YMCA Victoria

YOUTH PARLIAMENT

2023 Application Information Pack

the Y

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Tessa Buchanan
Program Director -
2023 YMCA Victoria
Youth Parliament

Dear passionate young people,

2023 marks the 37th year of the Victorian Youth Parliament run by YMCA Victoria, making it the largest and longest-running annual state forum for young people aged 16-25 who are seeking change in Victoria. If you want to be a part of this important program to raise your voice, with the chance to influence change in Victorian legislation – I encourage you to apply today.

The Y's 2023 Victorian Youth Parliament will invite 120 people from all corners of the state to create a community of changemakers. Empowered by each other and our incredible Volunteer Taskforce, you will ultimately share your team's ideas during Youth Parliament Week within the chambers of the Parliament House of Victoria. Furthermore, the residential camps will give you a chance to develop your leadership skills through experiential sessions run by our expert Taskforce.

Over the years more than 30 Youth Parliament Bills have been adopted into state legislation. Our successful Bills have covered social, safety, and environmental issues with benefits from mandating gender neutral school uniforms to banning lightweight plastic bags and many more. Each debate will also be covered by a group of young journalists, participating in the complementary Youth Press Gallery program.

Applications to our program are always competitive. To apply please read the information and instructions on the following pages to submit an application.

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

Sincerely,

Tessa Buchanan
Program Director - 2023 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 periodically with a mentor from the Taskforce. In these meetings, participants will;

- brainstorm potential bill topics and elect their three most preferred Bill topics
- be assigned a Bill topic from their preferences to create and debate their Bill on
- be supported in the drafting and finalising of their Bill
- be introduced to the parliamentary debate structure and etiquette

Participants will also be given the opportunity to meet with a stakeholder and/or Member of Parliament in the area of their Bill topic to discuss their Bill and advocate for change directly.

> "[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."
>
> **- 2022 Youth Parliamentarian**

WHAT IS YOUTH PARLIAMENT continued

TRAINING WEEKEND (26TH – 28TH MAY):

Length: Three day residential camp at Lake Dewar Discovery Camp

Purpose: Prepare teams for everything that they need to know from debate structure to media training.

Across the weekend, participants will:

- Finalise understanding in key training areas such as parliamentary etiquette and debate
- Engage in practice 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

SITTING WEEK:

Length: Six day residential camp at Lake Dewar Discovery Camp

Purpose: Youth Parliamentarians attend the camp and Parliament House to apply all that they have learned, debate their Bills and continue to develop important leadership and advocacy skills.

Across the week, participants will:

- Connect with a community of change makers
- Continue to build leadership and advocacy skills while at campsite through tailor-made sessions
- Travel by bus on the 26th, 27th, and 29th of June to Parliament House to participate in the Youth Parliament sitting week
- Gain practical experience in the parliamentary debating process – participating as both the sponsor (arguing for) and refuter (arguing against) roles for debate on Youth Parliament Bills
- Be given the opportunity to conduct a short speech (adjournment debate) directed to a state MP on an issue they are passionate about

KEY INFORMATION

WHEN

Friday 26 May to Sunday 28 May 2023
(Youth Parliament Training Weekend)

Sunday 25 June to Friday 30 June 2023
(Week of Youth Parliament)

Please note that both residential components of the program are compulsory elements of the program and participants will be required to attend for the full duration of both.

COSTS

$5,125 (including GST) per team of six participants

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

WHERE

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

Sitting days:
Mon 26, Tues 27, Thurs 29 June
Parliament House, Spring St, Melbourne

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE:

Youth Parliament is open to any young person:

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

FUNDING ASSISTANCE

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

Rural / Regional Teams: full or partial sponsorship for teams located in rural or regional Victoria.

