

Victorian Students' Parliamentary Program 2024

General Information for Schools

The Victorian Students' Parliamentary Program (VSPP) is supported by the Victorian Government. National Curriculum Services (NCS) is contracted by the Victorian Department of Education (DE) to deliver the VSPP.



January 2024

Background

The Victorian Students' Parliamentary Program (VSPP) aims to provide opportunities that support the civic learning and active participation in democratic processes of all Victorian students through a series of Parliamentary Conventions and in-school activities, and to support the professional learning of civics and citizenship education. The program is funded by the Victorian Government Department of Education.

National Curriculum Services Pty Ltd (NCS) have been contracted by the Victorian Department of Education to assist with the delivery of the Victorian Students' Parliamentary Program.

Purpose of this information

This information is designed to assist schools in understanding the VSPP offerings and for consideration to include parts of the program into your school's civics & citizenship teaching calendar for the year. We hope you find the information useful.

Key Dates

Event	Date	Venue
VSPP Local Parliamentary Conventions for Secondary Schools	Throughout the year	At host schools
VSPP Secondary Parliamentary Convention	Tues 21 May 2024	Parliament of Victoria
VSPP Primary Parliamentary Convention	Tues 25 June 2024	Parliament of Victoria
VSPP Online Secondary Parliamentary Convention	Tues 30 & Wed 31 July 2024	Online via Zoom
VSPP Online Primary Parliamentary Convention	Tues 13 & Wed 14 August 2024	Online via Zoom
VSPP Teachers' Parliamentary Convention (*Targeted at teachers)	Tues 22 October 2024	Parliament of Victoria

Local Parliamentary Conventions (LPC)

Held throughout the year at schools state-wide

Local Parliamentary Conventions provide Years 9 – 12 students with the opportunity to discuss contemporary social and legal issues. Many issues that are discussed at the Convention will relate to the Victorian Curriculum within the Civics and Citizenship or Legal Studies Curriculum.

Each convention involves exploration of a political question and culminates in a day of guest speakers, debate and a final vote on the chosen topic, simulating a parliamentary vote. Schools are strongly encouraged to invite other local schools to participate on the day to strengthen the diversity of perspectives on the day and share the benefits of the event more broadly.

The Conventions are open to all senior secondary students from government and non-government schools. The Conventions are hosted by schools across Victoria who invite other local schools from all sectors to attend.

Who can become a host school for a Local Parliamentary Convention?

Any secondary or combined schools are eligible to complete an *Expression of Interest* to become a host school. An *Expression of Interest* must indicate a proposed date, topic and the proposed schools you will invite to the Convention.

Host schools receive a \$1,000 grant to conduct the local Conventions.

Generally, the process for hosting a local convention is as follows:

- Schools to select a topic for the Convention (suggest involving students in the topic selection process and to phrase a topic so that it can be voted upon).
- Develop pre-reading materials/resources to stimulate student thinking and enhance knowledge.
- Identify key speakers and invite them to provide presentations on the selected topic.
- Pre-assign discussion groups for students to discuss the topic, perhaps around key questions.
- Develop the program and promotional flyers or other materials to be used on the day.
- Arrange a suitable venue, set-up, and catering.

Copies of previous programs can be provided by NCS on request but a typical Parliamentary Convention would include:

- Opening statements (students to express their views before the Convention starts).
- Presentations from speakers providing arguments from both sides.
- Discussion group session(s) for students to exchange views and come to a consensus on the topic for reporting back for their group.
- Report back session from groups.
- Soapbox session for students to debate on their views as individuals.
- Students vote on the topic.
- Attendees to complete evaluations by NCS for compiling a report on the day's outcomes.

NCS will provide schools with a checklist for organising a Convention, and will assist schools in developing their program and promote the Convention prior to the event.

In 2024, DE will provide the opportunity for **up to EIGHT secondary schools** to host a Local Parliamentary Convention as part of VSPP.

Primary Schools' Parliamentary Conventions (PSPC)

The Primary School program is designed for Grade 5 to 6 students.

Expression of Interest applications for the two Parliamentary Conventions will be made available to schools from **early April**, and schools will be selected by the Department of Education should over subscription occurs.

Face-to-face at Parliament House

The face-to-face State-wide Primary School Parliamentary Convention will be held on **Tuesday 25 June 2024 at Parliament of Victoria** and aims to bring together approximately of 70 Primary students, from participating schools for a one-day event. The topic for this Convention is *"With the increase in issues related to concussion, should contact sports be banned?"*.

Selected schools would be contacted to register **up to five** Grade 5 or 6 students and accompanying teachers to attend, and more information about the Convention (including the program and a pre-reading/activities pack) will be provided once schools have registered.

Online via Zoom

The online Primary School Parliamentary Convention will be held on **Tuesday 30 & Wednesday 31 July 2024 via Zoom**. There is no restriction on the number of schools/participants in total. The topic for this Convention is *"Should students be taught how to use artificial intelligence tools in the classroom?"*.

Selected schools would be contacted to register **at least five** Grade 5 or 6 students to participate, and more information about the Convention (including the program and a pre-reading/activities pack) will be provided once schools have registered.

Secondary Schools' Parliamentary Conventions (SSPC)

The Secondary School program is designed for Years 9 to 10 students.

Expression of Interest applications for the two Parliamentary Conventions will be made available to schools from **early March**, and schools will be selected by the Department of Education should over subscription occurs.

Face-to-face at Parliament House

The face-to-face State-wide Primary School Parliamentary Convention will be held on **Tuesday 21 May 2024 at Parliament of Victoria** and aims to bring together approximately of 70 Secondary students, from participating schools for a one-day event. The topic for this Convention is *"Should social media platforms be held responsible for the spread of misinformation and fake news?"*.

Selected schools would be contacted to register **up to five** Years 9 or 10 students and accompanying teachers to attend, and more information about the Convention (including the program and a pre-reading/activities pack) will be provided once schools have registered.

Online via Zoom

The online Primary School Parliamentary Convention will be held on **Tuesday 13 & Wednesday 14 August 2024 via Zoom**. There is no restriction on the number of schools/participants in total. The topic for this Convention is *"Should technological advancements, such as AI, be incorporated into the classroom?"*.

Selected schools would be contacted to register **at least five** Years 9 or 10 students to participate, and more information about the Convention (including the program and a pre-reading/activities pack) will be provided once schools have registered.

Teachers' Parliamentary Conventions (SSPC)

The Teachers' Parliamentary Convention was designed to support the professional learning of civics and citizenship educators. Teachers will be provided with training to support them to run their own student parliaments within a classroom or school setting, and will have the opportunity to network with like-minded professionals.

The Convention will be held on **Tuesday 22 October 2024 at Parliament of Victoria** and aims to bring together 60 teachers from across Victoria for the one-day event. The topic for this Convention is *"Should Australia have three levels of government?"*.

Application to attend will open in late August, and selected schools/teachers will be contacted to formally register for the Convention. More information about the Convention (including the program and a pre-reading pack) will be provided once participants have registered.

Should you require additional information or wish to discuss the contents of this information, please call NCS at 03 9415 1299 or email registrations@ncsonline.com.au.