



YMCA YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Canberra Region

'Building a world for and with young people'

Amplifying the voices of young people to participate in civic understanding

Program Overview



Snow
Foundation



Hands
Across
Canberra
Your Community Foundation



the  | YOUTH
PARLIAMENT

About Youth Parliament

About the Program:

Youth Parliament is a civics program that runs in every state and territory around Australia. Each year around 400 young people take part in the Y's flagship program, re-enacting parliamentary processes, leadership roles, formulating bills, understanding civic participation and forming connections to each other and their community.

Civics is more than politics, 'civics' derives from the Latin word 'civicus', meaning 'relating to a citizen' and that is what we believe needs to be understood.

Youth Parliament is about community and learning how we can use the most powerful seats to enact positive change.

Need for the Program:

62%, That's the percentage of Year 10 students that did not meet or exceed the proficient national standard for National Assessment Program for the Civics and Citizenship Curriculum (NAP -CC) in 2019.

Young People are not only failing to grasp civics, they are being excluded from civic participation.

But is it the fault of young people if the ways in which they learn and contribute are not tailored to their individuality and engagement?

Reflection of the Legislative and Committee Inquiry Process

Youth Parliament is a program that allows young people to form a better understanding of the systems in place that govern our territory and community.

During Youth Parliament they will be exposed to the processes of the Legislative Assembly in bill process, motions, speeches, debate, and responsibilities. They will also have the opportunity to work in committees and conduct community consultation on the bills that they have written.

Youth Parliament is not a word for word re-enactment of the Legislative Assembly, but a structured community program for young people to build an understanding of how systems in place enact change and serve our community.

WHAT HAPPENS AT YOUTH PARLIAMENT

Youth Parliament will be an opportunity for 25 young people to learn the roles and responsibilities of Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and become Youth Members of the Legislative Assembly (Y MLA) to engage in a program designed to elevate their knowledge on civics, democracy and citizenship. In addition, this program is an opportunity to develop their personal skills and identity.

Youth Parliamentarians will learn essentials about the ACT Legislative Assembly and democracy, setting personal and team goals to work towards.

Youth Parliament also will be an opportunity to learn about the roles of our assembly, our place in civics, democracy and bill writing. It also an opportunity for your personal development, building and gaining skills in public speaking, debating, confidence, community consultation and advocacy.

Youth Parliament is a platform to use your voice as a young person, representing your community. You will have the opportunity to work and collaborate with other young people and together make a big difference for our community

Application Process

Youth Parliament is a program that will supply the necessary tools in the development of civics and personal knowledge.

Participants do not need to know anything about politics, civics and democracy to participate, because as much as it is about promoting civics in Australia, Youth Parliament is a youth development program.

This is an individual journey while also working as a team.

Who Can Apply?

Anyone across the Canberra Region aged 16 to 25 years at the commencement of the program can be a Youth Parliament Member.

How Do You Apply?

Applications will be taken by an online form with application questions being able to be submitted written, video or verbal recording.

How are Applications Processed?

Applications will be open from July 2025 to 1st of November 2025. From there a panel at the Y Canberra Region will go through applications and nominations to decide who will move on to become Y MLA's in the Y Canberra Region Youth Parliament.

How can you nominate someone?

If you know a young person who you think should be a part of the program, you can complete a nomination application on their behalf.

Youth Parliament Taskforce

If you believe your skills and knowledge may be better resourced to assisting and perhaps becoming a mentor for future Y MLA's please apply to volunteer for our Youth Parliament Taskforce as the next step in your Youth Parliament journey!

Please find applications and information on our website.

Committees and Bill Writing

Committees

Committees are an important aspect of the Legislative Assembly's process to ensure community and expert consultation.

Y Youth Parliament 2026 will have 4 focus areas for Youth Bills to be created and committees to be formed:

1. Health, People and Safety

Mental and physical health, relationships, human rights, disability and healthcare.

Justice, emergency services, crisis management, children and young people, elderly and families.

2. Accessibility, Affordability and Inclusivity

Housing, education, education and work placements, work experience, economy, cost of living, access to community services and transport.

3. Environment, Technology and Innovation

Our relationship with the local environment, the technology we use to better our community, climate change and innovative ideas for sustainability.

4. Community Infrastructure

Social and physical spaces for recreation, interaction, arts, music, sports and cultural activities.

