



The Y in Australia

Community Impact Report 2021

We believe in the power of inspired young people



Contents

OVERVIEW	2	POSITIVE COMMUNITY IMPACT	20	OUR HISTORY	31
About the Y	3	Youth safe space	21	175+ years of the Y	32
Leadership message from the President and CEO	4	Young people exposed to the criminal justice system	21	The story behind the flag	32
Global Connection	6	Space Squad	21	RECOGNISING OUR PEOPLE	33
The Y at a glance	7	Schools' Breakfasts	22	Melinda Crole	34
The Y at a glance: 2020/21 Facts	8	Vocational Schools	23	Thank You message from Melinda Crole	35
A TRUE NATIONAL MOVEMENT	9	Victorian Skate Association	23	National Office staff	36
Reimagine labs	10	HQ	23	I.C. Howard scholarship	37
Y Safeguarding	11	STRONG SOCIAL ENTERPRISE	24	GOVERNANCE	38
National Redress Scheme	12	Recreation	25	Our Directors	39
EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE	13	Swimming lessons	26	Our Life Governors: Thank You: Tal Karp	39
Y Careers	14	Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre (GRAC) opening	26	Y MERCHANDISE (TRADING AS Y GEAR)	40
National Youth Parliament	15	Gymnastics programs	27	Y Eco Range	41
Global Youth Led Solutions Summit and Inside our Minds campaign	15	Camps	27	YMCA ReBuild	41
Virtual Y	16	Disability services	28	Y Custom Product Portal	41
Y Chats	16	Early Learning Centres	29	CONTACT INFORMATION:	42
The Affinity Network	16	Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)	30		
Youth Theatre Group	17				
WhyNot	18				
Youth Advocacy Project	19				
National Youth Retreat 2020	19				

OVERVIEW



About the Y

The Y in Australia exists to make sure that the power of inspired young people is realised.

We want our communities and society to see young people as we do – as the powerful changemakers they can be when they are empowered and listened to.

We're one of the world's largest global youth movements, aligned with others, and we see it as our responsibility to lead Australian society to inspire young people to feel and be more powerful.

The Y is not only trying to solve crucial social issues such as mental health or job creation - we are the brand that exists to remind Australia: That young people hold the key to shaping a just, fair and inclusive world - when they are inspired.

Where you belong

We provide spaces for children and young people to connect and belong, both physically and online.

We also amplify the voices of young people on issues that matter most to them, because we believe they are the changemakers that our society needs.

Be active. Stay connected.

Our recreation programs and facilities provide spaces for individuals to be active, and stay connected, with a holistic approach on body, mind and spirit. Whole communities are the eco-system of raising children and young people to ensure they thrive, and the Y exists in our communities to assist individuals be their best selves, and the best role models.

You'll love how they grow

Early Learning and OSHC programs all form part of the growth cycle to empower children and young people at all stages of life. We are committed to provide quality education, care and fun activities to enhance children's development and ensure they enjoy their time at the Y.

They'll want to come again tomorrow

At the Y, we are committed to empowering all children and young people to feel safe and be safe, at the Y, in their families and in their communities.

Leadership message from the President and CEO

Reimagining the Y towards 2030

The Y continues to look to the future with a focus on intergenerational leadership and youth voice leading the way. We know, that without the power of inspired young people, tomorrow will look too much like yesterday. As we all recover, rebuild and reimagine the world we need post COVID-19, we know we can adapt and embrace what is required to ensure relevance to young people and communities.

The world needs people who care, and as Y people we are committed to contributing to strengthening a world where these four strategic pillars, from our global Vision 2030, are enabled. As a Y, we believe in: (1) wellbeing and community; (2) meaningful future employment; (3) a sustainable future; and (4) a just world.

Our Y people, both staff and volunteers continued to shine this year and bravely facing into and adapting to the challenges of the second year of COVID-19. Overall participations during this period were down by 18 percent

[Continues next page](#)



OVERVIEW

Leadership Message cont...

from FY19/20 due to the extended lockdowns in Victoria, the ACT and NSW. This meant that less people were able to access and experience many Y activities such as Recreation (which includes aquatics, gyms, gymnastics and camps) and Youth Services. Although still impacted, our Early Learning Centres (ELC), Out of School Hours Care (OSHC), kindergartens and disability programs continued to operate. These essential services provided much needed respite, care and support for families. Thank you to all Y staff who worked with such care at this time to provide the nurturing environments required. You are our heroes.

With great challenge comes great opportunity. To ensure a vibrant, relevant and growth-ready Y, our key priorities include:

- ▶ a review of our licensing framework;
- ▶ continued engagement with industry partners and government;
- ▶ partnership development with organisations that align to our goals;
- ▶ enabling and building our relationship with our international Y family; and
- ▶ being intentional about developing prevention strategies to ensure the negative impact of COVID-19 on young people is mitigated.

With the upcoming 2022 Federal Election, we also lean into future advocacy, with exciting initiatives being the Y Career Agency and a Federal Youth Parliament. Both of these initiatives have been informed and co-designed with young people and our member Ys across Australia, and we will continue to advocate for federal support to realise them.

We believe in the power of inspired young people

Young People

In late 2019 we were informed by our Youth Forum that:

“Inclusion is complex and fundamental to valuing young people and our overall wellbeing. It must be purposefully embedded in our strategy, policies and practice. This is not something we can achieve unless we are intentional and make a collective priority”

As such we commenced the SBS inclusion and diversity training, and we're proud to say that 367 people are currently completing the program in Ys across Australia.

Our Office for Young People has supported the Movement to deliver a National Youth Advocacy Project, funded by the Commonwealth Government. The project focused on young people's insights and ideas on youth employment and economic participation.

The pandemic forced a shift in delivery for the National Youth Retreat 2020. This edition of the Retreat saw the event go virtual, which opened the door for more participation than ever, with over 130 people participating.

