

Youth Advisory Council Impact Report 2025

Insights, experiences,
and reflections from the
2025 Telstra Foundation
Youth Advisory Council



Foreword



Youth Advisory Council

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This year's Youth Advisory Council (the Council) reminds us why youth participation is not a box to tick; it's the engine of better ideas, better data, and better decisions.

We strive to hold a simple standard: *nothing about young people without young people*. It's what guides our [youth participation principles](#) and what shows up in our practice when we; co-design with young leaders, create safe and consent-led environments, pay young people for their time and expertise, and close the loop so young people can see how their input shaped the outcomes.

Our principles guided the Council's work throughout 2025 and strengthened the impact of everything we do as a foundation. You'll see that in two ways across this report.

First, translation of evidence into action

The Council helped us make sense of our Australian Youth Digital Index (AYDI) findings on digital life – what's changing, what's not, and what to do next. Their 'Sleep Challenge' turned a complex wellbeing signal into practical, youth-tested strategies that schools, families and communities can adapt. Their Digital Skills work reframed 'skills' beyond tools and platforms to the creative, collaborative and critical capabilities young people build every day, in class, at work and online.

Second, the way we produce knowledge

Young people informed how we asked questions, how we presented case studies, and how we shared insights with the public. That youth leadership made our reporting more honest about trade-offs (technology can be empowering and exhausting) and more precise about where barriers fall: cost, connectivity, confidence, or simply not being heard.

Across all of this, safety and dignity were the baseline. Participation was opt-in and consent-driven; representation choices sat with the young people; and image use and attribution were handled with care. We also kept participation accessible, through flexible formats, fair recognition for time, and supports that make it possible for diverse voices to take part, including those from regional and under-served communities.

Most importantly, we kept our promise to *close the loop*. Where their feedback led us to change wording, recut data, or rethink an approach, we did so and explained why. Where insights pointed to opportunity, we invested. Backing partners and projects that help young people feel more included, empowered and connected in their digital lives.

Thank you to every Council member, to our delivery partners who steward safe, inclusive participation, and to the educators, policymakers and funders who are watching and gathering these insights to put to work. If this report leaves you with one call to action, let it be this: **build with young people, not for them**. When we share power, we strengthen outcomes, equity improves, evidence travels further, and community trust grows.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jackie Coates", written over a horizontal line.

Jackie Coates
CEO, Telstra Foundation Ltd

Acknowledgement of Country

Telstra Foundation recognises and acknowledges the existing, original, and ancient connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to the lands, waterways, and sky country across the Australian continent. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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What is Telstra Foundation's Youth Advisory Council?

Our Council members help us to gain a deeper understanding of how young people experience digital technology and its impact on their lives. The Council provides crucial feedback on our projects, helps us to develop innovative ideas, and creates content that truly resonates with their peers.



25%
are from regional, rural,
or remote communities



13%
identified
as LGBTQIA+.



17%
are young First
Nations peoples



12%
are young people
living with a disability



33%
were culturally and
linguistically diverse.



29%
have lived experience
of mental health issues.



Telstra families were represented as well.

What is Telstra Foundation's Youth Advisory Council?

Continued

In 2025, Telstra Foundation's Youth Advisory Council (the Council) brings together a diverse group of 23 young people aged 12 to 18 from across Australia. The Youth Advisory Council reflects the rich diversity of young Australians – spanning regional and remote communities, First Nations young people, culturally diverse backgrounds, neurodivergence, disability, lived experiences of mental health challenges, caregiving roles, and identities across the LGBTQIA+ spectrum.



Impacts and Outputs

Overview

In its second year, the Telstra Foundation Youth Advisory Council focussed on the key findings in the 2024 Australian Youth Digital Index, diving deeper into the stories, realities, and potential solutions to common digital challenges faced by young Australians including:

- Adding stories to the data – showing what these key findings look like in real life
- Improving sleep and balancing the use of devices
- Illustrating what digital skills actually mean to young people

Members brought insights grounded in their own digital lives, often finding they had a lot in common – from navigating group chats and keeping up with fast moving social apps, to figuring out what feels safe online and what definitely doesn't. These shared moments helped them relate quickly to one another, spark honest conversations, and collaborate with real ease, even when they were connecting from different states. This is a snapshot of the Council's impact in 2025.



