



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA

15 FEB 2021

On 17 January 2021, you emailed the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, a copy of the Youth Investment Strategy.

The Youth Investment Strategy was launched in November 2016. It set out how the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi would approach its work over the following three years.

For your information, in 2020, the Minister for Youth launched the *Youth Plan 2020-2022: Turning Voice into Action Rebuilding and Recovering* was launched, which supersedes the document you have requested. The Youth Plan sets out actions that government will take, in partnership with others, to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 for rangatahi. More information, including the Youth Plan, can be found at <https://www.myd.govt.nz/young-people/youth-plan.html>.

As requested, please find a copy of the Youth Investment Strategy enclosed in this response.

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached document available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter and attachments on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz.

If you are not satisfied with this response, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or 0800 802 602.

Ngā mihi nui

Juanita Te Kani
General Manager, Youth

Ministry of Youth Development

youth investment strategy



**MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO TAIOHI

Administered by the Ministry of Social Development



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Foreword



The Youth Investment Strategy sets out how the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi – will approach its work over the next three years.

MYD is focused on achieving key goals, including growing the number of quality youth development opportunities available for more young people aged between 12 and 24 years, while increasing our reach to those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We've established a Partnership Fund which will be managed by a newly appointed Board. This will focus on leveraging the number and quality of youth development opportunities available, in partnership with the business and philanthropic sectors, iwi and other funders.

We also intend to recognise youth participation in leadership, mentoring and volunteering activities through a social record.

Our aim with the Youth Investment Strategy is to promote and support positive long term outcomes for our young people. Our ambition is to embed a social investment approach that ensures youth development investment is effective and supports young people to make confident transitions to adulthood, reducing the probability of more costly and intensive interventions later.

We want to build our evidence base so that all investment decisions consider how effectively the opportunities we fund support the overarching developmental outcomes of building capability and resilience.

We know that the social, cultural and environmental landscapes in New Zealand, and worldwide, are rapidly evolving, and we must position our young people to manage this in a capable and assertive manner. Young New Zealanders will need to be self-assured, connected, resourceful, pioneering, positive and resilient if they are to contribute and thrive. It's our intention that the Youth Investment Strategy provides a framework for us to support them on this journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robyn Scott".

Robyn Scott

Director,
Ministry of Youth Development



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Overview

Our vision

is to provide youth development opportunities that enable young people to acquire the skills and confidence they need to participate and contribute to the social and economic growth of New Zealand and its future.

The Ministry of Youth Development, Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi (the Ministry), works with and for all young people in New Zealand aged between 12 and 24 years old. We partner with others to enable, fund, and promote youth development opportunities.

The Youth Investment Strategy (the Strategy) sets out how the Ministry will progress toward implementing a social investment approach to achieve its vision for young people.



The Strategy will give effect to the new direction for the Ministry which is focused on:

- » increasing the number of quality youth development opportunities available for more young people from 50,000 to 70,000 by 2018, with a longer-term goal of 100,000 opportunities
- » increasing the proportion of funding targeted to youth from disadvantaged backgrounds from 18 percent to at least 30 percent
- » working in partnership to jointly invest in shared outcomes.

More information on the Ministry's new direction can be found on the Beehive website¹.

This Strategy will identify opportunities for young people that focus on:

- » **Leadership** - young people participating in and leading initiatives and decision-making processes
- » **Volunteering** - young people contributing time, service, and skills in their community
- » **Mentoring** - young people supported to develop skills and achieve goals through relationships with adults and peers.

Why are we doing it?

