A YOUTH VISION FOR PORIRUA CITY

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What young people in Porirua said they would do if they were given a cigarette that smelled funny.

What young people said they would do if there was violence at home.

The kinds of foods that young people want if it were free at Porirua's Saturday Market.

This week we look more closely at the work of the Porirua Social Sector Trial (PSST) and what it's done to improve social outcomes for children and young people in Porirua.

"In Porirua, we've found considerable differences in how sectors work with children and youth at school and in the community," says Manager of PSST Ranei Wineera-Parai.

This was strongly supported by the views of 100 parents, carers and providers in the Blitz Study carried out by the University of Otago. Lead researcher, Dr. Ramona Tiatia says that there is a general lack of information and confusion about the types and number of services for children and youth that currently operate across the Porirua region.

To address these issues, the *Tumai Hauora mo nga Rangatahi ki Porirua* report that was produced by the PSST lists seven key recommendations to help improve outcomes for children and youth.

Ms Wineera-Parai said that since the trials began four years ago the PSST has initiated several important inter-agency collaborations. As well as sponsoring a diverse number of youth sports and voluntary organisations, PSST's key successes for children and youth have been:

- Kaumatua in the Porirua Family Violence court, advising on sentencing and helping clients form cultural connections.
- A two year campaign led by Health and Education providers who distributed care packs with hygiene products like soap, toothbrushes and toothpaste to children in 20 primary schools. In colleges, older youth were provided shampoo, deodorant, sanitary products, shower gel, nail cutters and hair brushes through their school health clinics.
- Mobile health assessments (for Family Group Conferences) which can now be delivered in Porirua and by Porirua school-based services to help whanau involved in Youth Justice. Previously, all health assessments were carried out in Wellington which can incur costs and delays for whanau.
- Youth 2 Work a youth employment initiative set up 12 months ago found jobs for 50 youth within the retail, information technology, construction and hospitality industries.
- Linking with Iwi, a six month mentoring programme facilitated by Ngati Toa Kaumatua for Year 7 and 8 intermediate students in Western Porirua. Tikanga sessions, visits to sites of cultural significance, marae experience, whakapapa, waiata and bilingual resources are delivered.

"In the Blitz study, one in four children and youth said that they didn't see themselves living in Porirua in 10 years time – this makes us incredibly sad. We need to work much, much harder to make Porirua a special place where our young people will always want to stay and come back to."

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