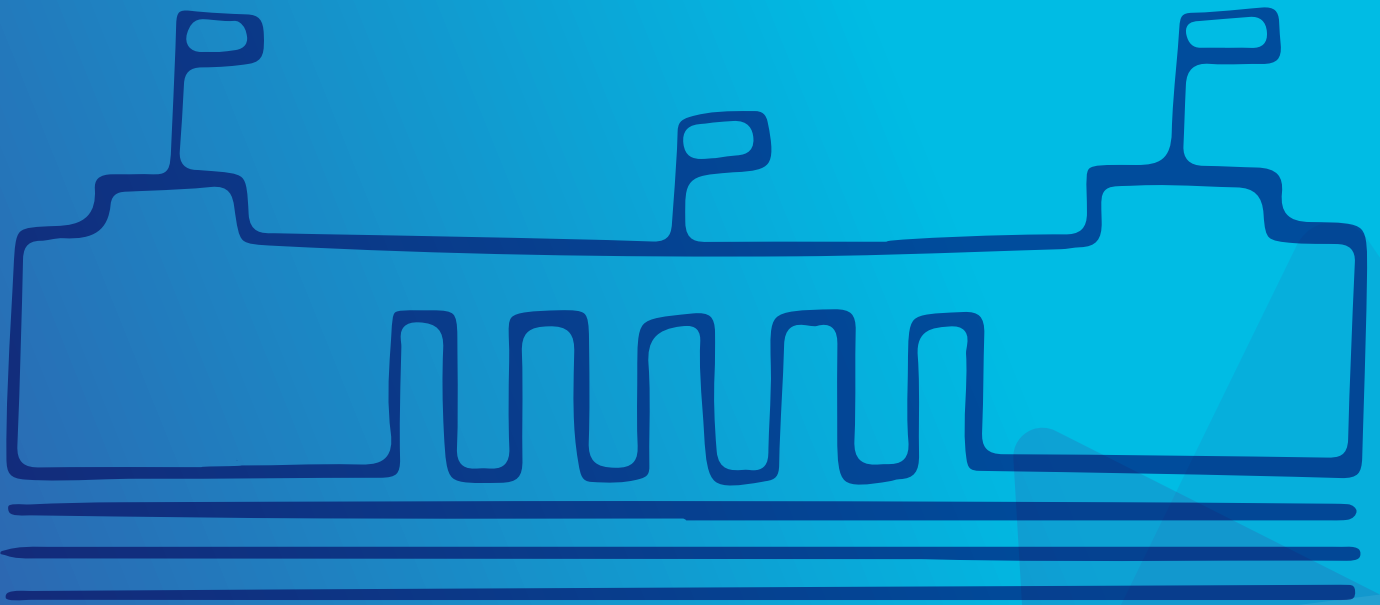


Y Victoria

YOUTH PARLIAMENT

PROGRAM REPORT 2023



Acknowledgment of Country

The Y's Victorian Youth Parliament recognises and pays respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who live within and across the borders of colonial Victoria. We pay respect to this land that has been cared for by generations, including the rivers and waterways, and the animals and plants. We also acknowledge the unbroken chain of storytelling and culture that has connected generations of Indigenous peoples for over 60,000 years.

We acknowledge that Youth Parliament is run on sites across Wathaurong and Wurundjeri lands, and hosts teams who come from and are based on traditional lands across Victoria, and pay our respects to the Elders and people of those lands. We also acknowledge the pain and trauma experienced by ongoing colonial practices and that truth-telling and healing is a continuing process with many stories still left unheard.

Every year on Youth Parliament, providing Indigenous young people with the opportunity to be heard on a legislative level is a priority. We hope to continue to learn and improve our practices to amplify Indigenous voices in a culturally sensitive and empowering way.



Pictured Artwork created by OSHC students during 2020 Reconciliation Week.

OVERVIEW

For the 37th Victorian Youth Parliament, new participants were welcomed in to the YMCA's camp community at Lake Dewar Discovery Camp and returning participants were welcomed back. Over the program, participants engaged in personal and professional development sessions, recreation, and training for debates at campsite. Participants also travelled to Parliament House for the sitting days where visitors could see Youth Parliamentarians advocating for change in the very seats held by Victorian Members of Parliament.

