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| Speak Up- Kōrerotia  Youth activism  16 October 2019 | |
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| Sally | Nau mai ki te hōtaka, ki ta tangata “Speak Up” – “Kōrerotia”. I’m your host, Sally Carlton, and today we’re talking about “Youth activism.” It’s so fantastic that we’ve got four guests who are able to share with us their experience and their wisdom. We’ve got our youngest ever guest on the show - we’ve had a few young teenagers but we’ve got a 12-year-old here today - so maybe we’ll start with you, Lucy, if you could introduce yourself and tell us a bit about you and your work that you are doing at the moment. |
| Lucy | Thanks Sally. Kia ora I’m Lucy. I go to Beckenham, I’m a Year 8 student. I’m part of the School Strike 4 Climate national and Christchurch team. So we run strikes multiple times every year. We recently had one on 27 September which was really big, we had 8,000 people here in Christchurch, that was really amazing. Nationwide, we had 170,000 so that was the biggest strike in New Zealand and we are second in the world for the percentage of people in our country in the strikes so that was really cool. |
| Sally | So it was 3.5% of the population or something? That’s huge, that’s great. OK: Trixie Ball, how about you? |
| Trixie | Kia ora, my name is Trixie-Mārie. I’m from Aparima College in Riverton. A few months ago, I went to a regional speech competition for Race Unity Awards which was in Dunedin and I made it through to the semi-finals which was held in Auckland and it was really amazing to hear how many different points of view young kids have or young students. I’m really new to this kind of scene of things but I’m so proud of Lucy, it’s awesome to hear things like that. I just want to know more. So I’m just here to voice my opinion and to hear more about everyone else’s. |
| Sally | And I guess just for people who are listening, the Race Unity Speech Awards take place every year. It’s a chance for young people to do -seven minutes, isn’t it? - a seven minute speech. |
| Trixie | Up to eight minutes. So it’s just a platform for rangitahi to voice their thoughts on racism. |
| Sally | I’ve judged quite a few of them and my goodness, they’re always so moving and powerful. |
| Trixie | Everyone’s opinion is so different on how they view things. So we all have a similar mindset on how we want the world to be but everyone has different solutions and it’s really, really fresh to hear different people from all parts of New Zealand |
| Sally | Very cool. And Allie? |
| Allie | Kia ora, my name is Allie Zohoori-Doosa, I’m a fourth year medical student at the University of Auckland. I am also part of the Bahá’í community of New Zealand. So I became involved with helping to organise and facilitate the Race Unity Speech Awards and the hui that happened in conjunction with the national finals every year. In that way I’ve been able to be a part of these youth spaces and hear the discussions that the young people lead around this kōrero about race unity and diversity in New Zealand.  Equally I’ve been involved with the Human Rights Commission, the race unity forums they have every year, trying to attend those and share a view from the Bahá’í perspective. I’ve been really blessed to be able to create a space for those younger than me and also those older than me to share their thoughts about racial diversity. It’s been really inspiring for me to see the innovative and hopefully vision that young people like Trixie and Lucy have to share with us so I’m really happy to be here as well, thank you. |
| Sally | And our final guest, we’ve got Sylvia Nissen. |
| Sylvia | Kia ora, I’m Sylvia Nissen, I’m a Lecturer in Environmental Policy at Lincoln University and I really started becoming involved in these types of issues over a decade ago when I was in Copenhagen for the climate marches there, and that really transformed everything I did after that. I came home and changed all my areas of study and I’ve just been really interested ever since in researching a combination of young people’s political action, and particularly student political action, and how that intersects with environmental change.  I wrote a book that came out earlier this year about student political action in New Zealand which was based off my PhD research, and so it is a real privilege to be a part of this conversation today with these three other amazing rangitahi. |
| Sally | Trixie, you have mentioned you are quite new to this space and you sort of talked about how you got into it, but for the rest of you: What was it that drove you to get involved? Was there sort of an ‘aha’ moment? Sylvia, you mentioned going to the climate march, for example. Allie, did you have a moment? |
| Allie | I wouldn’t say there was one specific ‘aha’ moment for me. I moved to New Zealand about six years ago - so I migrated here from Jamaica - and in the process of understanding New Zealand and the different diverse cultures that live and make this place their home, I had to create opportunities to talk to other people and to learn from them. One of the spaces that I was blessed to be in was the race unity hui where I was just an attendee for the first couple of years and then I was asked to help with facilitating some of the small group sessions. In that you get to see so many diverse perspectives, people who have so much passion and so many hopeful and inspiring ways to look at the world, and in that way you feel really motivated to be a part of that and keep attending those spaces.  I guess through my involvement with the Bahá’í community we do a lot of community-based, youth-led initiatives around education of young people to do with spiritual values and spiritual education. So that’s another thing I do in my free time which I wouldn’t say is activism on a national level but is definitely activism on a local level. |
