

Ways to get involved

Objective:

Students will become aware that they hold great power in their voices and actions. Young people can influence local government and participate in activities that advance ideas and policies, draw attention to issues, enlist community support and make a difference. This activity presents a few options for young people to get involved in issues that matter to them. It has a strong focus on empowerment through personal research.

Discuss with students the different ways that they can participate in and advocate for causes they believe in, for example;

- Political rallies
- Student parliaments
- Multicultural organisations
- Student Representative Council (SRC) activities
- Organise citizen forums
- Volunteering
- Social media campaigns
- Contacting local mayors and/or councillors or members for parliament.

Required materials:

- **Appendix C** - Young people, influence and interest groups
- Pen and paper
- Internet access

Task Description:

Part 1

1. Provide students with a copy of **part 1 appendix C** - Young people, influence and interest groups
2. Ask students to tick the things that people under the age of 18 can be involved in to advocate for issues and influence government. Have them complete the checklist with a partner. (Explain that they may need to conduct online research when making some decisions.)

Part 2

1. Have students conduct research on one of the organisations listed under the table in **part 2 appendix C**. These are just some examples of organisations that have a focus on young people.

2. Students should focus their research on:
 - the name of the organisation
 - the target audience of the organisation
 - the goals of the organisation
 - the issues addressed by the organisation
 - How does the organisation support young people
 - What sort of things can young people do to get involved using the organisation resources
 - What influence does the organisation have on local government
 - The actions taken by the organisation
 - The challenges to resolving the issues raised
3. Have student pairs present and discuss their research findings. What did they find out about these organisations?

Part 3

Required materials:

- Letter example (**Part 3 appendix C**)
- Pen, paper and Envelope
- Councillor contact details
- Internet access (if emailing letter)

Task Description:



1. First step is to 'know your why' - Have students in groups discuss and come up with a list of four or five local issues that they think are most important and why.
2. Have groups report back to the class. What issues have students identified as the most important? Are the issues local, state, national or global? Writing to your councillor for local issues is a step in the right direction of change.
3. One or more class representatives write to their divisional councillor on behalf of the class (**Part 3 appendix C**)
4. Letter can be hand posted or emailed

C. Young people, influence and interest groups

Part 1 - Tick Box

	Organise or sign a petition
	Write a wiki or blog about an issues
	Start a social media campaign
	Speak at a public meeting
	Hand out brochures
	Put up posters
	Contact a local councillor or member of parliament about an issue
	Wear a badge or T-shirt supporting a cause
	Write a letter to mainstream media
	Join or arrange a street demonstration
	Perform street theatre
	Join a non-government organisation (NGO)

Part 2 - Research links

- Oaktree <https://www.oaktree.org/>
- VicSRC Student Voice Hub | The Home of Student Voice
<https://studentvoicehub.org.au/>
- Australian Youth Climate Coalition <https://www.aycc.org.au/>
- MYAN Australia <https://myan.org.au/>
- UN Youth Australia | Opening Young Eyes To The World <https://unyouth.org.au/>
- Sydney's Young Mob Leadership Program | World Vision Australia
<https://www.worldvision.com.au/global-issues/work-we-do/supporting-indigenous-australia/sydneys-young-mob-leadership-program>
- About Us - FYA <https://www.fya.org.au/about-us/>
- Victorian Student Representative Council | VicSRC <https://vicsrc.org.au/>
- 27th National Schools Constitutional Convention 2022 - NCS Online
<https://ncsonline.com.au/projects/national-schools-constitutional-convention>

Part 3 - Letter starters

Introduction

Dear Councillor _____

In class, we are learning about government. We are learning lots of things about how as citizens we can contribute positively to our communities. To us, community means

During class we discussed the things that we would like to change about where we go to school. We voted on the key suggestions from each group in our class and the one thing we all agree would be good for our community is:

Suggestion: *[example] We need a community garden across the road from the school*

Body

Include 2-3 arguments with evidence. This is a good section to include any resources you will need and who will benefit from your proposal.

We have looked around the school area and we think that the _____ could do with improving because ...

This project would be good for the school community because ...

This project would be good for the _____ community because ...

To make this happen, we need ...

Conclusion

Thank the person for reading your letter and encourage them to support your idea.

We hope you will consider this idea and we would love to meet with you to discuss it. Thank you for reading my letter.

Sign your name.