**Reshape Our Future**

**Conference Program**

Each session of the Conference is connected state-wide. Attendees can participate in Q&As and discussions. For more information, [visit our FAQ page](https://www.yacvic.org.au/get-involved/events/reshape-our-future/faqs).

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Wednesday 11 August: Sector Conference Day A

**8:30am: Conference Space Open on Hopin**

Explore the Conference program and expo site.

**9:00am: Networking**

Catch up with colleagues and peers before the Conference sessions start.

**9:30am: Conference Opening**

* Welcome to Country
* Welcome by Kerrie Loveless (she/her) – Deputy Chair, YACVic
* Youth Loop: Video montage of a young person from each Conference location sharing insights about their region.
  + 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 Pyle (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) – Advocate and Student
* Program Overview by Katherine Ellis (she/her) - CEO, YACVic

**10:00am: 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
* 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
* Dr Harry Shier (he/him) – writer, researcher and global expert on young people’s rights and participation
* Thanked by: Heather Morecroft (she/her) – Senior Strategic Advisor, Spark Strategy

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

**11:00am: Break and Networking**

Networking with NZ Youth Workers: Online networking with youth practitioners in New Zealand at the concurrent INVOLVE Conference.

**12:00pm: 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:

* Hon Ros Spence MP (she/her) – Minister for Youth
* Gerry Goswell (she/her) – Director, Office for Youth, Victorian Government
* Youth Congress, Victorian Government:
  + Otis Heffernan-Wooden (he/him)
  + Tom Saxton (he/him)

**12:45pm: Break**

Short break and transition to new Zooms for next session.

**1:00pm: Parallel Sessions**

**Parallel 1: 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
* 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
* Matthew Bowden (he/they) - Consultant and former CEO, People with Disabilities Australia

**Parallel 2: 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

**2:00pm: Break and Networking**

**2:30pm: Parallel Sessions**

**Parallel 1: Young People Leading Peace and Connection**

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
* Zoe Condliffe (she/her) – Founder, She’s a Crowd
* Moderator: Thomas Feng (he/him) – Media & Communications Manager, YACVic

**Parallel 2: 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:

* Sue Jamieson (she/her) – Director – People and Wellbeing Recovery, 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 Rural Activator
* Willow (she/her) – Bairnsdale Rural Activator
* Quin O’Bran (she/her) – Member, Bushfire Youth Working Group, YACVic Rural
* Moderator: Carla Hall (she/her) – Rural Youth Projects Coordinator, YACVic

**3:30pm: Break**

Short break and transition to new Zooms for next session.

**3:45pm: 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 Liu (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 Tyson Harris (he/him) – Business Relationship Manager, HESTA

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

**4:30pm: Close Youth Sector Conference Day A**

End-of-day reflections and feedback.

Thursday 12 August: Sector Conference Day B

**8:30am: Conference Space Open on Hopin**

Explore the Conference program and expo site.

**9:00am: Networking**

Catch up with colleagues and peers before the Conference sessions start.

**9:30am: Welcome & Connection**

* Acknowledgment of Country by Natarsha Napanagka Bamblett (she/her) – 26-year-old Yorta/Bangerang, Warlpiri, Wuradjeri and Kurnai woman, multi-business owner, mum, facilitator, speaker, performer and mentor
* Josh Bull MP (he/him) – Parliamentary Secretary for Youth, Victorian Government
* ‘What gets you up in the morning?’: Interactive reflection on working with/for young people.  
  Led by Louisa Keck, Senior Facilitator, Reach Foundation

**10:00am: Parallel Sessions**

**Parallel 1: 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/they) – Co-Founder, Project ROCKIT
* Mija Gwyn (she/her) – Manager, Youth Disability Advocacy Service
* Starlady (she/her) – Program Manager, Zoe Bell Gender Collective

**Parallel 2: 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
* Introduced by Sean Callanan (he/him) – Engagement & Strategy Manager, Human Services, McArthur
* Kate Roache (she/her) – Executive Officer, Beyond the Bell

*Session sponsored by* [*McArthur*](https://www.mcarthur.com.au/)*.*

**11:15am: Break and Networking**

‘How I F#%ked Up’: Informal chat where experienced youth workers share stories of their mistakes, and what they learned.

**12:15pm: Parallel Sessions**

**Parallel 1: 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
* Angela Burt (she/her) – Palawa woman, Head of Programs, Korin Gamadji Institute, and PhD Candidate
* Vincent Shin (he/him) – Lawyer and Program Manager, WEstjustice
* Mehri Vijdani (she/her) – Participants, Victoria Police South-East Young & Emerging Community Leaders Program

**Parallel 2: Where Have All the Youth Workers in Rural Victoria 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
* Dr Fiona McDonald (she/her) – Senior Research Fellow, ISILC, Victoria University, and Research/Project Coordinator – Youth Perceptions of Bushfire Response, YACVic

**Parallel 3: 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 (Andrea) Davidson (she/her), Sexual Health Nurse, Gateway Health
* Jenny Walsh (she/her), Relationships and Sexuality Education Consultant
* Kyle Hayes (he/him) – Young mental health advocate, Live4Life
* Sienna Gladstone (she/her) – VicSRC Executive Member and Warrnambool student
* Moderator: Derm Ryan (he/him) – Rural Manager, YACVic

**1:15pm: Break and Networking/Consultation**

YACVic CEO consultation with Victorian youth workers

**2:15pm: 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:

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

**3:15pm: 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
* VicHealth representatives: Claire O’Brien (she/her) ‘*Reimagining Young People’s Futures*’ project, and Melanie Fineberg (she/her), Manager of Social Marketing & Communications
* Levi McKenzie-Kirkbright (he/him) - Gadigal and Youin man, software engineer, student

**4:00pm: Close Youth Sector Conference Day B**