This report tells the story of how Youth Parliamentarians, Youth Press Gallery Journalists, and Taskforce members engaged in the Youth Parliament program and the impact that it had on them as empowered young people. Our young people began conducting preparations for the program in December (Taskforce), February (Youth Parliamentarians), and April (Youth Press Gallery Journalists) and continued into May for the Participant Training Weekend and June for the Week of Youth Parliament, with the sitting days being held on the 26th, 27th, and 29th of June 2023.

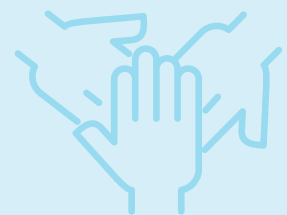
The volunteer Taskforce were exceptionally committed this year to develop and deliver an inspiring and outcome-driven program for the participant base. The result of this space being thoughtfully curated was a great achievement of program outcomes and inspiration in all young people involved.



“

(My biggest highlight was) going to Parliament House and feeling like, as a women, this is a viable career path for me.

”



- Youth Parliamentarian 2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank the people and partners who made this year possible.

Firstly, I would like to thank the volunteer Taskforce: Miora, Martina, Sam, Sheepy, Aimee, Georgia, Lily, Noah, Hannah, Anna, Alex, Katelyn, Declan, Ash, Oscar, and Ruby. Your immense efforts in bringing this program to life is reflected in the successes written throughout this report. This endeavour could not have been achieved without you all. Additionally, thank you to Chris and Paul who supported the team on the Participant Training Weekend, and Bailey who was invaluable on the Week of Youth Parliament. Your enthusiasm and expertise elevated the experience of both the participants and Taskforce.

Secondly, the team from The Y Victoria was pivotal in collaborating to ensure that our young people and volunteers were entering a space that felt safe and empowering. To the Youth, Communications, IT, Risk and Social Impact teams, thank you for your hard work and dedication to our program and young people.

Thirdly, I would like to thank the Office for Youth at the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the Victorian Electoral Commission and the Parliament House of Victoria staff. Your programmatic support through communications, staffing, team sponsorship, training, and liaison support ensured that the 2023 Youth Parliament was a successfully empowering and accessible program for our young people.

Finally, thank you to our Youth Parliamentarians and Youth Press Gallery Journalists. It is your passion, hard work, and creativity which bring meaning to Youth Parliament and communicate the priorities of young people through Bills and media exposure. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Resource People who supported our participants across the year. You are pivotal to young people feeling safe and able to engage in the program year on year.

Sincerely,
Tessa Buchanan

Program Director - 2023 The Y Victoria Youth Parliament



Tessa Buchanan
Program Director -
2023 Victoria Youth Parliament

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The 37th YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament was guided by a series of strategic goals, developed by the Victorian Government and the Y Victoria. They were:

- to provide learning opportunities for young people including personal development, team work, civics and leadership skills
- to help to empower young people, build their confidence, resilience and self-responsibility through a youth participation approach
- to provide opportunities for young people to participate in the decision-making, management and operation of the program
- to provide training for young people and adults to support their participation in the program and development of transferable skills
- to elevate the voice of diverse young people through media training and professional interactions with Youth Press Gallery journalists and other media
- to recognise the valuable contribution that can be made by young people to the community
- to enable and promote young people's participation in formulation and publicly debating ideas and opinions on issues of community concern, using democratic processes.



TIMELINE

Team Recruitment:
14 October – 14 November 2022,
all teams confirmed on
18 November 2022

Taskforce Recruited:
3 December 2022

**Participant
Information Night:**
8 February 2023

Bills Developed:
19 February – 30 April 2023

**Team Meetings
(Training and
Mentoring):**
February – May 2023

**Online Training
Workshop:**
9 March 2023

**Participant Training
Weekend:**
26 – 28 May 2023

**Optional Speech
Writing Nights:**
7, 14 and 22 June 2023

**Week of Youth
Parliament:**
25 – 30 June 2023

PARTICIPANT PROGRAM RATING



84%

“Youth Parliament felt **welcoming and inclusive.**”



92%

“Youth Parliament gave me a **platform to be heard and respected in society.**”



86%

“**I felt safe and supported** throughout Youth Parliament.”



