**Federal election 2019: a vision for young Australians**

Dear <**INSERT CANDIDATE NAME**>,

My name is <**INSERT YOUR NAME**> and I live in your electorate. I’m supporting the call by Youth Affairs Council Victoria for all Victorian candidates in the federal election to make a promise to young people.

Young Australians are coming of age at a time of tremendous change. The job market is growing more competitive, people are expected to attain higher levels of education than ever before, and globalisation and technologies are transforming our lives. As a nation, we are becoming more diverse, and mental health is a topic of rising concern. Meanwhile, Australia is facing the threat of climate change and environmental crisis.

Young people are at the forefront of these issues. Their ideas are vital to our nation’s future.

But all too often, federal politics excludes young people. Australia has no federal youth minister, no federal mechanism for engaging with young people, and no national youth policy framework.

We need a national vision for young Australians, and we need it now.

We call upon candidates to commit to taking these steps, to give young people a voice in the decisions that affect their country.

1. **Appoint a federal minister for youth.**

There should be someone in Cabinet driving change to benefit young people and speaking up for young people’s interests right across government.

1. **Launch a new mechanism to give young people a direct voice into federal government.**

A federal youth engagement mechanism would empower young people to become engaged with change, inform government policy, and build their own skills. This new mechanism should engage young people from diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and from rural, regional and remote Australia.

1. **Develop a whole-of-government strategy to build the best Australia for young people.**

This strategy should address the big issues shaping young people’s lives, including employment, housing affordability, mental health and wellbeing, and civic engagement. It should be informed by current data and research, and developed with young people and the services that support them. There should be adequate resourcing attached to bring about real change.

1. **Reinstate funding for National Youth Week.**

At this annual celebration, young people showcase their talents, celebrate their achievements, express their ideas, attend live events and entertainment, and have fun. Unfortunately, while state governments continue to support Youth Week, federal funding ended in 2017.

1. **Fund a national peak body to give young people and youth support professionals a strong, independent voice.**

The Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) formed in 2002; it promoted the rights and participation of young Australians, represented young people’s interests to federal government, and worked to build an expert and coordinated youth services sector. Unfortunately, federal funding to AYAC ceased in 2014.

Thank you for engaging on this important topic. I hope to see you joining the call for young people to have a real voice in their country’s future.

<**INSERT YOUR NAME**>

<**INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER>**

**<INSERT YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS>**