



*Organised
by*



Turning the Tables Report

Partnered with



NOVEMBER 2015

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WHO WE ARE

PYLAT Council

The PYLAT Council is a Charitable Trust based in Christchurch created to assist Pacific young people to participate in our democracy and to develop their leadership abilities.

Christchurch Youth Council

CYC exists to help make Christchurch awesome for young people. We connect the dots between young people and decision makers.

Youth Voice Canterbury

YVC is a network of young people from Youth Councils and youth participation groups from around Canterbury. YVC aims to support these groups and young people to get their voices heard by decision makers.



BACKGROUND

On Wednesday 23rd September 2015 the first Turning the Tables was held, a collaboration between Pacific Youth Leadership and Transformation (PYLAT), the Christchurch Youth Council (CYC), and Christchurch City Council (CCC). This event was supported by Youth Voice Canterbury (YVC), and groups in the YVC network were invited to participate in the event. Turning the Tables saw young people take over the Council Chambers as Christchurch City Councillors sat in the public gallery listening to the Youth Councillors debate relevant youth issues. Mayor Lianne Dalziel opened the event, handing over to Youth Mayor Cameron Russel to Chair the evening. The debates then followed, as 7-8 young people debated on each of the pre-selected topics.

Participants

Pacific Youth Leadership and Transformation
The Christchurch Youth Council
Youth Voice Canterbury
Christchurch YMCA Youth Council
Selwyn Youth Council

Hurunui Youth Council
Korean Society
Refugee Youth Council
Cashmere High School
MYD Regional Advisory Group



Debated topics

As voted by around 250 young people, the top 5 issues for young people debated were:

1. Mental health
2. Having our say and being listened to
3. The state of the rebuild
4. Youth friendly places and spaces
5. Cultural diversity

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health was voted as top issue for young people in Christchurch from the poll 250 young people from across the city. Key themes from discussion were about strengthening youth leaders to be able to serve the best they could. Other highlighted ideas were, producing success stories and showing positive stories around mental health.

Discussion Points:

- There a mechanisms and services are out there but the important thing is educating people about the support and services that are available.
- There needs to be more trainings for people like us who want to speak about youth mental health.
- There is not as much support for 18-25 year olds experiencing ill mental health.
- The need to be inclusive.
- The more this topic is talked about, especially by youth leaders, the more comfortable others in the community will be.

Recommendations:

1. Minister of Health does a stock take of the mental health services for young people in Christchurch and Canterbury.
2. There needs to be information/trainings available for young people wanting to advocate for or be aware of mental health issues and where to go.
3. Minister of Health review the need for health services that cater specifically for 18-25 year olds.



CONTRIBUTING TO DECISION MAKING & BEING LISTENED TO

Developing a two-way conversation is key. Having our say is important to us, and so is being genuinely listened to. Unless you're an engaged young person it can be difficult to have your say in CCC matters. Youth Councils do a lot to get the voices of young people heard but decision-makers need to be willing to listen.

Discussion Points:

- Working in partnership increases what we know, making us more effective.
- We want to be involved with decision maker's right from the start, and get as many young people involved as possible.
- The CCC website is not very youth friendly. If a young person wanted to have their say but didn't have support to engage with CCC and only went to their website it can be hard to navigate.
- Being involved in the process is good development for young people
- Suggestion: could develop a portfolio system where youth align to a council member or MP
- Need to engage with a larger base of youth – utilise the groups to increase reach
- Attending long meetings is not the way forward when working with youth – make it youth friendly

Recommendations:

1. Christchurch City Council develop a tool to assist working closer with the youth sector, involve young people in decision-making from the start, and utilise the youth participation groups to reach a larger base of youth.
2. Christchurch City Council get someone to do some research and make recommendations on making the 'having your say' aspect of the website more youth friendly and easier to engage with.
3. Christchurch City Councillors develop a portfolio system where a young person aligns to a Council member.

THE STATE OF THE REBUILD

The general consensus was that the rebuild is too slow and again, how can young people have a greater say in the decisions being made? Young people are the ones that are going to be living with the consequences of decisions made now.

Discussion Points:

- Good intentions and good visioning, but a shame some of these things haven't been done.
- Transparency is a big thing and especially important in the rebuild. Need to know the process and where it's going.
- We need people who genuinely care.
- As CERA transitions out democracy might transition up, but how many decisions would have already been made?

- Important to break down barriers to let ideas happen.
- How do people in the East feel?
- Rebuild still affects mental health of young people even in Hurunui.

Recommendation:

1. Minister of Earthquake Recovery and Christchurch City Council make sure that information is readily available regarding the state of the rebuild which is easy to comprehend and give feedback on.

YOUTH FRIENDLY PLACES AND SPACES

This topic was opened with reference to the Youth Relevant Design card, highlighting that young people want places that are safe, appealing, accessible, resourced, and youth friendly. Other main points from this discussion were:

Discussion Points:

- Get young people involved (in design) from the beginning.
- Youth spaces need to be able to evolve and change.
- There are no visible youth spaces in Linwood, a community that really needs it.
- Places are needed where youth can go and spend time with friends that isn't completely commercialised – whole city focus over central.
- The more things going on the more opportunities there will be and the better life will be for youth.
- Need to be rebuild of low-rent buildings, for non-franchised businesses and start-ups.

Recommendations:

1. Christchurch City Council pay teams of young people to do youth friendly places and spaces audits on all Christchurch City Council plans and buildings.
2. Christchurch City Council get young people get involved in the design of places and spaces from the beginning.

