



ROTORUA
LAKES COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera o ngā Roto o Rotorua

ATTACHMENTS

Council Meeting
Under Separate Cover
Wednesday, 23 October 2024

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Rotorua Youth Council 2024 End of Year Report



Acknowledgements:

*He rau ringa e oti ai
Many hands make light work*

We want to express our gratitude to each other as Youth Councillors. It has been a privilege to work alongside such passionate, dedicated individuals. We also extend our thanks to the Mayor and Councillors for re-establishing the Youth Council and for championing the importance of youth voices in decision-making processes - your support has allowed us to engage meaningfully with our community. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the staff who facilitated our work throughout the year. Your guidance, encouragement, and commitment to our success have made this a rewarding experience. Thank you all!

Introduction:

As we wrap up this year at the Youth Council, we take a moment to reflect on our achievements, challenges, and aspirations for the future. This report highlights our experiences and the themes that emerged from our activities, discussions, and initiatives throughout the year.

We'll start by discussing our projects and some of the key outcomes that we achieved. Then the report will explore the structure of the Youth Council, evaluating what worked well and where we see room for improvement. This report will also celebrate our wins and significant milestones, emphasising the bonds we've formed and the individual growth we've experienced as a Youth Council.

Our projects:

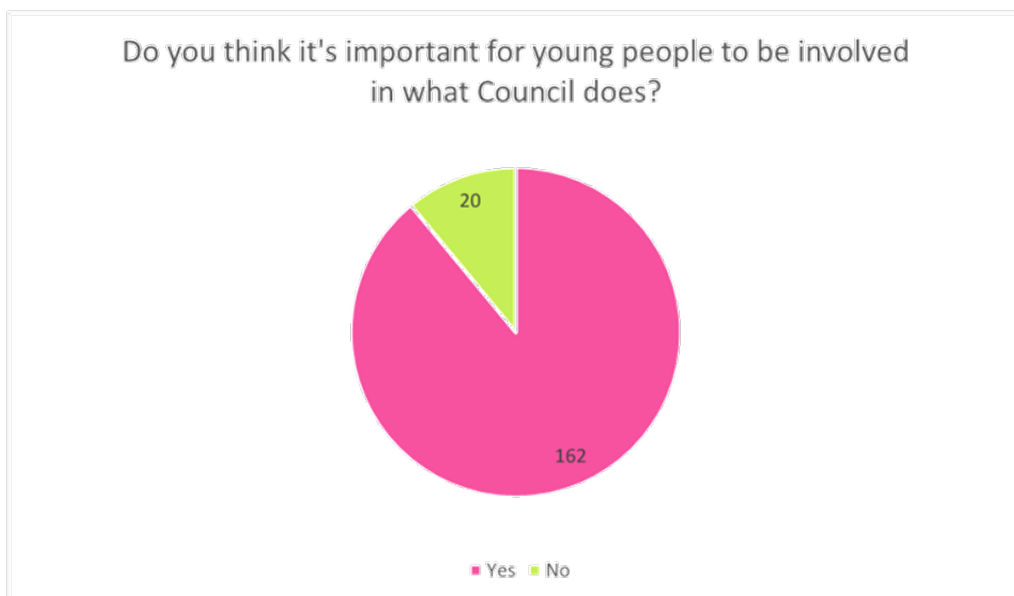
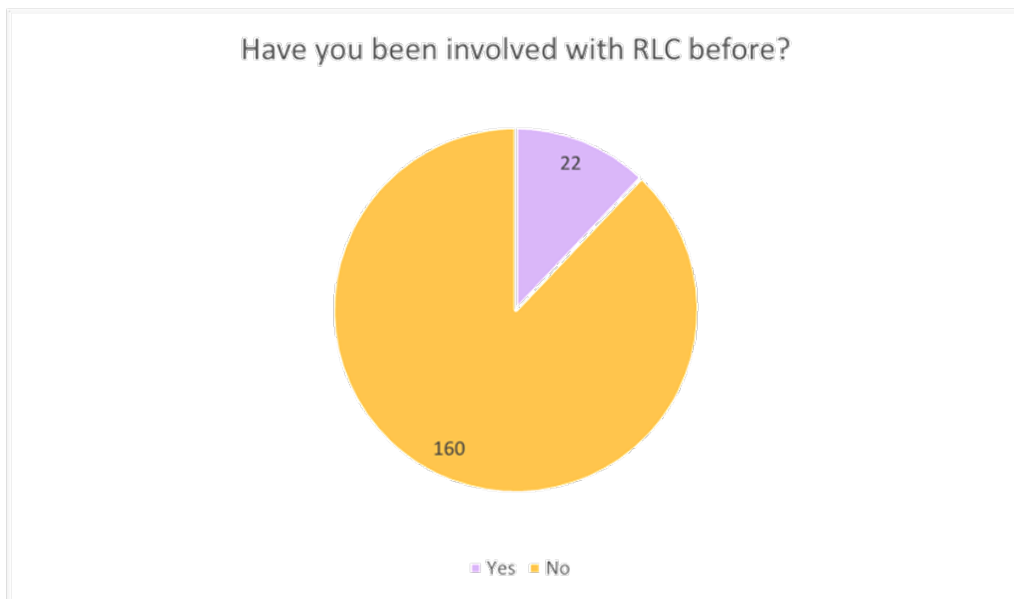
As Youth Councillors, we were committed to making a positive impact in our community. This year, we took on several key projects aimed at fostering youth engagement within Council decisions. Through collaborative efforts and active participation, we sought to ensure that the voices of young people in Rotorua were heard. Below, we outline the significant initiatives we undertook;