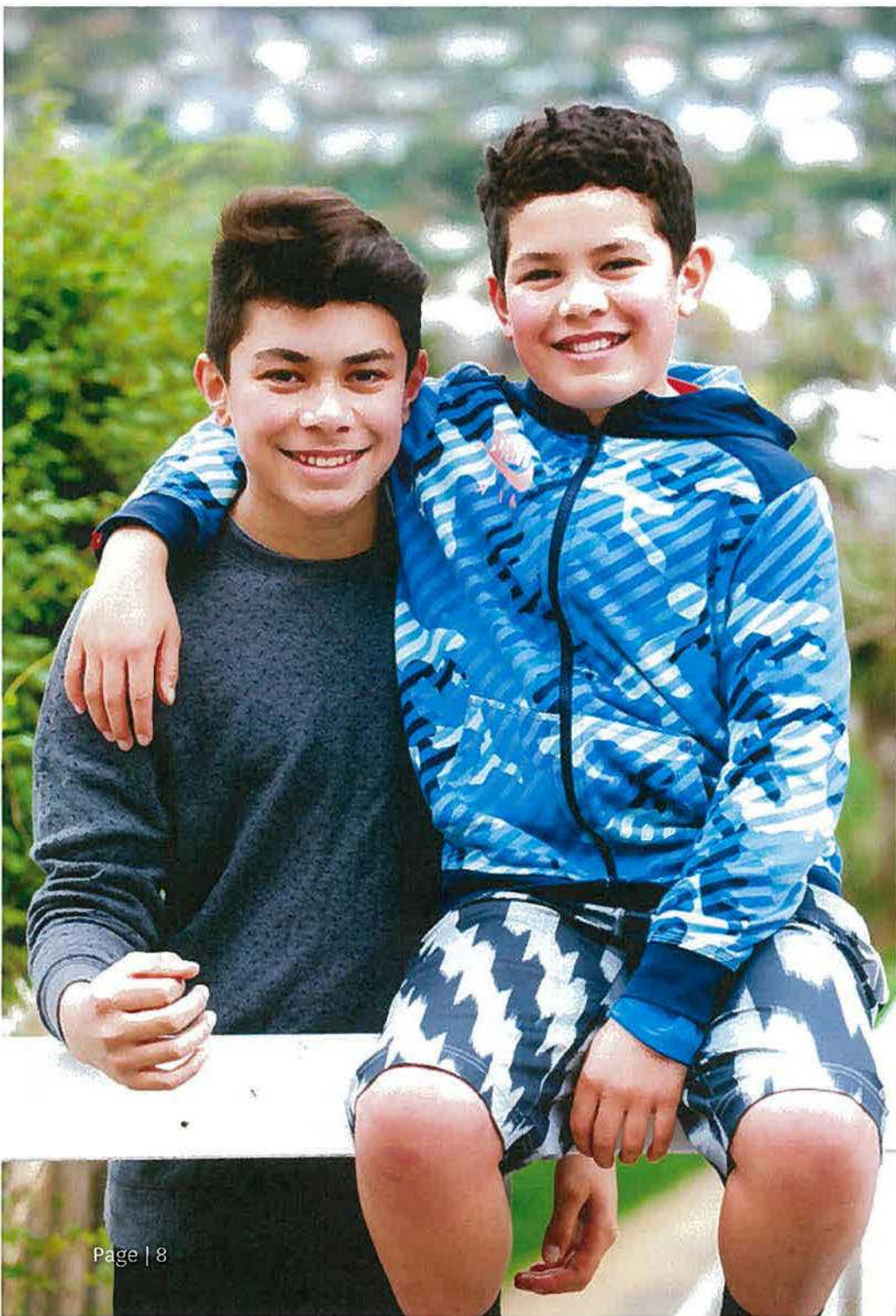
Our aim with this Strategy is to improve young people's long-term outcomes through better funding opportunities, programmes and initiatives that build the capability and resilience of young people so they have the skills and confidence to engage positively in, and contribute to, their communities. We also want outcomes that support increased educational achievement, greater employability, improved health and less state interventions.

We know that the economic and social environment for New Zealand is changing rapidly and having an impact on young people. Factors such as globalisation and the development of technology are transforming the way we live and work. Young people will increasingly need additional skills (for example, digital, entrepreneurial and enterprise skills) to support future New Zealand.

Creating an approach to investment that allows us to purchase and commission services more flexibly means we can support new initiatives and be responsive to environmental shifts and growing evidence of effectiveness. This will ensure our young people are prepared and equipped to thrive.

We know that youth development opportunities have a positive impact on young people, but we want to be better at evaluating what works and for who, using robust evidence and data analysis.

¹ <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/sites/all/files/Information-Sheet-Partnering-for-Youth-Development.pdf>



How are we doing it?

