

Level-up Youth Forum 2016

Facilitator's Report

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Background

The Level-Up Youth Forum held at the Rangitikei Golf Course on the 27th May 2016 was designed/developed and implemented through the enormous efforts of the Bulls – Marton Youth Reference Group under the guidance of the Bulls Community Development Manager – Jan Harris. The event was sponsored by the Rangitikei District Council, Bulls Community Trust and Pub Charity. With in-kind support from Fisher Print, Anzco Foods, Phil Harre-Allan McNeill Chartered Accountants, Carol Lewis-Remax, McVerry Crawford Mitsubishi Hyundai, Farm Source, Farmlands, Speirs Group, Colour Plus Marton, Bulls Floral Art and Scullys.

The purpose of the day was to facilitate capturing the voices and agency of local young people on their needs and aspirations for positive youth development. These broad ideas would be further refined using an open-space approach, where the ideas were funnelled to key priorities for further exploration and actions. These would then be incorporated into a Rangitikei Youth Action Plan for the Rangitikei District Council.

Facilitators

Karen Field, an ex-Bulls local based in Melbourne working in Welfare, returned to co-facilitate the event with Chantelle Higgs (a specialist Youth and Community Development Manager) from Drummond Street Services. We were incredibly honoured to be involved in this event especially given we arrived only two days before the event and met with the Youth Reference Group on the Thursday. All aspect of the event had already been arranged and the Youth Peer Leaders had a clear vision for the format of the day, had already completed key tasks to promote and manage an event that was engaging and fun for young people and respectful of their skills, expertise and the contribution they could make for the benefit for their broader local community and the diverse groups of young people in their district. At the planning meeting the final program was negotiated, facilitators and Youth Peer leader roles and responsibilities negotiated.



Key Note Speaker

Anya Bukholt-Payne is an Ambassador for UN Youth Aotearoa, member of the Wellington City Youth Council. Her advice to our young students on the day, be passionate, be brave, find an idea that you can commit to and just go for it. She empowers young people to be involved in exploring ideas and then becoming involved decisions that impact Youth Development.



The Forum

The event kicked off at 9am in the morning with 53 young people from Marton, Bulls and surrounding areas and 34 local service providers representing government departments, schools, council, Youth Services, Ministry of Youth Development, and Cultural Groups that support our young people living in the Rangitikei.

Thinking Outside the Box

Mihi Whakatau

Inspector Clifford Brown and his nieces Maddie and Olivia led the Opening address in Te Reo and then translated. It provided an important opportunity for intergenerational engagement, sharing and leadership, bringing together an Elder and next generation to open the day.



Welcome and Introductions of Facilitators – Adam Polglase

Karakia- Blessing of the food

Youth Development

Facilitators led discussions with young people around what is positive youth development to set the framework to centre their voices and unique expertise in the day's format. The participants engaged immediately and the facilitators set about capturing their ideas for future areas of potential development. Discussion topics reflected how life in the Rangitikei impacts them as teenagers through geographical location and their experience of and opportunities to participate in sports, education, art, employment, access to transport, alternative food choices. In particular the topic of youth spaces that encourage social connections through warm supportive environments, which they noted could be used for a variety of activities including as homework, music and youth clubs. The participants were emphatic that there was a need for a safe space and safe community that designed by and for young people and that there was an absence of such spaces at the local level. They drew upon examples that their peers have in Marton and Taihape to imagine how young people could have safe, supportive, affordable and accessible space.

The young people began by discussion the key ingredients for positive youth development including:

- Safe community
- Supportive adults
- Peer leaders/being leaders of the same age (because they get it)
- Peer advocates
- Being heard
- Restorative rather than punitive
- Recognising different learning styles and ways of coping

There were very specific and tangible ways they could see adults and the wider community providing these important ingredients such as:

- Safe, accessible youth space
- Having a youth space run, by and for young people, with youth leaders and with a youth council
- Delivery of positive activities and life skills (formal and informal educative opportunities)
- Inclusive of all young people, including those from different countries/ages
- Different activities and options (not just sport)
- A relaxing space

Who are our young people in Rangitikei?

Young people were able to name a broad range of groups that needed to be acknowledged when generating their ideas and planning a way forward. They recognised the need for inclusiveness and parity and what is available in the three larger towns. These groups include:

- Culturally diverse communities
- Maori
- Pasifika
- European
- Asian (Thai, Filipino)
- Indian
- Sexuality and gender diverse/LGBTI
- African
- Those with a disability
- Town, country/rural
- Young parents
- Different faiths
- Unemployed/employed
- People from different socio-economic backgrounds (wealth versus poverty)



Pressing issues that impact young people today.