| Lucy | Like Allie, I didn’t really have an ‘aha’ moment because I’ve kind of always been passionate about justice but it was kind of as soon as I found out about the magnitude of the climate crisis, I was just kind of like why is there not anyone doing anything about this? It just seemed so obvious that people would take action because it’s their lives at risk. Then I was kind of driven to make change before I even kind of realised that I was at that time a little bit of a lone voice in my community. But in my community there were also other people that stepped up to help once there was a platform for them to do so, so that was really cool to see. |
| Sally | The topic today is - I had a real difficulty trying to decide what to call it: youth advocacy, youth activism, youth having a voice, youth participation, those sorts of ideas - and I guess I’d be quite keen to hear about what is it that you all understand by those kinds of concepts, and how is that you *do* activism or you *do* advocacy? |
| Lucy | Well I suppose how I view it is just making a difference, making a positive difference, and I think everyone is going to have a different view of activism and leadership but I think that’s really important as well: incorporating those views into what you do to make it unique, because we have so many young people doing such cool stuff and everyone has their own perspective of what it is. My perspective, I think it’s kind of like stepping up, potentially even, like, doing stuff out of your comfort zone that might not directly benefit you that you can see right now but in the future it will. And that it’s also going to benefit other people. We are lucky here in New Zealand that at the moment we’re not really seeing the effects of climate change but the Pacific is and we need to be there to support them and I feel like that’s kind of part of activism and leadership is to support others. |
| Sally | Very nicely put. |
| Allie | I completely agree, I feel like as young people we have a very unique perspective of society and we are able to ask those difficult questions that maybe those older than us have become quite complacent to accept an answer that has always been given to us. We have these questions and we seek answers for them and a part of that is creating spaces to discuss things, having our voice heard and asking why is it like this and how can we improve this current situation, and highlighting the personal issues which we feel are really important to us. |
| Sally | Sylvia, from your research, have you got a general sense of what it is or how people do it? |
| Sylvia | No I don’t think there is any one way to do it. I mean broadly it’s this idea of people trying to make change together and so it’s a very collective process and it’s a process that requires a lot of connection. I can understand why you struggled to name what this session is about because there is no one way to do it and in fact, that’s a really good thing. You don’t want a ‘monoculture of activism,’ in a way. There’s so many different forms of engagement that is coming through and I think it’s all broadly driven by these desires to do things differently and having, in a way, a fresh pair of eyes and looking critically at a lot of the big problems that we are facing and thinking well, we actually have to change this; even if we might not fully know how, something needs to change. And so you’re seeing a whole range of different ways of engaging with that. |
| Sally | I think one thing that strikes me is how people do it. So it can be anything from - have you heard of ‘clicktivism’? clicking or liking the buttons on social media - right through to fundraising, right through to staging a protest like you guys have been doing - a whole lot of different things. And it could be quite passive and it could also be really, really active depending on how people are wanting to engage, I suppose. |
| Sylvia | I’d also add in, it’s not just sort of clicktivism and protest, there’s also guerrilla gardening and poetry and a lot of art involved with the new protests we’re seeing. |
| Sally | So cool. OK we might have our first break and our first song and then we’re going to continue with our discussion. |
|  | **MUSIC – Benee, ‘Kua Kore He Kupu’ (‘Soaked’)** |
| Sally | Welcome back to Speak Up – Kōrerotia. We’re speaking with Allie, Trixie-Mārie, Lucy and Sylvia about “Youth activism.” In this segment I’d like to think about what kind of factors enable you to have a voice? Trixie-Mārie, given that you have recently come to this, perhaps you might be a good person to kick us off? What was it that enabled you or encouraged you or facilitated you, to take that first step? |
| Trixie | So where I come from is just a little small town in the very bottom of the South Island. I find that a lot of the families there are Māori but no-one wants to speak up and stand for their culture which is really sad. I wanted to be the person that made a change, where I come from. Even if it’s just me at the moment, small steps, but I have got a few other people who are on board too. We do things like organise kapa haka and we do waka ama and we try and do everything that we can, like help out at the marae just to try and bring all of that culture back. I know that a lot of people are embarrassed to speak te reo Māori and I don’t want that to be happening. I want everyone to be proud of where they come from. Race Unity Award speeches just seemed like a first step. So I went there and I did my speech, I used the marae as a microcosm for something that New Zealand could follow. |
