

YOUTH VOICES ACTION

# THE CONNECTOR FOR ALL THINGS YOUTH

TAURANGA | BAY OF PLENTY



[WWW.YOUTHVOICESACTION.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.YOUTHVOICESACTION.ORG.NZ)

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# BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE NETWORK to strengthen youth support and system change

## OUR PURPOSE

At Youth Voices Action (YVA), our purpose is simple - **we are the connector**.

We don't run programmes ourselves. Instead, we look for who is already doing the good mahi, identify gaps, and create opportunities for collaborations that strengthen the whole system.

We bring rangatahi, whānau, schools, councils, agencies, and youth services together so young people can access support, share their voice, and help shape the systems around them. We believe every young person has the potential to make a difference when they have the right tools, strong relationships, and a safe space to speak.

YVA exists because many rangatahi tell us that they don't feel like they fit anywhere. They weren't always the loudest in class or the most active in their community, but they had ideas, insight, and potential that were going unheard.

Our job as the connector is to make sure those voices travel, not just between people, organisations, and decision-makers, but so they can lead meaningful change.

### WHERE WE BEGAN

Our journey started as the Tauranga Youth Development Team (TYDT) in 2010. Our organisation was created to strengthen coordination and collaboration across the youth sector in Tauranga and the Bay of Plenty.

For over 15 years, we built strong relationships, strengthened youth participation, and supported rangatahi to engage confidently in their communities.

In 2024 we changed our name as an opportunity to redefine our identity and step into the next phase of our mahi. That's how **Youth Voices Action (YVA)** was created.

YOUTH VOICES ACTION

### WHO WE ARE TODAY

YVA connects rangatahi, whānau, schools, councils, agencies and organisations so young people don't just find their voice - they're actively helping shape decisions and are heard in the places where those decisions are made.

This isn't about one programme or event. It's about building a community that listens, acts, and grows stronger because youth voices sit at the centre of everything we do.

Everything we do is youth-led. Rangatahi design it, run it, and share it with their peers.



# Our youth-led structure

## **YOUTH PANEL (10 MEMBERS) - THREE OF WHOM SIT ON OUR GOVERNANCE BOARD**

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A committed group of rangatahi who guide priorities, test ideas, and anchor our work in lived experience.

### **STEERING GROUPS AND CREATIVE PATHWAYS**

We support young people to get involved in areas such as:

- Content creation
- Camera, film and production
- Behind-the-scenes work
- Directing and producing
- Civics and decision-making
- Sports and activities
- Mental health
- Justice
- Environment
- Event design
- Employment and work experience

These groups offer practical skills, leadership opportunities, and real-world pathways to make change.

### **DEDICATED YOUTH COORDINATOR**

Our Youth Coordinator connects young people to projects, issues, and creative opportunities they care about. We also work closely with schools to support students wanting experience, involvement, or a place to use their talents.



# The case study that sparked the portal

## COLLABORATION IN ACTION:

The Youth Voices Portal began as Teen Tools - a simple idea between Youth Voices Action, Tauranga City Council and Te Whatu Ora which was created to help rangatahi navigate support with clarity and confidence.

Tauranga Youth Space Strategic Group, within Tauranga City Council, helped us evolve this collaboration by connecting us with Here to Help U.

### Our collaboration with Here to Help U

HTHU brings an experienced, established community referral pathway.

YVA brings youth voice, relationships, and local coordination.

Together, we are co-creating the Youth Voices Portal by focusing on what each organisation does best:

- HTHU anchors a proven, accessible referral system
- YVA leads design, youth insights, and engagement
- Rangatahi shape the tools, content, and user experience
- Partners contribute through the Youth Support Alliance

This partnership is our **first major case study of collaboration in action** - and it has become the foundation for a wider Alliance network.



### 1. YOUTH VOICES PORTAL

#### Public-facing. Led by YVA.

A single digital and physical point where rangatahi and whānau can:

- Find clear local information
- Access practical tools
- Use simple referral pathways
- Share feedback

The Portal builds on the Teen Tools concept and expands it into a connected, youth-led ecosystem created with HTHU and guided by our Youth Panel and steering groups.

We will share updates on our website as launch approaches.

You can follow our progress and find out how to get involved.

### 2. YOUTH SUPPORT ALLIANCE

#### Partner-facing. Convened by YVA.

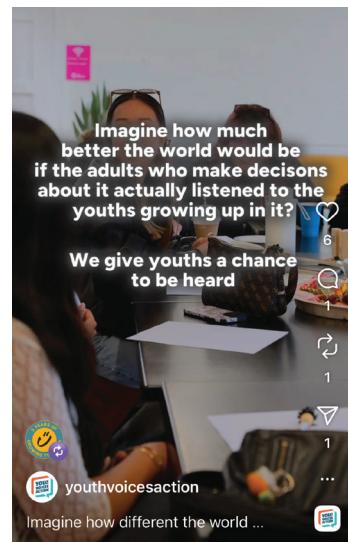
HTHU is the **first founding partner**.

The Alliance brings youth-facing services together to:

- Share information
- Strengthen referral pathways
- Solve system barriers
- Improve access for rangatahi
- Use insights from the Portal to guide change

Our collaboration with HTHU shows how the Alliance works: practical, relationship-led, and focused on collective impact.

More exciting collaborations are already underway, and we are preparing to welcome additional partners in the coming months.



