



Youth Advisory Panel 2021 Report

**Te Mana
Whakaatu**
CLASSIFICATION OFFICE

Youth Advisory Panel (YAP)

2021 Report

Lead facilitators: Caitlin and Georgia.
Supporting facilitators: Dylan and Tara.

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All images are of past and present panel members.

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Foreword from Robbie

Panel Member

2021 was a tremendous year for YAP, which saw us expand and welcome many new faces. One thing I admire about the dynamic of the Panel is both the diversity each member brings but also their ability to listen and consider the experiences and opinions of others. Having been a member of the YAP from day one it has been a privilege seeing the evolution and changes we as a group have gone through, while maintaining the diverse dynamic that makes our discussions so meaningful.

Among the many topics and successes of the Panel, one that stood out for me this year was the conclusion of the Consumer Video on Demand Bill (big shoutout to Troy at the Office). Although the Panel's involvement in the formation of the Bill largely took place at the beginning of last year, it has been incredibly fulfilling finally seeing the fruits of our labour this year. Being given the platform to offer a youth perspective which yielded observable results was a very empowering experience. I hope it serves as a foundation for further youth involvement within our government at a fundamental level, especially when the decisions being made directly affect us as young people.

Another facet of the Youth Advisory Panel that grew this year was a focus on youth voice and engagement. From blog posts and social media campaigns to the YAP workshop at the 2021 INVOLVE conference, ka pai to all of the Panel members involved. One particular discussion that stood out to me was of the world of technology and media that we now find ourselves immersed in. Every generation imposes generalisations upon their youth. Yesterday it was the harmful impacts of rock and roll or rap and today it is the internet. A seemingly unbreakable negative tie has been bound between my generation and the digital playground we were brought up in. Perspective is a nurtured and extrinsic process which, for us children of the internet, has enabled the most well-informed and richly diverse

generation of perspectives this world has ever seen. In recent years youth voice has forged a new and improved reputation with its involvement with issues such as climate change. I believe it is the obligation of this Panel to continue to organise and amplify our voices to the point where our opinions are given as much credit as those who make our decisions for us.

Lastly I would like to give a big thank you to the facilitators at the Office, Caitlin, Georgia, Shiyi, Dylan and Tara who have played a massive part in making the Panel what it is today. I feel incredibly privileged to have been a part of the journey thus far and I look forward to seeing the direction you guide the Panel toward in the future.

