

A group of four young people, two men and two women, are posed in business attire. The man in the back center wears a dark suit, light shirt, and dark tie. The woman on the far left wears a black blazer over a red patterned shirt and glasses. The man in the front center wears a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. The woman on the far right wears a black blazer over a red patterned shirt. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm tones. The entire image is framed by a red border with white diagonal stripes.

CLIENT HANDBOOK

YOUTH & GOVERNMENT



**Creating
healthier, happier,
connected
communities**



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WELCOME TO YMCA NSW

We're delighted to have you as part of our community and we look forward to working together to help you and your family live happier, healthier and more connected lives.

At YMCA NSW, we know that people thrive when they challenge themselves, engage in stimulating and enjoyable activities and connect with others. For more than 160 years, YMCA NSW has influenced the wellbeing and happiness of millions of children, young people and adults.

You can find us at over 100 locations across NSW and the ACT including camps, before and after school care, community recreation and sporting facilities, swimming pools and youth services. We deliver inclusive programs that meet community needs, and raise funds to help make our activities accessible for everyone. We work with government, corporate and community partners who are also committed to improving the health and happiness of all people.

Humble beginnings

The YMCA was founded in 1884 by British fabric merchant George Williams, who gathered together a few of his friends so that they could exercise as a group. Little did George know that the idea would catch on and now the YMCA exists in 119 countries around the world, with more than 58 million members!

For a fact

The YMCA helped invent:

Basketball

In 1891 Dr James Naismith, a teacher at the YMCA Training College in Massachusetts, USA, came up with the idea for the game. He introduced it to his class, who had become bored of marching and calisthenics.

International Red Cross

After setting up the World Alliance of YMCAs in 1855, Henry Dunant went on to inaugurate the International Red Cross in 1863.

Father's Day

In 1910 Sonora Dodd founded Father's Day at the YMCA in Washington, USA.

OUR VALUES

HONESTY Integrity, trustworthiness and fairness

RESPECT Acceptance, empathy, self-respect and tolerance

CARING Compassion, forgiveness, generosity and kindness

RESPONSIBILITY Commitment, courage and service

SAFETY Security, protection, respect and the freedom to speak out



OUR STAFF

All YMCA NSW staff members are qualified and experienced professionals, who are passionate about providing the best possible service to our clients.

Whether it be helping you to achieve your fitness goals, caring for your children, or providing you with opportunities to connect to your community, YMCA NSW staff will do their best to ensure that your experience of the Y is a positive one.

At YMCA NSW, we provide regular training and support for our staff, so that they are up-to-date with the latest trends in their chosen field. New staff members also undergo accredited child protection training and hold current Working With Children police clearance.

Working at the Y is more than a job for our people, it's a belief that we can have a positive impact on our clients' lives.



WHAT WE DO

YMCA NSW provides a variety of services to all members of the community, from our popular swimming pools and fitness facilities, to before and after school care and programs for people with disabilities.



RECREATION

The YMCA is the largest aquatic, leisure and recreation facilities manager in Australia. In NSW and the ACT we operate more than 30 centres across metropolitan and regional locations.

YMCA NSW's recreation centres are welcoming spaces where visitors of all ages and fitness levels can enjoy the benefits of physical activity undertaken in a friendly community environment. At YMCA NSW, we believe that being active makes people happy and enhances their general sense of wellness.

Run by our expert staff and featuring modern equipment, our recreation and aquatic centres offer a range of experiences. We teach children and young people how to swim and be safe in

the water; we coach gymnastics and prepare young gymnasts for competitions; we provide a range of exciting activities including Parkour, Trampolining, Dance, Indoor Rock Climbing and Dodgeball; we run Physical Education classes for schools, support sports competitions and we host community events such as 'Sunday Brekky on the Deck' and Bingo.

At YMCA NSW recreation centres, visitors can also access YMCA NSW Community Services, including our popular Ability Programs for people with disabilities; Brightside, which offers personal training to people experiencing mental health issues; and Fee Assistance for people in difficult circumstances.