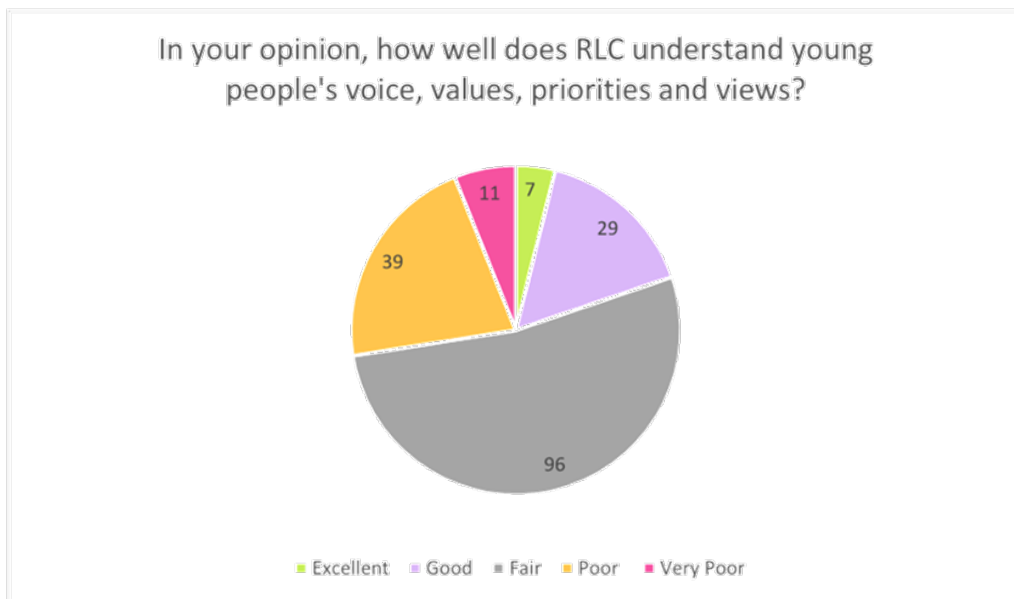
Long-Term Plan Submission: As Youth Councillors, we contributed to the Council's Long-Term Plan by putting forward a submission that emphasised the priorities of young people. We focused on areas that matter to us, ensuring our voices were included in the planning for the future of Rotorua.

Environment and Climate Change: We actively explored local responses to climate change, advocating for more green spaces, sustainable practices, and youth-led educational campaigns. Our goal was to highlight the importance of environmental issues and encourage actions that benefit both our generation and the future.

Inner City Revitalisation: In discussions about revitalising the inner city, we shared our ideas on improving public spaces and promoting community engagement. We wanted to create an area that feels welcoming and attractive to taiohi, making it a vibrant hub for youth activities and events.

Youth Engagement Strategy: To ensure meaningful participation from young people, we drafted a Youth Engagement Strategy for the Youth Council. This strategy aims to establish a framework for future recruitment and ongoing connection with taiohi in our community. It has been shaped by continuous feedback from our peers and community partners, ensuring it reflects youth needs and perspectives. We conducted a survey which was completed by 182 young people. Some of the key data has been highlighted below to illustrate the importance of continuing the work of the Youth Council- we would love to work with RLC to champion youth engagement.