We continue to encourage our Boards to recruit young people with the intentionality of bringing intergenerational leadership to life, and we are also recruiting young people on our national board committees, to commence in early 2022.

The Y Safeguarding

In March this year, Y Safeguarding was born – the Y's national safeguarding charity that has received Harm Prevention Status from the Australian Government. This is an extremely exciting time for the Y, as we continue our safeguarding journey to support even more children, young people, families and communities to enable all children and young people to feel safe and be safe. Thank you in particular to Chris Lewis (Y Safeguarding

President), Richard Nedov (Y Services President), Donna McMaster (Acting CEO Y Services) & Phil Doorgachurn (Acting CEO Y Safeguarding). Y Safeguarding continues to deliver quality resources to make sure children and young people are safe at the Y, in their families and in their communities. See [Y Safeguarding resources here](#).

The Y Brand

While it was November 2019 when we agreed as a membership collective to become the Y, 2020-21 was really when it was brought to life, and we started to refresh the brand proudly on our products, services and facilities. We started to understand what it is to be “the Y”. We're now bolder, fresher, brighter and more inclusive as a brand, thanks to incredible collaboration between our Member Ys own marketing and communications professionals. See [brand refresh video here](#).

National CEO

From our President: thank you Melinda for your significant contribution to the Y and the incredible legacy you leave as National CEO. We all wish you very well for the next chapter of your professional life and know you will continue to be a good friend to the Y and all of the National board and office. See [Melinda Crole Legacy video here](#).

Thank you to all of our Y Members, staff, volunteers and communities for your continued commitment, collaboration and support of the Y.



Ben Hubbard
President, Y Australia

Melinda Crole
CEO, Y Australia

Global Connection

The Y is one of the largest youth organisations in the world, founded in London in 1844, and has grown to reach over 60 million people a year across 120 countries, with nearly 90,000 staff, 920,000 volunteers and 12,000 branches worldwide.

“Young people must have a home and a safe space in the global Y and be able to use their voice to create an organisation and a world of dignity, equity and compassion. The Ys are taking steps to work alongside the communities they serve – to create a more just, equitable and anti-racist society;”

Carlos Sanvee, Secretary General, World YMCA.
See [full article here](#).

See Global Vision 2030 – [link here](#)

See Global Youth Mobilization – [link here](#)

See Youth Led Solutions Summits - Future of Work 7-9 June and Mental Health 10 Oct – [link here](#)



The Y at a glance

The Y has been operating and responding to community needs for over 177 years now, and this year in the global pandemic community needs were significant.

Currently, the Y provides services to Australians with over 18 million participations, and this year we had 1.2 million engagements with young people and nearly 8 million engagements with children.

Our children's services were vital for essential workers this past year. Early Learning Centre family registrations increased by 25%, and a number of new services commenced. OHSC and vacation care attendances also went up by 18%. Our youth services participations across Australia increased by 4%.

COVID lockdown impacts to participation rates at Ys in Australia:

Not surprisingly, there was a significant decrease in the overall participations in the last financial year FY20-21 (an 18% decrease) and (38% from FY18/19) with lockdowns significantly affecting our recreation sector (sports, health and wellness, aquatics and camps).

The Y at a glance: 2020/21 Facts



Total Participations

FY20/21	FY19/20	FY18/19
18,379,081	22,462,831	29,214,787

 **TURNOVER**
\$445,167,300

 **12,512**
STAFF
(includes over 8,000 young people)

 **ASSETS MANAGED**
\$493,975,016

 **1,035**
VOLUNTEERS

 **NUMBER OF SITES ACROSS AUSTRALIA**
660

Summary of our Services and Facilities in Australia

Sport and Recreation

- ▶ 3.4 million participations (down by 18% due to COVID-19 lockdowns)
- ▶ 56 community recreation centres
- ▶ 16 stadiums
- ▶ 1 golf course
- ▶ 1 sailing club
- ▶ 4 gymnastics facilities

Health and Wellbeing

- ▶ 5.5 million participations (down by 25% due to COVID-19 lockdowns)
- ▶ 56 health, fitness & aquatic facilities

Camping and Outdoor Education

- ▶ 75,965 participations (down by 61% due to COVID-19 lockdowns)
- ▶ 16 camps

Aquatics

- ▶ 2.25 million participations in swimming lessons (down by 19% due to COVID-19 lockdowns)
- ▶ 49 outdoor pools
- ▶ 24 Aquatic Education facilities

Youth

- ▶ 1.2 million participations
- ▶ Board members aged under 30 = 8 across Australia (14% increase of young people on our boards from FY19/20-FY20/21)

Children's programs and services

- ▶ Nearly 8 million participations
- ▶ 229 OSHC and vacation care centres
- ▶ 133 Early learning centres and kindergartens
- ▶ 6 Long day care and in-home day care centres

Disability inclusion services

- ▶ Over 19 thousand participations
- ▶ Over 87 thousand hours of support
- ▶ 723 participants

And more

- ▶ 10 disability services providers
- ▶ 36 special community services providers (including meals for homeless, breakfast and meals program, mentoring, Siblings Reconnect, Parentlink)
- ▶ 4 op shops
- ▶ 1 hair salon
- ▶ 11 hostels & housing accommodation facilities
- ▶ 8 schools
- ▶ 1 hotel
- ▶ 4 skate parks
- ▶ 18 Dedicated Youth Services/Programs (includes Youth Parliament, Drop-in youth centres, youth empowerment, youth diversion, youth mentoring, youth and family services, mobile youth, vocational training, Remote School Attendance Strategy)



A TRUE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

SHARING NATIONAL CULTURE, STRATEGY
AND ACTION

Reimagine labs

In 2020-2021, the Y undertook a reimagining process, looking at community needs first then what the Y must be to meet those needs.

Reimagine labs were held with intergenerational participants across each group, with the following agreed priority areas:

- ▶ Community wellbeing – mental health.
- ▶ A sustainable future – climate change.
- ▶ Future of work – meaningful employment for young people.
- ▶ A just world – diversity and inclusion.



