

# Thames-Coromandel District Youth Strategy

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## Introduction

Thames-Coromandel District Council through the 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan began the development of a suite of people focused strategies. The Positive Ageing Strategy was adopted in December 2011, followed by the Disability Strategy in November 2012. The Youth Strategy is the third, and at the moment, final component of this people focused strategy framework.

There has been considerable focus locally and nationally on the ageing population, particularly because Thames-Coromandel has the second highest proportion of its population over the age of 65 in the whole of New Zealand. It is therefore critical that there is a balanced approach, ensuring that the importance and needs of young people are not lost as they represent the future for the Peninsula. The ability to retain and attract young and growing families is an important factor in achieving a balanced community.

## Why a Youth Strategy?

Simply because many individuals (young and older) and organisations (statutory and voluntary) have been asking for it and, in particular, they have asked the Council to take a leadership role.

Some of the recurring reasons for these requests have been that there is no collective vision for what we hope our young people can achieve in the Coromandel, and that there is a perception that young people are not a priority for Council.

Additionally, there is not a single organisation that delivers a holistic service that meets all the needs of young people as they grow and develop, though there are some who play a more significant role in young peoples' lives, e.g. schools. Therefore, there is an opportunity to develop existing networks and strengthen coordination to deliver more effective and appropriate services to young people in the Coromandel.

The Council has changed the focus of how it sets its priorities and delivers many of its services through the development of its community governance model. Council believes that this model lends itself completely to supporting the local aspirations and actions that will underpin this Youth Strategy.

The development of this Strategy is not an indication of, or a response to failure and we should be collectively proud as a community of the endless examples of collaborative working, selfless effort, inspirational leadership and achievement. Both by young people themselves and those who support their development.

The development of this Strategy is simply an acknowledgement from all sectors who engage with young people that by working together and supporting each other we can potentially achieve so much more.

## What we're trying to do

The purpose of this Strategy and associated work streams is to use a number of themes to:

- Bring agencies together
- Share information and intelligence to provide both a local and district-wide picture
- Consider alignment between national priorities and local practice and delivery currently
- Identify gaps in service provision
- Identify and create opportunities for youth
- Focus collective resources where possible

## Principles

A number of principles have been agreed which underpins how this Strategy has been developed but more importantly defines how we will work together.

1. A collaborative approach that respects each other's organisational mandates, skills, expertise, responsibilities and accountabilities.
2. Focus on real needs - evidence based
3. A preference for simplicity
4. A positive action focus (getting things done)

## Vision

The vision for this work is as follows:

***That the Coromandel is a place where:***

- ***Young people are safe and valued***
- ***Their voices are heard***
- ***Their issues and needs are understood***
- ***Local work opportunities are available and interesting***
- ***And finally, for those that leave, that the Coromandel is a place that they have their roots and would be happy to return and live.***

## Partner agencies and process to date

The Thames-Coromandel District Council has sought to collaborate with others in developing this Strategy, including the Ministry of Youth Development, Ministry of Social Development, Waikato District Health Board, local schools and youth support networks.

We have drawn on information shared by these agencies. Young people's views have been gathered as expressed through local and national surveys and research.

The consultation process included a workshop for key stakeholders at the end of July 2013 and a discussion with each of the five community boards in early September 2013.

One of the challenges in developing an evidence base has been significant gaps in local, detailed information. This will continue to be a challenge in a rural area with a small population.

We acknowledge that it in some respects this has been an imperfect approach, defined by time constraints, and has meant that not all stakeholders have been fully engaged in this process to date. However, the Council is committed to an inclusive approach and views this Strategy as the starting point of a shared journey, rather than the end result.

## Young people in New Zealand and the Coromandel

There are varying definitions of what constitutes 'young people'. The Ministry for Youth Development definition of young people is the 12-24 age group, and this has been adopted for this Strategy as the overarching definition as it allows all the key agencies and organisations to have a meaningful involvement. Each of these agencies will have a different focus and priorities

