

Rainbow Youth Group

Hurunui District Council

Case Story #1



Overview

Thanks to the support of the Lotteries Community Research Fund, Youth Mental Health Specialist Michelle Cole and Researcher from The Collaborative Trust for Research and Training in Youth Health and Development Sarah Wylie could undertake research based on the youth of the Hurunui District.

This research focused on the opportunities for our young people and their strengths, and how both of these can be developed. Questions concerning current and future wellbeing needs, service delivery and support and a potential wellbeing hub were addressed.

Although commissioned by Cheviot Area School, the research is of relevance to all youth service providers across Hurunui, and is intended as a community resource.

January 2021 Report Recommendations

The findings supported the development of a LGBTQI+ youth peer-based diversity support group across the District. The Hurunui Youth Programme (HYP) were well positioned to provide a youth-led approach to this initiative. Support included HYP staff seeking funding, gathering support from other agencies and helping with transport. Suggested events included the North Canterbury Pride Picnic and a visit to Qtopia in Christchurch.



Rebecca at the 2021 Pride Picnic

Solution

Hurunui Youth Coordinator Rebecca Pugh set about creating the Hurunui Rainbow Youth Support Group. To kick things off in a relaxed way, she took a group of youth to the 2021 North Canterbury Pride Picnic held in Rangiora. The first official meeting was held 13 April 2021 with Qtopia on hand to help facilitate the catchup. Attendees were welcomed from across Hurunui and Kaikoura, and a range of ages were present.



Outcomes

On a bimonthly basis, the group gathers to eat pizza, play board games, talk and most importantly, have a lot of a laughs. Qtopia is always there to support, advise and guide the group in any way that they can.

Members were just starting to enjoy the face to face catchups when the 2021 lockdown occurred. Similar to many businesses and organisations, the group turned to Zoom to stay connected. Kaikoura youth continued to connect with their Hurunui friends by regularly joining the Zoom catchups.

Attendees continue to come from all corners of the District to find support, make friends and enjoy themselves.

Objectives

- To provide emotional and social support for youth aged 12-18 years old that identify in the LGBTQIA+ category of gender and sexuality.
- To facilitate and support friendships and connections between rangatahi youth from across the District.
- To provide a contact and path for further support from Qtopia.
- To allow our rangatahi to attend social events that are safe, inclusive and non-judgemental with a group of like-minded peers.
- To create a more youth-led environment within this setting.
- To create one event open to wider rainbow youth community in Kaikoura and Canterbury e.g. Pride Picnic, Rainbow Colour Run.

It's been our honour to support the development of the Hurunui Rainbow Diverse Youth Group. We know the positive impact community connection has on mental wellbeing –to see community gather from all over Hurunui gives us hope for what's possible, right now and in the future.

We look forward to continuing to walk alongside Hurunui District Council to provide this vital lifeline for our rangatahi.

Jennifer Shields, 2IC Qtopia