

YouthLaw

Free legal help throughout Aotearoa

Annual Report

July 2017 – June 2018

YouthLaw Aotearoa

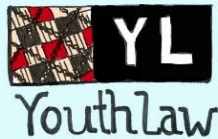
Level 3 Park View Tower, 21 Putney Way, Manukau, Auckland

0800 UTHLAW
(0800 884 529)

www.youthlaw.co.nz

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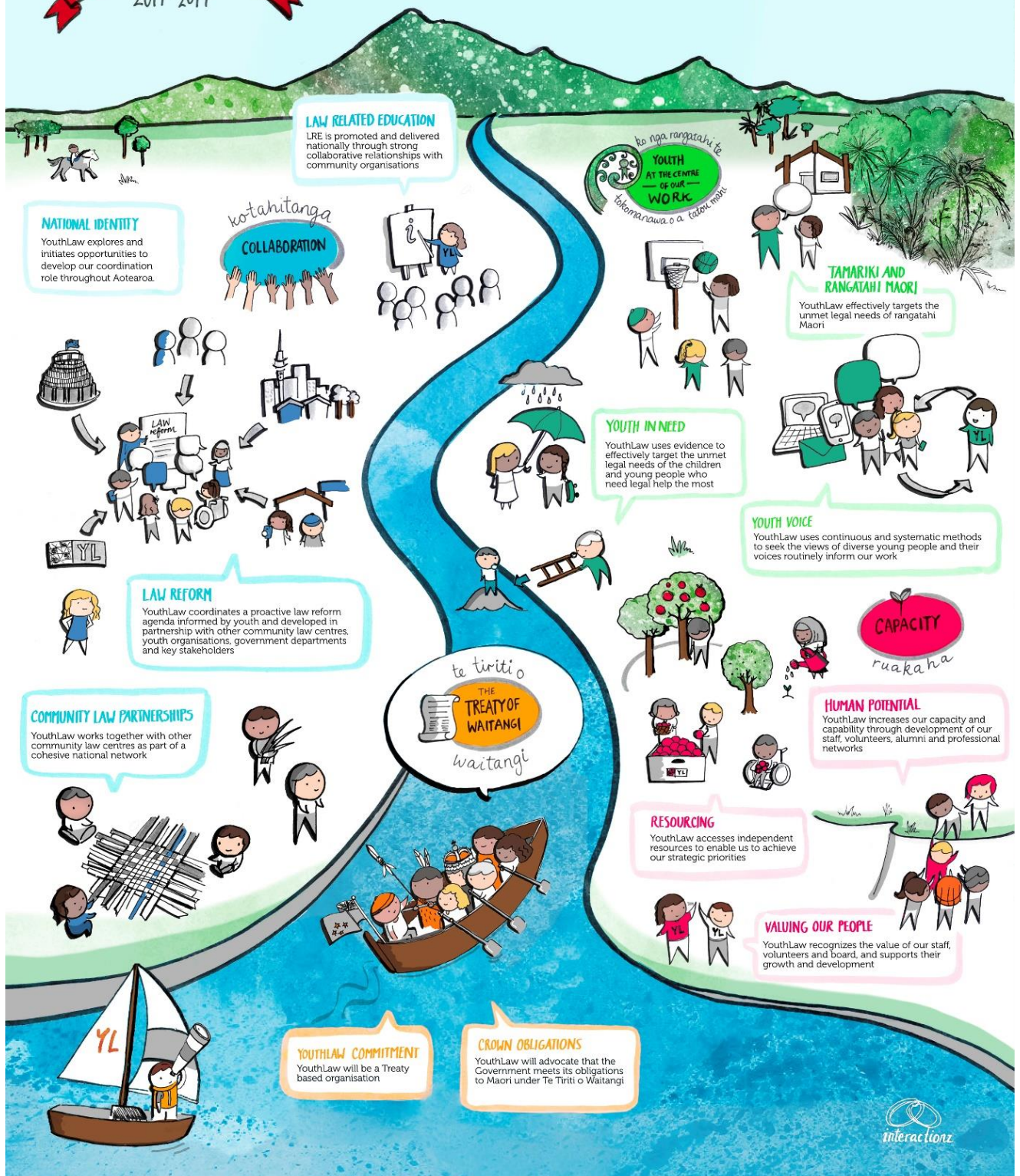
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THREE YEAR STRATEGIC INTENT
2017-2019

YOUTHLAW VISION

A fair and just AOTEAROA where children and young people's rights are respected and their voices heard



Chairperson's Report



Simon Judd
Chairperson

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

Changes

The past few months have been challenging and exciting for the staff and Board of YouthLaw. We have said farewell to a number of longstanding and senior staff as discussed in the General Manager's report. Jen has paid just tribute to the hard work and dedication of Vanushi Walters and the other staff members and I, on behalf of the Board, endorse all she has said. We wish them well in their future endeavours.

The big change for us on the Board was Jennifer Braithwaite's resignation as longstanding Chairperson to become the General Manager of YouthLaw. Jen has shown incredible dedication to YouthLaw as a Board member for 9 years and Chair for the past 7. She was an exemplary Board member and Chair with great passion, energy and commitment. She is also extremely well organised and efficient, traits that her successor is struggling to emulate! On behalf of the Board, I thank Jen for her years of service as a Board member.

But the Board's loss is a wonderful gain for the staff and the organisation as a whole with Jen becoming General Manager. We on the Board have complete confidence in Jen's ability to lead YouthLaw forward with that same passion and enthusiasm she showed on the Board. We are looking forward to continuing to work with Jen and the rest of the team to ensure that YouthLaw continues to provide high quality legal advice and legal education services and continues to push for changes to law and policy to benefit young people.