These focus areas reflect current research, surveys and reports around what young people are expressing concern around. However, all issues are youth issues, so Y MLA's will not be limited to creating bills that only focus on young people.

Committee Selection

During the application process each participant will select the committee they wish to participate in by order of preference. If an application is successful each participant will be organised in to committees for the bill writing weekend, followed by the committee consultation phase

Committee Consultation

Each committee will consult their bill with key community stakeholders in the field such as NGO's, government services, politicians, community groups and interested citizens.

Bill Focus

Youth Bills are an important aspect of Youth Parliament, giving the opportunity for young people to understand the process in how legislation is made and passed by

parliaments. With Youth Bills, young people will have the opportunity to collaborate in creating bills that address key issues affecting the community.

Bill Writing Phase

The committees will come together for collaboration on writing bills. With the assistance of the Youth Parliament team and taskforce, they will research in to key issues and areas of focus in the Canberra region. Using a wide scope, they will gradually work to pinpoint an area or topic of changes on their committee focus area, and work on writing a draft bill that will be edited up to resemble those created in the ACT Legislative Assembly.

Taskforce Assistance

The Youth Parliament Taskforce will help to formalise and will help participants write down their ideas in a professional, formalised manner.

Finalised Bills

Once the all four Youth Bills have been agreed to by all participants, they will be edited and ready for the next stage of Youth Parliament.

Youth Parliament Sitting Week

The sitting week is where all your hard work and learning comes together to have meaningful conversations and constructive debates over 3 days at the ACT Legislative Assembly and on the floor.

Day 1:

Opening of Youth Parliament

Committee Bill Debate

Private Members business

Media opportunities

Day 2:

Committee Bill Debate

Private Members statements

Close of Sitting days

Media opportunities

Day 3:

Q/A sessions

Workshops and learning

During the course of the program, workshops and skills learning will be designed to better equip the young people during the program and to use after.

Workshops will be designed for online and offline environments, with the Y working with community organisations, institutions and education providers to provide the best opportunity for young people to develop skills and build on understanding.

Types of workshops throughout the program will include:

- Committee workshops around policy literacy and bill writing
- Personalised workshops based of applicants pre-surveyed skills
- How to prepare and write speeches, motions and private member statements
- Parliamentary Processes
- Legislative Assembly Processes
- Civics Understanding and Citizen responsibility
- Mis and Disinformation
- Role of media in civics
- Personal Development around psychosocial awareness, personal advocacy and working in diverse groups

Program Timeline

***Asterix indicates dates may be subject to change before official commencement of program**

For Safeguarding reasons, the full Program Outline date list has not been supplied. If you have any questions about the schedule or dates, please contact yp.canberra@ymca.org.au

Applications:

Applications open – July

Applications close – November 1st 11:59 pm

Applications selection outcome – December 15th

Applicant onboarding – December to January

Y Youth Parliament Canberra Launch – February

Committee Challenge – Legislative Assembly Education Team – February*

Bill Writing Weekend – March*

Committee Bill Writing

The Split – Government and opposition

Election – Youth Chief Minister and Opposition Leader

Committee Consultations – March to June

Youth Parliament Workshops and Events: – March to July

Events, Functions and Development – March to July*

Preparation and speech writing weekend – June

Sitting Week – July

Wrap Up and Evaluation – July to August

Frequently asked questions:

Who can apply to be a part of the Youth Parliament?

Anyone from the age of 16 to 25

Where does the Y Canberra Youth Parliament Take Place?

Various training days and workshops will be held at various sites, with the bulk being run from the Y Aquatic Recreation Centre in Yarralumla. The Youth Parliament sitting day will be held at the Legislative Assembly.

Is there a participation fee for Youth Parliament?

No. There is no fee associated with the participation in the program.

I'm from a regional area, can I participate?

Of course! Please contact us if you think there may be any issues with transportation or accommodation.

Do I have to know anything about politics?

Absolutely not! The program is designed for you to build your own knowledge and opinion along the way. You will learn everything you need to know throughout the year.

Do I have to be a member of a political party?

Certainly not! We do not mind – as long as you leave partisan politics at the door, you are more than welcome.

Does Youth Parliament cater for young people with disabilities?

Absolutely, we do everything we can to cater for any physical, mental or other disability. If you have any questions, please send us an email to discuss your situation.