Feedback & Recommendations:

We found that the Youth Council format worked well. The pōhiri really set the tone for a great start, and we appreciated the first meeting learning about the history of Rotorua and the context of Council- we also appreciated connecting with the Mayor and Cr Wang to learn about their Youth Council experience and how that has shaped their leadership journey.

Communication was clear and consistent, thanks to group chats and iMessage, which kept everyone informed. The communication platform, Teams, worked for us, but sometimes it was a bit tricky to navigate, so we’re recommending switching to something like Google Classroom or Docs.

The educational workshops helped us understand Council work better, and we enjoyed the formal meetings combined with our more productive working groups. Choosing a permanent chairperson could help us maintain leadership continuity and stay focused on our goals. However many of us enjoyed the opportunity to have a go at chairing as a result of the rotating chair arrangement. It gave us a good appreciation for what is involved.

Festival for the Future and guest speakers were also highlights for our leadership, connection and development. We’re recommending continued leadership events and collaboration opportunities next year. We also think starting team bonding activities earlier in the year would strengthen our connections and confidence sooner.

We enjoyed learning about Council processes and contributing to the Long Term Plan (LTP) but would love to have more chances to engage directly with Council members, plus extra support for our LTP working group.

We really valued the advocacy and consultation opportunities this year, particularly our involvement in the Youth Engagement Strategy. However, more face-to-face events could help us engage even better. Our discussions about urban revitalisation and environmental issues were insightful, and we want even more hands-on workshops so that we can make a difference in our community. We hope to see more specific ways for us to contribute and take action with future projects.

Learning about the bicultural history of Rotorua enriched our understanding and highlighted the importance of cultural competence. We would enjoy exploring even more diverse cultural contexts in our learning experiences.

We reflected on striking the balance between 'doing more' and having more of a 'strategic influence' in areas that we and our peers care about. We would like to do more, but know we have our own studies, sports, cultural, work and family commitments too.

We have also enjoyed our experience so much that we hope to continue to be involved in the future, possibly in a tuakana- teina mentorship model.

Our Wins

One of the standout moments for us was putting together our submission for the Long-Term Plan. It felt amazing to understand how the submission process works and to make sure that the youth perspective was a priority.

Reflecting on the year, we felt a strong sense of friendship as a Youth Council. We bonded while working on different projects that mattered to us. Together, we contributed to the Long Term Plan and created a Youth Engagement Strategy, identifying meaningful ways to involve youth voices in Council work. Each of us grew individually through experiences like attending meetings and participating in the Festival for the Future, which were invaluable. We're proud of our Long Term Plan submission and ensuring youth perspectives were included, and we appreciated feeling valued for our contributions.

We have built some awesome connections while working together on various projects and initiatives. Our teamwork has been really positive, making it easy for us to share ideas and support each other on our leadership journeys.

As Youth Councillors, we've had the chance to dive into local governance—helping shape the Long-Term Plan and developing a Youth Engagement Strategy. We've also found new ways to get more young people involved in local decisions, making sure our voices as taiohi are heard loud and clear.

With members from different schools and backgrounds, we've done a great job representing a wide range of youth voices. This diversity has driven home the importance of inclusivity in all our projects, reflecting the different perspectives and needs of Rotorua youth.

Our teamwork with the Council's various departments has been a huge success too. By collaborating, we've made sure that our young perspectives are included in planning and decision-making, showing how effective collaboration can be.

Being part of the Youth Council has also helped us grow a lot as individuals. From attending the Festival for the Future to taking part in meetings and working on strategies, we've gained knowledge, confidence, and key leadership skills. We've learned a ton about leadership, public speaking, project management, and civic engagement—skills that'll definitely help us in our future roles within the community.

Final words:

“The Rotorua Youth Council has been such an awesome opportunity this year. The world of governance is quite hidden from everyday society, particularly youth, so it can be hard for many to understand what goes on behind the scenes. However the opportunity to be on a Youth Council this year has given me a brilliant glimpse into the world of decision making and public policy.

I was able to meet many new people, including those of a similar age who share similar interests. Friends I may have never met outside of the council. I also had the opportunity to get to know councillors and council staff, enjoying some cool discussions about the layout of a day at work for them.

I would 100% recommend anyone and everyone to have a go at a year on a Youth Council. It's the perfect experience for any rangatahi who want to learn what it takes to run a city.”