Y Safeguarding

We believe that every child and young person has the right to be safe, and feel safe at the Y, in their families, and in their communities.

This year, Y Safeguarding developed and launched the 'Stay Safe, Tell Someone' program, as well as an online version of the program, thanks to a \$335,000 grant from the eSafety Commissioner. The online training site has had over 25,000 visits, with over 85% of all who undertook the training – for children, young people, and parents – exceeding learning outcomes. See Safeguarding resources [here](#) including policies, licensing standards and guidance videos.

In 2021, the Y was proud to announce that its National Safeguarding Unit was restructured to be a stand-alone subsidiary of Y Australia and was registered as a Harm Prevention Charity, a charity that's dedicated to promoting and facilitating the prevention of harm and abuse of children and young people. Y Safeguarding will also continue its principle activity to support the Ys in Australia to meet and exceed their safeguarding obligations and commitments.

Video Links:

[Stay Safe, Tell Someone Campaign Launch Coordinator - YouTube](#)

[Stay Safe Online, Tell Someone - YouTube](#)

Online training program:

[Training The Y \(ymca.org.au\)](https://ymca.org.au)



A TRUE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

National Redress Scheme

The Y is a participating institution of the National Redress Scheme, established in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse. We joined the National Redress Scheme when it commenced in 2018 and we encourage all survivors of child sexual abuse to make contact with the Scheme directly or alternatively with our Redress Manager.

The Y considers all forms of child sexual abuse to be intolerable and inexcusable under any circumstances, and we recognise the lifelong impact that child sexual abuse may have on the health and wellbeing of individuals, their families and communities.

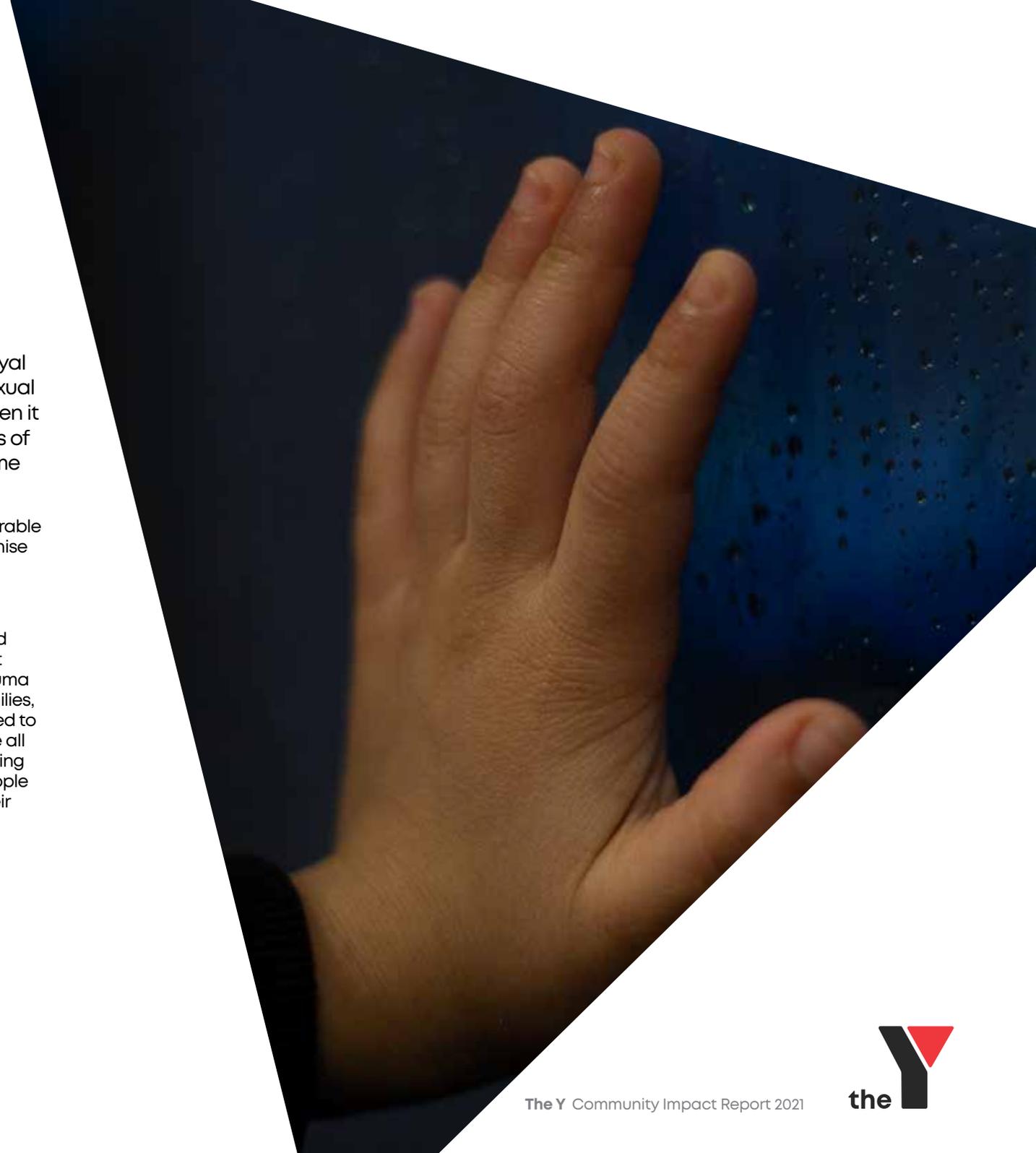
At the Y, we would like to pay our respects to all victims and survivors of abuse. We would like to acknowledge the past failures to protect children and young people and the trauma that was inflicted upon the victims, survivors and their families, especially if they were under the Y's care. We are committed to address and learn from the wrongs of the past and assure all survivors that suffered abuse that we are dedicated to doing everything we can to empower all children and young people to feel safe and be safe at the Y, in their families and in their communities.

