**Reshape Our Future**

**Conference Program**

Each session of the Conference is connected state-wide, with speakers presenting in-person and online from multiple locations. Attendees can participate in Q&As and table discussions from their location, whether that’s in-person or online. For more information, [visit our FAQ page](https://www.yacvic.org.au/get-involved/events/reshape-our-future/faqs).

Jump to:

* [Monday May 31st: Youth Forum](#YouthForum)
* [Tuesday June 1st: Sector Conference Day A](#SectorConfDay1)
* [Wednesday June 2nd: Sector Conference Day B](#SectorConfDay2)

Monday 31 May: Youth Forum

**9:30am: Arrivals**

* Registration and tea/coffee
* Technology briefing

**10:30am: Welcome and Youth Forum Opening**

* Local Welcomes to Country
* Hon Ros Spence MP (she/her), Minister for Youth
* Tasha Ritchie (she/her) – Chair, YACVic, and Youth Programs Manager, Children & Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)

*This will happen in each location.*

**11:00am: We are the leaders of today and tomorrow! Empowering Young People**

We will hear from amazing young people about why empowering us as leaders is so important for our communities and society as a whole.

Speakers:

* Melbourne: Natarsha Napanagka Bamblett (she/her) – 26-year-old Yorta Yorta/Bangerang, Warlpiri, Wuradjeri and Kurnai woman, multi-business owner, mum, facilitator, speaker, performer and mentor
* Lakes Entrance: Brodie Pile (he/him) – 13-year-old comedian, creator of Gippsland Promotions
* Mildura: Breanna Macfarlane (she/her) – 25-year-old mother and lived experience advocate and co-founder of HomeBase, a youth led youth space
* Warrnambool: Cassandra Prigg (he/him) – Activist and Student
* Wangaratta: Steph Grant (she/her)

*Speakers in all locations.*

**11:50am: Break and Networking**

This is a time to rest, have a snack or meet other young people. If you are online, take a screen break.

**12:00pm: Where’s Your Head At? Addressing Mental Health and Stigma**

Conversations about mental health often only cover general things, and don’t get deep. Join us for a chat about:

* Intersectional experiences and what that means
* Stigmatised mental illnesses

Speakers:

* Melis Layik (she/her) – Centre for Multicultural Youth, mental health advocate
* Alexander Dalton (he/him) – ABC Takeover Melbourne Winner, LGBTQIA+ and mental health advocate
* Charlie Bassett (she/her) – Live4Life Ambassador, Portland
* Kyle Hayes (he/him) – Live4Life Ambassador, Worker at Batyr, Orygen Youth Health

*This session will be hosted by Warrnambool. Breakout discussions will happen at each location.*

**12:50pm: Break and Networking**

This is a time to rest, have a snack or meet some people. If you are online, take a screen break.

**1:00pm: I’m Down if You’re Down… Sexual Health and Healthy Relationships**

This is a safe space for young people to talk about what sexual health looks like for us. Let’s discuss:

* Consent
* Healthy relationships
* Sexual education
* Relationships

Speakers:

* Nevo Zisin (they/them) – queer, non-binary, Hewish writer, performer, activist and public speaker. Author of award-winning *Finding Nevo* (2017) a memoir about gender transition, and *The Pronoun Lowdown* (2021).
* Margherita Coppolino (she/her) – influential disability and inclusion consultant
* Will Burns (he/him) – young person involved in the ‘Sexy & Safe: Let’s Talk About It’ program across the Mallee focusing on strengthening sexual and reproductive health outcomes for young people

*This session will be hosted online. Breakout discussions will happen at each location.*

**1:50pm: Lunch and Vibes**

This is a time to eat lunch and meet some people. If you are online, take a screen break. There will also be live music entertainment.

Music acts:

* Melbourne: Matt Darvis
* Lakes Entrance: Aurëa
* Warrnambool: Grace Moloney
* Wangaratta: Taylah

**2:30pm: Nothing About Us, Without Us! Disability Justice and Inclusiveness in Education**

Accessing education as disabled young people can be complicated. Join our amazing guest speakers as they share:

* Experiences of education
* How the disability justice movement is fighting for inclusiveness
* What inclusive and accessible education actually looks like

Speakers:

* Tim Chan (he/him) – adult autistic non-speaker and advocate for access, participation and inclusion for people with disability
* Mac Zamani (he/him) – 17-year-old queer and disabled youth advocate currently undertaking year 12
* Srishti Chatterjee (they/them) – Sociology and Media & Communications student at the University of Melbourne intending to pursue a career in academia, and disability advocate

*This session will be hosted by Wangaratta. Breakout discussions will happen at each location.*

**3:20pm: Break and Networking**

This is a time to rest, have a snack or meet some people. If you are online, take a screen break.

