



REPORT ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF YOUTH PARLIAMENT 2007

For presentation to the House of Representatives
by Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Minister of Youth Affairs



**MINISTRY OF
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO TAIOHI
Administered by the Ministry of Social Development

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Introduction

Youth Parliament 2007 was held from 8 to 11 July 2007 in Parliament Buildings, Wellington. It involved 121 Youth MPs, 10 Youth Press Gallery members and 22 international observers travelling to Wellington to discuss and debate issues of importance for young people today.

For the information of all Members of Parliament a brief overview of the activities that made up Youth Parliament 2007 has been provided.

History

A brief history of Youth Parliament has been included as well as a list of improvements made for Youth Parliament 2007.

Proceedings of the House

While at Youth Parliament 2007 the Youth MPs:

- debated the Youth Parliament 2007 bill titled the *Household Response to Climate Change Bill 2007*
- posed questions for oral answer to Cabinet Ministers
- engaged in general debate
- sat on 10 select committees of inquiry.

Youth Press Gallery

The 10 Youth Press Gallery members were selected from across the country to report on the activities of Youth Parliament 2007 and Youth MPs, with the aim of increasing public awareness of the event and of topical youth issues.

Also included in this section is an overview of the media generated by Youth Parliament 2007.

International Observers

The international observers participated in a specialised programme which culminated in a training day that preceded a Ministerial Forum with Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Minister of Youth Affairs.

History of Youth Parliament

Youth Parliament was first held in 1994 to mark the 20th anniversary of the lowering of the voting age to 18 years. That inaugural Youth Parliament was a short event with young people coming to Parliament for an education day.

Due to the success of the event, Cabinet invited the Minister of Youth Affairs to hold a Youth Parliament every three years from 1997. This was particularly relevant as it was the first year of an MMP government.

After Youth Parliament 1997, the next events were held in 2000 and then 2004. The 2004 event coincided with the 150th anniversary of the first sitting of Parliament and the 30th anniversary of the lowering of the voting age.

Each event since 1994 has built on previous events by increasing the scope of what Youth MPs do, and by introducing the Youth Press Gallery, international observers and the youth reference group to give advice to the project team. This has allowed for greater learning by Youth MPs and more effective communication of young people's views to the government of the day.

Feedback from Youth Parliament 2004 suggested extending the number of days Youth Parliament was held over, to allow for more events.

For Youth Parliament 2007, the following changes were introduced:

- Online elections - this is a new process for MPs to use to select their Youth MP. It involves MPs selecting three Youth MP candidates who then participate in online elections
- Nationwide consultation on the topics to be discussed – as well as consulting with government departments and national youth organisations, for Youth Parliament 2007 a nationwide consultation with young people was conducted
- Caucus sessions – during Youth Parliament 2007 Youth MPs attended party caucus sessions so they can learn about how decisions are made in caucus
- Panel discussion – young people are always keen to hear about the life of an MP. A panel discussion was organised with MPs from each party so that Youth MPs could hear directly from MPs about their journey to Parliament
- Presentation of a report summarising the proceedings of Youth Parliament 2007 – this report summarises the proceedings of Youth Parliament 2007 for the information of all Members of Parliament.

Proceedings of Youth Parliament 2007

This section provides an overview of the activities that occurred in the House during Youth Parliament 2007.

Hansard

The Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives has provided the Ministry with the advance copies of Hansard for both of the House sitting days for Youth Parliament 2007. They have been included in Appendix 1.

The Ministry will work with Youth MPs to collect any amendments and provide these to the Office of the Clerk. The Office of the Clerk expects to have the finalised (pink version) of the Youth Parliament 2007 Hansard completed by early September. This will be distributed to all Members of Parliament.

Legislative debate

There were a total of 52 speeches during the legislative debate which was the second reading of the *Household Response to Climate Change Bill 2007*. A copy of the bill is attached in Appendix 2.

The result of the personal vote was 53 Ayes, 53 Noes and 14 Abstentions. The bill was therefore defeated at this stage.

At the conclusion of the legislative debate, the House agreed to four notices of motion, moving that:

- this and the next Youth Parliament emphasise the importance of young people understanding and participating in the decision making process
- thanks be extended to those who have worked to make Youth Parliament 2007 a success
- thanks be extended to all the Members of Parliament who made themselves available throughout this session
- thanks be extended to the Speaker and Presiding Officers for running the House sessions.

Question time

The Youth Parliament 2007 question time was well attended by Ministers. A total of 23 primary questions and 17 supplementary questions were asked. The following Ministers made themselves available to answer questions:

- Hon Dr Michael Cullen, Minister of Finance
- Hon Steve Maharey, Minister of Education
- Hon Phil Goff, Minister of Defence
- Hon Trevor Mallard, Minister for Sport and Recreation
- Hon Pete Hodgson, Minister of Health
- Hon Chris Carter, Minister of Housing
- Hon Damien O'Connor, Associate Minister of Health
- Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Minister of Youth Affairs
- Hon Harry Duynhoven, Minister for Transport Safety
- Hon Peter Dunne, Minister of Revenue

Darren Hughes, Junior Government Whip, was available to answer questions if Ministers found themselves unavailable on the day. He answered two questions on behalf of Hon Benson-Pope, Minister for Social Development and Employment and one question for Hon Duynhoven, Minister for Transport Safety (who was delayed for his first question).

