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# **YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT**

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## NOTE

These speeches were delivered in October 2021 as part of Raise Our Voice Australia's *Youth Voice in Parliament Week*.

Young people up to the age of 21 were asked to submit a 90 second speech answering the question: **What do you want Australia to look like in 20 years?** Over 50 Senators and Members accepted an invitation to read one of these speeches submitted from their electorate in parliament.

This resource is not a comprehensive list of all speeches. This collection includes a range of speech topics from electorates across all states and territories, with voices of different ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds. The speeches here are ordered by age of the author.

### Relevant Links:

- **Raise Our Voice Australia:** <https://raiseourvoiceaustralia.com/>
- **For recorded speeches** - Raise Our Voice Australia YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcttgFI\\_v4F-VJC34jqEDWQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcttgFI_v4F-VJC34jqEDWQ)
- **For more transcribed speeches** - Hansard website with keywords "Youth Voice Parliament" between the dates: 18 - 22 October 2021: [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Hansard](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Hansard)

## **DR KATIE ALLEN MP, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Jasrah, 8 (VIC)**

All Australians have to come together and put a stop to pollution. Pollution is hurting our animals on this land. We have to do our part, cleaning up our land and oceans. I can see Australia in twenty years as the cleanest country and there's so much we can do to achieve this goal. Find ways to get plastics out of the ocean. Reduce pollution by using recycled plastic and paper products. Try and buy things that can be reused. schools can plan a bigger part to teach children about pollution. Excursions to the beach to find rubbish and pick it up. We could be doing more projects on pollution. There should be more recycling bins around the country. It's important to protect our animals to keep them safe just like we are. If we can keep our oceans clean, then we can all enjoy life and know that our environment is protected.

## **PETER KHALIL MP, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Zoe, 9 (VIC)**

In 20 years, for the world, I would like there to be no more COVID-19, a solution for global warming and a home for everyone. For me, and others with type 1 diabetes, I would like to see a cure. Diabetes is a very hard thing to deal with. It's not like a cold or the flu. It never, ever goes away. All day and night, I must monitor my blood sugar, and, every time I eat, I have to decide how much insulin to give. Sometimes I feel very tired and yucky because I'm low. This can happen anywhere, any time. I hate having lows at school, at night-time and on special occasions. Having diabetes is scary and, at times, makes me feel lonely and different. My life has been much better with the continuous glucose monitor and insulin pump. I can go to parties, I don't have lots of daily injections and my blood sugars are better. I'm worried that, when I'm older, I won't be able to afford a pump and CGM. So I speak for everyone to say that, by 20 years time, I would like pumps and CGMs to be free for everyone while we work towards a cure.

## **SENATOR KATY GALLAGHER, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Sujaan, 11 (ACT)**

Can you think back to when you were my age, and what you wanted the world to look like in 20 years' time? You might have imagined flying cars, or hoverboards, or a world where everyone has access to healthy food and clean water. But would you have imagined the only living structure you can spot from outer space, our very own Great Barrier Reef to be at risk of dying because of carbon in the atmosphere? The current generation of adults needs to fix the problems in today's world, so when people of my generation are adults we don't have to spend our time fixing the problems that we have now. We will have to spend our time solving problems or inventing new ways to do things in the future which we haven't even begun to imagine yet.

There are small things we can all do, like not littering, turning off lights when you leave the room and not buying products containing palm oil. But there are bigger things that people and governments can do to reduce the destruction of nature. For example, encouraging everyone to use renewable energy sources and making sure forests and natural areas are better protected from logging and deforestation. In 20 years, I want to be able to see a world where no one is destroying forests, killing wildlife, and releasing CO2 into the atmosphere. When you were young, did you hope the leaders would do a better job to help fulfill your hopes about the future? Now that you're the leaders, do you think you could help the children of our generation to fulfill ours?

