



Youth Advisory Panel

2022/23 Report

Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) 2022/23 Report

Lead facilitators: Shannan, Caitlin and Georgia.

Supporting facilitators: Dylan, AJ, Shiyi, and Tara.

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Foreword

2022 was another exciting year for the Youth Advisory Panel (YAP), with a multitude of new experiences for existing panel members and the added excitement of having new members join our crew.

Every single YAP meeting is insightful and filled with content that is relevant to youth in Aotearoa. We all offer unique perspectives and we're eager to learn more about each other's experiences.

I have loved being a part of the YAP since 2020. My interactions with the Panel leave me feeling fulfilled and hopeful that we are making a difference in society.

Not only do we have serious meetings about big issues with important people, we also have small but meaningful chats that could go on for hours.

This year has been met with optimism by the Panel. One of the highlights of the year was our discussion about digital citizenship with the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor.

It was a privilege to meet with the Chief Science Advisor and be involved in a discussion that will shape how youth identify and engage with mis/dis-information in the future.

Another incredible opportunity the YAP had was to talk about the on-screen bullying that youth in Aotearoa face.

We highlighted the ways cyber-bullying has evolved to be much more sophisticated than what most parents and teachers believe it to be.

It was amazing to be able to have an open and enlightening conversation that was based on Aotearoa youth experiences, rather than the usual American narrative we are all fed through social media and popular American high school movies.

Our monthly meetings are visible proof that the youth of Aotearoa are heard and that we can make a difference, no matter what our age is.

I would like to say a huge thank you to the facilitators at the office – you all rock! AJ, Georgia, Caitlin, Tara, Dylan, and Shannan: I know you have all put so much effort into this panel and it definitely shows.

To Caroline, who is the Chief Censor: thank you for putting in the time to join in on our chats, it is always a pleasure to have you in our discussions. We are all so appreciative of your hard work and I cannot wait to see what else you all have in store for us.

The YAP is an exciting opportunity for youth to hold adults accountable for the decisions they make regarding us. It's empowering for youth to be able to take a stand and do something to better the lives of everyone in society.

Hariklia *(she/her)*

Youth Advisory Panel Member



Message from the Chief Censor

Te Mana Whakaatu—Classification Office established the Youth Advisory Panel as part of a wider youth engagement strategy in 2018.

Young people are most impacted by the work we do, so it makes sense to fully involve them in New Zealand’s classification system.

We want to constantly improve our work on issues that directly affect young people, such as our restricted classification decisions. The Panel also helps us plan and execute youth-targeted projects and develop resources for the public.

Through the Youth Advisory Panel, the voices of rangatahi are now a part of our daily work. The Panel plays a critical role in informing us when we classify films and shows that impact young people. I have had the privilege of attending several film screenings with YAP members, and their insight and contribution to the classification process is invaluable.

It’s important to note that members of the Youth Panel do not wholly represent the general youth population, and they are in no way expected to represent the voices of all young New Zealanders. However, their contribution is rich and varied, and panel members individually and collectively bring enormous value to this work.

The Youth Advisory Panel is a model for government engagement with young people. That is reflected in the fact that other agencies and departments – such as the Department of Internal Affairs, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the Prime Minister’s Chief Science Advisor – have worked with the Panel this year on issues that impact their generation.

I’m proud of the work that members of my staff put in to facilitate and engage with the Panel, and I’m so impressed by the depth of insight and care that members invariably bring to the topics at hand.

Caroline Flora (*she/her*)

Chief Censor

Facilitators

“It’s a privilege to be able to amplify young people and enhance their representation in spaces of power.”

SHANNAN

“There are so many opportunities for rangatahi in Aotearoa, if we just make them happen.”

AJ

“I love working with rangatahi and seeing the power of the youth voice enrich and reshape government thinking.”

CAITLIN

“The level of thought and care that rangatahi show for each other is so heartening.”

DYLAN

“It is so inspiring to see the YAP passionately advocate for their beliefs, and influence projects and policy that uplift the voices of rangatahi across Aotearoa.”