Timeline

April 2025

Abbey speaks at the Technology and Wellbeing Roundtable

Abbey (a member of the 2024 and 2025 Telstra Foundation Youth Advisory Councils) attended the Technology and Wellbeing Roundtable in April, to explore how the sector can facilitate safe and engaging online communities for young people once the social media ban comes into effect. She spoke alongside Maddie, a youth advocate from ReachOut, and thought leaders in tech and wellbeing.

May 2025

May – June 2025

August 2025

September – October 2025

October 2025

October – November 2025

December 2025



Visual summary of Technology and Wellbeing Roundtable

Timeline Continued

April 2025

Sustainability Materiality session/feedback from Lydia

May 2025

Lydia Hatch, a Senior Sustainability Specialist in the Sustainability team at Telstra, met with the Council to hear young people's perspectives on issues and concerns related to sustainability issues such as environment, social justice, etc. These thoughts and conversations feed straight into the sustainability work Telstra does, helping inform them what young people think is most important for the business to address.

May – June 2025

August 2025

September – October 2025

October 2025

October – November 2025

December 2025



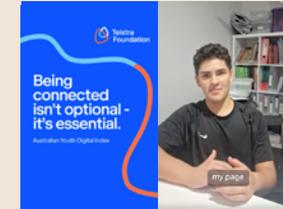
Timeline Continued

April 2025

Australian Youth Digital Index Reels Creation

Members of the 2024 Council spoke to camera about their experiences relating to some of the key findings of the 2024 AYDI:

May 2025



May – June 2025

August 2025



Digital Experts

In many households, young Australians are not just tech users but also tech teachers. They often teach themselves digital skills – less than half report learning digital skills from school or family while 85% report learning skills, at least in part, through their own initiative. In a generational shift, they are also the go-to tech support within their families, helping parents and older relatives navigate the online world.



Learning Digital Safety

Most young Australians report feeling safe online (94%) and are aware of key online safety concepts, including privacy and data protection. They are aware that their digital actions can have a lasting impact, making them more cautious about what they share and engage with online. But many, especially primary-aged children, still struggle to use safety features effectively, like blocking users or recognising suspicious links.



Balancing Digital and Wellbeing

Young people understand the need for balance regarding their digital habits. The majority feel in control of their screen time and report positive or neutral experiences with social media – 70% are satisfied with their time on digital devices, and 65% say they can control what they see and do online. Yet, they are not blind to the negative impacts – many acknowledge that device use affects their mental and physical health, and nearly two in five say it impacts their sleep.



Connectivity is essential

For young Australians, being connected isn't just a luxury – it's a necessity. Yet, cost-of-living pressures and limited access to affordable options often impact their ability to stay connected. The percentage of young people who have access to neither a laptop nor desktop at home was 1.42 million in the 2024 results and nearly one million young people primarily rely on mobile data to access the internet, which can be significantly more expensive than home broadband.

September – October 2025

October 2025

October – November 2025

December 2025

Timeline Continued

April 2025

Bailey and Rispah present to Telstra and Telstra Foundation Boards

Members of the Council since 2024, Bailey and Rispah presented their insights to the Telstra and Telstra Foundation Boards, sharing the work of the Council since its inception, and highlighting its impacts over 2024–25.

May 2025

GSMA spotlights the Youth Advisory Council

The Council is featured in GSMA's [Bringing Youth Perspectives into the Business of Connectivity Report](#) released in June. The report aims to support members of the global telecommunication mobile operator community, to take their first steps in engaging young people around their needs and priorities, when it comes to the online world. It outlines existing good practices and expectations for the successful delivery of youth participation initiatives.

