
Volunteer Youth Ambassadors

Terms of Reference

The Matamata-Piako District Council recognises the importance of obtaining the views of younger people in Matamata-Piako and providing a VYA for obtaining advice about matters that impact on young people.

Purpose of the Matamata Piako Volunteer Youth Ambassadors

The Matamata Piako Volunteer Youth Ambassadors (VYA) will be the voice of the youth community around the Council table, providing leadership in their communities by raising concerns and issues important to youth, providing opportunities for youth to develop and communicating council issues and plans back to the youth. VYA will develop and practice leadership skills, improve their confidence, encourage and promote volunteering.

The purpose of VYA is to;

- Strengthen engagement between Matamata-Piako District Council and young people and build young people's knowledge of Community, Council and Central Government processes to enable them to participate in community decision-making processes.
- Build the Community, Council and Central Government's knowledge of the needs of young people and how these can best be met.
- Work towards greater youth involvement in decision making on boards and committees.

This is achieved by:

- Volunteering in various community based events and activities
- Liaising with Matamata-Piako Council and other Key decision makers within the community
- Networking with various youth based organizations and agencies
- Raising awareness of the positive contributions young people make to our community
- Engaging in positive and constructive social activism

The Volunteer Youth Ambassadors Terms of Reference sets out the values, understandings and expectations agreed on by the VYA Members about how they conduct themselves while acting as Youth Ambassadors.

Membership

The Volunteer Youth Ambassadors will consist of a core group of three to nine young people aged between 12 and 24, with equal representation from each of the three wards of Matamata, Morrinsville and Te Aroha.

The inaugural core group and Chairperson will be appointed by the Mayor/Council, and appointed for one year to 10 February 2018.

A process for nominating and appointing members in the future will be developed by VYA for approval by Council.

Expected Behaviours

The VYA recognises the following principles for maintaining a strong and meaningful relationship between Council and youth community in the district:

Honesty and integrity: Youth Ambassadors should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned. They should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour

Openness: Youth Ambassadors should be as open as possible about their actions and those of the Council, and should be prepared to justify their actions;

Respect for others: Youth Ambassadors should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person. They will treat people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;

Leadership: Youth Ambassadors should promote and support these principles by example, and should always endeavour to act in the best interests of the community

Successful teamwork is a critical element in the success of any democratically elected organisation. No team will be effective unless mutual respect exists between Youth Ambassadors.

With this in mind, Youth Ambassadors will establish a working relationship that achieves the best possible outcomes for the community by:

- being open and honest with each other;
- focusing on issues rather than personalities; avoiding aggressive, offensive or abusive conduct and language;
- demonstrating courtesy and respect to their fellow Youth Ambassadors ; respecting the diversity of opinion that may exist and the right for different points of view to be heard; and
- acting in good faith towards other Youth Ambassadors .

Every Youth Ambassador is entitled to be treated with courtesy and respect by their fellow Youth Ambassadors.

Meetings and Meeting attendance

The Volunteer Youth Ambassadors will determine its own meeting frequency, but not less than four times each year, and meeting process. A quorum constitutes a majority of members. Decisions will be made by a simple majority vote (a majority of those present and voting). In the event there is an even number of voting members, the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

Youth Ambassadors are expected to attend the meetings of the VYA. From time to time, Youth Ambassadors may also be invited to attend additional meetings with Council or its committees/working party. VYA is encouraged to send a representative to such meetings to provide the youth voice on issues to be discussed.

If at any time a Youth Ambassador is unable to attend a meeting, their apologies must be submitted to the Chair-person as soon as practical.

General functions of the VYA

To be successful in obtaining robust advice on matters of concern for young people, it is expected the Volunteer Youth Ambassadors are actively engaged with both young people and the youth sector. VYA will identify and communicate to the Council the interests and preferences of young people living in Matamata-Piako in relation to:

- The development of strategies, policies, plans and bylaws of the Council.
- The appropriate processes and mechanisms for engagement with young people in Matamata-Piako.
- The Ambassadors will prepare a work programme for the year including costs. This will be reported to Council for approval. Delegation to spend the grant monies in line with approved Work Programme remains with Council staff, as per MPDC Delegations Policy.
- Any other matter that the Ambassadors considers to be of particular interest or concern to young people of Matamata-Piako.

The Volunteer Youth Ambassadors makes recommendations to the Council.

Council's duties to VYA

The Council must provide the VYA with the information that it needs to identify business of the Council that relates to the VYAs purpose. Council is encouraged to consult the VYA on matters affecting young people and give consideration to the VYA's advice.

It is to be acknowledged the limitations on resources Council can and are willing to provide may result in the purpose of the VYA not being fully realised within the VYAs timeframes.

The Matamata-Piako District Council will provide staff support and work with the Volunteer Youth Ambassadors to assist them in their work. The officer will also act as a liaison with services within the Council.

The elected member appointed to the Volunteer Youth Ambassadors will be a liaison between councillors and the Volunteer Youth Ambassadors.

Representing VYA in the community and online

VYA is a volunteer organisation set up with support of Matamata-Piako District Council. VYA is not a formal part of Council, and Council's internal policies and procedures do not apply to VYA.

Youth Ambassadors are free to express a personal view in the media and social media at any time, provided the following rules are observed:

- media comments must not state or imply that they represent the views of the Council
- It must be clear whether the views stated represent the VYA as a group or the Ambassador as an individual.
- they must not criticise other Youth Ambassadors, Council decisions or Council staff in the media or on Council's or their own personal social media pages;
- they must not use Council's social media pages for the purpose of promoting themselves or VYA events or business.

Media

All media enquiries will be directed to Council staff, and logged in the media register. The Council communications staff will work with the nominated Volunteer Youth Ambassadors spokesperson to respond to all media requests.

Loss of qualification for membership

In the event that a member is absent from three consecutive meetings without approval of the Volunteer Youth Ambassadors, that person will cease to be a member.

If, in the opinion of the Volunteer Youth Ambassadors, or Matamata-Piako District Council, a member brings the Volunteer Youth Ambassadors into disrepute, or their membership entails a significant conflict of interest, that person will cease to be a member.

Conflicts

The Ambassadors members will declare all conflicts of interest and complete a signed conflict of interest register.

Adopted by Council on