

# National's Youth Plan

## Backgrounder

### Wasted youth potential

- More than 25,000 young people aged 15-19 are not in any form of education, training or work.<sup>1</sup>
- That's despite Labour's promise to get that number down to zero.<sup>2</sup>
- More than one in five school students doesn't gain a qualification by the time they leave school.<sup>3</sup>
- 40% of students leave school without having gained a Level 2 or higher qualification.<sup>4</sup> Level 2 is "regarded as the level from which students gain foundation skills for employment as well as for further study."<sup>5</sup>
- More than 13,000 teenagers are receiving a government benefit.<sup>6</sup>

### New Zealand's growing youth crime problem<sup>7</sup>

While the apprehension rate of 14- to 16-year-olds has remained stable over the past 10 years, the severity of offences has worsened.

- The number of youth apprehensions for violent offences has increased by 39%, up from 2,690 in

1995 to 3,743 in 2006. Between 2005 and 2006 apprehensions for violent offences increased by 9%.<sup>8</sup>

- Violent offences are up even when population trends are taken into account – there were 196 youth offences per 10,000 population in 2006, compared to 167 per 10,000 of population in 1995.<sup>9</sup>

Youth Court statistics also show an increase in the seriousness of offending by young people:

- 2006 recorded the highest rate ever of prosecuted and proved youth cases per head of population.<sup>10</sup>
- The number of proved cases involving a violent offence increased from 235 cases in 1992 to 504 cases in 2006. Between 2004 and 2006 there was a 10% increase.<sup>11</sup>
- Proved youth offending cases have increased between 1992 and 2006:<sup>12</sup>
  - Aggravated robbery up from 75 to 164 cases.
  - Grievous or serious assault up from 58 to 169 cases.
  - Robbery up from 28 to 74 cases.

### Background: Youth Guarantee

- The latest Household Labour Force Survey found there were 8,400 16- and 17-year-olds not in any form of work, education, or training.<sup>13</sup>

1 Household Labour Force Survey, September 2007

2 See 28 August 2007 Press Release from Hon. Steve Maharey, "This government is fully committed to its shared goal with the Mayors' Taskforce for Jobs of having all 15-19 year olds in work, education, training or other meaningful activities by the end of this year."

3 See page 15 of Ministry of Education Publication, "New Zealand Schools 2006": "Just over one-fifth (22 per cent) in the 2004 cohort have not achieved a qualification on the NQF by the end of Year 13. Most of this group leave study after their first senior secondary year. A minority return for a second year before leaving."

4 See table, "Highest attainment of School Leavers", on page 18 of "New Zealand Schools 2006".

5 See page 17 of "New Zealand Schools 2006".

6 See answers to written questions PQ 18696 (2007), showing 9940 18- and 19-year-olds receiving a benefit and PQ17711 (2007) showing 3125 16- and 17-year-olds receiving a benefit.

7 Source for Youth Justice Statistics: "Youth Justice Statistics in New Zealand: 1992 to 2006, published by the Ministry of Justice, August 2007. <http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2007/nz-youth-justice-statistics-1992-2006/index.html>

8 See page 13 of "Youth Justice Statistics in New Zealand".

9 See page 46 of "Youth Justice Statistics in New Zealand".

10 See page 15 of "Youth Justice Statistics in New Zealand": 324 prosecuted youth cases per 10,000 population in 2006 up from an average of 220 over the period 1992 to 2003. The rate of proved cases in the Youth Court was 88 cases per 10,000 up from an average of 68 over the period 1992 to 2003.

11 See page 70 of "Youth Justice Statistics in New Zealand". Proved cases involving a violent offence increased from 457 cases in 2004 to 504 cases in 2006.

12 See page 70 of "Youth Justice Statistics in New Zealand".

13 Statistics New Zealand, prepared for Parliamentary Library, 8,400 youths aged 16-17 were in the category "Not employed, no study – no caregiving". 5,200 of that group were males.