GEORGIA

“It’s great to collaborate with such intelligent, empathetic and critical thinkers.”

TARA



Our approach

Our approach to collaborating with the YAP is based on the Mana Taiohi Framework.

Whanaungatanga

The facilitators and panel members purposefully cultivate a constructive, fun, and encouraging environment. There is no expectation of bringing anything more than what each individual already knows, believes and has experienced. We are grateful for our panel members' time, energy, and meaningful engagement.

Whai wāhitanga

Being a young person can be hard. They are all on their own journey, 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, experiencing their insights and walking alongside them as they positively develop. Our aim is to always respect, listen, and amplify their voices. We encourage and connect individual members to participate in additional opportunities.

Mātauranga

As an independent Crown entity, the YAP helps us to deliver our statutory functions well, but we have to be careful that any collaboration with young people is not decorative, manipulative, or tokenistic – something that could 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.

We also draw on the recently released 2023 Youth Plan Refresh which aims for the voices and perspectives of young people to be listened to, valued, and embedded in decision-making at all levels.

Highlights

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

Mis-/dis-information with the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor

Background

The Chief Science Advisor, Dame Juliet Gerrard, and her team visited Te Mana Whakaatu in March. The Chief Censor, Caroline Flora, recommended the Youth Advisory Panel as a potential group to help with their He Uru Kahikatea project on mis- and dis-information in the online space. The project looks at ways to build young people's resilience to mis- and dis-information by developing critical thinking skills, resilience to online manipulation and harassment, and digital citizenship skills for self-regulation and peer-to-peer support.

Discussion

The meeting had our highest participation rate to date, featuring 14 panel members. The PMCSA team provided an overview of the He Uru Kahikatea project. The Panel split up into three groups and each was assigned a staff member from the PMCSA team. Members discussed the types of mis- and dis-information they come across and which sites and online spaces they use. Panel members also offered advice on the precautions they take, how they establish accuracy, and which social media accounts and influencers they see spreading mis- and dis-information.

Outcomes

The PMCSA team sent a letter of reference signed by the Chief Science Advisor. They also sent through a draft version of their report to the YAP members to review. Members were satisfied with the contents of the report and the way their contributions were recorded. Dame Juliet thanked the YAP for participating and providing invaluable contributions to the He Uru Kahikatea project.

“The meeting with the YAP was one of the highlights of the stakeholder engagement for our project. It was fantastic to engage with such an energetic group of young people who provided us with a thorough and thoughtful perspective on how we can empower our rangatahi to be resilient to our polluted information landscape.”

Professor Dame Juliet Gerrard (DNZM FRSNZ), Chief Science Advisor

He Whenua Taurikura hui

Background

In October 2022, staff members and the Chief Censor were accompanied by YAP Members Katie and Eden to attend He Whenua Taurikura, New Zealand's annual hui on countering terrorism and violent extremism. He Whenua Taurikura translates to 'a country at peace'.

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch mosques recommended that the government organise an annual hui, where various stakeholders, including central and local government agencies, communities, civil society, the private sector, and researchers, can come together.

The purpose of the event is to foster connections and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and strategies in combating violent extremism and terrorism.

Discussion

Panel members Eden and Katie participated on a panel with the Chief Censor and the Chief Human Rights Commissioner, Paul Hunt. They were the only youth participants that were asked to speak on a panel, and they made great use of this amazing opportunity. They shared how vulnerable young people can be online when it comes to mis- and dis-information and extremism content.

They touched on their experience with social media, possible prevention response measures, and the need for organisations to be proactive in preventing radicalisation while balancing human rights. Both members also supported feedback for including more youth in the organisation and running of the event, and a desire to hear more about what is happening at the grass roots of civil society.

Outcomes

Since their participation, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has outlined plans to involve youth participation in the organisation of upcoming He Whenua Taurikura hui. We are arranging for representatives from our panel to help with this process.

“It was a privilege to have been involved in these conversations both as a listener and as a speaker! I hope that in the coming years of He Whenua Taurikura, we see more representation and voices of young people involved.”