May – June 2025



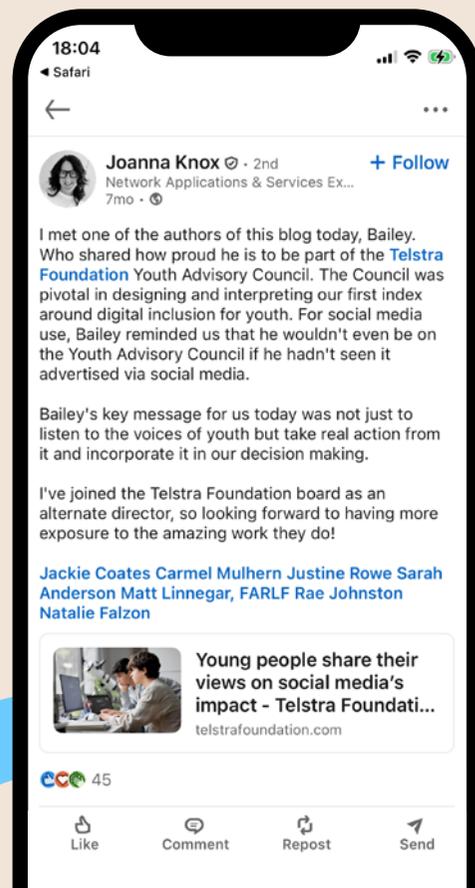
August 2025

September – October 2025

October 2025

October – November 2025

December 2025



Timeline Continued

April 2025

Mini-Sleep Challenge

In 2025, the Youth Advisory Council led a week long Sleep Challenge to explore how digital habits shape young people's rest and wellbeing.

Through daily check ins, vlogs, and reflection sessions, the Council uncovered what actually helps young people feel more rested in a tech saturated world. Their insights centred on small, sustainable changes and greater self awareness, highlighting that better sleep isn't just about less screen time, but about routines that support feeling refreshed, focused, and energised. Read the full [Sleep Challenge Report](#).

Comments from Telstra people taking on their own challenge:

May 2025

May – June 2025

Co-designed with sleep experts Jocelyn Brewer and Moira Junge, the challenge invited members to track their sleep, set personal goals, and test practical, youth friendly strategies – from tech free wind down routines to using tools from their customised 'sleep kits' (like Fitbits, sleep masks, and alarm clocks).

Their sleep challenge also helped to shape the Telstra Sleep Week activation during Australia's National Sleep Week.



Me? I know my body needs sleep to function. My family knows I'm a much nicer person when I'm well rested. So I was excited when I saw the Do Not Disturb Sleep Challenge pop up at work, because work and sleep rarely cross paths!

Nicole, Telstra

August 2025

Sleep Challenge resources provided by the challenge advisors, Jocelyn Brewer and Moira Junge inspired an internal Telstra sleep challenge.



Sleep, I've learned, is not a luxury. It's a discipline. A gift. And these days, I try to treat it like one.

