

# An evaluation of Youth Parliament 2025: Insights from young people and stakeholders



Ministry of  
Youth Development  
Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi

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# Executive Summary

## Background

The Youth Parliament programme provides an opportunity for young people from around Aotearoa New Zealand to participate in a unique youth development and youth voice programme as either Youth Members of Parliament (MPs) or Youth Press Gallery (YPG) members. Young people from around Aotearoa New Zealand learn first-hand about the country's democratic system and government decision-making processes, and are able to actively work on and be heard on topics and issues they are passionate about by key decision-makers, other young people, and the general public. The Youth Parliament programme is an investment in youth development through providing a high-quality programme that encourages and supports young people to gain new knowledge, skills, and experiences, and participate confidently in their communities.

Youth Parliament aims to:

- replicate the Parliamentary process
- involve as many young people as possible (before and after the event)
- maximise the educational opportunities of the event
- enhance Parliamentary public relations
- make known the views expressed to appropriate policy agencies.

The evaluation aimed to assess how young people experienced the Youth Parliament 2025 programme, the influence of the programme on the outcomes of participating young people and their wider community, and opportunities to strengthen the programme. It also explored what changed in the delivery of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme compared to 2022 and the effects of these changes.

The intention is that the evaluation insights will be used to inform the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi, sector partners, agencies, and other stakeholders to better understand ways of supporting as many young people as possible to engage with the political system as well as known flow-on effects such as enhanced public-Parliamentary relations, agency valuing of youth voice, and maximised educational opportunities.

This evaluation utilises a mixed methods approach, comprising a photovoice component, interviews with stakeholders, and a pre-/post-Youth Parliament 2025 survey (based on the Youth Parliament 2022 survey questions) for young people.

## Findings

Youth MPs and YPG member respondents reported high satisfaction overall, valuing the in-person event and support from the project team. Opportunities for improvement included aspects related to Question Time, general debate speech feedback, and limited time and support for community engagement. Photovoice participants expressed feeling inspired and collaborating, despite differing views.

Participants demonstrated confidence in understanding Aotearoa New Zealand's political system, understanding and advocating for people in their community, and making friends and connections. Many reported greater political engagement personally and among peers.

The Youth Parliament 2025 programme introduced several changes following the Youth Parliament 2022 evaluation, aiming to enhance participant experience, improve inclusivity, and strengthen youth voice in parliamentary processes. Some of these changes included:

- The introduction of Parliamentary Working Groups (PWGs), which were widely welcomed as more meaningful avenues for youth voice, though some young people wished to participate in the previously included mock bill.
- The involvement of Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People and Mana Mokopuna - Children's Commissioner in the wellbeing space, which was rated positively by stakeholders.
- MPs receiving clear instructions on selection and support roles. However, there are opportunities to strengthen communication with MP office staff.

## Recommendations for future Youth Parliament programmes

1. Future Youth Parliament programmes could benefit from a more nuanced definition of “non-partisan” by drawing from the United Kingdom Youth Parliament guide<sup>1</sup>, distinct from “apolitical”. This would acknowledge the context of Parliament and support young people to engage with political issues.
2. Youth MPs could benefit from more support for community engagements including check-in points with MYD. One stakeholder suggested that the opportunity for young people to share their progress could help facilitate engagement and provide avenues for young people to seek support.
3. Youth MPs were not always within their selecting MP's region and/or electorates, which impacted the ability of young people to work with their MP and engage communities alongside their MP and their office. As this was a recommendation from the last evaluation, MYD encouraged MPs to choose Youth MPs active in their region. As issues persisted there may need to be further consideration of the ways in which young people can still engage adequately if their selecting MPs are located in another region to where the Youth MP resides.
4. There are opportunities to strengthen communication with MP office staff to help streamline information to MPs.
5. Room allocation and accessibility are important considerations for future participant wellbeing and safety, for example, alongside the practice of allocation by gender, hotel rooms could be assigned according to age as well.

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1 [NEW-UK-Youth-Parliament-Rulebook-2023-2025-June-24-compressed.pdf](#)

6. While resourcing constraints limited MYD's ability to undertake live streaming of the event, the use of evolving technologies could be considered in future events.
7. While respondents shared many positive outcomes and valued being in the Parliament environment, opportunities for broader civics education programmes could be explored to involve as many young people as possible in this youth development opportunity.

## Background

Youth Parliament was first held in 1994 to celebrate the 20-year anniversary of the lowering of Aotearoa New Zealand's voting age to 18 years. Young people from around Aotearoa New Zealand learn first-hand about the country's democratic system, government decision-making processes, and are able to actively work on and be heard on topics and issues they are passionate about by key decision-makers, other young people, and the general public. The Youth Parliament programme is an investment in youth development and youth voice through providing a high-quality programme that encourages and supports young people to gain new knowledge, skills, and experiences, and supports them to participate confidently in their communities.

In March 1995, Cabinet invited the then Minister of Youth Affairs to hold a triennial Youth Parliament, to be delivered once every Parliamentary term by the then Ministry of Youth Affairs to:

- replicate the Parliamentary process
- involve as many young people as possible (before and after the event)
- maximise the educational opportunities of the event
- enhance Parliamentary public relations
- make known the views expressed to appropriate policy agencies.

### Youth Parliament 2025 programme

The Youth Parliament 2025 programme was the 11th New Zealand Youth Parliament and provided an opportunity for 143 young people from around Aotearoa New Zealand to learn first-hand about the country's democratic system as Youth MPs or YPG members. The Youth Parliament 2025 programme was four months long (from Monday 28 April to Friday 29 August 2025) and included an orientation day and two-day event in Wellington from Monday 30 June to Wednesday 02 July 2025.

Participants were made up of 20 YPG members and 123 Youth MPs with distinct roles.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The Minister for Youth retained overall responsibility for the delivery of Youth Parliament 2025, providing direction to MYD officials to deliver the programme. The Minister for Youth established a Multi-Party Reference Group (MPRG) to support the successful delivery of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme. The MPRG comprised an MP from each political party represented in Parliament, and the Chair of the Parliamentary Press Gallery (PPG).

The role of the MPRG was to:

- a. champion an objective Youth Parliament with a youth development focus
- b. advocate with Parliamentary colleagues (including through members' caucuses) the opportunity to support young New Zealanders to experience and learn about Parliament, represent their communities, and debate the issues that affect them and other young people, on a national platform
- c. inform and update each member's respective caucuses / the Press Gallery on Youth Parliament 2025
- d. provide advice and guidance on aspects of the programme, at the request of the Minister for Youth, such as the role MPs and the Press Gallery can play to support Youth Parliament participants during:
  - the Youth MP selection process
  - the community engagement period
  - the two-day event at Parliament
  - the evaluation of Youth Parliament 2025 following the tenure period of participants.

MYD was the lead organisation for delivery of the 2025 programme in the lead up to and during the two-day event at Parliament, the pastoral care of participants, and the evaluation of Youth Parliament 2025. MYD provided secretariat support to the MPRG and in disseminating information to MPs. MYD supported partners across government to deliver Youth Parliament 2025 as required. Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives (OOC) – Te Tari o Te Manahautū o Te Whare Māngai contributed to supporting the delivery of Youth Parliament in 2025 with a reduction from their involvement in 2022. This was limited to activities they could deliver within their baseline resourcing.

## Youth MPs

Youth MPs were selected by MPs. Youth MPs were not expected to follow the political views of the MP who selected them, or of the selecting MP's party. This supported the youth development, non-partisan approach for Youth Parliament 2025. The Youth MP role was designed to learn about government decision-making processes, actively work on topics and issues they were passionate about, and engage with key decision-makers, other young people, and the general public.

Each MP ran their own application process to select a Youth MP and set specific criteria related to that. MPs were encouraged to consider diversity in their selection process and think creatively about how to engage young people in the application and selection processes. Youth MPs needed to be aged 16 to 18 years. MYD suggestions for MPs to recruit Youth MPs were as follows:

- Seek nominations from schools or youth organisations in the electorate.
- Create a social media challenge.
- Hold a speech, essay, or video competition asking young people to explain why they would make a great Youth MP.
- Run a mini campaign and election and encourage the young people's peers to vote for candidates on social media.
- Call for individual applications via your ECO [Electorate and Community Offices] and interview candidates.

The four-month programme provided time for Youth MPs to engage with their communities prior to attending the Youth Parliament 2025 in-person event, to better represent the views of other young people.

Activities for Youth MPs during the programme included:

- participating in online training modules to prepare for their roles
- meeting with the MP who selected them and jointly engaging in local activities, such as attending local engagements together to experience ‘a day in the life’ of an MP
- researching the topics to be discussed at the two-day Youth Parliament 2025 event, and consulting peers to understand their opinions and views
- supporting the Electoral Commission’s promotional activities focused on young people understanding the value and importance of voting
- completing online training in May-June 2025 to prepare for the two-day event
- attending the orientation programme and-in person Youth Parliament 2025 event in Wellington from Monday 30 June to Wednesday 02 July 2025.

## YPG members

The YPG operated as per the PPG, providing an opportunity for the opinions, concerns, and recommendations of the Youth MPs to be presented to politicians, the Government, and the general public. YPG members wrote profiles and articles on Youth MPs, including their activities during their tenure and at the two-day event.

To be selected as a YPG member, young people had to meet the following criteria:

- Be aged between 16 and 24 years.
- Be either a current student studying journalism, media studies, or communications, completing an internship or working at a media outlet, or a secondary school student with a strong and active interest in media.
- Have an interest in New Zealand Parliament processes.
- Have a strong interest in journalism as a career option.
- Be committed to contributing their best, including preparing and seeking to publish articles on Youth Parliament 2025 and Youth MPs throughout the full tenure.

## Changes to the programme

Findings from the evaluations undertaken in 2019 and 2022 were taken into account throughout the Youth Parliament 2025 programme design, including a focus on strengthening the youth development aspects of the programme and broadening the community engagement to involve more young people. The Youth Parliament 2022 Evaluation recommended the removal of the mock bill from the programme due to it “not being the best way to teach young people about the legislative process” and to help “simplify parliamentary activities and make them less information heavy”.

Feedback from previous Youth MPs also highlighted the mock bill did not add value for them and they would have preferred more time dedicated to the general debate and increased time for participants to reflect on their experiences to embed the learning.

Specific feedback on the select committee process from previous Youth MPs described how important it was for them to work on topics that young people want to address and that they wanted their feedback on the select committee topic to be provided to relevant agencies/Parliamentary select committees.

In response to feedback received from young people during the Youth Parliament 2022 evaluation, to increase the youth development opportunity of Youth Parliament 2025, some changes were made to elements of the programme. Changes included:

- the removal of the mock bill and select committee process
- reduction in tenure from six to four months.

The 2022 live streaming of Youth Parliament via Parliament TV was also not included in Youth Parliament 2025.

MYD consistently hears feedback from young people that they want to be engaged in government decision-making, and issues that matter to them. To support youth voice and a youth development approach, the mock select committee and mock bill processes were replaced by new Parliamentary Working Groups (PWGs) to provide young people an opportunity to work on real-life policy topics of interest to them. These PWGs were based on Parliamentary Cross-Party Groups so aimed to mimic real Parliamentary processes and allow for young people to hear from topic experts, bring their views to the table, and present their ideas to decision-makers in ways that work for young people.

A total of 12 PWGs were established for Youth MPs to work together on topics that were important to them and that were being considered within government. Each Youth MP was assigned to a PWG based on their preferences, provided with a written briefing on their topic from the responsible government agency, and invited to a training session to meet with officials from the government agency and ask any questions about the topic. Agencies included: Ministry of Health, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Retirement Commission, Ministry of Social Development, Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry for Primary Industries, Ministry for the Environment, Te Puni Kōkiri, Sport New Zealand, Ministry of Justice, Public Health Agency, Ministry of Education, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People.

At the in-person event there were two sessions for PWGs to meet and discuss community feedback on their topics and prepare recommendations based on that feedback for responsible government agencies. Each PWG was co-chaired by two Youth MPs. On the second day of the event, there was a presentation session for co-chairs to present the key recommendations for their topic to Ministers, and agency senior leaders responsible for PWG portfolios were invited to listen to the report back. YPG members were assigned to PWGs and were asked to follow the community engagements and report on them and attended the in-person event sessions to report on findings to close the feedback loop with young people that were engaged.

PWG topics were:

- **Philanthropic investment in communities:** How do you think philanthropy – whether that’s donating or volunteering - supports local communities? How do we make the most of that giving to create meaningful change for communities?
- **Biodiversity Credits:** Consider how economic tools can improve the environment and provide economic benefit, with a particular focus on biodiversity credits, which have emerged in recent years from the voluntary carbon market as a promising environmental financing mechanism.
- **The Workforce and Gene Technologies in Aotearoa New Zealand:** What should we be doing as a country to ensure we have the right workforce (i.e, right skills and capabilities) to make the most of the GeneTech regulatory changes?”

- **Supporting Unpaid and Informal Carers in Aotearoa New Zealand:** How could New Zealand better prepare to address the growing population of carer support that will be required in the future?
- **Sport and Recreation:** How can government organisations (e.g, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Oranga Tamariki, etc.) use sport and physical activity to improve the lives of young people?
- **Preventing and minimising harm from gambling for youth:** Consider how effective current arrangements to prevent young people in New Zealand from experiencing gambling harm are, and what could be done to improve them.
- **Supporting Disabled Learners:** Unlocking Potential: Education, training and Employment for Disabled People.
- **Implementing the Action Plan for Pacific Education: Enhancing Support for Pacific Learners and Improving NCEA Outcomes:** How could the education system improve the support it provides to Pacific learners?
- **Promoting online safety and wellbeing for young people:** How can Aotearoa New Zealand better promote online safety and wellbeing for young people? How can New Zealand better prevent online harm? What tools could support victims?
- **Enabling more housing to ease pressure on the market:** We need to ease the pressure on the housing market by creating more housing. How should we enable this? Is urban intensification (building more houses in a compact area) the way to go? What about rural revitalisation and redevelopment? What is the right mix?
- **Preparing retirement income policy for the next 25 years:** Consider how future governments could approach retirement income policy given population ageing and other important changes expected to take place over the next 25 years. The main retirement income policies in New Zealand are NZ Super and KiwiSaver.
- **Te Reo:** What are the key barriers to the widespread adoption of te reo Māori in Aotearoa, and how can these be systematically addressed?

## Perceived censorship of general debate speeches

MYD provided guidance to participants regarding the Youth Parliament 2025 programme in relation to its non-partisan nature. All participants were told in advance of the event that their speeches would be reviewed. Participants were informed that this review was not about changing the content of their speech, but to protect them from any risk in the contents of their speech which they may not be aware of.

Ensuring participants were protected from any potential liability of the contents of their speech, and did not breach defamation, copyright, privacy, or contempt of court laws, or broadcasting standards was an important part of the pastoral care role for the Youth MPs who were aged between 16 and 18 years. As part of the pastoral care role, MYD was focused on the wellbeing of young people. Once the content of their speeches was made public, they could face backlash and online and social media spaces are not always safe. MYD was focused on their pastoral care responsibilities and the majority of participants were minors. In keeping with this, and replicating the Youth Parliament 2022 process, MYD provided feedback on general debate speeches, which emphasised that Youth MPs were not protected by parliamentary privilege.

For Youth Parliament 2025, there was a significant amount of media attention as a few young people perceived that their speeches had been censored due to the feedback they received from MYD. This led to a substantial number of Official Information Act (OIA) requests, and MYD subsequently actioned a substantial proactive release of the relevant guidance and communication provided to Youth MPs. After reviewing its correspondence with participants, MYD accepted that it could have been clearer and more consistent in the language used when providing suggestions and recommended changes to speeches.