[Acknowledgement of Survivors - YouTube](#)

Contact: www.nationalredress.gov.au

National Redress Scheme: 1800 737 377

Email: redress@ymca.org.au





EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE

At the Y, we provide safe spaces for children and young people, to not only connect, but to belong.

We believe that young people in Australia have a strong voice and need to be heard, so we provide a number of programs and services to amplify their voices.

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:

Y Careers

With nearly 1 in 3 young Australians either unemployed or under-employed in 2021, we see a massive opportunity to help solve two of the biggest problems facing our country: the need to help young people find meaningful and secure jobs and the critical need for a pipeline of skilled workers in the caring workforce.

Our care workforce is already stretched beyond capacity, with the ageing population expected to double over the next 30 years. Unfortunately the current employment, skills and training system doesn't effectively support enough young people to explore sustainable and meaningful employment in the care industry. The Y believes there needs to be a more innovative and effective way of linking the supply of ready and able young people into the carer's labour force. The Y is establishing the Y Career Agency - an initiative that will create a pipeline of workers for the care industry.

The Y Career Agency, if supported, will deliver personalised career education, advice and support services to nearly 30,000 young people over the next five years to build job-ready care industry skills and help them access relevant education and training. We will provide multiple work experience opportunities across different settings, while acting as a single employer coordinating as many hours as they need across multiple roles or locations.



YOUTH INITIATIVES AROUND THE Y IN AUSTRALIA:

National Youth Parliament

The Y is all about providing opportunities to amplify the voices of young people and one of our premier youth voice platforms in Australia is the Y's Youth Parliament program.

Youth Parliament has been running for over 35 years now, and takes place in each State's Parliament House, with an exact replication of a true parliament sitting session. Held in Victoria, NSW, WA, SA, Tasmania and Queensland, the program is designed to give young

people between the ages of 16 and 25 a chance to be heard at the highest levels of State Government on a wide range of issues that young people care most about. Youth Parliament bills are then developed and forwarded to relevant Ministers, providing our government with insights about issues important to young Australians. Youth Parliament has had over 10,000 participants to date, and we are currently looking at a Federal Youth Parliament program.



Global Youth-led Solutions Summit and Inside our Minds campaign

The Global Youth-Led Solutions Summits are a response to the Y's ongoing commitment to elevate and amplify youth voices, and provide agency for young leaders around the world, to empower global impact and action.

In 2020 and 2021, three of the greatest challenges facing young people today – the climate crisis, the future of work crisis, and the mental health crisis have been covered.

In October 2021, the Global Youth-led Solutions Summit joined forces with our National Inside our Minds campaign, for a joint global campaign. The summit included a young Australian keynote speaker Rosie Thomas, OAM, Co-Founder of Project Rocket, along with panellist Martin Johnson, a Y Australian Change Agent and founder of Inside our Minds. The summit also included presentations and interactive demonstrations on mental wellness, through a digital wellbeing tool, with an opportunity for young people to provide feedback on its functionality and design. [Link here.](#)

Virtual Y

At the Y, we know how important staying connected is and believe youth clubs play a vital role in keeping young people together. Which is why Virtual Y was created - because online youth hubs mean you can stay connected, while apart.

Virtual Y provides access to exclusive fitness, nutrition, wellbeing, family and youth content. From keeping fit through workouts and training at home and learning all about nutrition with our delicious recipes and Healthy Living Magazine. Not only does this youth health hub focus on physical health, but also mental health - offering methods of looking after your wellbeing with mindfulness practices; learning with your family with home activities; to engaging with the Australian youth community through our Youth Hub. [Home | Virtual Y \(ymca.org.au\)](https://www.ymca.org.au)

YChats

YChats is another youth voice platform coming out of the Y in WA, with a podcast series featuring a mix of real-life stories from young people, together with a mix of high profile personalities and professional speakers who offer practical support and advice, with new episodes released fortnightly. Available on [Spotify](#), [iTunes](#), [Libsyn](#) or wherever listeners access their podcasts.

The Affinity Network

The Affinity Network is an employee support network at Y NSW that assists in advocating and facilitating a culture of inclusion and respect, regardless of sexuality, gender and expression.

It also raises awareness of LGBTQIA+ people and their issues to support the Y NSW to be a 'safe place' for LGBTQIA+ employees. This is achieved through a range of social and personal development opportunities for members of the network while also providing a platform for inclusion and diversity training for Y employees.



Youth Theatre Group

Our Y SA's Youth Theatre Group puts on two major productions a year, and is the place for young people to build confidence, social skills and to express their creative selves.

The Theatre runs a full calendar of workshops and performance bootcamps tailored to young people, supporting them from their first theatre experience to their first production and beyond. See the latest Youth Theatre Group performances and previous shows, including Disney's *The Little Mermaid Jr* (2021), *Legally Blonde Jr* (2019) and *Seussical the Musical* (2018).

[Youth Theatre Group | The Parks Theatre \(ymca.org.au\)](https://ymca.org.au)



EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE

OFFICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE:

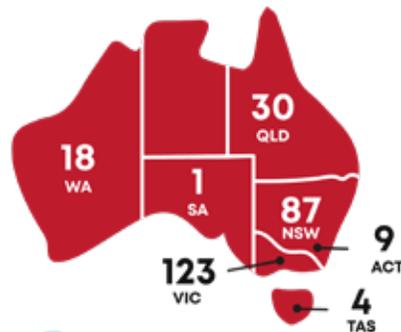
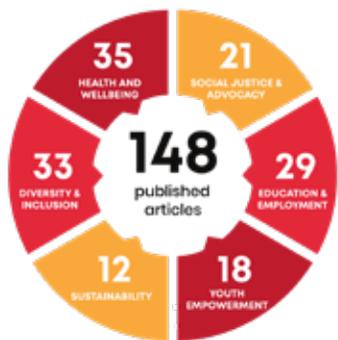
WhyNot

WhyNot is the Y's national online platform designed to give young Australians the opportunity to have their voices heard.

