
Rotorua Strategy - Youth Transitions 2004-2007

A Memorandum of Understanding between Rotorua District Council (RDC) and the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to develop a three year strategic plan for youth transitions in Rotorua.

This case study shows how an agreement between two parties has led to a written strategy that is supported and implemented by multiple organisations including central government, local government, and the community. The strategy works in support of all organisations focused on improving outcomes for young people in Rotorua.

The Parties

Rotorua District Council
Ministry of Social Development
Careers Service Rapuara
Lakes District Health Board
Family and Community Services
Ministry of Education
Rotorua Youth Transition Service
Support Net
Supported Employment Agency

Te Arawa Trust Board – Education and Training
(now Te Arawa Lakes Trust)
Tertiary Education Commission
Waiariki Institute of Technology
Ministry of Youth Development
Rotorua Community Youth Centre
Schools
Toi Te Ora Public Health
Local community-based service providers

Background

In 2004 the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) approached five local authorities across the country with the offer of piloting a Youth Transition Service (YTS) in their area. The purpose of the YTS would be to assist young people aged 15-17 to make the transition from school to work, training, or other education.

Due to its significant number of 'inactive'¹⁹ youth, Rotorua was identified as a potential pilot site for a YTS. MSD's Regional Commissioner, Work and Income, Bay of Plenty, extended an invitation to the Mayor of Rotorua for Rotorua District Council (RDC) to participate in the programme. A Memorandum of Understanding between MSD and RDC specified that the development of the new service in Rotorua would be supported by the preparation of a three year Strategic Plan – to be developed through a community planning process led by RDC.

In September 2004 RDC responded to the invitation, both welcoming the opportunity, and indicating a desire for a longer term involvement by Council than specified in the Memorandum.

¹⁹ A term to describe those who are not in any form of work or training. In 2004, around 32% of young people aged between 15-24 in Rotorua were said to be 'inactive'.

RDC was clear that a single new service would need to be strongly supported by an active wider strategy embedded into the local framework of schools, policy, truancy services, health services, careers advice, literacy, and youth training providers. Council was committed to working with others to ensure that both the wider strategy and the Youth Transitions Service were successful.

Benefits of Putting Pen to Paper...

- new resources to develop a community-based strategy for youth transitions and a new Youth Transition Service in Rotorua;
- increased collaboration between agencies working in youth development, education, employment, training and support in Rotorua;
- strong community involvement in guiding and shaping the implementation of a national pilot in their community.

Putting it Together...

A group of key agencies (known as the Strategy Planning Group) was brought together to guide the development of an 'interim' Rotorua Strategy - Youth Transitions. To meet the timeframes set by MSD, the Planning Group had less than three months to develop the Strategy. The Strategy Planning Group decided to call it an 'interim' strategy because of the difficulty of developing a comprehensive and genuinely community-based strategy with defined timelines and responsibilities in such a short period.

To ensure widespread community involvement and buy-in to the Strategy, the Group hosted a Community Planning Day that was attended by 70 people. Through small group workshops, those present identified a community vision for youth transition in Rotorua including key themes, issues, and service gaps. Strategy areas and action plans were then developed in 10 key areas²⁰ based on the themes identified during strategy planning. The Strategy also offered advice to MSD on the tendering process²¹ for the new Youth Transition Service and outlined the operating principles they wanted embedded in the new service.

"The pressure was on. The Strategic Planning Group which came together was supported by an independent contractor who took in all the information, did the planning and drafted the interim Strategy."

- Laurie Durand, Coordinator Te Waiariki Perea Trust

A draft of the three-year *Interim Rotorua Strategy - Youth Transitions* was circulated widely for comment in November 2004. Once feedback was incorporated it was submitted to MSD. The Strategy was widely supported by central government, local government, and community agencies. It is now recognised as "community owned".

What Has Happened Since...

The Rotorua Youth Transition Service was launched in 2005 by the then Minister Of Social Development, Hon Steve Maharey. It has been well received by those working in the youth transition sector. Rotorua YTS acts as a point of referral for young people and complements, rather than competes with, existing community services.

²⁰ The 'strategies within the Strategy' are: ongoing strategic coordination of the sector, youth development, research, centrally managed information on services and support, data collection and monitoring of young people in transition, process improvements, young people at school, post school training, employers, whānau, and families.

²¹ Key recommendations for inclusion in the tendering process included: taking into account the track record of agencies in working with youth, existing functional relationships with local agencies and stakeholders, and their commitment to working collaboratively. A request was also made for the new service to have strong linkages and responsibilities for deliverables back to the *Rotorua Strategy – Youth Transitions 2004-7* Strategy Implementation Group.