| Allie | With your example of process of becoming active in this specific discourse of race unity and ethnic and race relations, you had a moment of, I guess, race consciousness. You looked in your society and you thought this is an issue that I’m concerned about which is, I guess, Māori involvement in their society and wanting to see themselves participating more actively. You said, “I have opinions about this which I have formed” and then, “I would like those to be shared” and I guess in that situation, there was a platform that was created for the youth to share. That is, I guess, the responsibility for the rest of society: to create space and a platform for youth’s voices and their opinions to be heard by more. Also to have dialogue and discussion between youth. |
| Sally | So you have been lucky in that maybe a teacher told you about the Speech Awards and that provided you with a platform? |
| Trixie | Yes we have an amazing English teacher at Aparima College, her name is Mrs Grove, and she is always encouraging kids to partake in things to do with helping fight climate change and to help fight racism. She wants everyone to be united and think the same and the world to be a better place than what it is now. So it is good that we have people who back us up. |
| Lucy | I suppose for me there were a number of platforms. In my school I was able to start a group called Global Group with some of my friends but it wasn’t like a platform that was already there. I couldn’t draw on a group. The existing ones were kind of about composting and stuff like that - which is really important - but we thought, well first of all we need to teach kids about climate change. So we were like ten, but we were like, we are going to start this group and teach kids about climate change from what we’ve learnt off the internet. It was actually… All of the knowledge that I have now, I kind of sustained from back then and all of it seems relevant but it’s changing. There needs to be more platforms for people to be able to speak up because not everyone has the capacity to start a group in their school or start a strike and stuff. There needs to be the actual platforms for people to do that, especially in their own communities and smaller communities. |
| Sally | What I’m hearing from you is you’ve had a supportive teacher, you’ve had a supportive school, and having something that helps you put your visions into reality, I suppose. You also mentioned the internet, Lucy, and I suppose that’s got to be very, very powerful for young people in terms of having a voice? |
| Lucy | I think social media, if it’s used correctly, then it’s a huge tool and it’s super powerful. We don’t even have very many followers on our Christchurch Instagram page but the people who do follow us, they will come to our strikes because they follow us and that’s just the power of social media when it’s used right. |
| Allie | We live in a really connected world now and I guess this is something that our generation of youth has which is different than our parents’ generation and we can use that to our advantage. And as you said, if used correctly, social media has a very powerful for raising awareness, for creating a bit of a buzz in a social movement which otherwise wouldn’t occur because there wouldn’t have been that communication of ideas that is so fast and so available and so accessible to so many of us. But even then, there are still some of us who don’t have access to that and how do we reach those people and share these ideas with those who probably are most vulnerable to the issues that we’re advocating for, like racial injustice or like the effects of climate change. |
| Trixie | I definitely agree with both of you but then there’s also that side of social media that can be bad. So what Lucy was saying about using it correctly is really important. For things like fake news also about climate change and things like that, you’ve got to be really careful about what you read. |
| Sally | Yes. Or at least read it with a mind that you’ve checked out a lot of different sources. |
| Lucy | Yes. And I think it’s really important to, no matter what you read, to stay positive. Not to double guess yourself and be like, “Oh am I doing the right thing?” Because some people will post that people who are protesting should be jailed, they should be banned from doing that. It’s just one person’s opinion and not as big as your whole movement’s opinion. And I think it’s really important to stay true to yourself even in the face of adversity and people not agreeing with you. |
| Sally | I’d like to get a bit more into the challenges as we move forward because I think you guys, the climate strikers, have faced quite a few of them and it’s difficult I would imagine, trying to face all of those. Sylvia, from your perspective, have you got anything to add what might facilitate or enable youth participation? |
