



YMCA Victoria **YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

2025 Application Information Pack



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Dear young Victorians and advocates of young people,

In 2025 we will see the 39th Victorian Youth Parliament run by The Y Victoria come into fruition. 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
2025 YMCA Victoria
Youth Parliament

The Youth Parliament program offers 120 young people from across Victoria the opportunity to make change from one of the most influential positions in our state; the chambers of Victorian Parliament House. Over 60 Youth Parliament Bills have been adopted into current state legislation since the program's inception in 1986, including Bills on social issues, safety, education, environment, and more! To name a few, laws which mandate the wearing of bicycle helmets and the banning of lightweight plastic bags originated from participants on the program in the past. In addition to the Bill development and debating 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 - 2025 YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament

WHAT IS YOUTH PARLIAMENT?

Youth Parliament is an annual residential program run by the Y that draws together 20 teams (each comprised of 6 young people aged 16-25) from across Victoria to advocate for issues that matter to them. Across the span of 5 months, participants will learn about the Victorian legislative system, develop advocacy and community leadership skills, and create and debate their own proposed legislation (Bill) on an issue that they are passionate about.

The program is delivered in three blocks:

OFF-CAMP (TERM ONE AND TWO):

In the lead up to the residential camps, teams will meet and attend meetings with a mentor from the Taskforce. In these meetings, participants will;

- be assigned a Bill topic from their submitted preferences
- be supported in the drafting and development of their Bill
- be introduced to the parliamentary debate structure and etiquette
- gain an understanding of local, state and federal legislation

Teams may also be given the opportunity to meet with a stakeholder in the area of their Bill topic to discuss their Bill and advocate for change directly.

It is also recommended that teams meet frequently outside of their supported mentor meetings to keep on top of the Bill writing workload.

“ [Youth Parliament] gathered likeminded young individuals [and] provided a platform where they can share their stories and experiences. [The program] helps young people build their confidence and networks, whilst supporting young people to understand the political system. This is a once in a life time experience.

-Youth Parliamentarian



WHAT IS YOUTH PARLIAMENT continued

TRAINING WEEKEND (23RD – 25TH MAY):

The Training Weekend is a three (3) day residential camp at Lake Dewar Discovery Camp. It is the time for participants to learn about parliamentary debating and parliamentary etiquette, learn about and engage with media, and begin building a sense of community with other young people. Across the weekend, participants will:

- Finalise understanding in key training areas such as parliamentary etiquette and debate
- Engage in mock parliamentary debates
- Engage in media training and be interviewed on their Bill by the Youth Press Gallery
- Establish the Chambers for Sitting Week including appointment of leadership roles (Chamber Leaders and Youth Premier)
- Engage in skill development sessions covering topics such as confidence and leadership

THE WEEK OF YOUTH PARLIAMENT (6TH JULY - 11TH 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 Parliamentarians will debate their Bills at Parliament House in front of ministers and the public. They will also continue to develop personal and professional skills, and build connections with a group of passionate change-makers who may become important personal and professional contacts for years following participation in the program. Across the week, participants will:

- Connect with and build a community with other change-makers
- Continue to build leadership and advocacy skills while at campsite through tailor-made experiential learning sessions
- Travel by bus on the Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday of camp to Parliament House to participate in the Youth Parliament sitting week
- Gain practical experience in the parliamentary debating process – participating in both the sponsor (arguing for) and refuter (arguing against) roles for debate on Youth Parliament Bills
- Be given the opportunity to deliver a short speech directed to a state OR federal MP on an issue they are passionate about

KEY INFORMATION

WHEN Friday 23 May to Sunday 25 May 2025
(Youth Parliament Training Weekend)

Sunday 6 July to Friday 11 July 2025
(Week of Youth Parliament)

Please note; both residential components of the program are **COMPULSORY**. Participants will be required to attend for the full duration of the program.

