
**REPORT BACK ON THE MINISTERIAL FORUM –
YOUTH COUNCILS**

1. Purpose of Report

To report back to all councillors on the Ministerial Forum, including subjects covered and the value of attendance for Elected Members.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1. Receive the information.*

3. Details on the Conference

This was the inaugural Ministerial Forum on youth councils, held at the Rotorua Energy Events Centre on 29 February 2008.

I was invited to attend this forum as a young City Councillor who had previously been on the Wellington Youth Council.

The forum was attended by approximately 70 young people from the central and upper North Island, as well as approximately 30 youth advisors and councillors.

Two workshops ran simultaneously; one that was attended by the youth advisors and councillors, the other workshop for the youth councillors.

4. Subjects Covered**4.1 Workshop One – Youth advisors / Councillors**

It was evident at this workshop that many smaller councils are starting to understand the importance of youth in their communities, with many of these small councils developing youth strategies and forming youth councils.

A presentation was made by the Rotorua youth advisor who highlighted the process of developing a policy for young people in Rotorua. A copy of Rotorua's

policy is attached to this report. This led to an open discussion about what was important when developing a youth strategy, including:

- The value of having a yearly action plan attached to a youth strategy,
- Clear alignment with the Youth Development Strategy of Aotearoa,
- Written so youth can understand the strategy,
- Including a section stating expectations of Council,
- Regular reviews.

There was some discussion on the importance of involving young people in decision making and in particular the value of youth councils. Most of the participants in this forum were either in the process of, or had recently been in the process of setting up new youth councils. The main recommendations were to:

- Provide an incentive for youth councillors such as payment or transport allowances.
- Provide adequate training to ensure they can actively add value to the council decision making processes.
- Ensure that youth councils knew who the councillors were and vice versa so a close working relationship could be established.
- Allow youth councils to develop tools such as websites etc which will enable them to communicate with the wider youth population.

I was asked to take questions from the workshop on my experience having been on the Wellington Youth Council and being a current City Councillor.

4.2 Workshop Two – Youth Councillors

I was only able to attend the last five minutes of this workshop where I was invited to share my thoughts on the importance of youth councils, my experiences as a previous youth councillor and potential opportunities.

4.3 Launch of the National Youth Council Network

The Honourable Nanaia Mahuta launched the National Youth Council Network. This is a Ministry of Youth Development initiative aimed at providing online support and networking opportunities for youth councillors throughout the country.

The National Youth Council Network will be run by six elected youth councillors from around the country alongside the Ministry of Youth Development.

Following the launch of the National Youth Council Network, the youth councillors were invited to ask questions of the Minister of Youth Development and Local Government, Rotorua's Mayor Kevin Winters, Councillor Hemi Matenga and myself.

5. Benefit to Council/Elected Members

The Ministerial Forum on Youth Councils was worth attending. The forum proved to be a great opportunity to find out what other territorial authorities were doing for youth. In the workshop it was evident that Wellington is on the right track with its youth council but there is still work that can be done developing positive relationships between Wellington City Councillors and Wellington Youth Council.

Report prepared by: *Councillor Wain*