



**YOUTHLAW
AOTEAROA**

ANNUAL REPORT

2019/2020

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



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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou katoa.

This has been a year of challenges and changes at YouthLaw. The biggest challenge, of course, has been the impact of COVID-19 and managing how best to continue delivering services to our clients with the different restrictions that have been in place.

The Board has been impressed with the way in which management and staff have handled the disruptions and adjusted their working practices as necessary. The transition to working from home during the Level 4 lockdown including ensuring appropriate IT resources for all staff was handled very well with excellent communication between management and the Board. The Board feels confident that the organisation is well set up for whatever may occur in the future.

This year saw the departure of Jennifer Braithwaite as General Manager and the end of her long involvement with YouthLaw. Jennifer had been on the Board for 10 years with eight years as Chairperson before taking on the role of General Manager in 2018 following the departure of Vanushi Walters. On behalf of the Board, I acknowledge and thank Jennifer for her outstanding contribution to the organisation over so many years. Her hard work, dedication and innovative thinking have left a legacy and she left the organisation in great shape. The Board wishes Jennifer well in her future endeavours.

Recruiting a new general manager was challenging with the uncertainty and ongoing restrictions caused by the pandemic. The Employment Sub-Committee of David Sutton and Harvena Cherrington did an exceptional job of running the recruitment process with the invaluable assistance of Operations Manager, Sarah Mansell. I record the Board's gratitude for the many hours that David, Harvena and Sarah devoted to ensuring that we recruited the best possible person and that the Board and staff were able to provide valuable input into the decision.

The Board was delighted to welcome Neil Shaw as new General Manager starting just after the end of the financial year in July 2020. Neil has years of experience in community law and has also worked as a family and criminal lawyer, for a government department and as in-house counsel for a private sector company. He is trusted and respected by staff and Board members alike and it has been a seamless transition to his leadership. The Board feels very confident that YouthLaw is in good hands to face whatever challenges arise as a result of COVID-19 or otherwise.

YouthLaw has continued to perform well against our contractual targets despite the challenges of the pandemic. The restrictions have led to uneven flows of work through the legal advice helpline with numbers dropping during the Level 4 lockdown but increasing again thereafter. It was not possible to supervise volunteers with everyone working from home and so the volunteer programme had to be suspended. This has increased the load on staff. The restrictions also limited the ability of our Legal Related Education team to conduct their usual programme of work, which involves teaching groups and travelling around the country. The Board considers that the organisation has done extremely well against its contractual and other legal obligations in the circumstances. We are confident that the volunteer programme for the advice line and LRE sessions will soon be back to their pre-COVID levels provided the country does not have any further lockdowns.

In last year's report, I referred to the statement in YouthLaw's strategic plan:

Youth Voice – YouthLaw uses continuous and systematic methods to seek the views of diverse young people and their voices routinely inform our work.

I mentioned that the Board was determined to involve young people in the governance of YouthLaw and was looking at the best way to do so.

I am pleased to report that we followed through with that commitment and recruited two young people to sit on the Board, Veisia Maka and Leiu Yeng-Tung. In addition, we have established a Youth Advisory Committee made up of eight young people from around New Zealand. Their profiles can be found on the YouthLaw website. The Board is grateful to Board Secretary, Nive Sharat Chandran, for leading this project, in liaison with YouthLaw staff.

It has been fantastic to have Veisia and Leiu around the Board table and we will continue to work on the best ways to seek the views of young people via the Youth Advisory Committee and otherwise. A key challenge for us is to ensure that their voices routinely inform our work at Board level and we will continue to assess how best to achieve this.

Joanna Maskell retired from the Board in November last year and Mark Cubitt has recently retired due to family commitments (3 children under the age of 3!) We thank Jo and Mark for their service and wish them well for the future.

Thank you to the staff and volunteers of YouthLaw and to my fellow Board members for their invaluable contributions over the past year. We are in a strong position to face the future despite the uncertainties of COVID-19 and I look forward to working with you all over the coming year.

Ngā mihi nui



Simon Judd
Chairperson



GENERAL MANAGER'S

REPORT

Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou, Tēnā koutou katoa.

The 2019-2020 year was exceptional. We were the beneficiaries of funding that provided opportunities to work in new ways regarding our education services and start work to develop better contact with our constituency through a youth participation project. The first two thirds of the year saw our funded projects start and our advice team carry out our core work in its usual professional manner. However, the last third of the year saw YouthLaw having to adapt to a new model for providing legal advice and law related education.

During the year we:

- Farewelled four staff members (Jennifer Braithwaite, John Kyle, Suivaaia Pritchard and Hiruni Wijewardhana);
- Welcomed five new staff members (Sarah Colcord, Greta Wilkins, Paul Paek, Gretchen Carroll and myself);
- Closed our doors to staff and visitors due to COVID-19 lockdowns, and
- Were introduced to working-from-home and holding meetings in Zoom.

I believe that this year recognition needs to go to our staff, not because we achieved in some spectacular way; but because we persisted, we did what was needed to be done, and we kept on keeping on despite the circumstances.

I joined YouthLaw at a time between the COVID-19 lockdowns. When I joined the YouthLaw whānau I found a mature, organised, and engaged group of people. It gives me great pleasure to present this report on behalf of the YouthLaw staff.

I wish to firstly acknowledge my predecessors in the role of leading YouthLaw, and in particular Vanushi Walters and Jennifer Braithwaite, both of whom I knew through their work at YouthLaw.

Their DNA is imprinted on the way YouthLaw operates; the networks that have been developed over many years; and the level of detail in the policy documents that underpin this organisation. In addition, they left behind staff members of integrity and maturity.

This year has seen us work in ways that we could not have imagined 12 months ago. Where the office space became a place to avoid and staff had to learn new ways to deal with clients, workloads, supervision, and time management.