87%

“I would **recommend Youth Parliament to my peers**”



93%

“I will use what I learnt on Youth Parliament **now and in the future.**”



87%

“I feel **empowered to make change** in my community.”



88%

“As a result of Youth Parliament, I **am now more confident.**”



89%

“Youth Parliament gave me an opportunity to **develop my teamwork skills.**”



87%

“As a result of Youth Parliament, I **developed leadership skills.**”



88%

“I have a **stronger voice and am able to be heard more clearly on issues that I care about** because of my involvement in Youth Parliament”



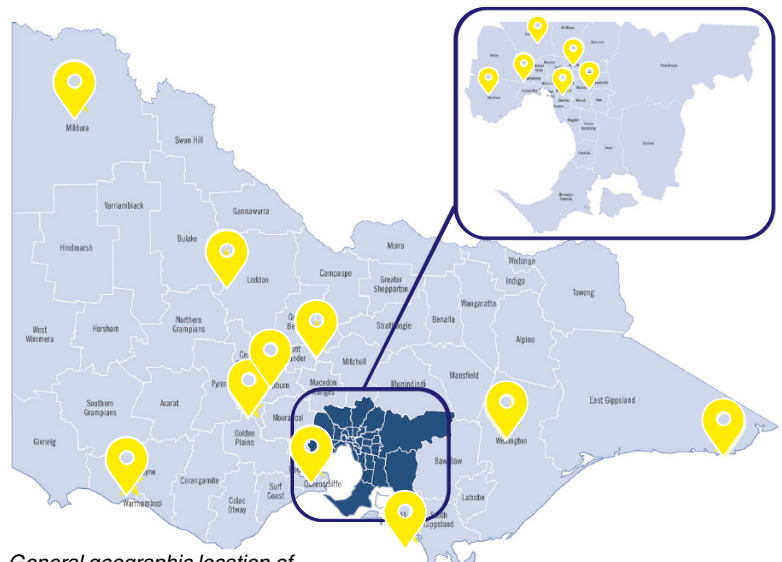
77%

“The skills I learnt as part of the program **would be hard to learn in a classroom setting.**”

REPRESENTATION

Since a Parliament is designed to represent as many voices as possible, the geographic and demographic representation of young Victorians participating in Youth Parliament was a key selection criterion.

The below data demonstrates the geographic and demographic make-up of 2023's Youth Parliamentarians, Youth Press Gallery Journalists and Taskforce.



General geographic location of Youth Parliament teams in 2023

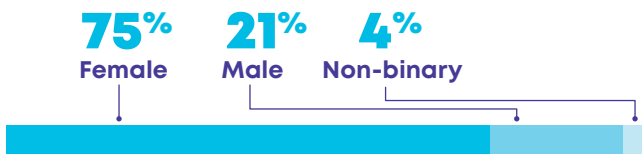
20 TEAMS

10 RURAL / REGIONAL

8 METRO

2 CULTURAL GROUPS WITH PARTICIPANTS FROM ACROSS THE STATE

YOUTH PARLIAMENT TASKFORCE MEMBERS:

