



Hey! My name is Emily, I am a 15 year old queer person that lives in Dunedin. And I am a year 11 student that attends Otago Girl's High School.

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

I would like to be a member on the Rainbow Youth board because I want to use my voice to make valuable changes to the current system in New Zealand. Rainbow Youth is an incredible organisation that is extremely necessary in this day and age, because it is one of the only organisations that are enforcing change in order to make New Zealand a safer environment for queer people to thrive. When I first began to question my identity, there were hardly any resources in support for the queer community that I could easily get my hands on. This was deeply frustrating, because I didn't feel at all comfortable in who I was and I didn't understand what was 'wrong with me'. I believe that being a Rainbow Youth Board Member would be an incredible opportunity to bond with fellow queers and create valuable change in New Zealand, and make our country much safer and welcoming for young queer people.

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

To continue talking about Te Tiriti and acknowledge its importance and relevance today. Because if we don't keep it in conversation, we cannot improve on the systemic oppression and biases towards the indigenous people of our country.

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

I have confidence in public speaking. When I was 14, I won a school speech competition with my speech written about raising awareness of the unspoken realities of being LGBTQ+ in New Zealand. I enjoy taking a creative stance on things, I like to push the creative boundaries when working on projects. The subject of LGBTQ+ rights is very important to me, and I am extremely passionate about this. As a queer person growing up in environments that aren't exactly healthy and good for my personal growth, I am very familiar with the struggles. I am very willing to learn a lot more about social issues in NZ, and becoming more aware of the different queer experiences people have. I am a part of multiple extracurriculars at my school. I am involved in my school's QSA, which is an amazing and safe environment for the queer folk at my school to socialise and be unapologetically ourselves (this is probably the only safe place for queer people in my school). And I am also involved in my school's Amnesty International group. Amnesty is a

student led extracurricular that focuses on social justice, and how we can make a difference in our school environment and community. In this group, myself and a few other students are working on a small project that could force Otago Girl's to be much more welcoming and accepting of genderqueer students.. We are working on a pronouns and name changing form that allows trans students to safely let select teachers know what pronouns to refer to them as, and the name they would like to be called. This form will include how they want to be referred to other teachers as, on their reports, and to the student body. This would be extremely confidential, because of the dangers of being outed to family members or the student body if it isn't entirely safe. I work well in group environments. I love to work with other people because it's important to have a range of opinions and ideas from others.