## Method

This evaluation was completed using internal MYD capability and peer reviewed by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) – Te Manatū Whakahiato Ora Evidence and Effectiveness team. It utilises a mixed methods approach, comprising a photovoice component, interviews with stakeholders, and a pre-/post-Youth Parliament 2025 survey (based on the Youth Parliament 2022 survey questions) for young people.<sup>2</sup>

This evaluation aimed to assess what changed in the delivery of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme from previous iterations and the effects of these changes. The evaluation also explored how young people experienced the Youth Parliament 2025 programme, the influence of the programme on the outcomes of participating young people and the wider community, and opportunities to strengthen the programme.

The intention is that the evaluation insights will be used to inform MYD, sector partners, central government agencies, and other stakeholders to better understand ways of supporting as many young people as possible to engage with Parliament as well as known flow-on effects such as enhanced public-Parliamentary relations, agency valuing of youth voice, and maximised educational opportunities.

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2 Optional surveys were also developed for parents/guardians and MPs. The results of these surveys are provided as appendices, to keep the focus on youth voice as with previous years.

## Evaluation questions

Key question	Sub question
<p>What changed in the delivery of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme compared to the 2022 programme and what effects did the changes have?</p>	<p>Why and how did the delivery of YP change?</p> <p>What differences did the changes make for young people, MYD, and OOC?<sup>3</sup></p> <p>What recommendations from the previous evaluation have been implemented? What were the effects of these changes?</p>
<p>How did young people experience the 2025 Youth Parliament programme?</p>	<p>How did young people become involved with the programme?</p> <p>How did young people experience the four-month Youth Parliament programme?</p> <p>How did young people experience the two-day Youth Parliament event?</p> <p>How well did young people share their opinions with policy agencies during the programme?</p>
<p>What type of outcomes did participating young people experience? What outcomes extended to their peers and the wider community?</p>	<p>What changes have young people experienced as a result of their participation?</p> <p>How did Youth Parliament 2025 increase participants' political/civic/community engagement?</p> <p>How did young people engage with their communities throughout the programme?</p>
<p>What opportunities are there to strengthen the Youth Parliament programme?</p>	<p>What improvements could be made to the application and selection process?</p> <p>What improvements could be made to the programme and the Youth Parliament event? What other civics education opportunities could be made available for young people?</p> <p>How could more young people be encouraged to engage with Youth Parliament?</p>

<sup>3</sup> MYD has collected this data for operational purposes, and it is not included in the evaluation, which focuses on young people's experiences and outcomes.

## Photovoice

Photovoice is a participatory research method that enables participants to document their experiences and concerns through photographs (Tobin, Jones, Ho, & Short, 2023). Photographs then guide discussions with participants to elicit the underlying experience and emotions associated with the photos (Tobin et al., 2023). Photovoice research with young people is a growing area, with photographs understood as a form of field notes (Volpe, 2018). Photovoice as a methodology is consistent with a youth voice approach as it allows young people to generate data themselves and guide storytelling, strengthening agency.

Although photovoice is a methodology used across cultures for youth participation, it aligns strongly with culturally appropriate processes for both rangatahi Māori and Pacific young people. Photovoice is consistent with tikanga Māori processes and oral traditions by drawing on images, metaphors, whakataukī, and storytelling.<sup>4</sup> The photovoice and follow-up interviews will also provide talanoa (conversational) opportunities for Pacific young people to speak about their experience of Youth Parliament 2025.

A photovoice study on Pacific youth views on health and wellbeing described the relevance of photovoice to Pacific young people: “By implementing the photovoice method in this research project, the lead researcher can use the photos as a means to facilitate discussion, which is talanoa in practice” (Fukofuka, 2018).

Consistent with standard practice, the project had three main components:

### **Stage 1: Online photovoice training session**

An online training session was held to discuss basic photography principles as well as consent. This covered the objective of the project, the quantity of photos (three-six), and what type of photos can be taken (i.e., young people were encouraged to represent activities, places, people (with consent), objects, views, moments, ideas, settings, etc.). Ethical considerations were also covered. The session included important content about privacy, confidentiality, and ethical photography (e.g., avoiding taking photos of others without permission), as well as the importance of respecting people’s dignity in photos.

### **Stage 2: Photography period and ongoing support**

After the training, participants were provided with the slides for reference as well as consent forms for subjects. They were then encouraged to start taking photos to capture their tenure (before, during, and after the in-person event).

### **Stage 3: Semi-structured interviews**

Following the Youth Parliament 2025 event, short interviews were conducted via Microsoft Teams (using the record and transcribe function) with each photovoice participant. Interviews were guided primarily by the photographs chosen by participants, i.e., participants were asked to walk the MYD interviewer through the meaning behind each photograph, as well as overall questions about young people’s experiences of the programme and suggestions for improvements.

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4 <https://whatworks.org.nz/photo-voice/>

A total of 50 Youth MPs and YPG members expressed interest in the Photovoice project. Based on the young people's open text box comments and with a view towards ensuring a spread across regions and demographic variables, 20 were selected to participate. While 20 young people initially provided consent to participate in the photovoice component of the evaluation, only nine completed the project. Quotes used throughout the report are verbatim.

## Surveys

The first short survey was completed online by all 143 participants as part of their overall application form. The first survey contains a short list of eight characteristics for young people to rate themselves on prior to their tenure.

The second online survey was more comprehensive and, drawing on questions from previous evaluations of the programme, it asked about young people's experience of different elements of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme through a combination of open text and multiple-choice responses. This was in addition to being re-presented with the initial list of characteristics to rate themselves on towards the end of their tenure. This was anonymous.

The total number of Youth MP survey respondents was 55, but five were excluded due to not answering anything beyond demographic questions. Total respondents included in analysis was therefore 50 (41% of the cohort); however, this varied between questions as they were not compulsory.

A total of nine YPG members took part in the second survey (45% of the cohort). Because of this small sample size, only summaries of their responses are included.

Overall, 59 Youth MPs and YPG members took part in the surveys (41% of the total cohort).

## Stakeholder interviews

A total of six stakeholders were interviewed from MYD, MSD, and OOC. Broad questions were developed; however these were tailored depending on the participant's role. Generally, the questions covered stakeholder's role in the programme, views on different aspects of the programme, and perceived areas for improvement.

## Demographics<sup>5</sup>

The gender distribution between the two surveys was fairly even across Youth MPs with slightly more young women participating in the programme and second online survey. The majority of post-Youth Parliament Youth MP survey participants were NZ European/Pākehā/European, followed by Asian and Pacific peoples. The majority of YPG respondents were young women, comparable to the first survey. Most YPG respondents were NZ European/Pākehā/European, followed by Asian or a different ethnicity.

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5 To protect the confidentiality of evaluation participants, only demographic summaries are provided.

## Ethical considerations

In 2024, as part of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme planning, MYD decided to administer an in-house evaluation of the programme, rather than commissioning an external contractor.

To maintain the integrity of the in-house evaluation, numerous peer review functions were put in place both from MSD's Evidence and Effectiveness team and the MSD Ethics Panel.

Other ethical considerations included making the post-event surveys for young people anonymous and reassuring participants that their contributions to the evaluation would not damage their relationship with MYD or their tenure as Youth MPs or YPG members.

In addition to the overall consent provided to MYD to participate in the programme, young people provided written consent to participate in the evaluation and for MYD to include their photos and comments in reporting. Consent was also obtained from the subjects of any photos in the photovoice project.

## Limitations

Survey analysis was descriptive, rather than inferential so conclusions can only be drawn about the survey respondents, not the entire group. The first survey was part of the application process and all participants responded. The second survey was optional and anonymous and had a response rate of 41% for Youth MPs and 45% for YPG members. Note: While what is considered a good survey response rate varies by survey type and subject matter area<sup>6</sup>, caution needs to be taken not to extrapolate findings to the entire group of Youth MPs and YPG members. For comparison, the 2022 evaluation had an overall response rate of 51%.

All efforts were made to ensure young people could respond freely about the programme (e.g., anonymised surveys). However, because the evaluation was conducted in-house, young people may have felt compelled to respond positively and those with less favourable views are less likely to have engaged with the survey or interviews. Given the variety of positive and negative responses to the programme throughout the survey and interviews, this risk appears to have been mitigated to an extent.

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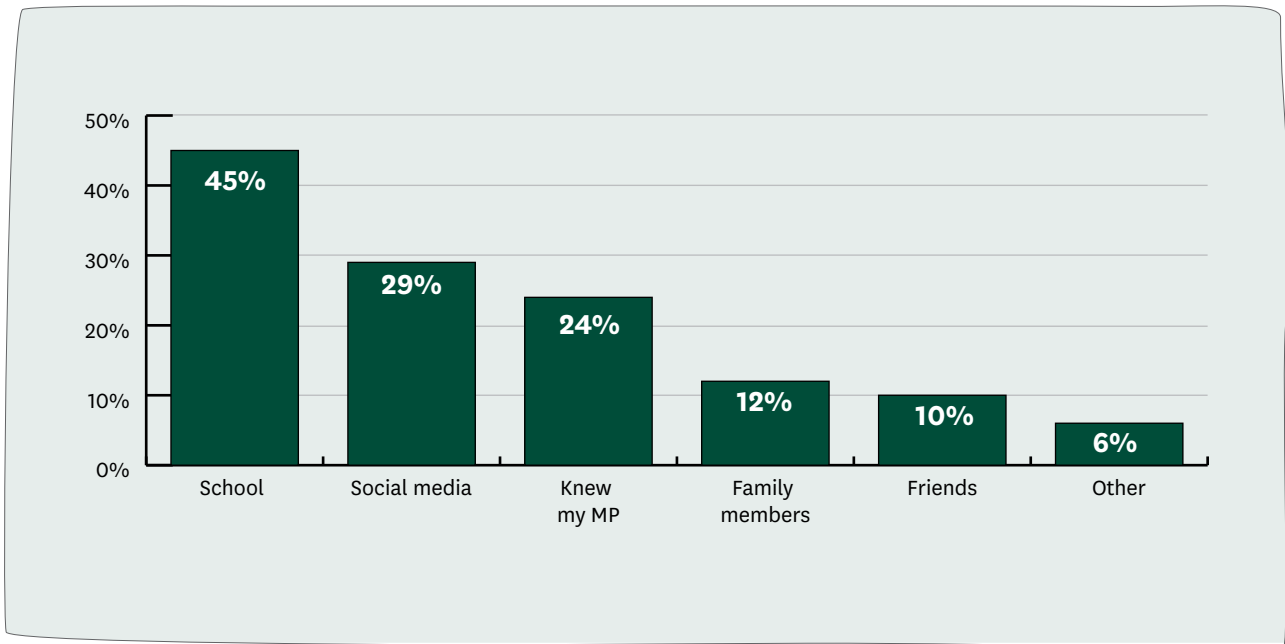
6 [What is a Good Survey Response Rate? | SurveyMonkey](#)

# Youth MP and YPG members experience and outcomes

# Application process

The most common way Youth MPs reported finding out about Youth Parliament 2025 was through school (45%, N= 22).

Figure 1. How Youth MPs heard about Youth Parliament 2025, N=49

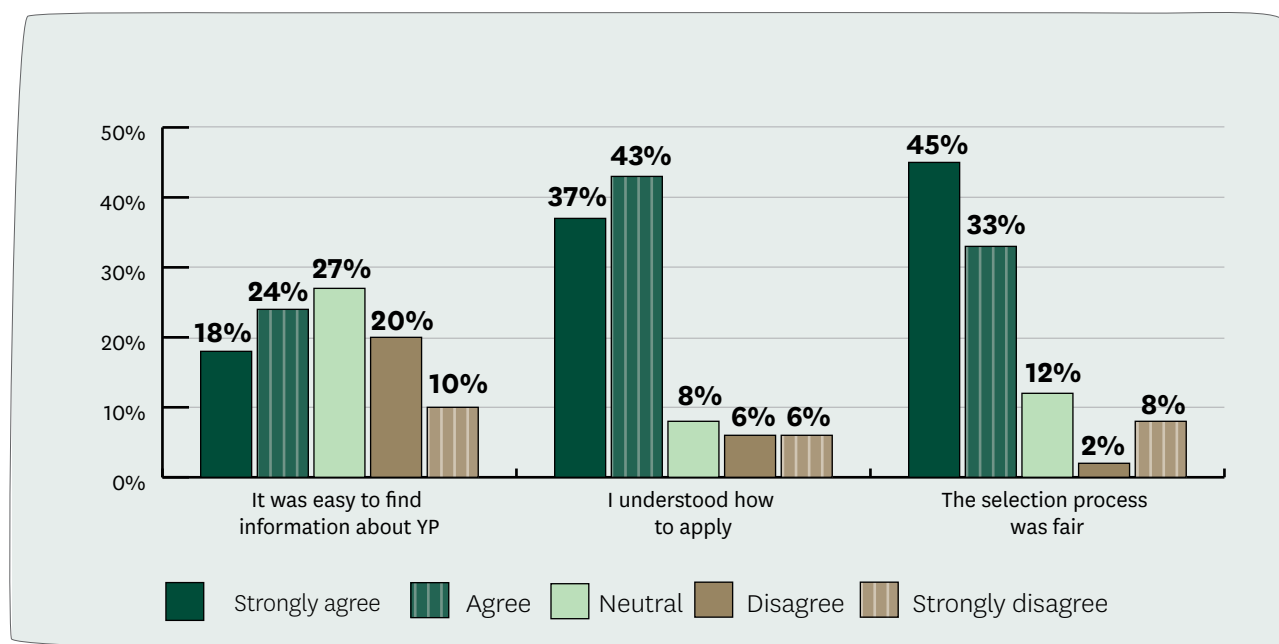


The three respondents who selected “other” referenced posters outside MP offices, hearing about Youth Parliament 2025 through the district council, and generally hearing about it beforehand. In the Youth Parliament 2022 evaluation, social media, school, and friends were the primary means participants (all) found out about that Youth Parliament programme.

While the majority of Youth MP respondents were positive about understanding how to apply, a number of respondents disagreed about how easy it was to find information on Youth Parliament 2025.

Only 42% (N=21) agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to find out information about Youth Parliament 2025 with 30% (N=15) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Given the level of disagreement from those who successfully navigated the system, there may need to be more work done to extend the reach of the information about the programme.

Figure 2. Youth MP views on application process, N=49



Slightly more YPG member respondents were neutral, disagreed, or strongly disagreed that “it was easy to find information about Youth Parliament 2025.”

While most YPG members agreed that the selection process was fair, one YPG member strongly disagreed with this statement.

Most YPG respondents heard about Youth Parliament 2025 through social media, followed by school.

## Community engagement

Part of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme involved Youth MPs being allocated to Parliamentary Working Groups (PWGs). PWGs aimed to replicate Parliamentary cross-party groups, where MPs from across the House can work together towards a common purpose. A total of 12 PWGs were established for Youth MPs to work together on policy topics that were currently being considered within government and that were important to them. Each Youth MP was assigned to a PWG based on their preferences, provided with a written briefing on their topic from the responsible government agency, and invited to a training session with officials from that agency, to ask questions. Youth MPs were also provided with youth-led training and guidance focused on facilitation skills, and ways to lead youth engagement with other young people in their communities on their PWG topic throughout June 2025, and bring their voices to the PWG session at Parliament.

## 77% of Youth MP respondents (N=47) reported that they ran a community engagement, but some identified challenges.

The majority of engagements were surveys (69%) and interviews (51%) followed by focus groups (37%), events (17%) and other (14%). Other engagements included speaking to people in the community and engaging with people on social media. When asked to share more about their engagement, young people reported experiences such as interviewing local youth councils, visiting schools, and sending out surveys. Challenges to community engagement included:

- balancing schedules between work, university, Youth Parliament 2025, and other commitments
- the challenges of being a rural Youth MP and connecting with the electorate
- standardising methods of collecting information
- difficulty engaging the community with their topic due to lack of interest
- unclear expectations
- a lack of time between being briefed on community engagement and the in-person event.