Our ambition is to embed a social investment approach that ensures youth development investment is effective and helps young people to make positive transitions to adulthood, reducing the likelihood of more costly and intensive interventions later.

The following key components of the Strategy will help us move toward a social investment approach:

- » maximising resources through **partnering** with corporate, iwi, philanthropic and other government organisations
- » **targeting** investment to where it will have the most impact
- » being clear about the **outcomes** we want to achieve
- » building our **evidence** base
- » improving **data** collection and analysis so that we fund based on knowledge of what works for which young people.

The Strategy aims to balance the delivery of an increased number of youth development opportunities with more intensive investment aimed at specific groups, such as young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.



We will be more effective at achieving the best outcomes for young people. To support this, the Ministry will regularly assess the mix of investment types, constantly evaluating, refining and prioritising its investment.

To achieve the new direction we need to change the way we work so that we can deliver and ensure that:

- » our funding and contracting of services is evidence-based and flexible to facilitate market competition, fairness and consistency
- » the evidence base is used to guide disinvestment decisions, as well as new investment in response to wider trends.

Key to the successful implementation of the Strategy will be engaging with young people, organisations, partners and other government agencies as the Strategy is implemented.

The Strategy is a 'living document' and will be adapted as required to remain fit-for-purpose.





Key components of our investment approach

We will maximise resources through partnership

Many businesses, philanthropic organisations, iwi and cultural groups are already investing in opportunities to help young people acquire the skills and confidence they need to contribute positively to society. We will maximise resources by partnering with these organisations to create a wider variety of opportunities for more young people.

The Ministry committed \$1 million to seed a **Partnership Fund** in 2016/2017, and expects that collaboration will generate partner contribution of at least another \$1 million. This is intended to support 6,000 youth development opportunities for more young people in 2016/2017.

A **Partnership Fund Board** has been appointed to support information sharing, collaboration and co-investment and will make investment decisions about the Partnership Fund. Its membership comprises young people, philanthropic and business sector leaders and youth development experts, with a mix of age, gender, ethnicity and geography represented.

We will work more effectively with other government agencies to combine resources and knowledge. This will be particularly important with agencies where we work with the same groups of young people.

Further, we will explore opportunities to partner with young people themselves, supporting them through networks, not just through funding.



We will target investment to where it will have the most impact

Investment decisions on where, what, and who we invest in will be informed by information on existing government funding in different areas of New Zealand. The types and the mix of youth development opportunities we fund and deliver will also be considered.

We will build a better understanding of the young people who currently participate in youth development opportunities and the overlap with other priority groups being targeted by government services.