### Local Demographic Profile

- Young people in the 12-24 age group represent around 19% of the total New Zealand population - in other words, nearly one in five New Zealanders is aged 12 to 24.<sup>1</sup>
- Thames-Coromandel had a 12-24 age group population of 3,333 (12.8% of the total population) at the 2006 census.
- Young people are underrepresented as a proportion of the population and if the Thames-Coromandel mirrored the national average of 18.8% there would be a youth population of 4,895.<sup>2</sup>
- Only South Wairarapa (12.6%) had a lower proportion of its population in the 12-24 age range than Thames-Coromandel in the whole of New Zealand.
- Thames-Coromandel at the 2006 census had a population that was dominated by two groups in the 12-24 age range, European-Pakeha (82.1%) and Maori (27.1%) Pasifika, Asian, and other ethnic groups were present in negligible numbers. This trend has continued based on the more up to date school population profiles.
- The school aged population has in each year group on average over 300 young people across the Coromandel.
- There are roughly 1500 secondary school age young people living on the Peninsula.
- In terms of distribution of school-aged children across the Peninsula, Thames High School has the highest proportion of students (51%), followed by Mercury Bay Area School (31%), Whangamata Area School (14%) and then Coromandel Area School (4%). (NB: these figures do not yet include the Manaia school)
- The Coromandel can lose between a quarter and a third of its school leaver youth population each year with little in the way of inward migration other than for seasonal work opportunities.

### Local Social Profile

- An indicator of relative affluence and deprivation is the decile ratings of schools which vary considerably throughout the Peninsula, with a range from 3 (for Coromandel Area School), to 6 (for Mercury Bay Area School and Thames High School). Whilst Thames High School has a decile rating of 6, some of the feeder primary schools have a decile rating of 2.
- Overall, the staying-on rate at schools is slightly above the national average and significantly above the regional average<sup>3</sup>.
- Completing secondary school is a significant milestone in young people's lives and results in a substantial departure of the youth population from the District. The reasons for leaving the Coromandel are varied but for most this is a conscious and positive choice. As a result one of the age ranges in the community that are most under represented is the 18-24 age group.
- Some young people will go straight to Higher Education, some will take a gap year. Others will go straight into work and will often move to find a wider range of work opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics New Zealand, Census 2006

<sup>2</sup> Statistics New Zealand, Census 2006, from Ministry of Youth Development Youth Statistics

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education, Education Counts as at 1 July 2012

- There is a large network of sports-based recreation groups, including active, competitive leagues, rugby, netball, soccer and swimming.
- There are currently four active youth forums/youth advisory groups throughout the Peninsula, and a number of faith-based youth groups also.
- There is an active network of youth supporters in the Thames-Coromandel.
- There is no public transport for young people to access.

## Strategic Themes

Through the consultation process a number of recurring themes were drawn from a wide range of sources. They cover the fundamental components of young people's development, and while they are sufficiently important that they stand alone in their own right, the ability to make a significant difference is in understanding the critical dependencies between the themes and their impacts on individual and shared outcomes.

The function of the themes in this Strategy is to present common concerns which can be link local needs with national and regional priorities and to create opportunities for agencies and young people to come together. The focus and emphasis however will vary across the district and at a local level there may be a decision to focus on only one or two themes or a single issue in a theme.

The themes are:

- Education
- Youth training and employment
- Health and wellbeing
- Justice and crime
- Youth supporters
- Youth voice
- Leisure and social activities for young people

Each of these themes are discussed further on the following pages.

## EDUCATION

### Theme description

Whilst learning starts in the home, young people are required to attend school until at least the age of 16. Within this theme national targets are well defined and the responsibility for meeting these targets is predominantly the responsibility of the education service through schools.

### Areas of Focus

Based on analysis of existing information and consultation with key stakeholders the following are identified as the main areas of focus:

- Increasing attendance at school, especially among Maori.
- Improving literacy and numeracy levels.
- Increase the numbers of young people achieving educational attainment.

### Key observations

A summary of the main supporting evidence is as follows:

(NB: *This theme has the advantage in that it is an area where benchmarking is possible given the extent of information available through education statistics*).

- There are roughly 1500 secondary school age young people living on the Peninsula.
- There are five schools that deliver a secondary education curriculum, only one of these is a dedicated secondary school (Thames High School) the other four are area schools (combined primary and secondary) which are Coromandel, Manaia, Mercury Bay and Whangamata. There are also a further 18 feeder primary schools across the district.
- There are also a further 18 feeder primary schools across the district.
- Using school decile ratings as an indication of social deprivation, there is considerable variance in social circumstances within school rolls; between schools and across the Peninsula.
- In each school year group there are on average over 300 young people across the Coromandel.
- There are roughly 1500 secondary school age young people living on the Peninsula.
- Adding year 8 from the primary schools raises this number to 1800. A number of these young people leave school at 16 but the majority continue to live in the district, and a small proportion of the secondary age population attend schools outside the district, this is estimated at around 50-100<sup>4</sup> young people.
- There are five schools that deliver a secondary education curriculum, only one of these is a dedicated secondary school (Thames High School) the other four are area schools (combined primary and secondary). Mercury Bay is the largest area school in New Zealand.