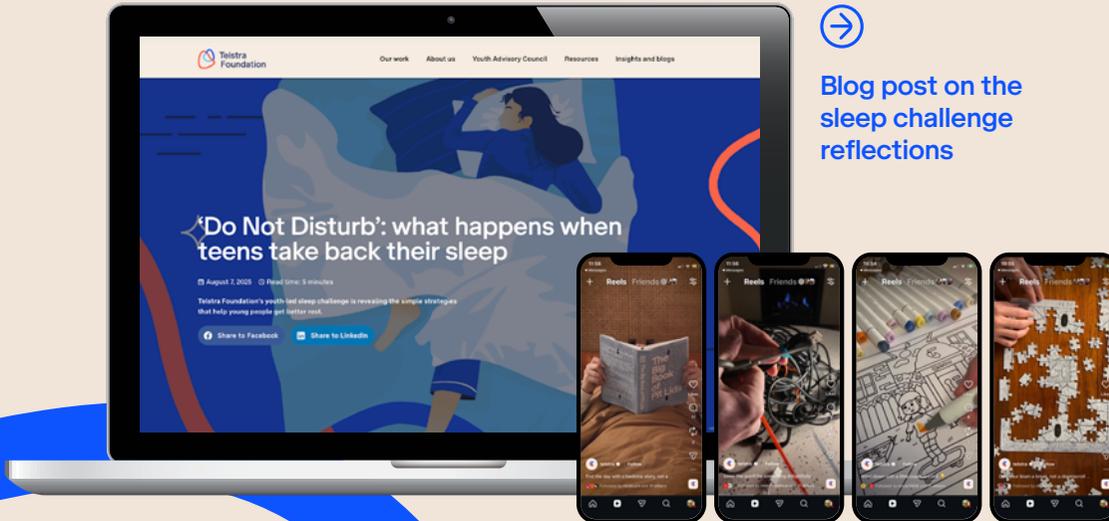
Joy, Telstra

September – October 2025

October 2025

October – November 2025

December 2025



Blog post on the sleep challenge reflections



Instagram posts



Self-awareness & Discipline – It takes self-awareness to catch yourself doom scrolling or staying up late & it takes discipline to stop yourself perpetuating bad habits & changing back onto healthier ones!

Peppino, Telstra



Council Members participating in the sleep challenge

Timeline Continued

April 2025

Collaborating with GSMA

GSMA is a non-profit organisation that represents mobile network operators worldwide and unites the wider mobile ecosystem. Its members include over 750 mobile operators and nearly 400 other companies in related fields like handset makers, software companies, and equipment providers.

May 2025

- **Global Engagement:**

The Council helped the GSMA's Child Rights team to shape youth participation in Mobile World Congress (MWC) initiatives. This included contributing to GSMA's youth-focused case studies and providing quotes and images for global reports.

This collaboration gave us the chance to elevate youth voices in global tech policy conversations, ensuring their perspectives were heard on issues that shape the digital future. Most importantly, it created meaningful pathways for Council members to influence major events like Mobile World Congress and contribute to setting industry standards worldwide.

May – June 2025

August 2025

- **Event Guidance & Panels:**

We were invited to co-design guidance for intergenerational panels and youth engagement strategies at MWC. Rispah joined a research project developing event guidance, leveraging her experience from SXSW Sydney and Telstra Board panels.

September – October 2025

- **GLOMO Awards Participation:**

Micah supported GSMA's Global Mobile Awards (GLOMOs), bringing authentic youth perspectives and expertise to judging the Best Mobile Innovation for Enhancing the Lives of Children and Young People.

October 2025

October – November 2025

December 2025



Timeline Continued

April 2025

Taking the stage at SXSW Sydney

At SXSW Sydney, Rispah took part in a panel discussion titled 'Handle with care: what if the internet was designed by and for kids?' joining sector leaders from the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, Alannah & Madeline Foundation, and Digital Rights Watch to explore how young people can help shape a safer, more inclusive digital world.

YAC members also participated in a unique project to design and produce video content that was showcased during the panel. They ensured that authentic youth perspectives were central to the panel's conversation.

This experience gave Rispah the opportunity to represent young Australians on a national stage, share her insights, and advocate for

youth voices in technology policy, while also building her confidence, public speaking skills, and connections with sector leaders, demonstrating the real impact young people can have in influencing industry and policy conversations.

May 2025

May – June 2025

August 2025

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October 2025

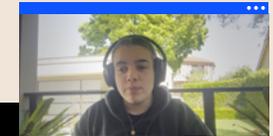
October – November 2025

December 2025

Watch the following videos



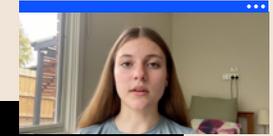
What do you wish adults understood better about what you do online?



How do you feel about adults observing what you do online?