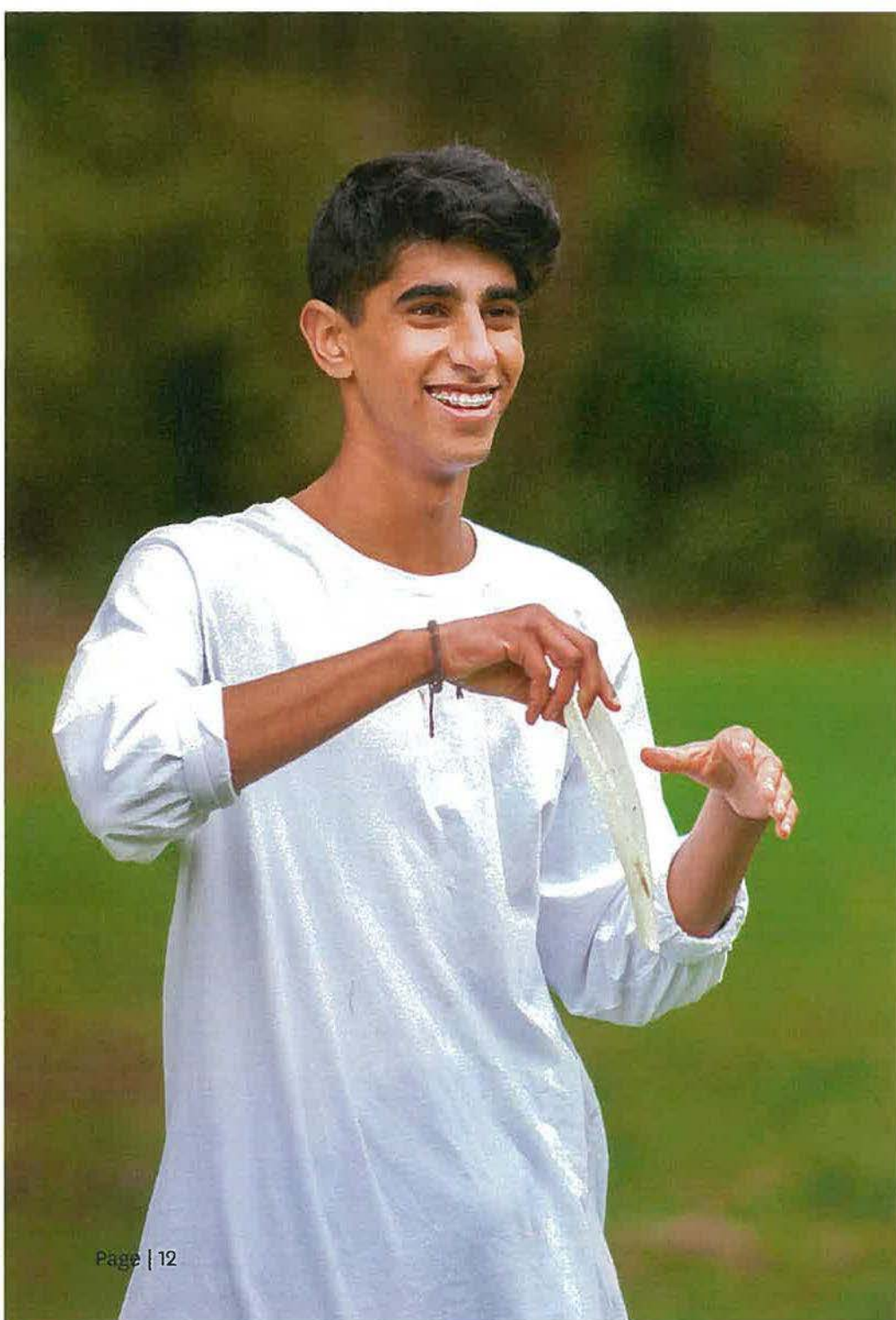
While youth development opportunities will continue to be available to all young New Zealanders, at least 30 percent of total investment will be targeted toward young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. These young people may be less able to access opportunities due to:

- » lacking financial or social resources
- » feeling a lack of belonging and/or experiencing adversity due to their ethnicity, disability, gender or sexual identity, or migrant status
- » living in an isolated, rural or 'economically deprived' location.

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are not necessarily at any immediate risk of harm and do not necessarily require intensive intervention.

We will strategically target our investment by looking at:

- » where we fund - allocating funding to areas where we know there are a high proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds
- » what we fund - funding services that work for, and are accessed by, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds (eg some of these young people may require more intensive, higher-cost opportunities in order to receive the most benefit)
- » how we fund - amending expectations to ensure that performance measures are reliant upon young people from disadvantaged backgrounds being given sufficient youth development opportunities.



We will be clear about the outcomes we want to achieve

All investment decisions will consider how effectively the opportunities we fund support the overarching developmental outcomes of **building capability and resilience**.

Capability refers to the competencies or skills that people require to live and participate fully in their communities. Building capability is important as it supports the transition into adulthood which is characterised by taking on new social roles.

Resilience refers to the ability to deal with adversity. Resilience has been identified as a significant protective factor, particularly for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Evidence shows that building capability and resilience in young people supports positive social and economic outcomes like increased educational achievement, improved health and a reduction in state interventions.

Currently, we assess these outcomes through self-reported participant surveys using measures such as improved decision-making, improved self-management, and increased personal and/or cultural identity. We want to corroborate existing evidence through the use of stronger measures to understand the outcomes of our investment for young people.

For example, for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds participating in mentoring, we may assess the impact of the opportunity on their educational achievement, employment status or general wellbeing.

It is crucial that we measure the outcomes and impacts of our investments to allow for continuous improvement in how we deliver, and invest in, youth development opportunities.