Electorally underrepresented demographics: full or partial sponsorship provided by the Victorian Electoral Commission. Communities that are eligible to apply for this funding include:

- First nations
- Disability
- Low socio-economic
- Culturally and linguistically diverse
- Currently experiencing or have experienced homelessness

Alternate funding assistance: In the past, many teams have found assistance through groups and organisations such as their local rotary clubs and local MP offices who have been able to contribute at least some of the cost. Prior to applying, we encourage any teams in need of financial assistance to explore these options first, due to the competitive nature of our sponsorships.

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 meetings 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.
- Supporting the team to feel prepared for the residential camps, including assisting in the sourcing of parliamentary clothes, and ensuring participants feel confident attending camp.

> "The Youth Parliament Victoria program's greatest strength is amplifying the voices of young people and leaders. This program provides a safe platform to do meaningful work bring about the change we want to see. The opportunities that we have been given, such as global broadcasting of debates, meetings with Victorian Ministers and the presentation of our bills to Parliament, are things that I am beyond thankful for. This program gives people whose voices tend to be suppressed a turn to share how they think and feel. It is amazing."
>
> **– 2021 Youth Parliamentarian**

APPLICATION DETAILS

APPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH PARLIAMENT TEAMS WILL BE OPEN UNTIL 5.00PM ON MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2022

- All applications are for a team 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 or 2021 programs as both programs operated online).
- All team members are to be committed to participating in all aspects of the YMCA Victorian Youth Parliament program, including meetings with their mentor, 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.
- A complete team is not necessary during the application process. If successful, team members must be confirmed by 6 February 2023.

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 Tessa Buchanan at youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au

KEY CONTACTS DURING THE APPLICATION PERIOD

Tessa Buchanan	Program Director	youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au	0488 038 470
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. Therefore, it is imperative that every applicant who wishes to participate in the program understands the expectations of all participants and are willing to meet those expectations, as follows:

- Participants commit to attending all meetings organised with their mentor (usually 4-5 meetings throughout the program), and any additional meetings their team organises to work on Bill or speech writing. Typically, teams meet 6-8 times in total.
- Participants are expected to spend at least ten 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 Discovery Camp.
- 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 the Victorian Youth Parliament 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 and drug free program, and no alcohol or drugs are allowed onto the residential program.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE

- A three-day residential training weekend and six-day residential program, including full catering, accommodation and transport to and from Parliament House.
- Three days of facilitated debate in the chambers of the Parliament House of Victoria, Spring Street.
- Coaching and mentoring from 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.
- 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 Mon 14 November 2022	Team applications close
Fri 18 November 2022	Successful applicant notified via Letter of Offer
5pm Fri 25 November 2022	Signed Letters of Offer due back to youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au
4:30pm Mon 28 November 2022	Resource Person Information Night (online)
5pm Mon 6 February 2023	Confirmation of six team members due
Term One to Term Two (starting Mon 6 Feb 2023)	Teams meet with Taskforce mentors to research an issue and construct a Bill
6pm Wed 8 February 2023	Participant Information Night (online)
5pm Mon 27 February 2023	Full or first payment due
5pm Fri 10 March 2023	Participant indemnity forms submitted
5pm Fri 31 March 2023	Final payment due
5pm Fri 28 April 2023	Bills must be finalised and submitted
Fri 26 to Sun 28 May 2023	Youth Parliament Training Weekend
Sun 25 to Fri 30 June 2023	Week of Youth Parliament
4:30pm Mon 10 July 2023	Resource Person evaluation meeting (online)

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

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 25 November 2022.**
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 one 2023 and begin the researching and Bill-writing process.
3. All six team members must be confirmed via the link provided with the Letter of Offer by **5pm Monday 6 February 2023.**
4. All Bills must be finalised and submitted by **5pm Friday 28 April 2023.**

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! 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 in the event that a space becomes available.

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

Website | www.vicyouth.ymca.org.au/learning-and-leadership/youth-parliament
Instagram | @youthparliamentvictoria
Facebook | www.facebook.com/ypvic/
Twitter | @ypvic
YouTube | www.youtube.com/channel/UCvWBFaOVBBoEXQ_NHAA5D6g

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