Eden, Panel Member

On-screen depictions of suicide

Background

The Office frequently warns for suicide when it clearly appears in content, but judgement calls are made when depictions are implied, obscure or fleeting. We wanted to hear the YAP perspectives to help us to calibrate our thinking, especially when it comes to content aimed at rangatahi.

We understand this is a topic that can be challenging and triggering. We took extra precaution in ensuring members were informed, safe and supported throughout and after the session. The content and questions were all based on non-graphic content and 'edge' cases.

Discussion

We discussed a scene depicting Icarus flying into the sun in the film *Eternals*. Overall, the Panel felt that the audience would not connect or be influenced by a character flying into the sun. They were more concerned with seeing the raw emotions of the character and how that might make viewers feel, especially men.

The Panel were unanimous in their opinion that informing viewers about a suicide scene should not be considered a spoiler. Members brought up many different pieces of content that included suicide in some form, including the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*, and talked about the impacts that had on them.

They spoke about how common this type of content is and how it is hard to prevent people from watching it, especially when they are deliberately searching for it. They suggested that more information for parents and rangatahi about series and films featuring suicide content is better.

Outcomes

We shared this information with mental health experts such as the Mental Health Foundation and the Suicide Prevention Office. The Classification Unit have been able to include findings from the meeting in their decisions. We are actively promoting our Find a Rating webpage with the intention of reaching audiences who would benefit from knowing more before pressing play on their chosen content. In our content breakdowns and blogs on our website we have paid special attention to describing suicide scenes, even if the publication did not include a warning for suicide.

“People do search for this type of content when they’re struggling but if their friends and family are informed about what is shown, they could deter them from watching it.”

Panel Member

2022-23 Co-views

Members from the Youth Advisory Panel attended 10 film viewings along with our classification advisors and provided their insights on the most impactful content.

Don't Worry Darling

R13 | Violence, sex scenes, self-harm and offensive language

Three members of the Youth Advisory Panel attended this classification screening. They identified the sex scenes as being amongst the strongest content, particularly because they occur at the beginning of the film and the first is a relatively sustained depiction of oral sex. They felt that these scenes were inappropriate for children. One YAP member thought that some viewers may read these scenes as rape given the wives are unwillingly in a simulation. They also felt that cruelty was a significant element in the film. They felt that the violence and offensive language were relatively low level but more suitable for mature viewers.

Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio

PG | Violence, cruelty and content that may disturb

Two members commented that throughout the film there is a pervasive sense that something bad will happen and felt that the overall dark atmosphere and themes of death and existentialism would be confronting for young children. This may also be challenging for very young children who are unfamiliar with the concept of death. The YAP felt that the cruelty was the most impactful aspect of our criteria, citing the scene where the ringmaster attempts to burn Pinocchio as the strongest scene in the film. They felt that the ringmaster's brutality towards his monkey was also strong. Other scenes of note were the

children being trained to fight for the fascists in the war and a father forcing his son to shoot Pinocchio.

Smile

R16 | Violence, offensive language & horror

A member of the Youth Advisory Panel attended the screening. She felt that Laura's death was the most impactful scene in the film as it was intense and relatively drawn out in comparison to others. Overall, she felt as though the violence was quite bloody. The panel member explained that children and younger teens would likely be frightened by the horror elements, such as the jump scares, and blurred lines between fiction and reality. She agreed that there was some maturity required to understand that the deaths were acts of possession rather than a result of mental health/suicide.

Scream VI

R16 | Graphic violence and content may disturb

Two members had watched the original *Scream* film in their Year 12 Media Studies classes. They identified the violence as the strongest aspect of the feature, noting the deaths of Anika, the psychologist, and one of the Ghostfaces as the most impactful in the film. They felt that other killings were relatively low-level in comparison. One of them mentioned that the previous film, *Scream V*, had more graphic knife attacks. In terms of horror, they felt that most people who are familiar with the *Scream* franchise would find the

killer's reveal to be predictable (as formula states that it is always a familiar character rather than a stranger), and that the intended audience would be unsurprised by the stabbings and slashings. They felt the film is best suited to older teens and young adults.