Student attendance and engagement are fundamental foundations for student achievement. The level of stand-downs, suspensions, exclusions and expulsions help provide indications of where engagement in productive learning may be absent and behavioural issues may be present.<sup>5</sup>

- Absence from schools in Thames-Coromandel is trending upward, compared to a downward national trend.<sup>6</sup>
- There is a much higher level of the use of suspensions than both the regional and national rates, particularly for the 15+ and Maori.

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<sup>4</sup> Estimate based on analysis of Ministry of Education data.

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Education, Education Counts (website)

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Education, Education Counts - As measured through total absence rates and total unjustified absence rates.

- Thames-Coromandel is below the national rates for stand-downs and exclusions while above for suspensions and expulsions. Across the board there are significant differences between Male and Female, Maori and European/ Pākehā, and the older age groups.

Staying-on rates in schools can be an indicator of positive engagement in the learning environment, but can also be an indicator of lack of other learning environment opportunities (such as apprentice-type opportunities).

- Overall, the staying on rate is slightly above the national average and significantly above the regional average. In overall terms Thames-Coromandel is ranked 21<sup>st</sup> of 85 territorial authorities, but still well behind the highest performing, with six authorities achieving staying on rates at over 90%.
- The overall performance is attributable to the much higher staying on rates of Maori at (75.4%), as European/Pakeha is very slightly below the New Zealand average though still above the regional average. Maori staying on rates in Thames-Coromandel is ranked at 17 of 85 territorial authorities, the highest achieving area is the Devonport-Takapuna Community Board area in Auckland at 88%

Attainment of qualification and skills is needed to progress to further education or meaningful employment.

- In 2012, the Thames-Coromandel has 85.2% of school leavers with a NCEA Level 1 or above, which is consistent with the national average.
- At 72.5% the attainment of NCEA level 2 is slightly below the national average of 74.3%.
- Significantly fewer Thames -Coromandel pupils achieve a level 3 qualification with either Merit or Excellence when compared at a regional or national level, though the difference at Excellence level is less pronounced.
- Overall, the staying-on rate at schools is slightly above the national average and significantly above the regional average<sup>7</sup>.
- Completing secondary school is a significant milestone and results in a significant departure of the youth population from the District. The reasons for leaving the Coromandel are varied but for most this is a conscious and positive choice. As a result one of the age ranges in the community that are most under represented is the 18-24 age group.
- The Coromandel can lose between a quarter and a third of its youth population each year with little in the way of inward migration other than for seasonal work opportunities.
- Some will go straight to Higher Education, others will take a gap year. Others will go straight into work and will move to find a wider range of work opportunities.

For all of the above observations, there are differences between ethnic groups and geographic location.

## Responsible agencies

The responsibility for formal education lies with the Ministry of Education and is organised on a regional and district basis. Thames-Coromandel falls within the Central North region. Parents also play a governance role in individual schools through School Boards.

NB: Home school stats have not yet been considered.

There are a wide range of agencies who support and engage with schools, as schools plays a pivotal role in agencies engaging with young people.

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<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Education, Education Counts as at 1 July 2012

# YOUTH TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

## Theme description

This theme focuses on creating pathways to employment, current opportunities for youth, and barriers to participation and entry into the workforce. Transitions to employment take three forms a) secondary tertiary programmes, b) tertiary education organisation programmes, and c) workplace training options.

## Areas of Focus

Based on analysis of existing information and consultation with key stakeholders the following are identified as the main areas of focus:

- Reduce the number of young people not in education, employment, and training (NEET).
- Increase the proportion of young people in the working age population who are working.
- Increase the range and quality of training opportunities.
- Support young people to develop job seeking skills.

## Key observations

A summary of the main supporting evidence is as follows:

- In today's economic climate, young people find it more difficult to secure jobs and in times of austerity are more likely to lose their jobs than older workers.<sup>8</sup>
- At the end of April 2012, 27.4% of all unemployment benefit jobseekers in New Zealand were young people aged between 18 and 24 Years<sup>9</sup>
- Nationally, the Government have signalled a focus on reducing long term welfare dependence with young people identified as a key priority group.
- The welfare reforms will have a major impact on young parents whose children reach one year old. In addition to the direct impact on young people there is also the potential for other impacts on family units as the focus will also move to unemployed parents with children over the age of fourteen.
- The highest priority group are those Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) which in New Zealand is defined as:
  - unemployed and not engaged in education or training
  - not in the labour force and not engaged in education or training
- There are a number of known barriers to entering the labour market from a number of international studies these include; low academic achievement and skill levels particularly literacy and numeracy; lack of experience; criminal records; young people leaving care as well as those with care responsibilities including children, siblings and parents; transport. These barriers are often multiples of those mentioned and complex.
- Those at greatest risk from long term unemployment or low incomes are often those who have achieved lower educational attainment levels. In the Coromandel the proportion of school leavers who fitted this profile included 14.8% who do not have an NCEA Level 1 or above. Additionally those leaving with a Level 1 qualification would also be a priority (12.7%). In total 27.5% of school leavers in the Thames-Coromandel District<sup>10</sup> leave school with qualifications that do not fully prepare them for the world of further training, employment and education.
- Locally, there a number of initiatives in place that attempts to address at least some of these issues.