Finley English, RLC Youth Councillor, 2024

“Being a part of the Rotorua Lakes Youth Council for 2024 has truly been an unforgettable experience. The youth council has allowed me to gain further insight into the world of governance and public policy. I have been able to grow and strengthen my relationship skills through conversations and working closely with other like-minded youth. The youth council has given me a voice, it has enabled me to get involved in projects I care deeply about such as creating a more accessible Rotorua and it has helped me confirm what my passion and skills are and how to use them to create a better future for everyone.”

India May Heron, RLC Youth Councillor, 2024

Conclusion:

Through our projects and discussions, we've seen the power of youth voices and the impact we can have when we come together.

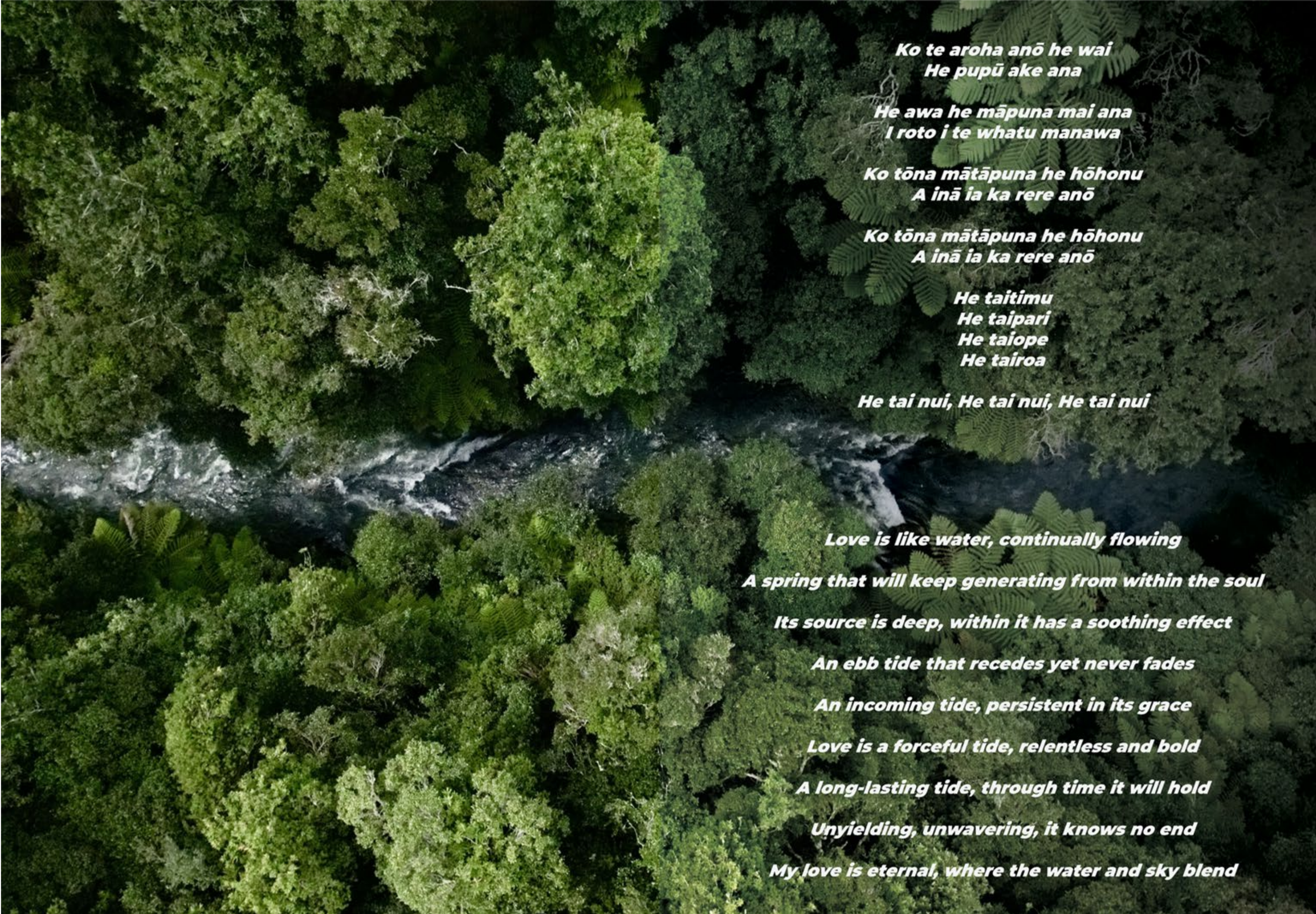
We're incredibly proud of what we've achieved—whether it was tackling community issues, diving deep into big topics like the Long Term Plan, or just sharing our thoughts in meetings. The connections we've made and the lessons we've learned will stick with us.

