

**YOUNG  
MAYORS**



# Wollongong Youth Forum

2024 Nominee  
Information Pack



**fya**



## What is the Young Mayors program?

The Young Mayors program supports young people aged 12 to 17 across the Wollongong Local Government Area to run for election on to Wollongong Youth Forum. Elected by their peers, together this Youth Forum will nominate roles, set an agenda for their 18 month Term in Office and work with the Wollongong City Council on specific issues.

With access to training, mentoring and money to run local projects and campaigns, the Youth Forum won't just have a voice - but a platform to take action on the issues that young people in Wollongong truly care about.

It's free for all young people to apply and participate in Young Mayors.

## Who runs the Young Mayors program?

Young Mayors is run by the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), in partnership with Wollongong City Council and other councils around Australia. FYA is a national non-profit organisation that exists to back young people across the country to beat injustice and create long-lasting change for all.

# Message from the Youth Forum

"I decided to nominate to be part of the Wollongong Youth Forum because I have always wanted to change people's lives for the better and help as many as I can. I believe it is important to recognise different life experiences and be a speaker for anyone who may not be able to speak up for themselves. I want everybody to live a life that they deserve and that brings them joy, freedom, and peace, so when I heard about the Wollongong Youth Forum, I knew it was the perfect place to do that.

The Wollongong Youth Forum means so much to me and I love every moment. I have changed from a regular person with a dream of equity, to a role model who is working to make it a reality. My forum members have become my favourite people and I am constantly inspired to do more to help the people around me. It makes me feel like I could make a real difference for the future and I am so proud of the forum and where I have come.

Since nominating for the Wollongong Youth Forum, I have become a role model and a speaker for my school with people talking to me with concerns and for advice. The feeling of being so respected has felt odd, but brilliant knowing I can actually do something to help instead of standing by others' struggles. The forum has given me a new perspective on the people and world around me, and I find myself learning something new every meeting. I cherish the friendships inside and out of the forum that have developed due to my position, and I can not imagine how different my life would be if I never nominated for such an opportunity.

It will be terrifying. I was terrified, sometimes I still am. But there is so much to learn and so many opportunities to grow that you will find yourself loving it. It is crucial to understand how important your opinions are and that you are able to make so many positive changes to people's lives. If you are scared or unsure, please give it a go because there are so many brilliant people to support you through the whole journey, and your voice could save lives and change how other people see the world. There are so many that believe in you and will stand by you, protect you, fight for you, and follow you. Even if you don't think you can do it, trust me, as someone who thought the same thing, you absolutely can".

**Wollongong Youth Forum member**

# Message from the Lord Mayor



Young people play a significant role in Wollongong so it's important that their voice is heard and respected. Through this program, young people in our region will have the chance to provide their thoughts and feedback to Wollongong City Council on issues that they care most about. This initiative will continue to complement other existing opportunities for young people to provide input to Council.

Wollongong was the first region in New South Wales to democratically elect young people to our own Youth Forum in partnership with the Foundation for Young Australians. I encourage young people to again put their hand up, nominate and run for election; and get out and vote! Your involvement matters and I look forward to seeing your contribution to our community.

**Cr Gordon Bradbery AM**  
**Lord Mayor**

# What have the 2023 Wollongong Youth Forum members been up to?

The Wollongong Youth Forum has been hard at work for the first 7-8 months of their term with over 1000 of Wollongong's young people having participated in events run by the Forum already. These events have included:

**Raise the Volume:** A one day music festival that kicked off this year's Youth week. The day included local music acts, youth markets, a dedicated art space and food throughout. All totally free for young people.

The Forum has held **Living for the Future- a life skills expo** at Corrimal High School and Five Islands Secondary College students. This event brought together a variety of the youth centered services in our community to hold expo stalls as well as host workshops on topics ranging from pathways to university, mental health and young peoples rights in the workplace.

The Forum also hosted a **Walk on Country** with Aunty Joyce Donovan where they, other young people and Youth Services staff were able to sit on Country at Mullet Creek and listen to wisdom, dance and eat with Aunty Joyce and her Family.



Youth Forum at their swearing-in ceremony with Lord Mayor Gordon Bradbery

The Youth Forum has set their priorities for the rest of their term in office and will continue to deliver projects and advocate on these issues. **The priorities for the 2023 - 2024 Youth Forum are:**

- **Youth Poverty**
  - this includes tackling the many ways poverty manifests for young people, inc. food and period poverty
- **Youth health**
  - health understood as five dimensions of health, inc. mental, physical, spiritual, emotional, sexual health
- **Safety**
  - focusing on young people being safe to exist in public whilst expressing themselves without having hate crimes inflicted on them

