The Wayback Machine - https://web.archive.org/web/20231001143859/https://www.education.govt.nz/school/student-support/youth-advisory-group/

Ministerial Youth Advisory Group

Learn about the Ministerial Youth Advisory Group and its members.

LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE	MAIN AUDIENCE	OTHER
Inform	• Young people • Parents, caregivers and whānau	• Principals and tumuaki • Teachers and kaiako • Community organisations

Children and young people are at the heart of our education system. They have a right to participate, be heard and have their opinions considered in decisions that affect them.

- Purpose of the Youth Advisory Group
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Purpose of the Youth Advisory Group

- A way for New Zealand youth to share their experiences and perspectives on education with the Minister of Education.
- Members bring their insights to the Ministry of Education to help inform how we work and improve the education system.

Meet the Ministerial Youth Advisory Group

Hazel Rodney

17, Hamilton

Kia ora

My name is Hazel Rodney and I am a Year 13 student at Sacred Heart Girls College Hamilton. I have been granted the honour of being elected as our school's Mission Leader for 2023.

I hail from the beautiful island of Borneo, specifically a state of East Malaysia called Sarawak. A place that is home to an abundance and plethora of culture, I hold pride within my indigenous identity and heritage as a young Iban woman. My upbringing as an Iban youth who experienced a transition of experiences from the Malaysian to Aotearoa's educational system has served as a major influence upon my prospect and perspective of education.

I am a goal-driven individual who is stubborn when it comes to curiosity in subjects where insight could be extracted. My interests lie within fields of humanities and liberal arts, a common denominator being the attributes of human society. My passion for education and further improvement stemmed from my efforts to adapt as a student in Aotearoa, for I intend to help make the system a platform of empowerment and strength, making the transition a far easier process compared to one with no aid. My experiences and knowledge of two different geographical education systems could be a merit for a source of perspective within the Youth Advisory Group.

Coming from a descendant of remarkable educational figures of Sarawak, my desire and enthusiasm to enable the system to cater and benefit those who intend to pursue knowledge runs within the bloodline. From a lineage of rich history filled with native tribes and warriors.

My life essentially revolves around the notion of a remarkable quote said by a prominent Iban warrior called Rentap: "Agi Idup, Agi Ngelaban". The essence of the quote is the belief that as you are alive, you continue to fight. The same philosophy is applied in my perspective of education: for as long as I live, I will keep on fighting to work for inclusivity and how the system can cater for various students as no individual should ever experience deprivation from the opportunity to attain knowledge and shall be given the chance to reach their full potential academically. With this, I also intend to return to my homeland and act for positive change to be inflicted upon the education system for the welfare of students, as my privilege as a student in Aotearoa allows me to gain further opportunities that I mean to use to great capability.

Laila Baghdad

15, Wellington

Kia Ora and Assalamu Alaikum :)

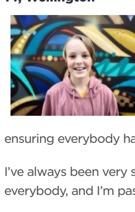
My name is Laila Baghdad, and I am a year 11 student at Tawa College. I am part of the student council and an active member of the SVA committee and our school's Muslim club.

I love to read, watch films, and listen to music. I have a strong passion for psychology and wish to pursue a career in it in the future- I'm also a huge advocate for mental health. I am originally from Egypt, and my culture is very valuable to me.

As a Muslim and an Arab, I hope to be the voice of Muslim youth in Aoteroa. As a new addition to the YAG, I am really looking forward to being a part of the action and truly making a difference in our education system in 2023. I have attended school in three different countries, and I have a bunch of new ideas from various cultures that I cannot wait to bring to the group.

Mackay Thomson

14, Wellington



Kia Ora,

My name is Mackay Thomson and I am a year 11 student at Kāpiti College. I've lived both in New Zealand and Ireland and have experienced a variety of different schooling systems. Coming from a family that puts a lot of value in ensuring everybody has access to an education and the resources they need,

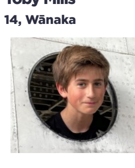
I've always been very supported, but I recognize that by no means is this the case for everybody, and I'm passionate about trying to change that.

My college has the highest proportion of openly transgender students in the country, and with an active transgender support group and "queer straight alliance" cohort supporting students of all identities and sexualities.

As a bisexual myself, I hope to bring this progressive movement to the table through the YAG and establish more widespread support in schools for our rainbow rangatahi, as well as address the growing mental health crisis affecting students all over the country. I hope that I can use this opportunity to represent the needs of students and create a more inclusive, prosperous educational environment for all.

Toby Mills

14, Wānaka



Hi, my name is Toby, I'm 14 years old and I live in Wānaka.

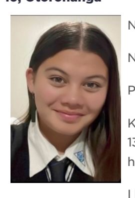
I'm currently in Year 10 at Mount Aspiring College and I feel very privileged to have been given such an awesome opportunity to work alongside the rest of the YAG team.