**Figure 3. Types of community engagement, N=35. Percentage does not add up to 100% as some participants used multiple forms of community engagement.**

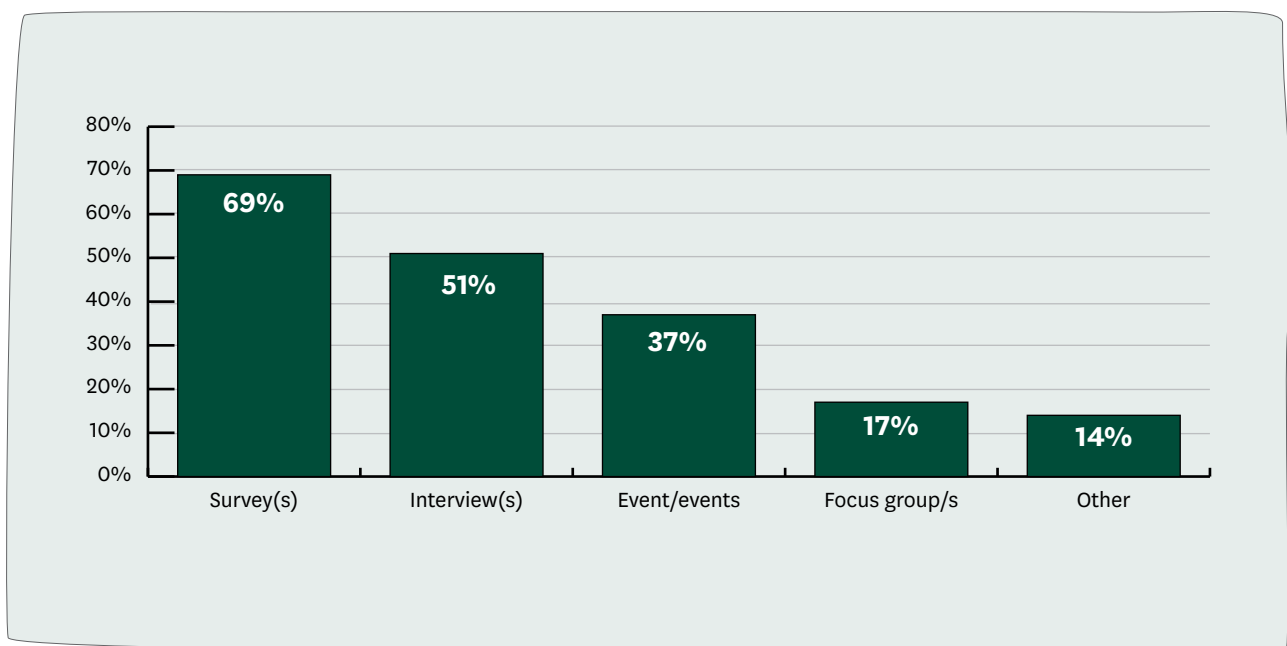
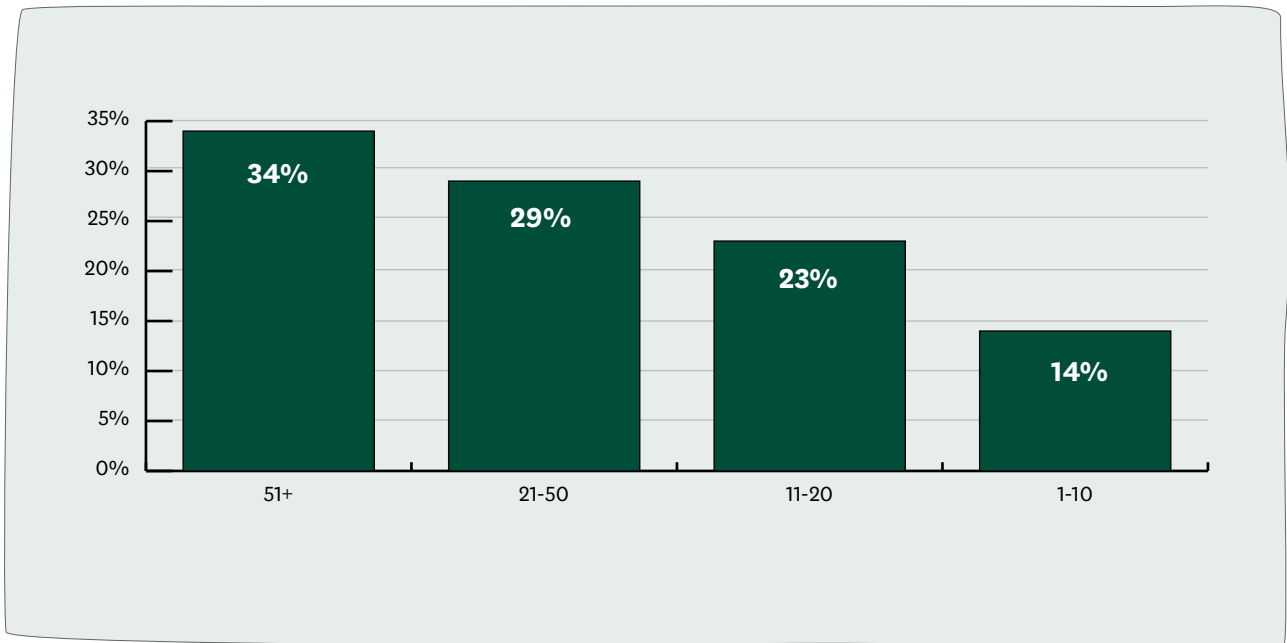


Figure 4. Number of community members Youth MPs engaged with, N=35

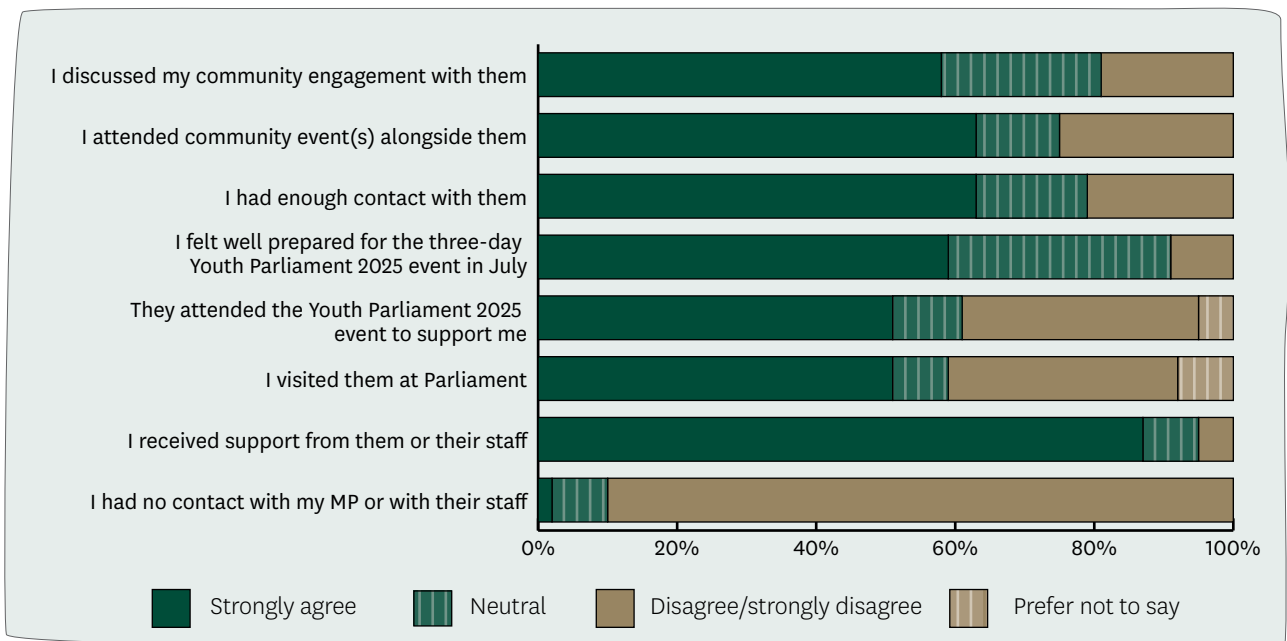


When Youth MPs were able to engage with members of the community, 86% engaged 11 or more people and 34% engaged 51 or more people.

## MP engagement

Levels of MP engagement with Youth MPs varied.

Figure 5. Youth MP engagement with MPs, N=47



A majority of Youth MPs experienced a range of supports from their MP, including discussing community engagement and attending events alongside them. MPs attending the in-person event, or the Youth MP visiting their MP at Parliament were less common but were still reported by over half of respondents.

Sixty-two percent (N=30) of Youth MPs reported having enough contact with their MP, with 21% (N=10) reporting not enough contact.

One Youth MP agreed that they had no contact with their MP or staff, which is not in line with the guidance provided.

## Training

Youth MPs and YPG members participated in online training sessions and online modules prior to the event.

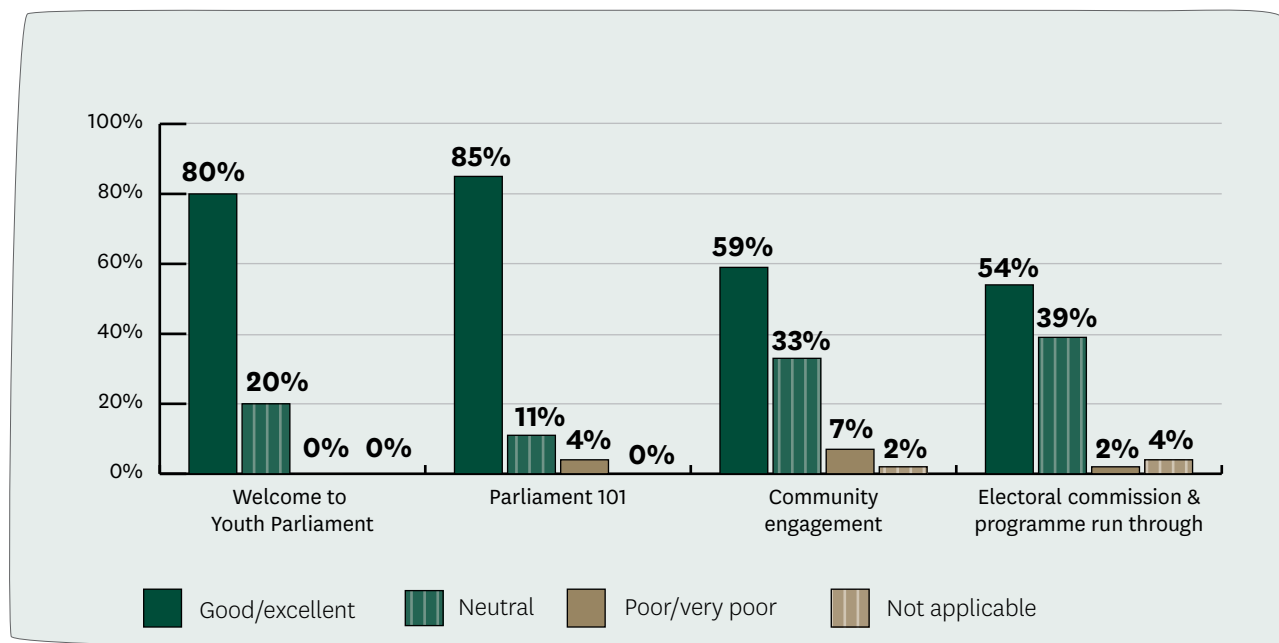
	Youth MPs	YPG members
<b>Online Training One</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome to Youth Parliament 2025</li> <li>• Whanaungatanga</li> <li>• Understanding your role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome to Youth Parliament 2025</li> <li>• Whanaungatanga</li> <li>• Understanding your role</li> </ul>
<b>Online Training Two</b>	Parliament 101 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define ‘What is Parliament’ and identify key roles in the House</li> <li>• Outline the five core functions of Parliament</li> <li>• Explain how parliamentary questions fit into the role of Parliament</li> <li>• Describe the purpose of the general debate</li> <li>• Discuss what Standing Orders are and understand basic expectations in the Chamber</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parliament 101</li> <li>• Writing 101: from pitching to publications ethics and the law</li> <li>• Photography, film, and visual journalism</li> </ul>
<b>Online Training Three</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Q&amp;A session with PWG subject matter experts</li> <li>• How to deliver community engagement (designed and led by MYD’s Youth Advisory Group)</li> </ul>	Support for writing and publishing your articles
<b>Online Training Four</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction from Electoral Commission</li> <li>• In-person event run through, practicalities, questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction from Electoral Commission</li> <li>• Programme run through, practicalities, questions</li> </ul>

Separate online training modules that participants were able to view in their own time covered:

- Youth Press Gallery
- Health, Safety, & Security
- PWGs
- General debate
- Question Time
- The House
- Who's Who in the House?
- Youth Parliament Opening Ceremony
- Parliament and He Tohu Tour
- Behaviour, Wellbeing, and Code of Conduct
- Youth Parliament Standing Orders
- Pōhiri/pōwhiri.

## Youth MPs were positive overall about the training leading up to the Youth Parliament 2025 in-person event

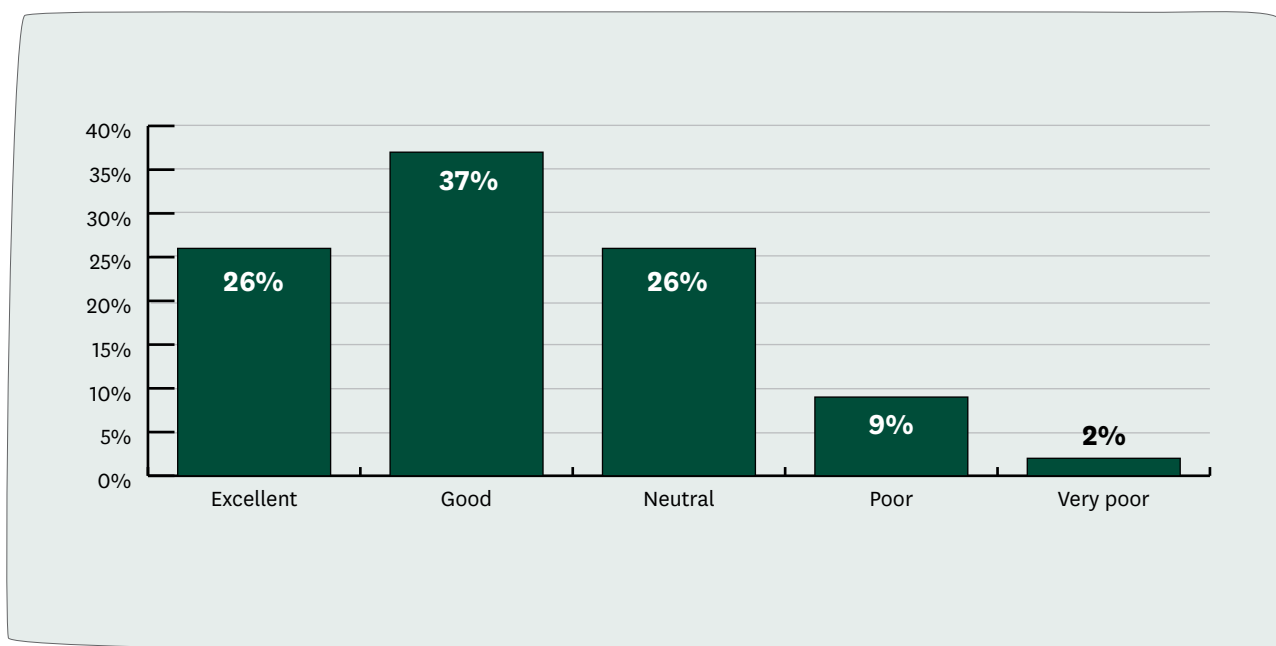
Figure 6. Youth MP ratings of Online Training sessions, N=46



Youth MPs rated the first and second sessions (Welcome to Youth Parliament, 80% positive; Parliament 101, 85% positive) of the online training more highly than the third and fourth sessions (Community Engagement, 59% positive; Electoral commission & programme run through, 54% positive). Following the event, there were two additional training sessions that featured the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (including a panel of young people), evaluation, feeding back findings to the community, and the Office of the Ombudsman. While these last two sessions weren't specifically addressed in the survey, some young people provided feedback in the open text questions.