What fun things do you enjoy doing online?



What is one thing you would design differently on the internet and why?



Rispah on SXSW Panel

Timeline Continued

April 2025

Supporting the launch of Codemates for Telstra

As part of the launch of [Codemates](#), a first-of-its-kind coding experience where young people aged 8–15 could bring Patch, an animatronic puppet, to life through code, Chloe had the opportunity to serve as a Student Coder and spokesperson.

This was all about inspiring young Australians to develop digital skills in a fun and accessible way, and helping to demonstrate Telstra’s ongoing commitment to digital inclusion.

For Chloe, participating meant sharing her own coding journey in media briefings, video recordings, and interviews, helping to demystify coding for her peers and encouraging others to

give it a go. The experience not only allowed her to influence how coding is presented to kids nationwide but also helped her build confidence, communication skills, and a sense of pride in contributing to a project that empowers the next generation for the digital future.

May 2025

May – June 2025

August 2025

September – October 2025

October 2025

October – November 2025

December 2025



Timeline Continued

April 2025

Digital Skills Research and Australian Youth Digital Index

The Council led a youth driven Digital Skills Project to explore what ‘digital skills’ truly look like in the lives of young people today.

May 2025

Using AYDI data and action research methods, Council members investigated the full breadth of digital capabilities they use across creativity, learning, play, communication, and problem solving. Over two weeks, members immersed themselves in self selected digital activities

– from AI art and music production to gaming, bot development, VR design, coding and building online tools – and tracked the skills they applied and developed through surveys, conversations, and case studies.

May – June 2025

Their insights showed that digital skills go far beyond technical tasks. Young people are creators, collaborators, problem solvers, entrepreneurs and innovators, often teaching themselves through curiosity, experimentation and online communities. The project revealed strong everyday digital confidence but highlighted gaps in advanced skills and media literacy, reinforcing the importance of access, guidance and opportunities to explore. The Council’s lived experience lens shaped the report’s findings, ensuring that the digital skills reflected in the AYDI capture the depth, diversity and agency of young people’s digital lives. The Council’s Digital Skills report is contained in the broader [AYDI 2025 report](#).

August 2025

September – October 2025

October 2025

October – November 2025

December 2025



Dakota's album cover digital artwork



Communication via YAC minecraft server

Timeline Continued

April 2025

Dakota's Voice: insight that landed



Feedback from the audience was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing appreciation for Dakota's honesty, clarity, and ability to make the research findings feel grounded in lived experience. Her contributions helped bring the data to life and reinforced the value of centring young people in conversations about Australia's digital future.



I really appreciated Dakota's voice in the discussion — thoughtful, relatable and insightful. She reminded us why youth leadership matters.

Event attendee

May 2025

During the 2025 AYDI launch, Dakota delivered clear, thoughtful insights that strongly resonated with attendees. She spoke openly about her experiences with digital literacy and the realities young people face online. Her reflections added authenticity and depth to the launch event.

May – June 2025

August 2025

September – October 2025

October 2025

October – November 2025

December 2025



Dakota spoke with such authenticity. Her contributions deepened the conversation and helped us see the Index through young people's eyes

Event attendee



Highlights of the year



22k+ people reached

16 YAC based blogs

45k+ social media impressions

2 national media campaigns

3 national events panels



1 Telstra team, provided expert advice

Elevated the voices of young people to senior executive audiences presented to Telstra and Telstra Foundation Boards



Delivered a flagship youth-led wellbeing initiative 'Do Not Disturb' Sleep Challenge →



Built a major youth-led research asset Digital Skills deep-dive →



Expanded influence beyond the Telstra Foundation: Supported cross-Telstra initiatives, like Codemates and GSMA's youth participation work, amplifying young people's perspectives into broader conversations



Shared evidence of program value: released the YAC 2024 Impact Report →



Strengthened the Australian Youth Digital Index program and launch impact: Council contributions featured across AYDI 2025 outputs →