The platform exists to stimulate debate, start conversations and create awareness about issues that matter to young people. Ten young leaders from Ys across the country, collectively known as the WhyNot Editorial Committee have been driving the platform.

In September, the Editorial Committee launched the 'Rarely Seen. Hardly Heard.' campaign. This campaign aimed to elevate diverse voices that hadn't yet been published on the platform. As part of the 'Rarely Seen. Hardly Heard.' campaign, WhyNot partnered with a number of organisations including [HoMie](#), [ManCave](#), [ReBuild](#) and the [Benevolent Society](#). As a result of these partnerships, the Editorial Committee was able to enhance platform accessibility and publish diverse content, including video and audio interviews.

The Editorial Committee has continued their partnership with the [Foundation for Young Australians \(FYA\)](#) and [National Youth Commission Australia \(NYCA\)](#) and recently connected with [UN Youth](#). These collaborations highlight the importance and true value of supporting young Australians to have their voices heard through various mediums and channels.





Youth Advocacy Project

Our Office for Young People have supported the Movement to deliver a National Youth Advocacy Project, funded by the Commonwealth Government.

The project focused on young people's insights and ideas on youth employment and economic participation. Over the course of 2021, 10 youth advocates were appointed from WA, NT, SA, VIC, NSW, and QLD, featuring employees and volunteers of the Y. Our team of youth advocates captured the voices of over 660 young people through two large scale national online forums and 13 local forums that were delivered both face-to-face and virtually. All learnings from these forums are being compiled into a report that the Y will submit to the Commonwealth and share with our community in early 2022.

“ I loved it - definitely one of the best forums I have ever attended. I loved contributing to conversation surrounding issues I am passionate about and have experienced ”

Participant of the Your Voice = Change online forum

National Youth Retreat 2020

The pandemic forced a shift in delivery for the National Youth Retreat 2020.

This edition of the Retreat saw the event go virtual, which opened the door for more participation than ever. Professional development, keynote addresses and interactive workshops were provided in easily accessible lunchtime slots. Over 130 people participated in sessions at the National Youth Retreat, with a mix of participation across all levels of the Y, including volunteers, service delivery staff, executives, and board members.

Where you belong

A group of children in red and white school uniforms are sitting on a wooden bench outdoors, eating breakfast. They are holding red bowls and eating cereal. A banana is visible on the bench in front of the girl on the right. The background shows a green hedge and a building.

POSITIVE COMMUNITY IMPACT

PROVIDING PROVEN, TANGIBLE
BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Youth safe space

The Y NT's Palmerston youth centre provides a safe space, a connection to support services, training opportunities and free dinner, and 75 per cent of its staff are Indigenous. Partnering with Darwin's Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, buses are provided to take the kids home from the centre.

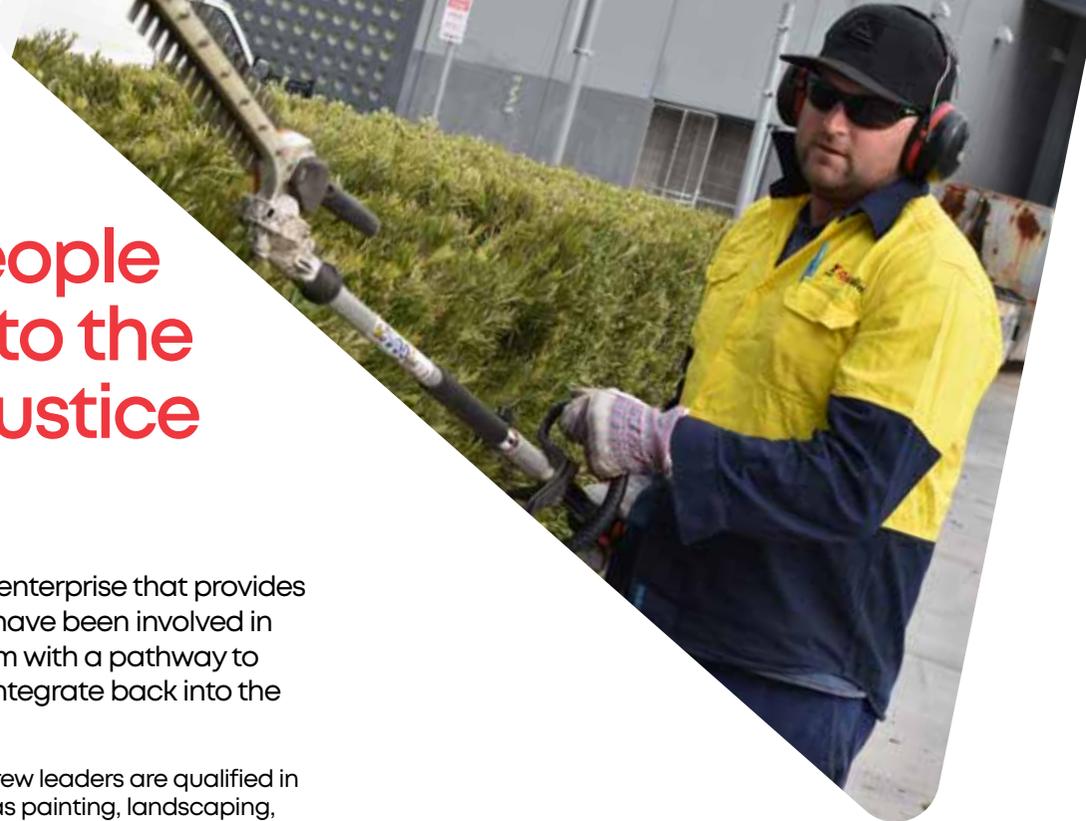
“ Since opening this space, I've noticed some really positive changes. I've seen some kids that are really shy come out of their shells and blossom with their confidence ”

Frances Kelly, Y youth mentor

Young people exposed to the criminal justice system

YMCA ReBuild is a social enterprise that provides young people who may have been involved in the criminal justice system with a pathway to assist them to better re-integrate back into the community.