- Robbie, Youth Advisory Panel Member



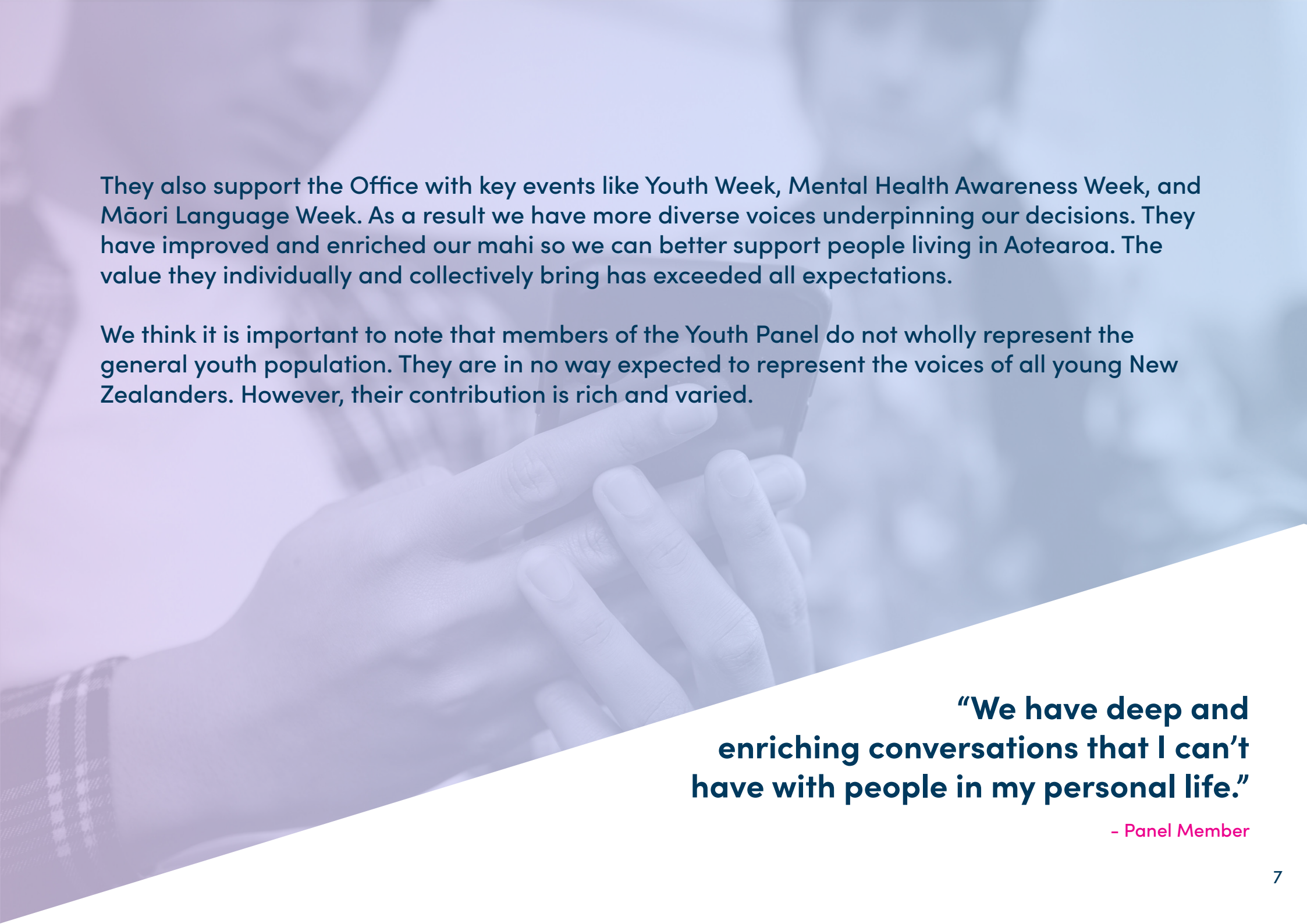
Background

Te Mana Whakaatu-Classification Office established a Youth Advisory Panel as part of a wider youth engagement strategy in 2018. It made sense to involve rangatahi in New Zealand's classification system as they are most affected by what we do. We thought the Panel could help plan and execute youth-targeted projects, and develop resources for public outreach. We also wanted to hear their views so we could improve our work on issues that directly affect them, such as our restricted classification decisions.

Through the Youth Advisory Panel the voices of rangatahi are now a part of our daily work. The Panel plays a critical role in classifying films and shows that impact young people. The monthly Panel meetings are a space where young people can voice their opinions and know that they are heard. Panel members have presented to Parliamentary Select Committees, edited and starred in clips for social media, presented at events, and consulted on government projects.

“It is important to move away from concrete thinking and pivot toward a more human element. Young people are not the same.”

- Panel Member

A background image showing several hands holding a smartphone, with a soft purple and blue overlay. The image is slightly blurred, focusing on the hands and the device.

They also support the Office with key events like Youth Week, Mental Health Awareness Week, and Māori Language Week. As a result we have more diverse voices underpinning our decisions. They have improved and enriched our mahi so we can better support people living in Aotearoa. The value they individually and collectively bring has exceeded all expectations.

We think it is important to note that members of the Youth Panel do not wholly represent the general youth population. They are in no way expected to represent the voices of all young New Zealanders. However, their contribution is rich and varied.

“We have deep and enriching conversations that I can’t have with people in my personal life.”

- Panel Member

Facilitators

Caitlin

Tēnā koutou. I love working with rangatahi and seeing the power of youth voice enrich and reshape government thinking. Alongside working with young people I have also enjoyed supporting both national and international agencies on their youth engagement journeys.

