

2.6 MONASH YOUTH COMMITTEE ADVOCATING FOR A NATIONAL APPROACH TO MANDATING RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

That Council:

- 1. Notes the importance of the issues raised by the Monash Youth Committee (MYC) on behalf of their peers in the City of Monash.*
- 2. Notes that policy surrounding Respectful Relationships is currently both a State and a Federal Government responsibility that is impacting young people and families.*
- 3. Endorses the letter written by members of the MYC to be sent to the following:*

Federal Representatives:

Federal Ministers:

Senator Marise Payne (Minister for Women)

Senator Anne Ruston (Minister for Families and Social Services & Minister for Women's Safety)

Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie (Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education)

Hon Alan Tudge (Minister for Education & Youth)

Hon Scott Morrison (Prime Minister)

Federal Shadow Ministers:

Hon Tanya Plibersek (Shadow Minister for Women & Shadow Minister for Education)

Hon Linda Burney (Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services)

Hon Amanda Rishworth (Shadow Minister for Youth)

Hon Anthony Albanese (Leader of the Opposition)

Local Federal MPs:

Dr Katie Allen - Member for Higgins

Ms Gladys Liu - Member for Chisholm

Ms Clare O'Neil - Member for Hotham

Senators for Victoria:

Senator The Hon Kim Carr

Senator Raff Ciccone

Senator The Hon Sarah Henderson

Senator The Hon Jane Hume

Senator Kimberley Kitching

Senator The Hon Bridget McKenzie

Senator James Paterson

Senator Janet Rice

Senator Lidia Thorpe

Senator David Van

Senator Jess Walsh

State Representatives:

Members of the Victorian Legislative Council:

Eastern Metropolitan Region:

Mr Bruce Atkinson

Dr Matthew Bach

Mr Rod Barton

The Hon Shaun Leane

Ms Sonja Terpstra

South Eastern Metropolitan Region:

Dr Tien Kieu

Mr David Limbrick

The Hon Gordon Rich-Phillips

Mr Lee Tarlamis

Southern Metropolitan Region:

Ms Georgie Crozier

The Hon David Davis

Mr Enver Erdogan

Mr Clifford Hayes

Ms Nina Taylor

INTRODUCTION

The Monash Youth Committee (MYC) are wanting to ensure Respectful Relationships education in schools is at the forefront of both State and Federal Members of Parliament leading into the upcoming election period.

MYC are wanting to create more conversations around the Respectful Relationships curriculum program that is currently offered in some Australia states. MYC would like to encourage the Federal Government, with the support of State and Territory Governments, to develop and mandate a consistent, whole school approach for Respectful Relationships to be embedded in all Australia public, independent and Catholic schools' curriculum.

The MYC is seeking endorsement to send a letter advocating for mandatory Respectful Relationship education for all schools, but particularly in Monash.

MYC is concerned that the Respectful Relationships program is not reaching enough young people in schools, not only in Monash, but across Victoria and Nationally.

MYC is not seeking to meet with members of parliament; they are seeking to share their point of view on embedding Respectful Relationship education in all schools across Australia. The MYC have drafted a letter, which is attached to this report, for Council endorsement.

The MYC is seeking endorsement to send the attached letter to State and Federal Members of Parliament with relevant portfolios and to ministers who sit within the City of Monash. The mandatory implementation of Respectful Relationships education in schools is an issue of policy direction rather than party politics. MYC wishes to send a letter to the following:

Federal Representatives:

Federal Ministers:

Senator Marise Payne (Minister for Women)

Senator Anne Ruston (Minister for Families and Social Services & Minister for Women's Safety)

Senator the Hon Bridget McKenzie (Minister for Regionalisation, Regional Communications and Regional Education)

Hon Alan Tudge (Minister for Education & Youth)

Hon Scott Morrison (Prime Minister)

Federal Shadow Ministers:

Hon Tanya Plibersek (Shadow Minister for Women & Shadow Minister for Education)

Hon Linda Burney (Shadow Minister for Families and Social Services)

Hon Amanda Rishworth (Shadow Minister for Youth)

Hon Anthony Albanese (Leader of the Opposition)

Local Federal MPs:

Dr Katie Allen - Member for Higgins

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Senator Kimberley Kitching

Senator The Hon Bridget McKenzie

Senator James Paterson

Senator Janet Rice

Senator Lidia Thorpe
Senator David Van
Senator Jess Walsh

State Representatives:

Members of the Victorian Legislative Council:

Eastern Metropolitan Region:

Mr Bruce Atkinson

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Mr Lee Tarlamis

Southern Metropolitan Region:

Ms Georgie Crozier

The Hon David Davis

Mr Enver Erdogan

Mr Clifford Hayes

Ms Nina Taylor

BACKGROUND

The MYC is a group of young people who come together to share ideas, opinions and discuss needs of all young people. The aim of the group is to be the voice and inspiration of young people in Monash. As such, the group strives to represent the views of young people in Monash to all levels of Government.

DISCUSSION

The MYC letter raises a number of issues which they want to share with State and Federal Members of Parliament including:

- The Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence mandated state-wide delivery across all Victorian schools, however, this has not been achieved.
- Whilst Respectful Relationships education is mandated for public schools in Victoria, there are 326 independent or Catholic schools who have chosen not to adopt a whole school approach to Respectful Relationship education. Monash is home to 20 independent and

catholic primary and secondary schools which may not have chosen to adopt the Respectful Relationship program.

- Victorian police crime statistics of family violence reports in the City of Monash have increased by over 25% in the 2020/21 financial year¹.
- Monash Council's Multicultural Communities would greatly benefit from increased discussions about respectful relationships and embedding of a whole school approach in all Monash independent and Catholic schools.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The MYC is passionate about Respectful Relationship education and they are concerned by the high level of domestic violence locally and nationally. MYC want members of parliament to be proactive in creating change within the community. MYC also wants to ensure that young people, many of whom are not yet eligible to vote, are provided with the same social consideration as other sections of the community.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The Monash Health & Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 is committed to creating a city that is safe and respectful and where gender equity is embedded in the community. Council will demonstrate leadership at both a local and state level ensuring attitudes and behaviours that condone violence against women are actively reduced.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

CONCLUSION

The MYC feels that it is important that there is ongoing dialogue between young people and policymakers so that young people's views are adequately considered and represented at both State and Federal levels of government. The MYC feels that both levels of government need to be more proactive in creating policies that promote more effective outcomes for young people.

The MYC requests that Council endorses the letter written by members of the MYC to be sent to the Federal and State Representatives as outlined earlier in this report.

¹ <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-crime-data-by-area>