COMMUNITY SERVICES

At YMCA NSW, we believe that everyone should have the chance to be connected to their community and to live a healthy, happy life. Our Community Services put this belief into action by delivering, managing and supporting a diverse array of programs for people from all areas of the community.



Primarily delivered through our Recreation and Children's Services centres, YMCA NSW's Community Services programs create opportunities for people who may often be excluded because of disability, family or social circumstances. Our programs include the popular Ability programs, which give people with disabilities the chance to engage in physical activities, such as swimming and gymnastics; Brightside, through which people experiencing mental illness can access personal training; and Fee Assistance, for people in compromised financial situations.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

YMCA NSW provides before school, after school and vacation care programs for school-aged children.

Our aim is to create a safe place for play in a leisure-based environment that supports children's learning and development. At our centres, children are free to communicate and form social relationships, which we know is fundamental to developing life skills. We strive to nurture a child's sense of agency and freedom of choice.

Our educators foster an engaging and supportive environment where children feel a sense of belonging. They seek input from children and their families to develop programs that correspond with children's interests and needs.

Our programs are based on the 'My Time, Our Place' national framework for school-aged care.



CAMPING

YMCA NSW's outdoor learning facilities create great memories by offering a range of fun, challenging and educational experiences for children, families, schools, and community groups.

Currently, we operate two unique camping venues at which campers can take part in a large selection of activities such as archery, kayaking, campfires, high ropes, giant swing, flying fox, art and craft and a host of nighttime activities.

Camp Yarramundi, located in the beautiful Hawkesbury valley, was established by the YMCA in 1937. Set amid 40 acres of bushland, Camp Yarramundi is the perfect setting for outdoor activities and getting away from it all.

Housed in a former Armory, Sydney Olympic Park Lodge is an oasis in the heart of the Olympic Park precinct, where campers can enjoy an authentic camp experience without ever leaving the city.

Featuring traditional facilities and run by experienced and educated YMCA NSW staff, both of our camps provide opportunities for campers to grow in mind, body and spirit, in a fun, safe and professional environment.

YMCA NSW's camps are also the sites for benevolent programs such as Siblings Reconnect, which gives young siblings, who are in out-of-home care through external factors, a chance to reconnect and spend time together.



THE YMCA: A SAFE SPACE FOR EVERYONE

At YMCA NSW, we are committed to providing a safe, peaceful and happy environment for everyone to enjoy. We believe that the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults is of the highest priority and this is reflected in our policies and practices.





SUN SAFETY

YMCA NSW is a sun-safe organisation and will ensure that all clients and staff are adequately protected from the sun when in our care.



SICKNESS

YMCA NSW asks that our clients refrain from using our facilities if they are experiencing symptoms of an infectious illness, so as to avoid infecting others.



SMOKING

Smoking is not permitted at any YMCA NSW service or its surrounding buildings, grounds or facilities.

BABYSITTING, CHILDMINDING AND PRIVATE COACHING SERVICES

YMCA NSW does NOT support our staff to contract directly with individuals or families outside the workplace.



YMCA NSW staff members are not allowed to involve themselves with families they have met only through the YMCA when they are outside of the work environment. This means they must not babysit; communicate on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram; accept or extend invitations for dinner; or attend children's activities, such as soccer games and parties.

We request that you also do not ask our staff to work for you outside the normal hours, ask them to pick up/drop off children, or meet them outside of work hours, as this is in breach of our policies. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

At YMCA NSW, we take the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults seriously. The right to enjoy a safe environment free from threats, abuse or mistreatment is first and foremost in our service commitment to our clients and communities.

YMCA NSW STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO SAFEGUARDING

YMCA NSW, including its Board of Directors, commits to creating and maintaining an environment that ensures all people involved in YMCA NSW activities, programs or services act in the best interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and take all reasonable steps to ensure their safety, welfare and wellbeing.

There is a requirement for all YMCA NSW employees, volunteers (including its Board of Directors), student placements, consultants and contractors, affiliated associations, clients, parents, guardians, families and others associated with YMCA NSW understand the important responsibility they have to:

Protect children and young people from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by our people.