# What you can expect if you're elected to Youth Forum

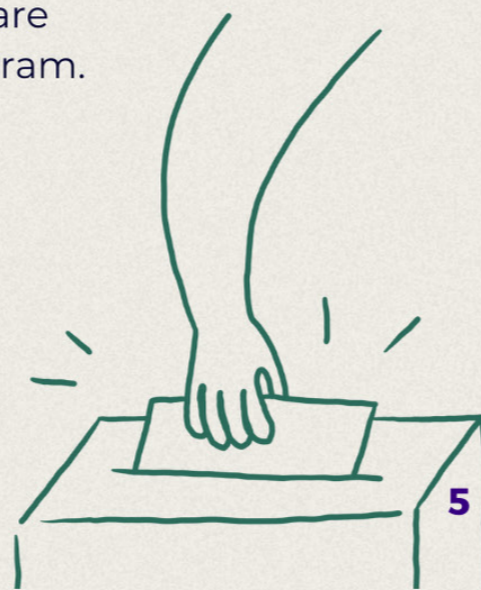
Representing your community on the Youth Forum is an important responsibility, and will be a whole lot of fun. If you're elected, you will:

- Participate in a **2-day induction**, held in January 2025
- Serve a **18 month Term in Office**, from February 2025 to August 2026
- Participate in **fortnightly meetings on a weekday, after school.**
- **Work with your Youth Forum** to engage with your local community and collaborate on projects.
- **Get involved in activities** led by the Youth Forum, and opportunities to work with the Wollongong City Council
- **Represent your community and celebrate its diversity;** share opinions and ideas, learn from others and contribute to creating a better future for your region

The Youth Forum is non-partisan and not affiliated with any political party or politician. We ask you to not represent any party or politician and participate as an independent candidate.

We use the Code of Conduct and responses to your questions to decide whether or not nominees are selected to move to the next phase of the program.

Read more about our Code of Conduct at [bit.ly/YoungMayorsCodeConduct](https://bit.ly/YoungMayorsCodeConduct)



# When and where the youth council meets

Regular Youth Forum meetings are held once per fortnight and where possible hybrid (online and in-person) meetings are offered. Face to face meetings are hosted by the Wollongong Youth Services at the Wollongong Youth Centre, located at 85 Burelli St, Wollongong.

Forum meetings are usually 1.5 hours. Depending on the Forum's priorities, project-based committees may be formed, where Forum members are invited to opt-in. The committees are additional and may meet outside of the scheduled Forum meeting times, depending on the needs of the projects. Youth Forum members are expected to commit to their roles for the period of the Term in Office, however we understand that how Forum members contribute may vary throughout the term with other commitments such as school, work, sports etc.

The Young Mayors Wollongong Team and the Youth Forum work together to support all members to contribute meaningfully. Youth Forum members will also be encouraged to attend additional meetings with community, participation in events and some excursions.

Food is provided for meetings with all dietary requirements catered to.



# What you'll get access to

## If you're selected as a candidate to run for election, you'll get access to:

- Online workshops to prepare you for campaigning, led by experts from the Foundation for Young Australians and Wollongong City Council
- A small budget for campaign materials and 10 t-shirts for you and your supporters to promote your campaign
- The opportunity to speak to your constituents through a 'Meet the Candidates' community forum (with support to prepare)
- Coaching and well-being support from the Young Mayors Program team throughout your campaign

# 2024 Key Dates



## Campaign How-To Workshops will be held online:

- 27 September - Online workshop on being a representative and creating your team
- 02 October - Face to face workshop on campaigning and how to craft your messaging
- 05 October - Workshop on how to create your campaign t-shirt and campaign materials
- 16 October - Meet the Candidates event
- 26 October - Community engagement event in Wollongong

## If you're elected to the Youth Forum you'll get access to:

- Online workshops and training during your induction and throughout your Term in Office
- Support for transport to additional meetings and events, where possible
- Coaching and mentoring by experts from Foundation for Young Australians, Wollongong City Council and community organisations
- The chance to connect and collaborate with young people on Youth Forums and Councils in other parts of the country



\* During Term in Office: training opportunities will be made available to support the Youth Forum with skill development and to participate meaningfully in their projects and priority agenda.

# Who can apply?

Keen to apply? We're excited to hear! Nominees must meet the following criteria:

- live, work, study and play in the Wollongong City Council local government area
- Aged between 12 - under 18 years at the time of nomination
- be able to participate in the Youth Forum Induction in 2025
- understand and agree to the Code of Conduct
- submit your own nomination

The Youth Forum forms an important voice for young people in Wollongong, reflective of and celebrating the diverse strengths, interest, needs and cultural backgrounds of young people.

We encourage young people with a diversity of lived experience of life in Wollongong to nominate, including First Nations people, LGBTQIA+ people, disabled people / people with disability, women and non-binary people, low-income communities and people of colour.

You do not need to be an Australian citizen to nominate yourself. Young people both in and out of school are eligible to apply.