| Sylvia | Yes I think it’s interesting because it’s also in the context there’s so much discussion around how young people are apathetic and they don’t vote and there ends up being quite a big focus on the response to that being that we need to teach people more about how politics works and the rules of it, and it’s been very interesting listening to this discussion because it really highlights that what matters just as much, if not more, is having those faces, the connection and opportunities for people together to speak up and whether that is marae or in school. Just those spaces and opportunities for groups to get together and I think a lot of our discussion doesn’t often end up in that space. Often we just focus on teaching people a bit more about our political processes rather than thinking about those wider supports in place. |
| Lucy | I think that’s a really important point because, like, voting works for some people but it doesn’t work for other people. Certain things that we have that enable everyone having a voice works for some of our society but some people won’t ever be able to get access to that information about politics, it’s not going to be a reality for so many people and so many people might be encouraged not to vote. I think it works for some people but it doesn’t work for others, like so many things. If people are going to be active in their society, they’re probably going to need to do it in a way that works for them and in a way that feels supportive of their needs. |
| Sally | One other thing that I’d like to bring up in terms of enabling supporting youth voice is leaders. You guys are all leaders in your various spaces - you’ve gotten people trying to celebrate their Māori heritage, you’re organising these amazing mass strikes - and we look at the news and a day doesn’t go by that we don’t see Greta Thunberg in the news and various other youth leaders. The effect of that is huge as far as I am concerned, as somebody looking into this space. |
| Lucy | I think it feels like definitely space to have leaders, I think it’s really important because once you get past that “Oh but that’s them, I couldn’t do that” - once you get past that you can see that Greta Thunberg, for so many young New Zealanders, she’s probably a similar age and you can actually see that oh, she’s like a similar age to me and I could do that, that’s something I could do. It’s not just something that someone half way across the world can do, like I can do it here in my own community and I think that’s really important to recognise. |
| Allie | Yes. I think good leadership and good role models, people like Greta who show what’s a possibility for yourself and they also not only inspire but they mobilise other people into action. So they kind of lead a march in a sense and give a sense of direction as well. I don’t think it should just be a few key people, it does have to be a collective movement where we’re all building understanding and building capacity to carry out this really important work that we have identified. |
| Sally | Do you think of yourselves as leaders? |
| Allie | I don’t know. I guess sometimes you feel like oh yeah like you’re a leader in your community but I don’t generally give myself that title. I guess in the Bahá’í community, which is the main space that I operate in which I do most of my youth activism, everyone does kind of have a voice and it’s very much a shared consultative process about what we’re doing and what the direction that we’re taking is. But there are some people who shoulder more of the responsibility than others or who are more active to have their voice heard because of their involvement in things. |
| Lucy | I don’t know, I suppose I see the whole New Zealand strike team as a leader in itself but it’s a lot of collective people as well. It’s everyone who has joined together and even though we have come together with the same problem in mind, we all have so many different views, like so many different views about how to go about changing and then there’s a global community as well. I don’t know, it’s kind of like I think the idea of a leader being like someone who steps up but someone that steps up so that other people can step up themselves and join a community together. There’s no such thing as a leader if you don’t have people who are together with you, because you’re just leading yourself so you need people to believe in you and step up themselves. |
| Trixie | I’m struggling to find the right words that are in my head but everything that everyone is saying is… I’m just trying to process it all. |
| Sally | This might be a good opportunity for you to tell us about the marae. |
| Trixie | At the marae we have all of the key competencies that are in our national curriculum. So we have supporting others and working together, collaboration and all of that. All of the morals that as tangata whenua we show on the marae, I feel that if everyone learnt the morals and tikanga and if it was put out into the world, how much better and easier and how much nicer things would be. In the marae, it’s not always nice, but the way that people are and how they’re real, I think it’d be really nice if we could put that into the world. I’m not too sure how to say it, do you know what I mean? |
| Sally | I think it probably ties in really well with this idea of leadership and it being a community that has to do it. |
| Sylvia | It’s a really interesting discussion about leadership because often we fixate on single leaders to make sense of a much bigger movement, and in a way it makes it simple to tell a story as a movement being led by one person because we’re really not very good at having that language and being able to tell those stories about collectives and communities and how those evolve over time. Like what you’re struggling to get the words for what happens on the marae, it’s part of a wider problem that we have about how we talk about these types of collectives’ moments. |