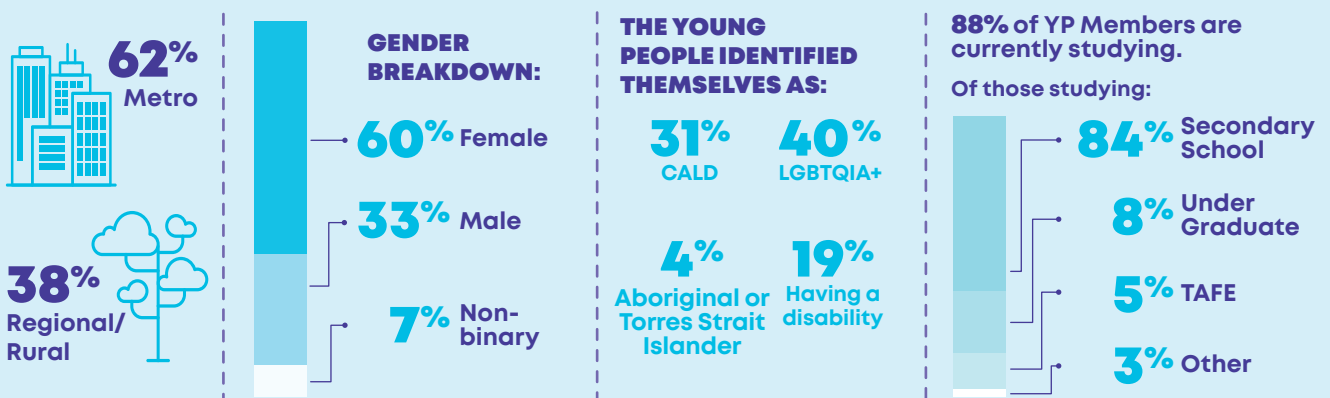


THE YOUNG PEOPLE IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS:



120 YOUTH PARLIAMENTARIANS RECRUITED:

Due to late withdrawals not being able to be replaced, 105 participated in the sitting week.



15 YOUTH PRESS GALLERY JOURNALISTS:

Due to late withdrawals not being able to be replaced, 11 participated in the sitting week.



TASKFORCE

From October 2022 to July 2023, over 6,776 hours were contributed by 20 passionate young volunteers to develop and deliver the Youth Parliament and Youth Press Gallery program.

This equates to a total of 892 standard work days, with each volunteer donating an average of 45 work days to the programs. The Taskforce dedicated their time and expertise to collaborate and innovate the delivery of the program, and significantly impact the outcomes that young people achieved from participating in the 2023 program.

The Taskforce consisted of five portfolios: Parliamentary Training, Participant Logistics, Youth Press Gallery, Wreck and Communications & Stakeholder Engagement. The executive leadership team consisted of the Program Director, the Youth Governor, and the Directors of each portfolio. The Taskforce and their positions were:

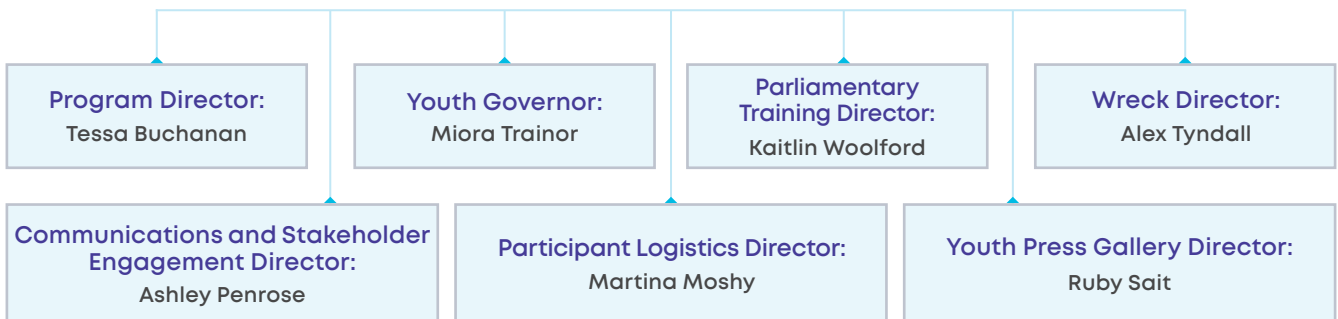
“

I'm so grateful to them all [Taskforce], they instilled so much confidence in me and made me feel supported and cared for.

– 2023 Youth Parliamentarian

”

EXECUTIVE



GENERAL



TASKFORCE IMPACT

In 2023 the team of passionate Taskforce stepped up to deliver another life changing program for young people in Victoria.

As seen from the impact results above, the program had a significant social impact on Youth Parliamentarians and Youth Press Gallery Journalists. The program also strives to provide Taskforce with a number of development opportunities and outcomes. Below shows the impact that the program had on the 2023 Taskforce:



100%

of Taskforce members said Taskforce felt welcoming & inclusive.



100%

of Taskforce said they feel valued by the Y.