Testimonies from continuing members

When working for the Telstra Youth Advisory Council I really enjoyed the collaboration aspect and making new friends who are from all around Australia that have similar interests. It was an awesome experience getting to be involved in interesting projects like the sleep challenge as well as exploring everyone's digital interests. I loved chatting to the other members who were involved in the Minecraft digital skill for a couple hours each day to get to know them better. It was also always interesting to learn a little bit of the science behind sleep during the sleep challenge. Overall, I had an incredible experience as I was looking forward to each meeting and what we were doing next. It was extremely inspiring working with everyone else and watching them achieve their goals. I cannot wait to see what is instore for next year!

Lilly

I joined the Telstra Foundation at first in 2025 and found it an eye-opening experience. I had never joined a Youth Council before and the very first time I joined a meeting, I was met with such warmth and joy. I met so many new people and learned about some of the fun projects we would be doing together! One thing I really enjoyed this year about the Telstra Foundation Youth Advisory Council was a project we did called 'The Sleep Challenge' or as we nicknamed it 'Do Not Disturb'. During this time, we were given everything we could need to improve our sleep as well as Fitbits! All we were asked in return was to fill out our daily sleep form where we recorded our sleep and what strategies we used to make sure that we maximised our sleep patterns. This not only improved our health but also showed us what things affected us the most when we have a good night sleep and a bit of a rough night of sleep. Something I would like the entire world to know about my experience is that it was a fun group to be a part of and we really connected in different ways like music or art. I really loved this whole year with the Council and can't wait to do it all again next year!

Eshan

Being a Council member was incredibly rewarding. I was part of a supportive, respectful team where young people's voices were genuinely valued. There was a strong sense of collaboration, and I always felt encouraged to share ideas, ask questions, and learn from others' lived experiences. The most enjoyable part of my experience on the Telstra Foundation Youth Advisory Council in 2025 was the sleep challenge. It helped me build a much better understanding of how daily routines and habits directly impact sleep, and encouraged me to reflect on my own behaviours in a practical, achievable way. I found it really empowering to learn strategies that I could apply in my everyday life and also share with other young people. Overall, being part of the the Council helped me grow in confidence, develop new skills, and feel connected to a community that is passionate about creating positive change for young people.

Sienna

Where are they now?



Where our Council are headed next year (continuing and alumni)

- Starting a TAFE nursing course
- Working and studying
- Launching gaming products and websites
- Bachelor of Law and Bachelor of Music
- Starting High School
- Launching a youth-led mental health awareness enterprise

... and so much more

Reflections

In 2025, the Council moved from ‘advisory’ to ‘co-creation’. Council members didn’t just share perspectives, they built practical outputs (e.g., the Digital Skills Report – YAC 2025) and contributed to real advocacy content, which is the clearest marker of a maturing youth-participation model.

The December retrospective centered on future planning for 2026, with the Council members brainstorming improvements and new initiatives. Key themes included increasing meeting frequency, and expanding the Council’s project portfolio. Members expressed strong interest in more social connections and having greater facilitation roles within the group.

What worked?

- The community fostered meaningful connections among members. **Community is the engine:** When the Council is run as a safe, collaborative space, members form real peer connections – which lifts candour, confidence and retention.
- Creative project ideas emerged naturally from the group. **Creativity happens ‘in the room’:** Strong ideas emerge organically when young people are positioned as co-designers (not just consulted) – turning insight into publishable, practical outputs.
- Members demonstrated enthusiasm for continued involvement and growth. **Growth pathways drive engagement:** The Council wants development + meaningful roles (speaking, co-authoring, leadership opportunities), alongside clear expectations and support.
- **Flexibility reduces drop-off:** Participation needs to work in and around school/ life. Normalising different engagement levels (core members, self selected smaller project groups, and standalone contributions) kept the cohort inclusive and participation healthy.
- Engaging with Telstra teams, seeing the impact of young people’s voices in the company’s work. **Cross-Telstra and broader industry exposure makes it ‘real’:** Sessions with Telstra teams and industry bodies (e.g., Sustainability/GSMA) visibly demonstrate where youth voice influences business thinking.
- **Close the loop to build trust:** The single biggest multiplier is showing ‘what changed because of you’ – feedback → decision → visible shift. All reinforcing legitimacy and momentum.