Bros

R16 | Sex scenes, sexual references, drug use and offensive language

Two members identified the sexual content as the strongest material and thought that the scene where two character's foreplay included shoving and slapping would be particularly difficult for children and younger teens to contextualise. They noted that the foursome was a strong depiction of sex, although there was no explicit sex or nudity. They felt that Bobby's unconventional relationships with casual partners and multiple people would be beyond the maturity of children and younger teens, however older teens and adults would understand the complex nature of these relationships. They thought that Bobby's use of dating apps to explore relationships was likely to resonate

with young people. They discussed how comedy and the clever play on stereotypes challenged ideas that people have about queer people. They felt as though the characters were more three-dimensional and relatable than queer characters in other films. They thought that the film would have a wide appeal with members of the LGBTQI+ community, young adults and fans of comedy films.

Butter

R16 | Suicide themes and bullying

Two YAP members were invited to view the film and took part in a discussion with Classification Office staff. The two YAP members did not think that the bullying depicted was particularly strong but commented that the main character being forced to eat a stick of butter was difficult to watch. They felt that younger viewers who had experienced bullying and name-calling in person or online could be triggered by some of the depictions in the film.

“I really value the wide-ranging conversations we have with panel members. Their careful and considered insights are often instrumental to our final classification decisions and warning notes.”

Caroline Flora, Chief Censor



Opportunities for members

Human Rights Commission hui

“My visit to the Human Rights Commission was full of interesting discussions surrounding misinformation and disinformation. It became clear to me that this issue isn’t confined just to social media and affects a variety of human rights. It’s comforting knowing that the HRC are actively trying to involve youth perspectives in their hui. I enjoyed this visit thoroughly.”

Kaita, Panel Member

Whakatane schools talk

“Presenting the Office’s *What Ya Watchin’* presentation to Whakatane High School media studies students alongside Caitlin was an amazing opportunity for me to really dig deep and find confidence in public engagement, as being in a room with rangatahi can be super scary! However, getting into the gist of it and going over what our office does was super fun.”

Former Panel Member

Korean Media Rating Board

“When the Korean Media Rating Board visited the office here in Aotearoa it was fascinating to see the different ways that we deal with harmful media content. It was interesting to see that Korean youth and Kiwi youth face similar yet in some situations, vastly contrasting issues. I was very honoured to have represented the YAP and explore the diversity surrounding media.”

Kaita, Panel Member

He Whenua Taurikura hui 2022

“The Panel allowed us to share our thoughts and knowledge of what online extremism and radicalisation looks like from a youth perspective, preventative response measures, and the need for the government, government agencies, and private companies to be proactive in preventing radicalisation while balancing human rights. The conference was insightful and sparked crucial conversations between government, the private sector and community leaders who are all affected by violent extremism in different ways.”

Eden, Panel Member

Social media campaigns & blog posts

It's important that we talk to young people, not at them. That's why we design youth-focused social media campaigns with input from our members and publish blogs written from their perspective.

Social media campaign: Parental controls

As part of our wider campaign about parental controls we created a series of animations with the aim of supporting and encouraging a range of people living in Aotearoa to use parental controls. One of these animations was aimed at rangatahi. While we had many ideas of what this would look like, we wanted the YAP to influence a clear direction on how best to connect with young people on a campaign they might not be as interested in.

The original idea for the animation was based on a babysitting scenario where a young person was (or wasn't) able to keep younger tamariki safe while watching something during the time they were in charge. YAP members said that when they babysit, they rely on things like "kids mode" or what the parents already have programmed into the family TV. One member said "I found myself feeling pressure when I am with my little brother and he wants to watch something he shouldn't," but made the point that it wasn't their responsibility to change their brother's behaviours and ways of thinking, and instead it was their parent's job. We realised that it is a tricky line for young people to walk – especially with younger siblings who tend to push boundaries while the parents are away.

The conversation moved on to sleepovers and there was unanimous agreement that at some point during a

sleepover, members (and facilitators) had watched a film that they did not want to. Members said that "majority rules always wins" at sleepovers when it comes to deciding what to watch. We realised we should lean into the sleepover idea and the concept of protecting your friends.