Dylan

Ko wai au? Ko Ngāpuhi-nui-tonu tōku iwi. Ko Dylan tōku ingoa. I am a trauma-informed educator and violence prevention practitioner based in Te-Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington.

Georgia

Kia ora! I love helping rangatahi hold adults accountable for the decisions they make. It is so inspiring to see the YAP passionately advocating for their beliefs, and influence projects and policy that uplift the voices of rangatahi across Aotearoa.

Tara

Kia ora koutou. I'm a classification advisor at the Office. I love working with rangatahi because I think they bring an important perspective to our work. It's great to collaborate with such intelligent, empathetic and critical thinkers.



Our Approach

Whanaungatanga

The facilitators and panel members have purposefully cultivated a relaxed, friendly, and casual environment. There is no expectation to bring anything more than what each individual already knows and believes. And what they bring every time is valuable, useful, meaningful, and important.

Whai Wāhitanga

Being a young person is hard. They are all on their individual journeys, which include setbacks, pressures, barriers, emotions, and physical and mental changes. All this comes while they are trying to find their place in the world and work out who they are. It has been a privilege getting to know our panel members individually and supporting them to develop. Our aim is to always respect, listen, and amplify their voices. We keep an eye out for opportunities individual members or small groups can get involved in.

Mātauranga

As a Crown entity we have to be careful that any collaboration with young people is not decorative, manipulative, or tokenistic – something that can happen unintentionally. We ensure that every project benefits both the young person and our Office, and ensure their voices are not misused or repurposed. We want to provide meaningful opportunities for young people and empower and enhance their mana.

– Based off the [Mana Taiohi Framework](#)

“The Panel has the ability of being able to listen and contribute despite our diverse backgrounds.” – Panel member

2021 Highlights

The Panel meets every month to support the Office with understanding issues that directly impact rangatahi. Below are some highlights from this year's meetings.

Offensive Language

Whenever we classify publications we need to consider how people might be harmed by any offensive language it contains. What is considered as 'offensive' changes over time. We receive complaints from older generations concerned about frequent use and how this could harm young viewers. We need to make sure that our decisions are relevant to the people most impacted by offensive language: rangatahi.

We asked the Panel to look at offensive language across a series of meetings this year. The Panel watched a series of clips where characters used offensive language. We then discussed the impact of the language, its context, and how the language made them feel. They also talked about how their friends and whānau would feel about the language used.

"The f-word is used to fill up space and give more volume to what characters are saying." - Panel member

Stereotypes and Rangatahi

The Panel recently looked at the question 'why is it important to break down stereotypes of rangatahi and what they watch?' The Panel demonstrated that young people are diverse, discussing their varied watching habits and perspectives. Young people are interested in every type of media, listing off examples ranging from reality shows and teen dramas, to financial podcasts and Reddit. Something we come across while working with young people is that a lot of adults don't respect the expertise of young people. Young

people are aware that messages in the media and society make generalising statements about them, often dismissing their opinions and ideas.

“It’s impossible to truthfully narrow down what people watch, especially what young people watch.” – Panel member

Lockdown

Over lockdown the Office ran a campaign supporting parents and whānau during the difficult time. Screen time was unavoidably high for most New Zealanders which came with an increase in media harms. The Panel provided hot tips and messages for the campaign and advised on what they like seeing and what they don’t like. They also answered questions about what was bothering them during lockdown. The panel were honest, vulnerable and committed to this campaign and the messages we were sharing.

“It’s okay to not attend a Zoom call.” – Panel member

National Security

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) consulted with the Panel to hear their views on the biggest national security concerns young people face in 2021. In the meeting, the Panel highlighted their concerns about New Zealand’s cybersecurity and lack of digital infrastructure, the impacts of large globalised companies such as Meta, and online radicalisation. From this discussion the Panel have made both a written and oral submission to DPMC.

