



Te Rōpū Kaitohutohu Take Hapori Iwi
Takatāpui

Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel

End of Term Report 2022-2025.

11 September, 2025



To: His Worship the Mayor and Auckland Council,

Over the last three years, the Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel (RCAP) has worked closely with Auckland Council to support a safer, more inclusive and responsive city for rainbow communities across Tāmaki Makaurau. We've brought lived experience, critical feedback, and practical ideas to the table, always grounded in what our people are seeing, feeling and experiencing.

This report is a summary of our key priorities, the mahi we've done, the shifts we've seen, and where we believe the next panel needs to go.

Members of the panel

Co-Chairs:

- Joshua Martin
- Teresa Platt

Panel Members:

- Ashe Black (joined February 2024)
- Ella Sargison
- Eric Chou
- Luca Bree (joined February 2024)
- Luis Meirelles
- Shayde Young (joined February 2024)
- Theo van de Klundert
- Tux Hika
- Note: one panel member resigned during the term; Dave Hati in October 2024.

Supporting Staff:

- Lead Officer – Maclean Grindell
- Governance Advisor – Duncan Glasgow
- Principal Advisor Panels - Victoria Wicks-Brown

Elected Members:

- Liaison Councillor – Councillor Richard Hills
- Chief Liaison Councillor – Councillor Julie Fairey

Our focus

At the start of our term, we confirmed three main areas of focus:

- Building rainbow cultural competency across Auckland Council, especially in frontline and public-facing roles.
- Strengthening engagement with rainbow communities across Tāmaki Makaurau, with a focus on takatāpui, Pacific and Asian voices.
- Addressing housing insecurity, mental health and cost of living pressures impacting our communities.

These priorities shaped our strategic workplan and were revisited throughout the term as we responded to emerging issues and opportunities.



Year-by-year reflection

2023

We began with inductions, planning, and early cross-panel sessions, and then quickly got to work. One of our first major engagements was with the Royal Commission into the COVID-19 response. We shared the impacts of lockdowns on rainbow people in Tāmaki Makaurau — including feeling unsafe in our own homes, disconnected from community, and unsupported by systems not built for us. At the same time, we acknowledged that lockdowns were necessary and saved lives. It was a chance to reflect honestly on what worked and what didn't.

This year also included a mid-term recruitment process, where we reached into our networks to bring in new voices — particularly trans, Māori and senior trans representation. This worked well because it prioritised lived experience and community connection. But the process needs improvement. Recruitment should start by engaging with community, not just those already in governance spaces. It's also important that there's a handover between outgoing and incoming panels so people are set up to succeed.

2024

This was our biggest year. We supported cross-panel advice on emergency management and storm recovery, participated in the Governance Model forum, engaged in multiple forums on the Long-Term Plan, and provided input into the Regional Land Transport Plan, the Waste Management and Minimisation Plan, and inclusion initiatives across Auckland Council.

One of our most positive relationships has been with Auckland Emergency Management, who kept returning to seek our views and genuinely worked to build their approach alongside us. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team also started engaging more regularly, showing up to nearly every hui and becoming active partners in the mahi.

The cross-panel work on the Long-Term Plan stood out. We shared priorities, shaped the joint presentation, and sat together with Council leadership to provide honest, practical advice. It was one of the clearest examples of how the panels can add value when they collaborate meaningfully.

2025

In May we held a community hui at Everybody Eats in Glen Innes. This was a highlight. It brought together voices we rarely hear in formal spaces and created space for whakaaro about safety, belonging, and what needs to change in the city. The kōrero was honest and powerful. Those voices were a gift and we believe future panels need to honour that by taking their feedback forward.

This year we also saw a direct impact from our advocacy. Rainbow Games has now secured funding from Auckland Unlimited following our engagement with their team. While our initial concerns about the Gay Games withdrawal were met with silence, our persistence led to a meeting with CEO Nick Hill. That follow-through mattered and shows why this panel needs to keep pushing when accountability is lacking. Ongoing council and CCO relationships critical to rainbow communities should be identified and maintained via RCAP processes.

Proud moments

- The way Auckland Council responded to the rainbow crossing being painted over and the attack at Drag Storytime. We had direct access to Auckland Council and Police. The support was immediate and visible. The CEO's and Mayor's immediate statements condemning the violence was deeply appreciated by our communities.
- The growth in cross-panel collaboration. We saw shared issues like housing, transport and safety being addressed more cohesively.
- Seeing staff and elected members show up consistently. Councillors Hills and Fairey were strong allies throughout our term. We also want to acknowledge the work of Victoria, MacLean, Milly and Duncan, who backed us every step of the way. Due to the commitment of staff, the panels have been engaged more consistently and effectively with all areas of council and CCOs and, critically, with the long-term planning and emergency and disaster response.