It was my good fortune to come into YouthLaw after staff had already experienced a lockdown. Not so long after my arrival we entered a second lockdown. However, by then the YouthLaw team was prepared to do what was necessary to keep services to young people operating.

Due to these unusual circumstances I wish to individually identify the achievements of staff in the 2019-2020 year.

We had to suspend our volunteer programme. To ensure that we continued to provide legal advice to our clients during lockdown, we employed a further two clerks – Paul Paek, and Greta Wilkins. Our law clerks: Robert Lim, Ruth Stowers, Paul Paek, and Greta Wilkins all carried out their work from their homes and flats without the usual support that is available in an office setting. All our law clerks received guidance and supervision by way of email, phone, and Zoom.

In addition to the two law clerks that we employed to carry the work of the volunteer students, we also had a full-time law clerk who joined YouthLaw in late 2018. Robert Lim had been a volunteer on our advice line prior to becoming an employee. But for the postponements caused by the COVID-19 interruptions, Robert would have completed the formalities for admission and would be our newest lawyer on staff. We are pleased to say that Robert will be admitted as a barrister and solicitor in the High Court at Auckland on 27 November 2020.

I also wish to acknowledge Robert's IT and training skills. The Ministry of Justice recently introduced a new client management system to all community law centres. Robert has become our in-house expert and has devised training and training material for our YouthLaw staff and volunteers.

Sarah Butterfield and Rita Unasa are the staff solicitors who have shouldered the workload for our advice team. Once COVID-19 became the new reality they settled into the routine of working from home and carried out the advice work in their usual professional manner, despite circumstances.

I also wish to commend Sarah Butterfield for her work in the law reform area – producing submissions, editing, incorporating people's comments and including new material. Sarah has started to build a volunteer law reform team. We thank our volunteers Sapphire and Corallee for their work with Sarah. Both volunteers started after the financial year had ended.

I have already mentioned Rita, Sarah Butterfield, Robert, Ruth, Greta, and Paul regarding their work on the advice line. However, behind the scenes Velda Chen has been the driving force that keeps the advice team on track, and ensured the advice delivered to our clients is sound and professional.

Velda works quietly and methodically in the background to ensure the highest quality advice is prepared and given to our clients. Despite the difficulties that the lockdowns have presented, Velda took the event in her stride and maintained a calm and professional attitude and made the drama caused by these events seem an effortless exercise.

Manawa Pomare and Sarah Guy have had a challenging year. Funding was secured by Jennifer from the Working Together More Fund enabling the YouthLaw Law Related Education (LRE) team to work with other community law centres across Aotearoa (so that those CLCs could deliver legal education to young people) and deliver education directly to students in various regions.

That funded work is in addition to the education programme required as part of the Ministry of Justice contract. Manawa and Sarah have had to traverse two audiences – youth and adults – and prepare material and resources for both.

Their work with community law centres saw them arranging events throughout Aotearoa. The lockdowns have created an enormous challenge to our LRE team. Events have been rescheduled, and in some cases postponed indefinitely. Manawa and Sarah have spent countless hours rescheduling workshops and seminars, but also had to rebook travel arrangements and juggle their calendars accordingly.

Throughout this time they found ways to keep delivering law-related education through online modules. This has not been easy, and does not replace a live event, but it did provide an opportunity to experiment and develop new ideas.

Despite the chaos created by the lockdowns the LRE team not only achieved the targets set by the Ministry of Justice for the 2019-2020 year, they laid the foundation for the funded work they are doing with community law centres.

Manawa celebrated (although with her family) her 10th anniversary of being a YouthLaw employee. We plan to celebrate this milestone with Manawa now that restrictions have eased. Manawa is not only a leader in YouthLaw, but also is co-chair of the Community Law Centre Association's Māori Caucus.

The YouthLaw office, and how it functions, can be attributed to two extremely capable people. Gretchen Carroll, our office administrator, has ensured the office systems and communications continue to run smoothly despite the unusual circumstances. Gretchen's work has also seen an efficient transition from the old client database to the new system.

I especially wish to acknowledge the work of Sarah Mansell, our operations manager. Sarah has the ability to maintain a lot of information in her head and can produce that information when the need arises. She ordered and organised the necessary equipment and resources required for a lockdown situation for all staff members. When we entered our second lockdown, all things necessary for staff to work from home were planned and prepared in advance and were rolled out within a few short hours. Sarah also ensured we all met as a team regularly, and that staff were supported when isolated from contact in the office environment.

In addition, Sarah has made my transition into YouthLaw a seamless and orderly exercise and continues to astound me with her ability to keep many balls in the air.

In addition to our normal advice and education roles, Jennifer worked hard to bring about an opportunity for young people to contribute to the way YouthLaw works.

Jennifer obtained funding to put together a youth participation project that required that we employ a full-time co-designer and coordinator. The purpose of the role is to progress our youth participation mahi, facilitating and supporting the young people involved in our Project Team, Youth Advisory Committee, and the Board.

The mahi of our youth participation coordinator is currently being carried out by Damian Piiua. The first person in this role was Suivaaia Pritchard. Unfortunately for YouthLaw Sui accepted a position in an organisation that works with young people in South Auckland. We wish Sui all the best in her new role.

We then employed Sarah Colcord in the youth participation role. Sarah built on Sui's work. However, her work was interrupted by the first COVID-19 lockdown. We lost Sarah to a business opportunity that arose during that period.

We now have Damian in the role as youth participation coordinator. He brings his own big personality to the role and is working hard to build momentum again after two lockdown hits.

We thank the various funders of our projects, which are noted on page 21.

On behalf the YouthLaw whānau, we wish to thank the many volunteers who have served on the advice line team. Although we had to suspend our volunteer programme once the first Covid-19 lockdown occurred, we appreciate the time that students give to working with us and we look forward to resuming that work in 2021.

Finally, we thank the YouthLaw Board for dedicating time and energy toward the betterment of young people in Aotearoa, and for ensuring the physical and mental well-being of the YouthLaw staff.