## **DAVE SHARMA MP, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Danni, 11 (NSW)**

Filling precisely half the chairs in the Senate were women, half in the House of Representatives and everywhere in the entire House. In the surgery room, exactly half the doctors were women and half the nurses too. At the sports field, half the audience were at the women's game and half the competitors were women too. At the building site, half of the construction workers were women. Half of everything was given to women; nothing less, nothing more. This is what I want in the year of 2041.

Its obvious women are unequal to men in terms of work, stereotypes or life in general. How come there are hardly any famous sportswomen in cricket, basketball or rugby? Why do I never see any female construction workers when I walked past a building site? And what about those girls who have dreams to become Prime Minister? Only once has that ever happened—once. When I'm older I want to be a brain surgeon. However, these days I would expect to be one of the few. During the pandemic women have especially become more unequal than ever. Mothers with kids have even sacrificed their jobs to deal with the otherwise unsupervised children. But we have to come back from this. We girls deserve equality; we deserve the image of 2041.

## **DAMIAN DRUM MP, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Poppy, 12 (VIC)**

My vision for Australia in 20 years is there is support readily available for those suffering from mental health issues. The uprising in mental health issues during COVID and the associated lockdowns has been significant, especially amongst the youth of Australia. The issue is that there has most definitely not been enough support for those struggling and the Government needs to step in and fix this. The Government needs to encourage more people to study psychology to become therapists and or counsellors, so that when people are struggling, they have that opportunity to go and receive the help and support that they need. To conclude, I think it is important that the Government prioritises the quality and quantity of help and support for those struggling from mental health issues. If the focus isn't placed on this today, when will it ever be?

## **SENATOR ANDREW BRAGG, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Jai, 12 (NSW)**

I am a proud young Aboriginal man from Moree, located in the Gamilaroi nation. I am currently studying at the Hunter River High School, where I work hard to achieve the high marks in order to accomplish my career aspiration of becoming a doctor. Recently, I was appointed school captain, which was a great honour. I am also President of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and an NRL youth advocate. So what is my vision for Australia in 20 years? I would love to see Australia and the government really push to have one of the best education systems in the world. This benefits not only the rich upper-class society but also the socioeconomically disadvantaged, which includes a large proportion of Aboriginal people. As a proud Aboriginal man, it truly pains me to see such a large majority of Aboriginal people living in poverty, barely surviving from one day to the next. Malcolm X once said, "Education is the passport for the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepared for it today." The Australian government needs to prepare our young Aboriginal people of today with an affordable, culturally appropriate, world-class education system to build knowledge, as knowledge is power. Taking steps now to provide Aboriginal people with an education passport can break the cycles of poverty. In my vision of Australia in 20 years, the education passport will provide more Aboriginal doctors, nurses, lawyers, teachers, firemen, politicians and so on.

## **SENATOR MEHREEN FARUQI, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Yehansa, 13 (NSW)**

In 20 years, I want kids' faces to light up as they see dolls in ranges of skin colours and find one that looks exactly like them. In 20 years, I hope that kids can have bandaids that match their skin tone. In 20 years, I hope that racially diverse characters in TV shows, movies and media are shown in a better light and are shown often. In 20 years, I hope that job opportunities and pay are equal for everyone, no matter what skin colour, religious background or identification. In 20 years, I hope Australia is an equal place, starting with bandaids and dolls. Though it may seem little, this is important. Knowing what it means to be accepted means that children can recognise racial discrimination as they grow up. They will understand racism is not right, and they will learn to educate others standing up against it. This is the key to a kinder Australia. A kinder Australia is the start to a kinder world. My hope in 20 years is that the differences we have shouldn't be masked but celebrated.

