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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT - 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020 for AGM 19 November 2020

The 12-month period to which this report relates has been an interesting financial year for the Marlborough Youth Trust (MYT). The trust shifted its office and staff from a small office space in the Blenheim CBD, into the newly refurbished 'My Space' Youth Development Centre on the East end of the Stadium 2000 building, on the corner of Kinross Street and Redwood Street, Blenheim. MYT was well established and operating from My Space by the 1st of July 2019.

This huge, multi room space which is owned by District Council, was renovated by MYT at a cost of around \$400,000 to make it a modern, fit-for-purpose youth centre, dramatically increasing the trust's ability to provide meaningful youth services to a far greater number of Marlborough youth. The premise is leased by MYT as a tenant, but District Council has provided the space at 'peppercorn rental.' While this is great for the MYT budget, the downside is that the premise, which was previously occupied by commercial entities, attracts Operational Expenses (Opex) of around \$1,700 per month, meaning that the operational budget continues to effectively fund the equivalent of monthly rental.

The 12 months started with a 'hiss and a roar,' with a massive increase in young people visiting the My Space Youth Centre, which allowed our employees the opportunity to engage with and draw a far larger number of youth into programmes and events that the trust runs.

A challenge that became obvious from first occupying My Space, was that the vastly increased space of the premise and the dramatic increase in youth clientele, meant that MYT had to actively seek an increase in income to ensure that the added expenditure was being met. With some creative thinking and some help provided through training by funders, the MYT Manager and trustees have been able to significantly increase income that almost meets the need. This income has come from ensuring that there is effective use of the My Space 'spaces,' with a variety of different commercial arrangements to hire the spaces out to external users, including a permanent sub-lease of a space to a dance company that caters to youth, a variety of groups and organisations that hire spaces regularly, and a formal written agreement with the Education Department to hire rooms where tutors teach Alternative Education students. These arrangements also create synergies that help bring the youth involved into the MYT fold as well.

Covid-19 restrictions through the first part of 2020 meant the My Space Youth Centre had to shut its doors and cease face-to-face business. Fortunately, our youth workers were able to continue engaging with many of their clients via social media, video conferencing and other lateral means. MYT applied for and received financial support from the Government in the form of wages payments during this lockdown period as the trust lost many of its income sources over this period.

A Snapshot of Marlborough Youth Trust in 2019 - 2020:

YEP - Youth Employability Programme. This programme has flourished and is favoured by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) as a funder. MYT has undergone an audit initiated by MSD and is once again qualified as a Level 3 Accredited Service Provider. This means the trust meets the requirements to be funded as a service provider for MSD and this also opens doors to other funding. MYT collaborates with REAP, local colleges, Work and Income NZ and seeks youth for the programme from within the pool of youth already engaged with My Space. The 'Licence to Work,' programme has continued to be delivered to more than 20 youth, providing participants with the soft skills and experience required to ensure they are seen as a good choice for employers. Once again, a number of youths engaged in the programme successfully achieved employment and all the participants reflected positive changes in presentation, confidence, skillset and attitude. The Covid-19 restrictions imposed in New Zealand in early to mid-2020 had a significant effect on the programme, effectively restricting the ability of tutors to making contact and training participants via video-link, rather than in a classroom setting, however the outcomes have remained very good.

YES – Youth in Emergency Services Programme. This very successful programme that puts youths alongside a variety of emergency service providers and not only trains them, but also tests their learned skills in a large scenario training weekend as a finale, unfortunately was not able to find a source of funding throughout this 12-month period. The programme is still favoured by MYT and the trust is working on reinvigorating YES with a new funding source.

MYTAG - Marlborough Youth Trust Advisory Group, a group to ensure the voice of youth is heard within MYT and also an opportunity for youth to have a hand in planning, developing and running youth initiatives, while also receiving training, soft skills and developmental opportunities. This group of around 20 youths is selected annually after advertising for youth who are interested in being representatives, with a panel of existing MYTAG's interviewing and selecting the candidates. This group is funded by the Ministry of Youth Development.