Co-Design

A big project last year was to explore different ways of doing things through a co-design process. Some members of the Board were able to attend co-design sessions with staff members, people from other community law centres and a number of young people. We even had officials from the Ministry of Justice at one of the sessions. With the help of a skilled co-design facilitator, the process threw up some fantastic ideas to improve our services, create better relationships with other community law centres and strategies to involve more young people in YouthLaw.

The Board is very excited to see how the ideas generated by the co-design process continue to flow through to the day to day operation of the organisation. An interesting aspect of the co-design philosophy is that it is an ongoing journey where new ideas are tried as "prototypes" and there is not necessarily an end goal. Rather, the continual development and trial of new ideas should help the organisation to evolve and adapt to the needs of our clients. The Board is very supportive of this approach. After all, our client base of young people is necessarily changing and renewing all of the time and so we need to have the flexibility and adaptability to adjust to the needs and concerns of the current and latest group of young people.

Performance

YouthLaw performed extremely well as an organisation over the 2017-2018 year. We consistently met or exceeded our contractual targets and received very high approval ratings from our clients. In addition to providing the core services of legal advice and legal related education to a high standard, YouthLaw staff found time to advance important areas of law reform and to work with other community law centres and CLCA.

The Board continues to be very pleased with the financial management of YouthLaw. We are always provided with clear and comprehensive information and any questions are properly answered. Throughout the year, the organisation was run efficiently, effectively and within budget and we congratulate management for doing such an excellent job.

Thanks

Finally I wish to thank all those who have contributed to YouthLaw over the last year. Our organisation is all about the people and the passion they bring to their mahi. We are so lucky to have volunteers, staff and Board members who care deeply about improving the lives of young people in this country and are willing to devote themselves to the task of doing so.

I look forward to working with you all over the coming year.

Ngā mihi nui

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Judd', written in a cursive style.

Simon Judd

Chairperson

General Manager's Report



Jennifer Braithwaite
General Manager

Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa

YouthLaw's People

I am in the unusual position of writing a General Manager's report for a year during which I did not have this role. Given this, the first thing I would like to say is a massive thank you to YouthLaw's former General Manager Vanushi Walters who left at the end of September. It is the achievements of Vanushi and her team that you see in this report.

Vanushi worked at YouthLaw Aotearoa for nine years, starting off as a Solicitor then moving into a Senior Solicitor role before becoming the General Manager, a role she held for around six years. Her contribution to YouthLaw for children and young people during her time with us was immense. Vanushi is a highly intelligent and strategic advocate and we will all miss her passion and commitment to access to justice. However, we know that she will continue the fight in other ways and we look forward to working with her in the future.

I also want to pay tribute to others who have left YouthLaw since the end of the financial year. This includes Jen Walsh and Sarah Boyd. Jennifer was YouthLaw's senior solicitor and had worked with YouthLaw for seven years during which she developed significant expertise in Education Law including delivering training nationwide and being appointed as an Arbitrator under section 10 of the Education Act 1989. Sarah was one of our legal education coordinators and brought a huge amount of passion, humour and aroha to her work teaching children and young people and those assisting them about youth rights as well as to the first stage of our co-design work. We will miss both Jen and Sarah but we know that they too will continue their work to create positive change for Aotearoa in other ways.

Since the end of the year we have also welcomed two new staff members: our new legal education coordinator Sarah Guy and our new youth engagement, co-design and social media coordinator Suivaaia Tapu-Pritchard. Sarah has worked in the community sector for fourteen years and has extensive knowledge and experience in education. Suivaaia has a background in youth development and youth mental health and brings a huge amounts of positive energy and enthusiasm to her role and YouthLaw's work.

I also want to acknowledge the work of other longstanding members of the YouthLaw team. Our solicitors Velda Chan and Kenton Starr have continued to do a fantastic job on YouthLaw's legal advice line including supervising our law clerks, student volunteers and volunteer lawyers from our pro bono partners Minter Ellison Rudd Watts. Manawa Pomare does amazing work as both a solicitor and an educator and in the last year she has begun to develop YouthLaw's focus on education for rangatahi Māori including in kura kaupapa Māori. We are also lucky enough to have a fantastic operations and administration team in Karen Davis and Hiruni Wijewardhana. Karen's eye for detail and head for numbers has ensured that YouthLaw manages its finances well and in budget and Hiruni does a great job co-ordinating our volunteer programme and reporting to the Ministry of Justice.

The year ahead

As YouthLaw continues to work towards our vision of “A fair and justice Aotearoa where children and young people’s rights and respected and their voices are heard”, we will be focussing on two of our strategic priorities:

- *Ko nga rangatahi te tokomanawa o a tatou mahi / Youth at the centre of our work:* Children and young people have the fundamental right to participate in decisions that affect them. They are also the experts in their own lives and we have much to learn from them. YouthLaw’s commitment to placing youth at the centre of our work lead us to begin our co-design journey last year and we will continue to embed this inclusive way of working over the next year with a particular focus on how we deliver legal services and how children and young people are involved YouthLaw’s work at all levels of the organisation.
- *Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi:* Both YouthLaw’s Board and staff will continue our own journey to becoming a Treaty-based organisation as well as our advocacy work to ensure that the Crown gives effect to its obligations to Maori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This includes developing our relationships with both urban Maori and iwi and hapū organisations as well as work towards a kaupapa Māori team which we hope will be funded by the Ministry of Justice from July 2019.

In the 2017/2018 financial year community law centres received our first funding increase in ten years. That increase was a wage and inflation-based increase and took effect at the start of the 2018/2019 financial year. The Ministry of Justice is now reviewing its funding to community law centres for the 2019/2020 and subsequent financial years. We are hopeful that this process will lead to further increases in funding to enable us to make meaningful improvements in access to justice for children and young people.

