

**Ministry of Youth Affairs
Te Tari Taiohi**

Building Resilience

Briefing to the Incoming Minister

August 2002

➤ **PREPARED BY THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS**

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YOUTH AFFAIRS
Te Tari Taiohi

Developing young people in New Zealand

BEYOND ...

<i>Focusing</i>	... on 'at risk', negative labels, problems ...
<i>Blaming</i>	... teachers, parents, TV ...
<i>Reacting</i>	... in an ad hoc manner to youth issues
<i>Fixing</i>	... single youth problems in isolation

TOWARDS ...

<i>Understanding</i>	... young people as partners in their development
<i>Encouraging</i>	... adults to be supportive mentors
<i>Planning</i>	... being intentional, having a plan and setting high goals
<i>Achieving</i>	... an inclusive economy/society – where young people are innovative and energetic participants ¹

¹ Ministry of Youth Affairs (2002) *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*.

**Ministry of Youth Affairs
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BUILDING RESILIENCE
BRIEFING TO THE INCOMING MINISTER

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACYD	Action for Child and Youth Development
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
IACYSP	Inter-agency Committee for Youth Suicide Prevention
NZCC	New Zealand Conservation Corps
UNCROC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
YDSA	Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa
YMPs	Youth Members of Parliament
YSC	Youth Service Corps
YSERG	Youth Suicide External Reference Group

Foreword

Welcome to your role as Minister of Youth Affairs. The Ministry of Youth Affairs (Youth Affairs) looks forward to supporting you in addressing the special interests of young people aged 12 to 24 years inclusive.

This document introduces you to Youth Affairs and provides an overview of issues for young people in New Zealand. It also describes how we work with others to manage or resolve those issues.

Youth Affairs is a small Ministry. However, issues affecting young people cover almost the full range of Ministerial portfolios, so many demands are made of us. We manage these demands by having a clear strategic focus and working closely with government and community organisations that contribute to young people's wellbeing.

We provide information and advice from a perspective that is highly focused on the special interests of young people and, most importantly, what we know works. Youth Affairs staff have a genuine passion for their work and for actions and innovations that benefit young people and the wider community.

To ensure the best outcomes for young people, our role is to influence government departments and agencies, non-government organisations and individuals. Key outcomes identified in our *Statement of Intent* for the year ending 30 June 2003 are:

- ▶ government decision-making that reflects the youth development approach
- ▶ young people having knowledge of, and access to, programmes that use this approach
- ▶ awareness throughout the broader community of the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* and the *New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy* and how they might be applied.

This briefing explains the thinking behind these key outcomes and initiatives, such as encouraging and supporting greater participation by

young people in decision-making processes. However, a prime motivation is to increase young people's ability to contribute directly to New Zealand's social, economic and cultural development. Evidence indicates that supporting and enhancing their contributions equips them better to deal with the demands of modern society.

We look forward to working with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne Carter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "A" being particularly large and stylized.

Anne Carter

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE
MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS**

The Ministry of Youth Affairs

In 1988 it was recognised that young people in New Zealand, despite being profoundly affected by social, economic and political conditions, had little influence over decision-making processes. To help overcome this, Youth Affairs was established. Our role is to:

- ▶ ensure the special needs of young people (aged 12 to 24 years inclusive) do not become secondary to other priorities
- ▶ support young people in influencing their political environment and voicing their concerns
- ▶ improve the analysis of policies' social and economic effects on young people.

Youth Affairs' departmental budget is allocated to three output classes (with appropriations totalling \$3.081 million, GST inclusive):

- ▶ **policy advice** (\$1.74 million) – advising on policies, services and legislation affecting young people, including leading and co-ordinating the implementation of the *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* and the *New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy*
- ▶ **communication and facilitation** (\$0.762 million) – empowering young people by providing information and opportunities to participate
- ▶ **youth development programmes management** (\$0.579 million) – managing funding and contracts, mainly for Youth Corps programmes.

Appendix A outlines our organisational structure and functional groupings, and provides more information on our activities, key personnel and non-departmental appropriations.

› THE CONTEXT IN WHICH WE WORK

KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS

The key influences on our work include Government goals, international obligations (for example, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) and trends that significantly affect young people, their families and communities (see Appendix B for more information).

The Treaty of Waitangi is also an important part of our working environment. It defines us as New Zealanders and guides us in establishing our relationships with and responsibilities to Māori, whānau, hapū and iwi.

Much of our current work programme relates to the following areas:

Population and families

- ▶ Overall, the proportion of young people in our population is declining and is expected to do so for the foreseeable future.
- ▶ Young people are ethnically diverse and the proportion of rangatahi Māori and young Pacific people is increasing.
- ▶ Family/whānau structures and living arrangements have undergone rapid change.
- ▶ Most young people live in metropolitan areas and many are more mobile than other population groups.
- ▶ A large majority of young people over 20 years of age do not live with their family/whānau, but young people are taking longer to become financially independent than earlier generations.

Education and employment

- ▶ Outside the family, young people spend most of their time in school or undertaking further education, training or work.
- ▶ Secondary school retention rates have decreased recently, but more young people are attending tertiary institutions.
- ▶ More rangatahi Māori and young Pacific people leave school without a qualification than other ethnic groups.
- ▶ Young people have very high rates of unemployment and are more likely to experience repeat periods of unemployment than other age groups.
- ▶ More rangatahi Māori and young Pacific people are unemployed than other ethnic groups.
- ▶ Many young people are combining work with study – the proportion of young people in full-time work has dropped.

Health

- ▶ Young people in New Zealand have high rates of mental illness.
- ▶ Young people in New Zealand die by suicide at a rate higher than those in comparable OECD countries.
- ▶ Young people's health and safety concerns are markedly different from those of the rest of the population – key concerns include car accidents, alcohol and drug issues and poor sexual health.
- ▶ Rangatahi Māori have greater health concerns than non-Māori, including a substantially higher suicide rate.
- ▶ While the health of other age groups has improved in recent years, the health status of young people has declined overall (although young people generally remain healthy compared with other population groups).

THE EFFECTS OF THESE TRENDS

Sector-specific government departments and agencies are the entities usually responsible for developing policies and services that influence outcomes for young people. These organisations are striving to manage the effects of these trends, which include:

- ▶ more young people are dependent on their families for longer than in the past
- ▶ young people are experiencing increasing psychosocial disorders
- ▶ increasing disparities between outcomes for rangatahi Māori and young Pacific people compared with those for non-Māori/Pacific young people.