Unsurprisingly, the participants were passionate in their articulation of challenges that they and their peers face. The issues they raised on the day included:

- Alcohol and other drugs and people bringing them into school

- Drink driving and unsafe driving
- Bullying (including social media, linked to gender and class)
- Adults ignoring bullying and safety issues
- Unsafe places and people
- Unsafe sex and pregnancy
- Issues, voice and safety for young women
- Body image
- Unsafe skate park
- Peer pressure
- Knowing legal rights and life skills, not enough information and resources



The young people present spoke a lot about not being heard and listened to and adults being unresponsive to their pleas for help. They voiced a clear concern that they weren't being listened to and there is an absence of safe places for them to meet and connect with their peers. When young people discussed being bullied it took verbal and physical forms. For young women at Nga Tawa they disclosed feeling



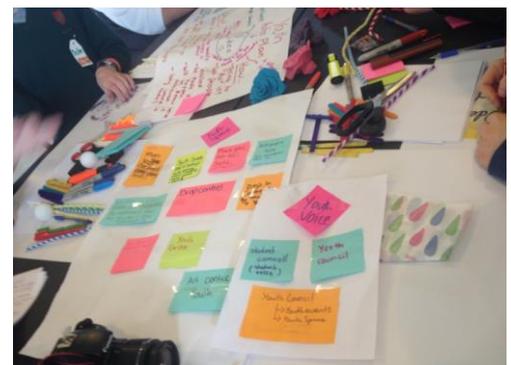
targeted as they walked into school and reported that people had attempted to run them over as there is no safe walking track into town. Young people identified that there as an absence of activities across their schools to promote social opportunities and understanding. Bulls young people felt there was no youth space for them and no transport options to access spaces at

other communities.

Capturing the ideas

Facilitators then broke the young people into seven random groups to brainstorm all of their ideas for improving youth development within Rangitikei.

All young people then presented their ideas which were then categories into broad emergent themes. This included:



Themes	Ideas
Spaces	Internet café, make skate park bigger with possibly older and young sections, Warehouse in Bulls, more indoor/outdoor places to hang out, community game, recreation centre, public tennis court, kid friendly park/big park, multi-sport camp, more sporting facilities, Splash, open community events such as drive-in that are family friendly,
Transport	See below
Safe community	Walking tracks to Marton, equality, more inclusion, neighbourly people, environmentally friendly, caring about community, positive mana by saying nice things to and about them, including everybody in activities you're doing, bully free zone
Sporting activities	Refer below
Non-sporting activities	Refer below
Education activities	Tutoring, homework club after school, driving license
Health and wellbeing	Access to free and confidential medical advice, safe sex education, peer support, workshops, mentoring, counselling, health centre/youth space, support for youth, positive alcohol experiences (educational around drinking), Nga Tawa working with Marton more, getting out more often, also working with council
Youth space	Refer below
Youth leadership	Refer below
Employment	Assistance pulling resumes together, access to careers advice younger to help with subject choices, information about employment options
Fast food	Refer below

Following the law of two feet, the young people then nominated which of these priority themes they would go forward into the Big Ideas project planning session of the day. These are discussed in more detail below.

Rangitikei Youth Action Plan

Following a very scrumptious lunch the young people were given the opportunity to nominate the big ideas they would carry forward as part of the Rangitikei Youth Action Plan. Of the 17 themes that emerged from the capturing ideas session, the participants self-nominated the topics they would take forward, using a tool to explain how these ideas could become a reality. The tool contained “why”, “what?”, “who?”, “how” as simple prompts which participants mastered in no time.



There were five themes that the young people decided to advance into the Youth Action Plan and they formed five groups to workshop the following action areas:

Themes	Ideas
Non-sporting activities	Music, music tutoring, music club, pokemon centre, petting zoo, more options than just sport, fiction camp, learning life skills, how to make a cv, Marton my kitchen rules, family activities, inter-school activities
Youth space	Youth space- see Levin and Palmy for example, Youth space – like in Palmy with gaming, music, table games, library, spaces you can feel safe, multi-purpose centre with quiz, board games, yoga etc., We need a place youth can hang out, do homework, meet the youths in their community, drop centres, drop in centres run by youth for young, more places for young people to hang out, youth centre, art youth centre
Youth committee	Student council, youth council, youth council- youth events and youth space
Transport	Youth trips, public transport, trips out of the district, youth bus for travel/youth taxi’s, bus to Palmy
Fast food	Teen café (somewhere to hang out), Mc Donald’s, Subway in Marton, milk bar, McDonalds/Subway, we need KFC, food shops- hangout places, clothing shops, McDonalds in Marton please- jobs for young people, hangout spots, Mc Donald’s in Marton- employment opportunities and free Wi-Fi, cat café, KFC
Sports	Gym park, after school clubs, swimming pool open in Winter, canoe and polo at night, lifesaving classes and swim team, water polo, Zumba, sound shell, mixed martial arts, outdoor adventure playground, adrenaline forest, all things accessible on the weekend, inflatable world, utilising local facilities- the river,

Non sporting activities

Young people narrowed down focusing on non-sporting activities including a camp, a petting zoo and music. **The idea** of a reading camp centred on activities such as reading, socialising and fun and which could be delivered annually. **Actions and key players** included advertising the event, fundraising to cover the cost of a camp (food, accommodation, and activities), identification of a space and would need to involve other young adults as organisers. The second **idea** of a petting zoo (home to animals, particularly 10- 15 mammals) would provide an activity for all ages, families, orphans, government and children and was important as people want to see animals, have family time and would be educational. The third **idea** of music activities was identified as important to providing: a broad range of opportunities; a new language (for young people), social and personal opportunities and being good for brain health. The music activities would for students, families and young children, thus having a positive impact on everyone and community as well as enabling recipients to perform for the community, and creating opportunities for communities to come together. **The actions and key players** included trial and error, involving schools and promoting via schools with flyer and the Rangitikei notice board, social media and getting other people to talk about it.