Thank you

I feel very privileged to have taken on the role of YouthLaw’s General Manager at a time when the organisation is so well placed to tackle the challenges of the future and to contribute to change for the better for the children and young people in Aotearoa / New Zealand. I once again thank YouthLaw’s staff members that have worked so hard to get us to this point and those that will take us forward into the future.

I also wish to thank everyone else who works with and for YouthLaw Aotearoa – our Board, volunteers, members as well as those from our partner organisations in the youth and community law sectors. I look forward to the work we will do together over the next year and the years to come.

Ngā mihi nui ki a koe



Jennifer Braithwaite
General Manager

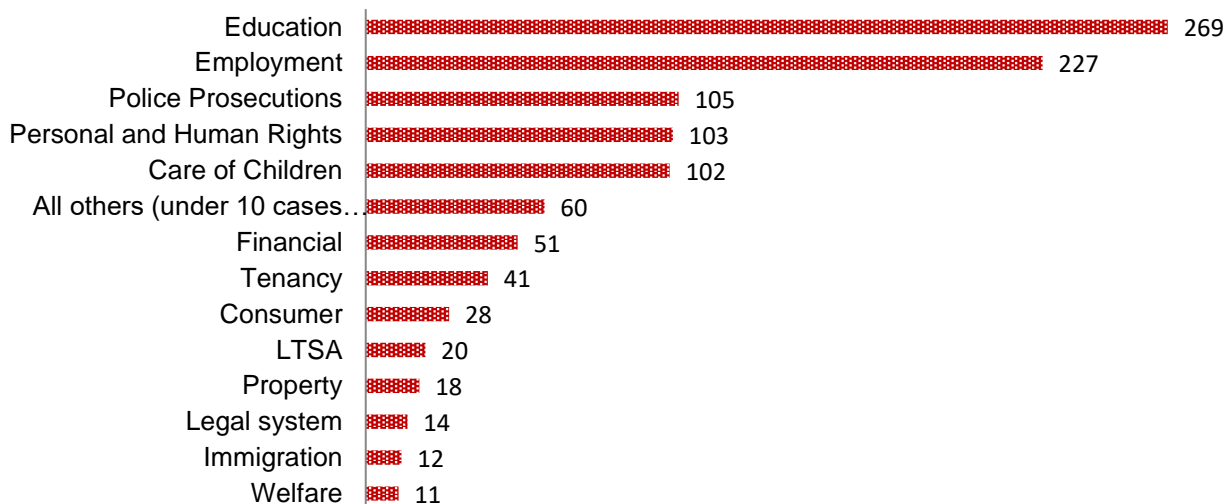
Legal Services

We can now officially say that we have been “prototyping” our trial legal service delivery model (which we commenced during our co-design process) for a year now! Time has just flown by and we have learnt so much to input into the ongoing co-design process and the advice line review we are undertaking which is scheduled to conclude in June 2019. Our solicitor Kenton Starr has been instrumental in developing systems for the prototype alongside our technical whiz Velda Chan which has ensured the smooth delivery of legal services for clients. We have had some really wonderful feedback from our volunteers who are enjoying how much involvement in the case work they can undertake with triaging.

The triage system is now quite well-honed and we have increased the number of volunteers assisting the legal team each day to 4. Our law clerk team has also grown and we have three law clerks that assist the lawyers every single day with oversight of the system and complex case work. We send our well wishes to our long serving law clerk Alex Slipper who has taken on a new role specialising in criminal law and Cameron Warner who finished up as a law clerk earlier this year to pursue an overseas exchange semester opportunity in Indiana, USA. We also extend a warm welcome to John Kyle and Emma Barnes who have joined the team.

Civil law still remains a major proportion of our practice with a large number of employment queries. We have also been dealing with various civil issues such as debt, tenancy, consumer and family law. One of our solicitors Kenton has been developing a strong practice background in a number of criminal matters. The legal team has also achieved significant outcomes for clients in other areas including in debt, credit contract act, tenancy and motor vehicle dispute matters.

Casework numbers 2017-2018



The entire team continues to build on our specialty expertise in Education law and also in special education matters. We continue to provide in-depth advice and assistance in a large number of access to education issues including participation and discipline and provide specialist input in special education matters to clients and other community law centres and organizations.

Just a quick snapshot of some particular cases we have worked on this year:

- A defended criminal hearing involving quite complex arguments regarding police officers duties when conducting impairment tests in relation to traffic offences;
- A successful substitution of community service order for a traffic offence where the case was extremely weak;
- Representation of a particularly vulnerable immigrant client who was exploited in an employment context;
- A tenancy tribunal hearing and clarification of landlord duties under the relevant legislation;
- Assisting a client we had represented a number of years ago and successfully argued for overturn of an ORS funding decision with the ongoing issues related to accessing a right to special education.

What people say about our casework:

Feedback from our special education client's mother "It still feels like a dream..... We can enroll "A" at [the] special school.. [we are very hopeful for the future] Thanks again...."

"Thank you so much for the call and all the info [...], very much appreciated. I am a lot more confident that my concerns were not unfounded and he can stay in the school that he loves with his siblings."

"Your legal service has never failed to help me, I am indebted, I have never once had bad service from any of the people I have had contact with and I'd love if you could pass that along to anyone relevant, amazing customer (is it customer?) service, always prompt and always explaining why you got to a certain view point which helps me tremendously."

"Thank you so much for all your time on the phone yesterday and then putting it in an email for us. It is very helpful for us to have all this in writing, and also outlining the options we have.... From looking at your website last night, you guys do a fantastic job!"

"I would like to say at this point a big thank you to all of the staff that I have dealt with so far at YouthLaw. I have been very impressed by the level of service and the professional manner in which everyone has helped us through this situation for [...] to date."

"Thank you very much, Kenton. I feel this has given me a greater understanding to make informed decisions or allowing the student to make informed decisions and the best way to go about it."

