



## Education Report: Proposed approaches for youth engagement in 2022

<b>To:</b>	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education		
<b>Date:</b>	4 November 2021	<b>Priority:</b>	Low
<b>Security Level:</b>	In Confidence	<b>METIS No:</b>	1272708
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<b>Messaging seen by Communications team:</b>	N/A	<b>Round Robin:</b>	N/A

### Purpose of Report

This paper sets out updated approaches for youth engagement in 2022. We have provided three different options for you to consider.

It also contains letters for members who have finished their tenure on the Youth Advisory Group (YAG) in 2021.

### Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

a. **approve** an option for 2022

- i. Option 1: Continue with the current YAG approach but with fewer face to face hui, and increased online engagement

**Approved** / Not approved

- i. Option 2: Close the YAG and set up a nationally managed child and youth engagement register who can opt into specific education topics

Approved **Not approved**

- ii. Option 3: (Preferred option) Hautū of Te Mahau establish regional YAGs that provide insights to be captured centrally and shared widely

Approved / Not approved  
Discuss

- b. **sign** the letters for 2021 departing YAG members or make amendments as required
- c. **agree** to proactively release this Education Report as part of the next publication.

☒ **Agree** / ☐ **Disagree**



Rose Jamieson  
**National Director**  
**Parent Information & Community Intelligence**  
**Te Pae Aronui**

2/12/2021



Hon Chris Hipkins  
**Minister of Education**

8 12 /2021

The YAG was established as a ministerial, rather than ministry, advisory group.

While COVID-19 has made engagement challenging over the past 18 months, I'm looking forward to that changing in 2022 and beyond.

I'm very supportive of MOE establishing their own regional YAG groups.

## Background

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- 1 The YAG commenced in 2018 and was well placed to support the Government's Education Work Programme.
- 2 YAG's advice was initially focussed on significant reviews of the education system and the development of key strategies and action plans<sup>1</sup>. YAG's advice was also sought on 'big picture' issues such as equity and wellbeing. As well as urgent and unforeseen concerns such as the Covid-19 pandemic and attendance.
- 3 The nature of advice being sought from YAG is changing. The Government's Education Work Programme has now moved to design and delivery. This includes the establishment of Te Mahau.
- 4 The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way YAG operates. For example, facilitated sessions are sometimes online, and YAG has been testing capturing their collective advice in video format. We also deliver its advice via EWU instead of a briefing note.
- 5 These recent changes prompted us to consider whether our current youth engagement approach is still relevant. Or whether there is a more effective mechanism to bring the voices of young people into education.

## What currently works well

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- 6 The YAG is doing what it was intended to do. It provides an opportunity for New Zealand youth to voice their experiences and perspectives on education. You hear from diverse young people directly.
- 7 YAG provides a safe and comfortable space for the young people to share their experiences.
- 8 Feedback from Ministry staff suggests that the mechanism has a good reputation and members provide great insights.
- 9 Ministry of Education staff are learning how to effectively engage with young people. The flow on effects from this are that engagements between the Ministry and wider groups of young people are enhanced.

## What doesn't work well

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- 10 Ministry groups need to access diverse youth voice regularly and at pace. This means the timing and regularity of YAG hui often misalign.
- 11 More recently, Ministry teams use the YAG to test products, instead of using their voice in the 'thinking' stages of their work. This means that the youth voice is not heard when work teams are designing policies, guidelines, and programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Kōrero Mātauranga, Tomorrow's Schools review, NCEA review, and the Reform of Vocational Education.

- 12 We think there could be a more effective and broader approach to engaging young people, in this current state.

## The possibilities for 2022

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- 13 We're proposing three options for you to consider. They are:
- i. Option 1 – Continue with the current YAG approach but with fewer face to face hui, and increased online engagement
  - iii. Option 2 – Close the YAG and set up a nationally managed child and youth engagement register who can opt into specific education topics
  - ii. Option 3 (Preferred option) – Hautū of Te Mahau establish regional YAGs that provide insights to be captured centrally and shared widely
- 14 A table setting out the advantages, limitations and risks of each option is attached for your noting in *Annex 1*.

### **Option 1 – Continue with current YAG approach**

- 15 Should you wish to continue with the YAG in 2022, 12 members will attend two annual meetings in Wellington. We will increase online engagement to meet the demand of accessing young voice, as required.
- 16 Recruitment of 5 new members will be needed to replace the 5 outgoing members.
- 17 The recruitment process for new members will begin in February 2022.

### **Option 2 – Close YAG and set up a nationally managed child and youth engagement register**

- 18 We set up an engagement register of children and youth who have an interest in sharing their education experiences. The engagement register will represent a diverse range of ages (possibly from as young as 10 years to 24 years), backgrounds, school types, and lived experience.
- 19 The register will allow you and officials to invite children and young people to share their lived experience in relation to specific education topics. Registered individuals will decide whether to participate or not. The register will still belong to you.
- 20 We will work with the relevant persons and teams to tailor engagements based on the need. For example, tailored engagements could be:
- national and/or regional
  - online and/or face-to-face
  - be a single engagement or ongoing
  - focussed on a specific topic or issues.
- 21 Should you agree to this option we anticipate that the register could be operating by March 2022.
- 22 We will officially close YAG at the end of 2021 as per its terms of reference and provide you with draft letters to sign, thanking members for their service. All outgoing YAG members will be invited to add their names to the engagement register.

