Youth Parliament’s objectives are 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.

Approximately 60 Youth MPs took part in, or organised a project, including:

- establishing youth councils and advisory groups
- surveying their community on youth issues
- delivering youth forums and workshops
- working with their school to encourage education on civics, climate change, and Aotearoa New Zealand history.

Aotearoa New Zealand’s Youth Parliament was first held on 19 September 1994, as an event that commemorated the 20th anniversary of the lowering of the voting age to 18 years.

A Youth Parliament event has been delivered once every Parliamentary term (every three years) since 1994. In 2010 a six-month programme was added, to make Youth Parliament more than an event and support participants to engage with their communities. The 1 March to 31 August 2019 Youth Parliament programme, including the 16 and 17 July Youth Parliament 2019 event, was the ninth Aotearoa New Zealand Youth Parliament.

The six-month Youth Parliament programme includes each Member of Parliament selecting a Youth MP to represent them and their community, and the Parliamentary Press Gallery selecting up to 20 members of a Youth Press Gallery to report on Youth MPs, producing a total of 140 participants. Youth MPs deliver self-directed projects on topics of interest to them, research the topics to be discussed at the Youth Parliament event, and engage with the MP who selected them. All participants attend the Youth Parliament event in Wellington.
Youth Parliament 2019 participant comments:

“I made multiple new friends and have made great connections with other Youth MPs. My project went very well and I had so much support.”

“I learned so much during the Youth Parliament events, I think it made me more mature especially with the experiences I had.”

“I think overall it was organised very well and everyone was so supportive and I took so much away from the experience and made me realise how important youth are for New Zealand in the future. This was certainly important for me to meet a diverse range of people.”

“Was an overall good experience, it gave an insight of what MPs do when they are sitting in the house, and also having relationships with MPs, Youth MPs, and other parliamentary staff.”

The 140 participants came from all around Aotearoa New Zealand, and one participant came from the United Arab Emirates.