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YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THEIR VOICE AT YOUTH POLITICS CAMP

Young people aged 14-19 from Strathbogie Shire had the opportunity to attend the Youth Politics Camp.

This year, 29 young people from Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Strathbogie and Towong Shires attended the camp in Harrietville for three days at the beginning of the school holidays.

Coinciding with Victorian Youth Week, the camp focused on the environment, which is a hot topic of conversation, particularly among young people.

A partnership between Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Strathbogie and Towong Shire, this camp is the only one of its kind in Victoria and was a YACVic Rural Youth Award finalist in 2018.

Strathbogie Shire Council's Community Development Officer, Inga Hamilton, was one of the organisers of the camp and said she has seen the long term benefits it provides for young people first hand.

"This year in particular we saw young people who were really passionate about rural communities and the environment and the wealth of knowledge amongst the young people involved was incredible," Ms Hamilton explained.

The camp was the last official engagement for Cathy McGowan MP who has been attending for the past five years to share her knowledge and experience in politics.

It provided an insight into politics not just on a Federal level, but also locally, with former Indigo Mayor Jenny O'Connor and Councillor Amanda Cohn from Albury also facilitating workshops.

A focus on leadership skills in areas beyond politics ensured a well-rounded camp and the interactive workshops gave participants a chance for their voices to be heard.

Strathbogie Shire Mayor Amanda McClaren said these types of programs are invaluable for young people, particularly in rural and regional communities where opportunities are limited.

"It's great to see young people from the shire building their capacity and making such great connections with other like-minded youth across North East Victoria," Cr McClaren said.

The next step for the Youth Politics Camp is sending a group of six participants to YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament 2019. The team is submitting three bills for debate which include a focus on agricultural practices, education and single use plastic bags.

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