

**YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

*Statement by Minister for Youth*

**MS H.M. BEAZLEY (Victoria Park — Minister for Youth)** [12.19 pm]: I am pleased to advise the house that applications for our 2024 Youth Parliament program are currently open. As I am sure members are aware, Youth Parliament is an annual youth advocacy and parliamentary education program designed to give young people aged between 15 and 25 the opportunity to have their voices heard on issues that matter to them. The Cook government, through the Department of Communities, is providing over \$60 000 to fund this year's program, which is run by the Y WA. The Y has been running Youth Parliament across multiple states for over 30 years—a tradition that we proudly continue in WA today. I am delighted to update the house that this year, the Youth Parliament program will celebrate its twenty-ninth year. It continues to go from strength to strength.

Last year, 58 young Western Australians participated in the program, which saw bills presented and debated on a range of important issues, from recycling and artificial intelligence to electoral reform. Participants in the program work in teams to develop legislation, discuss topical issues and present speeches in Parliament during a special sitting week in July. They each represent an electorate and act as either a member of the government or opposition. I have had the pleasure of sponsoring two Youth Parliament members in the past—Chelsea Brown in 2022 and Steven Thiele in 2023—both of whom represented my electorate as the youth member for Victoria Park. I look forward to sponsoring this year's participant as well. Youth members are also delegated to committees, based on their three areas of interest, and attend three days of training and online meetings related to their committees before attending a residential camp and participating in parliamentary sessions. Bills that are passed during Youth Parliament are shared with the government and opposition for consideration, giving these young participants a democratic voice.

I know that many members are already doing so, but I encourage everyone to promote the Youth Parliament program to young people in their electorate. Applications close on Sunday, 24 March. Our aim is to see a record number of applicants this year and to have many diverse young people represent every electorate across our state, including young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and young people from our regions. I am sure members will agree that political life can be demanding, but it is also incredibly rewarding, with many opportunities to make a difference in our community. The more we can encourage and support young people to participate in politics, the better, so that they have the opportunity to engage in processes that affect their lives. Our annual Youth Parliament is one important opportunity for them to do so.