WHERE Residential camp:
Lake Dewar Discovery Camp
339 Garrards Lane, MYRNIONG, 3341

COSTS \$5,700 (including GST) per
team of six participants

Funding assistance is available for eligible teams and individuals. Please find information on this funding assistance below.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE:

Youth Parliament is open to any young person:

- Residing in the state of Victoria; and
- Aged between 16 and 25 years at the time of the residential programs

FUNDING ASSISTANCE

We currently have two subsidized funding options for a limited number of Youth Parliament teams or individuals. To apply for funding assistance, please indicate this in your application form.

1. Young people living with a disability:

Financial assistance is available to support individuals or teams of young people that are made up of people with a disability. These funds can go towards making the program more accessible to these young people.

2. Electorally underrepresented communities:

Full or partial sponsorship may be available to teams that are made up of young people from electorally underrepresented communities through the generous support of the Victorian Electoral Commission. Communities that are eligible to apply for this funding include:

- First Nations Young people living with a disability
- Low socio-economic
- Rural and/or regional
- Culturally & linguistically diverse
- Currently experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness

In the past some teams have been able to secure funding assistance by contacting local community organisations like Rotary clubs and local councils, or by contacting their local MP. We encourage any teams seeking partial or full funding assistance to explore these options first, due to the competitive nature of our program and the limited number of funded spots on offer.

RESOURCE PERSON

The team application process is handled by a Resource Person who acts as a contact point between the program and the participants on a team. They will read and understand the application pack, and coordinate the application submission. The Resource Person is generally a teacher, youth worker, or council working at the organisation which is applying for a team, however a highly motivated and organised participant would also make a great Resource Person.

Once your team's place has been secured, the Resource Person is responsible for:

- Facilitating communication between team members and the taskforce, especially in organising and running meetings (including set mentor meetings, and additional team meetings without the presence of a taskforce member)
- Being present in mentor meetings to support your team and to support taskforce members to be able to run an efficient and productive meeting
- Providing some guidance to teams in the development of ideas, but acknowledging that as young leaders, the participants should lead the decision-making process and workload
- Ensuring all team members' indemnity forms are submitted properly and on time
- Being a point of contact should any issues arise with payment or team members
- Ensuring payment is made in full, in accordance with the agreed timeline
- Supporting the team to feel prepared for the residential camps, including assisting in sourcing parliamentary attire, coordinating transport, and helping participants to feel confident in attending the residential camps

Resource Person expectation of commitment:

The role of a Resource Person is just as important as that of a participant. They are crucial for the gathering of key information and for communication with team members to ensure a smooth process over the 6 month period of the program.

It is important that the Resource Person of a team is committed to their role within the program and remains communicative with the taskforce. This includes making all efforts to be present in mentor meetings. Please consider this expectation of commitment prior to submitting your application, remembering again, that this is an extremely competitive program and many organisations miss out on sending a team each year.

“ I had a confidence in myself that has been really low recently , so [Youth Parliament] has validated all the work I have been putting into myself. It has shown me that I have skills in connecting people in ways I was not aware of but am now proud to be flourishing in. I also feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to stand in the chamber of Parliament House and speak on a topic that is so near and dear to my heart.

–Youth Parliamentarian

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APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH PARLIAMENT TEAMS WILL BE OPEN UNTIL 5.00PM ON FRIDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2024

- All application submissions are for a Youth Parliament team made up of six participants. A complete team is not necessary during the application process, however if successful, team members must be confirmed by DECEMBER 15th 2024.
- All team members must be between 16-25 years for the duration of the residential programs.
- Only two of the six members of a team can be returning participants, and participants may only participate in the program twice.
 - *If finding team members is a difficulty, send us an email and we can discuss your options*
- All team members are to be committed to participating in all aspects of the Y Victorian Youth Parliament program, including meetings with their mentor, the residential training weekend, and the residential sitting week components of the program. This should be agreed to prior to signing up to join the team.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Applications for YMCA Victorian Youth Parliament is very competitive and is capped at 20 teams.
- 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 teams will be based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:
 - Appropriate representation of the diversity of Victoria's young people.
 - Applications are detailed and submitted on time.
 - Team's ability/plan to recruit and support a team of six young people.
 - Access to a secure funding source to cover full cost of the team's participation, including initial 50% deposit (This could include the funding assistance on offer for eligible teams, outlined on page 5).

