

# ELLIOT MCKENZIE

*THEY/THEM*

APPLYING FOR SECRETARY & GENERAL  
BOARD MEMBER

Elliot is a transgender writer & artist studying Fine Arts and English at Elam and the University of Auckland. They love to connect with others as a local community volunteer, most recently at Kai Avondale just around the corner from their house. In their spare time they love playing video games with their siblings, beating others at board games and getting outside for a nice long hike.

## **What made you want to join the RY board?**

I have a strong desire to help facilitate real social change in Aotearoa. I am particularly interested in and aware of barriers faced by transgender youth. I want to work with others to address and improve upon some of these pressing issues and to help make a difference for our gender diverse rangatahi.

I also want to do my part to give back to this organisation because of my own positive experience with Rainbow Youth's services. I connected with some really great people when I first attended GQ way back in 2012 and from attending Star\* more recently. I know how important this organisation can be for young people who are finding themselves. I think that Rainbow Youth is a really great space for learning and I would use my position on the board as an opportunity to develop my leadership and governance skills.

## **RainbowYOUTH is on a journey to proactively and respectfully uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi. How would you contribute to this journey?**

Māori perspectives have often been silenced and erased because of colonisation. I think that Rainbow Youth is on the right track by trying to consider Te Tiriti in a more proactive way, because systemic racism is a huge issue in our country. Personally, I try to read and listen carefully to Māori people's ideas and experiences and to question the Pakeha version of history I have been taught. I think it's important to understand the limitations of my worldview and be open to learning new things. I have a very basic understanding of Tikanga Māori and I am particularly interested to learn more about this idea.

## **What particular skills do you think you have that would make you suitable for the RY board?**

I am committed to the kaupapa of Rainbow Youth.

My patience, empathy and good listening skills allow me to communicate and work well with people of all ages.

I am a concise writer who can express their ideas clearly. I have good critical thinking skills which I have developed at University.

I enjoy working with others and often have creative ideas and solutions to problems. Most importantly, I am very eager to learn and would be very willing to develop my leadership and governance skills in this position.