Be alert to incidents of abuse and neglect occurring outside the scope of our operations and services that may have an impact on the children and young people to whom we provide a service.

Create and maintain a safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer on, or access our programs and services.





IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING

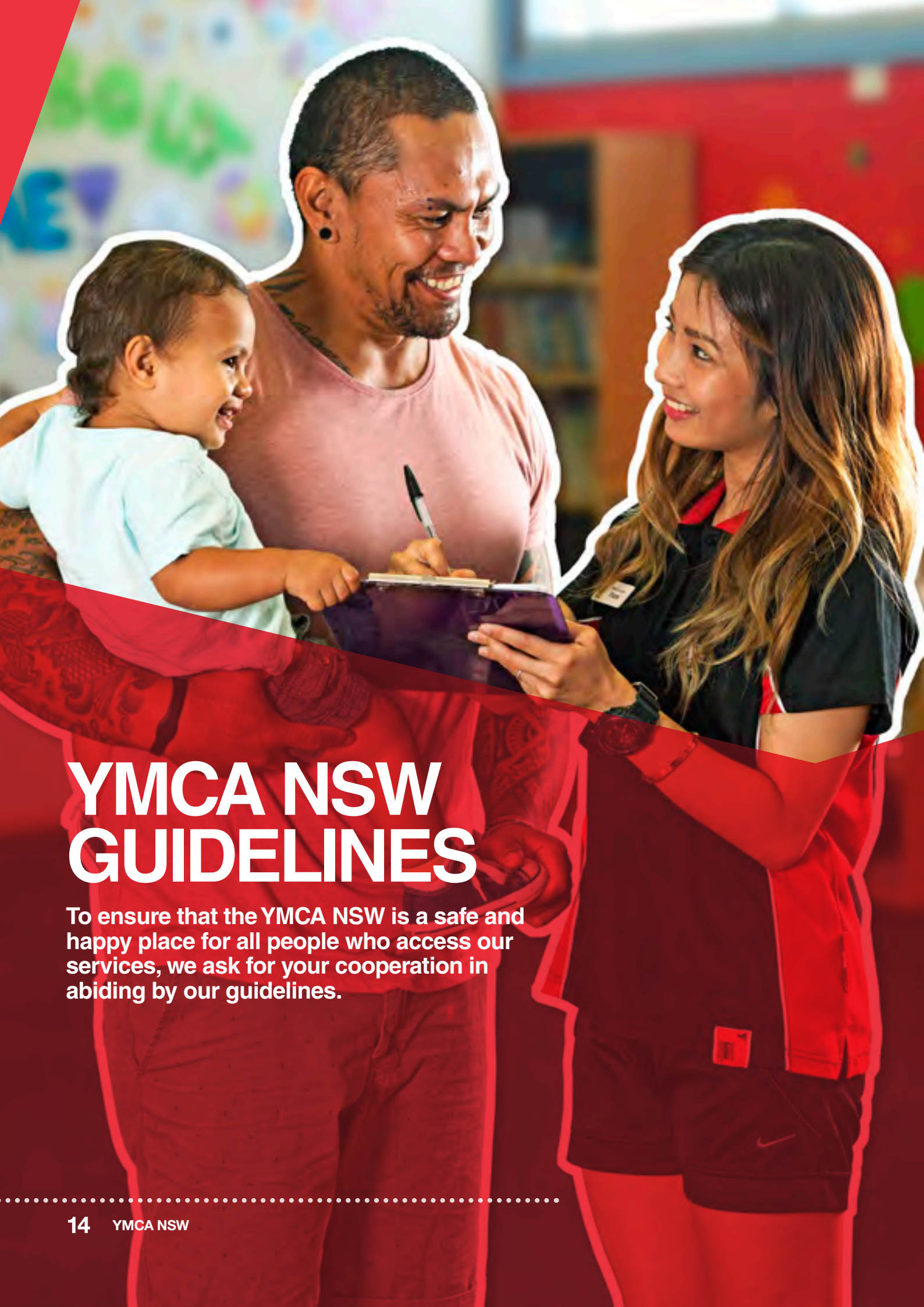


Keeping people safe is everyone's business and we encourage all our clients and staff to speak up and report inappropriate behaviour. If there are concerns about the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult at a YMCA NSW site, please report that concern to the YMCA NSW Manager on duty, call 02 9687 6233 or email safeguarding@ymcansw.org.au.

