

# YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE CHARTER

AUTHORITY	YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
APPROVAL DATE	21 JANUARY 2026
NEXT REVIEW DATE	21 JANUARY 2027
POLICY OWNER	EDUCATION INNOVATION LEADER

## 1. PURPOSE

The Zoos Victoria Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) exists to empower and amplify the voices of young people, fostering our passion for wildlife conservation and providing us with a platform for our valuable insights and contributions. The YAC is dedicated to shaping a future where youth actively engage with Zoos Victoria's mission, advocate for wildlife, and collaboratively plan and work towards a more sustainable and wildlife-friendly world.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The YAC is established with the following objectives:

- Empower young people to actively contribute to the zoo's mission.
- Cultivate meaningful wildlife connections for young people.
- Ensure young voices are valued and considered by Zoos Victoria.
- Address youth-relevant issues, keeping the zoo accessible and engaging.
- Contribute to the development of engaging youth events and programs for wildlife education and advocacy.
- Inspire young people to explore wildlife conservation pathways within Zoos Victoria and beyond.
- Collaborate with zoo committees, infusing youth perspectives into decision-making.

## 3. MEMBERSHIP

The YAC comprises a group of up to 15 members between the ages of 13 and 19, who are selected through an application process.

We strongly encourage diversity among our members, to adequately represent young Victorians from various locations, backgrounds, and life experiences.

Each member is appointed for a one-year term and may serve for a maximum of three consecutive years in total. This supports continuity while also creating space for new voices and perspectives. After completing three years, members who are still within the eligible age range may re-apply to join the committee through the standard application process.

Members who wish to leave the YAC are encouraged to communicate their intentions openly with the committee. We value the contributions of all members and respect their decisions to step down when necessary. This approach allows us to maintain a cohesive and dedicated team while prioritising the value of everyone's personal circumstances.

#### 4. RECRUITMENT

The application process includes:

- An open call for applications is made to all eligible individuals, aged 13 to 19.
- The applications are reviewed by the designated Zoos Victoria education team.
- After an initial review, applications are presented to the YAC for further consideration.
- Final selections are made by the Zoos Victoria education strategy team.
- All applicants are considered based on their qualifications, passion for wildlife conservation, and potential to contribute to the YAC team.

#### 5. MEETINGS

The YAC recognises the importance of effective communication and collaboration to achieve our goals. We have established the following guidelines:

- In person meetings will occur twice during each school holiday period, totalling eight meetings within a 12-month timeframe. There is also one online catch up over each of the school terms.
- Meetings may be conducted either in person or virtually, depending on the circumstances and the preferences of the committee members. We prioritise flexibility and accessibility to ensure all members can participate and contribute effectively.
- A dedicated Zoos Victoria education staff member will serve as the YAC liaison and will facilitate the meetings. This role is to provide guidance, support, and ensure that the meetings run smoothly, allowing us to focus on our mission and objectives.
- The YAC acknowledges the importance of ensuring that meetings are productive and representative of the committee's collective input. As such, a minimum number of 5 members are required to conduct an official meeting, known as a quorum.
- The YAC committee members have the flexibility to collaboratively determine the specific details of our meeting schedule, including how often we meet, and the location.

#### 6. ROLES

Each member in the YAC plays a vital role in achieving its purpose.

Responsibilities may encompass active participation in discussions, contributing to wildlife conservation ideas, representing youth perspectives, regular meeting attendance, and engaging in outreach and advocacy. A member of the committee will nominate themselves to different roles before each meeting, including:

- Acknowledgement of country.
- Meeting minutes.
- Communications.

## 7. CODE OF CONDUCT

To nurture a positive environment, a code of conduct guides our interactions. Members collectively shape this code, contributing expectations and values to ensure an effective and harmonious committee experience.

### **Respect and inclusivity**

We value diverse perspectives and acknowledge each member's worth.

### **Listening**

We engage in active and empathetic listening and embracing varied viewpoints through open and constructive discussions.

### **Fun**

We infuse creativity and positive energy into our work, fostering an enjoyable atmosphere that amplifies our commitment to wildlife conservation.

### **Inspired**

We inspire each other and our community through dedication to Zoos Victoria's mission. Our motivation stems from the potential for positive change in conservation.

### **Open-minded**

We approach challenges with open minds, welcoming innovative ideas, and diverse perspectives. Constructive feedback is always encouraged.

### **Curious**

We maintain an ever-curious spirit, seeking to deepen our understanding of wildlife conservation and explore new avenues for involvement.

### **Inquisitive**

We embrace questioning, a thirst for knowledge, and encouragement of exploration, recognising that curiosity fuels our growth and creativity.

## 8. COMMUNICATION

To ensure seamless communication, the YAC collectively decides on the preferred communication methods and establish guidelines:

### **Meetings**

Regular meetings, whether in person or virtually, are essential for discussion, planning, and decision-making. We will determine the frequency, format, and location of these meetings based on member preferences.

### **Email**

We use email for official announcements, sharing documents, and correspondence. Timely responses and courteous communication are encouraged.

### **Messaging platforms**

We may use messaging platforms for quick updates, reminders, and informal discussions, ensuring inclusivity and responsiveness.

### **Social media**

We may utilise social media platforms for committee updates and public engagement, following Zoos Victoria's social media guidelines.

## **9. REVIEW**

This charter is a living document that will undergo periodic review to ensure it stays in sync with the YAC's evolving goals and objectives. Members active participation in the review process is essential to maintaining the continued success of our committee.

### **Frequency**

We propose that the charter undergoes a thorough review on an annual basis. This timeline allows us to adapt to changing circumstances and continuously improve our committee's effectiveness.

### **Process**

The responsibility for leading the review process will be a collaborative effort among committee members. We encourage all members to contribute their insights and recommendations, ensuring that our charter remains relevant and aligned with our mission and goals.

## **10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

By participating in the Zoos Victoria Youth Advisory Committee, you acknowledge that you have read, understood, and are committed to shaping and implementing this charter.