100%

of Taskforce said Taskforce was run with professionalism & efficiency



100%

of Taskforce feel more inspired to contribute to positive change and social impact in their community.

“

I had a ball speaking in Parliament House and meeting with some [Members of Parliament].

– 2023 Youth Parliamentarian

”



TASKFORCE IMPACT

PRE AND POST PROGRAM SURVEYS ALSO SHOWED EVIDENCE OF **DIRECT IMPACT ON SKILL DEVELOPMENT** IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:



AMBASSADORSHIP



TEAMWORK



COMMUNICATIONS



**STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT**



PROGRAM DESIGN



**PROFESSIONAL
CONDUCT**



**ORGANISATION AND
TIME MANAGEMENT**



DEBRIEFING



**FLEXIBILITY AND
ADAPTABILITY**

DEVELOPMENT

PARTICIPANT TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES:



BILL DEVELOPMENT AND DRAFTING



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATING STRUCTURE AND ETIQUETTE



INTRODUCTION TO VOTING (RUN BY THE VEC)



MEDIA & INTERVIEWING TRAINING



PUBLIC SPEAKING

CHAMBERS

During the May Training Weekend, four Chamber Leaders were elected through preferential voting held within each Chamber which consisted of five teams. From these Chamber Leaders, an election was held to appoint the 2023 Youth Premier, voted on by all Youth Parliamentarians and Youth Press Gallery Journalists.

“

The program is voicing the opinions of young people, developing team working and debate skills, [and] forming community between young people.

- 2023 Youth Parliamentarian

”

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Government

Youth Premier:
Krushnadevsinh (Kano) Ravalji
- Wyndham City Council

Teams:

- Y Geelong
- Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School
- Daylesford Secondary College
- Wyndham City Council
- Wellington Shire Council

Opposition

Leader of Opposition:
Dimithri Wickramaratne
- Pasefika Navigators

Teams:

- Boroondara Youth
- City of Greater Bendigo
- Pasefika Navigators
- Buloke-Loddon
- Hoppers Crossing Secondary College

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Government

Chamber Leader:
Ella Shelden
- Moyne NextGen!

Teams:

- Moyne NextGen!
- Whitehorse City Council
- Mildura Rural City Council
- Y Ballarat
- Korin Gamadji Institute

Opposition

Chamber Leader:
Gabe Pascoe
- Newhaven College

Teams:

- Westbourne Grammar School
- Newhaven College
- Overnewton Anglican Community College
- Hume City Council
- Orbost Secondary College

YOUTH PARLIAMENTARIAN IMPACT

These key findings show the difference in young people’s opinion of themselves before and after taking part in Youth Parliament and were gathered from pre and post program surveys. As a direct result of the Youth Parliament program, Youth Parliamentarians reported:

(Percentages below reflect participant responses of either “good” or “excellent”)

66% → 85%

Increased confidence to **engage with political and civic processes**

77% → 89%

Increased confidence to **vote at the next local, state or federal election**

61% → 94%

Increased **connection to a community** of passionate young people

65% → 91%

Increased confidence in **speaking in front of an audience of strangers**

80% → 91%

Increased confidence in **expressing themselves and their opinions** in day to day life

77% → 83%

Increased belief that they have the **power to influence decisions** that affect me and my future

59% → 71%

Increased confidence when **speaking with the media, politicians and professionals.**

72% → 76%

Increased belief in **people valuing what young people think, say and do.**

This year’s program also focused on the development of specific skills.

As a direct result of the program, evidence suggests that the participants gained increased skills in:

Mindfulness & Self-care



Public speaking



Organisation / time management



Critical thinking



Socialising & Networking



Communication



Research



Teamwork



Problem-solving



YOUTH PRESS GALLERY

In 2023 the 10th iteration of the Youth Press Gallery program ran, with 11 emerging journalists engaging in 3 months of skill development and portfolio building opportunities across online meetings and the May Training Weekend.

Finally, the culmination of the Youth Press Gallery program saw the journalists reporting on the Youth Parliament proceedings and debates during the sitting week through written journalism, photography and videography.

IMPACT ON YOUTH PRESS GALLERY JOURNALISTS

As a result of participating in Youth Press Gallery, participants reported that:



87%

felt **safe and supported** throughout Youth Press Gallery.