When asked how the training sessions or modules could be improved, 31 Youth MPs provided written responses. Though a few Youth MPs felt there were no improvements needed, others offered feedback and suggestions. One Youth MP commented that the community engagement training was just common sense; however, five Youth MPs (16%) wanted more support with community engagement, with one participant commenting *"It would have been great to know the best ways to reach out to organisers and young people and have examples of people who have done it before."* A couple of young people questioned the relevance of components of the training, for example content encouraging them to vote when they were already politically engaged, or content encouraging them to learn a trade. The Electoral Commission session was designed with the pre-voting age range in mind (i.e., 16 years-plus). A couple of young people would have preferred in-person training sessions, though they noted the difficulty of this given the geographical spread. The break-out rooms were highlighted as a positive way to build connection before the event.

Figure 7. Youth MP ratings of online training modules, N=46



Youth MPs were generally positive about the online training modules, though a group were neutral about them and some participants rated them as poor or very poor.

### The YPG member respondents were most positive about Online Training 2: Parliament 101.

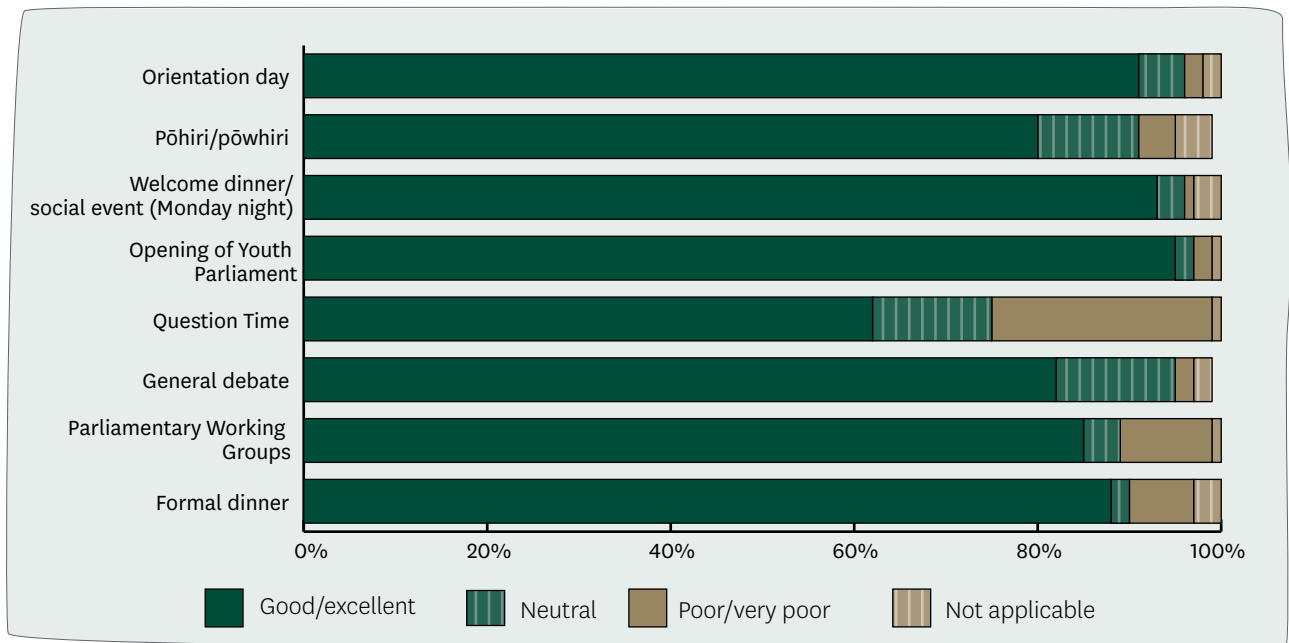
All YPG member respondents rated Online Training 2 (Parliament 101) as excellent or good. Online training four (Electoral Commission & In-person event run through) was less popular with four rating it as neutral and one rating it as poor. This may be reflective of what one YPG member commented about when asked, “which aspect(s) of these trainings or modules could be improved or was there anything that you thought would have been helpful but wasn’t covered?”, which was that the content around voting was “preaching to the converted.” Three other YPG members replied. One suggested more specific content related to journalistic writing, rather than basic writing. Another YPG Member requested more engaging/collaborative learning spaces rather than Google Meets. The final respondent discussed how beneficial it would have been to have further meetings between just the YPG members prior to the in-person event to get to know each other.

A high proportion of young people completed the online training modules, suggesting that many found the material engaging or felt compelled to complete it, to comply with the requirements of the programme. The largely positive training feedback from both Youth MPs and YPG members reflected well on programme preparation.

# In-person event

Youth MP respondents rated most components of the event positively, with some lower ratings for Question Time.

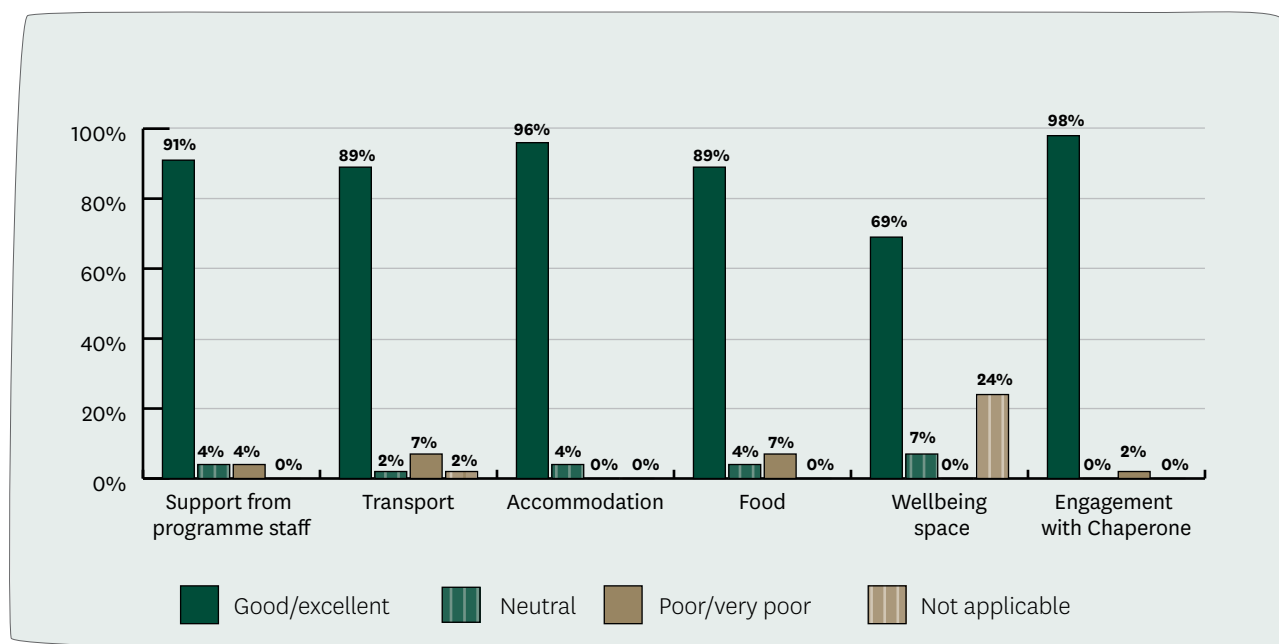
Figure 8. Youth MP ratings of different components of the in-person event, N=45



When asked to rate different components of the event, the most popular component was the opening of Youth Parliament 2025 with 96% (N=43) rating it as excellent or good. Other popular components included the welcome dinner (93%, N=42), and orientation day (91%, N=41). The most unpopular component was Question Time with 24% (N=11) rating it as poor or very poor. Towards the end of the survey, a few Youth MPs provided written feedback that Question Time could be improved with the inclusion of supplementary questions.

Youth MPs were very positive about engagement with their chaperones and support from programme staff.

Figure 9. Youth MP ratings of other aspects of the in-person event, N=45



A total of 98% (N=44) of Youth MP respondents rated their engagement with their chaperone as excellent or good. Youth MPs also rated support from programme staff highly (91% as excellent or good). The wellbeing space was rated as excellent or good by 69% of respondents, though for a large group (24%), this was not applicable (presumably because they did not feel they needed to use it). A total of three Youth MP respondents rated the transport as poor.

### The most popular component of the in-person event for the YPG respondents was orientation day.

All YPG respondents rated the orientation day as excellent or good. Question Time and the PWGs had the lowest ratings with five rating them as excellent or good. For Question Time, two YPG members rated them as poor or very poor.

### Food and support from programme staff were rated highly by YPG respondents.

One YPG member rated their engagement with their chaperone as very poor, however the majority rated them as excellent or good.

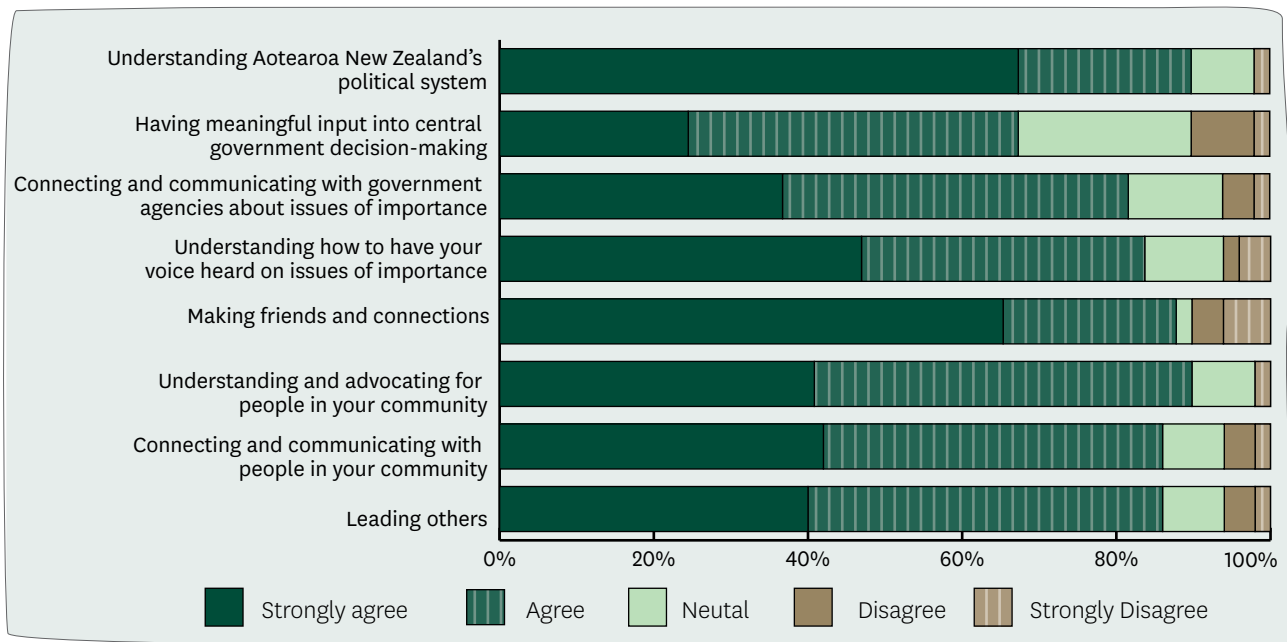
# Outcomes and experience

Prior to their tenure, Youth MPs felt confident in a range of areas but were less confident when it came to understanding the political system and having an impact on decision-making.

All Youth MPs (123) completed the first survey as part of their Youth MP Information Submission form. At the start of their tenure, Youth MPs selected Agree or Strongly Agree for most of the youth development capabilities described. Youth MPs showed higher levels of disagreement with the statements that they felt confident “having meaningful input into central government decision-making” and “connecting and communicating with government agencies about issues of importance”. As the first survey was connected to their application process, the high ratings may have been associated with young people wanting to make a good impression when entering the programme.

Towards the end of their tenure (and after the in-person event), many Youth MP respondents were confident that they understood Aotearoa New Zealand’s political system and could advocate for people in their community.

Figure 10. Youth MP levels of confidence after the Youth Parliament event, N=50.



Some Youth MPs disagreed that they were confident making friends and connections (N=5) and that they had meaningful input into central government decision-making (N=5).

Because only 41% of Youth MPs completed the second survey and it was anonymous, it is not possible to match and directly compare confidence ratings across the first and second survey. However, the following provides insights into the confidence levels of those who did participate in the follow up survey.

YPG members were generally confident leading others, understanding and advocating for people in their communities, and connecting and communicating with people in their community at the start of their tenure.

Surveyed YPG members responded with high confidence ratings across most statements in the second survey.

Some YPG respondents were neutral about connecting and communicating with government agencies about issues of importance and having meaningful input into central government decision-making, with and one strongly disagreeing with this statement.

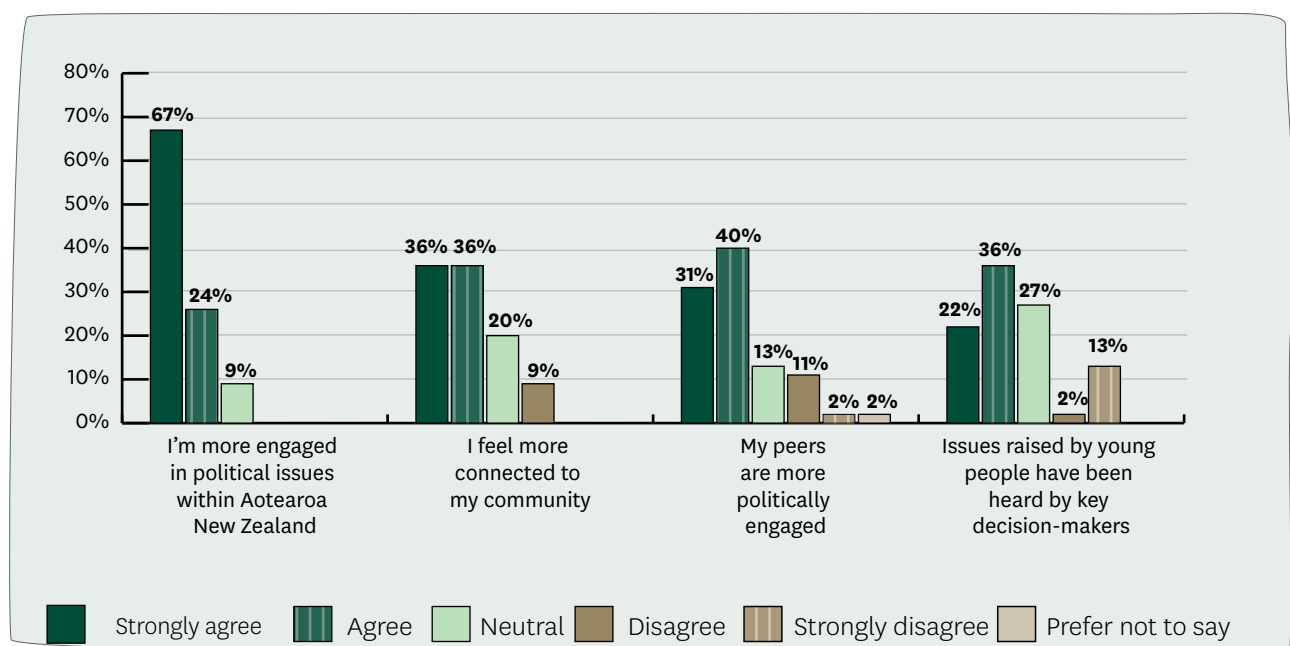
A total of 95% of Youth MP respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they enjoyed the three-day event.