CULTURE & DIVERSITY

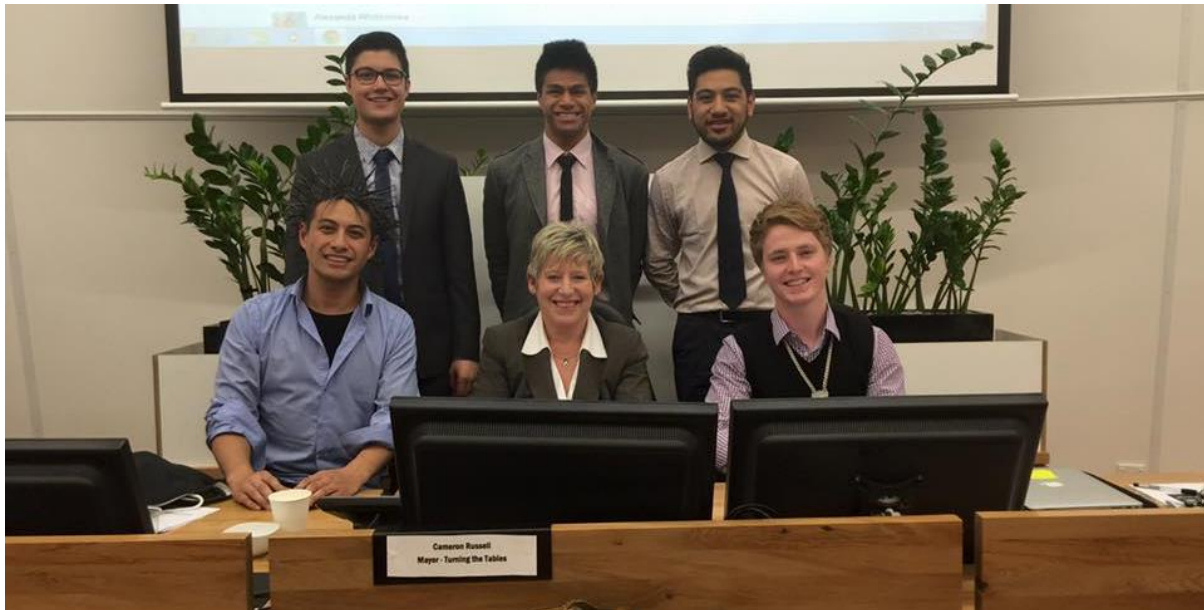
We need to stand up for targeted groups and promote strong leaders and positive stories.
Old habits die hard – we need to change the social norm!

Discussion Points:

- What would it mean to live in a city where the word 'multiculturalism' isn't needed anymore?
- Start good habits early – support diversity and we become more diverse.
- Important to have spaces and events that bring people together from different sectors.
- Show the positive.

Recommendation:

1. Christchurch City Council support the multicultural working group to engage with young people for their feedback on the multicultural strategy.



OTHER FEEDBACK

Following the debates the floor was opened up for the audience and youth councillors to ask questions and comment on some of the discussions.

Where to from here?

- There was a unanimous vote to make 'Turning the Tables' an annual event at least, and suggested that recommendations need to be made.
- "Important for the Christchurch City Council to be on board and involved."
- "Let's make our MOU more than paper." (re: CYC MOU with CCC)

Questions:

What is the best way to engage on issues?

- Reach young people where they are.
- Youth specific events in different parts of the city.
- "Target the young people who don't attend youth council meetings too... there are communities who don't get their voices heard."
- "Talking on couches like you talk with friends is good."
- "Get schools involved."

How might we change the mind-set on racism?

- Understand racism, the acceptance of implicit bias will help us fix things.
- "It comes down to positive leaders."
- "If we have a chance for people to just share their stories in can change a lot."

- “We have a moral obligation to say something and try and actively do something about it.”
- “Allow people to express their own culture which sharing ours.”

What would help these [youth participation groups] gain traction?

- Getting more people involved, then the pressure would be off those already overloaded.
- More people dedicated to helping youth in this city.
- Publicise events like [Turning the Tables] more, and get those names out there and get more people involved.
- It’s important to have the results of these things publicised, so people can see that they’re making a difference.
- There needs to be more paid workers to support these groups. These young people are volunteers, and need mentors/support.

FURTHER STEPS

Final comments focussed on suggestions on where to from here, including forming a working party to keep the momentum going.

Mayor Dalziel highlighted that the debate was of substance on all the topics grappled with, and asked about ways to engage the network all the groups represent. She suggested planning very direct youth engagement over the Annual Plan, possibly in the form of a conference where the Annual Plan is workshopped, recommendations are developed and then pitched to Council. It was also advertised that anyone can come along and have their say at the beginning of CCC meetings and share an idea. The next opportunity was the following morning after ‘Turning the Tables’.

Presenting at Council

The following morning after ‘Turning the Tables’, YVC’s Tayla and CYC’s Sofie attended the CCC meeting to present to the Councillors who couldn’t make the event what had occurred at ‘Turning the Tables’, the topics discussed, the ideas that were shared, and hopes for the future.

This discussion can be viewed at: <http://councillive.ccc.govt.nz/video/5958>.

The Five Deliverables

A working party met and discussed the following with CCC representatives as a way of moving forward with the suggestions and ideas discussed at ‘Turning the Tables’:

CCC Website	CCC will hire a person to do some research and make recommendations to the IT team on making the ‘have your say’ aspect of the website more youth friendly and easier to engage with.
Annual Plan	Working with CCC to plan youth engagement in the Annual Plan.
Youth Strategy	Working party would like to encourage CCC to develop a Youth Strategy.
Multicultural Working Group	Support the multicultural working group to engage with young people for their feedback on strategy.

Pre-Election
Debate

Hold a pre-election debate with the Mayor and Councillors to debate important youth issues.

This led to a discussion about wanting to engage more young people to vote in the next local election – selling it as something that matters and is interesting and relevant.