| Sally | I think we might have our next song and then I’d like to come back and think about some of the challenges that you have faced in terms of doing youth activism.  This song’s really exciting - we’ve actually got Lucy who’s going to be singing her very own, composed song for us. This is only the second time we have done this on Speak Up - Kōrerotia; what a cool thing to do, thanks Lucy. |
| Lucy | I started guitar three years ago and I write this song to acknowledge rising up and standing up and living what you believe in, especially when it comes to climate change. So yeah, this is a song that I wrote called ‘Rise Up.’ |
|  | **MUSIC - Lucy Gray, ‘Rise Up’** |
| Sally | We’re speaking with Allie Zohoori-Doosa, Trixie-Mārie Bull, Lucy Gray and Sylvia Nissen about “Youth activism.” We’ve been talking about some of the factors that might enable youth to have a voice but I know that there are a lot of challenges as well. We have touched on some of them but I’d like to get into them in quite a lot more detail. Lucy, you mentioned some of the criticism that you guys have faced. |
| Lucy | A lot of people critique us because they either - I’m not trying to put people into boxes - but often it’s not just because they are angry or they dislike what we’re doing, it’s because they’re scared for themselves and we’re trying to create systematic change… Sorry, systemic. It’s, like, people in the farming and coal industry, that’s, like, all they know. Most likely their grandfather probably did it, their great-grandfather might have even done it, and this is part of their heritage and they were being told years ago that they have been providing for the community and that they are heroes of the local community because they are providing.  Now they are kind of being pinholed, like you’re the problem, we need to get away from using your resources - and that’s a really hard thing to come to terms with, especially if you’ve been doing it for so long. So I think it’s really important that we don’t just pinhole people because if we’re saying oh like farmers, coal - it’s your problem. It’s all of our problems, it’s all of our responsibilities. And we’ve had some negativity but we’ve had a lot of positivity.  With challenges, I think one of the biggest challenges is that with any activism you are dealing with a problem and with climate change for youth, it’s such a big problem and it has such a huge impact on your mental health and wellbeing. For a lot of people I know in our movement, and for me as well, it’s like what helps us to get less involved in the scary facts is that we are taking action and we can see the effects of that and that’s what helps us to continue going and not give up because it’s just too hard, it’s too big, it’s too scary because you can see the action and it does make a difference. So seeing that can help your wellbeing. |
| Trixie | Everyone needs to understand that no matter what you do, in life there are always going to be people that disagree with you and that have different views. If you want to do something, you have to continue to do it no matter what the other people say. If you want to show that you’re proud for doing something and you want to make a change, you’ve just got to keep going. Little steps but you’ll get there because there’s always going to be people who are negative, disagree, say nasty things. |
| Sally | I imagine it must be particularly difficult when you are facing criticism from adults, they’re supposed to be in a place of supportiveness and responsibility and ‘leadership’ I guess, if we’re going to think about that word. |
| Lucy | A lot of adults say to our movement it would be more powerful if you striked on the weekends, your strikes don’t make a difference. When in 12 years, what’s going to happen when the climate is fine, what are you going to do? I think it’s just important that we recognise that as youth we do have power and there are people who are listening. There are people who are not but there are people who are listening. And I think it can be really hard when you are faced with people who are older than you and are supposed to be in a position of responsibility and power, say that the strikes are not the most effective way, kids just want to get off school, they’re going to drive up to the strike in an SUV - saying that is quite belittling, especially if you’re already young like me and you don’t need people who want to make you feel even younger! It can be quite belittling. We’ve got a whole team behind us and I think that’s what makes us powerful is we can just shrug it off. It is, it’s hard, but you have to try and be like… there are so many people that support us so we just have to focus on that and realise it’s always going to be difficult, as Trixie said, there’s always going to be people that are not supportive of what you are doing so you just have to let it go and be like, everyone is entitled to their own opinion. |
| Sally | One other challenge I would imagine that you probably face is you have busy lives, you’re at school or university, you’ve got responsibilities at the marae, you’ve got responsibilities to your community and your families and the things that you are doing are in some ways extra curricula even if they are quite all-consuming. How do you deal with all of that? |