One young person responded that they were neutral about the event and one disagreed that they enjoyed it.

All YPG member respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they enjoyed the in-person event.

Many Youth MP respondents reported increased engagement in political issues within Aotearoa New Zealand as a result of their participation in Youth Parliament 2025.

Figure 11. Outcomes for Youth MPs, N=45



A total of 91% (N=41) of Youth MPs strongly agreed or agreed that they were more engaged in political issues within Aotearoa New Zealand. A smaller group of Youth MPs (72%, N=32) strongly agreed or agreed that they were more connected to their community. A total of 71% (N=32) of Youth MPs agreed or strongly agreed that their peers were more politically engaged, and just over half (58%, N=26) agreed or strongly agreed that issues raised by young people have been heard by key decision-makers.

When asked about any other changes Youth MPs had seen in themselves, their peers, or their community due to their participation in Youth Parliament 2025, 24 young people responded. Youth MPs discussed having more confidence to share their own/community's views, feeling validated as leaders, having more connections, and having a sense that young people can create change. One young person responded that they felt they had experienced no changes, and another commented that some young people had become too politically engaged and were engaging in harassment in online group chats. Note that MYD experienced technical problems with the creation of its Facebook group to communicate with youth participants, therefore alternative group chats were created by participants.

**All YPG member respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they were more engaged in political issues within Aotearoa New Zealand and that their peers were more politically engaged.**

The majority of YPG member respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they felt more connected to their community, while one disagreed. The majority also agreed that issues raised by young people had been heard by key decision-makers.

When asked about any other changes YPG members had seen in themselves, their peers or their community, three participants responded. One discussed the drastic increase in their awareness of events occurring within the House, while one felt more confident both in their social abilities and in pursuing journalism. The final respondent discussed how participating gave their previously unengaged peers someone to relate to in the Parliament space.

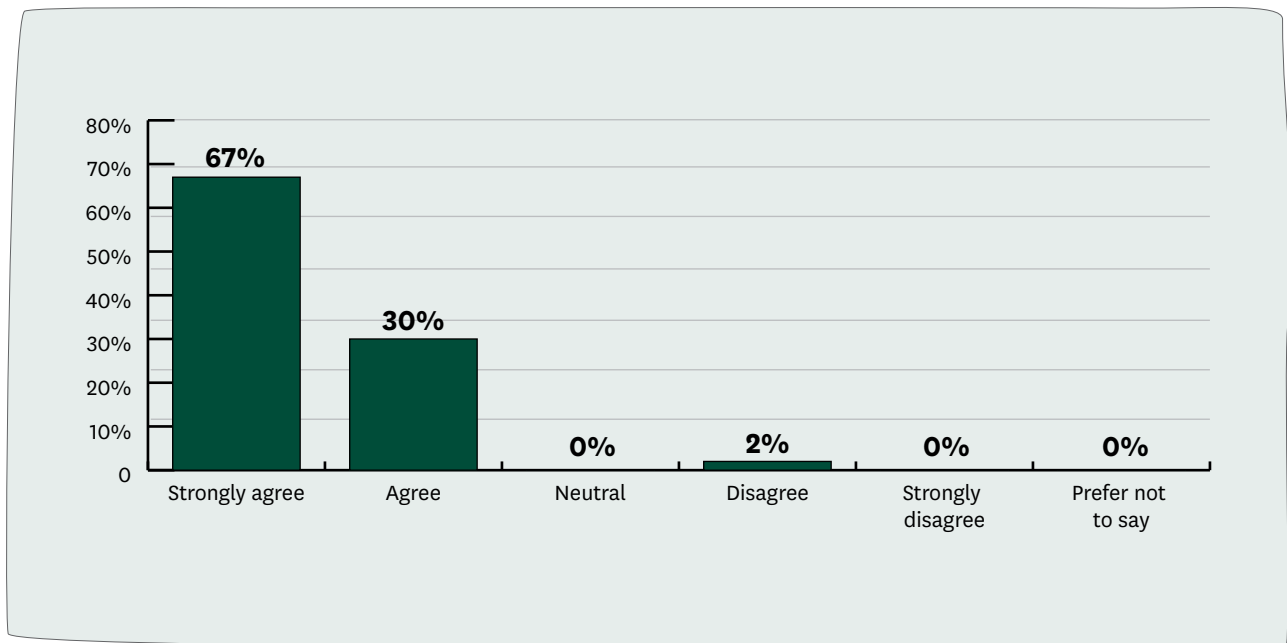
**YPG members published in the Youth Parliament 2025 e-newsletter as well as external publications.**

All YPG survey respondents reported publishing in the Youth Parliament e-newsletter, and six reported publishing on other platforms including The Spinoff, Craccum, and Scoop NZ. The first e-newsletter was sent to 512 people and opened by 303.

Because of the significant media interest there were a number of articles published by both Youth Press Gallery members and the wider media. MYD recorded 142 articles about Youth Parliament 2025. While much of this content related to the perceived censorship referenced throughout this report, there was also coverage of young people's aspirations for their tenure and speech content (for a summary of speech content see Appendix C). News outlets such as RNZ, Stuff, and The Spinoff were among the publications. There were also nearly 200 social media mentions about Youth Parliament 2025 posted by MPs, government and other agencies, political parties, and publications across platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, and Tiktok.

Most Youth MP respondents enjoyed or strongly enjoyed their tenure.

Figure 12. Youth MP enjoyment of tenure, N=46



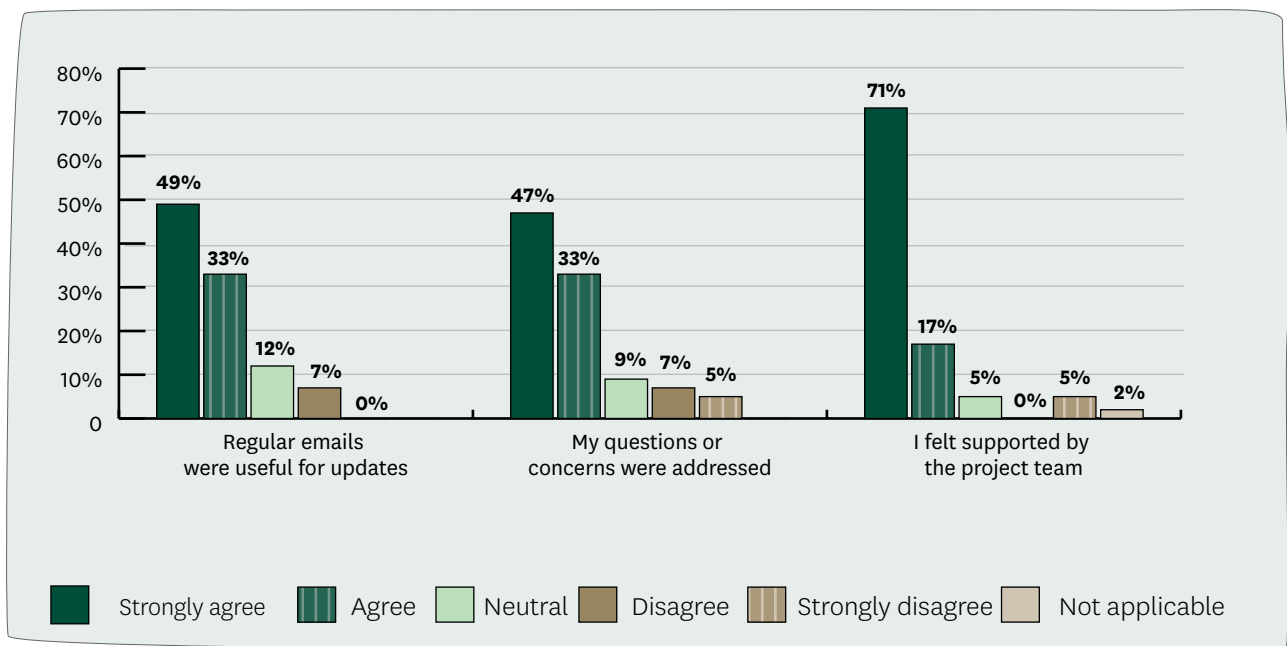
The vast majority of survey respondents strongly agreed (67%, N=31) or agreed (30%, N=14) that they enjoyed their tenure as a Youth MP, with one respondent disagreeing (2%).

Similarly, YPG respondents all agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed their tenure.

# Project team support

The majority (88%) of Youth MP respondents felt well supported by the project team.

Figure 13. Youth MP Project Team support N=43



The vast majority of Youth MP respondents agreed or strongly agreed that regular emails were useful (82%, N=35), that their questions or concerns were addressed (80%, N=34), and felt supported by the project team (88%, N=37).

Two young people (5%) strongly disagreed that their questions or concerns were addressed, and two strongly disagreed that they felt supported by the project team.

When asked how MYD could better support them, 26 Youth MPs responded. Nine Youth MPs reported being satisfied with communication and/or support. There were some contradictory responses with some Youth MPs reporting that the volume of emails was reassuring and helpful and others reporting that there was too much communication, which made finding the relevant information difficult. Some Youth MPs commented on wanting greater clarity on the feedback on general debate speeches and some requested photos and speeches to be released faster. Two Youth MPs felt responses from MYD were too vague. One Youth MP was disappointed regarding the support provided related to poor Youth MP conduct and suggested more enforcement was needed.

YPG member respondents were very positive about project team support.

Seven YPG respondents indicated they strongly agreed or agreed that regular emails were useful for updates, while the rest were neutral. A further seven strongly agreed or agreed that their questions or concerns were addressed, with one disagreeing. All respondents (N=8) strongly agreed or agreed that they felt supported by the project team.

When asked what MYD could do to improve its communications or better support them, three YPG members responded. One requested a more direct means of communication with staff (e.g., Whatsapp) to answer immediate questions. One requested clearer guidelines from the beginning on subjects such as peer review processes for externally published articles, as they felt the guidance was developed on the spot. The final respondent requested more structure/guidance about their role, noting that Youth MPs could reply on their MP For guidance, but they did not have this option.

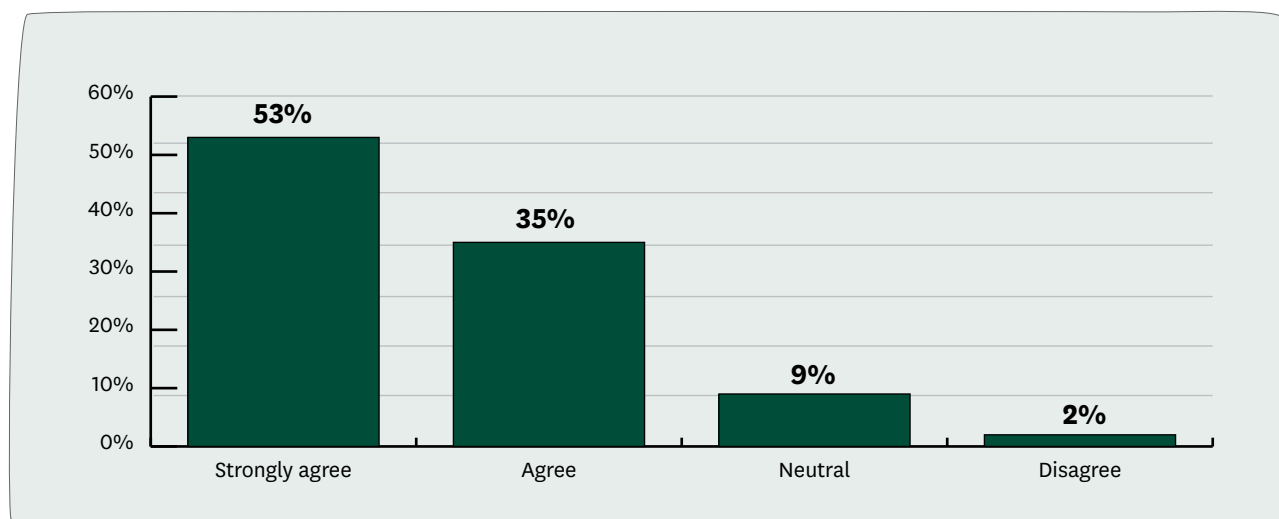
The majority of YPG member respondents (N=8) reported that they had enough contact with the MYD Youth Parliament 2025 project team.

One YPG member strongly disagreed. Only two YPG members agreed or strongly agreed that they had enough contact with past or present PPG members (though this contact wasn't guaranteed), with three disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Four YPG members reported receiving enough feedback on their writing, but a slightly larger group were either neutral or disagreed with this statement (N=5). Similarly, only three of YPG members agreed that they felt prepared for the three-day event, with three disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

## Overall feedback

Youth MP respondents were very positive about the overall programme.

Figure 14. How much Youth MPs agreed that the programme was good overall, N=43



A total of 88% (N=38) of surveyed Youth MPs reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that the Youth Parliament 2025 programme was good overall. A small number (9%, N=4) were neutral about the programme, while one Youth MP (2%) disagreed that it was good.

## Most Youth MPs highlighted the in-person event as a particularly good aspect of the programme.

When asked which aspect(s) of the four-month programme they found especially good, 35 Youth MPs responded. A total of 66% (N=23) discussed the event itself, while 34% (N=12) brought up the networking opportunities with other young people. Engaging with MPs and PWGs were also reported as a highlight, as were the online [training] sessions and generate debate. Other highlights included interviews on the tiles, representing their community, the food, and having their voice heard.

## More support with community engagement and a longer event were among the suggested improvements from Youth MPs.

Six Youth MPs reported wanting more help with community engagement and six felt the event should be longer. There were also some (N=4) requests for the return of live streaming and/or faster return of general debate speeches. Four young people said that the PWGs could be improved, for example in terms of the advice and support provided to Youth MPs about these or increasing the length of time of sessions. Other feedback included reintroducing the mock bill, shorter speeches at the opening ceremony and formal dinner, and wishing to keep parliament swipe tags. One Youth MP requested more management of specific youth organisations so they didn't have a disproportionate impact on the event or use it as a platform for publicity.

## Overall feedback included considerable general praise for the event.

When asked for any final comments on Youth Parliament 2025, 24 Youth MPs responded. Feedback included considerable positive comments about the event, e.g., *"Thanks so much for everyone involved you guys did a great job. I think it is very important that Youth Parliament continues as it is an invaluable experience and resource for New Zealand youth"* and *"[YP staff] ARE THE BESTTTTT"*, along with recommendations to vet other Youth MPs more, find ways to check MPs are connecting with their Youth MPs, and better communication around general debate speeches. There was a recommendation from one Youth MP that hotel rooms are assigned according to age as well as gender. One Youth MP noted that the concerns around perceived speech censorship took up more space than was necessary.

## Most YPG members were positive about the overall programme.

When asked, *"which aspect(s) of the four-month programme did you think was especially good?"* out of the three YPG respondents, two thought the three-day event was the best part. One highlighted the process of undertaking interviews and writing articles.

When asked, *"which aspect(s) of the four-month programme could be improved?"* four YPG members responded. Two referenced having more guidance around speeches in relation to perceived censorship. One requested using a more engaging form of learning in the online training, rather than slides. One responded that the whole programme was pretty good but that perhaps the YPG could have more YPG-specific events like the mock-post-Cabinet briefing held with the Minister for Youth or their tour of the PPG offices. They also thought that more time with members of both the PPG and the YPG would be beneficial. Regardless, they reported being busy and having a lot of fun.

Finally, when asked if they had any final comments about Youth Parliament, two YPG members responded. One thanked MYD for everything and a second stated that, *“I know the whole censorship thing went crazy, but I think the event is super well run itself.”* One also expressed their appreciation of the transparency of the New Zealand Government to actually allow them in the Parliament environment.