"Received the email. Thank you so much this is way more information given than the first meeting with the assigned lawyer."

"Thank you so much for this detailed report. I am very grateful."

Volunteer Team

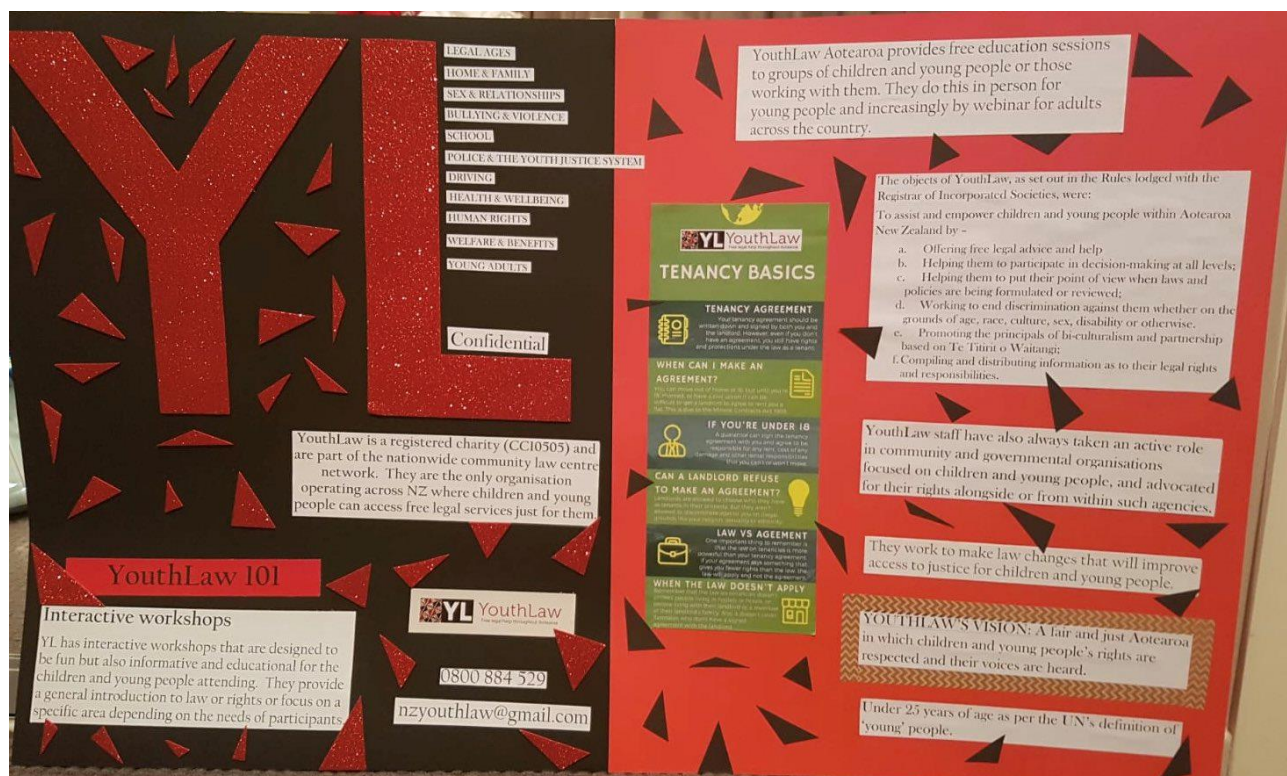
Following our relocation to a larger space in Manukau, we have gradually increased the size of our advice line volunteer team. In our Papatoetoe offices, we were only able to house a maximum of 2 volunteers per shift due to the limited physical space in our Papatoetoe office. With our move to a larger space in Manukau, we have now increased our volunteer capacity to anywhere between 2-4 volunteers per shift.

A new system was created in the last year to ensure better workflow and increased work for volunteers which ensured efficiency but also accountability. Volunteers also had a larger variety of advice line jobs they could complete, volunteers were taking the calls from our clients, and also helping with the drafting of advice and the delivering of the legal advice after the advice had been checked by a lawyer on the advice team.

Volunteers have the freedom to choose which cases they would like to work on, or could choose to work on projects like projects where they would help us create social media content. The new changes provide more fulfilling and varying work to volunteers and keep the volunteers engaged. It has allowed the volunteers to have a wider range of jobs to choose from and has helped them gain better practical experience on how they could apply the law to real-life cases.

We continue to work with Minter Ellison Rudd Watts who have continually, over the years, offered pro bono lawyers to help out in the running of the YouthLaw advice line.

We are extremely grateful for every volunteer and pro bono lawyer who spend their valuable time volunteering with YouthLaw; YouthLaw would definitely not be able to provide services as efficiently without our volunteers' daily contribution.



Project Display by YouthLaw volunteer May Ganon of her YouthLaw volunteering experience

Legal Education

It's hard to believe it's that time of year again, and I can confidently say that the 2017-2018 LRE year has been a very interesting one (outside of the usual highs and down periods).



Our year started off like most, chipping away at contract milestones, and doing our best to work as much as possible with those who most need our assistance, and those who assist them; however with co-design, came new opportunities to involve youth people and ensure their voice was part of that first stage of the process. It was a great learning experience and helped pave the way for the next piece of work to be done.