Members felt that rangatahi would connect with this idea as they have noticed how their friends, peers and young people across Aotearoa are motivated by empathy and passion. One member said that the animation "needs to be a non-clinical and a more genuine approach" for young people to relate with.

With this feedback in mind, we created an animation about a group of friends at a sleepover where one of them is not on board with watching a horror. The group watches it anyway. The lights go out and it's sleep time, but the scared friend isn't able to sleep. She texts her mum to get picked up and another friend watches her drive away from the window. The animation ends with the narrator encouraging viewers to look out for their friends and respect their no-go zones when it comes to what they watch.

"Being able to give feedback on the Parental Controls campaign allowed me to understand the importance of age ratings and content warnings to help protect tamariki."

Kaitlyn, Panel Member

Blog: How I wished my parents talked to me about upsetting content

Like most people in Liv's generation, the internet was used for entertainment, connection and escapism. But the dark side of the online world took its toll. In her blog post, Panel Member Liv explains the difficulties she faced and provides advice for parents who are navigating this issue. Check it out here:

classificationoffice.govt.nz/news/blog-posts/how-i-wished-my-parents-talked-to-me-about-upsetting-content.

“The distressing content that I came across would amplify the idea that the world is inherently cruel and scary. Only later did I realise how much this contributed to the decline of my mental health.”

Former Panel Member

Social media campaign: On-screen bullying

We wanted to find out how rangatahi really feel when they watch bullying-heavy content. Should we be stricter when it comes to age ratings and content warnings, or is it okay if the depictions are far-fetched?

We talked with a group of young people aged 13–15 about what they thought of on-screen bullying depictions and how that compares to bullying in real life.

We took what the rangatahi said to our Youth Advisory Panel and worked with them on structuring a campaign, identifying who the key audiences were, and nailing our key messages.

The Panel felt strongly about getting these specific messages across to parents, caregivers and young people: bullying isn't one size fits all; parents should validate, not escalate; not everything you see in movies is realistic; bullying has evolved while on-screen depictions have not; and the bullying contexts might not be real, but your feelings are.

“In movies, it's obvious when someone is being bullied. But in real life it's more covert – it's usually done behind your back, it can be more subtle, and often it's your friends doing the bullying.”

Panel Member

Blog: When sleepovers go bad: A first-person experience

"I wish I had someone to support me and give me tips and advice on how to survive a sleepover as a non-horror lover when I needed it, it would have been so helpful to prevent the situation." One of our panel members shared her story of a harmful experience, providing tips for young people so they can avoid the same thing happening to them. Check out the full blog here: classificationoffice.govt.nz/news/blog-posts/the-conjuring-changed-me-when-sleepovers-go-bad-a-first-person-experience.

Pastoral care

The purpose of the work we do as an office is to safeguard 18aupapa18 and rangatahi from harm, and we extend this 18aupapa to our YAP members.

We deal with challenging content, so we have a strong internal focus on keeping each other safe. We achieve this in a variety of ways:

Interview processes

During recruitment for the Panel, we are transparent with applicants about the kinds of topics we talk about in meetings and after watching films. We make sure that new members know exactly what they are getting into when they join the Panel.

Support policies

We don't ask for personal experiences when it comes to discussing challenging topics. We ensure that members are aware of and have access to appropriate help and support measures. We have a disclosure policy in place, and we evaluate our approach with members annually.

Follow-ups

Some of our meetings this year were on particularly difficult topics, such as our discussion on suicide in films and shows. We wanted to ensure that all members felt safe and supported, so after the meeting we caught up with each member individually. We talked not only about the meeting, but also about life in general.

Tools and opportunities

The Panel has assisted the Office to provide younger audiences with the tools to safely engage with content and to offer opportunities to understand the way classification works in Aotearoa.

Find a Rating

The [Find a Rating](#) section of our website allows users to browse our huge database of film and video game ratings and classifications. This page allows parents, caregivers and others to easily access New Zealand ratings and content warnings and to find more information about popular series, films and games.