## Photovoice themes

### Weight of being a Youth MP

Many photovoice participants talked about the gravity of being a Youth MP and the significance of holding this title. Young people reflected on the history that had gone before them and the expectations set for them by previous political figures. As one participant described their photo, *“Reflecting on what it [is], I suppose, the weight of being picked as a Youth MP”*

#### Photovoice photo 1.



## Photovoice photo 2.

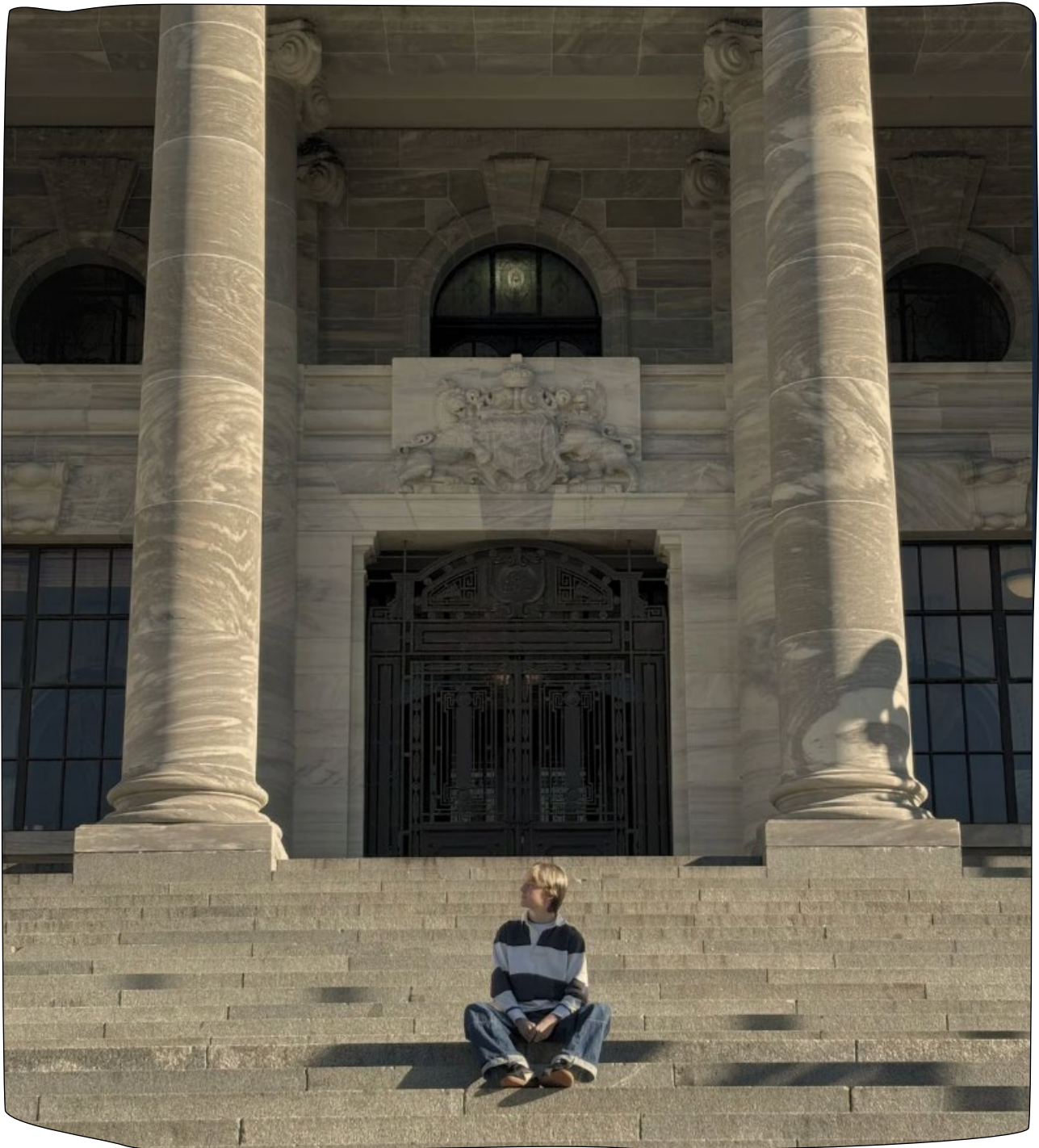
Young people were excited, but nervous about what the in-person event would be like, as one participant noted about their photo:



“ That kind of the distortion sort of represents my mental state. I was, yeah, very tired, a bit nervous and looking forward to it, obviously, but yeah, a bit unsure of what to expect.”

While young people received a significant amount of training before the event, as outlined above, there was understandably anxiety about being at Parliament and meeting everyone in person for the first time. In both the survey and the photovoice interviews, respondents expressed their desire to meet other Youth MPs located in similar areas before the event.

**Photovoice photo 3.**



Participants were hopeful about what they could achieve in their positions. One participant noted the mana and respect afforded to people when given a Youth MP title. Further, they acknowledged the importance of the opportunity that this key leadership position afforded them. One participant discussed the symbolism in their photo, taken outside Parliament:

“ It symbolises youth standing just at the threshold of power, not yet inside. But um undeniably present ...and the composition and the lightings a lot more bright, symbolising hopefulness.”

#### Photovoice photo 4.



Exploring the grandeur of Parliament was of particular significance to one participant from a rural background.

Photovoice photo 5.



Youth MPs and the YPG members expressed strong feelings of responsibility to uphold the mana of their positions. One participant discussed the excitement and anticipation of their first day as a YPG member, keen to capture the proceedings accurately.

“ It was just that the blank page element. Really like signified that like newness and the excitement that really was happening on that first day of sitting and listening to the debates and feeling the responsibility to like make sure that we’re writing everything down really well.... the sort of excitement of being the Press Gallery member.”



One participant reflected on their Māori identity and the significance of seeing Te Tiriti in person. They discussed the mamae (pain or hurt) associated with Te Tiriti and the sense of unease around racial tensions, while also touching on the hope that Te Tiriti brings:

“ I chose the sort of dark photography style with that on purpose, cause it’s sort of how the legacy of that treaty...It feels to me...there’s a lot of hope in that document, but also a lot of mamae or hurt, and conflict in there...It feels to me like a conversation around justice and identity, especially with racial tensions at the moment...The darkness kind of invites viewers to sort of sit with that discomfort around those racial issues.”

Photovoice photo 7.



Another photovoice participant reflected on Aotearoa New Zealand's history and mistakes, allowing youth to learn from the past and in turn, learn how to move forward:

“ It showed the youth looking at the history that Parliament was kind to give to us to have a look at and working and moving forward, but also looking back on history and seeing what mistakes we've made and how we can improve... And the red of the books symbolises, like red is a colour [that] symbolises passion, which we were all very, very passionate about politics.... And those books showed us that there were once upon a time, people just like us in history who were passionate about making Aotearoa a better place... And it's about reclaiming the knowledge and then writing our next chapter, which I thought that was kind of a little fun metaphor to put in there.”

### Contrast between perception of politics and human reality

A few photovoice participants commented on the contrast between the perception of politics through a TV screen and the more complicated, down to earth nature of the practice and the people involved. As one participant discussed in their photo:

“ I wanted to highlight sort of the contrast between I guess the polished-ness of it and the formalities of it and often the messy reality of things that is covered in that press conference.”

Other participants noted the humanising nature of seeing MPs in the context of, for example, a billiards room located in Parliament:

“ It was also quite comforting in the fact that it showed that MPs go through those feelings too. Like they, it really humanised them...You often see them on TV and it's quite a -I think you only see one side of them. So it was cool to meet to get to know them in a different context. They were, the camera was off.”

One participant described their photo showing the distortion between the door and the debating chamber beyond it, representing the contrast between what we see on TV and the more everyday reality of Parliament.:

“ You do see a different side of the place once you're in it because it's, that's more, it really humanises the MP's and it, it is in many ways just a regular workplace like many others.”

**Photovoice photo 8.**



Importance of community engagement

**Photovoice photo 9.**



Some photovoice participants discussed the sense of achievement they gained from community engagement. For one participant, this extended beyond the Youth Parliament 2025 tenure, with the establishment of a casual political and social event at their school that they hoped would be rolled out to other high schools to further engage young people in politics.

Another participant discussed an event at a school where young people spoke about their views on youth-related issues that they wanted to see presented in Parliament. Reflecting on their photo, they shared:

“ [It] just shows like the tight bonds within our electorate, our communities.”

This participant discussed the need to remove perceptions of bureaucracy from politics, and the need to let young people know that politics can be as simple as a meaningful conversation. The young people this participant talked to were primarily interested in youth representation and ensuring that their voices were heard. Several photovoice and survey participants discussed the need for more guidance and structure around community engagement, beyond the training provided.

## Protest and perceived censorship

As noted above, some Youth MPs objected to their general debate speeches being reviewed and the feedback MYD provided. While Youth MPs were informed by MYD that this was a non-partisan programme, some participants perceived that Youth Parliament 2025 had been censored due to MYD feedback on their general debate speeches. By contrast, some felt that this discussion didn't apply to them at all or detracted from the event.

Ensuring participants were protected from any potential liability if the contents of their speech breached defamation, copyright, privacy, or contempt of court laws, or broadcasting standards was an important part of the pastoral care role for the Youth MPs who were aged between 16 and 18 years. In keeping with this, and replicating the Youth Parliament 2022 process, MYD provided feedback on general debate speeches, which emphasised that Youth MPs were not protected by parliamentary privilege.

All participants were told in advance of the event that their speeches would be reviewed. Participants were informed that the review of speeches was not about changing the content of their speech, but to protect them from any risk in the contents of their speech which they may not be aware of. MYD also provided guidance to participants regarding the programme in relation to its non-partisan nature.

As publicly stated, MYD noted it had looked through correspondence with participants and acknowledged it could have been clearer and more consistent in its language when providing these suggestions and recommended changes to speeches.

While the feedback email headers said “General Debate Speech feedback - changes required”, the content of the emails went on to explain the feedback was just “recommendations”.

MYD accepted the language may have caused some confusion.

A couple of photovoice participants chose photos around themes of protest against government policy and/or their perceived censorship in parts of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme.

### Photovoice photo 10.



One participant used the photovoice project to document their passion for the environment, protecting the land and therefore the people living on it. They discussed damage to their rural community due to the carbon credit system and advocated for guardianship of the land and did not feel the government was doing enough to protect the whenua.

Another participant shared a photo (photo 11) displaying a silent protest they took part in with a number of other Youth MPs at Youth Parliament over the content of one of the speeches. They decided to protest in a way that didn't disrupt the speech, but also didn't take them away from the chambers:

“ So we all agreed that anyone heard of Taonga or anything to kind of represent them in their culture, to put it on the tables in front of us... Really just, yeah, silently protesting what this member was saying, just out of respect for our own cultures and to kind of be seen but not heard, which was kind of the point.”

They found this bonded those who participated together, which included Pākehā, and non-Māori Youth MPs in addition to Māori and Pacific peoples. This participant highlighted the right of people to speak even if they didn't agree:

“ Whether you agree or disagree with someone's opinion, it's their opinion to hold and their right to say to share it.”

Photovoice photo 11.



One photovoice participant critiqued the lack of clarity around speech changes.

“ And so, a lot of us felt like what we wanted to say, we couldn’t fully say because it had been edited by the Ministry of Youth Development. Now, we’ve heard that it was a bit of a miscommunication, but we would have, I think a lot of us would have loved to have that information beforehand.”

Another photovoice participant interpreted the speech changes and inability to ask supplementary questions as a reflection of the government wanting to suppress youth voice, stating:

“ This was a Youth Parliament which was censored because they know they [sic] actions are wrong and they do not want the youth of New Zealand actually telling them how it is in their country which they are slowly making worse.”

However, some other survey and photovoice participants felt that the perceived censorship debate detracted from the purpose of their roles and the programme:

“ I don’t wanna say take a side, but I feel like all of that hate and all of that debate and dissent and stuff kind of took away from the, the main purpose of the event, which was to educate rangatahi, like talking about politics. And I, I fear that some of that dissent might have scared people away from it. so that’s my take on that. It’s, I understand it’s an opportunity to voice those concerns like those people did, but I, I feel like we, that’s not the reason we were there. We were there to represent our communities, not, fight each other because it was non-partisan...The idea is we were all together with the same goal, and it didn’t always seem like that.”

Another participant noted that ultimately, they had had their voice heard through the programme:

“ But at the end of the day that we were given an opportunity to share our opinions. And this was clearly conveyed by interviews that we did, whether it was before Parliament, during Parliament, or even after Parliament”

One participant noted the increased pressure as a result of some other Youth MPs speaking to the media about perceived censorship. While they felt prepared for the YPG writing articles on them, they did not expect this level of external scrutiny:

“ I wasn’t quite experienced for sorry, prepared for that much kind of coverage coming out of the event.”

For future events, additional training and support around external media coverage could help prepare young people for any heightened media attention.

The difficulty balancing a non-partisan event in the context of Parliament was not novel to Youth Parliament 2025, despite the increased media attention in this iteration. The Youth Parliament 2022 evaluation noted that:

“ Some Youth MPs and stakeholders believed it was important to be apolitical so the programme could focus on youth development, while others saw the Parliament event as unavoidably political.” and concluded, “The event was more political than in previous programmes”.

One of the recommendations from the Youth Parliament 2022 evaluation was to provide more guidance and support to MPs on their non-partisan support role. The Youth Parliament 2025 guidance documents provided considerable content on the non-partisan nature of the programme for MPs and Youth MPs; however, there is room for improvement, as discussed below.

While MYD's non-partisan approach is broadly consistent with approaches taken in other jurisdictions, such as regions of Australia<sup>7</sup>, and the United Kingdom, the distinction between non-partisan and apolitical could be clarified in the guidance given to Youth MPs. In the United Kingdom Youth Parliament rulebook<sup>8</sup>, they outline the nuances of this issue:

“Members of the Youth Parliament need to be non-partisan when carrying out their role or when representing the UK Youth Parliament/National Youth Agency. It is important to distinguish between the definitions of non-partisan and apolitical. A person may be described as apolitical if they are uninterested or uninvolved in politics. This definition is not true of MYPs or the work of UKYP and as a result the term non-partisan is correct, meaning no affiliation with and free from bias towards a political party. There is a difference between being political and being partisan and UKYP is a political programme but cannot, due to NYA's charity status, be partisan. The UK Youth Parliament seeks to represent no party-political view and the discussions are to be solely issue-based. Members are elected as representatives and their duty is towards; the young people who voted for them, the young people who didn't vote for them and every young person in their constituency.”

While this description is based on a different political context, it is a useful example of how future Youth Parliament events would benefit from a more nuanced definition of non-partisan, which still acknowledges the political context and enables young people to engage with topical issues. In addition, more practical examples to work through what non-partisan means could solidify abstract concepts.

## Working together despite different views

Several photovoice participants discussed the opportunity Youth Parliament 2025 provided to be exposed to different views and that, in general, these differences were respected. One photovoice participant noted:

“There was some pretty different perspectives and that's the whole essence of Parliament, you know... And I welcome a discussion around it. So, and it was good to see people sharing their perspectives and debating issues around debating Māori issues in general because you know, that's how we can resolve them ultimately is by talking about them and learning from each other in that process. So, I think it was a good opportunity for young people to hear each other's perspectives and learn from that.”

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7 [Youth Parliament 2025: 6 Youth Bills, 2 Youth Petitions, and 32 Young People! - Y NT - Empowering young people](#)

8 [NEW-UK-Youth-Parliament-Rulebook-2023-2025-June-24-compressed.pdf](#)

Another photovoice participant reflected:

“ Because when it comes to the end of the day, even though we all have different perspectives on things, everybody who’s in Parliament is trying to make Aotearoa a better place.”

One photovoice participant photographed two Youth MPs shaking hands to symbolise this, however this photo was not able to be included as the photo subjects did not provide consent.