Last year I broke my C4 vertebrae and as a result I spent a lot of time navigating around in a wheelchair. This has made me a lot more aware of general accessibility around schools and this is something I'd really like to focus on whilst I'm part of the Youth Advisory Group.

I'm really looking forward to being part of the team in 2023!

Te Atamihi Papa

16, Otorohanga



Noo Waikato-Maniapoto

Noo Ngaati Koroki-Kahukura me Ngaati

Pou Rahui ahau.

Kia ora, my name is Te Atamihi Vivienne Papa. I'm 16 and a year 13 student at Te Wharekura o Maniapoto. I am currently the head girl at my kura and co-leader for the student council.

I have been brought up and enriched in my maori culture through the Kiingitanga. Returning regularly to my marae, to Kiingitanga events, attending Kohanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa and Wharekura has enabled me to embrace all cultures and communities in Aotearoa.

It is my hope that rangatahi can provide fresh and vibrant ideas, such as including maramataka maori (lunar calendar), and trying to include maori philosophy in the way we teach so that it remains relevant in our world.

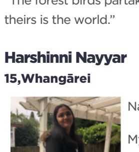
I'm grateful for the opportunity to be included in the Minister's Youth Advisory Group. I hope to use this opportunity to connect with others and create more ideas for the betterment of the education system.

"Ko te manu e kai i te miro, noona te ngaahere. Ko te manu e kai i te maatauranga noona te ao."

"The forest birds partake of the miro berries, but the birds that partake of education, theirs is the world."

Harshinni Nayyar

15,Whangārei



Namaste/Kia Ora,

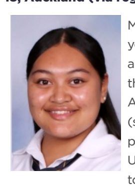
My name is Harshinni. Harshinni means bringing a smile; that is what I love doing. I am a Year 11 student attending Whangarei Girls High School. I am blessed to have a twin to share my successes and failures. I am 15 years old, have lived in three diverse countries, and studied in seven private, charter and state schools. I am fortunate to have enjoyed an enriching experience with contrasting education systems and social and cultural values. Although, as an Indian and gifted learner, I have faced challenges and obstacles in my learning path. However, these challenges assisted me to gain resilience and

perseverance. I am passionate about promoting progressive changes to the educational environment where we are proud to be ourselves regardless of gender, ethnicity and race.

I am excited to join the YAG team and appreciate the opportunity to become the voice of new immigrant students in NZ so that their learning experience is positive and worthwhile.

Eniselini Ali

18, Auckland (via regional Ministry YAG representation)



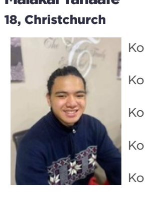
Malo e Lelei, my name is Eniselini Ali, I am 18 years of age and a year 13 attending Marcellin College in Auckland. A little bit about myself; I am a proud daughter of Tongan immigrants and the first generation in my entire family to be born and raised in Aotearoa. I enjoy any literature subjects, performing arts (specifically joining cultural groups), and I have a strong passion for studying law and international politics in the University of Auckland next year. The main reason why I want to join the National Advisory Group is because I have many relatives who are yet to reach NCEA, and I hope to see them strive for success and excellence in the hands of an education system that supports and caters to their academic needs. Not only do I hope for my family members to gain such support, but for all the future learners and successors of New Zealand.

With having the privilege to be educated in Aotearoa, I have a strong passion in changing the way our education system caters to its students; more specifically the BIPOC youth community financially, academically, mentally and spiritually. The main issues I am personally targeting are the importance of mental health, subjects that allow students who balance work and school (especially through the disruptions of covid) to be able to gain credits and have a flexible schedule that caters to their education and to their families needs. I also want to improve/implement better funding catering for updated resource books and practical materials for students attending low decile high schools, so every high school gives an equal amount of learning opportunities regarding every student's academic possibilities. All these issues have been brought to my attention from my own personal experiences, and I hope that when I am able to work alongside such a powerful youth group, we as a country can bring forth better learning opportunities for the upcoming generation of young learners.

I want to thank the Minister of Education, the Auckland Youth Advisory Group, my family and my people for getting me to where I am now. I hope that the ideas and changes we put forward as a group will inspire at least 1 student to make big moves regardless of what they have to say and wherever their voices are shared. I also hope that in taking this step, I become a vessel to all the young learners of Aotearoa and the Pacific and become a better leader and student for my people and those that are yet to come.

Malakai Tahaafe

18, Christchurch



Ko Whetumatarau tōku maunga,

Ko Awatere tōku awa,

Ko Horouta tōku waka,

Ko Te Whānau a Hinerupe tōku Hapū,

Ko Hinerupe tōku Marae,

Ko Ngāti Porou, ko Ngāti Hamoa, ko Ngāti Tonga tōku iwi,

Ko Te Kura ō Ngā Tamatane ō Ōtautahi tōku kura,

No Ōtautahi ahau,

Ko Malakai 'Ilamekiteau Tahaafe tōku ingoa,

E ngā mana tēnā koutou kātoa, Mālō e lelei, Talofa lava and Warm Pasifika Greetings. My name is Malakai, and I am a Year 13 student at Christchurch Boys' High School in Christchurch.