Looking ahead, we're more motivated than ever to keep this momentum going. We've laid a strong foundation this year, and we can't wait to see what 2025 has in store for the Rotorua Youth Council. Thank you all for being such a fantastic team.



NGĀ WAI O ROTORUA
YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

**TE KAUNIHERA
TAIOHI O ROTORUA**
Rotorua Youth Council



*Ko te aroha anō he wai
He pupū ake ana*

*He awa he māpuna mai ana
I roto i te whatu manawa*

*Ko tōna mātāpuna he hōhonu
A inā ia ka rere anō*

*Ko tōna mātāpuna he hōhonu
A inā ia ka rere anō*

*He taitimu
He taipari
He taiope
He tairoa*

He tai nui, He tai nui, He tai nui

*Love is like water, continually flowing
A spring that will keep generating from within the soul
Its source is deep, within it has a soothing effect
An ebb tide that recedes yet never fades
An incoming tide, persistent in its grace
Love is a forceful tide, relentless and bold
A long-lasting tide, through time it will hold
Unyielding, unwavering, it knows no end
My love is eternal, where the water and sky blend*

Introduction

Ngā Wai o Rotorua, meaning "the many waters of Rotorua," represents our region's stunning landscapes. Our district is surrounded by lakes, streams, springs, and geothermal waters, contributing to its unique beauty. Ngā Wai o Rotorua also refers to the wai within our bodies, and our relationship with each other and our environment. All these wai must be healthy and balanced to contribute to a thriving future for Rotorua.

In 2024, the Rotorua Lakes Council revived the Youth Council after being dormant. This renewed programme welcomed 11 exceptional taiohi, aged 15 years to 20 years, from across the Rotorua district. Committed to their roles, these young leaders participated in monthly meetings throughout the year, actively engaging in existing Council projects while focusing on their personal growth, leadership, and community contribution. The Rotorua Youth Council have led the development of this strategy, and will co-lead its implementation alongside the Rotorua Lakes Council. The Youth Council's dedication and insights were instrumental in engaging the wider youth population of Rotorua to develop the Ngā Wai o Rotorua Youth Engagement Strategy (Ngā Wai o Rotorua).

The Youth Council conducted a comprehensive survey over six weeks, reaching **180 young people aged 12 years to 19 years**. The survey findings were instrumental in shaping the plan's core elements and identifying critical initiatives for the Youth Council to champion in the future.

The survey revealed that **88% of respondents had yet to engage with the Rotorua Lakes Council**, highlighting a significant opportunity for improved engagement with youth. **90% of respondents expressed that their involvement in local government is important**. However, the survey also uncovered challenges such as **a need for more awareness about the Council's**

activities, confidence issues when sharing their ideas, and uncertainty about the impact of their contributions.

The Rotorua Lakes Council had previously identified the need to engage young people in the Council's operations and outcomes. Rotorua population consists of approximately 9,670¹ young people aged between 15 years – 24 years of that amount 5,577 are Māori². Our regional reality is that we are a young population. This creates a real need to engage young people to influence their community earlier, establishing a strong foundation of connection to their community's design and decision making. A community and region that they will soon inherit.

Ngā Wai o Rotorua aims to address the barriers our local young people identified in their survey responses and conversations with Youth Council members.

Ngā Wai o Rotorua has four focus areas:

- **Ngā Wai Hononga** (Accessibility and Inclusivity)
- **Te Puna Māramatanga** (Education and Awareness)
- **Ngā Waiariki** (Empowerment)
- **Wai Koropupū** (Digital and Social Media Engagement)

Through these focus areas and corresponding initiatives, the Rotorua Lakes Youth Council and Rotorua Lakes Council together aim to bridge the gap between themselves and the Rotorua youth population, encouraging greater inclusivity, awareness, and empowerment. Through these efforts, Ngā Wai o Rotorua will enhance youth engagement and contribute to a more connected and thriving future in Rotorua.