- As of September 2007 there were 3,125 16- and 17-year-olds receiving some kind of benefit, of whom:
  - 626 were receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit.
  - 1,115 were receiving the invalids benefit and 139 were receiving the sickness benefit.
  - 1,245 were receiving some other sort of benefit, including the Independent Youth Benefit.<sup>14</sup>
- While theoretically these welfare recipients are expected to look for work, the reality is the requirements are often vague.<sup>15</sup>
- NCEA school qualifications sit at the same level as other level 1-3 qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework. Level 1-3 qualifications can therefore be described as 'school level'.<sup>16</sup> A range of level 1-3 Certificate courses are currently offered at polytechnics, wananga and private training establishments and in some cases these may be suitable for 16- and 17-year-olds. These courses are funded through a combination of government subsidy and student fees. Under the Youth Guarantee both components would be covered by the Government and tertiary providers would not be able to charge fees for courses funded in this way.
- Currently 16-and 17-year-olds may be asked to front up with as much as \$4,000 in fees for courses like these. For example, CPIT in Christchurch runs a Level 1 Certificate in Workskills; the course has a fee of \$4,283 for participants.<sup>17</sup> They also run a Level 2 Certificate in Hairdressing with fees of \$6,250 per year.<sup>18</sup> The Manukau Institute of Technology offers a Level 2 Certificate in Furniture Making with course fees of \$2,415 per year.<sup>19</sup>
- One of the groups targeted by this policy is school-leavers with no or very low qualifications. This is a high-needs group who will frequently have grossly

inadequate literacy and numeracy skills. They may need a high level of individual support and courses to meet their needs may be more expensive to run than typical polytechnic courses. The closest existing example of this kind of course are those currently provided free through 'Youth Training'. National is confident more courses like that can be developed so that more people have access to that kind of education.

- There are currently 14,000 16-and 17-year-olds enrolled in level 1-3 courses at tertiary providers.<sup>20</sup> Some of these will incur fees but others are offered for free, for example those provided through Youth Training. In 2006, 7750 16-and 17-year-olds took part in these courses.<sup>21</sup>

#### Background: New Zealand's Youth Justice System<sup>22</sup>

- Offenders aged 14 to 16 are called "youth offenders" and are dealt with by the Youth Court. Youth offenders can be tried and sentenced in adult courts for murder or manslaughter or for purely indictable offences such as rape, aggravated robbery and arson.
- The Youth Court has a range of sentencing options available to it which are referred to as Youth Court orders. These range from discharge, admonishment, fines, reparation and restitution through to supervision orders, community work, supervision with activity and supervision with residence orders.
- In 2006:
  - 1,677 cases against youth offenders were proved in the Youth Court.<sup>23</sup> Of these, 752 resulted in a Youth Court supervision order, of which 238 were supervision with residence sentences, 97 were supervision with activity sentences, 417 were supervision orders.<sup>24</sup> The remaining

14 See PQ 17711 (2007)

15 See PQ 19818 (2007) "where appropriate, they will be required to engage with Work and Income to plan towards participating in these activities now or in the future."

16 <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/framework/about.html#nqf>

17 [http://slider.cpit.ac.nz/courses/programme\\_detail?a=11746](http://slider.cpit.ac.nz/courses/programme_detail?a=11746)

18 [http://slider.cpit.ac.nz/courses/programme\\_detail?a=11733](http://slider.cpit.ac.nz/courses/programme_detail?a=11733)

19 <http://www.manukau.ac.nz/study/search/CourseInfo.asp?p5CNumber=498>

20 Ministry of Education, "Domestic students enrolled by ethnic group, age group, and qualification level 1999-2006". In 2006, 14,146 students participated in a level 1-3 certificate course. [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/\\_data/assets/excel\\_doc/0020/16292/Provider-based\\_enrolments.xls#ENR.8!A1](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/_data/assets/excel_doc/0020/16292/Provider-based_enrolments.xls#ENR.8!A1). These figures do not include students enrolled in industry-training.

21 [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary\\_education/participation/Targeted-Training-programmes.xls#TTP\\_2!A1](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary_education/participation/Targeted-Training-programmes.xls#TTP_2!A1)

22 See <http://www.justice.govt.nz/youth/about/yj.html>

23 Source for Youth Justice Statistics: "Youth Justice Statistics in New Zealand: 1992 to 2006, published by the Ministry of Justice, August 2007. See page 58.