If there is a risk of significant harm to a child or young person, you can make a report to the NSW Child Protection Helpline (NSW) or Child and Youth Protection Services (ACT).

In NSW call 13 21 11

In ACT call 1300 556 728



YMCA NSW GUIDELINES

To ensure that the YMCA NSW is a safe and happy place for all people who access our services, we ask for your cooperation in abiding by our guidelines.



YMCA NSW STANDARDS OF CONDUCT FOR CLIENTS

We expect our clients will:

Respect the YMCA NSW culture that promotes and monitors the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults, where we are all expected to speak up and ask questions about the safety of others.

Not act in any way that condones or fails to respond to inappropriate behaviour with children, young people and vulnerable adults by YMCA NSW staff, clients or members of the public. Any concerns are to be reported immediately to YMCA NSW staff.

Not approach YMCA NSW staff to provide any other support or service outside the boundaries of our programs, such as babysitting, coaching services, or lifts to and from the YMCA centre or events.

Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and must not make any derogatory, culturally insensitive, violent, sexually suggestive comments or use inappropriate language whilst on YMCA NSW-operated premises.

Talk to children, young people and vulnerable adults and ensure that they are aware of their right to be protected and free from harm. Clients should make sure that children, young people and vulnerable adults know that if they feel they are being bullied or are concerned about the way they are being treated, they can talk to their parent/guardian or a YMCA NSW staff member.

Ensure that all children under 10 years of age are supervised at all times by a parent or responsible guardian of 18 years of age or older (unless in a supervised activity).



Not use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol or supply alcohol or drugs, including tobacco, to children, young people and clients on YMCA NSW premises.

Understand that verbal, emotional, psychological or physical abuse and physical punishment are unacceptable forms of behaviour at any YMCA NSW facility or event.

Not engage in any sexual behaviour on YMCA NSW-operated premises. Any sexual behaviour is prohibited.

Speak with YMCA NSW management if you have any complaints, concerns or feedback in relation to these Standards of Conduct or in relation to their time with the YMCA NSW and/or treatment by YMCA staff.

PRACTICE AND BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Please read these with your children and/or young people and ensure that they understand their rights and what is expected of them at the YMCA NSW.



As children and young people you have the right to:

Enjoy your time at the Y.

Feel comfortable and supported.

Contact your parent/guardian at any time if you feel upset, unsafe or uncomfortable.

Feel welcome and part of the group.

Be respected and listened to.



Be and feel safe.

Not be bullied.

We expect that you:

Participate fairly and allow the same for others.

Ask staff if you need to leave the group/main area and always go in pairs.

Keep your hands to yourself.

Treat others with honesty, caring, respect and kindness.

Tell staff if you feel unsafe or uncomfortable in any situation so we can help you.

Will not bully anyone.

Listen to others.

Say no to an adult if they ask you to do something that makes you feel unsafe or uncomfortable

Ensure that you use online programs (social media) responsibly including not posting images of others without permission and not bullying anyone online.

Follow the rules at the Y.

If you are unhappy with the way you are being treated, please tell someone from the Y or a parent/guardian.

YMCA NSW staff will:

Provide you with a safe space with safe equipment.

Create a space where you feel comfortable and familiar.

Supervise you while you are at the YMCA NSW.

Treat you with honesty, caring, respect, responsibility and safety.

Listen to you, support you and try to resolve any concerns you may have.

Provide you with rules so you know what you can and can't do at the YMCA NSW.

Do whatever we can to make sure you are protected from harm.

Respond and report incidents of abuse or neglect.

Wear a YMCA NSW uniform or a YMCA NSW name badge when working.