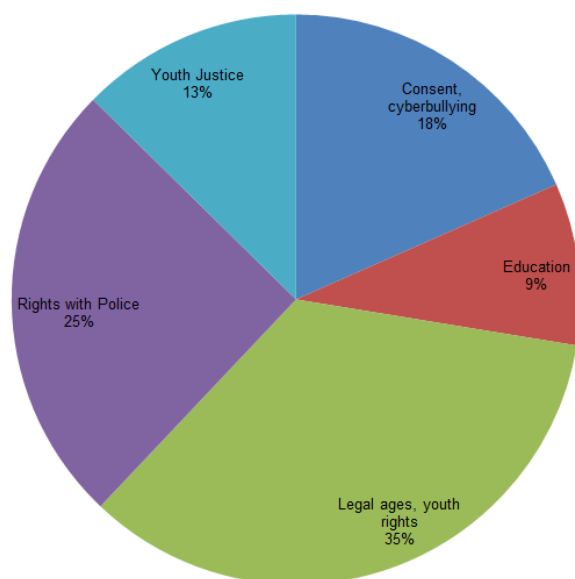
We have travelled to deliver sessions across Auckland, Waikato, Tauranga, Manawatu, Christchurch, Wellington, and Northland, working with young people or those who work closely with them in schools, the community; and other settings.

We have continued our work in Oranga Tamariki Residences, Korowai Manaaki, and Whakatakapokai, and are continuing our aim of working with centres to develop capacity to work in these spaces. We also delivered sessions with youth from VOYCE Whakarongo Mai.

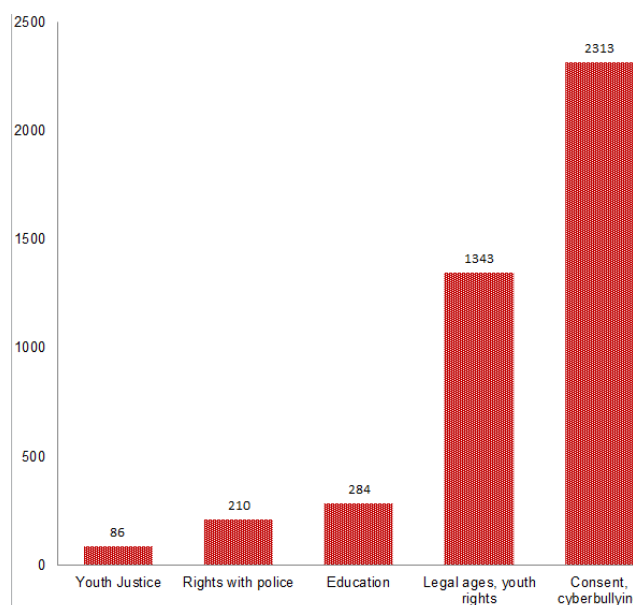


Rights with Police, Cyber bullying, Sex and Consent and Human Rights continue to be popular sessions both in Residences, in schools, and the community. In sessions that we deliver, we have consistently received feedback about the harm caused in the community, and often a lack of knowledge around what is legal and where to get help. We have seen particular concerns around the use of photoshopping, Instagram, pornography, and issues around consent and sexual images being sent, received and shared.

As with other years, we continue to receive feedback from participants in our sessions (both youth and adults) that there is a real need for more civics education in schools.



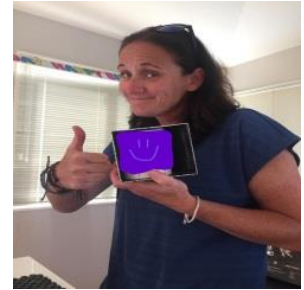
Education sessions by topic



Education participants by topic



As the 2017-2018 contract year drew to a close, we said farewell to our Legal Education super star, Sarah Boyd –who has since taken up a position with the Defence Force doing Sexual Violence Prevention and Response. We miss her infectious enthusiasm, passion, talent, and green t-shirts, but wish her well.



Since then, we have welcomed our new LRE team member – Sarah Guy, who has already brought in fresh new thinking, innovation and a brilliant sense of humour. We look forward to another year of LRE ahead and are always keen to collaborate with other CLCS where possible.