Dedicated managers and crew leaders are qualified in their specified trades (such as painting, landscaping, and carpentry) and work with these young people to train, mentor and supervise them.



Space Squad

Space Squad is an immersive, residential holiday program run by the Y in Canberra for young people who love space.

It gives budding astronauts a community of people who share that passion for all things space and STEM, physics and aerospace. We seek to inspire, spark and engage all children to seek answers to all the big questions that they may have. See Space Squad – YMCA Canberra Region.



Schools' Breakfasts

At the Y in Brisbane, we want to reduce the number of school students disadvantaged by hunger and poor nutrition.

Our Y Schools' Breakfast Program provides an average of 70,000 healthy free breakfast meals each month across 125+ schools in South-East Queensland. In a one-off program supported by the State Government, the program is supporting a further 87 Schools across Queensland. The Y Schools' Breakfast Program began in September 2006 with the support of the Clem Jones Group and Foodbank Queensland, at five state schools in the heart of Logan, deemed by Education Queensland as 'most in need' of a breakfast program. Since commencement, the program has served over 5.7 million meals.



Vocational Schools

The Y Brisbane's Vocational School prepares students for long-term employment. Evidence-based wellbeing programs are also delivered to ensure students are mentally and physically healthy and able to live a purposeful life.

The school commenced 11 years ago with 40 students on one site, and has now grown to 640 students across eight sites.

At the Y, young people will experience programs dedicated to enhancing practical and personal skills, at a pace that encourages school attendance, engagement and confidence. Because of the success of this program, and a vision to be the leader of individualised education in Australia, we are currently expanding into WA and Vic (Whittlesea). Link here: [Vocational Schools - YMCA Brisbane](#)

Victorian Skate Association

The Y runs skate parks in partnership with local councils, offering skateboarding lessons and workshops, as well as professional competitions and events nationally.

YMCA Action Sports encourages the use of skate parks and sustainably manages existing public spaces, supporting the local economy. We aim to support social, mental and physical activity of local communities, with programs designed to engage young people with alternative sport and recreational activities. We engage with over 250,000 people each year and our events and program framework is sanctioned by Skate Australia Inc., the recognised national sporting organisation for skateboarding. <https://skatepark.ymca.org.au/>

HQ

The Y's WA's HQ program assists in equipping young people to transition successfully into adult life, impart skills, develop leadership and connect them to their local communities.

Operating for over 15 years, HQ is known as Perth's premier live music venue, with music events held most weekends throughout the year. HQ is also home to a number of innovative youth programs and activities, centred around music, performance, visual arts and creative enterprise. More here: [YMCA_HQ_Leederville_Factsheet.pdf \(ymcawa.org.au\)](#).



STRONG SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

A SHARED NATIONAL CULTURE, STRATEGY AND ACTION

As a not-for-profit we intentionally tackle social problems, improve communities, provide people access to employment and training – with all of our profits going back to local communities, and towards our belief in empowering young people through the youth services we offer.



Recreation

Our gyms and recreation facilities are all about being active and staying connected.

Not surprisingly, as a direct result of the COVID restrictions, there was a significant decrease in total participations in the last financial year FY20-21 (an 18% decrease). Lockdowns significantly affected our recreation sector (sports, health and wellness, aquatics and camps), particularly in Victoria and NSW. We're looking forward to a stronger 2022 - seeing our communities active and staying connected again.

Be active. Stay connected.



Swimming lessons

Swimming lessons are a priority at the Y - to teach young people confidence, skills and keep children and young people safe in the water.

Unfortunately, young Australians' swimming lessons were disrupted in the last 12 months during COVID, particularly in Victoria and NSW. The Y joined with the broader aquatic industry in raising concerns about the long-term implications on water safety and drownings, as we saw a 30% increase in drownings over the past year in Victoria. We all need to continue to ensure that children are safe around water, and the Y is committed to their safety with best practice swimming lessons.

Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre (GRAC) opening

The new Gippsland Regional Aquatic Centre (GRAC) in Traralgon opened in March 2021, providing a world-class health and fitness facility for families across the region, which the Y is proud to manage.

The \$57 million facility is the centrepiece of the \$85 million Latrobe Valley Sports and Community

Initiative, and the centre caters for competitive swimming and training, leisure swimming, general community use and major events. It includes an eight-lane, 50-metre indoor pool with seating for 500 spectators, an indoor water play zone, two large water slides, a learn-to-swim pool, a cafe and retail precinct and a 25-metre heated outdoor pool. See full details [here](#).



Gymnastics programs

Gymnastics is about learning to move, develop skills and self-confidence as well as staying physically active, and mentally challenging yourself to try new things. This all occurs under the guidance of qualified coaches in a socially inclusive, safe environment.

Our Y Gymnastics programs are designed to cater for beginners who are looking at participation and activity to those who aspire to the national, and even international, stage.

See Y Geelong's gymnastics program here:

[YMCA Geelong - Gymnastics - Programs](#)

[Gymnastics | The Y \(ymcansw.org.au\)](#)

[Gymnastics - YMCA Brisbane](#)

Camps

Our Y Camps promote teamwork, personal growth, community and immersion in nature, and programs include indoor and outdoor activities.

Camping is yet another way for people to get active, connect with others and build confidence. The Y in Australia usually runs 16 camps with over 150,000 participations annually, however, our camps were affected significantly in Victoria and NSW during the COVID period lockdowns, with a significant participation decrease of 61%.

In October 2020, the Victorian Government announced that Y Victoria would continue to run its five residential award-winning camps for another 20 years, building on the 15-year history in managing the camps at Mt Evelyn, Mt Eliza, Rowsley via Bacchus March, Falls Creek and Anglesea.

