



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
VICTORIA

YMCA YOUTH PARLIAMENT AND YOUTH PRESS GALLERY RECEPTION

Tuesday 2nd July 2019

Ms Olivia Beasley, Youth Governor

Mr Declan Negus, Youth Premier

Youth Parliamentarians and members of the Press Gallery

Dr Vaughan Koops, Serjeant-at-Arms

Mr Warick Gately AM, Victorian Electoral Commissioner

Ms Carolyn Morris, Acting CEO, YMCA Victoria

Ladies and gentlemen

First, I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we are gathering and pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to any Elders here with us this afternoon.

I am delighted to welcome you all to Government House today.

Let me start by congratulating all of the 2019 YMCA Youth Parliament and Press Gallery participants.

I am conscious that I am talking to some of Victoria's most promising future politicians, advocates for democracy, journalists, reporters, photographers and videographers. Or, whether in those fields or others, some of our State's most promising contributors: Victorians who are bright, active, curious and engaged.

I am a great enthusiast for the YMCA Youth Parliament program.

For 33 years now, it has given young Victorians like you the opportunity to come together to compile, research, draft, debate and vote on Parliamentary Bills.

This program allows you to express your views on matters that concern you.

It enables you to develop an interest in and understanding of our democratic processes.

It helps you to develop research, negotiation, clear thinking, decision making and leadership skills that will be to your advantage whatever life or career path you ultimately choose to follow.

And the development of your skills are to the ultimate benefit of the community's future too.

How gratifying for you that bills, when passed by Youth Parliament, are provided to the relevant Minister for consideration. And what a wonderful way for a State Government to come to know some of the concerns and expectations of our young people.

Indeed, more than 20 Youth Parliament Bills have become law. They include laws for mandatory wearing of bicycle helmets, nightclub safety reforms, gun reforms and roadside drug testing.

Of course, there are many components to a strong and stable democracy. The press has its own important role. And so it is a clever addition to the original Program that there is now a Youth Press Gallery, providing thorough coverage of the Youth Parliament, and pitching stories to Victorian media outlets.

I hope that this Program will give you all the opportunity to reflect on a number of things.

What you would like your community to look like. What skills you need in order to effect change. How being open to a diversity of perspectives will ensure an enriched debate. How our democracy profits when you advocate your opinions with integrity. And, fundamentally, why a stable democracy is so precious to us.

I hope that, in that regard, each one of you in this Youth Parliament, or reporting upon it, will understand that our democracy is underpinned by each and every role.

Of course, I have the clearest view on the Governor's role.

The Governor is appointed to represent the Queen, as the head of Victoria's constitutional structure.

The Governor's constitutional duties include ensuring the orderly transition of power from one government to the next after an election, and providing formal approval to legislation passed by the two Houses of Parliament, so that Bills come into law as Acts.

Of course, the Governor also has ceremonial duties, and a significant community role bringing Victorians together and celebrating their successes, as well as helping to promote Victoria's social, cultural and economic interests, both locally and internationally.

And so, as the proud Governor of Victoria, it really is a pleasure for me to host you here. You are such an important part of our State's future.

To all of you participating directly and indirectly in this year's Youth Parliament, I congratulate you on the bold agenda, neatly traversing some of the most pressing issues of our time. And I wish you all well in your deliberations and in your reporting of them.

Finally, I welcome the opportunity to formally thank the YMCA, and all those who volunteer to make this Program such a success.