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<sup>8</sup> Tertiary Education Commission Framework for Youth and Transitions

<sup>9</sup> Tertiary Education Commission Framework for Youth and Transitions

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Education, Education Counts as at 1 July 2012

### ***Wintec Trades Academy***

- Wintec has recently partnered with five secondary schools in the Hauraki-Coromandel region to open its third trade's academy – this time in Thames. The academy enables year 11-12 students who are interested in a career in trades or technology to combine practical tertiary-based study with studies towards their National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) level 2. Twenty four students are currently taking part in this two-year programme which aims to encourage students to stay at school for longer by engaging them in hands-on learning.

### ***Work and Income - Youth Service***

- Commissioned through Work and Income, and based in Thames, Youth Service is a new approach (commenced July 2013) to working with young people. Youth Service providers work actively and intensively with young people by providing on-going support and mentoring to improve their educational and employment outcomes. The service is primarily targeted at 16-18 year olds (and some 15 year olds), with defined needs.

### ***The Mayor's Taskforce for Jobs (MTFJ)***

- A nationwide network of Mayors which began in 2000 with 7 Mayors and now has a membership of 66 Mayors (100% of Mayors). Its focus is youth employment and engagement in local communities and is not prescriptive in terms of implementation. The vision for the Mayor's Task Force is that all young people under 25 be engaged in appropriate education, training, work or positive activities in their communities. The network provides a rich source of approaches and initiatives.
- Quarterly meetings are held in Wellington with the Ministers and Officials from Government Departments. Hon Steven Joyce is now the lead Minister for the work of the Taskforce.
- Thames-Coromandel District Council has not been active within this initiative.

### ***Youth Guarantee***

- The "Youth Guarantee" initiative, supported through the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission, aims to provide learners with more choices, ways and places to achieve NCEA L2 or equivalent to enable young people to transition to further education and participate in the workforce.

### ***Workbridge***

- Is a national body (and incorporate society) focussed on employment placement for people with a disability. Whilst there is no local office in the Coromandel, the service is administered from Hamilton.

## **Responsible agencies**

The two lead agencies for supporting the transitions to employment are the Ministry of Social Development through Work and Income, and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). Both provide funding to support young people with Work and Income having a greater focus on providing the safety net for young people who for a combination of reasons or are unable to enter training or employment immediately. The major focus is to ensure that young people do not become locked into a benefit dependency culture from this early age. TEC has lead responsibility to fund a range of organisations to deliver the Youth Guarantee.

As the Government's tertiary funding agency the TEC is tasked with ensuring there are sufficient well sign-posted learning opportunities available for the two distinct age bands within the 15 to 24 year

old age group. The first group includes senior secondary students aged 16-18. The second group are young people under the age of 25 with particular focus on priority learners. A shared priority for both is the Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) group.

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### Theme description

The Waikato District Health Board have defined a number of health priorities and risk behaviours for young people which includes:

- sexual and reproductive health
- youth mental health
- alcohol and drug related harm
- access to health care

### Areas of Focus

Based on analysis of existing information and consultation with key stakeholders the following are identified as the main areas of focus:

- Promote and support healthy lifestyle choices
- Reduce the number of unplanned teenage pregnancies
- Reduce the number of instances of alcohol and drug related harm
- Reduce smoking
- Improve access to health care services

### Key observations

A summary of the main supporting evidence is as follows:

#### Sexual and reproductive health

- 20% of secondary students in New Zealand had sexual intercourse by age 13, and 54% by age 17 years. 40% of 17 year old secondary students are currently sexually active.<sup>11</sup>
- The leading cause of hospitalisation for the 15-24 age group in the Waikato DHB was pregnancy, this was the case for Maori in both the 15-19 (35.9%) and 20-24 (42.7%) age groups. For around 40% of these admissions in the 20-24 age group there was an abortive outcome and just under 50%<sup>12</sup> for the 15-19 age group

