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| Frequently asked questions |
| Victorian Youth Congress  OFFICIAL |

# Support to participate

#### Are Congress members paid for their time?

Yes! We know that it’s important to value young people’s time, contributions and advice in a practical way, and that for some young people finances can be a barrier to participating in opportunities like Congress. The 2022 Congress is remunerated at $31.67 per hour. Congress members are paid for the time they spend engaged in or preparing for Congress activities (in addition to attending formal meetings).

* Payments are made monthly through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing’s payroll system.

#### What’s the time commitment?

Congress members are expected to attend a three-hour meeting each month, held on Friday evenings. These meetings alternate between online and in-person Members also contribute approximately 5-10 hours of project work each month outside of meetings in their own time.

We know young people are working, studying, and have a range of other commitments, so we try to be flexible with timing. We also know that some months you might need to take a step back, and that’s fine – we just ask that members keep us informed and work with us to stay involved as much as possible.

#### What support do members receive to participate?

For in-person meetings, we arrange transport and accommodation for all members living in regional or rural areas. We also provide transport for young people living in Melbourne to get safely home from meetings.

We provide accessibility supports such as Auslan interpreters, based on individual members’ needs. We’re always working to improve the accessibility of Congress, so if there’s a particular kind of support you need, please get in touch to discuss it with us.

# Work of the Victorian Youth Congress

#### What does Congress do?

Congress is supported by the Office for Youth, which is located within the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. Staff from the Office for Youth work closely with Congress members to coordinate meetings, provide guidance and support, and to help Congress engage with the Minister for Youth, Parliamentary Secretary for Youth and other parts of government.

Congress members will work in three ways:

* They will provide their advice and recommendations to the Minister for Youth by working with the Office for Youth and with each other on working group projects relating to specific policy or programs. Some of this work will take place in monthly meetings, and some members complete in their own time.
* They will provide some advice to other areas of government where other departments or teams are working on policies or initiatives related to young people.
* They will have training and development opportunities provided throughout the course of their term that may assist their work as Congress members.

#### What skills are Congress members expected to have, and what skills can they develop during their term?

The most important skills young people can bring to Congress are teamwork and an interest in Victorian young people and the issues that affect them.

During their time on Congress, members will have the opportunity to learn about how government works and engage with the Minister for Youth, Parliamentary Secretary for Youth and Members of Parliament (MPs).

They will also develop skills in public speaking, project management, critical thinking and problem-solving, and build networks and friendships with other young people who are passionate about making change.

#### What has the Congress been working on this year, and what will next year’s Congress be doing?

This year’s Congress has supported the launch of *Our Promise, Your Future: Victoria’s youth strategy 2022-2027*, released in August 2022 after more than two years in development. Congress has been involved in bringing the strategy to life by working closely with government to provide advice on implementing key strategic directions and making sure that young people continue to be involved in government decision-making. The 2023 Congress will continue to play a key role in supporting the implementation of the youth strategy.

Congress members also provide advice to government on a range of issues that affect young people and will have the opportunity to be spokespeople and ambassadors for young Victorians.

# Recruitment process

#### When can I expect to hear back about my application?

Applications to join Congress in 2023 are open until 11 November 2022. The Office for Youth and current Congress members will shortlist applicants and hold interviews from 13 November – 15 December 2022.

We’ll let all applicants know the outcome of the recruitment process in February 2022, pending the Minister’s endorsement. As the Victorian State election will be held on Saturday 26 November 2022, the Victorian Government will assume a caretaker role from 6.00pm on 1 November 2022 until such time that either it becomes clear that the incumbent government will be returned, or when a new government is commissioned. All appointments to the Victorian Youth Congress will be subject to Ministerial approval.

We are expecting a large number of applications, but we will do our best to give applicants timely responses and feedback. While there are limited spots for each term of Congress, we are keen to reserve your details for other opportunities may arise to involve young people with the Victorian Government.

We hope to stay in touch as, by applying to be a Congress member, we already know you would be an excellent candidate. We appreciate the time and effort you’re putting into your application!