## SENATOR PATRICK DODSON, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021

Source: Parliament of Australia

### Broome Senior High School students, 13-14 (WA)

We are a group of 13 and 14 year-olds from many and diverse backgrounds. Firstly, we believe that if Australia is welcoming to everyone then we can all live peacefully. We want Australia to be a place of equality, no matter what race, gender, sexuality, religion or jobs. We want different languages to be kept alive, and we support the goal of our Yawuru people for Broome to be a bilingual town. Secondly, we are concerned about the environment. As people of the Kimberley, our vision is for a cleaner and greener environment. We want to see the land cared for in the way that Traditional owners have been doing for centuries. Thirdly we want an Australia where there are plenty of economic opportunities, no matter where you live. So that youth can have more career opportunities, we would like to see more money going into public schools like ours. And we want affordable houses for everyone. Fourthly, we see the impact that crime has on communities every day. We want young people to have access to supports so they don't feel like they have no choice but to commit crimes. Fifthly, we are the Academic Extension Program class and are passionate about action against climate change. We have studied the impact humans have had on our world and we've thought about how this damage can be reversed. In Broome we consider ourselves lucky to have largely untouched environments around us, but we cannot just stand and watch as the planet deteriorates. Lastly, in Broome we have been pretty safe— (Time expired)

## SENATOR PETER WHISH-WILSON, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021

Source: Parliament of Australia

### Cooper (TAS)

In 2041, Australia can be in one of two places—a global pariah and climate outcast, blazing with bushfires, washed away by floods and having lost thousands of unique species, or we can be a success story, a country that chose to turn around the path of inevitable demise, ushering in a new green future. My vision for Australia is for our country to be a world leader in renewables, social standards and green manufacturing, a nation at the forefront of research and development to tackle the challenges that lay ahead. "Our land abounds in nature's gifts" is a line from our anthem, and in this decade it has never been more true. Our country is brimming with sunshine, rivers, raw materials and skilled workers.

In 20 years, I want to see Australia be the leader of a new green industrial revolution. In 20 years, Australia's strengths can be practically silent, with only the hum of electric cars to disturb you. Getting your electricity bill can be a pleasant surprise when you see the money earned from selling your excess solar power. My vision is that our cities will be filled with urban farms, parks and wildlife instead of being littered with the current waste. In this vision for our future, we need not worry about the impending doom of a climate emergency and environmental catastrophe. Instead we can live life to its fullest, creating a beautiful world for all.

## SENATOR DEAN SMITH, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021

Source: Parliament of Australia

### Lachie, 16 (WA)

In 20 years, I expect Australia's rural areas to have similar facilities to those available in the cities. This can be achieved by, for example, covering rural areas with good internet—probably 5G or 6G by then. I believe this is important as, currently, kids and families grow up without communication with the outside world and often have social and educational issues when they are older or leave home. Easier access to food would also greatly benefit our rural areas by placing more roadhouses along highways and in more-remote areas.

Growing up in a cattle station, I know that it can be expensive to simply drive to a town or your local community, often 100 kilometres away, just to get food. If we don't resolve these issues, families living in rural areas will be forced to leave and move to the city, and food production and the identity of true Australians will be lost.



## **SENATOR PERIN DAVEY, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Alexander (NSW)**

2020 was a challenging year for young people and 2021 has shaped to be much the same albeit with a light at the end of the tunnel, vaccination. Young people have felt the brunt of coronavirus restrictions and were most affected by lockdowns. This was the case due to their employment often being in the industries most impacted by lockdowns, be it cinemas shutting or wearing masks at Woolworths. While young people have been left at the end of the queue for vaccination (albeit on sound health advice) with more of the general population including young adults becoming eligible to be vaccinated, I implore young people across Australia and especially in my home state of NSW to take this incredible opportunity afforded to them and protect themselves, their loved ones, and their communities from the vicious scourge of COVID-19.

Our generation has the capability to act based on the science like none before. It is time for Australia to move out of the darkness of the past two years characterised by disunity, lockdowns and fear and move forthrightly as a nation not divided but united around a shared set of democratic values to tackle the big issues that this place was meant to debate without the spectre of COVID haunting us any longer. Vaccination is the path out of this pandemic, and it is up to each of us how far we walk.