ADDITIONAL PRESSURES

Young people and those responsible for attending to their interests are also facing pressures:

- ▶ an increasing cultural diversity and emphasis on cultural considerations
- ▶ a rapidly developing knowledge-based economy
- ▶ education/training systems struggling to meet developing demands
- ▶ labour market globalisation.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR APPROACH

Co-ordination and co-operation across sectors and government departments have increased considerably in recent years. A negative focus on young people ‘at risk’ and their ‘problems’ is giving way to policies and practice that focus on identifying and acting to enhance factors that protect and help young people to achieve positive outcomes (that is, as well as managing risk factors).

In this context, Youth Affairs strives to be a leader and strategic partner in developing policies and services that influence young people’s lives. We base our advice on sound evidence and focus on influencing and informing actions that are likely to offer the greatest benefits.

Following is a brief overview and explanation of:

- ▶ the youth development approach – our new policy platform that guides positive action within and across sectors
- ▶ key programmes and initiatives being delivered or developed (often in partnership with other departments) that align with the youth development approach
- ▶ important considerations for the future.

A New Way Forward: The Youth Development Approach

A youth development approach is a positive, holistic way of supporting young people's development. It helps ensure they are fully prepared for adult life by addressing their broader developmental needs instead of focusing primarily on solving their 'problems'.

This approach establishes a solid platform for increasing co-ordination and co-operation across sectors and government departments. As well as helping to manage risk factors, it underpins more holistic policies and practices that concentrate on the interplay between the many factors that can help young people to achieve positive outcomes.

A youth development approach focuses on:

- ▶ enhancing the protective factors in young people's lives
- ▶ supporting a sense of belonging and connectedness to key social environments (families, schools, training, work, communities and peer groups)
- ▶ ensuring young people have safe, caring relationships
- ▶ promoting young people's active participation and engagement in all areas of their lives.

The core to this is a strengths-based approach to positively developing young people. When positive development happens, young people are more likely to grow up with positive outcomes in many areas of their lives.

› **BUILDING STRENGTH: THE THINKING BEHIND THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH**

In June 2002, Youth Affairs published the *Youth Development Literature Review: Building Strength*. The review aimed to help us understand how to achieve good outcomes for young people in their social environments (family, peer group, school, career, neighbourhood and community). It discussed research on how those environments influence young people's development in New Zealand and in other countries. The review assumed

that human beings' developmental processes are reasonably similar, even across different ethnicities, cultures and countries.

Most up-to-date research on youth development tells us that parents, schools, peers and communities make a big difference by providing conditions in which it is more likely that young people will thrive. People who care for young people, or who simply come into contact with them, can have a tremendous positive influence. They include parents, extended family, friends, schoolmates, neighbours, school staff and community members such as youth and church workers. The type of neighbourhood in which young people grow up, their family income and the way schools are run can also have positive effects.

The review's findings indicate that young people clearly have a much better chance of success in many areas of their lives when the world in which they live is full of strong social connections. The positive implications of successful young people go on for many years and extend to subsequent generations.

The review identified the contributors to good outcomes for young people:

- ▶ surrounding young people with positive influences
- ▶ building abundant strengths into young people's lives
- ▶ supporting young people with rich resources
- ▶ delivering optimal parenting
- ▶ fostering positive peer influence – the power of friends
- ▶ providing education that is accepting, sets limits and has high expectations
- ▶ placing young people in well resourced communities with supportive neighbours
- ▶ involving young people in constructive activities outside school and work.

› THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AOTEAROA

The *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (YDSA) was released in February 2002 after extensive consultation. It is a practical, evidence-based policy tool that applies at all levels: central and local government, schools and tertiary education institutions, health services, community and voluntary groups, churches, workplaces, families and whānau and youth-led initiatives. Much of the information reviewed in *Building Strength* was used in developing the YDSA.

The YDSA consists of a vision, principles, aims and goals and suggested actions for key social environments, government and local government. The six YDSA principles can be used as a checklist in developing policies and programmes and in working alongside young people.

1. Youth development is shaped by the big picture.
2. Youth development is about young people being connected.
3. Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach.
4. Youth development happens through quality relationships.
5. Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate.
6. Youth development needs good information.

By applying these principles and the broader elements of the youth development approach, we will help young people to gain a:

- ▶ sense of contributing something of value to society
- ▶ feeling of connectedness to others and to society
- ▶ belief that they have choices about their future
- ▶ feeling of being positive and comfortable about their future.

The YDSA also acknowledges some key issues for specific groups of young people including rangatahi Māori, young Pacific people, young people from minority ethnic communities, young people with physical, intellectual and learning disabilities, young lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual people, isolated rural young people and young parents.

Youth Affairs is leading the implementation of the YDSA. The work is closely linked to implementing *New Zealand's Agenda for Children: Making life better for children* through the Action for Child and Youth Development (ACYD) work programme.

The YDSA implementation includes developing and maintaining mutually supportive relationships with organisations and individuals that work alongside young people and families. We will continue to help prepare and provide accessible information and encourage an exchange of practical ideas on implementing Government policies.

Our communication tools include regular newsletters, our website and participation in activities such as the 'Involve 2002' youth development conference, recently convened in association with the New Zealand Association of Adolescent Health and Development.

Key Initiatives

Youth Affairs proposes to continue or start a number of key initiatives in 2002-2003. These respond to either significant issues and trends or the implementation of government policies such as the YDSA.

› **WORKING WITHIN AND ACROSS GOVERNMENT SECTORS**

Issues and trends affecting young people arise in many sectors, and policies and services with the greatest influence on outcomes for young people are largely the responsibility of government departments and agencies other than Youth Affairs.

We recognise that productive and mutually supportive partnerships with government agencies will be most effective when:

- ▶ we all appreciate the value we can add to each other's work
- ▶ the partnership is intentional, clearly defined and open to changing circumstances.

Youth Affairs can help departments and agencies with information and help on applying the youth development approach to their work and promoting the approach within their sectors. We are active in ensuring they are aware, and apply the benefits, of a youth development approach.

Several areas of ongoing policy work and new Youth Affairs initiatives will help in applying the youth development approach to government decision-making and service delivery:

WITHIN SPECIFIC SECTORS

Education

Education is a key influence on young New Zealanders' positive development. We propose, as a matter of priority, to work in partnership with the Ministry of Education in applying the youth development approach to the following projects (which, except where indicated, will be led by the Ministry of Education):

- ▶ developing an intervention framework for students at risk

- ▶ school planning and reporting (including school charters)
- ▶ developing a framework for education and training opportunities for 16 to 19 year olds
- ▶ improving teachers' professional development to contribute to good youth development outcomes and improved learning outcomes
- ▶ improving curriculum development
- ▶ developing a resource for applying the youth development approach in schools (Youth Affairs lead)
- ▶ promoting greater student participation in school activities and decision-making (part of the joint ACYD work programme with the Ministry of Social Development, discussed below).