“ I got these two together cause I thought I’d be a pretty powerful message of those two working.... I just thought it was pretty powerful showing how the two sides are working together...that’s not partisan as they say...a lot of us, although not all of us were quite non-partisan. We all collaborated and worked together, which was pretty cool.”

### Improved confidence in connecting with peers

Connecting with other young people and relating to people with different perspectives was a highlight for participants. Some photovoice participants discussed improving their confidence in general or to meet and network with other young people. For example:

“ I think that I came away with like a lot more confidence in my ability to um, meet like so many people. It was so overwhelming, but it was really cool to like know that you can you can totally do that. You can put yourself in an uncomfortable situation, meeting heaps of people.”

Participants were able to apply this confidence to other aspects of their life, for example school leadership positions:

“ I’ve applied that to school and into my life. So, it’s been very, very beneficial in that way. But also representing people like politics at its core is about representation. And this was a chance to do just that. And I’ve brought that back to leadership at school, for instance.”

## PWGs were a meaningful way to express youth voice

A few photovoice participants described the PWGs as a highlight and appreciated youth voice having a direct channel to the Ministries:

“

In the Parliamentary Working Groups, you're really doing something meaningful... And it's a very specialist thing that we have to get our heads around...We didn't feel stupid at all. And they didn't... like dumb it down to us because we were youth.”

Participants appreciated the effort subject matter experts made to work with them so they could develop recommendations:

“

And that was really cool that someone had taken time out of their job and their time to come and spend their hours with us to put in the put in the work to get out good outcomes and recommendations. And that they reported back to us was really cool.”

# Stakeholder Perspectives

# Stakeholder interviews

A small group of six stakeholders were interviewed from MYD, MSD, and OOC about their role in the programme, views on different aspects of the programme, and perceived areas for improvement. This was to address the evaluation question around improvements to the programme for the future.

## Stakeholders encouraged more engagement with MP offices to address varied engagement.

One of the recommendations from the Youth Parliament 2022 evaluation was to increase guidance for MPs and provide more clarity about their role in supporting community engagement. As a result of this recommendation, MPs were provided with comprehensive information packs and guidance around supporting Youth MPs. However, as evidenced by the feedback from some youth participants, there was still significant variation in how much engagement MPs had with Youth MPs. One stakeholder noted that some Youth MPs joined MP visits in the community and some had little to no time with their MP. Two stakeholders highlighted the need to build better relationships with MP office staff to help the transfer of information:

“ If we can build stronger relationships with the MP’s office staff. Because it’s often the office staff who do a lot of the legwork on behalf of the MPs, in terms of supporting the Youth MP.”

One stakeholder suggestion to support Youth MP’s engagement with MPs was to encourage selection within the electorate the MP is located. While recommended in the guidance, it was ultimately up to MPs to decide. This is not necessarily straightforward for List MPs as they do not have an electorate, however the guidance encouraged them to coordinate with their local MP’s office.

## Stakeholders generally felt that the components of the in-person event ran well.

Stakeholders reported that the in-person programme events themselves ran smoothly and were well coordinated with sufficient time to move between components, for example:

“ I think the team worked really well in terms of moving from A to B and moving young people and ensuring that the young people got the most out of each of the different parts of the programme.”

Some stakeholders noted that the opening ceremony involved a considerable amount to coordinate given the relatively short length of time. They suggested an alternative option – the Commission opening which would keep everyone in the chamber and involve a visit from the Chief Justice.

Stakeholders felt young people were supported well by the wellbeing team, which was a group of people ready to assist from organisations such as Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People and Mana Mokopuna - Children's Commissioner. There was detailed work done with Parliamentary Services around accessibility and the project team had conversations with disabled young people and their carers to manage any needs.

## Stakeholders felt the PWGs significantly improved opportunities for youth voice compared to previous years.

When asked about the opportunities for youth voice at Youth Parliament 2025, stakeholders invariably referenced the introduction of the PWGs as an improvement on previous events. Stakeholders felt that youth being able to provide recommendations on real policy issues and receive feedback from decision-makers was more meaningful than previous programme components such as the mock bill.

The Youth Parliament 2022 Malatest evaluation recommended removing the mock bill due to stakeholder and participant feedback regarding it, for example:

“Stakeholders and participants criticised a lack of mandate for Parliament and Government agencies to listen to and engage with youth shared during the programme and felt it was a missed opportunity to gather valuable insights on youth issues.” (Malatest, 2022, Page 39)

The PWGs were introduced in 2025 to address this recommendation, with Youth MPs engaging with subject matter experts and providing recommendations to decision-makers. Following the in-person event, MYD published each PWG's recommendations report and these were sent to decision-makers. Decision-makers were encouraged to close the feedback loop with Youth MPs by reporting back on what they had done with Youth MP recommendations.

One stakeholder noted the programme improvement:

“It's taken it from a mock, or play; you're pretending to be this thing in this pretend version of Parliament into a, “No, this is actually for you, and this is real life policy development and your voice is being recognised in public agencies.”

Another stakeholder said that while the groups didn't mimic the select committee process, they were more meaningful *“because we're not just doing a fake select committee just for the sake of it.”*

Another stakeholder reflected on the feedback they had heard from young people and MYD:

“That that was an opportunity where they could work together on a topic that was kind of interest to them and speak directly to senior leaders and like people like actual people who can make decisions.”

## Stakeholders noted challenges with community engagement.

One stakeholder suggested having check-in points throughout the tenure on community engagement to hear about how it's going, pointing out that there was limited time in the Youth Parliament 2025 programme to do this given the reduction in tenure from six months to four months.

Another stakeholder pointed out that there was a lot of reliance on young people being self-motivated enough to do their community engagement and how confidence levels to do this varied among participants:

“ You get the real... confident, up front, “know what they're doing, don't have an issue with...talking to a group of 20 people”, to people who are shy and not so confident. And the first time they've done this, kind of, a young person.”

As referenced above, there was a specific training session focused on community engagement and MYD's Youth Advisory Group designed and ran a session on how to run engagements with young people based on their previous experience. However, overall, the project team had little oversight of Youth MP's community engagement. In terms of benefit to the wider community, one of the recommendations from the Youth Parliament 2022 evaluation was to encourage participants to report back to their communities, closing the feedback loop. This was suggested to Youth MPs in the guidance provided to them and a template was provided to support this. While a check-in point after Youth MPs had reported back to their communities may have provided further insight into community engagements, the number of Youth MPs engaging with the programme following the in-person event dropped significantly, so this may have been difficult to practically implement.

One stakeholder reported that they hoped the community engagement piece would provide a wider ripple effect for youth voice from the overall Youth Parliament programme.

Another stakeholder felt that while the concept of Youth Parliament was sound, there was limited benefit to the wider community. They suggested that alternative civics education opportunities may be a better investment:

“ Is [there] more effective ways we can continue to do that without having this intense, kind of time, both for people who put it together and for the young people, but actually have it as a slow, methodical, kind of, growing opportunity across the country?”

# Conclusions and recommendations

# Conclusions

The evaluation of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme suggests the programme fostered meaningful youth engagement with Aotearoa New Zealand's democratic processes. Youth MPs and YPG member respondents reported high satisfaction overall, valuing the in-person event and support from the project team. Photovoice participants expressed feeling inspired and collaborating despite differing views.

Participants demonstrated confidence in understanding Aotearoa New Zealand's political system, understanding, and advocating for people in their community, and making friends and connections. Many reported greater political engagement personally and among peers.

Changes such as enhanced wellbeing support, the introduction of PWGs, and clear guidance for MPs contributed to a positive environment for youth voice. While challenges remain – particularly around community engagement, communication with MP offices, and the nuances of what a non-partisan programme looks like – the programme successfully amplified youth voice and inspired civic participation. Future recommendations include strengthening community engagement support structures, clarifying the non-partisan role, and strengthening communication with MP office staff.

## How did young people experience the 2025 Youth Parliament programme?

1. Respondents largely enjoyed their tenure, participating in the democratic process in line with the aims of Youth Parliament. However, they noted challenges with aspects of the Question Time, community engagements, and general debate speech feedback.
2. Young people valued connecting with their communities, but a group of them required more support to engage effectively. Community engagement provided a valuable way to involve young people outside of the programme and supporting young people to engage effectively with their communities is central to this youth development opportunity.
3. Young people enjoyed connecting with other passionate young people and several respondents highlighted the value of working together even where their views differed. The ability of young people to connect with those with differing views supports the non-partisan intention of the programme.
4. The in-person event was a significant highlight for young people, and the photovoice interviews solidified the importance young people attributed to being in the Parliament environment and how they felt both inspired but carried the weight of history on their shoulders. Being in the Parliament context helped solidify learning for young people.
5. Most survey respondents felt well supported by the project team, agreeing or strongly agreeing that regular emails were useful, that their questions and concerns were addressed, and that they felt supported by the project team. This reflects well on MYD's pastoral care role.
6. Some young people highlighted concerns about their general debate speech feedback while others felt the perceived censorship discussion detracted from the purpose of the event. While not intended, this discussion amplified youth voice with considerable coverage of the event in the mainstream media. There is more work to be done on unpacking the nuances of the term "non-partisan" for future events.
7. Levels of engagement between participants and MPs varied. Stakeholders highlighted the need to strengthen communication with MP office staff to help streamline information to MPs.

## What type of outcomes did participating young people experience?

1. Towards the end of their tenure many Youth MP and YPG member respondents reported confidence understanding Aotearoa New Zealand's political system, having meaningful input into central government decision-making, and connecting and communicating with government agencies about issues of importance.
2. Survey and photovoice participants also reported increased confidence connecting with peers. Some respondents wanted to connect more with other participants in their region before the event.
3. Youth MPs and YPG member respondents reported confidence understanding and advocating for people in their communities, highlighting the importance of the community engagement process, when young people participate in it.
4. Many Youth MP and YPG respondents reported increased engagement in political issues within Aotearoa New Zealand as a result of Youth Parliament participation.
5. YPG members published in the Youth Parliament 2025 e-newsletter as well as external publications.

## What outcomes extended to their peers and the wider community?

1. The majority of Youth MP respondents reported running some form of community engagement. Some young people connected with over 50 people during their community engagements. This indicates some level of political engagement from the wider community. Young people took pride in engaging with their communities and one photovoice participant discussed the ongoing plans for engagement after the Youth Parliament tenure was over.
2. Many young people reported that their peers were more politically engaged as a result of Youth Parliament 2025, supporting the intention to involve as many young people as possible, though the views of these young people were not explicitly captured as part of the evaluation.
3. With the event not being live streamed or broadcast over other channels it's hard to determine how much reach it had. However, because of the significant media interest there were a number of articles published by both YPG members and the wider media on both perceived censorship and topics young people were passionate about.
4. One stakeholder felt community engagement was a good opportunity for extending outcomes to the community, but another did not feel the community benefited from the programme and suggested other civics education should be explored. This suggestion aligns with one of the sub-evaluation questions (see: Evaluation questions), but was not explored directly in this report.

## What changed in the delivery of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme compared to the 2022 programme?

There were several changes to the programme based on the recommendations of the Youth Parliament 2022 evaluation. Key recommendations from 2022 and findings related to the actions taken in 2025 included:

- **Increase opportunities to engage with Wellbeing Team and further improve support for youth with disabilities:**

Stakeholders felt that young people were well supported by the wellbeing team which included kaimahi ready to assist from organisations such as Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People and Mana Mokopuna - Children's Commissioner. Young people who used the wellbeing space were generally positive about it.

- **Focus the parliamentary activities on the most valuable components e.g., the removal of the mock bill:**

The mock bill was removed, and stakeholders and several youth respondents agreed this was a positive step, with the introduction of the PWGs seen as a more valuable articulation of youth voice. A few young people wanted the mock bill reinstated, though the reason for this was unclear and may have been more related to the desire to have more time in the debating chamber, rather than the merit of the mock bill component. Young people were generally positive about the PWGs, though a small group rated them as poor or very poor. This may have been because, as one photovoice participant described, they felt their contributions to the PWG were not taken seriously. However, several young people reflected on the value of having their voices heard by decision-makers. It's important to note that only a small number of participants attended the follow-up PWG workshops where decision-makers reported back on how they used young people's recommendations. More encouragement to attend post in-person event activities may have helped young people see the outcomes of their work.

- **Increase application and selection process guidance for MPs/ Increase guidance for MPs/ Provide more clarity for MPs about their role in supporting Youth MPs:**

Considerable guidance was provided to MPs surrounding the selection process and their roles. Stakeholders noted that there was more work to do in strengthening communication with MP office staff to ensure key information was communicated to MPs.

- **Further raise the profile of the Youth Parliament event:**

Youth Parliament 2025 was announced by the Minister for Youth, and promoted by MYD through its usual media channels (e.g., the MYD website, Facebook, and Instagram) as well as being announced by the Minister for Youth and communication to internal and external stakeholders including youth sector providers, journalism schools etc. Guidance for MPs included template letters to send to local schools with information on how to apply and MPs were encouraged to promote the programme widely. This was a similar approach to Youth Parliament 2022, although communication was led by OOC in this instance. The profile of Youth Parliament 2025 was raised significantly through the substantial media coverage of the perceived speech censorship concerns.

- **Involve a wider group of agencies to extend the benefits across Government:**

The involvement of Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People and Mana Mokopuna - Children's Commissioner in the wellbeing space was rated positively by stakeholders as well as the involvement of a number of agencies in the PWGs ie., Ministry of Health, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Retirement Commission, Ministry of Social Development, Department of Internal Affairs, Ministry for Primary Industries, Ministry for the Environment, Te Puni Kōkiri, Sport New Zealand, Ministry of Justice, Public Health Agency, Ministry of Education, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People.

Some recommendations were partially implemented:

- **Continue to increase diversity of Youth Parliament participants:**

MPs ran their own selection process and were given additional guidance around supporting the programme to ensure a range of lived experience are represented. The ethnic distribution in Youth Parliament 2025 was comparable to that reported in 2022. There was a slightly higher proportion of young women in the Youth Parliament 2025 programme compared to the Youth Parliament 2022 programme.

Due to the YPG recruitment process being undertaken by MYD and the material hosted on the MYD website, the YPG members were given access to information about the programme in:

- New Zealand Sign Language & Audio
- Large Print
- Te Reo Māori
- Easy Read.

- **Set clear expectations of Youth MPs for community engagement:**

While young people received specific training on community engagement, they may not have had time to implement this guidance prior to the event and some struggled with this element of the programme due to unclear expectations, difficulty balancing commitments, and challenges knowing where to begin when connecting with their electorate. The inclusion of a template for feedback on community engagement was an improvement on previous iterations, though it is not clear how many young people utilised this.

- **Extend pre-event educational opportunities for participants:**

Participants had considerable training, but Youth MPs wanted opportunities to connect with others in their region prior to the event.

- **Continue to refine the Youth Parliament Standing Orders to make the Youth Parliament event youth-friendly:**

The Youth Parliament standing orders (rules that guide how Parliament's work is carried out) were clear, however the text heavy PDF document could be translated into a more youth-friendly format in future. The online training module covering the standing orders contained more interactive content such as videos and photos and questions to check understanding.

- **Increase community engagement with Youth Parliament:**

The PWGs created opportunities for Youth MPs to engage with their communities on real life policy topics that they were interested in. Youth MPs were encouraged to close feedback loops with their community, but it is not clear that to what extent this was achieved.