We will build our evidence base

We are working with organisations to better understand how their specific youth development opportunity improves outcomes for young people. We need to be better at basing funding decisions on investments that are the most effective at achieving outcomes.

To do this, we need to have an ongoing understanding of:

- » what young people need
- » how youth development investment can add value
- » what will be required for young people to contribute to the social and economic growth of New Zealand now and in the future.

Currently, there is no cost-benefit analysis for youth development in New Zealand. We are gathering this information to support analysis on the return of investment from youth development spend.

Where a specific type of youth development opportunity is not shown to be effective or achieving the desired outcomes, we will reprioritise and reinvest funding in those that are demonstrating effectiveness.

Research indicates that:

Mentoring can be a protective factor for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Reported improvements are that young people are more likely to attend school and improve their self-efficacy.

There is a small number of impact studies on opportunities focused on **leadership**. Some international evidence indicates that these opportunities tend to improve self-efficacy, self-esteem and secondary outcomes such as academic performance.

Volunteering increases employability and development of soft skills. There have been positive results in service-learning (combining service in the community and curriculum based learning) increasing attitudes towards self, attitudes towards school and learning, civic engagement, social skills and academic performance.



We will improve our data collection and analysis

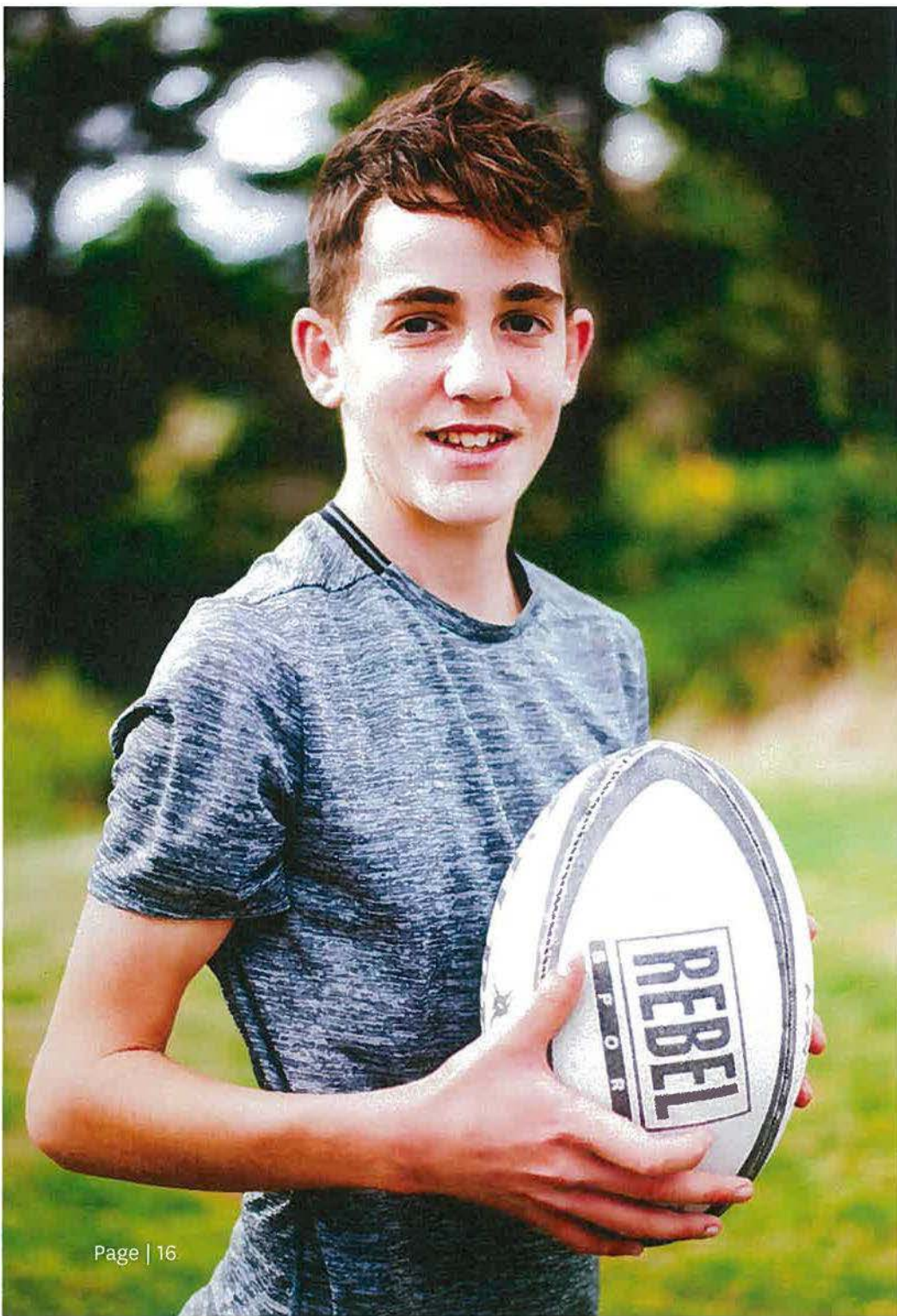
To determine providers' alignment with the Ministry's new direction, a rolling review is underway over 2016/2017. This includes assessment of whether a robust intervention logic for the opportunity can be demonstrated, whether the new data and reporting requirements can be met, and the proposed volume of opportunities to be provided.