#### Mental Health

- Of the ten Territorial Authorities in the Waikato DHB, males in Thames-Coromandel District had the second highest hospitalisation rate for Mood Affective Disorder (15-24 years)<sup>13</sup>
- Schizophrenia disorder hospitalisation was above the regional average for females but well below for males over the period 2005-2009
- Self-harm hospitalisation was the second highest of the ten Territorial Authorities in the Waikato DHB for the 10-14 and 20-24 age groups based on the average of 2000-2009<sup>14</sup>
- The Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project (April 2012) announced a range of initiatives<sup>15</sup> aimed at improving the mental health and well-being of young people aged 12-19 years. The focus of these initiatives is addressing concerns in the period when young people move from childhood to adulthood including depression and other mental health disorders, cannabis use and harmful use of alcohol and youth suicide.

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<sup>11</sup> According to the Youth 07 The Second National Health and Wellbeing Survey of New Zealand Secondary School Students

<sup>12</sup> CostPro - Waikato DHB Hospitalisation Database (2009), Population Health Waikato DHB - Future Focus

<sup>13</sup> CostPro - Waikato DHB Hospitalisation Database (2005 - 2009), Population Health Waikato DHB - Future Focus

<sup>14</sup> CostPro - Waikato DHB Hospitalisation Database (2005 - 2009), Population Health Waikato DHB - Future Focus

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/mental-health-and-addictions/youth-mental-health-project>

- Locally, in Thames, a community initiative is providing suicide-prevention training has recently started to operate.

### **Alcohol and drug related harm**

Alcohol consumption is deeply embedded into many aspects of our lives. New Zealanders spend an estimated \$85 million a week on alcohol. The impact on young people comes both directly from their own alcohol consumption and/or living in a household where parents or guardians drink excessively. The potential risks for alcohol misuse or abuse are higher for young people as they are more likely to suffer from a number of adverse consequences of their drinking than other age groups. These include:

- higher rates of involvement in alcohol related motor vehicle accidents
- higher rates of injuries and hospital admissions due to consumption of alcohol
- harmful effects on friendships and social interaction
- 72% of secondary school students have tried alcohol and 61% drink alcohol regularly.<sup>16</sup>
- The proportion increases by age. Just over a third of 13 year olds consume alcohol, and by age 17 this increases to 75%.
- Of the 16 and 17 year olds who currently consume alcohol, more than 30% drink once a week or more.
- The amount of alcohol consumed by secondary students is high. 50% of males and 40% of females who are current drinkers report consuming more than five drinks in a usual drinking session.
- Binge drinking (drinking more than five drinks within four hours) in the four weeks prior to the survey was reported by 34% of students who completed the survey.
- Binge drinking is highest among rural youth (42%) and those aged 16 years and over (47 - 52%).
- Parents (54%) and friends (53%) are the most common source of alcohol for those students who are current drinkers.

The Thames-Coromandel District Council is in the process of developing a Local Alcohol Policy which will have regard for these and other social issues related to the supply and sale of alcohol.

### **Smoking**

The majority of New Zealanders support the right to live in smoke-free environments (total 92%; Maori 91%; smokers 82%). Three quarters of the public say it is 'not at all acceptable to smoke at outdoor children's playgrounds. A number of local authorities have developed smoke-free playground policies (with the focus on information and persuasion, not bylaws) Thames Coromandel does not have a policy on this matter.

### **Access to services**

This is variable across the Peninsula. Thames residents have much better access to services than the rest of the Peninsula. The lack of public transport on the Peninsula is an issue especially for communities outside of Thames.

## **Responsible agencies**

The responsibility for health and wellbeing is principally organised at a Waikato level through the District Health Board.

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<sup>16</sup> According to the Youth 07 - The Second National Health and Wellbeing Survey of New Zealand Secondary School Students

Child and youth health and community services for children and young people across the Waikato DHB area include primary e.g. Primary Health Organisations, Thames Hospital, secondary (e.g. Waikato Hospital), and tertiary (e.g. Starship Hospital).

Primary Health Organisations are available to varying degrees across the Peninsula, with a hospital in Thames.

# JUSTICE AND CRIME

## Theme description

Reducing youth crime is a national priority that all agencies and youth supporters and most young people are committed to. Young people are often presented in the media as the main perpetrators of crime and while they are over represented as an age group in terms of overall apprehensions, they are also over represented in terms of being the victims of crime.

Addressing these issues requires an integrated approach to address the drivers of crime.