In December 2004, the Strategy Planning Group had achieved its original purpose. This group was superseded by the Strategic Implementation Group (SIG), named to reflect the 'action' phase of getting projects and changes. The SIG finalised the Rotorua Strategy – Youth Transitions, and continues to meet regularly to coordinate the implementation of the Strategy.

"The Strategy is a community document and we use MSD funding to deliver on it. It represents a community aspiration to provide a wrap around service for our young people. It's a mechanism that goes wider than the Youth Transition Service."

- Kevin Winters, Mayor Rotorua District Council

Rotorua District Council is acknowledged as a key 'cog' in the wheel. Their partnership with MSD continues and supports the ongoing coordination of the Strategic Implementation Group (SIG) and its progress on agreed actions. The SIG generally meets at Council on a monthly basis. The Council is seen as a 'neutral' place for government departments and a locally 'owned' space for community agencies. The RDC Manager of Community Policy and Resources, the Manager of the Youth Transition Service, and other SIG personnel, as appropriate, brief the Mayor monthly on progress towards implementation of the Strategy.

For the past year, the SIG has focused not just on the Youth Transition Strategy but also on general information sharing and networking across the sector. As a result relationships among agencies and service providers have strengthened considerably as has knowledge about what each agency does to support young people.

"The previous mentality of 'patch protection' is gone, we now have a sense that helping this group of young people is our shared responsibility."

- Strategic Implementation Group members Ann Esler (RDC), Jane Pearson (Career Services) and Alison Struthers (Ministry of Education)

The Strategy is described as a 'living' document and has been updated annually since it was established.

Best Advice For Others...

- value the skills and knowledge that each organisation brings to the table;
- work inclusively;
- if you want community ownership of the outcome, you need to support and resource community based processes;
- trust, honesty and caring for each other are essential ingredients.



Youth participate in the Rotorua YTS Youth Behind the Wheel promotion

Rotorua Strategy - Youth Transitions 2004 - 2007

Revised as at July 2006

Developed by the
Rotorua Youth Transitions – Strategy Implementation Group

Rotorua Strategy - Youth Transitions 2004 - 2007**Revised as at July 2006**

Strategy 1:	Co-ordinated Strategic Approach²	
Desired Outcome:	Implementation of the Rotorua Strategy - Youth Transitions is undertaken in a co-ordinated way, with involvement from key stakeholders.	
Objective 1	A Strategy Implementation Group oversees implementation of the Rotorua Strategy - Youth Transitions (RSYT) 2004 – 2007.	
	Actions	
	a. Strategy Implementation Group (SIG) continues co-ordinating the Rotorua Strategy – Youth Transitions.	
	Responsibility	SIG members
	Timeframe	Ongoing
	Resources	MSD and RDC ³
	b. Strategy Implementation Group (SIG) further develops relationships with key stakeholders and cluster groups.	
	Responsibility	SIG members
	Timeframe	Ongoing
	Resources	MSD and RDC
	c. Strategy Implementation Group (SIG) organises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information flows between all stakeholders • Meetings to focus on implementation of action plans. 	
	Responsibility	SIG members
	Timeframe	Ongoing
	Resources	MSD and RDC
	d. Monitor implementation of the Rotorua Strategy - Youth Transitions (RSYT).	
	Responsibility	SIG members
	Timeframe	Ongoing
	Resources	MSD and RDC
	e. Review achievements against RSYT annually and undertake planning for next period.	
	Responsibility	SIG members
Timeframe	Ongoing	
Resources	MSD and RDC	
f. SIG representatives continue monthly meetings with the Mayor to maintain communication about youth transition issues and SIG activities.		
Responsibility	SIG representatives	
Timeframe	Ongoing	
Resources	RDC	

² Refer to notes in Appendix 3³ A Glossary of Terms and Acronyms can be found in Appendix 1.

Objective 2	Youth transitions stakeholders work actively to implement the Rotorua Strategy - Youth Transitions (RSYT).	
	Actions	
	a. Strategy Implementation Group (SIG) invites existing cluster groups of youth transitions stakeholders to work actively with SIG to implement aspects of the Strategic Plan.	
	Responsibility	SIG members
	Timeframe	2007
	Resources	MSD, RDC, cluster groups of youth transition stakeholders and their funders
	b. Support cluster groups of youth transitions stakeholders to identify resources to support facilitation and co-ordination of clusters.	
	Responsibility	SIG, cluster groups of youth transitions stakeholders
	Timeframe	Ongoing
	Resources	MSD and RDC
Objective 3	Organisations working with young people in transition are able to build effective relationships with other key stakeholders.	
	Actions	
	a. SIG continues to develop ongoing networking and communication processes within and between clusters of organisations working with young people in transition, for example through electronic newsletters, discussion forums.	
	Responsibility	SIG members
	Resources	MSD and RDC