Youth space and youth council

One group of participants furthered the **ideas** of a youth space and a youth council, noting a need for youth spaces in Bulls, Marton and Taihape and corresponding youth councils. They wanted to see advertising for the existing sites and the creation of a youth space in Bulls. They cited the importance of such spaces to provide: somewhere for young people to go and talk and hang out; to have interactions between their peers; where they could support each other; hang out and relax and organise youth specific events. They articulated that a youth space was important as they stress about their futures and they want a safe space away from home, that is non-judgemental and they want a say in what happens in such spaces because adults and Council have different views and priorities. They also noted that it could be quiet intimidating approaching council. **The actions and key players** included approaching Council to access space, advising spaces, having volunteers to help run the space and fundraising. They also identified that in addition to these key stakeholders young people themselves needed to be involved as their voices need to be heard.

Transport

Having access to transport was articulated by young people as important as their parents work, petrol and cost of having a car are high, that there is limited public transport locally and this meant they couldn't access health services nor could they get out of/around town including to sports, jobs and school. Their **ideas** included increasing transport options

available such as bus routes, utilising the Rangitikei College/ other school vans (including having community involvement of the elderly), a pedal rail link and looking at how licencing could be made easier to access. The **key players** included Ministry of Transport, taxi company, UCOL, schools, Horizon, Electric people, Bus Company and P. Boyle. These connections could be used to get electric cars sponsored, establish bike sharing arrangements, generate funding and advertising of options available.

Fast food

Young people overwhelming expressed the need for fast food outlets in their local area. Utilising this enthusiasm for fast food outlets and what they offer for young people we learnt they are appealing as they provide; Wi-Fi, social meeting place/hang out space (including potential romantic interests), affordable food, employment and they are fun places that provide a safe environment. The young people distilled this discussion to consider how a space could be provided that had these ingredients. They converted this into the **idea for** a youth led and run café that also provided employment and training opportunities and which income could be used to fund other activities for local young people. The **key players** included the Government and Council were identified as key stakeholders, as were the welfare sector and private citizens. The **actions** anticipated included developing a business plan, fundraising, surveying consumers and securing investors to realise this idea.

Sports

The young people narrowed down sport activities and focused on several tangible **ideas** such as the redevelopment of netball courts (resurfaced and repainting), tennis courts and redevelopment of turf with dugouts, opening sports grounds for the public and installation of flood lights and multi-sports course. The **actions** were fund raising, gaining support, sponsorship, purchasing equipment, development (instead of building), holding inter-school sport competitions, sponsoring tournaments, building a storage space for equipment. The **key players** included coaches, Council, sponsors, schools, community, youth, sports teams, locals. They developed an image of what the sports ground could look like

Ongoing Leadership of Young People

12 young people assisted to plan the event from Rangitikei College, Nga Tawa, Feilding High School and Palmerston North Girls High School. (2 Marton, 2 Nga Tawa and 7 Bulls) The Peer Leaders came from different cultural, financial, blended, traditional and single parent families. The vast differences in background gave them an opportunity to connect them in a social and work environment. They explored the principles of Open Space and with the guidance of facilitators developed an event that heard the voices of our young people.

10 young women and 2 young men soon established each other's strengths with roles that suited individual areas of expertise given to group members.

Young people were resoundingly clear that they intend to be involved in taking their ideas forward. 16 young people self-nominated to join future leadership opportunities signing up on the day.

Key actions for stakeholders going forward

The development of a Rangitikei Youth Action Plan would support development of the Big Ideas moving forward. Denise Servante confirmed that Rangitikei District Council would facilitate a Youth Action Plan, with the support of young people and service providers. Council has confirmed its intention to provide some funding for youth development and is seeking other agencies to come on board and support. The proposal before Council is to develop Youth One Stop Shops through the District.



Service Providers who came forward on the day were:

- Rangitikei District Council to facilitate Rangitikei Action Plan moving forward
- Hawea Meihana, Te Runanga o Ngati Apa
- Katarina Hina, UCOL
- HYPE Academy (Marton Youth Club and Taihape Youth Hutt)
- Cath Ash, Project Marton
- Susan Crawshaw and Jo Greaney, Youth Services Marton, Bulls and Taihape
- Robb Torr and Raewyn Turner, Rangitikei College
- Angela Coleman, Truancy and IT Hub Marton
- Nardia Gower, to support a Youth Cafe
- Chester Penaflo, Alcohol and Drug PHO Whanganui
- Marie Kinloch, Sport Wanganui

Summary

The Bulls and District Community Trust would like to take this opportunity and thank Denise and Council for the opportunity by hosting the Level Up event in Bulls. We support Council in an initiative that develops strong opportunities for Youth Development within the Rangitikei.