Whatever the next 12 months may hold for us all, we look forward to working for young people who need our help, working with each other, and working with the volunteers who give their time freely. I hope we can all take something from the lessons of this year, and we wish you all the best for the coming year.

Ngā mihi nui



Neil Shaw

General Manager

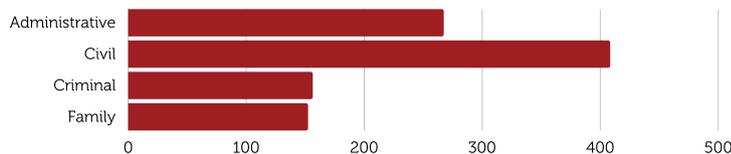


LEGAL ADVICE, INFORMATION ASSISTANCE AND REPRESENTATION

Areas of Practice

Civil law continues to comprise the largest proportion of our practice, our team having advised on more than 200 employment cases as well as on personal and human rights, financial, consumer, tenancy and property law cases during the course of the year.

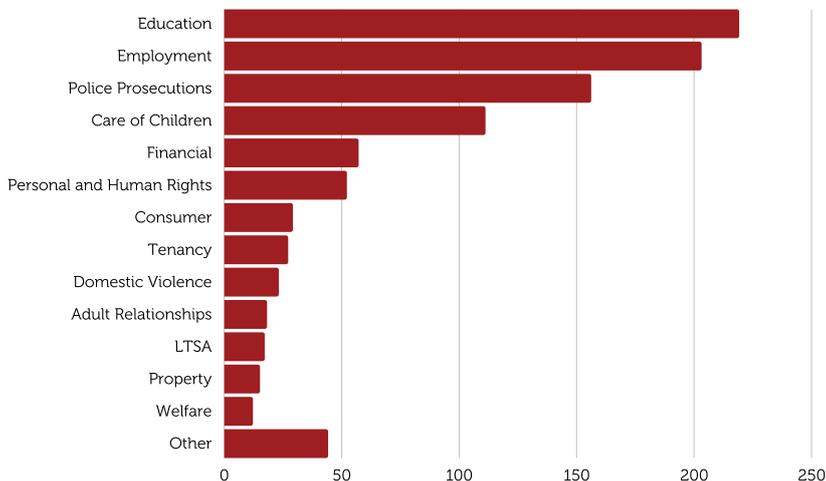
Advice cases by area of law



The second largest area of our practice is administrative law. We provided more advice on education cases than any other query type. We also provided legal advice on LTSA and welfare queries, among other administrative issues.

We provided legal advice on 156 police prosecution cases, our third-highest advice query, and 111 care of children queries; though criminal and family law comprised a smaller proportion of our overall advice work.

Advice cases by query type



“Thanks Sarah, for everything. You have really helped me make the decisions that I have needed to make.”

“Many thanks for this comprehensive summary. I do appreciate the assistance you have offered over recent months. Thanks to all the team for their advice and professional insight. You offer an amazing service.”

“Dear Robert, Thank you so much for all your helpful advice regarding this matter. I’m pleased to say that with your help [the young person] has managed to reach a compromise with [employer] which was fair to both sides. Thanks again for your help.”

“I spoke with Greta who was very helpful in advising what I should do to get my employment situation looked over.”

“I just want to acknowledge this email and the awesome information below. I will endeavour to follow up these points.”

“Thank you very much for your advice, I am not going to be taking any further action at this stage and so I will not be needing any further advice. Thank you very much again for all your help!!”

“Dear Sarah, thank you so very very much for the time and considerable effort you have gone into researching this issue. I have really appreciated your advice and this will be helpful for me and the team going forward. I will forward this email to our team who will be interested and excited to read your discoveries.”

“Thank you so much for your summary. This is very helpful and much appreciated.”

Our Clients

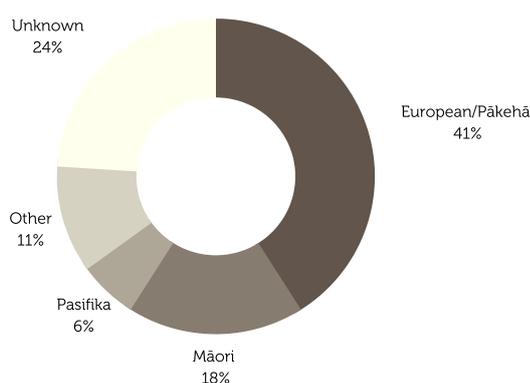
We provide advice and assistance to children and young people (or those working with them) throughout Aotearoa. Initial contact tends to come through our phone line, email or online advice form.

Although we are based in Tāmaki Makaurau, we provide services throughout the motu. Thirty-five percent of our legal advice services were provided to young people in Tāmaki Makaurau, where 34% of the total population are estimated to live. Not all regions are equally represented in our data though, with some regions potentially being underrepresented. However, with the location of nearly one-third of our cases unknown, it is possible that the actual distribution could differ.

Of the clients who provided us their ethnicity, approximately 18% identified as Māori and 6% as Pasifika. These proportions loosely reflect the most recent Census data, in which 17% of people identified as Māori and 8% as Pasifika.

We are seeing an increasing number of clients with complex legal needs which often overlap with other needs including the need for, and difficulty accessing, mental health services.

Client ethnicities



Future Focus

In the next year, we hope to continue our volunteer programme and find ways to help clients more efficiently through the lingering effects of COVID-19. We are also in the process of transitioning to a new case management system in partnership with Community Law Centres o Aotearoa (CLCA).