## Areas of Focus

Based on analysis of existing information and consultation with key stakeholders the following are identified as the main areas of focus:

- Highlight and promote the low levels of crime on the peninsula
- Supporting young people who are victims of crime or abuse
- Reduce offending by young people

## Key observations

A summary of the main supporting evidence is as follows:

The following observations have been made using primarily apprehensions data from the police. The reason this was chosen was that it provides a comprehensive overview in terms of where apprehensions are taking place, and the type of crimes at a more localised level than other data. It should however only be viewed as providing an insight rather than a definitive picture of crime.

The New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS): 2009 also provides an overview of crime and the reporting of crime. This survey suggests that:

- 32% of crime identified was **reported** to the police
- 87% of NZCASS crime was **not counted** in police recorded crime statistics
- The reporting rates for different crimes varied enormously with sexual offences the least likely to be reported

Specifically in the Coromandel (based on apprehensions data from the police):

- The Coromandel enjoys a relatively low crime rate, particularly around violent crime.
- As a proportion of apprehensions young people under 25 accounted for 57% of apprehensions over a two year period from 2011-2012 in the Thames-Coromandel District. This was split between those under 18 accounting for 22% and 18 - 24 year olds accounting for 35%.
- One third of all youth apprehensions in the Coromandel over this two year period are from a four to five day period covering Christmas, New Year and the Beach Hop in Whangamata. As a result some of the analysis has excluded these apprehensions because a large proportion of these apprehensions were holiday makers
- Like the rest of New Zealand Maori are over represented in all of the stages of the justice system. Within Thames-Coromandel more than half (56%) of apprehensions of young people are Maori. This is however lower than the rest of Waikato which is around 75% of apprehensions.
- Crimes of dishonesty is the largest single type of crime in the Coromandel (based on apprehensions) accounting for 45% of youth apprehensions (17 and under). The other categories of offences in descending order of significance are Drugs and Anti-social (22%); Property damage (13%); Violence (11%); Property Abuse (6%) and Sexual (1%)

- Thames has by far the largest number of apprehensions 44%, this reflects the fact that it also has the largest population of young people. Whangamata follows with 26%, while Whitianga and Coromandel have 15% and 12% respectively. Tairua has the smallest proportion with 3%.

NZ Police have adopted a youth policing plan called "Where Prevention Starts 2012-2015" and its priorities are to reduce youth offending and victimisation. The rationale for this approach cites the following research findings as part of its evidence base.

Children and young people are MORE at risk of offending and victimisation if they:

- Have a mental health condition
- Abuse alcohol and drugs
- Are from low socio-economic background
- Have a conduct disorder
- Are disconnected from family and/or community
- Come from single parent families
- Witness family violence and/or live in a family where intimate partner violence occurs
- Have close affiliation with anti-social peers
- Have poor parental supervision and discipline
- Are disengaged with education, training or employment
- Have low achievement in primary school
- Have a learning disability
- Have been in the custody of Child Youth and Family
- Have a lack of positive male role model

Research also shows that children and young people are LESS at risk of offending and victimisation if they:

- Are actively engaged in education, training or employment
- Have a sense of self-worth
- Have recognition and praise for positive behaviour
- Have stable, warm, affectionate relationships with one or more parents
- Have positive and pro-social friends
- Have strong connections to local community (eg sport/cultural activities)
- Have healthy boundaries and standards set by parents, teachers and the community
- Have positive role models

The justice system has many components to it however the organisation dealing with the immediate effects of criminal activity is the police force. The trend is to divert young people away from the court system:

- In the last 5 years the number of children and young people charged in court has decreased by 40% (from 5,064 in 2007)

Children and young people make up less than 3% of the total people charged in court in New Zealand

The youth policing strategy focuses on 1) prevention; 2) intervention; 3) capability/capacity, and 4) partnerships.

### **Responsible agencies**

As noted above, the Police Force is the organisation dealing with the immediate effects of criminal activity, however an integrated approach is required to address drivers of crime.

## **YOUTH SUPPORTERS**

### **Theme description**

This theme focusses on support that exists for young people in the Thames-Coromandel District.

A key element for youth development is those adults engaging and supporting young people, and as a consequence it is viewed as one of, if not the most important component of developing a sustainable Youth Strategy.

The rest of the Strategy identifies the issues and priorities and will lead to more detailed targets for continuous improvement, however that improvement is unlikely to happen without a vibrant supportive and skilled network of supporters. This support will come in many forms, parents as well as paid staff and volunteers. The existing network already brings an extensive range of experience and skills.