24 See page 81 of "Youth Justice Statistics in New Zealand".

cases resulted in, for example, 'admonishment' - a reprimand from the judge (376 cases), fines (317 cases) or other low-level punishments.<sup>25</sup>

- In light of these statistics, Principal Youth Court Judge Andrew Becroft has said there is a problem with a hardcore group of around 1,000 serious persistent offenders.<sup>26</sup>
- Programmes like Project K have been highly successful at turning around the lives of hundreds of struggling teenagers.<sup>27</sup>
- As many as four out of five young offenders before the Youth Court have a drug or alcohol problem.<sup>28</sup>
- Many young offenders sentenced to supervision with residence are released after just two months.<sup>29</sup>

#### Background: Fresh Start Programme sentences

- The 'supervision with activity' sentence available to the Youth Court is hardly ever used because there are far too few programmes. Judge Becroft describes it as having become "virtually extinct".
  - He says there are a few good programmes, and cites Pro-Active Venture in Papatoetoe, which sends youngsters to Waiouru Army Camp and provides long-term mentoring when they go home. But there are just not enough of them.<sup>30</sup>
- The Limited Service Volunteers Programmes (LSV) has been run since 1993 and has been highly successful. It is provided to unemployed young people aged 17 to 25.<sup>31</sup> They undergo a

six-week course at Burnham Military Camp near Christchurch, designed to help them develop self-discipline, self-confidence, and positive attitudes. The course consists of military activities such as physical training and marching, as well as instruction from outside providers in topics ranging from white water rafting to budgeting.<sup>32</sup>

- It was primarily designed as an employment programme, but is known to have positive effects on behaviour and offending patterns.<sup>33</sup>
- In 2007 it was estimated that approximately 70% of trainees find employment or go on to further training within two months of completing the course.<sup>34</sup>
- Labour has reduced the number of participants in LSV. In 2006/07 only 429 out of a possible 720 places on the LSV scheme were filled, leaving a 40% vacancy. This was down from 557 filled places in 2001/02.<sup>35</sup>
- In 2002, the Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending report identified "Army Initiatives" as one of 11 'priority projects':
  - "The Taskforce wants the youth justice sector to be able to benefit more from the resources and programmes provided by the Army. It believes that the skills and disciplines promoted by the Army have the potential to have a beneficial impact on youth offending. The Army has examined how its current programmes could be better targeted towards young offenders and has identified two programmes, the Limited Services Volunteer Scheme and Youth Life Skills, that could be developed further to meet the needs of 'at risk' youth."<sup>36</sup>

25 See page 79 of "Youth Justice Statistics in New Zealand".

26 See comments on Agenda, "at its hard-end it's probably about 1,000 to 1,500" <http://www.frontpage.co.nz/Site/agenda/transcripts/2004/2004-06-04.aspx>

27 See for example the Ministry for Social Development Project Evaluation of Project K that found "Project K participants improved their ability to master academic activities ... in their ability to form and maintain peer relationships and social assertiveness in the classroom ... in the ability to ask for adult help, information and support ... and to make good career decisions". <http://www.projectk.org.nz/MSDEvaluationresults/tabid/377/Default.aspx>

28 See 'The trouble with youth', NZ Herald, August 2007. In a submission to Parliament, Principal Youth Court Judge Andrew Becroft said 70 to 80 per cent of persistent offenders have a drug and/or alcohol problem.

29 They are required to be released after two months if they have not reoffended and have not absconded - s. 314 CYPF Act 1989.

30 See 'The trouble with youth', NZ Herald, August 2007.

31 [http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/manuals-and-procedures/employment\\_and\\_training/programmes\\_and\\_services/limited\\_service\\_volunteers/limited\\_service\\_volunteers-05.htm#P155\\_9732](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/manuals-and-procedures/employment_and_training/programmes_and_services/limited_service_volunteers/limited_service_volunteers-05.htm#P155_9732)

32 <http://www.army.mil.nz/culture-and-history/community-support/community-training.htm>

33 Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending, April 2002. <http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2002/youth-offending-strategy/ministerial-report/index-report.html>

34 Sourced from Army News no 378, 17/7/2007 <http://www.army.mil.nz/downloads/pdf/army-news/17july2007armynews4229kb20pages.pdf>

35 See answer to written question PQ 12832 (2007).

36 Report of the Ministerial Taskforce on Youth Offending, April 2002.