



YMCA Victoria  
**YOUTH  
PRESS GALLERY**

2026 Application Information Pack



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Dear young Victorians and advocates of young people,

In 2026 we will see the 40th anniversary of the Victorian Youth Parliament run by The Y Victoria unfold. This will continue the program's legacy of being the longest running annual state forum for young people aged 16-25 to call for change in the state of Victoria. The program is well renowned for its commitment to authentic youth participation in civic and political process, and personally, I consider it to be one of the most empowering and enriching opportunities a young person in Victoria can experience.



**Kaitlin (Sheepy) Woolford**  
Program Director  
2026 YMCA Victoria  
Youth Parliament

The Youth Press Gallery program offers 10-15 young aspiring journalists from across Victoria the opportunity to amplify the voices of our young people from one of the most influential positions in our state; the chambers of Victorian Parliament House. Throughout the history of the Youth Press Gallery program, more than 25 young people have gone on to have their articles published, and/or are now working in the journalism industry as a result of participating in this program. In addition to the article development and other industry skill development offered on this program, the residential camping experience that we value on Youth Parliament offers Youth Parliamentarians and Press Gallery members an immersive environment for experiential learning and the development of personal and professional skills.

Applications to our program are always extremely competitive. To apply, please read the information and instructions on the following pages prior to submitting your application.

Please reach out with any questions or concerns that you may have during the application process.

Sincerely,

**Kaitlin (Sheepy) Woolford**  
Program Director - 2026 YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament

# WHAT IS YOUTH PRESS GALLERY?

Youth Press Gallery is a program for young people aged 16-25 who are interested in gaining experience and developing skills in political journalism, videography, photography and social media. Participants will serve as the Press Gallery for The Y Victoria's Youth Parliament.

The Youth Press Gallery program is an important part of ensuring that the voices of young Victorians are heard. It is a great opportunity for aspiring journalists to bring attention to the issues that they're passionate about. Prior to the residential aspects of Youth Parliament, the Youth Press Gallery will partake in a series of workshops with industry professionals, equipping participants with relevant industry skills to produce stories for major publications and prepare for a career in media, politics and public policy.

Youth Press Gallery alumni participants have gone on to work for news organisations like the ABC, and some articles have been published in the ABC, SBS, Crikey and local papers such as the Macedon Ranges Leader and Bendigo Weekly.

Please note, there is no cost attributed to participating in this program – participants will receive all meals, accommodation, and activities during the residential aspects of the program free of charge.

“ This program has helped me develop my portfolio which is wonderful. Both of my articles from the program are getting published which I'm extremely grateful for. I also adored working in Parliament for the week

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- 2025 Youth Press Gallery Participant



## WHAT IS YOUTH PRESS GALLERY *continued*

### TRAINING WORKSHOPS (FEBRUARY - JUNE):

The Youth Press Gallery program will commence with a compulsory full-day workshop to be held at the Y Australia offices in Essendon Fields on the 28th of February 2026. This day will set up the Youth Press Gallery for success in the program, allowing participants to understand and begin preparing for Youth Parliament.

Outside of the first workshop and in the lead up to to, and between, residential camps, the Youth Press Gallery will meet online so that participants can;

- Get to know the group of aspiring journalists
- Meet and network with professionals in the journalism industry
- Develop skills that are highly sought after in journalists
- Develop their pieces for Youth Parliament

Meetings will be held fortnightly from 5.30-7.30pm on the following dates:

**12th and 26th March**

**9th and 23rd April**

**7th and 21st May**

**4th and 18th June**

**9th July**

### TRAINING DAY (SATURDAY 23RD MAY):

The Training Day is a full day onsite at our residential camp, Lake Dewar Discovery Camp, where Youth Press Gallery participants will upskill in journalistic methods and practice covering the Youth Parliament. Participants will also meet the Youth Parliamentarians whose Bill they are covering and interview them to begin creating their article.

Across the day, participants will;

- Get hands on experience in videography and photography
- Develop their in-person interviewing skills
- Begin preparing their pieces on Youth Parliament teams and Bills
- Practice debate coverage, including live-tweeting and quoting from active debate
- Engage in civics based sessions to increase their democratic knowledge
- Engage in community-building sessions with the Youth Parliamentarians

Participants will be expected to arrive onsite by 9am and will finish the day at 8pm, with the option to stay for a whole camp activity.



## THE WEEK OF YOUTH PARLIAMENT (28TH JUNE - 3RD JULY)

This is it! The Week of Youth Parliament is a six (6) day residential camp, also at Lake Dewar Discovery Camp. This is when Youth Press Gallery participants will cover their chosen Bills at Parliament House.