Client locations

| REGION | % OF CASES | % OF POP. |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----------|
| Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) | 35% | 34% |
| Waitaha (Canterbury) | 8% | 13% |
| Waikato | 6% | 10% |
| Te Whanganui a Tara (Wellington) | 5% | 11% |
| Te Moana a Toi (Bay of Plenty) | 3% | 7% |
| Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) | 3% | 4% |
| Manawatū-Whanganui | 3% | 5% |
| Ōtākou (Otago) | 2% | 5% |
| Whakatū (Nelson) | 1% | 1% |
| Te Matau a Māui (Hawke's Bay) | 1% | 4% |
| Taranaki | 1% | 2% |
| Te Tai Rāwhiti (Gisborne) | 0% | 1% |
| Murihiku (Southland) | 0% | 2% |
| Te Taihū o te Waka (Marlborough) | 0% | 1% |
| Te Tai o Aorere (Tasman) | 0% | 1% |
| Te Tai Poutini (West Coast) | 0% | 1% |
| Unknown | 31% | - |

Capacity and Targets

The final quarter of the financial year proved to be an exceptionally challenging one for the YouthLaw whānau as Aotearoa entered a Level 4 Alert. From late March 2020, we transitioned to working from home.

Our volunteer programme was paused for safety reasons, with our volunteers returning in reduced numbers from June 2020. Our team were under considerable pressure with the loss of the volunteers.

During the high Alert Levels, there were fewer queries and education cases reduced significantly. (With students completing their learning online, there were very few instances of them being stood down or suspended). However, the prevalence of mental health difficulties increased which required more care from our team when communicating with clients.

Our team worked exceptionally hard to help as many young people as they could. Despite the challenges created by the pandemic, we provided legal advice on 983 cases over the year – 98% of our contract target with the Ministry of Justice.

¹ Stats NZ - Subnational population estimates. <http://nzdotstat.stats.govt.nz/wbos/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLECODE7979>

² Stats NZ - 2018 Census ethnic groups dataset. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/2018-census-ethnic-groups-dataset>

Case Examples

At 15, R was suspended by their school for allegedly possessing and using a prohibited item. R strongly disputed this allegation and said that, while they had been present when the prohibited item was brought out and used, they had not engaged and left as soon as they could. The allegation upset R because they had been trying hard to do well at school after a rough start in Year Nine. YouthLaw met with R and their family, and then represented R at the Board of Trustees suspension meeting. At this meeting, the Board closely questioned R about the situation. The Board was satisfied that R was telling the truth and decided to return R to school and lift their suspension with conditions. Since the suspension, R has decided to leave school and pursue study on a course, which they are excelling at.

L had been employed for around six months and was promised full-time hours when they started their employment. However, they never received a contract and only worked an average of 20 hours per week despite repeatedly asking for full-time hours. Following the COVID-19 lockdown, L was eventually provided with an employment agreement and was able to negotiate to be provided with their minimum guaranteed hours. However, their employer refused to back-pay them for the wages they should have been able to earn during their time there and was not provided with the full-time hours that were promised at the start of their employment. After advising L on their legal position and options, they were able to resolve the matter by negotiating a reasonable compromise between themselves and their employer that L was happy with.

S was stood down from their tertiary institution because of an allegation that they were struggling with their mental health. The tertiary provider told S that they could not return to study until they were assessed by a psychiatrist. S was unnerved by the stand-down because the tertiary provider had not investigated the allegation, interviewed S, nor had they provided any documentation about the stand-down process or procedure. S was particularly upset they had not been interviewed, as had the tertiary provider asked them, they would have discovered that S had overcome their earlier mental health struggles and was receiving support. YouthLaw represented S through a letter to the tertiary provider highlighting process errors and discrimination on the grounds of disability. Following this letter, S decided that they did not wish to continue study at the tertiary provider and instead wanted to undertake a course elsewhere. S is now studying at a new tertiary provider, making good progress and enjoying their course.

A support worker reached out on behalf of a teenager who needed financial support but did not meet the residency requirements of most Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) benefits. YouthLaw advised them on the benefits available at WINZ and the requirements to receive those benefits. YouthLaw also provided contact details for other support services. They were grateful for the advice and said it would be helpful in creating some resources for the young people they work with.

Legal Advice Team

Our legal advice team is currently made up of our senior solicitor (Velda Chan), solicitors (Rita Unasa and Sarah Butterfield), law clerks (Robert Lim, Greta Wilkins and Paul Paek), and volunteers.

Right: legal advice team members Sarah (pink), Ruth (orange), John (yellow) and Robert (blue), with youth participation coordinator Sui (green) enjoying a team-building event at Rainbow's End.



LAW RELATED EDUCATION

The Law Related Education (LRE) team made a conscious effort to hit the ground running in July 2019, in light of the previous financial year's slow start and the stressful push to achieve numbers in the final quarter. This meant we ensured our target numbers were not only met quarterly, but surpassed year to date, so we were ahead of the game.

This became vital when COVID-19 interrupted and cancelled many planned sessions in the last quarter, but the LRE team still managed to meet the Ministry of Justice contract obligation numbers for the 2019-2020 period.

We focused on not only meeting target numbers but also being true to our national identity, and looking for ways legal education could be more readily accessed across Aotearoa.

Overall, COVID-19 had a huge impact on LRE. Online technologies were novel to us, so we needed to learn and become comfortable with using video. We discovered it was not always a safe or appropriate time to do legal education in a virtual setting where there were more anomalies and uncertainties than not. We continue to work on how to develop a hybrid model of digital and face to face education in an ever-changing and never certain world.

We have found planning often needs to be quick, flexible and reactive, and to take opportunities when they present themselves, rather than waiting for 'best time' – which may not eventuate.

Education Road Trip

In August 2019 YouthLaw was fortunate to be granted funding from the Working Together More Fund, for a project to deliver legal information and education in relation to children and young people's rights to schools and communities nationwide, through a roadshow in partnership with the 21 regional Community Law Centres (CLC).

We visited the following places on our road trips:

- Baywide – Tauranga, Whakatāne, Opotiki
- Northland
- Tairāwhiti and Hawkes Bay.

