



20 July 2022

Buloke and Loddon Youth present Bill in Parliament

Five young people from communities across the Buloke and Loddon Shire recently took part in the week-long Victorian Youth Parliament initiative coordinated by the Y (formerly known as the YMCA) which saw them present their draft Sustainability and Carbon Neutrality in Mining Bill 2022 in the Legislative Assembly in Parliament House.

Jake Murphy (Wedderburn), Tyler Riley (Charlton), Mia Braun (Pyramid Hill), Lennon Jablonka (Charlton) and Noah Slater (Donald) were joined by Martina Moshy from the Y to form a six member team that was responsible for drafting the Bill and then arguing in the House why it should be adopted and turned into legislation.

As the First Bill up for debate on Day One of the week-long experience, each of the six team members spoke on the merits of the bill, and despite the enthusiastic rebuttals of the Opposition, the Bill was passed.

The Buloke Loddon team was in action again later in the week when it was their turn to refute The Red Robins "Rehabilitation in Youth Justice Bill 2022", with all five members again speaking about the inadequacies of the legislation.

Three of the team members also participated in adjournment debates with Jake Murphy addressing the Minister for Education and the Arts about the disadvantages facing rural students regarding the limitations of subject selections, especially in the arts.

Noah Slater addressed the Minister for Regional Development talking about the urban-rural divide and the need to provide a more equitable approach to services and infrastructure across the state, while Lennon Jablonka addressed the Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gambling and Liquor Regulation speaking of the need to set limits on gambling advertising to reduce addiction.

According to Loddon Shire participant Jake Murphy from Wedderburn, Youth Parliament was a learning experience that not only broadened his horizons on the political front, it gave him the opportunity to make life-long friends.

"Now that the event has been and gone and the project is complete, I cannot imagine my life without having done it – what a truly remarkable experience," he said.

Mia Braun from Pyramid Hill also gained much from the experience, describing it as a life-changing opportunity that she would heavily recommend to every young person.

"I had little to no knowledge about politics, didn't know how to make a bill, and had significant public speaking anxiety. Through Youth Parliament I was able to learn new things, and overcome obstacles but most importantly, make friends and connections that I will never forget and cherish for the rest of my life," she said.

"It has been such an amazing journey throughout these past few months. I wish I could relive all of those everlasting moments that have, and will, replay in my mind when I'm looking back on the best moments of my life," said Mia.

Noah Slater from Donald said Youth Parliament was a great way for the views of young people to be heard by decision makers who will now have access to the 20 Bills presented by the teams, with some to potentially be turned into legislation.

"Being at Parliament House was incredible. We were able to meet members of both the Government and Opposition during the week and have conversations about topics that are important to us. We'd all love to do it again next year" he said.

Funded through the Victorian Governments Buloke and Loddon Engage! Programs, this is the first time the North Central LLEN has participated in the Youth Parliament program which has been going for more than 30 years, providing opportunities for young people (16-25 years) from across the state to stand up and be heard in Parliament Chambers on a range of issues that are important to Victorian Youth.

To read more about their experience including videos, photos, and the bill itself, visit www.ncllen.org.au/yp

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