### Option 3 (Preferred option) – Establish regional Youth Advisory Groups

- 23 Hautū of Te Mahau and their Directors of Education set up regional Youth Advisory Groups. Regional YAGs are already operating in Auckland and Waikato. A member of the Waikato YAG sits on your current Youth Advisory Group.
- 24 Regional YAGs will have the flexibility to determine their terms of reference and recruitment processes. They will provide insights to Directors of Education and we will set up a central repository to capture youth insights and share them widely.
- 25 Representatives from regional YAGs will come together twice a year in Wellington. They will bring local priorities to the table. You (and Associate Education Ministers) would hear from the group directly. This national YAG will belong to you.
- 26 Current YAG members will not automatically get a position on their regional YAG. As they may choose to have a specific focus. For example, Waikato YAG has a focus on secondary transitions and pathways. But members will be invited to apply for a position.
- 27 This is in line with the current YAG Terms of Reference which outlines the 'standard tenure for each member is for up to one year, or at the discretion of the Minister of Education.'
- 28 Should you agree to this option we anticipate that the regional YAGs will be set up by April 2022, with the first national YAG meeting taking place in July 2022.

### Letters of farewell for 2021 departing members

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- 29 Five members of YAG ended their tenure on 22 October. They are:
- i. Fine Aholelei
  - ii. Raiyan Azmi
  - iii. Moeka Koyama
  - iv. Tara Shepherd
  - v. Okirano Tilaia – original member from 2018
- 30 We have provided you with draft letters to sign. These are attached in *Annex 2*.

Annex 2 withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the OIA

Annex 1: Proposed approaches for youth engagement in 2022 – advantages, limitations and risks

	Advantages	Limitations	Potential risks	Key consideration
<b>Option 1</b> Continue with the current YAG approach but with fewer face to face hui, and increased online engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationships with current members are established</li> <li>Membership has diverse lived experience</li> <li>Members are familiar with how to give advice underpinned by a set of values such as respecting peoples' opinions etc.</li> <li>Ability to develop leadership and promote development amongst the YAG</li> <li>Pastoral care is available to YAG during and after sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagements can only reach up to 12 members at one time</li> <li>Limited ability to provide advice in an agile and timely way</li> <li>No ability to target specific sets of lived experience (gender, sexuality, ethnicity etc.)</li> <li>Less Ministry staff are accessing them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The reputation and momentum that has been built with the YAG may be lost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider how you want to access youth voice and if you still require the same mechanism that's been in place for four years</li> </ul>
<b>Option 2</b> Close the YAG and set up a nationally managed child and youth engagement register who can opt into specific education topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broader range of voices and lived experience</li> <li>More agile and flexible</li> <li>You will still have access to the register, and be able to gauge youth perspectives on topics without the administrative burden (appointments, agenda setting etc.)</li> <li>Opportunities to hear the perspectives of young people with unique experiences e.g. children in care, alternative education, learning support</li> <li>Has the potential to turn into a 'business as usual' activity and remove current barriers to accessing children and youth perspectives on education issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Functionality will be largely determined by who has volunteered to be on the register, their availability and the type of engagement</li> <li>There may be barriers to accessing the full range of voices due to accessibility or connectivity issues</li> <li>Not likely to build relationships similar to the YAG</li> <li>Not likely to provide leadership or development opportunities</li> <li>No pastoral care available post-hui, unless factored into tailored engagements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There may not be enough interest or, too much interest from children and/or youth to be on the engagement register</li> <li>Children or youth may not get selected for engagement which could make them feel undervalued</li> <li>Not having capability to manage the register and ensure engagements are appropriately tailored</li> <li>There is no example to know what 'good' looks like</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We can build on this overtime to generate regular and authentic two-way engagement between children, young people, and the Ministry of Education</li> </ul>
<b>Option 3 (Preferred option)</b> Hautū of Te Mahau establish regional YAGs that provide insights to be captured centrally and shared widely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater ability to give priority to regional and local voice</li> <li>Opportunities for regional YAGs to work together to provide national advice</li> <li>You still retain a national YAG</li> <li>Flexibility to design and establish a mechanism that works best for each region</li> <li>Broader range of voices and lived experience</li> <li>Members can identify issues that are important to young people and the communities they live in</li> <li>Having a central repository that captures the youth voice</li> <li>Mutually beneficial – members develop new skills and leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Differing terms of reference, expectations and responsibilities across YAGs</li> <li>It will take time for each region to set up a YAG and build its reputation</li> <li>There may be limited resource for regional staff to set up and maintain a youth engagement mechanism</li> <li>We can provide advice and support to regional teams to set up YAGs but we can't support their operations</li> <li>Some regions are geographically sparse – connectivity and digital access may be barriers to online engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional offices may not prioritise setting up a YAG without a directive</li> <li>If regional teams don't have/contract an appropriate facilitator, they may not maximise the participation and value of the members</li> <li>YAGs risk being disjointed or functioning in isolation</li> <li>Not setting up a mechanism for information sharing and flow in Te Mahau</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Te Mahau was established to be a more responsive, accessible and integrated local support function. Regionalised YAGs can be a mechanism that supports this to happen.</li> </ul>