All the road trips were met with positive reviews and a thirst, especially in the outlying regions and rural communities, for support services such as ours. Return visits were requested and it opened up the possibilities for future organisational relationships, and we will continue to strengthen connections with the CLCs.

There were places we could not travel due to the disruption (Wellington, Canterbury, Taranaki, Whanganui, Otago, Southland, Nelson, Blenheim) and these will be planned for in the 2020/21 financial year.

Below: top and bottom images are snapshots from our education road trip. Middle image is of an LRE session in Manurewa South School.

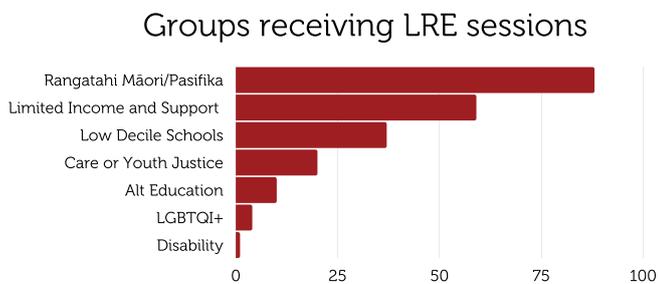


Participant Numbers

We surpassed the Ministry’s reporting numbers of participants, achieving 110% of target. Of the 2,883 participants, 86% were young people themselves, with the remainder being Youth Service Providers.

The majority of our LRE sessions have engaged our rangatahi Māori, Pasifika, and low income priority groups. While we ran fewer sessions focused solely on young people with disabilities, inclusion is an ongoing consideration for all of our sessions.

Our education team was able to reach participants throughout the motu. Most LRE sessions took place in Tāmaki Makaurau, in particular South Auckland where many of our priority groups reside.



“I really liked how the session was run, it was interactive and the facilitators’ content was very current and informative.”

“I really like the part when they said that cyber bullying is bad because I didn’t know about it.”

“I really liked how you explained carefully each item so we’d understand.”

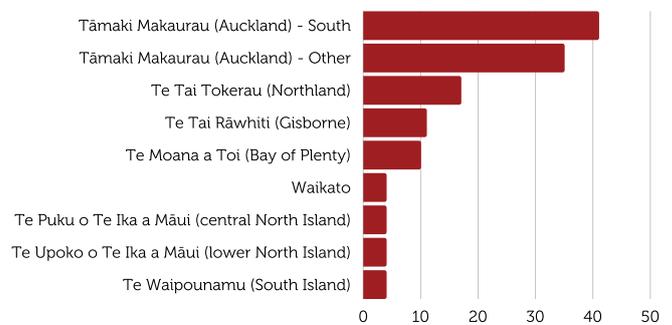
“It was inspiring.”

Participant Feedback

Of those surveyed, 99.6% noted an improved understanding and 98.2% said they would recommend the session to their friends and whānau. Schools have requested us back, a telling sign we were able to connect with both staff and young people.

The youth themselves are calling for this type of information and sessions to be run in schools. We need to stay relevant and impart knowledge in ways that are continually meaningful and engaging.

LRE session locations



“I really liked that they did experiments alongside their talk.”

“The interaction style with the group – my world, my decisions.”

“I never really knew much about the law but now I do.”

“How they open my rights in an easy and safe way. Wish there was a class when I was 16.”

Law Related Education Team

Manawa Pomare is a senior solicitor and legal educator with a focus on kaupapa Māori. Sarah Guy is a legal educator and creativity extraordinaire.

Right: From left to right - Suivaia Pritchard (youth participation coordinator) striking a pose with legal educators Sarah Guy and Manawa Pomare at the YouthLaw Christmas party 2019.



YOUTH PARTICIPATION

'Ko Ngā Rangatahi Te Tokomanawa o a Tatou Mahi - Youth at the Centre of Our Work' is a core objective of YouthLaw. We are working towards embedding a youth voice at all levels of our organisation, from governance to our services, to the resources we create.

This financial year was both challenging and rewarding for our youth participation work. COVID-19 created a lot of disruption in the last quarter, and we also had the challenge of two changes in the Youth Participation, Co-Design and Social Media Coordinator role. We are grateful to all the young people who remained committed to this partnership with YouthLaw despite the disruptions.

We were fortunate to receive funding from a variety of sources to support our youth participation mahi.

The J R McKenzie Trust has funded (among other things) the Coordinator role that is central to leading the delivery of this work. This funding has been instrumental in supporting all our youth participation projects as a result.

J R McKenzie's funding has also enabled us to remove barriers to participation (such as travel and Internet costs) for our Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) and youth Board members.

We also received support from Foundation North, Auckland Airport Community Trust and Ara Taiohi for our youth participation projects, in particular the work of The Project Team, and Young and in Lockdown.

We learnt a great deal during the past year and are excited about future work in this youth participation space.

Youth Board Members

We were delighted that two young people, Leiua Yeng-Tung and Veisia Maka were co-opted to the YouthLaw Board in January 2020, and a Youth Participation Subcommittee was established, comprising of them and Harvena Cherrington. A supportive relationship has developed between the subcommittee and the YAC.



Above: Board members Leiua Yeng-Tung (left) and Veisia Maka (right).

2020 has been a challenging year thus far. Covid-19 provided many challenges as well as opportunities to understand an array of social justice issues such as employment and education that fundamentally affected many young people this year.

The establishment of the Youth Advisory Committee and The Project Team enabled for a smooth transition for Veisia and I into this space. With the legal system having been highly dominated by legal professions, it was a huge opportunity to be able to work with the Youth Advisory Committee, Project Team and staff to ensure that the wellbeing of young people was considered during discussions of YouthLaw's future.

We believe that there is a huge potential for YouthLaw to set the precedent of how youth advocacy and engagement is conducted within the legal field. As a board member it has been a privilege to be able to work with such a dynamic group of passionate advocates who are equally passionate about young people and the legal system.

We are excited to see what 2021 brings for YouthLaw and our young people.