¹<https://reg.intometrics.co.nz/rotorua-district/population/age-composition?compare=new-zealand>



Te Reo o ngā Rangatahi Youth Voices

IS IT ESSENTIAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE INVOLVED IN WHAT THE ROTORUA LAKES COUNCIL DOES?

"Yes, because policies being implemented in Local Government impact us"

"It allows us to have a say in things that concern us"

"Decisions made now impact our future more than anyone's, so we should be involved"

"It allows us to contribute ideas, perspectives, and solutions to issues that affect us and our peers"

"Our voices and perspectives are important and, when listened to, can bring about positive change"

"Yes, for the experience!"

"We have a right to make decisions for our community"

"We make up the future of society, and our values will shape the world"

"We should have a say! We need to have a say!"

"We are at a point in our lives where it is essential that we feel supported, listened to and somewhat in control of our future. Inclusion here promotes youth wellbeing"

"We have some excellent ideas for improving issues. We will likely be the future Rotorua Lakes Council when we grow up"

"We are the future"

"It promotes leadership and enables young students to understand how processes work"

"Provides rangatahi opportunity to step into leadership roles outside of Kura"





Our Vision

YOUTH ARE ACTIVE IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ROTORUA

Our Mission

TO INCREASE YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF THE ROTORUA LAKES COUNCIL.

Our Values



COMMITMENT:

We act with integrity, demonstrating a willingness to put in the work, perseverance, wholehearted commitment to our values, and accountable to each other.



MANAAKITANGA:

We work together with kindness and support, respect diversity, consider different cultures and backgrounds, and value every voice.



ORIGINALITY:

We embrace thinking outside the box, celebrate our uniqueness, foster innovation in our approaches, and recognise and acknowledge everyone's perspectives.

Focus Areas

Each focus area name draws inspiration from Ngā Wai o Rotorua, representing a distinct state or type of water. Each playing a crucial and equally important role in the Rotorua ecosystem.



NGĀ WAI HONONGA

Ngā Wai Hononga symbolises the unity and connection of diverse groups, much like streams and rivers connecting through tributaries. It emphasises relationships, reflecting how young people and Rotorua Lakes Council could collaborate and support each other.



TE PUNA MĀRAMATANGA

Te Puna Māramatanga refers to a spring or source of knowledge. This name highlights the importance of nurturing and providing youth with access to information about the Rotorua Lakes Council.



NGĀ WAIARIKI

Ngā Waiariki refers to our natural hot springs. In the context of this plan, it symbolises sources of revitalisation, strength, and renewal. These springs are seen as energy sources and inspiration, offering physical and spiritual sustenance.



WAI KOROPUPŪ

Wai Koropupū refers to bubbling water, symbolising the dynamic, rapidly changing nature of online social content and digital interactions. Ngā wai e koropupū ana evokes energy and movement. This focus area Wai Koropupū reflects the energetic flow of information within and across digital and social media platforms.

NGĀ WAI HONONGA

INITIATIVE ONE

Build relationships with youth groups and organisations working with youth across Rotorua.

INITIATIVE TWO

Conduct a biannual survey to identify what's important to youth and identify critical issues they may be facing.

INITIATIVE THREE

Develop and implement at least three new engagement methods for diverse youth groups.

TE PUNA MĀRAMATANGA

INITIATIVE FOUR

Raise awareness and promote the activities of the Rotorua Youth Council.

INITIATIVE FIVE

Provide workshops and training sessions for youth to learn how to participate in the Rotorua Lakes Council processes.

INITIATIVE SIX

Create educational materials about Local Government and the Rotorua Lakes Council for youth.

INITIATIVE SEVEN

Integrate civic education into school programmes for youth.

NGĀ WAIARIKI

INITIATIVE EIGHT

Rotorua Lakes Council continues investing in the Youth Council programme, empowering our youth to shape Council decisions.

INITIATIVE NINE

Youth Hackathon. E.g. A Youth Hackathon is a collaborative event where young people work in teams to create innovative solutions to challenges faced by the Council.

INITIATIVE TEN

Rotorua Lakes Council delegate decision-making power on specific issues or projects to Rotorua Youth Council.

INITIATIVE ELEVEN

Acknowledge and celebrate youth contributions with awards and recognition.

WAI KOROPUPŪ

INITIATIVE TWELVE

Develop a Digital Youth Engagement Plan.

INITIATIVE THIRTEEN

Implement a youth-friendly digital platform for engagement.