What we're focussed on in 2026

In 2026, we're building on two strong years of youth leadership and some excellent insights from our members that continue to shape our approach each year. This year is all about growing influence, deepening participation, and creating more pathways for young people to lead, shape, and co-design the future of Australia's digital world.

1. More leadership, more ownership

We're strengthening the Council's internal structure by introducing a new leadership role and creating more opportunities for young people to drive decision-making, guide conversations, and support their peers. It's about backing young people not just as contributors, but as leaders.

2. Engagement that goes beyond projects

In 2026, we want the YAC experience to extend beyond scheduled workshops and project cycles. That means:

- more touchpoints with the Foundation team throughout the year,
- more invitations to events, consultations, testing sessions and sector insights,
- more chances to represent at launches and public forums, and
- more space for ongoing peer connection within the group.

This year, being part of the YAC will feel less like a series of projects and more like being part of a continuous community of practice.



What we're focussed on in 2026 Continued

3. A head start for a bigger year

We're kicking off earlier to give the Council more breathing room and more creative space, for deeper, more sustained work. An earlier start unlocks time for additional youth-led initiatives, new experiments, and opportunities to let ideas grow instead of rushing them.

4. More opportunities to co-create

We're opening the door wider to co-designed projects. Building on last year's youth-led successes, 2026 will bring more opportunities for members to pitch ideas, collaborate, and shape work that feeds directly into the Foundation's priorities – from digital inclusion to safety, skills, wellbeing and beyond.

We want projects that don't just reflect young people's voices, but originate with them.

In short:

2026 is the year we deepen engagement, elevate youth leadership, create space for earlier and richer collaboration, and support the Council to imagine and deliver big, bold new ideas.



A glimpse into 2026

A new Young Person-in-Residence role

The new **Young Person-in-Residence** role will bring an older YAC alumni on board to provide lived experience, fresh ideas, and a direct youth lens across priority projects. Working alongside Telstra Foundation and the YAC, the Young Person-in-Residence offers strategic insight on digital inclusion, innovation and ethical tech, and contributes to co-designed work such as AYDI deep-dives and research activities.

By embedding youth leadership at this level, the Foundation strengthens its commitment to authentic youth voice and ensures young people's perspectives shape the direction and impact of our work.

A deeper dive into the 2025 AYDI results

The Council will take a more active, hands-on role in responding to the Australian Youth Digital Index by selecting some priority insights that feel most urgent or meaningful to young people (e.g., mis/dis information and AI). Once finalised, the group will lead a focused, youth-driven deep dive to better understand the issue – exploring lived experiences, identifying gaps or misconceptions, and sharing stories and perspectives from their networks.

This ensures that the AYDI doesn't just highlight challenges – it becomes a platform for youth-led solutions, amplifying young people's voices and turning insight into meaningful, real-world impact.



A glimpse into 2026

Continued



Social media restrictions – a reflection

The Council will explore how new social media age restrictions are affecting young people’s everyday digital lives. Building on their unique experiences and diverse contexts, they’ll explore the realities behind the policy changes – that are often debated about young people, rather than with them.

The Council will ensure the broader conversation about age-based restrictions is informed by real stories, practical insights, and the nuanced perspectives of young people themselves.

Exploring what matters most to them

In 2026, the Council will also have the opportunity to design and lead their own **special interest project**. This flexible project stream allows them to explore an area they genuinely care about – whether it relates to digital wellbeing, creativity, access, safety, community impact, or emerging tech.

Guided by their interests, the Council will shape the project’s purpose, activities and outputs. This could include creating youth-friendly resources, exploring new ideas through workshops or storytelling, or developing content that speaks directly to the needs and experiences of their peers.

