



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

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## Submission Cover Sheet

### Inquiry into Electoral Amendment Bill 2021

**Submission Number: 07**

**Date Authorised for Publication: 2nd February 2022**

## **Inquiry into Electoral Amendment Bill 2021 Submission – Jahin Tanvir**

Young people are not the leaders of the future - they are the leaders of today. I have worked with young people from diverse backgrounds in the last four years, ranging all the way from remote, regional and rural Australia to culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous young people. The common thread that brings all of their ambitions and concerns together comes from wanting a voice. A sense of autonomy in this country. A justified seat on the table. As our democracy goes, millions of young people can only have that concern addressed if they are given the right to vote.

And this does not even matter if young people have any specific political affiliations, they want a seat on the table to make decisions that matter. To be part of the process that shapes the country. This is why I am calling to lower the age of voting.

As a first-generation migrant living in Canberra, I know what it means to feel voiceless. To feel like my words don't matter. No young people should feel that. Young people deserve the right to vote, even at the age of 16 where they are constantly being informed and learning about the world around us, the changes to the digital world, and the social determinants that are affecting them daily. This is irrespective of their allegiance or political affiliations. This is the autonomy that young people want in shaping their Australia.

In our future, I see an Australia that is inclusive of people of all ages, backgrounds, and religions. I see a nation where the youth are empowered to raise their concerns and be able to aptly display acts of leadership and democracy that matters. Too often we see young people devalued in decision-making for their lack of life experience.

Too often we see people of colour discriminated because of their differences. However, in these instances, we fail to realize that it is this period of one's life — a time of fearlessness, ambition, and tenacity that can catalyze a lifetime commitment towards positive change. I hope to see a future where there is no longer a divide because of individual disparities but rather a time where we foster a culture of acceptance and togetherness in dealing with the problems at hand. This occurs positively once young people are given the opportunity to vote.

I yearn to see a time where we are able to have an open discourse about the issues that hurt our society, with a balanced response and co-design from all individuals to contribute.

To become trailblazers in arts and culture. To become visionaries in mathematics and healthcare. To facilitate productive dialogue in how we can marry these fundamental building blocks of society together and form the backbone of our society.

Young people deserve the right to vote and shape the nation they want. They want to be economic participants in national conversations. Let's listen, and we can a lot as a nation.