

Education Report: Recommendations for new Youth Advisory Group members in 2023

To:	Hon Jan Tinetti, Minister of Education		
Cc:	Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education		
Date:	9 March 2023	Priority:	Low
Security Level:	In Confidence	METIS No:	1306107
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Messaging seen by Communications team:	No	Round Robin:	No

Purpose of Report

This paper seeks your agreement to appoint two new members to the Ministerial Youth Advisory Group (YAG) for 2023.

Summary

A panel is recommending that you appoint two new members to the YAG 2023. The panel assessed several public registrations of interest. The panel's recommendations aim to complement the current YAG membership's diversity of lived experience, location and demographics.

The two recommended 2023 YAG appointments through public registrations of interest are:

- Laila Baghdad** (15 years old – Wellington) is an Egyptian, Muslim female from Tawa College in Wellington. She is a migrant who lived in England prior to New Zealand. Laila is passionate about multiculturalism and hopes for amenities such as prayer rooms to be more commonplace in schools.
- Mackay Thomson** (14 years old – Wellington) is a Year 11 male at Kāpiti College. He is part of the LGBTQIA+ community and is passionate about making education safe for fellow members of this community.

Otago and Waikato Regional Youth Advisory Groups have chosen to nominate a member each to the YAG, as regional representatives. The YAG Terms of Reference reserves a seat for regional Youth Advisory Group's should they wish to be represented on the YAG.

The two Regional Representatives joining the Ministerial YAG for 2023 are:

- a. **Toby Mills** (14 years old - Otago) he is a year 11 student from Mount Aspiring College in Wānaka. Last year Toby broke his neck after a mountain bike accident, he was in Hospital for several months, yet remained engaged in his education. He has since returned to school full time and learning to live in his new body.
- b. **Hazel Rodney** (17 years old - Waikato) she is a 17-year-old student from Sacred Heart College in Hamilton. She migrated to New Zealand, from Borneo, and had to learn English as a second language.

Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

- a. **agree** to the following Ministerial Youth Advisory Group (YAG) appointments:

- i. **Laila Baghdad** (15 years old), Wellington

☒ Agree / ☐ Disagree

- ii. **Mackay Thomson** (14 years old), Kāpiti

☒ Agree / ☐ Disagree

- b. **note** the Otago and Waikato Regional Youth Advisory Group appointments made to the Ministerial Youth Advisory Group:

- i. **Toby Mills** (14 years old), Otago (Otago Regional Youth Advisory Group nomination)

☒ Noted

- ii. **Hazel Rodney** (17 years old), Hamilton (Waikato Regional Youth Advisory Group nomination)

☒ Noted

- c. **note** the full applications from the Ministry's recommended candidates to appoint (Annex 2)

☒ Noted

- d. **sign** the draft congratulatory letters (Annex 3)

☒ Agree / ☐ Disagree

- e. **agree** to the attached draft press release being published, in coordination with your office, by Thursday, 30 March 2023 (Annex 4)

☒ Agree / ☐ Disagree

- f. **note** you are scheduled to meet from 11:15am – 12:15pm on 3rd May at their first face to face meeting in 2023 from 2 to 3 May. We will work with your office to confirm the final details

Noted

- g. **agree** that the Ministry of Education release this paper in full once it has been considered by you.

Agree / Disagree



Reno Paotonu
**Acting National Director
Parent Information and Community
Intelligence**

09/03/2023



Hon Jan Tinetti
Minister of Education

22/03/2023

Background

1. The Ministerial Youth Advisory Group (YAG) was created in 2017, background on the formation of the YAG is attached (Annex 1).
2. The YAG's most recent meeting was held from 25 to 26 October 2022. Following this meeting, four members ended their tenure with YAG, leaving several vacancies.
3. Public registrations of interest to fill the YAG vacancies opened on 10 February 2023 and closed on 26 February 2023 (after being extended a week due to Cyclone Gabrielle). This process was to fill two public membership positions, with the remaining two to be filled through regional groups.