### **Areas of Focus**

Based on analysis of existing information and consultation with key stakeholders the following are identified as the main areas of focus:

- Encourage wider participation and support by adults to spread the load.
- Acknowledge and champion the selfless contributions of youth supporters.
- Support and create opportunities for youth supporters to develop their skills.
- Support and create opportunities to share experience and network.
- To cultivate greater collaboration at a governance level across Coromandel based/focused organisations.

### **Key observations**

A summary of the main supporting evidence is as follows:

- A Hauraki-Coromandel Youth Supporters Network has been in existence since 2000.
- The Hauraki-Coromandel Youth Supporters Network have a Strategic Plan to cover the period 2011-2014, and there is a wide representation of agencies and organisations that have signed up as members of the network.
- There has been virtually no formal resourcing of the network and it relies on the good faith of its membership and in-kind support.
- It has however continued to be active despite the lack of formal support.
- There are a number of other initiatives which encourage cross agency collaboration, particularly through the Community Link initiative hosted through the Ministry for Social Development. A specific example is the Action Focus Team.
- There are also a range of faith-based networks for youth, through local churches.
- A number of the agency strategies have identified capability/capacity building as a key component and of their strategies as well as identifying collaborative and partnership working as being a fundamental approach. The Sport NZ and Youth Policing strategies are the most explicit in terms of this, though there are many other references in areas like education and training through the development of the Youth Guarantee.

### **Responsible agencies**

No single agency or organisation has lead responsibility for the development of overarching partnership and capability/capacity building initiatives across the Peninsula. This has been one of the drivers for the development of a Youth Strategy.

The Ministry of Youth Development is one of the key agencies tasked with joint agency development. Its purpose is to:

- provide government with advice on how to improve outcomes for young people
- work with government agencies, local government and communities to deliver positive youth development opportunities
- build and share an evidence-base about youth development in New Zealand

There have been a number of Social Sector pilots developed across New Zealand, by the Ministry of Youth Development, which use different models of leadership, governance and delivery.

# YOUTH VOICE

## Theme description

One of the recurring messages provided to Council, by young people, is that young people want to be involved in, or able to influence the decisions that affect them. The perception is that the responsibility only lies with young people but this is only one dimension.

The "Youth Voice" theme focuses on both the representative needs of young people and the capability of organisations to engage with and respond to young people.

## Areas of Focus

Based on analysis of existing information and consultation with key stakeholders the following are identified as the main areas of focus:

- To challenge organisations to develop appropriate and meaningful engagement with young people.
- To develop young people's skills to understand, engage and influence the key decision making structures across the Coromandel.
- To move beyond talking and translate the dialogue and engagement into tangible outputs and outcomes.

## Key observations

A summary of the main supporting evidence is as follows:

- Thames-Coromandel has an established network of youth forums, to give effect to a youth voice.
- Youth in the Coromandel have participated in the Youth MP programme in the past, and the Youth MP position is currently held by a young woman from Thames.
- With the support of the youth forums, young people have made submissions to Council's planning processes, which have led to the development of this Youth Strategy.
- Young people from across the district have met at least three times a year at youth hui where the venue has rotated around the district to talk about shared issues and participate in development training programmes.
- Young people occasionally take the opportunity to present to the Community Boards and Council, although this is infrequent.
- There are no young people in the 18-24 age range on any of the Community Boards, or on Council. This is not unique to Thames-Coromandel District however a number of councils across the country have developed innovative approaches to bridge this gap.
- Supporting young people to participate and contribute to planning and policy development requires investment in the development of not only young people's skills but also of those who are elected to represent them.

## Responsible agencies

The Ministry of Youth Development promotes the interests of young people aged between 12 and 24 years old. They encourage and assist young people to be involved in the social, educational, economic and cultural development of New Zealand.

It has five key functions relative to this theme as follows

- providing young people with a central point of contact within government so they can express their views and interests
- working with government agencies, local government and communities to deliver positive youth development opportunities
- funding services for young people in local communities

- building and sharing an evidence-base about youth development in New Zealand.

The Ministry of Youth Development is administered by the Ministry of Social Development.

Youth Forums in Thames-Coromandel have been supported in the past with funding through the Youth Development Partnership Fund. An application made to this fund in 2013 by the Thames-Coromandel District Council has been successful to:

- Develop opportunities for young people to contribute to local decision making
- Deliver a leadership training programme for young people

## LEISURE AND SOCIAL

### Theme description

This theme focusses on the social preferences of young people in the Coromandel, as well as a range of broader community initiatives and national programmes many of which specify young people as a priority group.

This is an extremely diverse theme and therefore difficult to capture succinctly. It is also one of the themes which young people consistently identify as a major priority. As many of the developments are captured in wider community initiatives it is not proposed to duplicate these processes but simply capture those which are of most significance to young people, particularly through the supporting action plan to ensure that these priorities remain high and to monitor progress.