Visit our camp websites here:

[Camps | YMCA Victoria](#)

[YMCA NSW | The Y](#)

[Camping - YMCA Brisbane](#)

[School Camps and Group Accommodation - YMCA Canberra Region](#)

[YMCA Geelong - CAMP WYUNA](#)



Disability services

At the Y, we are inclusive, and proud to create opportunities for all people to live a better life.

We have a genuine desire to support our participants to be self-determined, have an improved quality of life and connect with their community – with the same access to recreation and fun as everyone else. Some of the programs across Australia include independent living support, group support, and recreation programs and access. The Y's disability services provide inclusive recreation opportunities for people living with a disability.

Visit our Disability Services websites:

[Inclusion Services - The Y Whittlesea](#)

[Disability Services | YMCA SA](#)

[YMCA Bundaberg - Inclusion Services - NDIS - Assisting People with a Disability](#)



Early Learning Centres

We believe that childhood is a time to have fun, play and learn and we want to see all children grow, thrive and become inspired young people. It is a privilege to teach and care for children, and we don't take this privilege for granted.

A big thank you to all of our essential workers in the Y's Early Learning centres across Australia - well done in another tough year - you're incredible. To all of the families and children in our programs - thank you.

At the Y, we continued our service provision during 2021. The Community Childcare Fund (CCCF) under the new Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Relief Package was pivotal for the support of this essential service to the community. Y Ballarat also commenced the management of 35 kindergartens across regional Victoria in early 2021.

You'll love how they grow



Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)

We continue to provide Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) during 2020 and 2021, and wish to extend our warmest gratitude for our OSHC workers, who continued working, not only to support to our communities, but to provide engaging and fun programs for children to enjoy during the pandemic.

We had key involvement in the National OSHC peak body in 2021 (OSHCA) and joined with other OSHC providers to lobby the government for more funding for vital OSHC programs. This was due to closures and low numbers of participants in states experiencing COVID lockdowns, with providers facing threats of financial viability. The OSHC sector continued to provide support for essential workers during the global pandemic and lockdowns.

They'll want to come again tomorrow



OUR HISTORY



175+ years of the Y

The YMCA (the Y) has been working in communities across Australia since 1851. A young man from London, George Williams, founded the Y in 1844 during the Industrial Revolution - a time of great poverty and despair.

In his early 20s, he gathered a number of friends together to meet regularly to support each other to gain renewed strength in body, mind and spirit.

The Y has now been going for over 175+ years now and continues to support individuals and communities – through world wars, the great depression, natural disasters, and global pandemics.

The story behind the flag

In our YMCA Australian national archives, an original manuscript written by YMCA Representatives explains the role of the YMCA and the conditions that they work under at the battlefield frontlines in Belgium and France in WWI. A YMCA flag flown in WWI, which was signed by the Brigadier, Officers and troops - has been framed and is now takes pride of place in our Essendon Fields National Office.

Thank you to Life Governor and volunteer war historian John Bindon, who has summarised the document – [link here](#).





RECOGNISING OUR PEOPLE

Melinda Crole

Our National CEO, Melinda Crole, left the organisation following 24 years with the Y, 17 years in National office and five years as CEO. Melinda leaves a great legacy with the Y, and we are so thankful for her incredible leadership during the COVID-19 period.

[Melinda Crole – Profound Legacy video here](#)

A photograph of Melinda Crole, a woman with long brown hair, smiling and pointing her right index finger towards the back of a man's white t-shirt. The man is seen from the back, and his t-shirt has the text "We believe in the power of inspired young people." printed on it. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a festive or event setting with red and white bunting.

We believe in the
power of inspired
young people.

Thank You message from Melinda Crole

Thank you for the privilege of allowing me to be the CEO of the National Council of YMCAs of Australia. Although there is so much I want to say, the most important thing I have to say is “thank you”.

I'm proud of the 'small part' I've played in the Y's long history and that it was now at a point in time where it needs to be “heroic and ensure young people are not left behind by the disruption of the pandemic but rather are inspired and empowered to lead us into a bright future”.

What I do know is that Inspiration comes in many forms but you know it when you feel it.

It influences your mind and your soul and I have had the privilege of being around people at the Y that have inspired my mind and my soul. I've been privileged to work with some of the smartest and most caring people on the face of this planet - you have lead us all... to the proudest of moments.

It has been a role that has challenged me, made me excited about the future, allowed me to meet and work with some of the most amazing people the world has to offer and provided me with the honour of learning from, listening to and being inspired by young people.

Navigating this complex and changing world requires us to combine our strengths and act as one.

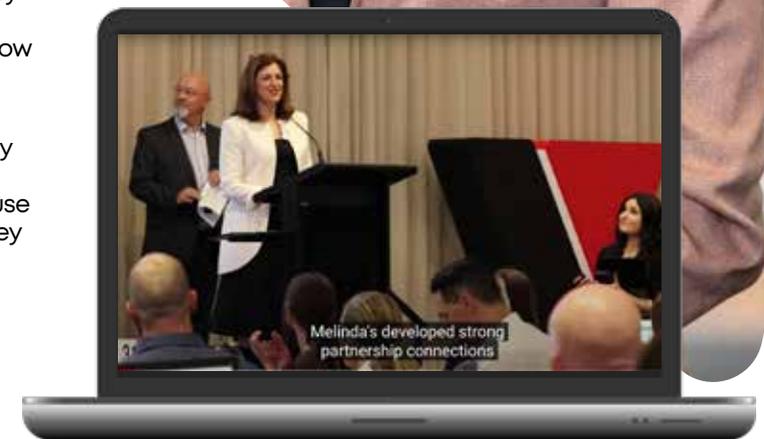
Things such as us discovering our belief in the power of inspired young people, together consciously deciding

to collaborate more, together being intentional about what our customer requires of us and shifting to the Y, supporting survivors of child sexual abuse via the National Redress scheme and so on, all of these things are the outcome of the combined leadership that is heroic, creative and nurturing.