“We are anxious about online radicalisation. The lack of internet regulation allows communities of likeminded people to connect, share hate, and incite violence. Some of us expect an event like the Christchurch mosque attack to happen again in the future” – Panel member

2021 Co-views

This year the Youth Advisory Panel helped us to classify seven films. These included:

The Justice of Bunny King

“The Panel member thought that the gritty tone and slow pace of the film was unlikely to appeal to children and the more mature themes (such as the references to domestic and sexual abuse) were likely to go over children’s heads.”

- Classification decision

Gunpowder Milkshake

“There was consensus amongst them that the candy-noir aesthetic lessened the impact of the violence, saying it was not as bad as something more dark and gritty.”

- Classification decision

Candyman

“They found the body horror the strongest element - ‘it was the nails that got me’ - and considered it more bloody than they were expecting.”

- Classification decision

The Suicide Squad

“Although the Panel found some of the violence quite strong compared to the 2016 Suicide Squad film, they still thought the audience would expect it.”

- Classification decision

Halloween Kills


“While they thought the violence was stronger than in previous films, they also indicated that the film’s dark humour lightened the overall tone of the film.”

- Classification decision

Scream

“They explained that the offensive language was unnecessary but added comic relief - particularly when victims were swearing at the killer while being attacked.”

- Classification decision



“A lot of the violent themes have been negated by the wacky weirdness of the games.”

- Panel Member talking about Netflix series Squid Game.

Opportunities for Members

We look for personal and professional development opportunities for members. Here are some of the opportunities the Panel have had this year.

Presenting at INVOLVE 2021

At this year's INVOLVE conference Fletcher and Lulu supported Caitlin and Georgia delivering a workshop on the Youth Advisory Panel. They shared their experiences and described how the Panel has grown since it started.

Fletcher was also invited to be on a panel of young people during the keynote presentation. Youth worker and facilitator Rod Baxter asked the panel questions about why it is important to work with rangatahi, and gave them the opportunity to demonstrate the power of youth voice.



Presenting at New Echo Systems Conference

Alexi was asked to speak at a conference on the topic of Youth on Youth—Architects of, or Hostages to, Social Media. He was on a panel with two other rangatahi from School Strike 4 Climate in Dunedin. He spoke about how social media makes rangatahi feel both included and excluded in their social circles. He felt that young people feel disengaged from talking about social media due to adults' pessimism towards their use of it. Alexi thinks that more regulation is needed in regard to misinformation and he called on attendees to include young people in the discourse surrounding social media.

“Social media is the digital infrastructure of our lives.” – Alexi

Presenting to the Justice Committee on the Harmful Digital Communications Act Amendment Bill

In May, the Panel made an oral submission to the Select Committee considering the Harmful Digital Communications Act Amendment Bill. The Bill proposes changes to the reasons people can be convicted for sharing intimate images. Panel members Hariklia and Mosi provided the Committee with insight into the impacts on rangatahi of sharing intimate images. The Select Committee engaged them on discussions across mental health, cultural diversity, and toxic masculinity.

“No matter what the intention of the perpetrator was it doesn’t change what the victim is feeling or how much damage is actually caused.” - Hariklia

“For boys it means social acceptance, and I think that being able to change the culture and being able to change this social norm that it’s cool to be posting this, it’s cool to exploit women, it’s cool to disrespect them.”

- Mosi



Social Media Campaigns

This year the Panel supported several different social media awareness campaigns. They are the experts of what it is like being a young people and on what it is like growing up online – it just makes sense that they are drivers behind most of our campaigns. Their influence makes the content we create relatable for other young people in Aotearoa.

“I’m glad someone else is on my level.”

– Young person in comment section


Misinformation

From the Capitol riots to the ongoing global pandemic and vaccinations, misinformation has been a hot topic of 2021. Rangatahi living in the digital world are not immune to influence of misinformation on their screens. We asked the Panel about their views on misinformation, and we shared these learnings on our social accounts after the launch of our misinformation report in June 2021.