The panels continue to provide the voice of our communities and are a valuable resource for both staff and elected members.

Challenges and recommendations

- Meeting frequency was a barrier. Having hui every four to six weeks limited what we could achieve because the meetings were too far apart. We recommend shifting to monthly hui, alternating between in-person and online. That would support relationship building and help the panel respond more quickly to community issues.
- Recruitment still leans toward the “usual suspects.” Future recruitment should remain focused on reaching new people who reflect the diversity of our communities. The onboarding processes have improved immeasurably, and this panel has been able to learn their role quickly and become effective in good time. Education, onboarding, and better succession planning are essential.

Some organisations and teams were slow to engage. The termination of the Gay Games 2030 bid by Tataki Auckland Unlimited (TAU) was a surprise to many in the rainbow community who had worked so hard towards it and for the associated Rainbow Games Tamaki Makaurau. Despite our clear connection to that kaupapa, we (and the Governing Body) were not approached for feedback. There is immense societal value associated with major events such as the Gay Games and the Rainbow Games and in our increasingly homophobic and transphobic environment our communities need as much support as we can provide. Overall, we were disappointed with decisions made by TAU and recommend that stronger internal accountability is needed.

Looking ahead

Some of our planned work is still in progress. The Rainbow Engagement Guidelines continue to need review and to be embedded in the organisation. More than a document, these guidelines should lead practice, performance expectations, and the culture of service at every level of Council.

We also see the need for:

- More community hui, held across the region, not just in the city, so that we can hear rainbow voices all over the city.
- Continued work on housing and wellbeing, as our rainbow youth continue to be adversely affected by increased cost of living and housing crises, intersected with homophobia.
- Better use of data, insights and research to inform policy for rainbow Aucklanders.

Final thoughts

Unfortunately for us, the panel provided advice during a time when transphobia and homophobia is increasing in Aotearoa, supported largely by loud homophobic rhetoric in the USA. These were some of the headlines:

Stuff
https://www.stuff.co.nz › nz-news › rainbow-storytime-...
Rainbow Storytime tour cancelled after drag queens sent ...
25 Apr 2024 — Drag Queens Erika and CoCo Flash have cancelled the Storytime tour after receiving death threats. It follows protest by Destiny Church paint over Rainbow crossing in Gisborne

New Zealand
Rainbow crossing on Auckland's Karangahape Rd painted over, police open investigation
Police are investigating after white paint was poured over the rainbow crossing on Karangahape Rd in Auckland overnight. Nobody has taken responsibility ...
28 Mar 2024

'Abuse and threats': Inside the decision to cancel drag queen library event
Auckland Rainbow Parade: Destiny Church members disrupt march, storm Ponsonby Rd

Kahu
Police say not enough evidence to prosecute Brian Tamaki over Te Atatū Community Centre incident
Senior police officers have concluded there was insufficient evidence to charge Destiny Church leader Brian Tamaki with allegedly inciting violence at a ...

New Zealand
Destiny Church protests: Teenager concussed after violent attack at Te Atatū, West Auckland event
16 Feb 2025

New Zealand
Auckland Pride warns of US influence on NZ anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment - The Front Page
13 Feb 2025

New Zealand
'Lil Gay Out:' Hobsonville Point Secondary School cancels LGBTQ+ event after protest threats
21 May 2025

New Zealand
Newsmax host hysterically rages that California wildfires are 'death by DEI'
News > World > Americas > US politics

Things to know about how Trump's policies target transgender people
Trump's executive order on military service
Trump's efforts to eradicate "gender ideology" hurt trans people from

The Supreme Court Dealt A Blow to Trans Rights. Here's How to Take Action
TRANS KIDS

Politics
Winston Peters, NZ First follow Donald Trump's anti-DEI path with new Bill
07 Mar 2025

All the ways Trump wants to exclude trans people from public life
From passports to health care, the White House is trying to make it harder for transgender Americans to live openly and safely. Here's a look at the executive orders and their impact.

Fortunately, this panel was able to speak up when harm occurred, advise on critical policies, and build strong relationships with those in decision-making roles. The panel offered a space for honest advice and real impact. We developed relationships with the Mayor, governing body members, Police and senior council staff who we could reach out to in times of turmoil and ask for help for our communities. In every instance we received positive responses and help where we needed it.

To the next panel: meet in person when you can. Build strong relationships. Don't hold back. Your voice is valuable, and this table exists so our communities are heard.

Ngā mihi nui,

Josh Martin and Teresa Platt
Co-Chairs
Rainbow Communities Advisory Panel 2022 to 2025
Tāmaki Makaurau