HOW TO APPLY

Please read through the information pack and complete the application form:

<https://vicyouth.ymca.org.au/learning-and-leadership/youth-parliament/application>

For any questions regarding the application process, please email Kaitlin Woolford at youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au

KEY CONTACTS DURING THE APPLICATION PERIOD

Kaitlin Woolford Program Director

youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au

0491 237 766

Michael Delaney Youth Services Manager

michael.delaney@ymca.org.au

0403 289 373

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 that these are clearly communicated to them by the resource person or person who fills out the team application.

The expectations are as follows:

- Participants commit to attending all meetings organised with their mentor, and any additional meetings their team organises to work on their Bill or speeches. Typically, teams meet 6-8 times in total. Participants are expected to spend at least five hours working on their Bill and speeches outside of the residential program.
- Participants must attend the entire three-day residential training weekend, and six-day residential program at Lake Dewar Discovery Camp.
- While on camp, 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 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, and transport to and from Parliament House, with optional transport to the campsite.
- Three days of facilitated debate 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.
- The opportunity to work alongside a Y Youth Press Gallery journalist to develop media for their team's Bill.
- A suite of best practice leadership and teamwork training that can be applied to a multitude of contexts beyond camp

PROGRAM TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT DATES

5pm Friday 11th Oct 2024	Team applications close
Mon 21st Oct 2024	Successful applicants notified via Letter of Offer
5pm Thurs 31st Oct 2024	Signed Letters of Offer due back to youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au
Mon 4th Nov 2024	Full or first payment due
Mon 11th Nov 2024	Resource Person Information Night (online)
Mon 16th Dec 2024	Confirmation of six team members due
Term 1 and 2 (starting 1st Feb 2025)	Teams develop their Bills
Mon 10th Feb 2025	Final payment due
Thurs 27th Feb 2025	Participant Information Night (online)
Fri 18th Apr 2025	Participant indemnity forms due
11.59pm Wed 30th Apr 2025	Bills must be finalised and submitted to mentor
Fri 23rd to Sun 25th May 2025	Youth Parliament Training Weekend
Sun 6th to Fri 11th July 2025	Week of Youth Parliament
Mon 28th July 2025	Resource Person evaluation meeting (online)

PLEASE NOTE: failure to comply with any of the above deadlines may result in your team forfeiting their position on the program.

AS A SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT...

- Each team's resource person will be sent a Letter of Offer, which will need to be returned by 5pm Thursday October 31st.
- A Taskforce member will contact your team's Resource Person to organise all of your mentor meetings for Bill development. These will occur between 1st Feb and 20th April 2025.
- All six team members must be confirmed via the link provided with the Letter of Offer by 5pm Dec 16th 2024.
- All Bills must be finalised and submitted via email to your team's mentor by 11.59pm April 30th.

SOME INSPIRATION TO GET YOU GOING!

Here are some examples of previous Bills:

- Promotion of alternative sentencing for non-violent crimes
- Extended concessions for students on public transport
- Increased incentives for relocations of skilled professionals to rural areas
- Universal accessibility of all musical and cultural festivals
- Container deposit scheme (cash-for-cans/bottles)

WHAT IF I AM NOT A SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT?

Worry not! Occasionally we have teams drop out of the program due to varying circumstances, so we will have a team waitlist as well as an individual participant list where teams and/or individual participants may be invited to participate in the program later in the year if and when a space becomes available.

There are also a ton of other ways to engage with The Y Vic! We have heaps of other programs to cater to your advocacy and personal development needs, including the Youth Press Gallery if you are a budding journo. Send an email through to youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au if you would like some more information!

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information about the program can be found online at our following websites:

Website | www.vicyouth.ymca.org.au/learning-and-leadership/youth-parliament

Instagram | [@youthparliamentvictoria](https://www.instagram.com/youthparliamentvictoria)

Facebook | www.facebook.com/ypvic/

Twitter | [@ypvic](https://twitter.com/ypvic)

YouTube | www.youtube.com/channel/UCvWBFaOVBBBoEXQ_NHAA5D6g

Please know that any queries can be emailed to:
Kaitlin Woolford at youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au