Photos from some of our education sessions & events we have attended



Festival for the Future



Mahurangi College sessions



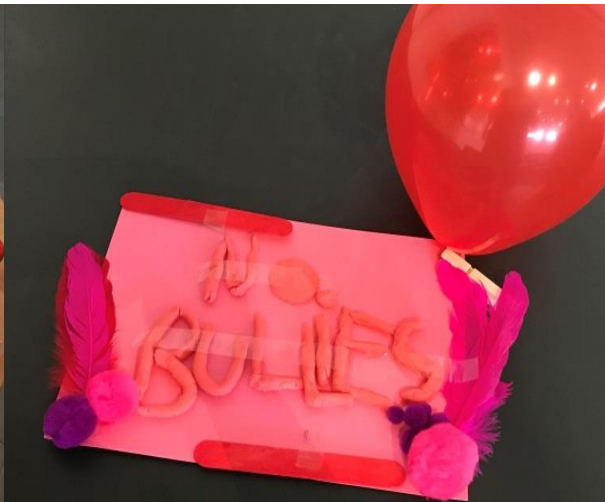
Into Motion Christchurch



Mt Roskill Grammar Peace Week



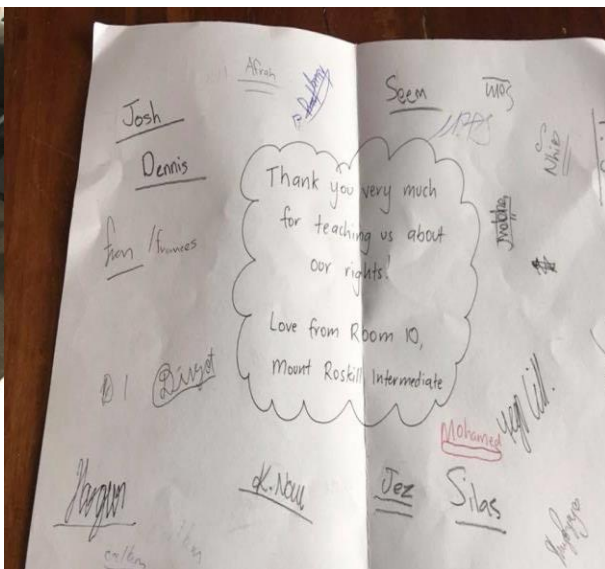
Stakeholders codesign hui YouthLaw



Auckland Alternative Education session



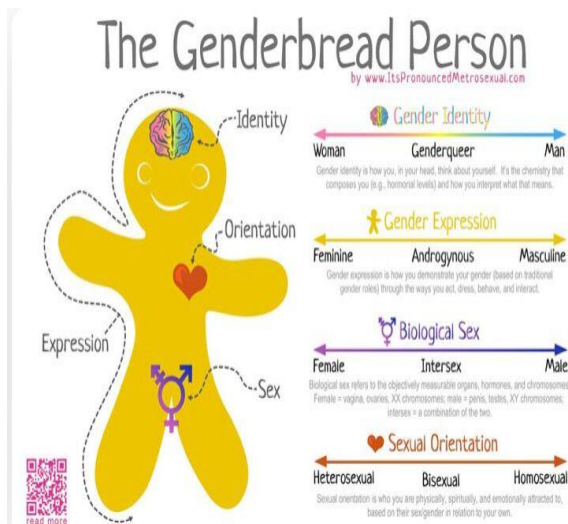
Umupuia Marae Co design hui



Clendon community codesign



Burnside High School



Gender and the law Tauranga



Voyce Whakarongo Mai workshop

What people say about our education sessions:

"I really liked how they actually addressed pornography, it's a real problem for people in this day and age"

"I really liked how they included some of our students in a scenario and showed us what they could have done to avoid all the trouble"

"I really liked the kaupapa, positive vibes, the information, the presenters, the environment, the presentation"

"I really liked learning about the subject and strategies to help if you're shy or scared with the police"

"I really liked how they let us students get involved (the narrator, police officer example) story time. I enjoyed learning about some rights we have if we aren't under arrest and dumb charges"

"I really liked all of it, the information will assist me in my practice out in the community"

I really liked discussions held, enjoyed hearing others perspectives and knowledge, the content was helpful"

"I really enjoyed the games, Whaea Manawa was clear, I learnt a lot of useful information"

"I really liked everything that was taught and what they have experienced to be passed on to others"

"I feel really good about today's session, learnt a lot I didn't know, and feel confident directing people to use YL"

"I liked it because there were some shocking laws that I never knew"

"I really liked that you maturely and clearly explain the laws and consent of sex, and the advice offered for those who need help"

"I really liked the fact that both speakers didn't use big words, really down to earth, gave it how it was"

Law reform

Youthlaw has continued its close involvement with Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA) over the past year. ACYA has been involved with a number of submissions including providing a submission on the Budget Policy Statement 2018, providing input into the Universal Periodic Review, and also submissions on changes to children in care and changes to oversight mechanisms. Key recommendations in regards to the oversight review were:

- That any changes to the Children's Commissioner must be underpinned by a clear rationale that is linked to the wellbeing of all children and young people; and
- That based on the general principles of the Children's Convention, the high-level criteria for deciding what, if any, broader change is needed to the Children's Commissioner should be:
 - Do all children and young people benefit equitably from having a Children's Commissioner, particularly pēpē, tamariki and rangatahi Māori?
 - Do the purpose, status, functions and powers of the Children's Commissioner serve all children's best interests?
 - How does the Office contribute to the State meeting its obligations to build a society in which all children can thrive and reach their full potential?
 - What are children and young people's views on what the Children's Commissioner's Office should look like and do?

YouthLaw met with Taskforce members who are reviewing Tomorrow's Schools. Youthlaw was able to provide input on matters such as school discipline and access to education issues in areas such as special education. We discussed with the Taskforce members the feeling of powerlessness many young people have in the schooling system, and the variability - school to school, suburb to suburb, and between cities in terms of how discipline plays out. We also spoke about the need to ensure children and young people have access to age appropriate learning opportunities regarding their legal rights and the need for young people to engage in learning about civics in New Zealand and what citizenship means.

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/tomorrows-schools-review/out-and-about/>

YouthLaw and ACYA both supported the Joint children's sector submission on the Child Poverty Reduction Bill 2018. Key recommendations within this submission included:

- The development and implementation of the Child Wellbeing Strategy, including action to reduce child poverty, be consistent with and uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Poverty reduction targets and measures should be realistic and, most of all, backed by policies that will be effective in achieving them.
- The Child Wellbeing Strategy should take a child rights approach encompassing all children in Aotearoa New Zealand and all areas of their lives, as required under the Children's Convention; and
 - be developed, designed and monitored in consultation with children; and in partnership with iwi and Māori organisations, non-government organisations and communities; and
 - be adequately resourced and budgeted for, have clear time frames and transparent processes for review, monitoring and reporting on progress.