80%

have a **stronger voice** and are able to be **heard more clearly on issues that matter to them**



80%

reported feeling more **prepared for a career in journalism** as a result of Youth Press Gallery



94%

of participants reported that Youth Press Gallery **felt welcoming and inclusive**



86%

have a **broader understanding of career options and opportunities**



80%

would **recommend** Youth Press Gallery **to their peers.**

YOUTH PRESS GALLERY

IMPACT

PRE AND POST SURVEYS ALSO SHOWED EVIDENCE OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE PROGRAM:

Mindfulness & Self-care



Social connection



Organisation and time management



Social media management



Problem-solving



Editing



Teamwork



Critical thinking



Interviewing



Photography

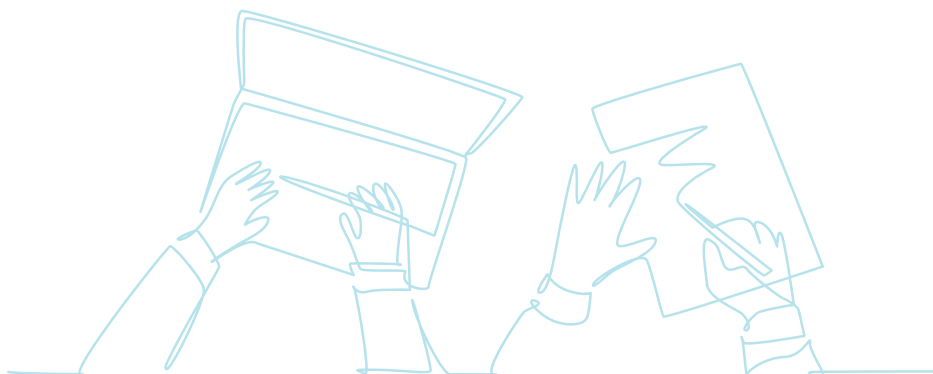


Pitching



YOUTH PRESS GALLERY JOURNALISTS

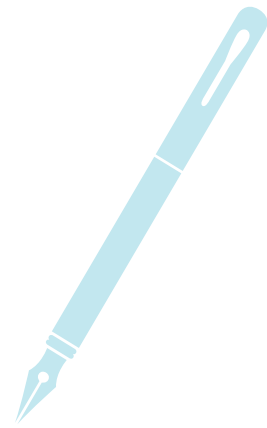
- Aidan Sinclair
- Alexia Hatzimihailidis
- Blake Lee
- Bonnie Collings
- Cathryn Langley
- Jemma van Zaanen
- Lauri Pavlovich
- Lilian Bernhardt
- Peifan Bai
- Saskia de Leeuw Kyle
- Tien Tran



YOUTH PRESS GALLERY

PUBLICATIONS

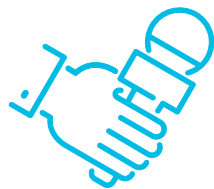
Our Youth Press Gallery members worked to cover the Youth Parliament teams and debates from April to July 2023. You can find links to publications on Youth Parliament by our participants here:



-  ***Hemi's rent has increased by \$160 since 2020 — so he took his concerns to the 37th Victoria Youth Parliament***
By Lillian Bernhardt
-  ***Young trailblazers propose Indigenous Youth Employment Hubs at Youth Parliament***
By Jemma van Zaanen
-  ***Youth Parliamentarians in Melbourne***
By Blake Lee
-  ***Young Advocates Propose Bill to Minimise Travel Emissions in Victoria***
By Tien Tran
-  ***Young Regional Victorians Stand Up Against Bullying***
By Cathryn Langley
-  ***Students lead fight for tougher child pornography laws***
By Jemma van Zaanen
-  ***Youth Parliamentarians Tackle Food Waste***
By Blake Lee
-  ***Ballarat Youth Take Parliament By Storm***
By Saskia De Leeuw Kyle

MEDIA COVERAGE

In 2023, numerous media mentions were made relating to the Victorian Youth Parliament, including in The Age, The Herald Sun, The New Daily and many more. Here is the impact that this had:



282
MEDIA MENTIONS



9.63M
POTENTIAL PEOPLE
REACHED

Of all sentiment captured in relation to media relating to the Victorian Youth Parliament program, none was negative, 54% was editorial (positive) and 46% was journalistic (neutral). This demonstrates how positively the program and the young people involved were perceived by the media across Victoria.