**3:30pm: Work in Progress… Meaningful Work for Young People**

Gippsland East Local Learning and Employment Network (GELLEN) are presenting a skills workshop about pathways education – how we as young people can improve our chances of finding meaningful and enjoyable work. We will focus on:

* Career pathway planning
* Short- and long-term personal goals
* What meaningful work looks like for you

Speakers:

* Jes John (she/her) – Media and Communications Officer
* Riley Legg (he/him) – ICT Trainee

*This session will be hosted by Lakes Entrance. Breakout discussions will happen at each location.*

**4:20pm: Break and Networking**

This is a time to rest, have a snack or meet some people. If you are online, take a screen break.

**4:30pm: ‘Ally’ as a verb: Let’s Make Real Change**

This workshop will explore:

* What allyship actually means and why it’s important
* How we can all be better allies
* Taking real action as an ally

Speakers:

* Elsa Tuet-Rosenberg (she/her) –
* Tishiko King (she/her) –

*This session will be hosted by Melbourne. Breakout discussions will happen at each location.*

**5:20pm: Feedback and Q&A**

Tell us what you thought of your day!

**5:30pm: Close**

Tuesday 1 June: Sector Conference Day A

**8:45am: Arrivals**

* Registration and tea/coffee
* Technology briefing

**10:00am: Welcome and Conference Opening**

* Acknolwedgment of Country
* Mr Josh Bull MP (he/him) – Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Victorian Government
* Tasha Ritchie (she/her) – Chair, YACVic, and Youth Programs Manager, Children & Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)
* Youth Loop: young people from each Conference location share insights about their region and the previous day’s Youth Forum.
  + Melbourne: Natarsha Napanagka Bamblett (she/her) – 26-year-old Yorta Yorta/Bangerang, Warlpiri, Wuradjeri and Kurnai woman, multi-business owner, mum, facilitator, speaker, performer and mentor
  + Lakes Entrance: Brodie Pile (he/him) – 13-year-old comedian, creator of Gippsland Promotions
  + Mildura: Breanna Macfarlane (she/her) – 25-year-old mother and strong advocate for rural and regional young people
  + Warrnambool: Dylan Bermingham (he/him) – residential care worker at Brophy and studying a Bachelor of Psychological Science
  + Wangaratta: Steph Grant (she/her)

**10:30am: Young People are Reshaping Our Future**

Young people are more active than ever in their communities and across global movements. How is it that they do not have a more prominent role in decision-making on urgent issues?

Speakers:

* Moderator: Andrew Leap (he/him) – Student Voice Advocate, and Member, VicHealth ‘Reimagining Young People’s Futures’ Youth Steering Group
* Dr Harry Shier (he/him) – writer, researcher and global expert on young people’s rights and participation
* Bryce Taylor (he/him) – Participation & Development Officer, Koorie Youth Council
* Amy Chu (she/her), Youth Ambassador and Catherine Maine (she/her), Youth and Family Services Team – ‘Youth United Against Family Violence’ initiative, City of Greater Dandenong
* Thanked by: Heather Morecroft (she/her) – Senior Strategic Advisor, Spark Strategy

*This session is sponsored by* [*Spark Strategy*](https://sparkstrategy.com.au/)*.*

**11:30am: Morning Tea and Networking**

**12:00pm: Identity and Intersectionality**

People and politics seem more divided than ever. How can we empower diverse young people to participate in and build a more connected society?