INITIATIVE FOURTEEN

Create online challenges that encourage youth to share their ideas.

Ngā Wai o Rotorua



COMMITMENT:

We act with Integrity, demonstrating a willingness to put in the work, perseverance, wholehearted commitment to our values, and accountable to each other.



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We embrace thinking outside the box, celebrate our uniqueness, foster innovation in our approaches, and recognise and acknowledge everyone's perspectives.

YOUTH ARE ACTIVE IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF ROTORUA

BY PARTICIPATING IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF THE ROTORUA LAKES COUNCIL



NGĀ WAI HONONGA
(ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY)

INITIATIVE ONE
Build relationships with youth groups and organisations working with youth across Rotorua.

INITIATIVE TWO
Conduct a biannual survey to identify what's important to youth and identify critical issues they may be facing.

INITIATIVE THREE
Develop and implement at least three new engagement methods for diverse youth groups.



TE PUNA MĀRAMATANGA
(EDUCATION AND AWARENESS)

INITIATIVE FOUR
Raise awareness and promote the activities of the Rotorua Youth Council.

INITIATIVE FIVE
Provide workshops and training sessions for youth to learn how to participate in the Rotorua Lakes Council processes.

INITIATIVE SIX
Create educational materials about Local Government and the Rotorua Lakes Council for youth.

INITIATIVE SEVEN
Integrate civic education into school programmes for youth.



NGĀ WAIARIKI
(EMPOWERMENT)

INITIATIVE EIGHT
Rotorua Lakes Council continues investing in the Youth Council programme, empowering our youth to shape Council decisions.

INITIATIVE NINE
Youth Hackathon. E.g. A Youth Hackathon is a collaborative event where young people work in teams to create innovative solutions to challenges faced by the Council.

INITIATIVE TEN
Rotorua Lakes Council delegate decision-making power on specific issues or projects to Rotorua Youth Council.

INITIATIVE ELEVEN
Acknowledge and celebrate youth contributions with awards and recognition.



WAI KOROPUPŪ
(DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT)

INITIATIVE TWELVE
Develop a Digital Youth Engagement Plan.

INITIATIVE THIRTEEN
Implement a youth-friendly digital platform for engagement.

INITIATIVE FOURTEEN
Create online challenges that encourage youth to share their ideas.

Implementation Pathways

Year One: Foundation

FOCUS AREA	INITIATIVE	MEASURABLE OUTCOMES	QUARTER
Ngā Wai Hononga	01	Establish a relationship with at least five youth groups and organisations.	Q1 - Q2
Ngā Wai Hononga	02	Increase youth participation by 25% from the survey completed in 2024.	Q1 - Q2
Te Puna Māramatanga	04	Increase awareness of the Rotorua Youth Council by 30%. Measure this using baseline data collected in the biannual survey in 2027.	Q1 - Q4
Wai Koropupū	12	Launch a Digital Youth Engagement Plan.	Q3 - Q4
Te Puna Māramatanga	06	Develop at least three educational materials about the Local Government and the Rotorua Lakes Council for youth.	Q3 - Q4
Ngā Waiariki	08	The Rotorua Lakes Council guarantees the Youth Council as a sustained program in its policy and annual planning.	Q4
Year Two: Integrate			
Ngā Wai Hononga	03	Engage with a total of 50 youth through these engagement methods.	Q1 - Q4

Te Puna Māramatanga	05	Conduct three workshops or training sessions per year for youth.	Q1 - Q4
Wai Koropupū	13	Launch and maintain a Youth-friendly digital platform.	Q3 - Q4
Wai Koropupū	14	Create and run at least four challenges annually that encourage youth to share their ideas online.	Q4
Ngā Waiariki	9	Host a biannual hackathon	Q4
Year Three: Enhance			
Ngā Wai Hononga	01	Strengthen existing relationships and expand to new groups.	Q1 - Q2
Ngā Wai Hononga	02	Review and assess the effectiveness of engagement methods through biannual survey.	Q1 - Q2
Te Puna Māramatanga	07	Integrate civic education into at least 25% of local high schools.	Q1 - Q2
Ngā Waiariki	10	Delegate decision-making power to youth annually on at least two specific projects or issues.	Q3 - Q4
Ngā Waiariki	11	Establish an annual awards programme to recognise youth contributions.	Q4





TE KAUNIHERA
TAIOHI O ROTORUA
Rotorua Youth Council