



**Supporting Rangatahi in Devonport-Takapuna
Local Board**

Rangatahi Guide to Attending Local Board Meetings

Nov 2023, Version 1.0



Contents

Purpose	2
Introduction	2
Application Process.....	3
How you'll be selected	3
How Meetings Work.....	3
Workshops.....	3
Business Meetings	3
Structure of a Meeting.....	4
Standing orders.....	5
Community Forum	5
Expectations of Rangatahi.....	5
Before Meeting	5
During Meeting.....	6
After Meeting	6
Post Attendance Opportunities	6
Issues or Complaints Process	6
Peer Support	7
Local Board Services Staff.....	7
Auckland Council Staff	7
More information on Younite.....	8

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to support youth participants to understand the process of attending a Devonport-Takapuna Local Board meeting. This guide includes the application process, expectations of participants before, during and after the meeting and a guide for lodging complaints or concerns should they arise.

Rangatahi and young people are used interchangeably throughout this guide.

Youth advocate takes chance to speak up for trees



Next-generation voices... Younite youth board members (from left) Tina Kim, Tate Agnew and Adrianna Tobin at a recent local-board workshop

A teenager attending a Devonport-Takapuna Local Board workshop took the chance to ask an Auckland Council officer about tree policies, specifically what could be done to combat people removing trees illegally.

Takapuna Grammar School student Tate Agnew, a member of the Younite youth board for the local-board area, was told it was a compliance issue, although council preferred to educate people if it could.

Tate, one of three Younite members sitting in on the recent workshop, was keen to see more promotion of tree-planting efforts.

Accompanying her to the meeting in the school holidays were Westlake Girls High students Tina Kim and Adrianna Tobin.

The trio also took a keen interest in the discussion about use of land adjoining Shore Junction, the area's youth hub (story, page 4).

The group receives a small amount of board funding to encourage it to canvas and offer a youth voice on matters such as the Local Board Plan.

It also runs events aimed at its age group, including this month a slam poetry night and an arts exhibition, both held at Lake House Arts in Takapuna.

Introduction

Within the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board Plan 2023-2026 the Local Board has prioritised youth voice and integrating a youth seat into the board's regular meetings. This is an incredible opportunity for Rangatahi across the board area to get firsthand experience in local democracy and understand the value of contributing to the work the local board does.

Young people have a unique perspective in that they sit outside the day-to-day politics and are thinking in the long term- what their wellbeing will look like.

The Supreme Court stated in November 2022 that preventing 16- and 17-year-olds from voting is unjustified age discrimination in breach of the Bill of Rights, that says from the age of 16 you cannot be discriminated against based on your age.¹

Following on from this decision, young people should not only have a vote at the ballot, but a voice directly in the decisions that will affect them. Unfortunately, by legislation you cannot vote at these board meetings, but your voice will be heard, and your contributions taken seriously.

A Local Government New Zealand presentation in 2019 on Youth Voice Groups said youth voice is necessary because "a city which is attractive to young people, and which involves, values and acknowledges young people, create benefits for the whole community."²

Feedback from Youth Council participants stated "We need positive role models and mentors who can help our voice reach where it needs to go. We need funding to implement or vision and guidance

regarding the plausibility of that. We need people to believe in us and talk to us, rather coming into our spaces and overtaking our narrative with their own political agenda.”

Application Process

How you'll be selected

1. For the initial trial period, schools will open an expression of interest process with students. The school staff will give students they believe best suited and who can miss a day of school an online application link.
2. Registrations will be monitored by Younite, the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board Youth Board, an Auckland Council Youth Specialist, and the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board Community Broker (a community liaison role for the board).
3. When a student is selected, they'll be sent upcoming workshop dates to choose one to attend. Workshops are always on Tuesdays.
4. Representatives will be expected to attend for the entire day and will have an exemption to miss class without penalty.

How Meetings Work

Devonport-Takapuna Local Board meets on Tuesdays.

This opportunity will be for Rangatahi to participate in Workshops. Rangatahi can attend Business Meetings and Community Forum with support from Council staff but cannot participate.

Workshops start at 9:30 am on Tuesdays and Business Meetings and Community Forums start at 10am.