PROGRAM PARTNERS

Youth Parliament is privileged to benefit from the support of a variety of stakeholders.

The support from the following stakeholders provides everything from team financial support, expertise in program delivery, and liaising with significant figures to provide expert opinion to teams. Continued stakeholder commitment allows for Youth Parliament to be an increasingly accessible and impactful program. We would like to thank our core stakeholders:

The Office for Youth — Department of Families, Fairness & Housing

The Office for Youth (OfY) is integral to the running of Youth Parliament, year on year. Their bi-partisan commitment when in government and funding support provides the Y Victoria with the means to continue to engage with young people and community members through Youth Parliament. The financial support for rural and regional teams who would not otherwise have the means to access the program has enabled strong rural and regional presence in the program this year and across many previous years.

The Office for Youth was pivotal in connecting a significant number of teams to stakeholders in Government departments, including Members of Parliament. From these connections, teams were provided an opportunity to discuss their chosen issues with government officials and Members of Parliament, and afforded invaluable insights into their Bill topics. This opportunity is pivotal to the experience of Youth Parliamentarians to hear unique insights into their Bills.

Parliament of Victoria

Parliament House not only provides the venue for the three sitting days that Youth Parliament runs each year, but also provides the expertise of Parliament House staff. The support from staff is integral to empowering young people to be truly heard with legitimate debate rules and traditions adhered to throughout the typical Youth Parliament experience.

In 2023, the hard work of Parliament House staff ensured that debates were held to a high quality. Further, staff worked during the sitting days to provide us with proper Clerking and Hansard services, which elevated the participant experience and outcomes, and ensured the documenting of the 2023 Youth Parliament.

Our sincere thanks to the Presiding Officers for both allowing the young people of Victoria unique access to the chambers, and also for their direct involvement in this year's program and ceremonies. The program and participants also received ongoing support from House Department staff, Hansard and Broadcast, Catering, Security, IT & Cleaning team, all who make the experience realistic and memorable. Our engagement in Parliament would not have been possible without their efforts and your ongoing support for our program.

Victorian Electoral Commission

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) strives to ensure that teams of young people whose demographics are underrepresented in Victorian election are able to access our program regardless of economic status. The support from the VEC in 2023 meant that six teams from priority cohorts were provided with a sponsored place on Youth Parliament and the opportunity to access this unique experience.

The VEC also provided additional support and development to our volunteer Taskforce by running a training session centred around Victorian democracy, upskilling them to work more effectively with the participants. The VEC also delivered training on 'Democracy' and 'How to Vote' to all at the Participant Training Weekend on May 27th 2023. This was followed by the opportunity for all participants to run for a Chamber Leader role and also the role of Youth Premier. This saw real life elections and immersive voting experiences to appoint the peer elected roles, providing young people with hands-on civic engagement experience and procedure. As demonstrated by the social impact details above, these training and experiences left participants well informed and confident to engage in civic processes.



STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Our stakeholders meetings provide our young people the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion with political representatives or industry professionals in their area of advocacy, development, or electorate.

In 2023, 9 meetings occurred with 9 teams and the Youth Press Gallery, providing 54 of our young people with the opportunity to gain insights from state politicians and industry professionals. These meetings directly informed the Bills produced, debates engaged in, and media developed.