| Allie | I think that’s one of the biggest challenges youth who do have passion for social issues and have a really strong sense of justice face, is that they’re trying to balance being a young person with school commitments, family commitments, maybe other cultural commitments and then also wanting to act on this consciousness that they’ve been able to raise in themselves. And I feel like it’s about finding a balance, it’s about remember your why. Like why are you passionate for what you’re doing? What’s the purpose for the school strikes? What’s the purpose behind having a discussion about racial injustices and what are we working towards? So once you have that reminding of why you are doing it then it is as bit easier to motivate yourself and that comes from motivation. But I feel like also having a really strong social support network and really supportive family and friends who also understand your why and are willing to back you and to create space and facilitate your life in a way which is going to allow you to be active in these different spaces. And like for Trixie, it’s being able to have family who are willing to wake up at who knows what time this morning to drive her 45 minutes to the airport in Invercargill so she could fly up to Christchurch. I’m sure you [Lucy] can’t drive - you’re 12 - so I’m sure your parents have to drive you everywhere you need to go for meetings, for strikes, for different activities to have your voice be heard and progress this really important thing for you.  I’m in the same way, my family is really supportive and am still a fulltime med student and that takes a lot of time but because I know why I’m doing what I’m doing then it does motivate me to keep at it. |
| Sally | One other issue I imagine that you may face or may not, is peer pressure. I mean the School Strikes 4 Climate are a very big global movement and is there pressure for people to take part? If so, is that a good thing? |
| Lucy | It’s in different ways. Like some people will pressure us and say you need to get mayoral candidates up on the stage and tell them what you want to see them do and you need to get the National Party up at your strikes and tell them that they’re doing the wrong thing, and you need to do this and that and people need to participate in the strikes. From a strike perspective, from an organiser perspective, we’re a non-partisan organisation so we can’t side with any party and we don’t because we’re wanting government change, not just changes in individual parties.  In terms of peer pressure of attending strikes, I think for some people it is really hard because - in my friendship group even, like, all my friends are super supportive which is amazing and some people at my school, I know that they’re not able to participate because their parents aren’t supportive or they just have no way to get there or some people won’t want to participate - and there is some pressure, but I think I feel like they kind of have to take a stand in themselves and not just listen to others and go oh, if you’re going then I’ll go. Like, if you’re going then it’s because you’re passionate about what is happening not because someone else has told you to.  It is hard. I don’t think it’s something that we’ve really had a huge struggle with but it’s definitely something that has been difficult. |
| Sally | One other point that I wanted to bring up that from my perspective might be a challenge, is do you ever get frustrated that things aren’t moving along? That probably comes along with being young and having no political voice in terms of voting as being a key mechanism for change. I open it up for the floor. |
| Trixie | It is really frustrating actually. At our school everyone has different opinions and I feel like I am always fighting just to even have a say in things because everyone else shuts you down really quick and I want to be really careful about what I say because even though I’m proud Māori, I’m also really proud of my Irish and Scottish, my Pākehā mum. But seeing how washed out our Māori culture is at the moment, that’s why I’m focusing on that. I’ve got to be really careful sometimes, people like to say things like, “Oh you’re pale skinned, you can’t always be fighting for Māori.” |
| Lucy | I’ve been in that situation before. I’m part of a kapa haka group, I’m part of te reo extension, and we go to the cultural festival and I was in my uniform, and someone walked past and was like, “Oh you are Pākehā wearing Māori clothes, that doesn’t work.” It’s like, well it’s not about who you identify, it’s about what you advocate for. |
| Allie | And do you have to be of a certain ethnicity or culture to be able to connect with and value the voices and also want to support that movement? I guess not and I don’t think so. |
| Sylvia | When it comes to activism, it’s playing the long game in a way and there are short-term wins that can be made but looking at those firmly as a researcher and political participation, I’m really aware that often we’ve missed the underlying shifts that happen and often in our media commentary and things like that as well. We talk about things like social movements and activism as something that is spontaneous and that it comes from nowhere; actually it doesn’t. Even something like that school strikes, I mean yes it took Greta Thunberg to sit down in front of the Swedish Parliament to catalyse that movement, but that movement didn’t come from nowhere. I mean groups like Lucy’s group were already getting together then and talking about climate change and there was a whole range of other groups within New Zealand for example, that were organising around this. And Greta’s actions brought all of that together but we sort of miss that there’s all this organising already happening and when they all come together, you can see these quite amazing shifts happen very fast. So even when it’s really frustrating and seems like nothing is happening, often a lot is happening and we often miss it. |
