Socio-economic deprivation also had a significant impact on teenagers’ mental health. About one in five students said they had difficulty getting help during difficult times. The researchers identified many possible causes for the rise in mental distress, including an increased exposure to violence, smartphones and social media, the ongoing impact of colonisation and racism, a lack of free time, higher expectations at schools, and parental stress. Climate change, the housing crisis and the uncertain future of work were also mentioned as contributing factors.
- Some progress had been made in terms of youth substance use. Rates of at least monthly binge drinking among secondary school students had dropped sharply in the past 20 years, from a peak of 36 percent in 2007 to 22 percent in 2019.
- When asked what needed to change to better support young people, many respondents said they wanted adults to listen to them and involve them in decision-making. “Many students saw the future as bleak and felt that their generation was inheriting a broken world.”
- The report recommended adults create opportunities for young people to connect and have fun together. Support services needed to be more inclusive, supportive and culturally responsive. Institutional racism and discrimination must also be addressed for there to be improvement in youth mental health.

⁶ <https://bpac.org.nz/BPJ/2015/October/wellbeing.aspx#:~:text=Most%20young%20people%20in%20New,emales%20reported%20good%20emotional%20wellbeing.>

⁷ <https://www.youth19.ac.nz.>



New Zealand Government