

Deb Foskey MLA

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Youth votes

ACT Greens MLA Deb Foskey's motion calling for the optional vote for young people 16 and 17 years old has today been referred to the Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Education, Training and Young People.

"An optional youth vote is long standing Greens party policy (and now ACT Labor policy as well). We have put up this motion this week as a contribution to Youth Week" Dr Foskey said today.

"Voting is not the only way that people can engage in politics, and young people are active at all levels. However, in our society, it is an influential method of political participation. Politicians, as a class, have shown that they will not listen to young people until they have the right to vote."

"An overwhelming number of young people want to participate in decisions about issues that affect their lives, but society in general, and governments in particular, disregard their opinions."

"Laws like the changes to Industrial Relations, affect young people as much as or more than other groups – they need a say about who makes these laws."

"When young people enter the workforce they will bear the brunt of the new IR laws. They usually lack economic power, experience and skills, in negotiating with employers over terms and conditions, and without the vote, they lack political power as well."

"Proposed Federal Government changes to electoral laws, like closing registration when an election is called, makes this motion more urgent, to increase young peoples' political awareness and make them more likely to register as soon as they are able."

"Many young people distrust politicians and are disengaging from formal political processes. We must work hard to prevent their alienation and giving them the right to vote is a vote of confidence in their judgement and social value" Dr Foskey said.

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