

A photograph of a grand, ornate hallway with classical columns and arched doorways, overlaid with a red geometric design.

YMCA Victoria

YOUTH PARLIAMENT

2021 Application and Information Pack



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Dear aspiring changemakers,

As the largest and oldest annual state forum for young people, the 35th YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament offers the opportunity for 120 young people to be empowered to tell their stories in the halls of the Parliament House of Victoria.

From the leafy streets of Stonnington to the sun-soaked Murray Plains, the farming townships of Gippsland to the coastal promenades in Hobsons Bay, the bustling streets of Naarm to the artisan markets of Castlemaine, YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament invites all young Victorians to participate.

YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament draws from the partnership between the youth-focused impact and global knowledge of the Y, as well as support from the Victorian Government, to be the leading experiential civics educational program in Victoria.

You are invited to form a team of six young people, aged 16-25, to participate as one of 20 teams. Under the mentorship of passionate young leaders collectively known as the Taskforce, each participant will learn about Victorian civics, advocacy, media and stakeholder engagement skills, as well as have opportunities to make life-lasting memories with peers.

Each team will research an issue they are passionate about during Term Two and Term Three, constructing a Bill under the guidance of a Taskforce member. Each team will have the opportunity to debate their Bill with other teams in the Parliamentary chambers for collective consideration. After all the Bills have been debated and received the assent of the Youth Governor, they are handed to the Minister for Youth who in turn distributes them to the relevant Ministers and Departments of Government for Government consideration. This process has resulted in over 30 Youth Parliament Bills adopted into state legislation, including gender neutral school uniforms and banning lightweight plastic bags.

Beyond the real and potent advocacy of the Youth Parliamentarians, the holistic benefit of Youth Parliament is in giving young people a voice, igniting a passion and delivering real and transferable skills.

The program culminates with a mandatory residential training weekend held in late-August, and ends in a five-night-long residential camp during the September school holidays. This weeklong camp focuses on three full days of debate in Parliament House, giving young people a chance to flex their newly developed parliamentary skills as well as spend time together as a cohort of young leaders.



Kergen Angel
Program Director - 2021 YMCA
Victoria Youth Parliament

A MESSAGE FROM OUR **PROGRAM DIRECTOR** continued

The debates will be covered by a fleet of young journalists participating in a complementary program, the YMCA Youth Press Gallery. Away from Parliament House, participants take part in a series of rewarding and sometimes challenging personal development sessions at YMCA Lake Dewar Lodge, which develop participants' teamwork and leadership skills.

Every year, the feedback from past participants of the program are glowing, with many young people citing their YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament experience as being formative in their development journeys. In 2019, a staggering 96% of participants would recommend the program to their peers, and 97% of participants listed the program as a core platform to be heard and respected. **In a time when many young people feel overlooked or excluded, we know that the Youth Parliament offers something special.**

Additionally, after a year adapting the program to become COVID-safe in 2020, should a residential program be unable to go ahead due to restrictions, we are confident in delivering an equally high-quality YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament remotely.

Applications are always extremely competitive; to secure your place in this tremendous program, please follow the instructions on submitting an application in the pages below.

Please contact me should you have any questions or concerns through this process: youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au or 0457 170 567.

Kindly,

Kergen Angel

Program Director - 2021 YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament

E youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au **P** 0457 170 567

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“I feel inspired to make positive social change in my own community. Since Youth Parliament I've tried really hard to be the best version of myself and help others to do the same. I feel more motivated than ever!”

- 2018 Youth Parliamentarian

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KEY INFORMATION

WHEN	Fri 27 Aug – Sun 29 Aug 2021 (Compulsory Youth Parliament Training Weekend) Sun 19 Sep – Fri 24 Sep 2021 (Week of Youth Parliament)	COSTS	\$4,880 (including GST) per team of 6 (six) participants Please note: this fee does not cover the cost of travel to and from the residential program.
WHERE	Residential camp: Lake Dewar Lodge YMCA 339 Garrards Lane, MYRNIONG, 3341 Sitting Days: 20, 21 and 23 September 2021, Parliament House, Spring St, Melbourne	WHO IS ELIGIBLE	Youth Parliament is open to any young person aged between 16 and 25 years at the time of the residential programs residing in the state of Victoria.

KEY CONTACTS DURING THE APPLICATION PERIOD

- **Kergen Angel**, Program Director, 0457 170 567
- **Michael Delaney**, Youth Services Manager, 0403 289 373

HOW TO APPLY

Please read through the following information pack and complete the application form at this link below.

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

If you have already submitted a team application but have not registered six team member details, please submit them at the following link:

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

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

“Some major highlights would have to be being given the opportunity to be heard and express my opinions, as well as how encouraging and supportive everyone was. We became such a close community of people who respected and supported each other and that’s something I’ll always cherish.”

- 2019 Youth Parliamentarian

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH PARLIAMENT TEAMS WILL BE OPEN UNTIL 5.00PM ON FRIDAY 19 MARCH 2021.