Appointment of new members

4. The Ministry recommends the following young people be appointed as the new members of YAG for 2023:
 - a) **Laila Baghdad, 15 years old**
Laila is an Egyptian, Muslim female attending Tawa College in Wellington. She is passionate about being a voice for Muslim students and creating culturally safe spaces for them. She has lived in three different countries and experienced education in them all (Egypt, England and now New Zealand). She is an immigrant who has faced challenges and barriers to her learning.
 - b) **Mackay Thomson, 14 years old**
Mackay is a year 11 male student, attending Kāpiti College. He is a strong voice for the LGBTQIA+ community and is passionate about speaking on the challenges in education faced by this community. He hopes to make education safe for these students and bring awareness to the challenges these students also face at home.
5. The following young people are new members who have been allocated seats via Ministry's regional YAG:
 - a) **Toby Mills, 14 years old | via Otago regional office YAG**
Toby attends Mount Aspiring College in Wānaka. Last year he faced a major accident when mountain biking and has since been learning how to live in his new body. He is passionate about accessibility and has been working with the school to make his school more accessible.
 - b) **Hazel Rodney, 17 years old | Waikato regional office YAG**
Hazel is currently Year 13 at Sacred Heart College in Hamilton. She is an immigrant who has migrated from Borneo. Hazel initially came to New Zealand and had to go through education while learning English as a second language.
6. If you agree to appoint these two young people to YAG, collectively there will be:
 - a. a more even gender representation
 - b. a wider range of ethnicities
 - c. a wider representation of members in terms of location

7. If approved, the group in 2023 will have a range of demographics:

Location	Gender	Age (years)
North Island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Auckland (3) Northland (1) Waikato (4) Manawatū-Whanganui (1) Wellington (1) South Island <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canterbury (1) Otago (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male (5) Female (6) Gender diverse (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 14 (2) 15 (1) 16 (3) 17 (3) 18 (3)
Education	Languages	Lived experience & Advocacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boys' school (1) Girls' school (2) Boarding school (1) Home school (1) Tertiary (2) Kaupapa Māori (1) Te Kura (1) Co-Ed state school (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Māori Hindi Bangladeshi Pakistani English Tongan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Māori voice (2) Pacific voice (2) Immigration (2) LGBTQIA+ (2) Environment (2) Wellbeing (7) Community Voice (1) Pathways (1) Mental health (2) Disability (1) Neurodiverse (1) Immigrant (3) Gifted (1)

Selection process and Terms of Reference

- A panel was set up to select two young people from the shortlisted registrations of interest. The panel consisted of two Ministry officials, one Office of the Children's Commissioner representative and one YAG alumni. Collectively, the panel represented, youth, Disability, Pacific and Māori lived experience.
- The aim was to identify young people who complement the diversity of experiences of the current YAG membership. This included consideration of gender, age, ethnicity, regional diversity, life experiences and school type (if applicable).
- Under the YAG Terms of Reference, we allocate seats for any Ministry regional YAG. Seats are currently allocated for three regional groups, Auckland, Waikato and Otago. Auckland has a current member represented on the YAG. Waikato and Otago nominated two new members this year.
- If you'd like more information on the recommended candidates, you can see their applications in full (Annex 2).

Announcement

12. If you agree to the proposed appointments, we have prepared draft congratulatory letters for you to sign, welcoming new members to your YAG (Annex 3).
13. We suggest you announce the new members on the week of 30 March, before we hold the first meeting from 2 and 3 May 2023. This will allow time to advise all applicants of the outcome, update the website, and arrange travel and accommodation.
14. If you agree, we'll work with your office to confirm the announcement date.
15. A draft press release for your announcement of new members for 2023 is attached (Annex 4).

Next meeting

16. The first face to face meeting this year is on 2 and 3 May. Your office has scheduled for you to meet the YAG on 3 May between 11:15am – 12:15pm. We'll work with your office to confirm the final details, including agenda priorities.