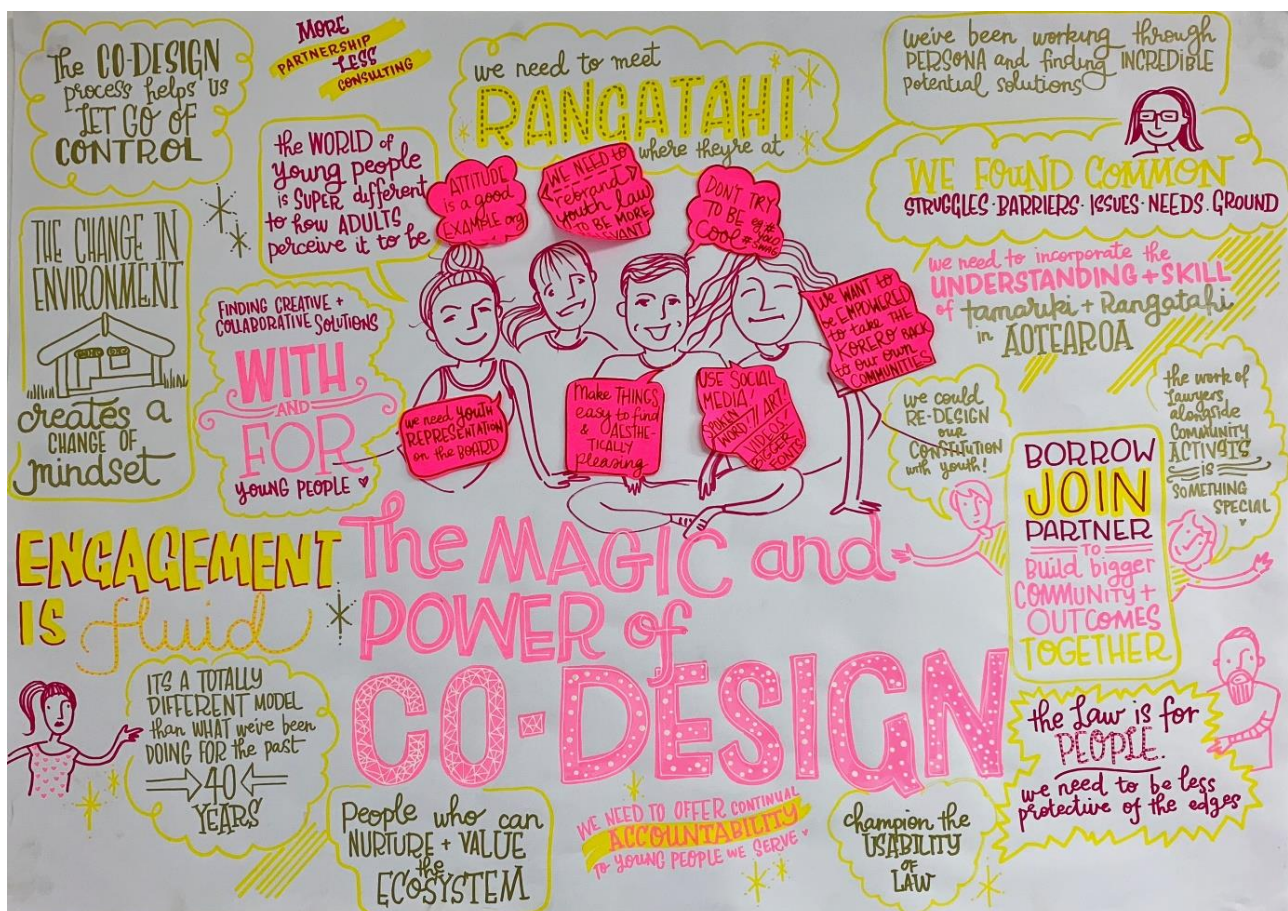
- Actions under the Child Wellbeing Strategy to reduce child poverty and improve the wellbeing of children should align public policies and social service delivery with children's rights so that all children and young people, at all stages of their childhood and adolescence, have access to and equitable outcomes from:
 - sufficient income and an adequate standard of living;
 - quality housing;
 - free quality public education;
 - good health, including nutritious food, and quality healthcare when needed; and
 - timely, flexible and integrated social support services when they need them.
- The reference year for the fixed-line after housing costs poverty measure be updated at least every five years.
- More resourcing should be allocated to the collection of and reporting on data so that it can be captured, disaggregated and analysed as promptly as possible and based on a larger sample than currently taken by the Household Economics Survey (HES), from which the Household Incomes Report is drawn.



Co-Design

This reporting year has seen us explore a new way of developing our services. We started to learn more about co-design and get familiar with co-design methodologies.

So what is co-design? Co-design or participatory design is an approach to design attempting to actively involve all stakeholders in the design process of services to help ensure the result meets their needs and is usable. Including all stakeholders in a design process is more likely to result in service design that all key parties agree on and that most importantly meets the needs of children and young people. It is also a practical way of giving effect to the right to participation and ensure that children and young people are at the centre of what YouthLaw does.



Through consultations during our Strategic Planning process we identified barriers and opportunities in regards to how we operate. We decided that we would like to embark on a process of co-design that puts the voices and experiences of those who we aim to be delivering services to at its centre.

We also wanted to engage with other community law centres and our core funder the Ministry of Justice in a more robust way about how Community Law as a whole should be responding to young people's needs and what role YouthLaw should play within a new service design model.

We've had several Hui through the year as we start to get our heads around design thinking and practice. Here are some of the things we've heard from or about young people through these initial discussions:

- Young people need to be involved and to influence at all levels of YouthLaw' work.

- Young people often have a number of things going on in their lives – might not just be one discreet legal issue.
- Young people are more likely to go to people they trust than an expert they don't know or trust.
- Young people are online – you need to do more online – social media.
- Education is important but it has to connect to young people – humour is the best way to do this.
- Community law centres need to be there when young people are ready or treat those who are like an extension of our staff – e.g. school counsellors
- You don't need a brand you just need to connect to young people – through campaigns/info.
- You have to go to where young people are you can't expect them to come to you.
- You have to be willing to change all the time – prototyping is good (but make sure you know what success/failure looks like so you can decide what/when you need to change).



Some of the things we heard about community law centres were:

- There needs to be better coordination of work for young people across the community law movement. It's not about one entity doing it all as there are hubs of expertise across NZ but there needs to be more coordination.
- Coordinating community law centres and between community law centres can be a challenge as everyone is busy and focused on what they need to get done.
- Some of the work that really needs to be done (preventative work) isn't currently recognised in the contract or isn't given as much value as it should. Incentives are around getting large groups of people in a room and getting good feedback.

Where to Next?