WE WILL NOT:

Take pictures of you without permission.



Transport you in our own car without parent/guardian permission.



Call or text you from our own phone or make contact with you on social media.



These Practice and Behaviour Guidelines for children and young people were developed in consultation with children and young people of the Y.



YMCA NSW YOUTH & GOVERNMENT

YMCA Youth & Government (Y&G) nurtures the potential of young people to lead, learn and connect to their community and be advocates for causes about which they are passionate. The program empowers young people – especially those who wouldn't normally get the opportunity – to voice their ideas, passions and experiences in a parliamentary format in order to propose positive change for their futures.

YMCA NSW YOUTH & GOVERNMENT

YMCA NSW Youth & Government (Y&G) is a suite of programs run by the YMCA NSW that nurtures the potential of young people to lead, learn and connect to their community and be advocates for causes they are passionate about. We also aim to provide opportunities for young people who wouldn't normally get the platform to participate in a leadership program such as Youth & Government.

The two elements to the overall Y&G programs are:

Youth Parliament

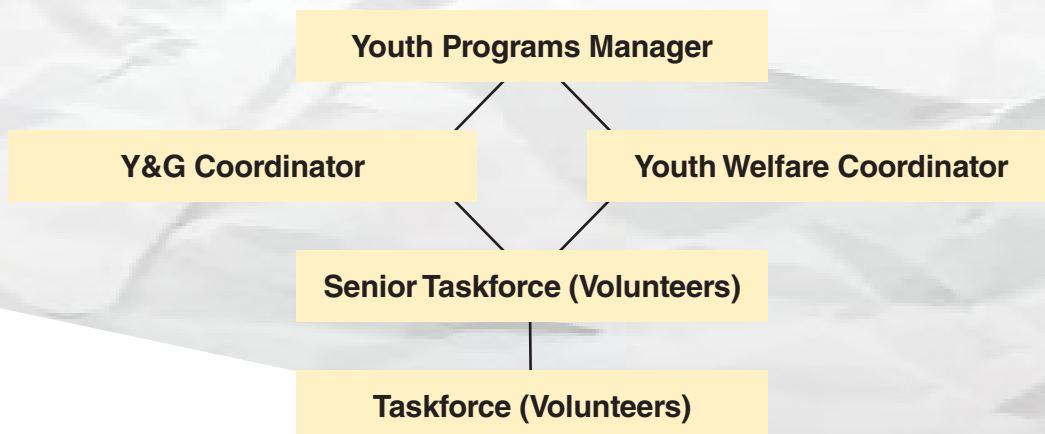
Targeted to young people in years 10, 11, 12 (or equivalent age). Youth Parliamentarians have the opportunity to create solutions to the problems facing NSW, and debate those ideas in NSW Parliament House in front of real MPs.

Junior Parliament

Targeted to young people in years 7, 8, 9 (or equivalent age). Junior Parliament is an apolitical program that introduces young people to the legal and parliamentary process of NSW and empowers them to be advocates for their community! Junior Parliamentarians have the opportunity to create solutions to the problems facing NSW, and debate those ideas in NSW Parliament House in front of real MPs.



YOUTH & GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE



TEAM

The Youth & Government program is made up of staff and volunteers who are trained to deliver a safe and client-focused program. Our team attend annual training weekends that cover: roles and responsibilities; child safe policy and procedures; skills building; and logistical training on the program delivery.

PRE-PROGRAM

All Youth & Government programs require pre-camp work and communication. For Youth Parliament and Junior Parliament, this includes working with a team of fellow participants from across the state. You will be required to have regular contact with your team to complete research with the assistance of your team advisor, who is a YMCA Volunteer.

Taskforce members are available for support with any of the mentioned commitments.

How to register/fill out forms

There are two ways to register for the program. Online, you can fill out an application form that also doubles as an enrolment form – this is done via our online form-building website, Jotform.

We also have a paper version of this form that you can request to have sent to you if that is preferred.