Employment

Unemployment and the transition from school to the workforce are key issues for young people's development. Youth Affairs and the Department of Labour are jointly investigating options for improving information on youth participation in the labour market with a focus on:

- ▶ the nature of employment of children and young people under 16 years
- ▶ transitions to work of young people between 15 and 25 years.

Health

Youth Affairs has been working in partnership with the Ministry of Health to apply the youth development approach in *Youth Health – A Guide to Action* (in draft, yet to be publicly released). The Guide:

- ▶ highlights health issues of special significance to young people
- ▶ provides direction for the health sector by identifying potential approaches or actions (including strengths-based options) to improve health outcomes for young people.

We propose to continue our support for this work and to provide specific advice on applying the youth development approach in preparing sexual and reproductive health action plans (specifically, for unintended /unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections).

Other sectors

Youth Affairs also contributes to work led by other sectors. Examples include:

- ▶ justice, in relation to implementing the *Youth Offending Strategy*, and developing and implementing strategies relating to crime reduction and general violence
- ▶ local government – an important sector for promoting strong connections between young people and their communities. Youth Affairs is working with the Ministry of Social Development, the Department of Internal Affairs and Local Government New Zealand to promote children's and young people's participation in local government activities
- ▶ social services, in relation to developing and implementing the *Care and Protection Blueprint*. The *Blueprint* arose from recommendations by Principal Youth Court Judge Mick Brown on improving the care and protection field to benefit young people. Youth Affairs has participated in workshops and consultation and in developing ideas and activities on how to consult best with young people and their families.

ACROSS SECTORS

Implementing the New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy

The *New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy* was launched in 1998. It aims to enhance protective factors and reduce risk factors, suicide and suicidal behaviour through a multi-level, inter-sectoral approach. It has two parts: *In Our Hands*, which has a total population focus; and *Kia Piki te Ora o te Taitamariki*, which focuses on rangatahi Māori.

The thinking behind the Strategy

Although it is unclear why New Zealand has such a high youth suicide rate, research has generated a lot of information about associated risk factors.

Those shown to be significant² include:

- mental illness, particularly depression, alcohol and drug abuse and conduct disorders

² Beautrais A L (2000) Risk factors for suicide and attempted suicide among young people, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 34:420-436.

- ▶ social factors, such as low socio-economic status, poor educational achievement, low income and poverty
- ▶ family factors, such as parental separation or divorce and marital discord, parental mental illness, a family history of suicidal behaviour, a history of physical and/or sexual abuse during childhood and impaired parent-child relationships
- ▶ individual and personality factors, such as a genetic predisposition to mental illness associated with suicide, physiological processes and same-sex-attracted sexual orientation
- ▶ exposure to recent stressful life events and adverse life circumstances
- ▶ environmental and contextual factors, such as exposure to suicide and inappropriate media publicity, and access to suicide methods.

In comparison with the evidence on risk factors, there is little evidence on how to protect against suicide or the effectiveness of suicide prevention programmes.

Making the Strategy work

Youth Affairs leads and co-ordinates the *Strategy's* implementation by interacting with many government sectors and the following three key bodies:

- ▶ the Ministerial Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention, chaired by the Minister of Youth Affairs and including the Ministers of Social Services and Employment, Internal Affairs and Corrections, and Associate Ministers of Health, Māori Development and Education
- ▶ the Inter-agency Committee for Youth Suicide Prevention (IACYSP), with representatives from 12 government agencies with responsibilities under the *Strategy*
- ▶ the Youth Suicide External Reference Group (YSERG), which includes experts from a range of sectors who advise Youth Affairs on implementing the *Strategy*.

Youth Affairs is leading or supporting work on priorities endorsed by the Ministerial Committee on Youth Suicide Prevention in October 2001. These are:

- ▶ strengthened implementation of *Kia Piki te Ora O te Taitamariki*
- ▶ expanding and improving support for individuals and communities following a suicide

- ▶ developing initiatives to reduce suicide and suicidal behaviour among gay, lesbian, bisexual and takataapui communities, who are at significantly increased risk of suicide
- ▶ developing an initiative to reduce youth suicide in the 18 to 24 year age group, particularly those who are not in education
- ▶ developing criteria and information for schools on school-based suicide prevention programmes
- ▶ developing a project plan to reduce suicide and suicidal behaviour among young women.

These priorities were identified in consultation with the IACYSP and the YSERG. They reflect populations at increased risk of suicidal behaviour and identified gaps in the current range of youth suicide prevention initiatives.

Youth Affairs funds and annually evaluates the Suicide Prevention Information New Zealand (SPINZ) service. SPINZ is a national service that collects and disseminates information about youth suicide and youth suicide prevention to support and inform suicide prevention activities. Youth Affairs also administers the Crisis Response Fund, available to support communities in developing appropriate responses to the suicide of a young person.

Action for Child and Youth Development (ACYD)

Youth Affairs has been working closely with the Ministry of Social Development to apply the youth development and ‘whole child’ approaches through the ACYD work programme. This programme links the implementation of the YDSA and *New Zealand’s Agenda for Children: Making Life Better for Children* (which focuses on issues for 0 to 17 year olds). The programme includes:

- ▶ establishing a senior officials’ Child and Youth Development Leadership Group
- ▶ advising on children’s and young people’s participation in decision-making at all levels of society, including schools, local government and national political and democratic processes
- ▶ developing youth participation resources for relevant sectors.

The YDSA and *Agenda for Children* development process highlighted the lack of a centre of responsibility in government for children aged 0 to 11

years. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child also commented on this issue when New Zealand presented its initial report.

The Ministry of Social Development has some responsibilities for the under-12-year-old age group, as does Youth Affairs in its responsibilities under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. A joint paper for you and the Minister of Social Services and Employment is being developed. This will set out options on the role of Youth Affairs and ways the two Ministries work together. The aim is to ensure the outcomes for this age group are given specific attention in policy development.

This work sits beside work being undertaken and led by the State Services Commission on reducing duplication and fragmentation in the public sector, and increasing the sector's capability. The latter aspect aims to see policy development and operational realities more closely aligned.

Drug education

Young people's learning can be inhibited and their capacity to reach their full potential reduced if they become involved with drugs. Health promotion and drug education messages are important to encourage them to avoid or at least delay their use of drugs – and make the most of educational and other learning opportunities in preparation for future employment.

It is imperative that we find the best ways to impart information to young people, their families/whānau and the wider community.