Ngā mihi,

Leiua and Veisia

YouthLaw Board members

Youth Advisory Committee

The YAC was established to provide advice to the YouthLaw Board and staff based on their experiences as young people aged 16 to 24 years old living in Aotearoa. We made call-outs for YAC members in February and were blown away by the calibre of applicants.

The YAC includes nine members, with experience relating to our priority groups (rangatahi Māori; disabled young people; LGBTQI young people; Pasifika young people; young people who live in low income families; young people who have had a care or youth justice experience; and isolated young people).

The YAC is a one-year pilot that began in April 2020 and aims to:

- Identify issues that are important to young people, particularly YouthLaw’s priority groups;
- Provide input into our strategies, policies and plans;
- Help us engage effectively with young people more widely;
- Be involved in our advocacy work including consultations and policy reform submissions;
- Provide support and advice to our Board members;
- Make recommendations for how young people should be involved in our governance and decision-making.

Unfortunately, the timing of COVID-19 meant the committee was established during Alert Level 4, which had a huge impact on the members, their focus, and prevented whakawhanaungatanga in person.

Despite the challenges this presented, the YAC’s mahi during the financial year included providing feedback to us on the important issues for young people during the lockdown; having input into the Young and in Lockdown campaign (see below); carrying out a review of our Operational Plan 2020-2021; and having input into the structures and processes that enable meaningful relationships between YAC members, staff members and Board members.

Left: the members of the Youth Advisory Committee – Wahine Murch, Janica Bayogan, Kurarauringa Waller, Lucas Walters, Tangihaere Gardiner, Damian Piilua (now our youth participation coordinator), Terina Wall, Fine Aholelei, Jahmin Tengu.

Tuia i runga
 Tuia i raro
 Tuia i roto
 Tuia i waho
 Tuia te here tangata
 Ka rongo te pō, ka rongo te ao
 Haumi ē, hui ē, taiki ē.

Tēnā koutou,

Being engaged in YouthLaw’s Youth Advisory Committee has been both a tough and rewarding experience, with COVID-19 interrupting a lot of potential opportunity to not only develop more mahi as a committee, but to actually meet our peers face to face. Building relationships with each other and our then superstar coordinator, Sarah Colcord, was done through a screen and over Zoom - this was a difficult experience for us all, but as youth we learnt to adapt quickly.

For myself, the drive to carry on comes from the passion for the kaupapa. YouthLaw’s vision and mission is something that aligns well with my personal values and I look forward to giving more of my time and energy to the kaupapa - hopefully kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) in the near future.

Nō reira,
 Mauri Tū, Mauri Ora.

Wahine Murch,
 Chairperson.



The Project Team

The Project Team comprises 15 young people aged 15-19 years old living in South Auckland, who co-design engaging and relatable YouthLaw legal resources. The group originates from earlier youth participation work, building on the work of the 'Phase 2' group, who came up with the idea of using performing arts to express legal information, and were a key part of our funding application process. The Project Team is a mix of those who were part of this groundwork, and new recruits.

The team was formed following an overnight retreat at Kōkako Lodge in Hunua funded by the Auckland Airport Community Trust. The retreat included an introduction to YouthLaw; law-related education through activity-based learning; co-design workshops; and the young people had direct input into our submission on the Education and Training Bill. Guests the Black Friars did a performing arts workshop, and the team completed a high ropes course.

This retreat helped develop relationships and sparked ideas to work together on., with financial support from Foundation North.

The first project following the retreat was working on our presence at Polyfest, using interactive games and social media. Polyfest was scheduled for March 2020 but was cancelled due to the nationwide lockdown. Subsequently the team shifted to online engagement and pivoted our attention to something we could work on together remotely. Guest speakers such as local creatives joined us, as well as Do Good Feel Good members, and the team decided to create informative TikTok videos in collaboration with our legal team.

Below: members of The Project Team with YouthLaw staff at the retreat. Front row: Junior Homasi, Ana Potaufa, Liza Gabriel, Uga Vaialia, Harleen Bathal, Amazing Fanaua, Leiua Yeng-Tung, Sui Pritchard, Emily McGechie. Back row: Lekah Vite, Sarah Mansell, Sarah Guy, Lauryn Spreckley, Manawa Pomare, Sarah Colcord, Robert Lim.



I have truly enjoyed my time with The Project Team this year. I enjoyed coming to physical meetings earlier this year when we began planning the Polyfest stall. Everyone in The Project Team is so kind and we all work well together. COVID-19 ended up being a big barrier though as we weren't able to do a lot of things we had planned to do. The production was something I was really looking forward to and I hope I can be a part of the team next year so we can get that off the ground. The YouthLaw staff are honestly what made me attend the meetings. I have been a bit slack over the past few months because of exams but I've had so much fun at all of our meetings. All in all my experiences at YouthLaw have been amazing and there's honestly nothing negative to say.

*Harleen Bathal,
The Project Team member*

Young and in Lockdown

Young and in Lockdown was a social media campaign that took place on Facebook and Instagram during Youth Week 2020 (the week's theme was "We are speaking, are you listening?") about the impact of COVID-19 on young people and their whānau.

We asked young people to message us with three to five sentences about their experience with COVID-19 and the lockdown, and how it has impacted them and their whānau. Once we received a submission, we passed it on to one of two illustrators who then brought it to life. The submissions were also passed on to our lawyers, who provided legal oversight to identify opportunities to provide information and support in the caption. We also gave our partners the chance to contribute to the caption.

This campaign was successful in amplifying the voices of young people and highlighting the challenges that they experienced during lockdown.

A video of The Project Team retreat can be found on our [Youtube](#) channel, YouthLaw NZ.

Our Young and in Lockdown campaign can be found on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). For a copy of the report, contact info@youthlaw.co.nz.

TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

YouthLaw strives to be a Treaty/Te Tiriti based organisation and this is reflected in the mahi we carry out.