# Recommendations

## What opportunities are there to strengthen the Youth Parliament programme?

1. Future Youth Parliament programmes could benefit from a more nuanced definition of “non-partisan” drawing from the United Kingdom Youth Parliament guide<sup>9</sup>, distinct from “apolitical”. This would acknowledge the context of Parliament and support young people to engage with political issues.
2. Youth MPs could benefit from more support for community engagements including check-in points with MYD. One stakeholder suggested that the opportunity for young people to share their progress could help facilitate engagement and provide avenues for young people to seek support.
3. Youth MPs were not always within their selecting MP’s region and/or electorates, which impacted the ability of young people to work with their MP and engage communities alongside their MP and their office. As this was a recommendation from the last evaluation, MYD encouraged MPs to choose Youth MPs active in their region. As issues persisted, there may need to be further consideration of the ways in which young people can still engage adequately if their selecting MPs are located in another region to where the Youth MP resides.
4. There are opportunities to strengthen communication with MP office staff to help streamline information to MPs.
5. Room allocation and accessibility are important considerations for future participant wellbeing and safety, for example, alongside the practice of allocation by gender, hotel rooms could be assigned according to age.
6. While resourcing constraints limited MYD’s ability to undertake live streaming of the event, the use of evolving technologies could be considered in future events.
7. While respondents shared many positive outcomes and valued being in the Parliament environment, opportunities for broader civics education programmes could be explored to involve as many young people as possible in this youth development opportunity.

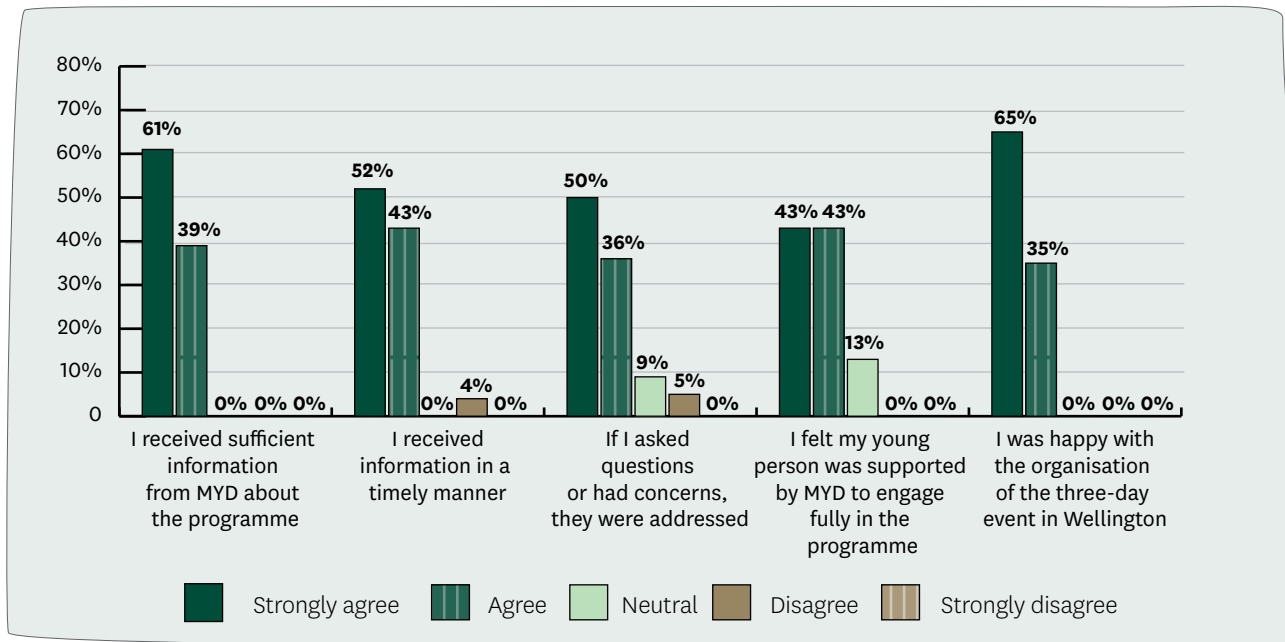
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9 [NEW-UK-Youth-Parliament-Rulebook-2023-2025-June-24-compressed.pdf](#)

# Appendix A:

## Parent/Guardian survey

Figure 1. Parent/guardian feedback, N=23



All parents/guardians were invited to participate in a short online survey that would provide additional feedback on young participant’s experiences and a small number (N=23) of parents/guardians participated.

Parents/guardian respondents strongly agreed or agreed with most statements, including that they received sufficient information from MYD about the programme and that they were happy with the organisation of the three-day event. One parent/guardian disagreed that they received information in a timely manner and one disagreed that they when they asked questions or had concerns, these were addressed.

When asked if they had any other feedback about the programme, ten parents/guardians responded. Four respondents raised wanting to receive speech recordings faster. Four parents/guardians had positive feedback and reflected on the effort put in by MYD staff, e.g.,:

“ Throughout the process, following selection by the local MP and communication of that selection, the experience has been really well run, positively and proactively communicated, and as a parent we felt really supported and comfortable with our child’s safety and security.”

Two respondents raised areas to improve, including one parent/guardian who had concerns about some of the speeches being discriminatory towards Māori and Pacific peoples and questioned the support given to young people in these circumstances.

# Appendix B:

## Member of Parliament & Multi-Party Reference Group Survey

### Youth Parliament 2025 – MP & Multi-Party Reference Group Survey

Survey population: 123 electorate and list MPs  
 Response rate: 15% (19 complete responses inclusive of one MPRG member)  
 Survey period: 8-22 August 2025  
 Method: thematic analysis (qualitative)

**How well did you feel prepared to recruit, appoint, support and mentor your Youth MP in the overall programme and during the two-day event – what was good? What else would've been helpful?**

**Preparedness**

Preparedness Level	Percentage
Unprepared	0%
Less prepared	16%
Well prepared	84%

**Key enablers for well-prepared MPs**

- Availability of clear information, including briefing packs
- Strong support from MP colleagues, electorate offices, and MYD

*“I think it would have been useful to have some info sessions for new MPs who hadn't done it before to ask a lot of questions in the lead up to the appointment of the MPs.”*

**What were your views on any changes to the Youth Parliament programme and the impacts of these changes?**

**Changes that worked well**

- Shorter Youth MP tenure
- Parliamentary Working Groups
- Online training and increased support for community engagement
- Additional activities including National Library tour and workshops

**Changes that did not work so well**

- Shorter time for nomination and appointment process
- Speeches and debate not livestreamed
- Editorial oversight

*“The smaller working groups were certainly a hit, and a fantastic way to get away from that party mentality, and focus more on the matters at hand.”*

**How did your Youth MP experience the 2025 Youth Parliament programme?**

**Experience**

Experience Level	Percentage
Positive or excellent	95%
Neutral	5%

**Most MPs reported their Youth MPs had a positive – often excellent – experience, describing it as empowering, engaging, and inspiring.**

*“She is now much more aware of the system and made some good contacts of peers in the cohort who I believe will become lifetime connections.”*

**What outcomes did participating young people and the wider community experience?**

**Outcomes**

Outcome	Percentage
A greater understanding of democratic and political processes and civic participation	58%
Youth MPs inspiring peers, community leaders, and their whānau, contributing to wider community impact	42%
Opportunities to lead and influence decision-making at local and national levels, helping to amplify youth voice and leadership	26%
Neutral	21%

*“Our community's young people now have a more active role in the electorate as the Youth MP selection process inspired a Youth Advisory Panel and Youth Public meeting.”*

**What opportunities are there to strengthen the Youth Parliament programme in the future?**

**Opportunities**

Opportunity	Percentage
Planning	32%
Communication	21%
Speeches, debate, and working groups	47%
Community engagement	21%
None	21%

**Recommendations include:**

- Share key dates early; update the website promptly
- Promote Youth Parliament more widely in school
- Clarify behavioural expectations and speech guidelines in a way that empowers rather than restricts
- Provide more opportunities for Youth MPs to engage with their communities before the two-day event

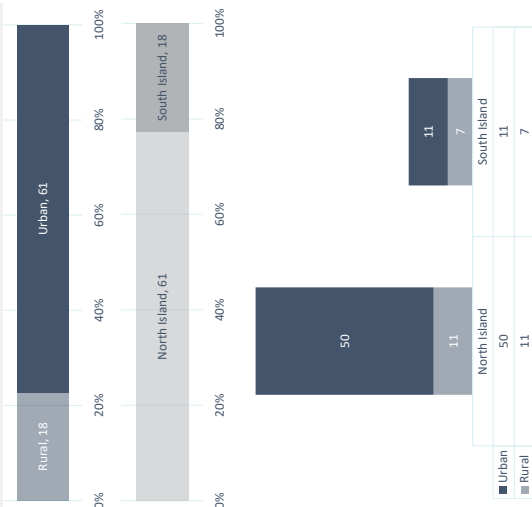
# Appendix C:

## General Debate Thematic overview

### Youth Parliament 2025 General Debate: Thematic Analysis Overview

#### Demographics of Youth MPs Who Participated in 2025 General

63% of all 2025 general debate speeches were delivered by Youth MPs from North Island urban centres, compared to 48% in 2022. The overall distribution of speeches delivered by those from the North Island or the South Island was similar to that of 2019 and 2022.

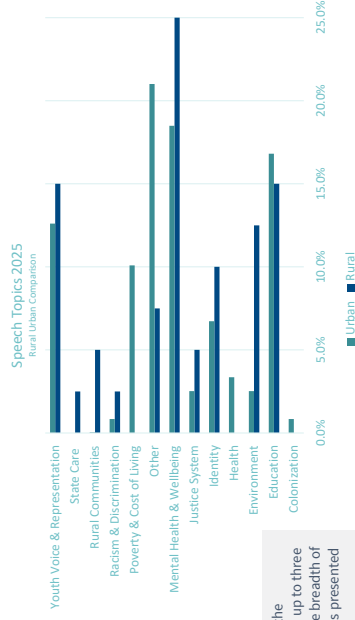


\*Dataset captures Youth MP contact addresses and may not reflect the communities that young people most identify with

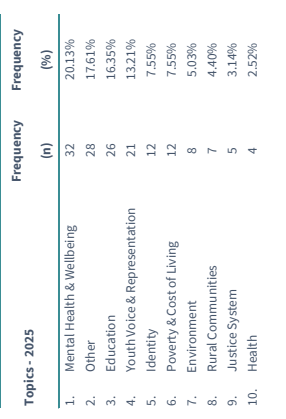
#### Topics Discussed in Speeches

In both 2022 and 2025, Mental Health & Wellbeing was a large focus area of general debate speeches. Speeches that focused on Poverty & Cost of Living saw the biggest drop between 2022 and 2025, falling from 16.91% to 7.55%. The most significant increase between the years was seen in the 'Other' category, which saw an increase of 8.8%, followed by Education at a 6.1% increase. Mental Health & Wellbeing was commonly discussed within the context of such themes as Identity, Education, and Poverty & Cost of Living, but was not recorded as a main topic in all cases - 53% of speeches contained references to Youth Mental Health. Speeches in 2025 covered a range of diverse topics, as shown by the prominence of 'Other', which hosts 13 sub-categories.

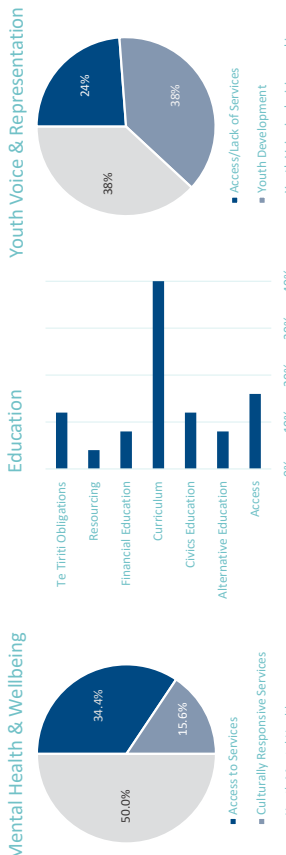
In 2025, several topics were equally relevant to Youth MPs from rural and urban areas (examples: Youth Voice & Representation, Education). However, Youth MPs coming from major urban centres were more likely than rural counterparts to focus on topics such as Poverty & Cost of Living, but less likely to focus on topics including the Environment.



#### Top 10 Topics - 2025



#### Sub-Topic Breakdowns



# Appendix D:

## Glossary of key terms and acronyms

**MYD:** Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi.

**MPRG:** Multi-Party Reference Group: The Multi-Party Reference Group (MPRG) for Youth Parliament 2025 is a cross-party reference group established to support the successful delivery of the Youth Parliament 2025 programme.

**OOC:** the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives (OOC) – Te Tari o Te Manahautū o Te Whare Māngai.

**MSD:** the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) – Te Manatū Whakahiato Taiohi.

**PPG:** Parliamentary Press Gallery

**Youth MP:** Youth MPs were selected by MPs. The Youth MP role was designed to learn about government decision-making processes, actively work on topics and issues they were passionate about, and engage with key decision-makers, other young people, and the general public.

**The Youth Press Gallery (YPG):** operated as per the Parliamentary Press Gallery, providing an opportunity for the opinions, concerns and recommendations of the Youth MPs to be presented to politicians, the Government and the general public. YPG members wrote profiles and articles on Youth MPs, including their activities during their tenure and at the two-day event.

**Chaperones:** During the two-day event, they were responsible for up to 11 Youth MPs and two Youth Press Gallery members (i.e, up to 13 participants) with a range of responsibilities including ensuring participants get to each session at Youth Parliament, stay onsite, and connecting with the wellbeing team as required.

**Wellbeing Team:** The Wellbeing Team was responsible for responding to wellbeing concerns arising during the two-day event in Wellington.

**Parliamentary Working Group (PWG):** PWGs were based on Parliamentary Cross-Party Groups so aimed to mimic real Parliamentary processes and allow for young people to hear from topic experts, bring their views to the table, and present their ideas to decision-makers in ways that work for young people. A total of 12 PWGs were established for Youth MPs to work together on topics that were important to them and that were currently being considered within government. Each Youth MP was assigned to a PWG based on their preferences, provided with a written briefing on their topic from the responsible government agency, and invited to a training session.

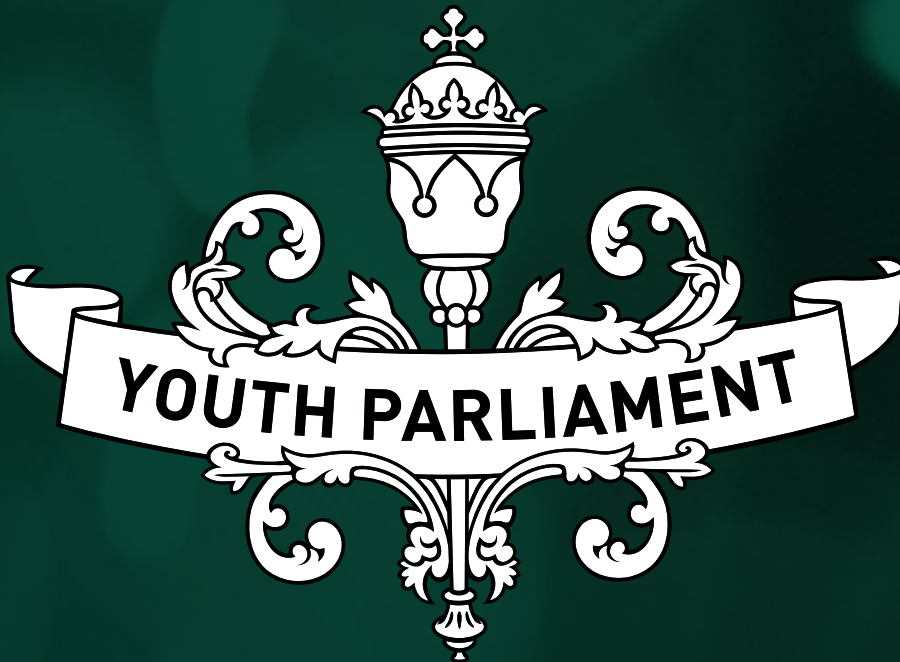
**Community engagement:** Youth MPs were provided with training and guidance aimed at engaging them with other young people in their communities on their PWG topic and bring their voices to the PWG sessions at Parliament.

# References

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