## **SENATOR JORDAN STEELE-JOHN, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Winter, 17 (WA)**

There are many aspects of the Australian experience that I wish to see evolve, but there is one area that I am particularly hopeful to see change in the next 20 years. I have spent my highschool years surrounded by some of the most wonderful people, many of whom happen to be queer, trans, non-binary, or otherwise gender diverse. And I have watched them, my friends struggle to be accepted and have their feelings and identities taken seriously.

I am hoping that as a society we can normalise the non-conformity to gender norms, as well as increase the availability and normality of gender neutral bathrooms. Similarly, I hope to see increased funding for services that provide gender diverse youth with guidance and acceptance so that they may live a life that feels authentic and fulfilling to them. Through facilitating societal evolution in this way I hope to see that the youth 20 years from now will not have to struggle, as my friends have, to find acceptance and understanding from Australia.

## **LUKE GOSLING, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Taylor, 18 (NT)**

Last year, 35 per cent of young Australians reported psychological distress. My parents are supportive and try their best to understand, but I've seen the effects on my close friends and others when they grow up in a family which isn't aware of mental health issues and mistake it for their teenager being lazy or moody. Right now so many young people feel that they have no-one supporting them and cannot afford the help of professionals.

I want to see more adult awareness of youth mental health. Every suicide means something isn't working. Suicide rarely happens without warning, so, the more educated we are about the warning signs and not confusing those behaviours with normal teen moods, the better we can help people. Us young people are the next future leaders. In 20 years I hope that, instead of looking at high rates of youth mental illness, Australia will see our young people reaching high and becoming politicians, doctors and nurses, teachers and artists.

## **SENATOR LOUISE PRATT, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021**

**Source: Parliament of Australia**

### **Alexis, 20 (WA)**

It is a privilege to give this speech on behalf of Alexis Pallister, as part of Raise Our Voice Australia. Alexis says: My name is Alexis Pallister, I am 20 years old and currently live within the Pearce electorate in Western Australia. In 20 years, I would like to see an Australia which emphasises consent, promotes autonomy and diminishes stigmas surrounding sexual education. In 20 years, I hope Australia has enacted change to our education curriculum, making consent mandatory and, in turn, has seen a reduction in violence against women. I hope women feel safe and our culture endorses consent, encouraging a sex-positive mindset amongst all. Changes to our curriculum need to be implemented, with consent being at the forefront of all conversations. Sexual education should promote autonomy, diminish stigmas and most importantly, inform young adults on the most fundamental principle of sex—consent. Students deserve a comprehensive sexual education, which includes a broader base of topics and educates everyone including, those belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community. Our future generations should have the right to be informed. They deserve to be taught consent because consent education saves lives. Explicit and informed consent education acts as a violence prevention stagey, as it changes the narrative on what a healthy relationship should adhere to by encouraging boundary setting and fluid communication. In 20 years, I hope to see an Australia that I can be proud of, where women feel safe, violence has ceased, and consent is understood. Make consent education mandatory!

## SENATOR REX PATRICK, YOUTH VOICE IN PARLIAMENT WEEK, 2021

Source: Parliament of Australia

### Hugo, 20 (SA)

My name is Hugo Taheny. I'm 20 years old and I live on Narungga country in the electorate of Grey in rural South Australia. I live with an intellectual disability. My vision for Australia in 20 years would be for a more inclusive life for everyone. I hope that people of all abilities, cultures, communities and backgrounds would be working together in a more friendly way to enjoy the beautiful land that we live on. I would like to be treated like a person, not a person with disabilities. I would like people to include me, to talk to me and to help me and my friends contribute positively to make our society a better place. It is so important to be inclusive in every way so that all people feel welcomed and equal. Everyone should be given the same opportunities for school, health care and jobs. When my friends and I are included, we feel proud. When we're not included or treated differently, we feel sad and lonely, like we don't matter as much as others do. It is really important that everyone embraces diversity and opens up to being inclusive in every way to help make the world a better place. Thank you.