Proactive Release

17. It is intended that this Education Report is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Annexes

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| Annex 1: | Background information on the YAG and its formation |
| Annex 2: | Applications from the Ministry's recommended candidates to appoint |
| Annex 3: | Congratulatory letters for new members |
| Annex 4: | Press Release announcing new members |

Annex 1: Background info on the YAG and its formation

1. A need was identified to hear directly from youth on their experiences of education in the context of their own lived experiences. In response, the YAG was initially created in late 2017.
2. The YAG's first meeting was held in February 2018. YAG initially met four times a year in Wellington. However, since 2019 a hybrid model was adopted being two meetings virtually and two face-to-face (where possible). In 2023 they are going back to four face-to-face meetings annually, after members mentioned the difficulties, they've faced in online meetings.
3. Meetings have been organised around the Minister's priorities at the time, such as learning through lockdowns, NCEA review, Child Wellbeing strategy and the curriculum vision refresh project. If there's an urgent topic that comes up, the members can respond by meeting online to provide advice.
4. Advice has been provided to the Minister in several ways over the years – through meeting notes, videos and most recently through the EWU. We aim to make sure the advice is how the Minister prefers, to be the most helpful.
5. Membership is made up of 12 young people, with the added option to add in more if we believe a particular voice is missing – for example a young person living in care of others.
6. Members are diverse amongst themselves, in terms of location, gender, age, ethnicity and school type to represent a wide range of opinions and lived experiences.
7. A young person is eligible to be a member if they're between the ages of 14years – 18years on 1 January each year. They don't have to attend school or be in education to be a member. Hearing the perspectives of young people who've experienced education that hasn't worked out for them also provides important depth to the YAG's advice.
8. This year (2023) will be the sixth year of the YAG, and the first year with a Minister other than Minister Hipkins.

Annex 2: Candidate profiles recommended to you for appointment, and regional YAG nomination profiles

Please note: these are the submissions as part of their original applications, in their own words or in the words of the person who nominated them.

Laila Baghdad

GENDER	Female
AGE AS AT 1 JAN 2021	15
ETHNICITY	Egyptian, North African, Middle Eastern
LANGUAGE(S)	English, Arabic
SCHOOL OR KURA	Tawa College
LOCATION OF SCHOOL	Wellington
SCHOOL TYPE	Co-Ed State School

Kia ora! My name is Laila Baghdad. I am a 15-year-old student at Tawa College. I am involved in a variety of clubs and committees, including the yearbook club, the SVA committee, the Muslim club, and others. I'm originally from Egypt, but I also lived in England before moving to Aotearoa.

As someone who has attended schools in three different countries and seen a wide variety of teaching approaches in action, I think I would be a great addition to the Youth Advisory Group. I can incorporate fresh concepts from various cultures and implement them into our school system.

I am also Muslim, and it is my hope to be able to represent many Muslim kids in our schools. I want Muslim youth to feel more comfortable and secure showing their culture. I believe that teachers should place a high priority on multiculturalism, as I think it's incredibly important. I am hoping to be able to add amenities like prayer rooms and places for wudū in schools across the nation.

I have a strong passion for reading and literature, and I don't believe there are enough kids and teenagers reading nowadays. I want it to be more common for kids to pick up a book, and I have ideas on how to help make that possible. I'm also a huge fan of science, and I think that science education in New Zealand schools could and should be improved. Other than a few science experiments here and there, science isn't properly taught until college, and that needs to change. I believe that there is room for much more learning, especially in the intermediate years.

I like to think that I'm a very dependable and proactive person. I am open-minded and flexible, and I get along with nearly everyone. I have a lot of connections to people from many different backgrounds and I'm prepared to be their voice, to share their views and opinions. Getting this opportunity to be a part of the YAG would mean a lot to me, and I will be sure to make the very most of it.

Thank you for your time,

ليلي

Mackay Thomson

GENDER	Male
AGE AS AT 1 JAN 2021	14
ETHNICITY	English
LANGUAGE(S)	English
SCHOOL OR KURA	Kāpiti College
LOCATION OF SCHOOL	Paraparaumu
SCHOOL TYPE	Co-Ed State School

Tēnā koe, my name is Mackay, and I'm a year 11 student at Kāpiti College. I have a passion for driving positive change and have been on various councils and leadership teams throughout my years of education. Joining the YAG will allow me to give a voice to my fellow students who are fighting for change, but still aren't heard. It'll help me deliver the change we need to secure a fair education for all generations to come.