Speakers:

* Moderator/speaker: Hang Vo (she/her) – CEO, Whitelion, and Chair, the Victorian Pride Centre
* Leah Van Poppel (she/her) – Co-Chair, Victorian Government Diversity & Intersectionality Working Group, and CEO, Women with Disabilities Victoria
* April Goldring (she/her) – Rainbow Program, Leading Aboriginal Mentor, and Mentor and Facilitator, Strong Brother, Strong Sister
* Swathi Shanmukhasundaram (she/her) – ABC Takeover, and Co-Founder, The Vermillion Project

**1:00pm: Lunch and Networking**

**2:00pm: Bright Spot 1 – Victorian Government Youth Strategy**

Update on the progress of the Victorian Government’s new Youth Strategy, due for launch later this year.

Speakers:

* Gerry Goswell (she/her) – Director, Office for Youth, Victorian Government
* Youth Congress, Victorian Government:
  + Otis Heffernan-Wooden (he/him)
  + Tom Saxton (he/him)
  + Tiana Sixsmith (she/her)

**2:30pm: The Future for Mental Health – Making Reform Real**

Bushfires, pandemic and recession over the past two years have put intense pressure on the mental health of young people and those working with them. At the same time, the Royal Commission into Mental Health has presented a roadmap for the future of Victoria’s mental health system. As key stakeholders, how can young people and the youth sector contribute – state-wide and locally – to the successful implementation of the recommendations?

State-wide speakers:

* Pam Anders (she/her) – CEO, Mental Health Reform Victoria
* Natasha Ludowyk (she/her) – Researcher, Live4Life Evaluation Project, Ludowyk Evaluation
* Han-Mari Cronje (she/her) – Global Ambassador Program, headspace Werribee
* Kirsty Fealy (she/her) – Global Ambassador Program, headspace Werribee
* Moderator: Jen Rowan (she/her) – Youth Mental Health Working Group Member, YACVic

Local speakers: TBA

**3:30pm: Afternoon Tea and Networking**

**3:50pm: Bright Spot 2 – What We Wish You’d Do**

Three young activists speak on urgent issues, encouraging better allyship from the youth sector.

Speakers:

* Angie Judd (she/her) – Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC)
* Cindy Chiu (she/her) – COVID-19 Youth Working Group, Youth Disability Advocacy Service
* Tim Lo Surdo (he/him) – Founder and National Director, Democracy in Colour
* Introduction by Nick Duffy (he/him) – Partnerships Manager, HESTA

*Session sponsored by* [*HESTA Superannuation*](https://www.hesta.com.au/)*.*

**4:30pm: Local Sessions**

Each location will run a session on a different, locally-specific topic.

**Melbourne 1 / Online: Stepping Towards a Peaceful Future**

Social media bubbles and identity politics try every day to divide us, and can lead to violence and exclusion. How are young people taking action to build social connection and respectful relationships, and how do we support them?

Speakers:

* Lakshitha Saji Prelis (he/him) – Co-Chair, Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security, and Director, Children & Youth Programs, Search for Common Ground
* Ofeira Satele (she/her) – Know Your Roots, Point of Difference Studio, Shepparton
* Aby Simaika (she/her) – Know Your Roots, Point of Difference Studio, Shepparton
* Moderator: Thomas Feng (he/him) – Media & Communications Manager, YACVic

**Melbourne 2: Enthusiastic Yes! Positive and Respectful Relationships**

We need to support young people to enjoy more equitable, respectful and safer relationships now and in their futures. How can we take a strengths-based, holistic approach to this, and build on work already underway?

Speakers:

* Dr Kath Albury (she/her) – Professor of Media and Communication, Swinburne University of Technology
* Miranda Johnson-Jones (she/her), Laura Crozier (she/her) and Paddy Grindlay (he/him) – Youth Ambassadors, Time to Talk consent initiative, Macedon Ranges Shire Council
* Moderator: Julia Baron – Policy & Advocacy Manager, YACVic
* *Time to Talk* video

**Lakes Entrance: Young People in Disaster Recovery and Emergency Management**

In disasters, it’s vital to provide resources to specifically support and empower young people. Not only in the immediate aftermath, but also as part of ongoing recovery and rebuilding over several years. In the wake of the 2019/20 fires and COVID-19, how do we collectively ensure that young people have a central role in decision making? How do we ensure that they get dedicated and specific roles on local, state and national recovery committees, and other advisory bodies?