**NOTE:** This year, Youth Press Gallery members will NOT be required to stay onsite at camp for the duration of the 6 days. They WILL be required to arrive by 9am at Parliament House for the 3 sitting days and stay for the entire day. Participants WILL also be required to attend the full Wednesday at camp, allowing them to touch base with their chosen teams and continue writing their articles. They will also be required to log in online each night (not Wednesday) of the week-long program to continue developing their articles.

The Youth Press Gallery members will also be invited, and required to attend, to Government House alongside the Youth Parliamentarians on Tuesday 30th June after the sitting day has concluded at Parliament House.

Across the week, participants will:

- Travel to Parliament House on their sitting days (Mon 29th-Tues 30th-Thurs 2nd)
- Cover their chosen debates using a specific journalistic medium (i.e. social media, written articles, or photography)
- Continue to develop their pieces outside of debates
- Engage in civics based sessions to increase their democratic knowledge
- Engage in community-building and global citizen based sessions with the Youth Parliamentarians

“ I learnt how the media industry works behind the scenes, including how stories are chosen, written, and edited under pressure. These insights and skills like interviewing, writing clearly, and thinking critically will be useful in any future work I do in media or advocacy.

- 2025 Youth Press Gallery Participant

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# PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

Due to the limited spaces on the program, unfortunately some applicants miss out. It is imperative that every participant applicant understands the expectations of them, and is willing to meet the expectations.

The expectations are as follows:

- Participants commit to attending **ALL** Youth Press Gallery workshops, including the full-day workshops
- Participants must attend the entire Saturday of the residential training weekend, the six-day online aspects of the Week of Youth Parliament program, attend the full day at Parliament House on 29th, 30th June, and 2nd July, and attend the reception at Government House on Tuesday 30th June.
- While on the program, participants must respect that the Y has duty of care for all participants, even if they are over the age of 18. This means that all participants must adhere to all procedures and policies and must stay on site at all times.
- While on the residential program, participants are expected to participate in all sessions and activities to the best of their ability.
- Participants are expected to respect the diversity and the opinions of other young people on the program and understand that the Victorian Youth Parliament program is a place for sharing ideas and learning new things.
- Participants understand that the Victorian Youth Parliament and Youth Press Gallery is a non-partisan, issues-based program and is not affiliated with any political party or specific ideologies.
- Participants should note that Youth Parliament is an alcohol, drug, and weapon free program. No alcohol, drugs or weapons are allowed onto the program in it's entirety.

# WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE

- Two residential camping experiences, including; full catering, accommodation (if required), and transport to and from Government House, with optional transport to the campsite.
- Three days of reporting on debates in the chambers of the Parliament House of Victoria, Spring Street (this opportunity is afforded to very few programs, so we are lucky to be able to do so).
- Coaching and mentoring from the Taskforce for the duration of the program.
- Key industry workshops led by industry professionals to build journalistic skills.
- A suite of best practice leadership and teamwork training that can be applied to a multitude of contexts beyond the program.

# APPLICATION DETAILS

**APPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH PRESS GALLERY WILL BE OPEN UNTIL 11.59PM ON MONDAY 2ND FEBRUARY 2026**

Head over to our website and fill out the application form, or [apply here!](#)  
Please note: you MUST be aged 16-25 at the time of the residential camps to participate.

**Applications close Monday 2nd February 2026 at 11.59pm.**

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by the 9th of February via email. If you have any questions about the application pack or the program, please contact: Lauri Pavlovich or Natalie Ryan (Youth Press Gallery Leaders) at: [pressgallery@ymca.org.au](mailto:pressgallery@ymca.org.au)

## PLEASE NOTE:

- Applications for YMCA Victorian Youth Press Gallery is very competitive and is capped at 15 participants.
- Each application will be assessed on a uniform criteria to provide a balanced and accurately representative program which includes the vast spectrum of young Victorians.
- Selection of participants will be based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:
  - Demonstration of reasonable aptitude in relevant skills via submission of a portfolio of work and article pitch.
  - Applications are detailed and submitted on time.
  - Proportionate representation of metropolitan and rural young people.
  - Equal representation of Victoria's gender & cultural diversity.
  - The benefit provided to the individual.

## HOW TO APPLY

Please read through the information pack and complete the application form:  
<https://vicyouth.ymca.org.au/learning-and-leadership/youth-press-gallery/apply>

For any questions regarding the application process, please email [pressgallery@ymca.org.au](mailto:pressgallery@ymca.org.au)

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## KEY CONTACTS DURING THE APPLICATION PERIOD

**Lauri Pavlovich & Natalie Ryan** - Youth Press Gallery Leaders

[pressgallery@ymca.org.au](mailto:pressgallery@ymca.org.au)