Both through these council groups and as a bisexual with many queer friends, I see the terrible disparity that LGBT+ and gender-queer youths face. For many queer people, every day is a genuine gamble on whether they'll make it home safe or get bullied or shunned for their very identity. I seek to change this.

As a member of the YAG, I'd bring insight into the lives of students who aren't heterosexual and cisgender, and provide ways to make their education a fruitful one, not one of torment. I'm also intent on facing both the climate and mental health crises, both of which loom before us with ever growing speed. I can **ensure** that the voices of students from all backgrounds are heard and that the issues they care about are faced. Because, in such a critical turning point of uncertainty and change, the voice of those who are affected greatest matters most. Kia ora, thank you for considering my application.

Toby Mills – Otago Representative

GENDER	Male
AGE AS AT 1 JAN 2021	14
ETHNICITY	NZ European
LANGUAGE(S)	English
SCHOOL OR KURA	Mt Aspiring
LOCATION OF SCHOOL	Otago (Wānaka)
SCHOOL TYPE	Co-Ed State School

Toby is an excellent student. He involved in a wide range of school and community activities - he is a great writer, musician, involved in local volunteering activities to support students who have additional needs to make the most of the opportunities available.

Last year Toby had a very unlucky accident on his mountain bike. He broke his neck and knew as soon as the injury happened that his life would be changing. He was in Burwood Hospital for a number of months after the accident.

Throughout his time in Burwood he communicated with his class, his teachers, made videos, and was really upfront and honest about what had happened and how he was learning about life in his new body.

This year he has returned to school full time. His attitude and approach is one to be humbled by - challenge for him is an opportunity. He has recently been involved in a Ministry of Education property meeting with the college to help support students (all! not just him) to have better access around the school.

He constantly thinks of how to improve things for others, is articulate, and a role model for all in the Wānaka community. His voice on this panel would be a unique one - he has had a very challenging experience that has changed his life, but his focus on education has remained unchanged.

Hazel Rodney – Waikato Representative

GENDER	Female
AGE AS AT 1 JAN 2021	17
ETHNICITY	Sea Dayak (Borneo)
LANGUAGE(S)	English (second language)
SCHOOL OR KURA	Sacred Heart
LOCATION OF SCHOOL	Hamilton
SCHOOL TYPE	Catholic, State Integrated

Hazel is a year 13 student at Sacred Heart College, a Catholic, State Integrated school in Hamilton.

She describes herself as hard-working, diligent and goal orientated which she believes will be an asset to the Youth Advisory group as she is driven to help others.

This year will be Hazel's third year as part of the Waikato Regional Youth Advisory Group and she loves working as part of a team.

She was driven to sign up for the Waikato Regional Youth Advisory Group based off her experiences moving to New Zealand. She knows what it feels like to be left out and be different from her peers, because of her Sea Dayak heritage. Hazel is motivated by this experience to make sure other students don't feel the same way.

Hazel is passionate about making learning fun for her peers, so they realise that learning is fun.

In her free time, Hazel enjoys participating in drama and productions, which she thinks has helped her build her confidence. She thinks this started from when she was living in Malaysia and able to be part of the Young Doctors Club for aspiring Doctors. In this she would practice speech competitions and learn about how the body works.

Proactively Released



Mackay Thomson

Ref: JT2911

mackaythomson@outlook.com

Tēnā koe Mackay

Ministerial Youth Advisory Group Member for 2023

Congratulations, you have been selected as a member of my Youth Advisory Group for 2023.

Applications were received from across Aotearoa New Zealand, and the selection panel were impressed with the calibre and experiences of the applicants.

In particular, the selection panel noted your passion for improving education experiences for the LGBTQIA+ community. This is admirable, and I believe your voice will bring valuable insight to the Advisory Group.

I look forward to welcoming you to the group at the first hui in May 2023, and to hearing your views on the future of education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Ministry of Education will be in touch to organise your travel arrangements. Until then, take care and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Tinetti'.