“People are more likely to take your thoughts into account if there is respect in the conversation.” – Panel Member

The Panel told us that Rangatahi are worried about misinformation too. They want tools for both identifying misinformation as well as navigating difficult conversations.

“Be mindful of your responsibility to share accurate messages.” – Panel Member



“Relationships have a sort of progression as they go along and some people might think that sending nudes is a part of that for like everyone.”

- Panel member

The Bare Facts

Sharing nudes is part of everyday life for many young people in Aotearoa, but not all consider how their image may be made public or shared in ways they didn't intend after the moment. Netsafe and the Office developed [The Bare Facts](https://www.netsafe.org.nz/barefacts), a nationwide campaign designed to encourage open conversations about the reality of online intimate images.

As part of the campaign we asked the Youth Advisory Panel difficult questions about sending and sharing nudes. Check their answers and the rest of the campaign at www.netsafe.org.nz/barefacts.

“People are going to take nudes and share them but you have trust with the person that you share them with. They should respect that and not share them further on.” – Panel Member

AJ, a long-time member of the Panel, wrote a blog about what it was like for him at school when a student's nude was leaked. Check it out on our [website](#).



Evaluation

Every year we conduct a review of the Panel to ensure that we are working ethically with young people and they feel safe, supported, and see the value in what they do. This year we supported Panel members Lulu and Robbie to facilitate the review. As well as ensuring Panel members felt comfortable sharing their feelings, it gave Lulu and Robbie the opportunity to develop facilitation skills.

Key take-aways from the review:

- The Panel members feel a sense of purpose and enjoyment from being in a space where they have the freedom to share their opinions and ideas about things that interest them.
- Size and diversity of the group are their key strengths.
- Members feel like their voices are heard but would like more information about what their voices are feeding into.
- The Panel enjoy going to dinner, the movies and receiving vouchers as a reward for their time.
- Favourite meetings involved giving feedback on projects or meetings where they were able to co-design content.
- They enjoy collaborating with other agencies and would like more opportunities to do this.
- Some members felt that the gaps between meetings were too long and suggested that we have shorter, more frequent meet-ups.

2022

We are excited to continue journeying with the Panel and implementing changes highlighted in the review.

The Office understands and values the power of youth voice and we will continue to advocate and learn from rangatahi.

Haere rā

We have said goodbye and will be saying goodbye to a few integral parts of our team this year. Georgia has moved to Ministry of Education and continues to support rangatahi in her new role. A few members of the Panel are moving on, including Robbie who wrote the foreword message for this report. Lastly, our Chief Censor David Shanks' term came to an end on the 6th of May. You all have been advocates, leaders and guiding lights for the Youth Advisory Panel. Haere rā e hoa mā.



Appendix

Timeline of Panel activities

Date	Topic	Discussion Points	Outcomes
04/02/2021	Censor for a Day	The Panel contributed to a design restructure of video clips, and trialled a few group activities.	Their feedback ensured that our presentation is more youth-focused and accessible.
05/02/2021	Misinformation cognitive testing	Two members of the Panel went through the questions for our <i>The Edge of the Infodemic</i> report.	They provided feedback on the questions and how young people would interpret them.
14/06/2021	Nudes campaign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members interviewed each other about the risks of sending and sharing other people's nudes. - They filmed and edited the interviews and then oversaw the making of the animations. - One member wrote a blog on nudes. - The whole panel gave feedback on the script for the main animation of the campaign. 	Their feedback and involvement ensured that the campaign would be relatable and interesting for young people in Aotearoa.
16/03/2021	New Echo Systems conference: Youth on Youth-Architects of, or Hostages to, Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member spoke about social media making young people feel both included in their social circles, but also excluded. - He felt that young people feel disengaged from talking about social media due to adults' pessimism towards their use of it. - He explained that more regulation is needed in regard to misinformation. - He called on attendees to include young people in the discourse surrounding social media. 	He was able to directly address academics and social media companies.
30/03/2021 and 13/05/2021	Offensive Language: Part I and II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Panel felt that the tone and context of scenes can contribute to the effect of offensive language. - They spoke about different cultures and their reactions to words that are considered offensive. - They felt that older generations had a different understanding of what is appropriate versus what is not. 	The young people were able to help shape the way in which the Classification Office and CVoD providers classify offensive language.