When I commenced my CEO adventure I was so very fortunate to spend time with Carlos Sanvee (Secretary General) and he taught me about the African Philosophy of Ubuntu. This reminds me of how I feel now – “I am because you are”.

Thank you Ys of Australia. May you always be heroic, may you always nurture, may you always care deeply about those who need you and may you always believe in the power of inspired young people; because when young people are inspired and empowered they will change the world for the better.

Melinda Crole
outgoing National CEO
the Y Australia
(October 2021)



Significant contribution 2020 – thank you Melinda:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9gJbh9sxY&t=3s>

National Office staff

A huge thank you to our National Office staff team, who have worked tirelessly throughout the COVID period. Most staff were located in Victoria, experiencing over 267 days of lockdown, and working from home for most of this time. We acknowledge their great work, resilience and their significant contribution over the 2020-2021 period.



I.C. Howard scholarship

Leon Tan from Y Victoria was the 2020 recipient of I.C. Howard scholarship, and he was thrilled to meet Ian Howard, who presented his award in November 2020 via Zoom.

Leon is half-way through the Business Analyst course funded by this scholarship, and he will complete it in early 2022. The face-to-face experience (in 2022) will be beneficial for both his learning and networking experience.

Becoming a certified HR Business Analyst will greatly reduce the turnaround time for report creations, and will increase capabilities in overall goals and objectives of the Y.

[Watch an interview between Ian Howard and last year's IC Howard Scholarship Recipient Leon Tan, of Y Victoria.](#)



“It was such an honour to meet Ian, and this scholarship will help me fulfill my passion – which is to make people’s work experience at the Y, better” said Leon.

Tribute to Ian Howard

We are very sorry to share that our esteemed Life Governor, Ian Howard, passed away on Sunday 31 October, aged 98.

“The Y in Australia has lost a giant upon whose shoulders stand many inspired young people, thanks to his generous and long-standing co-sponsorship of our one and only annual staff scholarship award,” said Ben Hubbard, President, Y Australia.

Named in his honour, the I.C. Howard/Y International Service Clubs of Australia Scholarship Award commenced in 1989, and each year since has enabled a Y employee to further their research or study with the \$5,000 scholarship.

At just 21, Ian served in the Royal Australian Navy, surviving D-Day, and quickly establishing himself as a leader. When post war he returned to Australia, newly married, with not a cent to his name, he started making furniture. Ian grew into a renowned leader in the field of furniture manufacture and design, founding Aristoc Furniture in mid-century Melbourne, then Herman Miller Australia, and finally Co Design, the preeminent commercial furniture company in Australia in the 1970s.

In his spare time, Ian volunteered for the Y, helping establish a superannuation fund for YMCA employees, which helped ensure thousands of YMCA staff, were able to retire with dignity, after a life of service to the Y.

“We are so thankful for Ian’s significant contribution to the Y over many decades, and offer our sincere condolences to his family, who have so generously shared Ian with us,” Ben added.

Ian is survived by three children, four grandchildren and five great grandchildren.



Ian Howard (right) photographed with previous winner, Peter Burns, from Y Canberra



GOVERNANCE

GOVERNANCE

Our Directors

We'd like to acknowledge all of our Directors on the Y Australia National board [link here](#).

Your significant contribution during this COVID period has been invaluable to the Y.

Thank you.

Our Life Governors:

Mr John Bindon

Ms Caz Bosch

Mr David Davis OAM

Mr Richard Edwards OAM

Mr Bruce Harris

Mr Ian Howard

Mr Peter Malone

Mrs Jenny McCombe OAM

Mr Alan Morton

Mr Ross Melville

Mr Bob Nicholson

Mr Robert Romanes OAM

Mr Grahame Wheeler AM

Thank You: Tal Karp

We'd like to acknowledge and thank outgoing Board Director, Tal Karp.

Tal served on the Y Australia board from July 2018 to May 2021, and has been a real asset for the Y. We want to thank her for her contribution, hard work and engagement with young people. Thank you so much for your value-add to the Y, Tal!



Caption: front (L-R) – Richard Nedov, Amelia Shaw, Tom Stephenson, Tal Karp
back (L-R) – Jenny McCombe OAM, Ross Peddlesden, Melinda Crole, Ben Hubbard, Laurice Temple, Leigh Johns OAM

Y MERCHANDISE (TRADING AS Y GEAR)



Y MERCHANDISE (Y GEAR)

Y Eco Range

Y Gear proudly introduced a new Y Eco Range, a collection of sustainable products designed to complement daily life while helping to reduce single-use plastics. This is a small step on a much larger journey to becoming more environmentally sustainable, and we'll continue to find ways to reduce our impact with innovative solutions in products, packaging and services. On average, Australians use 130 kg of plastic per person each year, and only 9% of that is recycled (WWF). We all have a part to play in reducing our impact on the environment and here's your chance Y Eco Range – [Y Gear](#)



YMCA ReBuild

We are a proud partner of YMCA ReBuild, which has a range of unique, custom-made products available that are handcrafted by young people from the Ravenhall Correctional Centre (RCC). This social enterprise is dedicated to rebuilding lives of young people involved in, or who are at risk of being involved in, the criminal justice system and creates increased training and employment opportunities. All funds generated are then reinvested straight back into YMCA ReBuild which will enable the training, employment and mentoring of more young people. So make sure you purchase with purpose YMCA ReBuild Shop – [Y Gear](#)



Y Custom Product Portal

The Y Custom Product Portal enables you to create and design your own products with logos and text. It's not just for Ys either! Anyone can access the great service. Please click on the link to our portal now Custom Products – YMCA Gear. If you would like more assistance and wish to discuss your requirements with one of our awesome team, they can be reached at: ysservices@ymca.org.au or (03) 8799 0000.



*We believe in the power of
inspired young people*

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