Budget 2002 provided funding (\$0.450 million over three years) for Youth Affairs to establish and support a Ministerial Advisory Group on Drug Education. We recommend that finding suitable candidates and completing the Cabinet appointments and honours process be a priority.

Among other things, we propose that the Group report to you on local and international research on the most appropriate messages and approaches to drug education for young people and families. We also recommend that the Group be encouraged to identify approaches that:

- ▶ minimise harm and reduce the negative effects of drug use
- ▶ enable young people to make informed decisions.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) encompasses a full range of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for children (up to 18 years). It reaffirms that children need special care and protection and acknowledges the primary role of the family and parents in the care and protection of the child.

New Zealand ratified UNCROC in 1993 with three reservations relating to:

- ▶ distinguishing individuals on the basis of their authority to be in New Zealand
- ▶ any young person in custody being kept separate from adults unless it is in their best interests not to do so
- ▶ setting a minimum age of employment for young people.

Cabinet agreed³ to an UNCROC work programme to address concerns about New Zealand's compliance expressed by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Social Development jointly manage this work programme, which focuses on physical punishment of children and removing New Zealand's UNCROC reservations.

Reports are due to Cabinet this year on specific issues (such as section 59 of the Crimes Act 1961) and to the United Nations Committee in September/October 2003. Youth Affairs has a lead role in developing these reports and works closely with a number of other departments.

Commonwealth Youth Programme

The Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) is the youth department of the Commonwealth Secretariat. New Zealand participates at both a pan-Commonwealth and Pacific regional level.

New Zealand's contribution of \$95,000 per annum supports CYP programmes and activities that empower young people (aged 15 to 29 years) throughout the Commonwealth. CYP supports member governments in developing, implementing and strengthening youth policies and participatory practices.

³ CAB (00) M32/7 refers.

We understand the next meeting of the Commonwealth Youth Ministers is to be held in May 2003, in South Africa. We will raise any issues on the timing of the meeting relative to other Ministerial commitments and issues likely to be raised at the meeting closer to the time.

The meeting will be preceded by a meeting of the Regional Advisory Board and Regional Youth Forum in Fiji towards the end of October 2002.

› **MANAGING YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

Youth Affairs administers a number of youth development programmes, including the New Zealand Conservation Corps (NZCC) and Youth Service Corps (YSC). These programmes were established in 1988 and 1995 respectively and aim to:

- ▶ develop life skills and social competence
- ▶ raise self-esteem and motivation levels
- ▶ increase problem-solving skills
- ▶ teach job skills
- ▶ support development of positive peer relationships
- ▶ link the participants to their local communities
- ▶ provide opportunities to contribute something of value to society
- ▶ provide opportunities for exploring broad identity goals and cultural issues.

Participants are encouraged and helped to grow to their full potential and to build a positive outlook on life.

The programmes have five elements:

1. Conservation or community work projects.
2. Challenging recreation.
3. Practical education.
4. Te ao Māori.
5. Practical work experience placement.

The Corps programmes are one of the most successful government-funded youth programmes. On average, 65 to 70 percent of participants are working or have taken up other training or educational opportunities

within six months of leaving a programme. Over 90 percent indicate their self-esteem has improved as a result of the programme.

Since 1988, participants have dedicated about four million people hours to conservation and community projects. They have provided tangible benefits to local communities and demonstrated the capabilities of young people who are encouraged to work in a team situation.

The NZCC and YSC owe their uniqueness and success to a partnership with communities and their youth development focus. Critical to this is a comprehensive approach to developing the participants' social, educational and vocational skills.

The Corps programmes have evolved into an effective joint community and government enterprise. Government funds cover the overhead costs, while the community organisations (called sponsors) provide technical expertise and cover some material costs. Sponsorship levels have increased significantly; each project now receives around 50 cents from the local community for every government dollar invested.

Youth Affairs has developed strong, collaborative relationships with the contracted sponsors that run the programmes, providing additional leverage for standards of excellence in their delivery.

NEW ZEALAND CONSERVATION CORPS

The NZCC caters for young people aged 16 to 25 years and focuses on conservation activities, practical education and challenging recreation. Young people are encouraged to participate in projects that benefit not only themselves but also their local communities.

Projects average 20 weeks and are run by a variety of organisations including community organisations, polytechnics and Māori trusts. We contract with each sponsor for six months, one year or two years. In the 2000-2001 financial year 1,708 young people participated in the NZCC on 128 projects throughout New Zealand.

The NZCC was transferred to Youth Affairs from the Department of Labour in 1990, at the end of its pilot. We provide a consistent base for Corps programme operations and add value to their delivery by reinforcing the critical focus on youth development.

YOUTH SERVICE CORPS

The YSC was established in 1995 as part of the Government's *Youth Employment Strategy*. While it is modelled on the NZCC, it focuses on community projects as opposed to conservation projects and caters for 16 to 20 year olds. In the 2000-2001 year 323 young people participated in the YSC on 22 projects.

NEW YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Specialist Youth Service Corps (for young offenders)

A modified version of the YSC will be established during the 2002-2003 financial year. The 'Specialist Youth Service Corps' will be targeted at young people engaged in the youth justice system aged 15 to 17 years and is part of implementing the *Youth Offending Strategy*.

The programme will aim to change participants' offending behaviour, help them to develop social, educational and vocational skills and provide them with a transition into further education and training or employment.

Programmes will initially be established in eight sites, and in 2003/04 and out-years 16 programmes will be run in eight sites.

Young New Zealanders' Challenge

The Young New Zealanders' Challenge (part of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in New Zealand) is a youth development programme for 14 to 25 year olds. It is designed to engage young people in interesting activities that challenge them, grow their skills and help them contribute positively to their communities. To achieve the Award's different levels, participants complete a mix of community service activities, expeditions, physical activities and skills development.

From 1 July 2002, Youth Affairs is funded to support the Young New Zealanders' Challenge. A particular focus of our work will be extending the Challenge to young people least likely to undertake it, including:

- ▶ rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people
- ▶ young people from other ethnic minorities
- ▶ young people from low socio-economic backgrounds.

› YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE SCHEME

Our student representative scheme in schools is one way we keep in contact with hundreds of young people all over New Zealand. Each year all primary, intermediate and secondary schools in New Zealand are asked to appoint a Youth Affairs student representative. Since the scheme started in 1993, over 4,000 students have taken part.

In 2002-2003 there are student representatives in 673 schools (248 in secondary/composite schools and 425 in intermediate/primary schools). For secondary/composite schools, this represents around 50 percent of the total number of schools.

Student representatives receive, distribute and display information that we send them. We also ask them to survey student opinion on a variety of topics and issues affecting young people. We have recently focused on student participation in decision-making in their schools.

YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The triennial Youth Parliament aims to help young people between 16 and 18 years achieve a greater understanding of and involvement in parliamentary processes. It also:

- offers young people an opportunity to have their views heard by key decision-makers and the public
- teaches young people how to be active citizens by understanding and influencing government decision-making processes.

The Youth Parliament duplicates as realistically as possible the actual workings of Parliament. Youth Members of Parliament (YMPs) are involved in all aspects of the event as members of Select Committees, asking oral questions of existing Government Ministers and participating in general debate in the House and on a specific Bill the YMPs propose.⁴

⁴Topics debated at the last three Youth Parliaments were: decriminalising the personal use of marijuana (2000); equity between the student allowance and the unemployment benefit (1997); and lowering the drinking age from 20 to 18 years (1994).

The next Youth Parliament is scheduled for August/September 2003. As part of the ACYD work programme, we propose that you consider international experience with similar events, and options to improve the effectiveness of the New Zealand approach.

We need a significant lead-in time to arrange the Youth Parliament and recommend an early decision on its timing. However, you may also wish to wait for the outcome of the ACYD work.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION RESOURCES

Before the end of 2002, we intend publishing resources for organisations to help them inform and involve young people in policy and programme development. This includes *E tipu e rea*, a guide for Māori organisations on rangatahi Māori participation.

Important Considerations for the Future

› MAINTAINING MOMENTUM WITH THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The YDSA is not a 'quick fix' strategy. Improving the lives of young New Zealanders requires concerted effort across the whole of government, local government and communities.

The YDSA has been widely promoted, and support at the community level and within the youth sector means the youth development approach has already generated considerable momentum. This was particularly evident at the recent 'Involve 2002' conference on youth development.

We need strong leadership and effective co-ordination to implement the YDSA, and believe this will be achieved by:

- ▶ ensuring more consistent, strengths-based thinking and action within and across sectors at both policy and programme levels
- ▶ ensuring more inter-sectoral policy development
- ▶ improving the level and practice of involving young people in decision-making and implementing policies and programmes
- ▶ expanding the range of development opportunities for young people generally
- ▶ enhancing the capacity of the community sector, particularly youth-focused organisations
- ▶ establishing better communication between the public sector, communities and service providers
- ▶ managing issues that arise from the increasing diversity of our youth population, and the special needs of some groups of young people, for example rangatahi Māori and young Pacific people.

Strategies are already in place to address a number of these strands. For example, the senior officials' Child and Youth Development Leadership Group will ensure a more consistent, strengths-based approach across sectors, particularly at a policy level.

We are also working with the Ministry of Social Development on a resource to help agencies involve young people in policy development. And we are currently establishing whether we need more formal forums to ensure children and young people can participate at a range of levels within society.

We have an important role in relation to the YDSA. Our success will largely depend on our ability to change the way the rest of the public sector thinks about and delivers services to young people.

› **BUILDING ‘YOUTH’ CAPACITY**

Effective youth development needs well functioning schools, workplaces, families, communities and peer groups. It is clear that these social groupings are more likely to function well when they are appropriately skilled and resourced – so building workforce capacity is a necessary adjunct to extending programmes and services for young people.

For example, the document *Youth Health – A Guide to Action* supports improving existing training initiatives as well as developing new youth-specific training across disciplines. Developing workforce training and improving knowledge on youth health will provide the foundation for competent, skilled professionals capable of working effectively with young people.

Another key area is youth work. Youth workers play a vital role in supporting young people to negotiate a range of challenges. An effective youth worker can make a significant contribution to individuals and the wider community. We need further work on strengthening youth worker networks at the local and national levels, and on ensuring that youth work is seen as a career with appropriate training and skill recognition.

› **MAINTAINING A FOCUS ON KEY SECTOR ISSUES**

We propose to manage key sector issues by focusing on policies and programmes that will significantly benefit young people, their families and communities. The education and employment sectors are expected to remain priorities for some time.

EDUCATION

We will need to work closely with the education sector to:

- ▶ help keep young people involved in learning at school
- ▶ help young people gain the skills they need to continue learning for a lifetime
- ▶ connect students to a broader range of learning or training options
- ▶ have them gain support and credit for learning no matter where it happens
- ▶ encourage the development of generic problem-solving and entrepreneurial skills
- ▶ help develop solutions that preserve young people's right to an education, rather than excluding them from school through suspension or expulsion
- ▶ investigate the economic and social costs associated with tertiary education.

EDUCATION, TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN TRANSITION

Some young people aged 16 to 19 years discontinue their education and find it difficult to make a successful transition to employment. We propose that you consider options for improving outcomes for this age group, which include developing and strengthening:

- ▶ income support and education and training systems to better support young people in transition
- ▶ employment initiatives for young people, such as those being led by the New Zealand Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Mayors' Taskforce

› **MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM OF THE YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY**

A range of initiatives to address the *Strategy* goals has been implemented since its launch in 1998. The youth suicide rate has declined significantly since a peak in 1995 and it appears the *Strategy* is having a positive effect.

One challenge is to ensure New Zealand does not become complacent about youth suicide. We still have one of the highest rates in the world and some youth population sub-groups continue to be at much greater risk of suicide than in the past. Priorities outlined earlier in this briefing aim to address this.

We need to ensure that communities and service providers are informed about the Government's response to youth suicide in a way that does not directly raise awareness about suicide (as this can often contribute further to the problem). At the same time, Youth Affairs and other government agencies must continue to work with an expanding number of community-based youth suicide prevention initiatives to encourage safe, effective and evidence-based approaches. This is a priority owing to the very real possibility of causing harm through programmes that do not meet such criteria.

Other emerging issues include the need for us to negotiate responses to:

- ▶ calls for an 'all-age' suicide prevention strategy
- ▶ an apparent increase in inappropriate media coverage about suicide.

› **ENSURING BETTER OUTCOMES FOR RANGATAHI MĀORI, YOUNG PACIFIC PEOPLE AND YOUNG PEOPLE FROM MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES**

The youth development approach places the young person within their broader social context. This is particularly important for rangatahi Māori and young Pacific people as there are clear disparities in their outcomes relative to non-Māori and non-Pacific people.

New Zealand's population of young people is very diverse, and this diversity is increasing considerably. The issues summarised below were raised during consultation on the YDSA, and most will need to be addressed in the context of initiatives across many sectors.

RANGATAHI MĀORI

Rangatahi Māori need to be properly equipped to contribute to their whānau, hapū and iwi. Many find that developing a greater sense of their Māori cultural identity helps in this respect.