Speakers:

* Carmel Flynn (she/her) – Acting CEO, Bushfire Recovery Victoria
* Dr Fiona McDonald (she/her) – Senior Research Fellow, ISILC, Victoria University, and Research/Project Coordinator – Youth Perceptions of Bushfire Response, YACVic
* Chris (she/her) – Combienbar
* Willow (she/her) – Bairnsdale

**Wangaratta: Young People in Disaster Recovery and Emergency Management**

In disasters, it’s vital to provide resources to specifically support and empower young people. Not only in the immediate aftermath, but also as part of ongoing recovery and rebuilding over several years. In the wake of the 2019/20 fires and COVID-19, how do we collectively ensure that young people have a central role in decision making? How do we ensure that they get dedicated and specific roles on local, state and national recovery committees, and other advisory bodies?

Speakers:

* Todd Macbeth (he/him) – Director, Inclusive Education Professional Practice Branch Department of Education
* Quin O’Bran (she/her) – Member, Bushfire Youth Working Group, YACVic Rural
* Claire (she/her) – Executive Member, Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC)

**Warrnambool: Collaborative Approaches to Mentoring**

The unique relationships developed in a mentoring relationship benefit everyone involved and are increasingly popular with young people. How can small-scale mentoring programs collaborate on common tasks like recruitment, promotion, training and scheduling? How can they keep policies current and staff well-supported? We consider a collaborative response to the logistics, ethics and future of mentoring in Victoria’s south west.

Speakers:

* Emma Brian (she/her) – Program Manager, Standing Tall Hamilton
* Drew Paten (he/him) – Co-Chief Executive Officer, AIME
* Leyla Quartermaine (she/her) – Marram Nganyin Aboriginal Youth Mentoring Project, Koorie Youth Council
* Kyle Hayes (he/him) – Peer Mental Health Advocate, Batyr, Orygen Youth Mental health and Youth Live4Life.

**5:30pm: Close Conference Day A**

**6:30pm: Optional Dinner**

Each location will organise a dinner (venues to be confirmed).

Wednesday 2 June: Sector Conference Day B

**8:30am: Arrivals**

* Registration and tea/coffee
* Technology briefing

**9:30am: Welcome events**

* Acknowledgment of Country
* Katherine Ellis (she/her) – CEO, YACVic
* Youth Loop: A young person from each Conference location will share insights about the previous day’s speakers and discussions
* ‘What gets you up in the morning?’: Interactive reflection on working with/for young people.  
  Facilitated by Louisa Keck, Senior Facilitator, Reach Foundation

**10:00am: Guaranteeing Decent Work for Young People**

Recessions impact young people disproportionately, both at the time and throughout the recovery. What needs to be done now, and in the future, to guarantee young people have access to suitable, safe and meaningful work?

This session will have a state-wide speaker and Q&A, followed by local speakers and discussions.

State-wide speakers:

* Emma Cull (she/her) – Program Development Manager, Youth Transitions, Brotherhood of St Laurence
* Mairead Lesman (she/her) – Acting Director, Young Workers Centre
* Emma Linton – ‘How Work Works’ project, Loddon Campaspe Region LLENs
* Moderator: Sebastian Antoine (he/him) – Research & Policy Officer, YACVic
* Introduction: Sean Callanan (he/him) – Engagement & Strategy Manager, Human Services, McArthur

Warrnambool:

* Kate Roache (she/her) – Executive Officer, Beyond the Bell

**11:00am: Morning Tea and Networking**

**11:30am: Ethical Youth Work Towards Social Justice**

The global pandemic has highlighted social injustice and inequality across the world, as well as closer to home. In what ways can ethical youth work provide a framework for a safer and more equal society based on human rights? How do we include ChildSafe Standards and Reportable Conduct, social media, disability self-determination, and trans and gender diverse young people?

Speakers:

* Moderator/speaker: Dr Tim Corney (he/him) – Principal Fellow ISILC, Victoria University, and lead author, Victorian Code of Ethical Conduct in Youth Work
* Liana Buchanan (she/her) – Victorian Commissioner for Children & Young People
* Lucy Thomas (she/her) – Co-Founder, Project ROCKIT
* Mija Gwyn (she/her) – Manager, Youth Disability Advocacy Service
* Sara Strachan (they/them) – Zoe Bell Gender Collective, cohealth

**12:30pm: Lunch**

**1:20pm: Bright Spot 3 – What’s Coming Over the Horizon?**

Three future thinkers share what they see coming for young people and their lives.

