



Proactive Release

Submissions on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy

August 2019

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has released the following submission received during its public consultation on the child and youth wellbeing strategy.

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Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy – Submission

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Organisation Name:	Korowai Tupu o Ara Taiohi
Organisation description: (tell us about your organisation – i.e. who do you represent? How many members do you have? Are you a local or national organisation?)	Korowai Tupu o Ara Taiohi is the national professional organisation for youth workers across Aotearoa. In 2016 Ara Taiohi launched a pilot association and invited youth workers from across the youth sector to participate in designing the professional association. These founding members were fundamental in designing an efficient and relevant professional association for youth workers in Aotearoa. Korowai Tupu launched in 2017 and carries the mana of all of those involved. Korowai Tupu reflects the aspirations of their members to support positive youth development for the young people of Aotearoa, whilst also providing support and a collective voice for youth workers in Aotearoa.



Executive Summary:

(Please provide a short summary of the key points of your Submission - 200 words)

Korowai Tupu are excited to see this governments passion for and support of tamariki and rangatahi.

We have a number of points for consideration that are outlined in more detail in the proceeding section.

Our main points, supported by recommendations below, are:

1. Understanding and recognition that the needs of rangatahi (12-25) differ from those of tamariki (0-11)
2. The ongoing role of the Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa (YDSA), and inter-departmental embedding and understandings of the issues relating to children and young people and how / if this strategy will achieve this
3. The core approaches to support of rangatahi and their needs being addressed within the approach of this document from an evidence-based, Aotearoa-centric space
4. Broadening, embracing and embedding the place of youth work in Aotearoa and those of others working alongside our tamariki and rangatahi in an equitable and mana-enhancing way

Submission Content

Point One

The initiation of a Child and Youth Health & Wellbeing Strategy is an exciting development, however we retain reservations as to having one strategy to encompass the support of two such important but different life stages.

Research conducted by the Ministry for Youth Development ([2009, 2010 & 2011](#)) highlights this, as does research undertaken by the Auckland City Council across the last ten years, particularly the acknowledgement in the Auckland plan for requirements that differ for each of these groups ([2016, 2018](#)).

The needs and requirements of tamariki (birth to 11) as opposed to rangatahi (12 to 25) are crucial to the success and wellbeing of Aotearoa. However understanding these needs and requirements and acknowledging that these also remain different within these groups and should be a major consideration going forward.

A variety of research both from within Aotearoa and internationally have consistently demonstrated a need for differentiation for these life-stages and we remain concerned that partnering youth and children in this strategy will diminish the quality of outcomes for both groups ([Fouche, Elliot, Mundy-McPherson, Jordan & Bingham, 2010](#)).

RECOMMENDATION: A strategy for Tamariki and a strategy for Young People OR differentiation of both groups within the document

Point Two

Korowai Tupu naturally aligns itself with the Ministry for Youth Development. As an organisation we have embraced the Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa ([YDSA](#)), and expanded this slightly to form the [core competencies](#) required of our membership (MYD, 2004; NYWANZ, 2008). We also have a strong [Code of Ethics](#) originally developed in 2008, with a second edition published in 2011 that embeds the YDSA in our safe and effective practice with young people (NYWANZ, 2008 & Ara Taiohi 2011). We feel strongly that the utility of these documents are ideally placed to be enhanced and embedded within any national strategy for inform working alongside young people. We know both documents have been embraced within the broader youth development sector and that our membership have a high degree of connection, application and understanding of these works.

We have questions around how the Child & Youth Well-being strategy will be implemented and question if this will be alongside the YDSA which is currently being



reviewed (with substantial assistance from Ara Taiohi and Korowai Tupu), or will be intended to replace it? It is clear that the YDSA needs to be updated to reflect our rich cultural heritage and the reality of young people and youth development in 2018/19. We see these principles as foundational, and as informing any strategy related to young people.

We are also curious as to how the strategy will be embedded across all governmental agencies and departments, as this has always remained a challenge with the existing YDSA.