For rangatahi Māori, this means more emphasis on:

- ▶ supporting community-based, rangatahi-driven youth development programmes
- ▶ providing opportunities for rangatahi for te reo Māori and culture development, including relevant Māori values and practices and opportunities for connection to their whānau, hapū and iwi
- ▶ increasing non-Māori communities' understanding and acceptance of tikanga Māori and the rights of rangatahi to participate in a culturally appropriate way
- ▶ empowering rangatahi with opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their lives
- ▶ better understanding rangatahi and recognising their values, how Māori see the world and their preferred ways of learning.

YOUNG PACIFIC PEOPLE

Pacific culture, values and practices are very strong in New Zealand. Young Pacific people need to develop their own identities among conflicting systems and two or more cultures.

For young Pacific people this means:

- ▶ acknowledging the different Pacific communities
- ▶ recognising Pacific young people in the context of their families
- ▶ promoting opportunities for retaining language and culture
- ▶ using appropriate methods and learning styles for engaging with Pacific young people
- ▶ promoting and using mentoring programmes and role models
- ▶ working alongside the strong church connections in Pacific communities
- ▶ providing culturally appropriate services in schools
- ▶ empowering Pacific young people with opportunities to participate in decisions affecting their lives

- ▶ supporting Pacific community-based youth programmes
- ▶ increasing cultural understanding by non-Pacific people of Pacific cultures and values.

YOUNG PEOPLE FROM MINORITY ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Ethnic people's needs and views vary according to their background and time spent in New Zealand. For young people from minority ethnic communities, better outcomes will be achieved through:

- ▶ acknowledging the specific issues of young people who are recent migrants, including language barriers and conflicting cultures, with different identities at home and at work or school
- ▶ promoting opportunities for retaining language and culture
- ▶ meeting the needs of young people in New Zealand who are here on their own for study, without support from their families
- ▶ recognising and understanding cultural difference in values and practices
- ▶ helping parents better understand their young people in the context of the New Zealand youth culture at school or work
- ▶ acknowledging the specific needs of young people who are refugees
- ▶ helping in the transition to adulthood in a new and sometimes alien culture
- ▶ living with different cultural and religious expectations from the majority of New Zealanders.

› RECOGNISING THE IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Information sent globally through a wide range of media is reaching many more young people than in previous generations. Countries are now competing with each other for highly skilled labour. It is advantageous for young people and New Zealand as a whole that they harness opportunities and successfully adapt to the innovative and creative world in which they live.

However, globalisation also brings significant problems for young people. Increasing rates of social change and competition for training and job opportunities increase the stress they experience. There will be

implications when reviewing policies that encourage young people to stay in New Zealand, such as the *Employment Strategy* and policies relating to student loans.

We are also aware of mounting concern about problem gambling, particularly among young men. Increasingly sophisticated gaming technology (such as electronic poker machines and internet gaming) and marketing that directly targets young people are growing global concerns. While the full economic and social impacts are not clear, increasing young people's access to gaming opportunities is unlikely to help with their positive development.

APPENDIX A:

Youth Affairs' Structure and Functional Groupings

› CHIEF EXECUTIVE UNIT

▶ CHIEF EXECUTIVE: ANNE CARTER

The Chief Executive Unit comprises the Chief Executive, her personal assistant and a communications advisor.

The Chief Executive directs and oversees all aspects of Youth Affairs' functions and operations.

Communication and facilitation are responsibilities shared by most Youth Affairs staff. However, many key youth participation and facilitation activities are led and co-ordinated by the advisor associated with the Chief Executive Unit. This includes ensuring young New Zealanders' perspectives are promoted in economic and social policy development and in managing relationships. This structural arrangement is currently being reviewed.

› POLICY

▶ MANAGER: HENRY DOWLER

The Youth Affairs Policy team comprises a manager, four policy analysts, two advisors and a support advisor.

The Policy team considers and advises on issues arising from almost the full range of government portfolios. The heavy demands made of this relatively small team require careful management.

The Policy team is committed to providing you with timely, high-quality policy advice that responds to Government priorities. It welcomes and incorporates critique and comment from an extensive network of stakeholders, including young people, practitioners, experts and other government departments, agencies, organisations and individuals.

As far as practicable, the Policy team strives to ensure all advice is supported by:

- ▶ a strong evidence base
- ▶ a clear decision-making framework
- ▶ multidisciplinary contributions
- ▶ consideration of diverse perspectives
- ▶ appropriate consultation, including with young people.

The YDSA also provides an important evidence-based platform for advice development.

› YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES MANAGEMENT

- ▶ MANAGER: SARNDRA HAMILTON

The Youth Development Programmes Management team comprises a manager, four advisors and an administration advisor.

The team is responsible for all aspects of managing youth development programmes funded through Vote Youth Affairs. This includes contract management and promoting youth development opportunities to young people.

Non-departmental appropriations (GST inclusive) administered for youth development programmes are:

- ▶ Conservation Corps – \$6.218 million
- ▶ Youth Service Corps – \$0.985 million
- ▶ Specialist Youth Service Corps (for young offenders) – \$0.504 million
- ▶ Young New Zealanders' Challenge – \$0.250 million
- ▶ Other Expenses – Commonwealth Youth Programme – \$0.095 million.

The team's manager also provides strategic human resources advice.

› YOUTH SUICIDE PREVENTION

- ▶ NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR: DEBBIE EDWARDS

The Youth Suicide Prevention team comprises a national co-ordinator and a policy analyst.

The team is responsible for all aspects of leading and co-ordinating the implementation of the *New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy*. This includes working closely with a large number of government departments, community organisations, expert advisors and other interested and affected parties.

Non-departmental appropriations (GST inclusive) administered for youth suicide prevention are:

- ▶ Youth Suicide Prevention Information Service (SPINZ) – \$0.460 million
- ▶ Other Expenses – Crisis Support Fund – \$0.020 million.

› CORPORATE SUPPORT

- ▶ MANAGER: TANIA DONALDSON

The Corporate Support team comprises a manager, two administrators, a communications advisor, an information officer and a support officer.

The Corporate Support team is responsible for providing support services across Youth Affairs. Services include general administration, financial, information management, information technology, media and public relations, operational human resources and property management.

APPENDIX B:

A Profile of Young People in New Zealand Today

The vast majority of young people in New Zealand, including those who may experience problems during adolescence, make a successful transition to adulthood. They are better educated and have more opportunities to be exposed to different ideas and cultures than any other generation.

Young people are reasonably healthy, although there are differences in status, especially for some ethnic groups. Statistics show that rangatahi Māori have more health issues than their non-Māori peers. Youth suicide also continues to be a major concern.

