



Media release
Friday 13 May 2016

Selwyn Youth Council nominated for national award

Selwyn Youth Council Chairperson Emily de Rooy will be heading to Parliament this month, as the Youth Council has been named as a finalist in the New Zealand Youth Awards.

The awards are held annually and recognise young people who have made a significant contribution to their community in areas such as the arts, culture, the environment and sport.

"I am overwhelmed by the support that the Selwyn District Council and the Selwyn community has given to our organisation. We have come so far in such a short space of time and are truly grateful for those backing us every step of the way," says Emily.

"I am always amazed at how much can be achieved by a group of young people working together. Chris Martin, our Youth Advisor, has been incredibly dedicated and passionate in giving us the opportunities that have allowed us to grow and develop as leaders."

Selwyn is New Zealand's fastest growing district and the Youth Council developed a Youth Strategy with the objective of having all young people in Selwyn feel valued and connected to their communities.

The Selwyn Youth Council was formed in 2013 and since that time has worked on a wide range of projects. Collectively the Youth Council has contributed over 2,000 hours of voluntary service to projects which benefit Selwyn. In 2015 the Youth Council ran 16 events including skate jams, roller discos, a band competition, youth markets and drive in movies. These events were attended by 3,000 people.

The Youth Council established a pop up café as a social enterprise to train and employ around a dozen local young people, helping them gain skills which will improve their employment prospects. The café is run as a not for profit business with the proceeds from sales distributed as youth grants.

Over the summer of 2015/16 the Youth Council, with assistance from Selwyn District Council, undertook 'Meet your Street' where they visited 34 different communities in Selwyn covering both new subdivisions and more established areas. Local residents were provided with free hot drinks from the Youth Council's pop up cafe, and invited to take part in games and chat to their neighbours in a park. These events were a great opportunity for people to meet their neighbours and form new friendships.

Each of the 13 members of the Youth Council has developed their own passion projects which they are currently working to progress. They are assisted by an adult mentor and the Youth Council members are responsible for building a team of other young people to help complete their project. In total around 40 young people are involved in passion projects designed to benefit young people and the wider community.

Collectively, this year the Youth Council will also be working on the opening of Generation House – a creative community space which will include a café, meeting area, wellness clinic, community radio station and arts space – running a youth arts festival, expanding their community access radio station and presenting a music festival.

Selwyn Mayor Kelvin Coe says the Youth Council's nomination is well deserved. "Selwyn is very lucky to have such an active, committed group of young people on our Youth Council. Their work in organising local events and working on projects to benefit the community helps make Selwyn a better place for the wider community and I would like to acknowledge and thank them for their work."

The New Zealand Youth award winners will be announced by Hon. Nikki Kaye, Minister of Youth, at a ceremony in Wellington on 24 May.

Ends

Photo attached: *Selwyn Youth Council members (from left): Ella McClure, Paige Sullivan, Lexi Sutherland, Maddie Tasker, Emily de Rooy, Rafael Clarke.*

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