Hon Jan Tinetti
Minister of Education



Laila Baghdad

Laila.baghdad118@gmail.com

Ref: JT2910

Tēnā koe Laila

Ministerial Youth Advisory Group Member for 2023

Congratulations, you have been selected as a member of my Youth Advisory Group for 2023.

Applications were received from across Aotearoa New Zealand, and the selection panel were impressed with the calibre and experiences of the applicants.

In particular, the selection panel noted your experiences in a range of different education settings, especially overseas. I look forward to hearing how your experience in Aotearoa New Zealand compares, especially with your desire to be a voice to uplift multiculturalism. I know your experience will bring valuable insight to the Advisory Group.

I look forward to welcoming you to the group at the first hui in May 2023, and to hearing your views on the future of education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Ministry of Education will be in touch to organise your travel arrangements. Until then, take care and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Nāku noa, nā

Hon Jan Tinetti
Minister of Education



Toby Mills

millst@mtaspiring.school.nz

Ref: JT2909

Tēnā koe Toby

Ministerial Youth Advisory Group Member for 2023

Congratulations on your nomination to be a member of my Youth Advisory Group for 2023.

I wish to acknowledge the personal challenges you experienced last year, and I am impressed by your motivation to continue to remain engaged in education throughout. Your interest in accessibility to education will bring valuable insight to the Advisory Group.

I look forward to welcoming you to the group at the first hui in May 2023, and to hearing your views on the future of education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Ministry of Education will be in touch to organise your travel arrangements. Until then, take care and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Tinetti'.

Hon Jan Tinetti
Minister of Education



Hazel Rodney

hazelrodney@shgcham.school.nz

Ref: JT2908

Tēnā koe Hazel

Ministerial Youth Advisory Group Member for 2023

Congratulations on your nomination to be a member of my Youth Advisory Group for 2023.

I see that you have experienced education in a number of different settings, including overseas. I am interested to hear how your experience in Aotearoa New Zealand compares, as well as all about your desire to make learning fun.

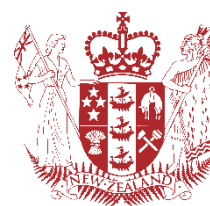
I look forward to welcoming you to the group at the first hui in May 2023, and to hearing your views on the future of education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Ministry of Education will be in touch to organise your travel arrangements. Until then, take care and I look forward to meeting you soon.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Tinetti'.

Hon Jan Tinetti
Minister of Education



Hon Minister Jan Tinetti

Minister for Education

MEDIA STATEMENT

Month 2023

New members joining the 2023 Youth Advisory Group

Four young people will be contributing their experiences and perspectives on important education issues as new members of the Youth Advisory Group, Minister of Education Jan Tinetti announced today.

“I am excited to announce that Laila Baghdad, Mackay Thomson, Toby Mills and Hazel Rodney are joining the current eight members this year for the 2023 Ministerial Youth Advisory Group,” Minister Tinetti said.

Now in its fifth year, the Youth Advisory Group have engaged with the Minister and education agencies, providing important insights and feedback to help inform ongoing work to improve the education system.

“I’ve been really pleased with the quality of thinking of the Youth Advisory Group. With my current focus on attendance and reengaging learners in education, I look forward to meeting the group and hearing their experiences throughout their education journey,” Minister Tinetti said.

The members of the 2023 Ministerial Youth Advisory Group are:

- Laila Baghdad, Wellington (new member)
- Toby Mills, Otago (new member)
- Hazel Rodney, Hamilton (new member)
- Mackay Thomson, Kāpiti (new member)
- Eniselini Ali, Auckland
- Tanin Cain, Auckland
- Harshinni Nayyar, Whangārei
- Te Atamihi Papa, Otorohanga
- Malakai Tahaafe, Christchurch
- Harlow Tran-Lawrence, Auckland
- Daisy Tumataroa, Taumarunui
- Jayden van Dyk, Hamilton

The group will have its first meeting in May 2023.

Go to [Ministerial Youth Advisory Group](#) for more information.

Contact: Minister Tinetti — Press secretary and contact number