# WHY THIS MATTERS

## RANGATAHI FACE REAL CHALLENGES:

- Fragmented services
- Confusing entry points
- Inconsistent navigation
- Whānau unsure where to start
- Providers wanting to help but lacking shared systems

## THE PORTAL AND ALLIANCE ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES BY CREATING:

- One clear entry point for information and support
- A connected network behind the scenes
- Better visibility of pathways
- A stronger youth voice shaping system design
- A scalable foundation for more partners to join

Through our Youth Panel and steering groups, rangatahi don't just use the system - they help design it.

We are delighted to be collaborating with Youth Voices Action in the Tauranga region to better serve taiohi and the organisations that support them. Our partnership is founded on shared values and a vision to transform the narrative for taiohi from "It's too hard to know where to go for help" to "Asking for support is okay, and finding it is easy."

HERE TO HELP U

Tauranga City Council supports YouthFest 2025 (and annually thereafter), because it's a strategically important community-led event due to its strong alignment to our vision "Together we can: prioritise nature, lift each other up, and fuel possibility".

TAURANGA CITY COUNCIL

I am writing this letter in support of Youth Voices Action and the work they do for the wider Tauranga community. The benefit of these events almost immediately in the confidence and character of the people it is aimed at, and the more Youth Voices Action receives the further they reach.

ŌTŪMOETAI COLLEGE

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

## FOR RANGATAHI AND WHĀNAU

- Join the Youth Panel or a steering group
- Build creative or leadership skills
- Visit the Portal when it launches
- Share feedback
- Use the referral pathway when support is needed

## FOR SCHOOLS

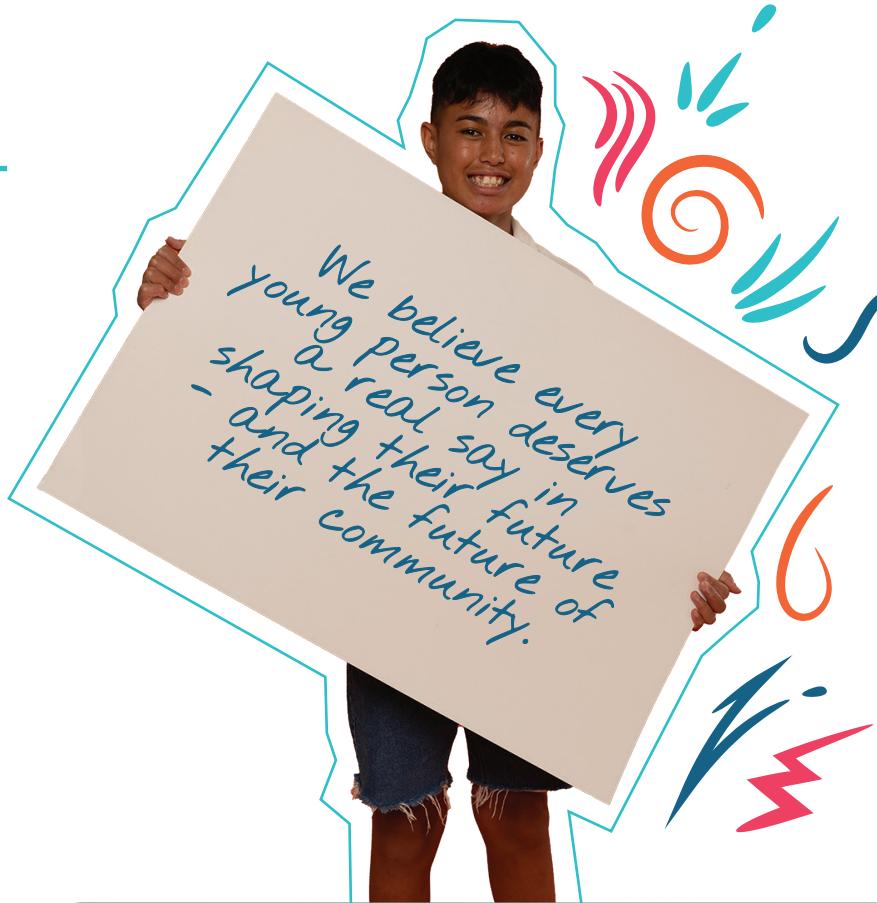
- Connect students to real projects
- Support work experience or volunteering
- Join our youth engagement networks

## FOR PARTNERS AND PROVIDERS

- Join the Youth Support Alliance
- Strengthen referral pathways
- Share insights
- Co-design practical solutions
- Check our website for updates on new collaborations and Portal launch details

If you love the mahi we are doing your contribution means we can reach more young people.

## DONATE HERE



Support Youth

ABOUT PROGRAMMES & EVENTS FOR YOUTH FOR ORGANISATIONS BLOGS

BE THE SPARK & FUEL YOUTH VOICES:  
YOUR **CONTRIBUTION** MATTERS

Donations help us bring fresh perspectives into important conversations and fund workshops, meetups, and panels where young people learn how to speak up about what matters to them.

You're helping them build confidence, learn new skills, and become more

Choose amount

Are you passionate about making a difference for young people? Your support can help us empower rangatahi to share their stories, build their confidence, and shape their future. Every contribution, big or small, makes a difference and is directly towards creating opportunities for young people to inspire, educate, and lead.

One-time Monthly Quarterly



## Get in Touch

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## Connect With Us

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