At the end of the reporting year we agreed that we'd continue our co-design discussions with a focus on design solutions relating to:

- How we provide legal advice; and
- How we include young people and support them to influence at all levels of the organisation.

We also made the exciting decision to recruit a Co-design, Youth Engagement and Social Media Coordinator. The interview panel included two of the young people who had participated in the co-design process and Suivaaia Tapu-Pritchard started in this role in October 2018. We look forward to continuing to develop this project over the coming year and working to fulfil the dreams and aspirations for young people in Aotearoa / New Zealand.



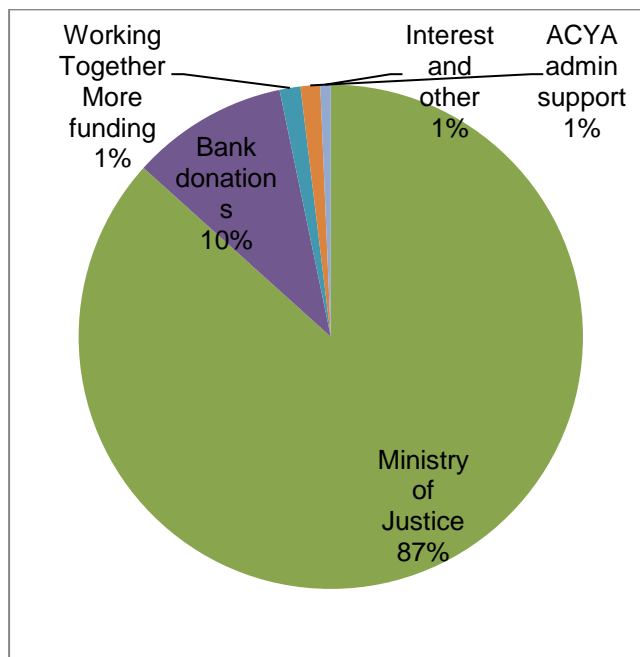
Finances July 2017-June 2018

Where does the money come from?

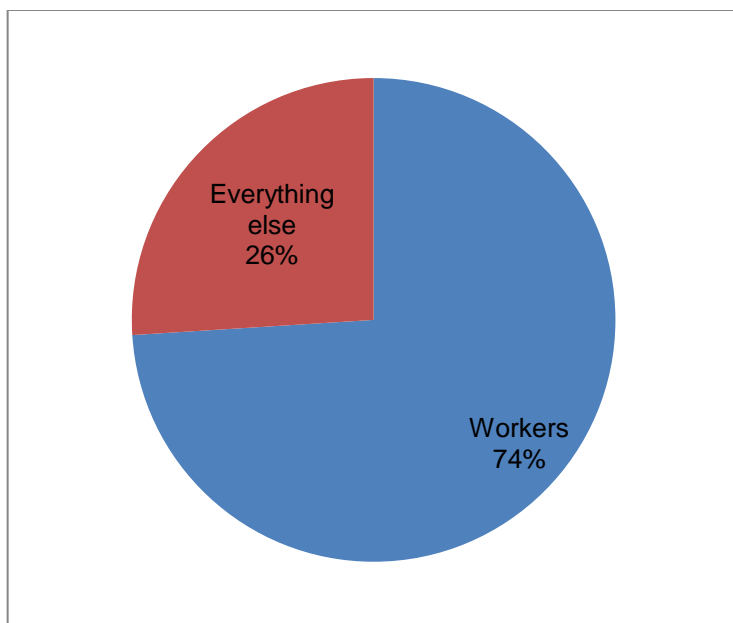
Most of our money comes from our contract with the Ministry of Justice for Community Law. About half of this money is derived from the interest earned on lawyers' trust accounts and the rest is supplied by Government.

In 2017 the major trading banks released a larger share of this interest money to Community Law. YouthLaw took a slightly smaller proportional share of this money in order to support more resourcing going to Auckland Disability Law in 2017-2019. We also received a grant from the Working Together More Fund to support our first steps in co-design with other community law centres with an interest in young people.

In addition, we provide Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa with some admin and bookkeeping support for a small reimbursement.



Where does our money go?



Most of our money is used to pay staff so that they can work directly with young people and be well supervised. We also pay rent, for phones and IT gear, travel to get to places, and the rest of the bills that keep the office going.

For our full financial Performance Report for the 17-18 financial year, please email info@youthlaw.co.nz.

Acknowledgements

YouthLaw Aotearoa wishes to thank the many organisations and individuals who have provided their kind support and invaluable assistance to its ongoing achievements and success.

In particular we would like to thank the following organisations:

- The Ministry of Justice
- ASB, ANZ, BNZ, Westpac and TSB
- The Working Together More Fund / He Putea Mahi tahi
- Auckland University Law Students Running Club
- Community Law Centres Aotearoa and community law centres around the country
- Minter Ellison Rudd Watts
- University of Auckland Law School
- AUT Law School
- AUT Law Students Association
- Youthline Manukau and Auckland Central
- Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa
- IHC
- Expert IT
- Cloud Accounting
- Australia New Zealand Education Law Association
- Rainbow Youth
- Auckland Disability Law
- Waitematā District Health Board Youth Advisory Group (including affiliates of COPMIA (Children of Parents with Mental Illness and Addiction), Auckland Changemakers' Tribe, and Young Innovators' Collective)
- Manurewa Youth Council & Limitless Youth Leadership
- Auckland Council Youth Advisory Panel
- Generation Zero
- Auckland University Students' Association Student Advice Hub
- Equal Justice Project
- Whakatakapokai Care and Protection Residence
- Korowai Manaaki Youth Justice Residence
- LifeHack
- PHAB New Zealand
- Ngā Rangatahi Toa
- Southland District Youth Council
- Palmerston North Youth Council

Thank you!