

A photograph of a grand, ornate hallway with classical architecture, featuring tall columns and arched doorways. The image is overlaid with a blue geometric graphic consisting of several overlapping triangles of varying shades of blue. The text is positioned on the left side of the image, partially overlapping the blue graphic.

YMCA Victoria

# YOUTH PARLIAMENT

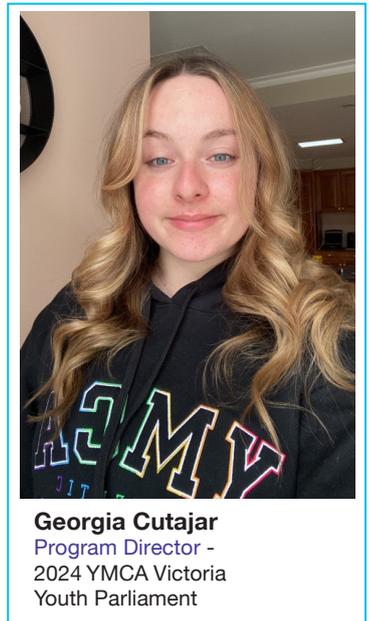
2024 Application Information Pack



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Dear young Victorians and advocates of young people,

In 2024 we will see the 38th Victorian Youth Parliament run by The Y Victoria come into being. 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 I personally consider it to be one of the most enlightening and empowering experiences that a young person in our state can partake in.



**Georgia Cutajar**  
Program Director -  
2024 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 halls of Victorian Parliament House. Over 30 Youth Parliament Bills have been adopted into state legislation over the program's run, including Bills on social issues, safety, 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 have during the application process.

Sincerely,

**Georgia Cutajar**  
Program Director - 2024 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 attend three meetings with a mentor from the Taskforce. In these meetings, participants will;

- be assigned a Bill topic from their submitted preferences (preferences to
- be supported in the drafting and finalising of their Bill
- be introduced to the parliamentary debate structure and etiquette

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.

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“[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

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## **WHAT IS YOUTH PARLIAMENT** continued

### **TRAINING WEEKEND (24TH – 26TH MAY):**

The Training Weekend is a three (3) day residential camp at Lake Dewar Discovery Camp. It is the time for participants to finalise and submit their Bills, learn more about debating and parliamentary etiquette, and learn about and engage with media.

Across the weekend, participants will:

- Finish writing their original Bills with support from the taskforce
- 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

### **THE WEEK OF YOUTH PARLIAMENT (30TH JUNE - 5TH JULY)**

This is it! What we have been working towards for 6 months! 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 will become important personal and professional contacts for years following participation in the program

Across the week, participants will:

- Connect with and build a community of 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 conduct a short speech Member's Statement directed to a state OR federal MP on an issue they are passionate about

# KEY INFORMATION

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**WHEN** Friday 24 May to Sunday 26 May 2024  
(Youth Parliament Training Weekend)

**Sunday 30 June to Friday 5 July 2024**  
(Week of Youth Parliament)

Please note; 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.

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

**COSTS** \$5,380 (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,
- ✓ Aged between 16 and 25 years at the time of the residential programs

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## 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 / 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.

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“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.”

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– Youth Parliamentarian

# APPLICATION DETAILS

**APPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH PARLIAMENT TEAMS WILL BE OPEN UNTIL 5.00PM ON SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2023**

- 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 11th March 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 (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.

## 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](mailto:youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au)

## KEY CONTACTS DURING THE APPLICATION PERIOD

<b>Georgia Cutajar</b> Program Director	<a href="mailto:youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au">youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au</a>	0455 777 126
<b>Michael Delaney</b> Youth Services Manager	<a href="mailto:michael.delaney@ymca.org.au">michael.delaney@ymca.org.au</a>	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 (3 set mentor meetings), 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 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 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

- Two residential camping experiences, 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 (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 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 Sun 12 November 2023	Team applications close
Mon 20 November 2023	Successful applicant notified via Letter of Offer
Mon 27 November 2023	Resource Person Information Night (online)
Mon 4 December 2023	Signed Letters of Offer due back to <a href="mailto:youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au">youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au</a>
Mon 26 February 2024	Full or first payment due
Term One to Term Two (starting Thurs 29 Feb 2024)	Teams <b>develop their bills</b>
Fri 29 February 2024	Participant Information Night (online)
Mon 11 March 2024	Confirmation of six team members due
Fri 29 March 2024	Final payment due
Sun 14 April 2024	Participant indemnity forms <b>due</b>
Fri 24 to Sun 26 May 2023	Youth Parliament Training Weekend
Sun 26 May 2024	Bills must be finalised and submitted
Sun 30 June to Fri 5 July 2024	Week of Youth Parliament
Mon 15 July 2024	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. Each team's resource person will be sent a Letter of Offer, which will need to be returned by 5pm Monday 4th of December
2. A Taskforce member will contact your team's Resource Person to organise all three of your Bill writing Mentor Meetings. These will occur between the 18th of March and the 28th of April 2024.
3. All six team members must be confirmed via the link provided with the Letter of Offer by 5pm Monday 11th March 2024.
4. All Bills must be finalised and submitted by the end of Participant Training Weekend, Sunday the 29th of May 2024.

## 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 our individual participant list and 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 Youth Press Gallery if you are a budding journo, or you could even volunteer on our Youth Camps! Send an email through to [youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au](mailto: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](http://www.vicyouth.ymca.org.au/learning-and-leadership/youth-parliament)

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

Facebook | [www.facebook.com/ypvic/](http://www.facebook.com/ypvic/)

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

YouTube | [www.youtube.com/channel/UCvWBFaOVBBBoEXQ\\_NHAA5D6g](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvWBFaOVBBBoEXQ_NHAA5D6g)

Please know that any queries can be emailed to:  
Georgia Cutajar at [youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au](mailto:youthparliament.vic@ymca.org.au)