The Ministry has also strengthened reporting and accountability requirements. Providers are now required to report additional information on the young people participating in youth development opportunities. Better analysis of this reported data will help us to identify the characteristics and needs of young people, including young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Where possible, we will work with organisations to utilise existing data and information and reduce the duplication of reporting requirements.

Over time, youth development data will be linked with cross-government data to better assess the long-term outcomes of services.

Better analysis of this data, being clear about our outcomes and building an evidence base of best practice will guide our investments. Evaluation of these components will help us have a greater understanding of what youth development opportunities achieve and for who.



Implementing our investment approach

Underpinning the Strategy's implementation is how we will commission and contract effective investment and how we will support the capability of providers. We will achieve this by:

- » Exploring the potential to pilot implementation of a social investment approach with a group of providers. If successfully implemented, we will use the pilot's findings to inform how we support other providers to build capability.
- » Identifying a range of commissioning models that could be used to increase the number of youth development opportunities available to young people to meet the target of 70,000 in 2018.





Partnering with others

In 2017

We will have a fully operational Partnership Fund Board that is actively scoping, evaluating and generating partnerships.

The Partnership Fund will have provided 6,000 quality youth development opportunities for young people.

Other contributors will have invested at least \$1 million in partnership.

We will undertake a mapping exercise to understand other organisations that are investing in young people.

In 2018

The Partnership Fund will have provided 7,000 quality youth development opportunities for young people.



Targeting investment

In 2017

We will have a demographic analysis of where and how to target funding for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We will:

- » assess where existing funding is being targeted (the type of opportunity, the location and to who)
- » understand who is currently participating and the overlap with other priority groups
- » identify the percentage of opportunities we should be investing in by portfolio type (leadership, mentoring, volunteering) based on the evidence
- » know where other government funding is being directed and the types of services being offered
- » promote youth development opportunities.



Clarity of outcomes

In 2017

We will identify specific reporting measures for more intensive youth development opportunities.

Organisations will be able to articulate the theory of change that shows how the youth development opportunity they provide will improve outcomes for young people.

In 2018

We will identify specific reporting measures for the remaining types of youth development opportunities (in line with a framework that recognises compliance cost for different types of opportunities).

We will know how we can use cross-government data to measure extrinsic long-term outcomes.





Building evidence

In 2017

We will undertake an initial demographic analysis of young people in New Zealand to understand geographic trends and breakdown by ethnicity, employment, education, disability and migration.

We will commission research to understand the current youth population and the skills and competencies they will need to contribute to, and thrive in, future New Zealand.

We will develop in-depth evidence briefs on service types and their effectiveness (what works for who).

We will use the evidence base to guide both disinvestment and new investment decisions.



Improving data collection

In 2017

We will have a clear strategy for analysing data and linking it with our outcomes approach and evidence collection.

We will be actively working with organisations to minimise the duplication of reporting and data collection.

We will utilise data and information collected by organisations to inform investment decisions.

In 2018

Youth development data will be linked with cross-government data to better assess service outcomes.



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