At the request of Madam Speaker one primary and one supplementary question from each Youth MP who had lodged an oral question was allowed. Question time was completed in 37 minutes.

To review the questions for oral answer and the answers given by Ministers please refer to the advance copy of the Youth Parliament 2007 Hansard included in Appendix 1.

Jonathan Rowe, Youth MP for Gerry Brownlee, made a short speech to thank the Ministers for their attendance.

General debate

There were a total of 30 speeches from Youth MPs set down for the general debate. Due to the pace of question time, a further 22 Youth MPs were provided with opportunity to speak during the debate. A wide variety of topics were covered during the debate.

To review the speeches made by the Youth MPs during the general debate please refer to the advance copy of the Youth Parliament 2007 Hansard included in Appendix 1.

At the conclusion of the general debate, the House agreed to three notices of motion, noting:

- the 140th anniversary of the establishment of the Maori seats
- the 60th anniversary of the first female Cabinet Minister being appointed and the 10th anniversary of the first female Prime Minister
- the 60th anniversary of the New Zealand's adoption of the Statute of Westminster.

Select committees

During Youth Parliament 2007 there were 10 select committees of inquiry:

Select Committee	Topic
Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade	Are we the Pacific scrooge? Why have we not met the 0.7% target for ODA?
Government Administration	Has the student loan system created an unfair burden for a new generation of New Zealanders?
Maori Affairs	How can we keep more young people in upper secondary school, including should there be a higher leaving age and/or a minimum achievement level for leaving school?
Social Services	How can we prevent young people joining gangs and reduce violent offending?
Finance and Expenditure	Is it fair to tax under 18 year olds at the same rate as over 18 year olds?
Transport and Industrial	New Zealand roads are the leading killer of young people, what can be done?
Law and Order	What should the focus of our youth justice system be?
Science	Should New Zealand allow the therapeutic cloning of stem cells?
Health	Should Party Pills (BZP) be illegal?
Education	Was the National Certificate in Educational Achievement a good idea?

Each Youth Parliament 2007 select committee prepared a report which was tabled in the House on the final day of Youth Parliament 2007. Copies of these reports are included in Appendix 3.

Youth Press Gallery

The Youth Press Gallery observed the debate in the House and select committee deliberations, and then reported on these sessions so that the views and recommendations of Youth MPs were presented to other young people, key decision-makers and the general public. They also interviewed Youth MPs about issues important to young people in New Zealand.

As with the whole of Youth Parliament 2007, the Youth Press Gallery aimed to duplicate as realistically as possible the actual workings of the Parliamentary Press Gallery.

The Youth Press Gallery was made up of a mix of young journalists who are working for daily newspapers, young people studying towards journalism degrees and high school students.

Over 50 articles were written by Youth Press Gallery members about Youth Parliament 2007. These included articles on the select committees, question time, general debate, legislative debate, interviews with MPs and Youth MPs as well as articles on their overall experience. Their articles were published in 25 media organisations nationwide and are available on the Youth Parliament 2007 website (www.youthparliament.govt.nz).

Media coverage

Youth Parliament 2007 used a proactive approach to obtain positive and comprehensive media coverage.

To date Youth Parliament 2007 has achieved the following media coverage:

- 302 print media articles
- 15 radio items
- nine television items
- 50 articles written by the Youth Parliament 2007 Youth Press Gallery, many of which have been or are going to be published in mainstream and youth media.

The diverse nature of Youth Parliament 2007 was promoted by highlighting the range of backgrounds the Youth MPs came from to specific media streams.

International Observers

For the first time in the history of Youth Parliament there was a contingent of international observers in attendance throughout the event.

The 22 international observers came from Fiji (2), Kiribati (1), Myanmar (2), New Caledonia (4 officials and 7 young people), Papua New Guinea (1), Samoa (2), Solomon Islands (1) and Tonga (2).

The goal for the international observers was to use their experience of attending Youth Parliament 2007 in New Zealand to enhance their ability to foster national youth representative mechanisms in their own countries.

The international observers programme mirrored the Youth MPs programme in the main, however there was also opportunities for them to ask questions of the Youth MPs, Youth Press Gallery members, and the organisers of Youth Parliament 2007. These young people, predominantly from the Pacific, had the opportunity to stay in a local marae, and on the day after the conclusion of Youth Parliament 2007 took part in a training day followed by a Ministerial Forum with Hon Nanaia Mahuta, Minister of Youth Affairs.