Date	Topic	Discussion Points	Outcomes
13/05/2021	Youth Advisory Panel Annual Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Panel said that the drive to attend meetings and screenings came from feeling a sense of purpose and enjoyment from being in a space where they have the freedom to share their opinions and ideas about things that interest them. - They identified the size and diversity of the group as being their key strengths. - The Panel enjoys the variety of work and the informal structure of the meetings. - Their favourite meetings involved giving feedback on projects that were yet to be completed or meetings where they were able to co-design content. - Some people felt that the gaps between meetings were too long and suggested that we have shorter, more frequent meet-ups and more communication about what their voices are feeding into. 	The Panel were able to provide facilitators with feedback that has helped shape the future direction of the Panel.
20/05/2021	Misinformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Panel talked about having conversations with people who have different opinions from their own. They agreed that all participants need to approach the conversation with openness and respect. - They felt that there is a hierarchy where older generations think they know best but they won't listen if it is coming from young people. - They talked about online friendships being an escape from offline friendships. - Seeing people's opinions online gives them more confidence to challenge their friends in real life. - They agreed that herd mentality, pride and shame contributed to the spread of misinformation. People don't want to admit they're wrong or stray too far from the views of their community. 	Their contributions helped create content such as blogs and social media posts for young people, parents, and whānau following the release of the Misinformation research report.
22/07/2021	Preparation for the INVOLVE conference	In preparation for the INVOLVE 2021 we met with the Panel. They discussed what they thought the attendees needed to hear on the topic of working with rangatahi.	The key message the Panel wanted to get across was to really listen to rangatahi. They identified different stereotypes and assumptions adults often make about young people. Members were honest during the meeting and expressed their emotions across two canvases which we took to INVOLVE and now have hanging in the Office.

Date	Topic	Discussion Points	Outcomes
09/08/2021	INVOLVE conference	Two members helped the facilitators present a workshop where they advised external groups on their journey working with rangatahi. One member was part of Rod Baxter's keynote panel and workshop on youth participation.	The young people were able to directly inform adults and talk to them about the importance of working with young people.
26/08/2021	Lockdown Social Media Posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The YAP explained that they enjoyed seeing positive messaging about lockdown. - They shared their frustrations with people spreading negativity and fear, including news media. - They shared some of their hot tips and messages for looking after yourself. 	Their contributions helped shape a social media campaign that was posted during the 2021 lockdown.
14/10/2021	Stereotypes and Rangatahi	The YAP shared what they've been watching and listening to (films, shows, podcasts etc.).	The information was used to create personas that will be used as a resource to help convey what young people are consuming. The personas will be shared in presentations, on social media, and in a blog.
02/12/2021	National Security Submission	The YAP formulated a written submission with their views on what they consider to be threats/risks to Aotearoa's national security.	The young people are able to have their say on Aotearoa's three-year security focus.


Acknowledgments

To our supporters, teachers, facilitators and most importantly our members, thank you for all your mahi.

We also acknowledge all the rangatahi in Aotearoa. We hear you and see you.

Feeling inspired to work with rangatahi?

For organisations intending to set out on this journey we recommend working with others with expertise to help guide and support you. We have learnt on and have been guided by experts in youth engagement. Our advice is to understand the ethics and remain updated. And most of all, have fun. Every single young person brings something unique and it is exciting to support their mana.

A photograph of two young men sitting outdoors, laughing and looking at each other. The man on the left is wearing a light blue t-shirt and has his head tilted back. The man on the right is wearing a dark t-shirt with a graphic, a black watch, and a blue cap worn backward. The background is a bright, hazy outdoor setting. The text is overlaid in the center in a dark blue, sans-serif font.

**“It’s a unique place for
discussions. I feel privileged
to be a part of the panel.”**

– Panel member



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