Our thanks to the following stakeholders who offered guidance to teams and journalists:

NAME	STAKEHOLDER ROLE/ ORG	TEAM
Lindsay Shaw	Senior Knowledge and Policy Officer Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation	Buloke-Loddon
Mark Riddiford	Senior Prevention Advisor (Education) Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation	Buloke-Loddon
James Fiford	Education, Inclusion & Youth Engagement Specialist Victorian Electoral Commission	Daylesford College
Georgie Purcell MP	Animal Justice Party Victorian Legislative Council	Hoppers Crossing Secondary College
Amanda Elliott	Policy Lead, Waste & Resource Recovery Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action	Mildura Rural City Council
Julie Russ	Senior Manager Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	Mildura Rural City Council
Tim Bull MP	Member for East Gippsland	Orbost Secondary College
Thomas Nice	Project Officer Department of Education and Training	Whitehorse City Council & Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School
Elise Willersdorf	Department of Education	Whitehorse City Council & Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School
Maddy Steinkoler	Senior Policy Officer Department of Education and Training	Whitehorse City Council & Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School
David Lee	Senior Policy Officer Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	Wyndham City Council
Jane Higgins	Policy Advisor Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action	Wyndham City Council
Alexandra Paleologoudias	Disability Education Support Coordinator Mount Alexander College	Y Geelong
Galdys Serugga	Journalist Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Youth Press Gallery
Kimberley Price	Reporter and Producer Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Youth Press Gallery
Leah Anderson-Byrne	Journalist Wangaratta Chronicle	Youth Press Gallery

TEAMS AND BILLS

In 2023, 20 teams developed Bills over a two-month period on a state-based issue they were passionate about, which were then debated and voted on by fellow Youth Parliamentarians. Of the 20 Bills, 18 received a majority vote at the conclusion of their vote and two did not. The teams, their Bills and outcomes can be found here:

TEAM	BILL TITLE	PASSED
Boroondara Youth	Travel Emission Reduction Strategies Bill 2023	✓
City of Greater Bendigo	Increasing Public Safety in Regional and Rural Areas Bill 2023	✓
Daylesford College	Lowering the Victorian Voting Age Bill 2023	✓
Hoppers Crossing Secondary College	Animal Welfare in Shelters Bill 2023	✓
Hume City Council	Urban Area Heat Temperature Bill 2023	✓
Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School	Textbook Reform in Secondary Schools Bill 2023	✓
Korin Gamadji Institute	Indigenous Youth Job Hubs Bill 2023	✓
Mildura Rural City Council	Increased Environmentally Sustainable Strategies Bill 2023	✓
Moyne NextGen!	Increased Access to Living in Regional Victoria Bill 2023	✓
Newhaven College	Increased Policing of Child Pornography Bill 2023	✓
Overnewton Anglican Community College	Reduction of Hostile Architecture Bill 2023	✓
Pasefika Navigators	Cultural Education in Schools and Communities Bill 2023	✓
Wellington Shire Council	Bullying Intervention and Prevention in Schools Bill 2023	✓
Westbourne Grammar School	Cybersecurity in Primary Schools Bill 2023	✓
Whitehorse City Council	Modernising the Education System Bill 2023	✓
Wyndham City Council	Food Waste Awareness and Reduction Bill 2023	✓
Y Ballarat	Residential Landlord and Tenancy Regulation Reform Bill 2023	✓
Y Geelong	Disability Inclusion in Victorian Secondary Education Bill 2023	✓
Buloke-Loddon	Limitation of Gambling Advertising Bill 2023	✗
Orbost Secondary College	Mandatory Day of Remote Education Bill 2023	✗

WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE BILLS?

Bills are debated by the Youth Parliamentarians and the issue is put to a vote, just like in Victorian Parliament. The Bills can pass on the voices (“aye” and “no”) or a division can be called if the Chamber Leaders feel the vote is close. This year the Minister for Youth, the Honourable Ros Spence MP, received the Bills that were passed and presented them to relevant Ministers for their consideration.

Over the years, 68 pieces of Victoria legislation or Government initiatives have found their origins in the Youth Parliament program. The ideas and concepts brought to the Victorian Youth Parliament display the remarkable forward thought and passion of young people in Victoria.

MATTER OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Each year, the Youth Parliament sitting week begins with a debate on a federal issue, coordinated by the Youth Governors across the Australian states and territories. All Youth Parliaments across Australia debate the same topic for consideration. In 2023, the Matter of Public Importance asked participants to discuss the topic:

This House Endorses the Implementation of a Federal Human Rights Bill.

Upon conclusion of the debate, both Houses of the Victorian Youth Parliament voted to agree with this statement.



For more information about the Youth Parliament program, please visit our website:
www.vicyouth.ymca.org.au/learning-and-leadership/youth-parliament