### Areas of Focus

Based on analysis of existing information and consultation with key stakeholders the following are identified as the main areas of focus:

- To move beyond wish lists and develop a rich and vibrant range of social and leisure options for young people across the Peninsula.
- To cater for immediate needs using innovation and imagination.
- To develop with this generation of young people legacy initiatives for future generations of young people.

### Key observations

A summary of the main supporting evidence is as follows:

#### **Youth and community facilities**

Members of the youth forums made submissions to the Thames-Coromandel District Council's 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan, some of which focussed on a number of leisure related priorities for young people. These were a result of a Youth Survey (2011), which was a survey of 555 young people across the district, carried out by the youth forums, common themes were:

- A youth centre or hang out place
- More things to do and youth focussed events
- Skate parks
- Multi purpose sports centres
- Swimming pools (new and upgraded)
- Gaming and technical activities

These issues are not new and have separately been the subject of considerable focus for council and the local community boards. This includes the soon to be opened Mercury Bay Sports complex, as well as two recent reports (July 2013) that have been commissioned and are under consideration by Thames and Coromandel Community Boards. These are *Coromandel Sportsville - Review and Future Directions*, and *Thames Ward Sport and Recreation Facilities - Review and Future Directions*.

One of the frustrations expressed by young people has been the length of time it takes to translate priorities into action e.g. the skate park in Thames has been a work in progress for many years.

There is a wealth of information and guidance in the sports and recreation area set against a national framework. One of the key outcomes for Sport New Zealand is 'More young people in more sport and recreation', which filters down through the regional framework. It is however less clear how that looks and operates in Thames Coromandel.

#### **Youth events**

Through the Youth Forums (see Youth Voice section for further detail), three district wide Youth Hui are organised, these are generally held on the last day of the school term and attended by around 50 young people.

The youth forums are also heavily involved in ensuring that Youth Week, which is celebrated annually in May across New Zealand, is celebrated locally in the Thames-Coromandel. Youth Week consists of a range of youth-focussed events, including arts, sports, recreational and cultural activities.

## Responsible agencies

The responsibility for providing leisure and social activities for youth lies with a range of agencies.

- The Council is involved in providing and maintaining a number of recreation assets.
- The community, the youth supporters networks and young people are involved in identifying and advocating for their needs.
- There are many active networks particularly in the sports activities which provide a wealth of opportunities for young people.

The Ministry of Culture and Heritage has overall responsibility for and funds both Sport New Zealand and Creative New Zealand. These organisations have overall responsibility for the development of sport and the arts nationally.

**Sport New Zealand (Sport NZ)** - is dedicated to getting New Zealanders enjoying and excelling through sport and recreation. They have a number of strategies and priorities which provide a framework for a local youth strategy to align against. Sport NZ have clear outcomes that are easy to understand.

- Sport and recreation opportunities for young people are essential to encourage lifelong participation in sport. Enjoyment and fun are key drivers. Performance, challenge and improvement are key motivators for young people also.
- The sport aspirations of young people are wide and varied. Multiple sport formats and sport options need to be available to cater to their needs.
- In addition to the organisation has a coaching strategy which covers foundation through to high performance and there is a specific focus on children and young people. The most relevant component of this strategy is the Community Sport Coaching Plan.

**Sport Waikato** - is the regional sports trust which Sport NZ recognises and supports defining their role as 1) to increase regional levels of physical activity; and 2) to strengthen regional sport and physical recreation infrastructures. The organisation is funded by a range of organisations including Thames Coromandel District Council and Sport New Zealand.

**Creative New Zealand** - the infrastructure and strategy for the arts is not as well defined as sport and the resources coming in to the area are not as well supported. There are active arts based initiatives operating locally and it is hoped that a clearer strategic direction can be provided through the young people and the arts working group. This working group is a joint initiative with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and the Ministry of Education to develop a joint framework for supporting the arts by, with and for young people. This group will report back in early 2013/14.

## **Implementation**

A Thames-Coromandel Youth Steering Group will be established, hosted by the Thames-Coromandel District Council.

Within the terms of reference for this group will be the ability to establish short-term working groups to develop detailed action plans, outline timeframes, set targets, determine success indicators, and identify lead agencies, for each of the themes.

The Steering Group will meet twice a year to share current information regarding youth issues and provide an oversight of progress against any agreed actions in this plan.

## **Review**

This document will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Council's Strategic Planning Team Leader and the Council's Chief Executive to ensure that the work programme for Council remains relevant.