Workshops

A workshop is where the board hears advice from staff on a range of subjects. It's an opportunity for elected members to ask questions of staff and to start to develop opinions. No official decisions are made at workshops. At a workshop you'll often see a few options presented and staff will ask the members to give feedback on what they would like to explore further. Workshops can cover topics from the hyper local such as a community group update up to issues of National significance that Council would like to feed back on.

Workshops tend to be more informal where the conversation flows more freely and standing orders aren't necessarily adhered to. Standing orders are the rules that govern meetings and are described more below in the Business Meetings section.

Business Meetings

Business meetings are where all formal resolutions are made and elected members vote on matters before them such as approving funding, feeding back to Governing Body or Central Government, or

approving leases. After an item has come to one (or many) workshops, staff put forward a formal business meeting report with a recommended course of action.

The Chair will submit recommendations prior to the meeting with a direction they would like the board to take on each item on the agenda. The Chair has usually canvassed views of other members and knows if there is a consensus around the table or not. Occasionally, members will table an amendment, that is ask for everyone to consider changing the recommendations.

If a young person has attended a workshop and wants to see how the item is formally voted on at a business meeting, they can request staff invite them to the relevant business meeting or they can watch the meeting after the fact on [Council's YouTube page](#).

Structure of a Meeting

Business Meetings follow a set structure as listed below

1. Karakia- to start the meeting
2. Apologies- if members aren't present for some reason
3. Declaration of Interest- sometimes members will declare a conflict of interest, meaning they won't be voting on an item. This can be because they have a relationship with someone the item affects or a possible financial interest in the matter
4. Confirmation of minutes- confirming the minutes from the previous business meeting are accurate
5. Leave of Absence- if a member is gone for a period of time
6. Acknowledgements- members use this space to acknowledge significant events or people in the community. Often this is a space used to talk about someone who has passed away recently and acknowledging their contribution to the community.
7. Petitions- occasionally members of the public will have a petition to present to the board.
8. Deputations- Members of the public can request 10 minutes to speak in front of the board on an item of interest. The board "deputises" them to speak on a topic potentially not related to board business of the day, but a matter of interest to the public anyway.
9. Public Forum- Members of the public can talk for 3 minutes on an item of interest. People use this space to give their opinions on items on the agenda or to bring up an issue they're experiencing in the community.
10. Extraordinary business- Sometimes the board has to make a decision on something urgently and at short notice where there has not been time for a report to be included on the official agenda. An item that is not on the agenda for a meeting may be dealt with at the meeting if there is reasonable explanation about why the item is not on the agenda, why the item cannot be delayed, and the board agree to accept the urgent item.
11. Notices of Motion- Elected Members use this spot to put forward items they would like Council staff to investigate further. These are usually topics that have not come before a workshop. Members will vote on whether to direct staff to consider the request of the member or not.

After the procedural items, the board moves into regular board business.

Standing orders

Standing orders govern the behaviour of the meeting. During each item, staff will present on the topic of discussion. Member's will then have an opportunity to ask questions.

When staff answer questions that elected members have raised, they start their answer with "through the Chair." The Chair controls the flow of the meeting and staff are speaking "through" them (ie with their permission) when addressing the meeting. Staff and members will also refer to each other with their titles during business meetings. Ie. Madam Chair or Member (last name)

After each member has had a question, there is opportunity for debate. There are rules around how the debate and question time are guided that the Chair will manage.

When member's go to vote on an item that there isn't agreement on, any member may call for a vote by division. This means asking for individual members to signal their vote separately and having them formally recorded in the minutes instead of calling for a general "yes or no" around the table.

Community Forum

Community Forum is where local groups or individuals come in to introduce to themselves to the board or to bring a matter before the board that they think needs attention.

Each group gets a 15-minute slot with question time from members and the Rangatahi Representative.

Examples of Community Forum presentations in the past range from disability advocates highlighting accessibility concerns to the Sunnynook Community Centre giving its yearly operational update to the board.

As Community Forum is structured like a business meeting, the normal business meeting style agenda applies and sometimes staff use the opportunity for the board to vote on extra items that have come forward between business meetings.

Expectations of Rangatahi

Before Meeting

Each young person is expected to attend a session with an elected member and Council staff prior to the meeting to get an understanding of what materials will be brought before the board on that day.

Workshop or business meeting agendas will be sent to you when they are sent to the members- usually the Thursday or Friday before the meeting. You will have the weekend to read the materials and develop an understanding of what will be discussed.

