

Youth Voice and Representation Bill 2026

A proposed National Youth Council of Australia

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Status: Preliminary proposal for discussion, broader consultation and legal review. No Commonwealth bill has been introduced through this proposal. A meeting with a federal MP has taken place to discuss its development; this does not establish endorsement or parliamentary sponsorship.

The purpose

To give young Australians a meaningful, ongoing opportunity to contribute to Commonwealth legislation that directly affects them, including those who are not yet old enough to vote. The Council would be advisory: elected representatives would retain legislative authority.

A representative from every electorate

One National Youth Representative aged 14-17 would represent each federal electorate on a permanent National Youth Council of Australia. Selection would involve an open application process, with the local federal MP making the final appointment.

Representatives would remain independent in expressing young constituents' views. They would not be required to adopt the position of their appointing MP or any political party.

Listening locally, meeting nationally

Representatives would consult young people, maintain regular engagement with their local MP and hold at least three public Youth Listening Posts each year. MPs would also be encouraged to establish local Youth Advisory Committees.

The proposal calls for Commonwealth funding for two national Council meetings in Canberra each year, so participation is not limited by geography or financial circumstances.

Consultation with a response.

Considering legislation

When new Commonwealth legislation is introduced, representatives would be notified. The Council would consider whether it substantially affects young Australians and, where appropriate, consult young people and relevant organisations, examine research and meet online.

The Council could publish reports, recommendations and proposed amendments for parliamentarians to consider. Formal parliamentary consideration and public availability of the reports are part of the proposed model; the practical procedure needs further development.

Accountability for recommendations

The relevant Minister and the parliamentarian responsible for introducing the legislation would provide a formal, evidence-based response. A Prime Ministerial response would be required only for significant national legislation that the Prime Minister has personally addressed or publicly advocated.

Consultation safeguards

For significant youth-impact legislation, the Council could request up to seven additional days for consultation. The final decision would remain with Parliament. This is not an automatic delay or a Council veto.

An independent Youth Participation Commissioner is proposed to oversee the Council's consultation processes and consider procedural complaints.

What the Council would not do

It would not pass legislation, independently move legislative amendments or compel Parliament to adopt its recommendations. The intention is to strengthen youth participation within the parliamentary process, not transfer legislative power away from elected representatives.

"The intention is not to transfer legislative power away from the elected representatives. It is to establish a genuine, consistent process through which young people can contribute before decisions are finalised."

Jack Okill, from the underlying proposal

From research to discussion.

How the idea developed

The proposal grew from Jack's Year 10 Commerce research into youth consultation around Australia's social-media minimum-age legislation. Its purpose extends beyond one policy, to issues including education, housing, employment, technology, mental health and transport.

Informal conversations with students, educators and people involved in politics and community advocacy have helped refine the proposal, including the importance of participation by young people with disability. Informal feedback is not a substitute for broader consultation or legal review, and is not presented here as organisational endorsement.

An earlier idea for a mandatory waiting period after certain Senate inquiries was removed. The current proposal concentrates on youth participation, with any request for extra consultation time remaining subject to Parliament's decision.

Parliamentary engagement and an APH pass

Jack has met with a federal Member of Parliament to discuss the proposal. He is also exploring sponsorship for an Australian Parliament House (APH) sponsored access pass to support meetings, development of the proposal and broader youth engagement work.

Sponsorship and a pass have not been secured. Any application would be subject to the relevant eligibility, security and authorised-access requirements. Seeking an access-pass sponsor is separate from obtaining support to introduce legislation.

Media and community channels are open

Media outlets will be contacted shortly. Questions, interview requests and feedback from young people, community organisations and parliamentarians are welcome now. Further updates will be shared through the website and Jack's media channels.

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Public summary adapted from Jack's proposal dated 29 September 2026. Personal correspondence, identifying consultation material, signatures and school assessment appendices are not included. This is a summary, not the full draft legislative text.

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