Growing up in Christchurch, I have experienced education in ways that could never have been imagined! Being displaced from our home during the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes, meant that my siblings and I for the first time, had to be home-schooled while our family lived out of a Holiday Park. In 2019, I experienced for the first time, a scary city-wide lockdown during school that lasted well into the night, when the tragic Mosque shootings occurred, and my school was near the Al Noor Mosque where the shootings began. From 2020, I experienced for the first time, online learning, remote learning, zoom/team's meetings, mass numbers of teachers and students away sick and raised anxieties, feelings of isolation and uncertainty from both students and adults in my school because of Covid. Some of the struggles I have witnessed include students having to drop out of school because of low attendance due to their parent(s) losing their jobs through being unvaccinated, boys not being able to afford proper equipment for their schooling, a lack of focus on mental well-being and suicide prevention, discrimination, and racism.

To do my part and explicitly raise awareness of the issues that matter most, I am a member on the International Committee, Wellbeing Committee, Student Executive, Student Forum, Pasifika Group, and Pasifika Voices Group. In my community, I am a member of The Christchurch Foundation "Generation Give Programme" that believes young people should have a chance to make a difference in their community and the Honourable Lianne Dalziel, Mayor of Christchurch is the patron of this initiative, and I am a young men's representative in the youth programme of my church.

I am honoured to have been selected to be a member of the Ministry's Youth Advisory Group. I hope to be an advocate and catalyst for the change necessary to ensure that no matter who you are, where you live or how in Aotearoa, we will all enjoy excellent and equitable outcomes through an education and schooling system that represents us.

Ahakoa he mihi poto, he mihi aroha tenei, tēnā koutou katoa.

Daisy Tumataroa

18, Taumarunui

Ko Ruapehu te maunga
Ko Makotuku te awa
Ko Aotea te waka
Ko Raetihi te tūrangawaewae
Ko Te Puke me Mangamingi ngā marae
Ko Te Āti Haunui-a-Pāpārangi me Ngāti Rangi me Uenuku ngā iwi
Ko Daisy Tumataroa tōku ingoa

Kia ora, my name is Daisy Jae Tumataroa and I am a first year student at Waikato University.

I was born and raised in small-town Raetihi in the central North Island near Mount Ruapehu. I am a curious person who enjoys obtaining new knowledge from pretty much anything. I have a passion for using my voice and fighting for what's right. I have a strong belief that education is the key to empowering people.

At Taumarunui High School we use an innovative big picture learning model and I enjoy putting forward new ideas and opinions for the future improvement of our educational system.

I am so thankful and blessed for the opportunity that has been given to me as a member of the Ministerial Youth Advisory Group and I look forward to the achievements of our team in 2023.

Jayden van Dyk

17, Hamilton

Hi, my name is Jayden van Dyk. I'm 17 and I live in Hamilton.

I have been fortunate enough to have attended a small rural high-decile primary school and a low-decile small middle school in the city where I was deputy head boy. In 2023 I'll be a Year 13 student at Fairfield College.

I have an ultra-rare genetic disorder KBG syndrome that has meant I have needed specialist support in education at different times. But I've never let that be an excuse not to fully participate in everything and sport is my equaliser where I'm just like any other 17-year-old boy.

I believe my experiences in different types of schooling allow me to be an asset to the Youth Advisory Group and I enjoy being able to have an impact.

Harlow Tran-Lawrence

19, Taranaki

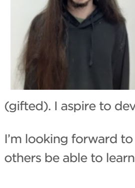
I'm Harlow Tran-Lawrence, I am a second year studying Global Studies at Auckland University, majoring in Global Politics and Human Rights.

I am queer nonbinary and of mixed and Vietnamese descent. My hometown is Taranaki where I graduated from Spotswood College in 2021, I've got a strong background in rainbow advocacy and working with queer youth.

My areas of passion focus on activism, inclusivity of minority communities, mental health, and LGBT+, POC, and BIPOC issues. I've had the privilege of being in the YAG for three years now and am excited to go into my fourth and last year.

Tanin Cain

17, Auckland



My name is Tanin. I'm a 17 year-old Māori/European and live in South Auckland.

I am currently a full-time student at Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (aka. Correspondence school), and prior to that I attended two primary schools, then was a home schooler for 6 years.

I have two younger brothers, both with Tourette's Syndrome and Autism, and I myself am neurodiverse too (gifted). I aspire to develop games.

I'm looking forward to contributing to the YAG for a fourth year. It is my goal to help others be able to learn in ways that fit them too.

Find out about the Youth Advisory Group expectations and responsibilities

Advisory Group terms of reference

Further information

If you have questions about the Youth Advisory Group email:

youth.voice@education.govt.nz

Last reviewed: 03 May 2023 Has this been useful? Give us your feedback

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