* Sonia Arakkal (she/her) – Co-Founder, Think Forward
* Claire O’Brien (she/her) – VicHealth ‘*Reimagining Young People’s Futures*’ project
* Kate Griffiths (she/her) – Fellow, Budget, Policy & Institutional Reform, Grattan Institute
* Moderator: Alyssa Jeffrey (she/her) – Young Peer Facilitator, YACVic

**2:00pm: Technology and Innovation in Youth Work**

Has the use of technology in the past 12 months taught us how we can build more accessible environments? What are the digital innovations that are enriching youth work and youth participation? What can we learn from global experts and local practitioners?

Speakers:

* Suvi Tuominen (she/her) and Juha Kiviniemi (he/him) – Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work, Verke (Finland)
* Elizabeth Smith (she/her) – Program Coordinator, Broadening Horizons Gippsland
* Jason ‘Jase’ McCurry (he/him) - Youth Leadership & Development Officer, Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)
* Moderator: Sam Champion (he/him) – Participation & Development Manager, YACVic

**3:00pm: Afternoon Tea and Networking**

**3:30pm: Local breakout sessions**

Each location will run a session on a different, locally specific topic.

**Melbourne 1 / Online: Young People and Youth Justice**

Young people who come into contact with the justice system are often facing complex difficulties. How can we work with young people to reduce re-offending? What are alternatives to the current system that will help keep young people and the community safe?

Speakers:

* Moderator/speaker: Laura Chipp (she/her) – Principal Lawyer/Prosecutor and Head of Specialist Children’s Court Prosecution Unit, Victoria Police
* Marlion Pickett – Richmond AFL Player and #RaisetheAge Advocate
* Vincent Shin (he/him) – Lawyer and Program Manager, WEstjustice
* Nasima Allahyari (she/her) & Mehri Vijdani (she/her) – Participants, Victoria Police South-East Young & Emerging Community Leaders Program

**Melbourne 2: Power in the Periphery**

We spend so much time creating and delivering programs and services for young people, that we often have no resources, time or energy to leverage their power beyond their immediate impact. How do we reshape our efforts on things like youth-led evaluation, policy influencing, and positive youth narratives in the media?

Speakers:

* Moderator/speaker: Wendy Williams (she/her) – Editor, Pro Bono Australia
* Dr Mandy Charman (she/her) – Project Manager, Outcomes, Practice and Evidence Network (OPEN), Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare (CFECFW)
* Kirra-Alyssa Horley (she/her) and Morgan Cataldo (she/her) – Lived Experience Consultants, Y-Change, Berry Street

**Lakes Entrance: Where Have All the Youth Workers Gone?**

With targeted programs, short-term funding, burnout and shift expectations, generalist youth workers seem to have all but disappeared in regional Victoria. Where are they? What gaps are being left? Should we, or can we, get them back?

Speakers:

* Dr Karen Hart (she/her) – Senior Lecturer/Researcher and Course Chair of Youth Work and Community Development, Victoria University

**Wangaratta: Sexual Health and Healthy Relationships**

Young people deserve to enjoy more equitable, respectful and safer relationships now and in their futures. How can we take a strengths-based, holistic approach to this, and build on work already underway?

Speakers:

* Ange Davidson (she/her), Sexual Health Nurse, Gateway Health
* Jenny Walsh (she/her), Relationships and Sexuality Education Consultant
* Freyja Postlethwaite (she/her) – Youth advocate, freelance writer, feminist

**Warrnambool: Sexual Health and Healthy Relationships**

Despite pervasive gender-based violence across the country, south west Victoria still has few resources to support young people in this space. Young people deserve to enjoy more equitable, respectful and safer relationships now and in their futures? How do we take a strengths-based, holistic approach to this, and build on work already underway?

* Munira Yusuf (she/her) – Senior Policy Advisory Young People, Our Watch
* Sarah Prescott (she/her) – Respectful Relationships, DET Wimmera South West
* Nicola Grayson (she/her) – School Nurse Manager, DET Wimmera South West
* Dr Erin Gordon (she/her) – GP and YouTube superstar
* Sienna Gladstone (she/her) – VicSRC Executive Member and Warrnambool student.
* Moderator: Emma Mahoney (she/her) – EO Barwon South West Women’s Health

**4:30pm: Close**