The Panel thought that this provided particular value for young people and other groups living in Aotearoa because it helps them to make good decisions about what they watch.

We expanded the Find a Rating search tool to include featured decisions, called Quick Takes. In addition to the standard information such as age ratings and content warnings, our Quick Takes go into more depth to explain the most impactful content that viewers can expect in a film, show or game.

Since then, Find a Rating has become the most visited section of our website, helping tens of thousands of users to make viewing decisions that work for themselves and their whānau.

Find a Rating: classificationoffice.govt.nz/find-a-rating.

Censor for a Day (C4aD)

After a wee break primarily due to COVID-19, [Censor for a Day](#) was back this year.

We invite senior media studies students to a local cinema and walk through the legislative criteria used to classify films, video games, books and other publications.

The event is a valuable learning opportunity, giving students a unique insight into the world of film classification. The Classification Office also benefits from receiving feedback from young people about the content they're seeing in films and games, and their views on film censorship.

We hope that by participating in Censor for a Day students gain information that is not only useful to their school studies, but also to their everyday lives.

Censor for a Day: classificationoffice.govt.nz/resources/items/censor-for-a-day-c4ad.

“It was really interesting learning about the process of classifying a film. It’s going to help me a lot in future when it comes to selecting films.”

Censor for a Day participant



Acknowledgments

To our supporters, teachers, facilitators and most importantly our members, thank you for all your mahi. We also acknowledge all rangatahi in Aotearoa. We hear you and we 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 leant on and 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 and enhance their mana.

“It’s a unique place for discussions. I feel privileged to be a part of the Panel, because we’re able to make an impact on things that are happening to us right now.”

Panel Member

Appendix: Timeline of meetings

10/02/2022 Content media review

Members spoke with the Department of Internal Affairs about the government's content media review and what is top of mind for young people in this space. This was part of a series of engagements with different communities about the review.

24/05/2022 | Countering violent extremism

The Panel met with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and spoke about violent extremism and radicalisation. This was part of a series of engagements with different communities on the subject and led to two members speaking at a cross-agency hui and conference in November.

30/08/2022 | Implied depictions of suicide

Members spoke about implied depictions of suicide and how it makes them feel. This information was shared with key stakeholders and we are incorporating their voice in our Classification Unit mahi.

27/09/2022 | Clifton StrengthsFinders and induction

Current and new members and management came together and were a part of a strengths-finding session.

10/11/2022 | Te Mana Whaakatu research

Members had the opportunity to influence the early stages of our upcoming research about body image. This was part of a series of engagements with professionals, stakeholders and other leaders in different spaces connected to this mahi.

19/01/2023 | On-screen bullying campaign

Members were asked to provide feedback and ideas for our campaign about on-screen bullying scheduled for May 2023. They reviewed our consultation with a group of 13- and 14-year-old secondary school students, and suggested ideas and messages for the campaign.

09/02/2023 | Parental controls campaign

Members influenced the design, scripting and storyline of an animation aimed at rangatahi as part of our wider parental controls campaign. We pivoted from an idea about babysitting to sleepovers as the YAP felt it more closely reflected an experience rangatahi could relate to.

09/03/2023 | Censor for a Day 2023 test run

AJ and Georgia presented the C4aD presentation for the YAP. The YAP provided a lot of feedback on how to make the presentation more engaging, understandable, and enjoyable for school students.

13/04/2023 | Disinformation with the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor

The Chief Science Advisor Juliet Gerrard and her team visited Te Mana Whakaatu in March. The Chief Censor recommended the YAP as a potential group to help with their He Uru Kahikatea project on mis- and dis-information online.

18/05/2023 | True crime

YAP members shared their experience and views on shows, films and podcasts in the true crime genre. They discussed the growing trend of true crime content, along with podcasts, shows and films they've listened to or watched. The YAP also shared rituals and resources they use to help keep themselves safe when dealing with true crime content.

15/06/2023 | True crime follow-up

Following up from the previous month's meeting, members came together to further discuss true crime.

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