Changes in the economy and labour market will require young people to increase their skills and education levels. They will also need to develop a flexible attitude to employment. The pressure to ensure they are well qualified will also mean young people are more likely to spend longer in education and be financially dependent on their families for longer.

› DIVERSITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people have many different types of social and cultural characteristics that influence the choices they make and the opportunities that are open to them:⁵

- ▶ gender
- ▶ age
- ▶ where they live (urban, rural, provincial)
- ▶ how they live (living arrangements)
- ▶ ethnic background – Māori, Pacific, New Zealand European, Asian, other ethnic groups

⁵ Ministry of Youth Affairs (2001) *Supporting the Positive Development of Young People in New Zealand: A discussion document for consultation on a Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*.

- ▶ connectedness' to their ethnic backgrounds (for example, the language they speak)
- ▶ fundamental beliefs and values (or 'world view')
- ▶ religious affiliations and spirituality
- ▶ sexual orientation
- ▶ disabilities
- ▶ level of educational achievement
- ▶ socio-economic background
- ▶ lifestyle interests, such as sports, recreation and music
- ▶ dependency on and responsibility for others
- ▶ paid and unpaid work, including self-employment and family responsibilities.

› HOW MANY YOUNG PEOPLE DO WE HAVE?

The youth population in New Zealand is ethnically diverse and changing. New immigrants from Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe, together with increasing numbers of young Māori and Pacific people, contribute to the increasing diversity.

Our young people (12 to 24 years inclusive) make up 18 percent (675,087) of the total population (3,737,280):⁶

- ▶ 16 percent of the New Zealand European population are aged 12 to 24 years
- ▶ 24 percent of the Māori population are aged 12 to 24 years
- ▶ 24 percent of the Pacific population are aged 12 to 24 years
- ▶ 26 percent of the Asian population are aged 12 to 24 years.

The proportion of young people in New Zealand's population is declining and expected to drop to around 15 percent by 2051.⁷

⁶ Statistics New Zealand, *2001 Census of Population and Dwellings*.

⁷ Based on 1996 Census. It should also be noted that the proportion of rangatahi Māori, Pacific, Asian and other young people is increasing, although projections will not be available from Statistics New Zealand until June 2003. *New Zealand Now: Young New Zealanders* (1998) Ministry of Youth Affairs and Statistics New Zealand.

› FAMILY/WHĀNAU AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

Family/whānau are usually the most important people in a young person's life. Structures vary and have undergone rapid change, and include:

- ▶ one or two parents
- ▶ natural or step parents and siblings
- ▶ grandparents raising an increasing number of grandchildren
- ▶ wider groups of relatives and extended family
- ▶ groups of unrelated people who support and care for one another.

The quality of family relationships is more important than structure to young people.

Young people commonly move to live independently, although some young people who have a partner and/or children may still live with their family/whānau.

At the 2001 census:⁸

- ▶ 65 percent of young people lived with their own parents or people in a parent role
- ▶ 83 percent of young people aged 12 to 19 years lived with their family/whānau
- ▶ 32 percent of young people aged 20 to 24 years lived with their family/whānau
- ▶ 63 percent of rangatahi Māori lived with their whānau compared with 69 percent of Pacific young people, 67 percent European and 60 percent Asian
- ▶ 35 percent of families (with dependent children) received welfare support.

⁸ Statistics New Zealand, *2001 Census of Population and Dwellings*.

› WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE LIVE?

Young people tend to live in large urban areas, reflecting the educational, employment and lifestyle opportunities available to them in our cities. After 25 to 29 year olds, young people aged 20 to 24 years are more mobile than the rest of the population.⁹

- ▶ More young people live in major urban (75 percent) than secondary urban, minor urban or rural areas.
- ▶ Relatively higher proportions of rangatahi Māori (14 percent) and young New Zealand European people (15 percent) live in rural areas.
- ▶ More young Pacific people live in major urban areas (94 percent) than other ethnic groups.¹⁰

› HOW HEALTHY ARE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Young New Zealanders are very healthy compared with the rest of the population, but they do poorly in some areas – most notably suicide rates. Other areas of concern include car accidents, alcohol and drug issues and poor sexual and reproductive health.¹¹ Differences in health status also vary according to ethnicity, gender and where young people live.

Compared with other age groups, young people have:^{12,13}

- ▶ high rates of mental illness (young women tend to have higher rates of anxiety and depression)
- ▶ high rates of alcohol and drug use and abuse, particularly younger men (which is frequently associated with mental illness)
- ▶ more injuries (including from motor vehicle accidents) which are the leading cause of hospitalisation and death for young people

⁹ Since the 1996 Census approximately 75 percent of this age group have spent fewer than five years at their usual residence. Statistics New Zealand website www.statistics.govt.nz

¹⁰ Statistics New Zealand, *2001 Census of Population and Dwellings*. The New Zealand Standards Areas Classification comprises four categories: main urban (minimum population of 30,000); secondary urban (10,000 to 29,999); minor urban (1,000 to 9,999); and rural (300 to 999). Statistics New Zealand website www.statistics.govt.nz

¹¹ Ministry of Youth Affairs (2001) *Youth Development Consultation Document*.

¹² Ministry of Health (2002) *Youth Health Action Plan*, June.

¹³ Ministry of Health, New Zealand Health Information Service (2002) www.nzhis.govt.nz/stats/hospstats.html.

- ▶ more motor vehicle accidents (which in 1996-1998 were the most common cause of death in 12 to 19 year olds and the second most common cause in 20 to 24 years olds)
- ▶ high rates of suicide (the second highest cause of death among 15 to 24 year olds).

Male hospitalisation rates for fractures/intercranial injuries are three to four times higher than those for females, and rangatahi Māori have higher death rates than non-Māori for all deaths caused by some type of injury, with the highest disparity being in suicide.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Early sexual behaviour is associated with low socio-economic status, poverty, poor educational opportunities, being born to a teenage mother and high rates of unemployment. Data suggest young New Zealanders' rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are considerably higher than in other countries.¹⁴

- ▶ The most common reason for hospitalisation in females over 15 years is associated with pregnancy.
- ▶ Over 60 percent of gonorrhoea, Chlamydia and genital warts cases occur in people under 25 years.
- ▶ Young people are also more likely to be diagnosed with multiple infections (over 75 percent of concurrent infections).¹⁵

YOUTH SUICIDE

Information maintained by the New Zealand Health Information Service confirms that the youth suicide rate has declined since the 1995 peak of 156 deaths. It is too early to be confident that this downward trend will be sustained, and the New Zealand youth suicide rate continues to be the highest among comparable OECD countries. Suicide rates for young women continue to rise.

