

Q 1 Are you in support of lowering the voting age?

I am strongly for lowering the voting age in Australia to 16 and 17 as non-compulsory. I believe that a portion of young people in Australia are growing a real passion for politics and the world around them. Australian Youth are starting to get loud and not afraid to have their voices heard. I believe that it is the right time to let the youth of Australia have a say on their future. What is being legislated now is of utmost importance to the youth of Australia. I believe we deserve a say because that is what our great democracy promotes.

It is also of my belief that lowering the voting age will teach a younger group of Australians on what politics is all about. I am very interested in current news and the politics in Australia and worldwide. It would be naïve of me to say that everyone is like me. I believe we have a massive disconnect with politics in this country and lowering the voting age is a great move to change this. I believe that everyone should know what is going on around them. Things like funding for public service like education and health should be more talked about between youth. This is information that directly effects the youth and they deserve a say on it.

Hence, lowering the voting age in Australia is a positive step and promotes our democracy.

Q2 If the voting age is lowered to 16, do you support it being non-compulsory? Why? Do you see any problems with this?

I do support it being a non-compulsorily vote. There are many factors that go into lowering the voting age. I do believe that the lack of engagement of young people would create false votes not based of any facts. I also am aware, as I state above, not everyone enjoys politics as much as I do. I believe making the vote non-compulsory from 16 means that people are not pushed into the system, they are persuaded to join.

There are also many factors that go into access to voting for young Australians that needs to be taken into consideration. At the age of 16, youth are not able to drive by themselves. This releases an obligation on parents to take the child to the voting booth to vote. This restricted access may cause some young people to not be able to vote. That is not hat I believe should happen.

I believe the two-year non-compulsory time will allow for youth to get educated about the subject. As they reach 18, they will have a better knowledge and will be more engaged with the system. From 18, it should stay compulsory as Australia wants to continue promoting a strong democracy where everyone is involved.

Q3 One of the arguments against lowering the voting age to 16 is that there are already many ways young people can participate and have a voice in the political process. National Indigenous Youth Parliament has been cited as one of these mechanisms. What is your view about this argument?

I believe that young people can have a say. That young people have opinions and are not afraid to shout them out for everyone to hear. But that change making ability is restricted by the inability to vote. In the democracy we have, the way to make real change is to vote. That is the system we have and that's the system I endorse. As 16 and 17 years old are barred from that system, we are not given equal access to be active in our democracy.

I believe that it is a sensible point that young people are already engaged. The aim should be to engage the further.

Q4 Another argument against lowering the voting age is a perception that young people are not mature or experienced enough, are disengaged from politics and that not enough young people

will take up the option to vote, thereby not making a difference to overall political participation. Do you agree or disagree with this? What is your response to this argument?

This point has been raised in many a debate that I have had on this subject. To combat this, I reiterate my previous point of education. If we can educate the youth of Australia about politics and what it means to be democratic, then they will gain maturity on the matter. If people are taught at a young age that's its okay to hold an opinion, then they will be more prepared for the future.

Young people, in some circumstances, are more engaged with politics than some 40-year old's. Yes, youth may not have as much life experience, but we do have unique knowledge on youth affairs. A representative system is meant to engage everyone, but we still have 50 years old's legislating my education funding. I believe that young people deserve to have a say and are of a mature mind to have one.

This can also be combatted by the non-compulsory suggestion. This will mean that youth are still able to wait till they are 18 to vote. If they do not feel like they are engaged enough, then they are not forced to vote. I would say, if you engage young people and allow them to speak up, they will. I think that involvement in politics will increase dramatically if 16 and 17-year olds can vote.

I believe that young people are mature enough and hold unique passion on a broad range of issues. I also believe that this will engage the youth and they will take advantage of the opportunity to vote, therefore a strong voter turnout.

Q5 One of the arguments in support of lowering the voting age is that 16 and 17-year old's can work full time, pay tax, join political parties, join our Defence forces and in many other ways are treated like adults in society – but they are unable to vote.

What are your views about this? What is your response to this argument?

I in support of this argument. Youth commit to the Australian system and give back to their communities. Youth can enjoy most of the liberties of an adult citizen. We can do all these things, but we can't vote to decide how much we get paid, how much tax we pay, what funding our schools get, our transport and many other issues that directly effect youth.

We can do everything in the political system except vote. That does not seem fair to me.