You can always find the form on the YMCA NSW website under Youth & Government, or by contacting the Youth Programs Manager on youth@ymcansw.org.au

What to bring to program and what not to bring to program

Prior to the program, you will receive a packing list for the program which generally consists of warm, comfortable and casual clothing, enclosed shoes, toiletries, bedding, Parliamentary attire, topic research and writing materials.

We do ask that you avoid bringing valuable items and electronics to camp. If they become lost, stolen or broken it will not be the responsibility of the YMCA NSW or the campsite.

This is a drug- and alcohol-free program and no such substances will be allowed. Restricted items also include knives, weapons or illegal items.



Who is the main contact before program begins

If you have any concerns before camp, you can contact either of the program coordinators at youth@ymcansw.org.au.

During program

During the program, we expect all participants to abide by the Code of Conduct – the Code of Conduct is a document that outlines the minimum standard of behaviour we expect from all participants.

After program

At the conclusion of the program, we do provide participants and their families the opportunity to give feedback. We will send you a feedback form, where you will remain anonymous.

We also strongly encourage participants to keep us up to date with any post-program activities such as media coverage, meetings regarding the work they have prepared, meetings with MPs, advocacy work, etc. We would love to know about it!

You can also keep up to date with everything Youth & Government on our official Facebook page: facebook.com/ymcayouthandgovernment/

You could also join our mailing list to be notified when the application process for future programs begins: form.jotform.co/YMCANSWYthParl/eoi

CASE STUDY

ARLO'S STORY

"I was 15 years old. I was lazy, unmotivated and apathetic to everything. My ever-pushy mother was convinced I was wasting potential and shoved me into event after event, trying to pull something from me."

In 2013, only two years after arriving in Australia from New Zealand, I was accepted into yet another program I didn't want to do. Little did I know how much Youth Parliament would change my life.

Training camp was a blur of noise and colour spun by opinionated people with a passion for change and development. Not to mention that everyone seemed to have the gift of the gab. Admittedly, I was nervous and shy first camp. I loved every minute however, finding my rhythm talking to kids about issues I was passionate about late at night in our daily cabin discussions. I spent my whole life believing what I thought was right, until the people at Youth Parliament made me question everything from both ends of the spectrum. I went home happy and amazed at the people I'd met and was getting ready to put in the work to make residential camp amazing.

The first day speaking in NSW Parliament House was life-changing and I've never looked back. The program taught me to share my message, and share it fast, because there are thousands of people who want their voices to be heard, so why hold onto yours? After getting up to talk for the first time, it seemed like I never sat down. I sat down, already scribbling to write down my next speech, disappointed every time I wasn't chosen. After four days of intense debating, it was over and I went home a kid who, after years of thinking he wanted to be a scientist, discovered his true passion, to make change.