# What is the nomination process?

To nominate, all you need to do is read and fill out this form: [bit.ly/WollongongNominations](https://bit.ly/WollongongNominations)

After nominations close, your application will be assessed by a panel of FYA and Wollongong City Council team members. So we can equip candidates with the skills and resources to campaign, final candidate places are limited. **Not everyone who applies will be selected as a candidate to run for election.**

Candidates are selected based on responses to two questions, and availability to commit to the Term in Office.

If you're not selected, we will provide feedback to help you develop a stronger application next time.

**Note: Once the Youth Forum is formed, they will identify the type of administrative structure that will best serve their community. For example electing a Mayor/s or identifying key roles.**

# FAQs

## How are nominees selected?

We use the Code of Conduct and responses to nominees questions to decide whether or not nominees are selected to move to the next phase of the program. Read more about our [Code of Conduct](#).

Nominees must also be able to commit to the Term in Office.

If a young person is not selected, where possible we will provide feedback to help them develop a stronger application next time.

## I'm keen to nominate but am unsure about being in public

Don't worry, we've got you. We understand that doing things in public can be daunting. The Young Mayors team will support you to campaign in a way that works for you, and (if you would like) help you to develop skills in things like public speaking and media engagement.

Candidates are encouraged to speak in public as much or little as they are comfortable, and support to prepare is always provided.

## Communication

Email and Zoom are used for Youth Forum communications. Text messages are also sent to remind Youth Forum members of important activities. Zoom channels are a space for the Youth Forum to collaborate and plan. FYA and Wollongong City Council staff monitor all Zoom communications and attend all meetings (in-person and online).

We ask that parents and carers respect these meetings and online communication channels as safe spaces for the Youth Forum to collaborate freely. Email addresses are only shared in limited circumstances and FYA and Wollongong City Council staff are cc'd in all communications.

## What is the commitment for young people?

### Campaigning

Candidates are encouraged to campaign as much or as little as they would like. Throughout the campaign period they are supported by the Young Mayors Wollongong Team. We also encourage them to put together a 'campaign crew' of supporters and champions to help them get their message out, brainstorm ideas and cheer them on throughout the process.

### Workshops

There are 4 optional campaign workshops held throughout September and October to build their skills and develop connections with the other candidates. Online workshops run for 1.5-2 hours and the face-to-face (in-person) workshops run from 2 to 4 hours depending on the topic. All workshops are during the school holidays or after school. In-person workshops are held at the Wollongong Youth Centre, 85 Burelli St. Wollongong and online workshops are recorded.

### Meet the Candidates Forum

Held on 16 October, the Meet the Candidates Forum is an opportunity for the candidates to speak to the community about issues that matter to them. It is optional, and young people are supported throughout.

### Term in Office

Regular Youth Forum meetings are held once per fortnight and where possible hybrid (in-person with options to join online) meetings are offered. Meetings are usually 1.5 hours.

Youth Forum members will also be encouraged to attend additional meetings with community, participation in events and some excursions.

Project-based (subcommittee) meetings which Forum members opt into are additional and will depend on the needs of the projects. It is up to the subcommittees to decide what day and how often these meetings occur.

Youth Forum members are expected to commit to their roles for the period of the Term in Office, however we understand that how members contribute may vary throughout the term with other commitments such as school, work, sports etc. The Young Mayors Wollongong Team and the Youth Forum work together to support all Forum members to contribute meaningfully.



### **How can parents, family and supporters get involved?**

Candidates are supported throughout by the Young Mayors Wollongong Team but we also encourage them to put together a 'campaign crew' of supporters and champions to help them get their message out, brainstorm ideas and cheer them on throughout the process.

We keep parents and carers informed of all key activity dates, including additional events, and those that require travel. If a young person has missed some meetings and can't be reached directly, we will reach out to nominated adults.

### **Youth Forum members paid?**

Youth Forum members will be paid a quarterly stipend of \$250 (\$1000 across the Term in Office) to recognise that costs might come up as a part of being involved (eg. transport).

### **What safeguarding is in place for young people in the program?**

The Young Mayors program works with young people aged 11 to 17 years. We recognise this program puts young people in the public spotlight, and this can create vulnerabilities.

Risk management planning includes, but is not limited to specific actions and support available to keep young people safe, processes to report harm, and clarity on expectations young people can have of each other, partners involved and the general public.

FYA and Wollongong City Council staff monitor all email and Zoom communications and attend all meetings (in-person and online). We ask that parents and carers respect these meetings and online communication channels as safe spaces for the Youth Forum to collaborate freely.

FYA and our partners are required to have Working With Childrens' Checks and adhere to a comprehensive set of safeguarding policies and legislative requirements. Both FYA Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Wollongong City Council Policies inform and underpin the program delivery.

### **More information**

If you have a question check out Young Mayors Wollongong website: [bit.ly/Wollongong\\_FAQ](https://bit.ly/Wollongong_FAQ)

For any other questions, or if you'd like support to fill out your nomination form, please email Irene Banda at [youngmayors@fya.org.au](mailto:youngmayors@fya.org.au)