We had hoped this year to have a noho marae and wānanga for whānau, including Board members and The Youth Advisory Committee, to build upon prior learning and develop a shared understanding of what being Treaty-based means for us. However, like with many things, that has had to be postponed for now due to COVID-19. More staff enrolled in te reo Māori courses, and they were able to continue these online.

Solicitor and educator Manawa Pomare continued her involvement as one of the Co-Chairs of the Community Law Centres o Aotearoa Māori Caucus Ngā Kaiāwhina Hapori Māori o te Ture (NKHMT). She attended the CLCA strategic planning hui as the Māori caucus representative, but the Māori caucus' annual hui was cancelled this year due to COVID-19.

Law Related Education

The LRE team continued to work closely with rangatahi Māori and those who work with them - we make a conscious decision to prioritise sessions with this group, and approach them first.

We give specific focus on sessions in Māori, as there is a real lack of agencies or services with the ability to run sessions in te reo Māori in full immersion Māori schools.

Below: members of the YouthLaw whānau practising their te reo Māori together.



We ran sessions in the following schools: Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Ngā Maungarongo; Te Wharekura o Ngā Maungarongo; Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Hokianga; Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Kaikohe; and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Tututarakihi.

We had hoped for more, but with the national lockdown face to face sessions were impossible, and while some were agreeable to online sessions, others preferred to wait until we were able to travel to them again.

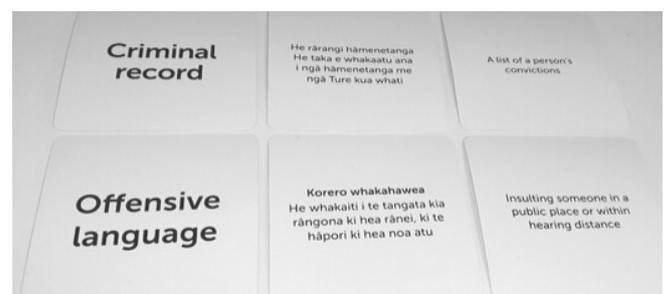
We also ran sessions with iwi social services and Māori organisations, for example Te Kaha O Te Rangatahi; Ngāti Kahu social services; and the Waipareira Trust.

Manawa also took part of collaborative LRE sessions with the kaihapai and kaupapa Māori teams from Wellington and Waitematā CLCs.

Te Reo Māori Resources

We received funding from the Lotteries Commission to create four prototypes for learning resources and tools to use in kura kaupapa:

- A game board covering a range of topics including rights with police, cyber bullying and legal ages;
- Nesting dolls as a representation of different ages, revealing information appropriate to each age;
- Scenario cards covering real life situations to prompt group discussions on cyber bullying, sex and consent and rights with police;
- Mix and match cards for the rights with police content we cover.



VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are an essential part of the YouthLaw whānau and enable us to help many more young people than we could alone. A big 'thank you' to all of our volunteers. We could not do our mahi without you.

Legal Advice Volunteers

We were lucky to have more than 50 volunteers during the course of the year undertaking tasks such as initial interviews with our clients; research; and supporting the legal team to draft and provide legal advice.

Our first volunteer intake for 2020 started just three weeks before the nationwide lockdown, meaning we needed to pause the volunteer programme. We missed our volunteers as we moved into remote working arrangements and are grateful for their patience and willingness to help again as soon as they could.

"I wanted to thank everyone at Youthlaw for all the support and training I've been given over my time there. It has certainly been a huge help both in terms of my university work and my general legal knowledge. All of the staff are incredibly kind and the office has an amazing community atmosphere."

We were delighted to also have two of our volunteers, Greta Wilkins and Paul Paek, join the YouthLaw team as Law Clerks.

Moving forward

In the next financial year, we will be trialling law reform specific volunteers and hoping to have more volunteers back in the office. We will also prioritise Board of Trustees suspension meeting advocacy, which is an area we have focused on in the past.

Below: enjoying a games and pizza night with some of our wonderful 2019 volunteers.



Other Volunteers

While our legal advice volunteer programme is a big part of our organisation, we do rely on volunteers in a variety of ways.

Our Board members, Youth Advisory Committee Members and Project Team members all volunteer their time with YouthLaw. We deeply appreciate their time and input.

We were also fortunate to have a student from Ormiston College, Lavinia Liava'a, complete a work experience placement with us.

Lavinia supported our 'Phase Two' youth participation team with administrative tasks, such as taking minutes and transcribing their creative processes into reference notes for the organisation.

"My work placement with YouthLaw Aotearoa was a great experience for me, I was surrounded day in and day out with a very welcoming and friendly work environment. Never gonna forget the love I was shown and the gentle support and guidance I was given while with YouthLaw Aotearoa. Thanks heaps

YouthLaw :)"

- Lavinia Liava'a

Below: from left to right - Suivaaia Pritchard (youth participation coordinator), Lavinia Liava'a (student volunteer) and Sarah Mansell (operations manager) celebrating the completion of Lavinia's work placement with YouthLaw.



LAW REFORM

YouthLaw has been impactful with our law reform work this financial year through numerous submissions to select committees and government departments. The young people we work with are also passionate about being involved in law reform and having their voices heard.

We ran a session with young people to gather feedback on the new school Board of Trustees objectives proposed in the Education and Training (EAT) Bill. This feedback was part of our submission to the Education and Workforce Committee about the Bill (see quotes below).

Sarah Butterfield, Solicitor, and Simon Judd, Chairperson made an oral submission on this Bill in April to the select committee via Zoom. We followed this up later with a letter to the Minister of Education, Hon. Chris Hipkins, about our concerns about the Disputes Panels.

Some movement has occurred with the establishment of the new Disputes Panels. However these Panels have yet to be implemented, and do not have any power to make binding decisions, unless both parties consent to be bound by the Panel's decision. Our frustrations about the lack of appeal options for education matters is often echoed by our clients.