EVENTS – MYT youth workers usually run six youth events annually as part of a Minor Services contract with District Council. The MYTAG team, together with supervising youth workers, completes a review of previous events and they decide what has worked and what changes need to be made. They then forwarded their recommendations to the trustees for approval. In September 2019 the 'Rugby World Cup Fanzone' event was held, featuring four RWC All Black games live and free to youth at the My Space Youth Centre. The games attracted good numbers of youth with 135 attending the livestreamed games and positive feedback. The mainstay 'Springfest' (September 2019) and 'Beachfest' (January 2020) events in which local youth performers entertain a youth

audience in a night-time setting, combined with food and other entertainment once again were the favourites and resulted in the attendance of large numbers of youth. An 'Outdoor Movie' event was run in December 2019 for the first time. It was originally planned to be held in beautiful Seymour Square surrounded by flower gardens and mature trees, but unfortunately stormy weather meant a last-minute shift to My Space. While a successful formula, the last-minute shift and weather resulted in fewer coming out, with 162 attending, despite initial enquiries indicating several hundred. 'Expression Sessions' were held again between April and June 2020, designed to allow youth to express themselves through various art forms, attending workshops involving Spoken Word, Skateboard Art and Photography. The finished products were used later in an exhibition that attracted around 100 people. The 'Into the Wild' event was an outdoor adventure day that was planned to occur on the 21st of March 2020. It was advertised as a jam-packed full day of outdoor adventure, survival skills, and extreme sports. Planning was very advanced when the Covid-19 restrictions were implemented, and as a consequence the event had to be cancelled.

THRIVE TIPU - YOUNG PARENTS GROUP – This was the fourth year that this group has successfully provided a safe, constructive environment to help and teach young parents and their children, with Ministry of Education accreditation as a pre-school educator. This group, with its paid Coordinator and volunteers, has worked successfully to improve outcomes for both young parents and their children in a supportive, socially interactive setting.

MY SPACE OVER 18's YOUTH GROUP – This group of youths, formed by MYT Youth Workers after a group of youth regularly turned up seeking support and fellowship at MYT, is in its second year. It is an opportunity for youth to get together in a constructive and fun group, where Youth Workers can also offer mentoring and in some cases, referral to professional counselling or other agencies. The youth workers have also taken the opportunity to provide training that offers soft-skills and life skills.

CACTUS - This military-style fitness programme has continued to be a staple of MYT, developing self-belief, courage, teamwork, reliability, leadership and fitness in youth and have a positive effect on the attitudes of those involved. The programme is popular with and continues to attract college-age youth. A recent successful meeting between the trust Chair, Manager and CEO of Marlborough Lines, has led to a sponsorship agreement that will ensure funding for the CACTUS programme for the next few years.

Despite the difficulties imposed by Covid-19 restrictions during this period, the 2019 - 2020 financial year has been positive, and a big shift forward for MYT in the new, purpose-built My Space Youth Centre. My Space has changed the face of the trust, opening up opportunities for service provision and allowing MYT to cater to a much larger segment of the youth population in Marlborough. More than 11,000 people have visited the new youth centre since the doors opened, demonstrating that there is a significant need for youth services in Marlborough, but also presenting the trust with a whole new set of challenges.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to express the gratitude of the trustees for the incredible effort, heart and soul that our Manager Jo Lane puts into ensuring that MYT and My Space remain not only viable, but vibrant and thriving. Of course, she couldn't do it without our amazing Youth Worker team, Maxine, Soni and Rory, with help from Schkiya. I would also like to acknowledge the good work and significant contribution that Youth Workers Rebekah and Reuben made to MYT, both of whom have moved on to other opportunities, but have remained connected with us. The trust finances are in good hands with the work that Laura, our Admin Officer churns through, and we are all indebted to our awesome MYTAG's and the over 50 volunteers that help ensure that MYT has the skills and manpower to get things done.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Russ Smith', with a large, stylized 'S' and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Russ Smith
Chairperson
Marlborough Youth Trust Inc