On Tuesday morning at 8:30 you will meet with an elected member representative and Council staff to go through the items on the agenda and answer any questions you may have. This is your chance to signal if there are items you would like to sit at the table with members and ask questions of Council staff or give a youth opinion on the subject.

During Meeting

During the items you've requested to be a part of, the Chair will invite you to sit at the table. Council staff will present their materials. Depending on the item, the Chair might open to questions as the presentation goes on or wait until the end. When the Chair opens the floor to questions, feel free to raise your hand. During a workshop, you can state an opinion while asking questions at the same time.

If it's a business meeting, after questions are asked the Chair will move everyone into debate. This is an opportunity to state an opinion on the matter at hand.

After Meeting

A link will be sent to you after the meeting to provide feedback on your experience. This is an opportunity to state what you would like to be kept up to date on or if you have any issues that need to be addressed. Please see the issues and complaints process below.

The Democracy Advisor will have taken note of your questions and if there is something that you'd like more information on, staff will ensure that's sent through to you when possible.

Post Attendance Opportunities

After a young person attends a meeting there are several opportunities for them to stay involved in local government or advocate for issues they care about in their communities.

If interested, they could:

1. Join Younite which involves leading youth engagement on local board and Council issues
2. If you are interested in meeting with a mentor in an area of Auckland Council, you can be paired, via the Community Broker, for a one-off meeting with someone in Council who works in an area you're interested in pursuing
3. If you are interested in anything you've heard or want to know more about different parts of Council, the Community Broker can connect you to relative staff to understand more
4. Using your new knowledge of local board staff, members and process, you can get involved in decision-making in your school or a community organisation to make change in your communities
5. You can join a special interest group or do own campaigning or community organising eg rainbow community, climate etc...
6. You can attend more than one local board meeting as the calendar allows. Contact the Community Broker or Youth Specialist to organise.

Issues or Complaints Process

If throughout the process of being involved with the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board you experience anything that makes you uncomfortable, unfavourable comments by Elected Members or Council staff or something that generally didn't sit right with you, there are a few different people you can reach out to. Each of these options below are equally valid and are more about your comfort levels.

Elected members are held to a Code of Conduct and Council staff have policies and procedures in place to deal with any issues or complaints that may arise.

After your attendance, you will be sent a form to feedback on the process. This is an opportunity to put any complaints or comments in writing that you don't feel need special attention but are simply a general reflection. If someone has personally harmed you verbally, physically or emotionally, please reach out to the one of the resources below.

Peer Support

Younite has a wellbeing officer and is well supported by Shore Junction Youth Centre. If you prefer to first make contact with a peer or youth worker from Shore Junction, you can email younitechair@gmail.com or Annaliese@shorejunction.nz.

Local Board Services Staff

There are several different roles within Local Board Services (LBS) staff. You'll likely work closely with the Local Board Advisor or Local Board Senior Advisor. They are both managed by the Local Area Manager. Any issues that are brought to the attention of LBS will likely escalate to the Local Area Manager. Local Area Managers also deal with any Code of Conduct complaints against elected members.

If your concern or complaint is about Council staff that you've worked with such as the Community Broker or Youth Specialist, the Local Area Manager is a good first point of contact as well.

To reach out to the Local Area Manager, you can email Trina.Thompson@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

Auckland Council Staff

There are two Council staff support roles you will likely engage with that sit outside Local Board Services: Community Broker and Youth Specialist. You can reach out to either one about complaints or issues. They support finding a resolution to your concern through the department of the staff member in question.

The Community Broker engages with all community groups and helps the Local Board deliver on its community delivery strategy. The current Community Broker is Deb.Doyle@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

The Youth Specialist is someone qualified in youth development and mentoring that provides specialist advice to local boards in all matters related to young people. The current Youth Specialist is Kathryn Schuster Kathryn.Schuster@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz.

More information on Younite

Younite is the Devonport-Takapuna Youth Board. They meet Fridays during school term at 5pm at Shore Junction in Takapuna.

If you're interested in joining Younite, check out their [Instagram](#), Facebook or read more information on the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board Page.



Open Mic Night



Art Exhibition

Rangatahi Event



Auckland Council disclaims any liability whatsoever in connection with any action taken in reliance of this document for any error, deficiency, flaw or omission contained in it.
© 2021 Auckland Council