RECOMMENDATION:

- **Aligning this mahi to the YDSA and utilizing the review of the principles to inform any strategy relating to young people**
- **Aligning this mahi when working with young people to Ara Taiohi Code of Ethics**
- **Embedding a requirement across governmental bodies to enact and evidence their engagement with both strategies**

Point Three

The core of youth work is relational, intentional and strengths-based (Martin, 2011). It occurs in a variety of settings and has its own evidence-based ways of working alongside our rangatahi (Beals, 2010). We note that this particular suggested framework appears to:

* focus on mental health and education – we argue that strategies to support Rangatahi must be broad, inclusive and holistic (Hurst, 2017).

* The strategy appears to support a normative development approach with a high emphasis on early intervention – we believe young people deserve to have opportunities for engagement at any stage of need, but also to lead their own journey's in this space (Baxter & Finlay, 2018).

* The approach itself reads as a welfare approach, with deficit-based / protectionist language. Youth work to our membership is inherently grounded in strengths-based, participatory, empowering approaches and the research is clear that work alongside young people requires this (Hart, 2008).

RECOMMENDATION:

- **Broaden the scope of this strategy to include all**
- **Support engagement at all ages**
- **Embed participatory and co-design practices for both youth people and children**



- **Shift the language and context of this document to be empowering, strengths-based and mana enhancing**

Point Four

Lastly, we note that you are interested in broader views around what needs to change to support our rangatahi. We believe that the overall growth of youth work is a crucial step towards this, but require more support at all levels of society - particularly at government level - for the mahi that we engage in. Youth work works - it is a game changer for support and growth of young people ([Fouche, Elliot, Mundy-McPherson, Jordan & Bingham, 2010](#)).

Youth work is largely underpaid or volunteer-based and consistently goes unrecognised, irrespective of the evidence-base that supports its efficacy. Over the last ten years we have seen the professionalisation of our sector and a growth in Aotearoa based research into the outcomes of youth work ([The Collaborative Trust](#), [Le Va](#), [Rainbow Youth](#), academics at Auckland University, Massey University, WelTec, Unitec, Praxis and a variety of other individuals and organisations).

Two undergraduate degrees in Youth Development (WelTec's Bach of Youth Development and Unitec's Bach of Health & Social Development) have emerged, alongside strong providers of constantly evolving national diplomas and certificates (Praxis, Careerforce, etc...) which are providing our sector with highly-skilled, evidence-based practitioners. We have seen the importance of youth workers in national organisations grow (such as large national uniformed and faith-based organisations) and the continual mahi that evolves from the grass-roots / NGO's. There is an emerging understanding that youth work and youth workers are ready and able to lead in this space.

We would love to see the government begin to recognise this mahi. Youth workers have a place in our schools, but these roles generally go to teachers or social workers who have differing understandings, approaches and perspectives around working with young people. Youth workers have a place in our healthcare system, but again, these roles go to clinicians, or social workers who may or may not have the young person at the core of their practice. Youth workers have a place in our community development / social support organisations and face the same challenges previously noted.

Youth workers are experts in young people, we operate from a primary-care space and with professionalisation have demonstrated our commitment to evidence-based practice where practice is aligned with rich, growing Aotearoa-led theory. And yet our ability to



work in spaces alongside our colleagues is challenged through rigid regulation and territorialism.

We know that youth workers are game changers. But that due to being underpaid, under-funded and with both degree programmes challenged by current tertiary sector issues (one in fact is in the process of closing), we see our best and brightest moving into other fields, completing training that isn't youth-centric in order to be better paid or continuing in our mahi, but struggling financially with the associated concerns this raise.

We have high hopes that Minister Henare's acknowledgment at our sector Hui, Involve, earlier this year will be realised - that those working alongside young people will be supported and recognised and grown.

RECOMMENDATION:

- **Recognise the role of youth workers more formally across Aotearoa by allowing for professional youth workers to have the same status as their colleagues / ability to be hired in schools, healthcare, social development organisations**
- **Aligning youth worker remuneration / conditions with Oranga Tamariki workers in recognition of our qualifications, experience and place in Aotearoa**
- **Supporting and growing the offering of Bachelor level qualifications in Youth Work and Youth Development in Aotearoa.**

We applaud the sentiment of the strategy and are excited to see mahi in this space. But firmly believe there is a need for differentiation here - and an embedding of respect for and recognition of youth workers to support this. Youth work is where young people are central to our societies, it requires a stronger voice to ensure this occurs.