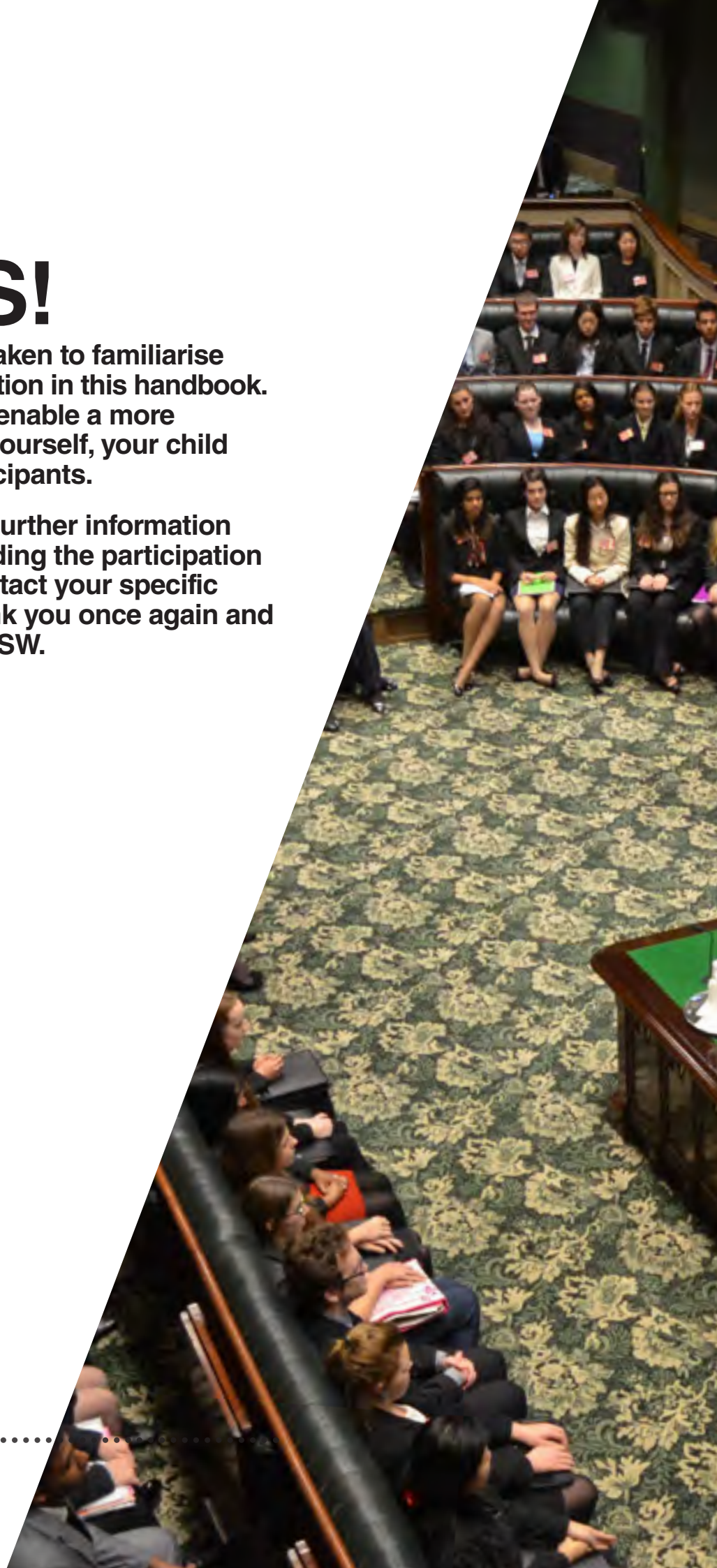
The second year I came back with a different plan. After my first year giving me skills and confidence in public speaking and debating, I wanted to get as much leadership experience as I could second year round. My aim was to be elected Premier, and luckily I was fortunate enough to be elected. I went into my first day at Parliament terrified of question time and left thinking it was the greatest 30 minutes of my life. I left once again with an eternal debt to Youth Parliament and all the Taskforce members who helped the program run."



THANKS!

We appreciate the time taken to familiarise yourself with the information in this handbook. Your support of this will enable a more positive experience for yourself, your child and other program participants.

Should you require any further information or have questions regarding the participation of your child, please contact your specific YMCA NSW site. We thank you once again and welcome you to YMCA NSW.







YMCA NSW

Level 5, 20 Smith Street
Parramatta NSW 2150
T 02 9687 6233
F 02 9687 6244
ymcansw.org.au

GET IN TOUCH

YMCA NSW is a people organisation and we value our clients' points of view. If you have feedback or suggestions for us, there are a number of ways you can get in touch.

Speak to our friendly staff on the phone or in person

Use the suggestion box at your local YMCA NSW centre

Complete a feedback form at your local YMCA NSW centre or at www.ymcansw.org.au.

CONTACTS

Youth & Government

For more information about YMCA NSW Youth & Government please visit ymcansw.org.au/centres/youth-government

Youth Opportunities

For more information about YMCA NSW Youth Opportunities please contact the Youth Programs Manager at youth@ymcansw.org.au





CONTACT US

 **YMCA NSW**
Level 5, 20 Smith Street
Parramatta NSW 2150

 02 9687 6233

 02 9687 6244

 contactus.nsw@ymcansw.org.au

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