Recently one of our clients told us *"...the structural process is flawed, offering little real time arbitration for dispute. There should in my view be an independent arbitration for every expulsion... Board members though apparently trained, will hold unavoidable bias and blindness to discrimination, as these are part time roles often with self interest at heart. Access to enforce these rights is otherwise outside the financial capacity of most families and not timely enough to actually be useful. This is a significant failure in policy by government. I feel hugely failed by the system."*

YouthLaw will continue with this important advocacy going forward into the next financial year.

You can read our submissions on our website, at www.youthlaw.co.nz/resources

YouthLaw also made written submissions to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) about their consultation paper regarding contractors; and to Dr Sharon Shalev about how seclusion and restraint practices in New Zealand have progressed, and where improvements are still required since the Human Rights Commission's 2016 report *'Thinking outside the Box? A review of seclusion and restraint practices in New Zealand'*.

The law reform team will be busy over the next couple of months working on many of the bills that were paused during the election and other government consultations, such as the MBIE consultation on workplace bullying and harassment. We are also in the process of creating a Law Reform programme which incorporates the consultation and inclusion of children and young people's voices.

"School could let the special needs kids hang out with us. They don't even come to school events it's like they go to a different school"

"Responsibility is a lot for Pacific island kids have to give back to family because parents push for it. Need good education but also money to look after family."

"Fights – get stood down for a whole week for being threatened for safety. The ones threatening, nothing."

Below: members of The Project Team, Lauryn and Harleen, working on the EAT Bill at our retreat in Hunua in January 2020.



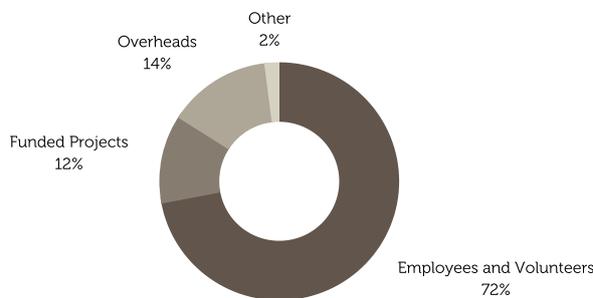
FINANCES

1 JULY 2019 - 30 JUNE 2020

Financial Position

YouthLaw ended the 2018/2019 financial year with a \$68,000 surplus, which we decided to reinvest into the current year to help us achieve our goals. As a result, we ended this year with a deficit.

We intend on taking a similar approach over the coming financial year, reinvesting the remainder of that surplus to maximise the impact we have in our communities.

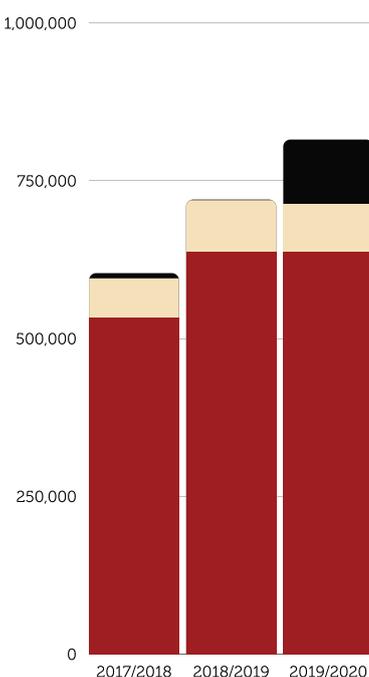


2019/2020FY

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Revenue | 819,500 |
| Expenses | 856,500 |
| Deficit | 37,000 |
| Assets | 397,100 |
| Liabilities | 173,300 |
| Accumulated Funds | 224,000 |

Income

The Ministry of Justice continues to be our primary source of funding, providing 78% of our income this financial year. The Ministry contract us to provide legal services that address the needs of young people throughout Aotearoa.



As in other years, the major trading banks have provided untaged donations, derived from the interest earned on lawyers' trust accounts. This year, 9% of our total income was from bank donations.

A significant proportion of our income was received through grants from a variety of funders, including the J R McKenzie Trust, Foundation North, Lotteries, The Working Together More Fund and Auckland Airport Community Trust. These grants represent 12% of our income this year.

We also received koha from members of the public. While donations represent a small proportion of our funding, they are beneficial to our kaupapa and are greatly appreciated.

Expenditure

Our people are our priority and our expenses reflect this. Employee and volunteer costs represent 72% of our overall spending.

Office overheads (including IT, communications, rent, power, cleaning, accounting, insurance, and various other costs) comprised 14% of our expenditure.

Twelve percent of our costs were related to a grant-funded project, for instance youth participation and co-design, the national education roadshow, or the development of legal education resources in te reo Māori.

For a copy of YouthLaw Aotearoa's full Performance Report for 2019/2020FY, 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:

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Community Law Centres O Aotearoa | Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa | Bluelight |
| Community Law Centres around the country | Expert IT | NZMA Manukau |
| University of Auckland Law School | Cloud Accounting | Lifewise |
| AUT Law School | Moore Markhams | Graeme Dingle Foundation |
| He Au Tona Ltd | Australia New Zealand Education Law Association | RainbowYOUTH |
| Voyce Whakarongo Mai | Wai Ako | Auckland Council Youth Advisory Panel |
| Do Good, Feel Good | Youth Horizons | The Black Friars |
| Kokako Lodge | | Yes! Disability Resource Centre |
| | | Shakti |

We also wish to thank the following individuals:

| | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Robert Ludbrook | Eric Soukai | Dom Ambros |
| Reti Pritchard | Cassandra de la Croix | Casper Gordon |

We are very grateful to our funders for enabling the work we do:

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| The Ministry of Justice | J R McKenzie Trust | The Working Together More Fund / He Putea Mahi Tahī |
| ASB, ANZ, BNZ, Westpac and TSB | Lotteries Community Fund | Auckland Airport Community Trust |
| Foundation North | Ara Taiohi | |





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