

6. YOUTH VENUES IN WELLINGTON AND PAPANUI

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Corporate Plan Output: Community Facilities	

The purpose of this report is to make some observations on youth venues in Wellington and some comments related to a possible youth venue in Papanui.

In late September the Community Development Adviser, along with Kylie Katene (Papanui Youth Worker) and Jono Campbell (Youth Worker, Te Kaupapa Whakaora), visited Wellington to look at youth venues in the city. The following makes some observations on these venues with a view towards the possible establishment of a youth venue in the Papanui area.

ZEAL

A purpose designed youth venue in the heart of Wellington. Located in Victoria Street, directly opposite the Central Police Station and within one or two hundred metres of some of Wellington's well-known downtown landmarks: Art Gallery, Council Chambers and the BNZ Building.

Zeal began as a result of Wellington City Council identifying a need to provide something for youth in the central city.

A local youth organisation with a proven record in running youth programmes, activities and events took over the use of the Council-owned building and set up Zeal 18 months ago.

Zeal is divided roughly into five areas:

1. An entrance including ticketing and a small reception/lounge area.
2. The main stage and performance/events area.
3. A smaller mezzanine-style events area.
4. A chill-out, quieter zone with video.
5. Office/administration space.

This allows for the opportunity to stage more than one event at a time.

Zeal is an events-based venue rather than a drop-in-centre. Management of Zeal considered that this is one reason that Zeal has not become “captured” by any one youth sub-culture. It is also rare for Zeal to change an entry fee. This policy is in recognition that young people often have very little discretionary income. Early on in its history, Zeal was unable to cater for the hundreds of young people wanting to attend events. This often meant that upwards of 300 young people were hanging around the street outside. Zeal were requested to “ticket” their events, meaning that young people had to obtain tickets prior to events. However, this proved to be a disincentive and numbers attending events dropped away considerably. Therefore, ticketing was abandoned, although they do charge an entry fee for some events to cover costs when there are extra expenses involved. Zeal has an event of some form every Friday night and have plans for extending what they offer, but with a policy of not putting any events on during school hours.

THE ROCK

The Rock is a Christian-based venue located just-off the Northern Motorway at the harbour end of Ngauranga Gorge. The venue houses a large auditorium with office space upstairs. Until recently a gymnasium operated in the building, but this has ceased so that the auditorium space could be extended to cater for increased demand.

The Centre run youth church services as well as secular events and use the centre as a base for off-site programmes.

HUTT VALLEY YOUTH HEALTH TRUST

Located in an old historic building, the Trust provides a multi-disciplinary health service, peer support, health promotion and information services.

The building is often used by young people as a hang-out venue or meeting place and the Trust encourages this.

THE LOCAL SITUATION

The Papanui area has had an active network of youth workers and organisations operating for approximately three years. Because of the existence of Northlands Mall it is also an area in which young people congregate in large numbers, attracting young people from the local Papanui area as well as from Bishopdale, St Albans, Belfast, Kaiapoi and wider. An estimate of the number of young people frequenting the Mall on Friday nights suggests around 200 plus with 40-50 of these being ‘regulars’.

A number of responses have been initiated in the area including the appointment of the Papanui Community Youth Worker. Although this position has been of benefit to youth and to the wider community perhaps the biggest hindrance to the work is the lack of a suitable venue for youth events.

The recent evaluation of community facilities in the Papanui area conducted by Ray Sleeman noted that, although the population was aging, there was a “lack of facilities to meet the existing needs of the youth market”. Some of the projects presently before the Board and Council for community facilities include youth zones. However, these projects may be two to three years away from completion. A specific youth oriented facility is worth considering immediately.

SOME LESSONS FROM WELLINGTON

Any dedicated youth facility in the Papanui area should take note of some lessons from similar facilities in Wellington, including:

- Youth specific – facilities/venues for young people need to be designed specifically for young people and not as part of a multi-use venue.
- Events-based – A venue which is based around events has greater chance of overcoming the possibility of “capture” by one youth sub-culture than does a drop-in style venue.
- Free/low cost access. Young people have very little discretionary income, thus precluding them from events which have a high price of entry.
- Image – Youth facilities must be designed in a youth friendly manner and need to have an image/brand (eg “Zeal”, “The Rock”) which is trendy rather than, for example “Papanui Youth Facility”.

SOME OTHER ISSUES

A couple of other matters to consider relating to a possible youth facility in Papanui include:

1. Location – Northlands Mall is “the hub” for the northern part of the city. It is difficult to envisage a youth facility being very effective if located at a distance from the Mall.
2. Voluntary Staff versus Sustainability – Staffing at Zeal is entirely voluntary at this stage. Some questions have been raised about the sustainability of a facility reliant totally on voluntary effort. Zeal staff themselves acknowledged this concern.

WHERE TO

The Board seriously consider the possibility of establishing a dedicated youth facility in the area adjacent to Northlands Mall.

Recommendation: That the information be received.

Chairperson's

Recommendation: That the Community Advocate report to a future meeting on possible options for a joint visit to Brisbane to look at the dedicated youth facilities projects with shopping malls in Brisbane, the report to provide information on a joint group including the Board Chairperson, Community Development Adviser, representatives from Papanui High School and Northlands Mall.