- A team is made up of six participants. 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, unless they participated in 2020 as it was a trial year for the program operating online.
- All team members should be committed to participating in all aspects of the YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament program, including meetings with their mentor, Training Weekend, and the full residential component of the program. This should be agreed to prior to signing up to join the team.
- Please note: applications for YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament are very competitive, with the program reaching capacity at only 20 teams. As such, each application will be assessed on several criteria to provide a balanced and accurately representative program which includes the vast spectrum of young Victorians. Selection of the 20 successful applications will be based on, but not limited to, the following criteria:
 - ▶ Appropriate representation of the diversity of Victoria's young people.
 - ▶ Applications are submitted on time.
 - ▶ Secure funding source to cover full cost of the team's participation, including initial 50% deposit (please note: funding assistance is available for eligible teams. Please contact the program coordinator prior to submitting application).

RESOURCE PERSON

The application process should be managed by a Resource Person. A Resource Person is the individual responsible for organising the team and coordinating their application submission. A teacher, youth or council worker, or motivated team member would make a great Resource Person. Once a team is accepted onto the program, the Resource Person will be responsible for the following:

- Assisting in organising an initial meeting with the team's assigned Taskforce mentor.
- Assisting the team as required, but acknowledging that as young leaders, the participants should lead the decision-making process and workload.
- Ensuring the team's indemnity forms are completed and submitted on time, and assisting in following up missing information.
- Being a point of call if an issue arises with the team, including issues about payment or team members.
- Ensuring payment is made in full, in accordance with the agreed timeline.

PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

Participating in YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament is a privilege. Due to the limited spaces on the program, unfortunately some applicants miss out. Therefore, it is imperative that every applicant who wishes to participate in the program understands what is expected of them and is willing to meet those expectations. We expect the following of our participants:

- Participants commit to attending all meetings organised with their mentor (usually 2-3 meetings throughout the program), and any additional meetings their team organises to work on Bill or speech writing.
- Participants are expected to spend at least five hours working on the Bill and speech writing outside of the residential program.
- Participants must attend the entire three-day residential training weekend, and six-day residential program at Lake Dewar Lodge YMCA.
- While on camp, participants must respect that the YMCA has duty of care for all participants, even if they are over the age of 18. This means that all participants 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 YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament is a place for sharing ideas and learning new things.
- Participants understand that YMCA Victoria 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 and drug free program, and no alcohol or drugs shall be allowed onto the residential program.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVE

- A three-day residential training weekend and six-day residential program, including full catering, accommodation and transport where necessary (this does not include transport to or from the residential campsite).
- Three days of facilitated debate in the chambers of the Parliament House of Victoria, Spring Street.
- An exclusive function held in honour of the Youth Parliamentarians.
- Access to a Parliamentary Training Taskforce mentor for the duration of the program.
- Access to a Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Taskforce mentor for the duration of the program.
- The opportunity to work alongside a YMCA Youth Press Gallery journalist to develop media for the team's Bill, closer to the program date.
- An exclusive YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament 2021 t-shirt and compendium.
- A suite of best practice leadership-and-teamwork training that can be applied to a multitude of contexts beyond camp.

IMPORTANT DATES

5pm Friday 17 March 2021	Applications close
Week of the 22 March 2021	Successful applicants notified via Letter of Offer
5pm Friday 31 March 2021	Signed Letters of Offer due back to youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au
5pm Thursday 1 April 2021	Full or first payment due as well as confirmation of six team members
Term Two to Term Three (starting Monday 19 April 2021)	Teams meet with Taskforce mentors to research an issue and construct a Bill
5pm Friday 7 May 2021	Final payment due
5pm Wednesday 19 May 2021	Participant indemnity forms submitted
5pm Friday 6 August 2021	Bills must be finalised and submitted
27 – 29 August 2021	Youth Parliament Training Weekend
19 – 24 September 2021	Week of Youth Parliament 2021

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

HOW WILL THE PROGRAM CHANGE IF RESTRICTIONS IMPACT A RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM?

YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament will continue to run if, in the worst-case scenario, COVID-19 restrictions inhibit an in-person program.

Mentor and stakeholder meetings, training sessions and debates will be held virtually, and some dates may change to ensure an enjoyable online experience.

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“Youth Parliament adapted remarkably well to the online format”

- 2020 Youth Parliamentarian

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AS A SUCCESSFUL APPLICANT...

1. Your team's resource person will be sent a Letter of Offer, which will need to be returned by 5pm Friday 31 March 2021.
2. A Taskforce member will contact your team's Resource Person to organise an initial date to meet with your whole team from the start of term two and begin the researching and Bill-writing process.
3. All Bills must be finalised and submitted by 5pm Friday 6 August 2021.

To get your thought processes started, here are some examples of previous years Bill topics:

- 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)

You can also view the 2020 Bills here:

<https://virtually.ymca.org.au/youth-space/youth-voice/listen/youth-parliament-bills-2020>

AS AN UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANT...

Worry not! All of your team members will be placed on a team backup list and may be invited to participate in the program later in the year.

It is also highly encouraged to keep an eye out for opportunities to participate in other ways. There are other programs YMCA Victoria offers centred on advocacy and personal development, such as YMCA Youth Press Gallery, and opportunities to volunteer for other programs. Feel free to email youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au for further information.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be found online at our following websites:

Website | <http://www.vicyouth.ymca.org.au/programs/youth-parliament.html>

Instagram | <https://www.instagram.com/youthparliamentvictoria/>

Facebook | <https://www.facebook.com/ypvic/>

Twitter | <https://twitter.com/ypvic>

YouTube | https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvWBFaOVBBBoEXQ_NHAA5D6g

Please know that any queries can be emailed to Kergen Angel at youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au