- ▶ One hundred and nineteen young people died by suicide in 1999, the lowest since 1987.
- ▶ In 1999 the Māori youth suicide rate was 30.6 per 100,000, compared with 20.3 for non-Māori.

¹⁴ Institute of Environmental Science and Research Ltd (2001) *STI Surveillance Report*.

¹⁵ Institute of Environmental Science and Research Ltd (2001) *STI Surveillance Report*.

ALCOHOL USE

A drug use survey of over 5500 people was conducted in 2001. Its findings for the year 2000 were :¹⁶

- ▶ alcohol is still the most widely used drug in New Zealand
- ▶ the number of young people who have tried alcohol has remained stable (compared to a similar 1998 survey), although in 2000 there was an increase in the proportion of young men and women aged 15 to 17 years who consumed enough to feel drunk at least monthly
- ▶ of those who had tried alcohol in the year 2000, 42 percent had started drinking by the age of 15 years.

DRUG USE

The 'more frequent' use of marijuana (10 or more times in the last month) by 15 to 17 year olds increased from 1 percent in 1998 to 4 percent in 2001.¹⁷ In young women aged 15 to 17 years there was an increase:

- ▶ in using marijuana 'more frequently' from zero in 1998 to 4 percent in 2001
- ▶ in 'trying marijuana' from 26 percent in 1998 to 38 percent in 2001
- ▶ in having used marijuana in the month preceding the survey, from 6 percent in 1998 to 15 percent in 2001.

There was also an increase in the number of people who had tried other drugs (excluding alcohol, tobacco and marijuana).

¹⁶Auckland Public Health Research Unit, University of Auckland, *Drug Use in New Zealand National Surveys Comparison 1998 & 2001.*

¹⁷Auckland Public Health Research Unit, University of Auckland, *Drug Use in New Zealand National Surveys Comparison 1998 & 2001.*

› YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION

Outside the family, young people spend most of their time in school or undertaking further education, training or work. Their chances of doing well in other parts of their lives greatly improve if they feel positive about school and build sound learning skills.

The proportion of students staying at secondary school beyond the compulsory age has gradually decreased over the past few years. In 1999 84.6 percent of students stayed at school until the age of 16 and 15.8 percent until the age of 18. Comparable figures for 2001 were 79.8 percent and 13 percent respectively.¹⁸

In the school sector, females are outperforming males. In 2000 41 percent of female school leavers gained a year 13 qualification compared with 34 percent of males. There are also significant differences in the qualifications gained by different ethnic groups. In 2000 more rangatahi Māori (35 percent) and young Pacific people (26 percent) left school with no qualifications than other ethnic groups (New Zealand European 14 percent and Asian 10 percent).¹⁹

The drive to a 'knowledge economy' is leading to a greater demand for a higher-skilled workforce, with an increasing number of young people attending tertiary institutions (universities, polytechnics, colleges of education and wananga).²⁰

Many young people are combining work with study. The proportion of young people in full-time employment has dropped and the proportion participating in education and part-time employment has increased.²¹ This has coincided with rising study fees and suggests many students are working (at least part-time) to fund their study. Young people are now more dependent on their families and taking longer to become financially independent than earlier generations.²² Many have student debts before entering full-time employment.²³

¹⁸ Data Management Unit, Ministry of Education.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Statistics New Zealand, *2001 Census of Population and Dwellings*.

²² Ministry of Youth Affairs (2001) *Youth Development Consultation Document*.

²³ The average cumulative student loan debt increased from \$5,524 in 1993-1994 to \$12,496 in 2000-2001. The overall forecast for loan repayment time is estimated at just over nine and a half years. Ministry of Education, Department of Inland Revenue and Department of Work & Income, *Student Loan Scheme Annual Report to 30 June 2001*.

› YOUNG PEOPLE AND EMPLOYMENT

Employment is a key determinant of income, health, housing, social wellbeing, family life and leisure. Work is also linked to reduced criminal activity by young people.²⁴ Working part-time may lead to more permanent employment opportunities in the future. At the 2001 Census 20 percent of young people aged 15 to 24 years had a part-time job.²⁵

Young people have higher rates of unemployment than other groups. This reflects lower levels of education, training and work experience and therefore employability, particularly among those at the younger age of the youth spectrum. Young people have also been disproportionately affected by unemployment in times of economic recession.²⁶ At the 2001 Census 40.3 percent of the total unemployed in New Zealand were aged 15 to 24. The unemployment rate for 15 to 19 year olds stood at 22 percent; almost three times that of the total population (7.5 percent). Twenty-eight percent of rangatahi Māori and 27 percent of young Pacific people were unemployed compared with 12 percent of New Zealand European and 23 percent Asian.²⁷

In 2001 a large proportion of 15 to 19 year olds were employed as service and sales workers (37 percent), with the next largest areas being clerks (14 percent) and elementary occupations (low-skilled manual jobs) (13 percent).²⁸

Access to new technologies, information and knowledge means countries are now competing with each other for highly skilled labour. The increasing rate of social change and competition for training and job opportunities are increasing the stress young people experience.

› OUR CHANGING WORLD AFFECTS YOUNG PEOPLE

Globalisation, new technologies and associated social change are rapidly changing the world in which young people live. At the 2001 Census 58 percent of families with 12 to 19 year olds had internet access at home.²⁹

²⁴ Ministry of Youth Affairs (2002) *Youth Development Literature Review: Building Strength*, Ministry of Youth Affairs.

²⁵ Statistics New Zealand, *2001 Census of Population and Dwellings*.

²⁶ Ministry of Youth Affairs and Statistics New Zealand (1998) *New Zealand Now: Young New Zealanders*.

²⁷ Statistics New Zealand, *2001 Census of Population and Dwellings*.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

APPENDIX C:

Reference Documents Attached to this Briefing

The following key documents are attached for your reference:

- ▶ *Statement of Intent of the Ministry of Youth Affairs for the Year Ending 30 June 2003* (May 2002)
- ▶ *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (January 2002)
- ▶ *Youth Development Literature Review: Building Strength: A Review of Research on How to Achieve Good Outcomes for Young People in their Families, Peer Groups, Schools, Careers and Communities* (June 2002)
- ▶ *The New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy* (1998)
- ▶ *Kia Piki te Ora o te Taitamariki: Strengthening New Zealand Wellbeing – The New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy*, Keri Lawson-Te Aho (1998)
- ▶ *In Our Hands: The New Zealand Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy – A Review of the Evidence*, Dr Annette Beautrais (March 1998)
- ▶ *Children in New Zealand: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – Second Periodic Report of New Zealand* (December 2000).