| Sally | I think that’s a good point to bear in mind, happening below the surface perhaps, below the radar. |
| Allie | I guess it’s also about being process-oriented and results-oriented. We’re carrying forward a process of change that as you said is a long game, so it’s not about seeing the results tomorrow and saying, “OK, we’ve accomplished a task” but it’s having that vision of what are we working towards and how long is it going to take to get there. |
| Sally | Perfect place for our final song, because in our final segment we’re going to be thinking about what do you hope for the future and how are we going to get there? |
|  | **MUSIC - ‘Hutia Te Rito’** |
| Sally | You’re listening to Speak Up - Kōrerotia on Plains FM, 96.9. We’re going to think about now what would our youth activists like to see happen in their youth activist spaces. Sylvia, perhaps we’ll just kick off with you. As a researcher, what would you like to see happen? And then we’ll hear from our other panellists. |
| Sylvia | I’d like to see the voting age lowered to 16, just throwing that out there. |
| Sally | I was listening to you talk, Lucy, and thinking there is no reason you should not be voting, absolutely none at all. |
| Lucy | I think it’s also about understanding even if someone is doing really good stuff and they have ideas but they’re not necessarily going to put them into action. They’re saying I’ll do this, I’ll do this and they’re like a parliament candidate. You have to understand that voting for one person, even if they have really good ideas but they’re not going to get very many votes is almost giving a vote to someone who necessarily doesn’t have the same views as you and I think it’s really important to know that… Because people say that I’m going to do this, I’m going to do this, I’m going to do this. As we know, they don’t always follow up with that and that’s something that is really easy to get drawn into a trap because they’re so convincing and it’s really important to understand that. |
| Allie | I’m keen to hear from you Lucy, what would you like to see achieved within this movement? |
| Lucy | Well we have four key demands. So our first demand is that government declares a climate and ecological crisis or emergency. Our second demand is that government, because the Pacific is struggling and we are not acknowledging that enough, we need to actually support them and we also want to see them actually rebuilding a renewable and sustainable economy and bring everyone with us in a just transition.  We don’t want people left behind who have been taken out of their jobs, like you can’t put a farmer into an accounting business. You have to use people’s skillsets that they already have. Another demand is that they stop all coal and oil extraction. That includes ending current agreements they have with coal and oil industries and I think it’s really important to acknowledge that the Zero Carbon Bill as it is, is not going to achieve that. We need to put it into practice where it’s actually all parties are supporting it and actually it’s going to make a difference. So we need there to be a methane statement more clearly, there needs to be actual consequences if people do not meet these targets, and it needs to be legally enforceable, because if it’s not then it’s like a party can come in and just take it out and it needs to be enforceable like the justice system is enforceable. Like a party can’t just come in and take out the justice system, that would not align with the beliefs of society. So it needs to be as strong as that and it needs to be as accountable. |
| Trixie | I’d just like to say that the way you speak is beautiful. |
| Allie | Very articulate. |
| Trixie | Moving.  In the future, I want everyone to be happy. There’s no need to be hurtful or be discriminatory because of where someone comes from or what they believe in. I think it’s just really dumb how people do that. I’m not very good at using big words like you guys but I just want everyone to be happy. |
| Sally | I think that’s also very beautiful. |
| Lucy | Yes, that was what I was about to say, it’s so simple. |
| Trixie | But it’s not, it’s something you’ve got to work towards. |
| Lucy | It’s such a simple concept but it seems so hard to accomplish. |
| Allie | Yes. I think a happy society is a productive and harmonious society and I guess my vision, which is partly from the Bahá’í perspective, is that we have a vision for a harmonious and united world in society which embraces diversity, which sees difference as a good thing, as a tool for innovation and for the development of new ideas, for learning from other people. I feel like in New Zealand we’re really, really blessed with a really diverse physical environment, beautiful physical environment and we should mirror those attributes in our social interactions as well and want to see communities where people feel valued and that their cultural and religious practices are honoured and also uplifted by others. |
| Sally | That seems like a very lovely place to end our conversation. Kia ora mō te wā. Thank you so much for taking the time. |
| Sylvia | I’m quite honoured and humbled to be part of this kōrero. |
|  | **MUSIC -  Debbie Gibson, 'Electric Youth'** |