This approach ensures the Council continues to be a space where young people lead with curiosity, co-design with confidence, and contribute work that reflects what matters most to them. Letting young people steer the direction reinforces the Foundation’s commitment to genuine youth agency and amplifies the perspectives and passions they bring to the table.

The final word



The Telstra Foundation is an organisation dedicated to supporting young people to thrive in an ever-evolving digital world. But over the past year, through the Youth Advisory Council, I’ve seen that it’s more than that. It’s a genuine platform, one where young people aren’t just providing feedback or sharing opinions but actively shaping decisions that impact children and young people across the country. More than that, the Telstra Foundation has done something arguably harder than youth advocacy and research: building a community. The warmth and kindness that YAC members share are only fostered by PROJECT ROCKIT and the Telstra Foundation. Whether it be creating an online garage band, starting a shared Minecraft server or having intense discussions about Robert Irwin, we were always heard, encouraged, and met with genuine enthusiasm. That support made it easy to build real, lasting connections with the people around us.

Being part of the 2025 YAC showed me what meaningful youth engagement actually looks like. We hope to have helped create digital spaces that feel safer, fairer and more empowering. Spaces where young people’s voices are not just heard but genuinely understood through initiatives like the Australian Digital Youth Index, which directly captures how young people are navigating and shaping the online world. The impact of the Council isn’t just measured in the recommendations we made or the reports we produced, but in the shift it represents by trusting young people as equal partners in building safer, more empowering digital spaces. And that matters, because as digital natives, the online world isn’t just our future, it’s our present.

Raghu

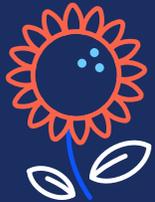
Our youth participation principles



Let young people lead
Put them in the driver's seat and amplify their voices.



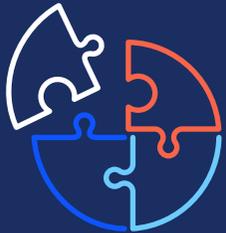
Respect their time & lived experience
Pay young people for their expertise and contributions.



Make it meaningful
Create exciting, flexible opportunities that genuinely matter.



Keep it open
Use regular, honest communication to stay connected and build trust.



Meet them where they're at
Adapt to young people's needs, lives, and contexts.



Create community
Foster safe, supportive spaces where everyone can share openly.



Grow together
Offer capacity-building and learning opportunities that build confidence and skills.



Champion every voice
Empower all members to influence change and shape the future.

Acknowledgement and thanks

A note of thanks

A huge thank you to every young person who contributed their voice to the Youth Advisory Council this year. Your ideas, honesty and lived experience have pushed us to think bigger, listen harder and design with far greater intention.

In 2025, you didn't just advise us – you shaped the direction of our work, challenged assumptions, and brought real insight to conversations that matter. Your leadership has strengthened the Australian Youth Digital Index, informed our programs, and reminded us what it looks like when young people are treated as partners, not participants.

We're proud of what we created together – and even more excited about what comes next.

This is only the beginning.

About the Telstra Foundation

Backed by Telstra for over two decades, the Telstra Foundation is an Australian charity on a mission to make Australia one of the best places in the world for children and young people to thrive online. By 2030, we aim to empower one million children and young people to shape their own futures in safe, inclusive digital spaces. The Foundation works with leading community stakeholders to improve children and young peoples' online safety and wellbeing, their digital skills and their access to essential digital services.

Listening to and amplifying the voices of young people is at the heart of our work. Their perspectives shape everything we do. This includes our annual Australian Youth Digital Index, which explores how young people experience the digital world. It's reflected in our partnerships, which are grounded in co-design with children and young people. And it's championed by our Youth Advisory Council, which ensures a strong youth voice drives the direction of the Foundation. To read more about our plans, our team and our partners, visit www.telstrafoundation.com.

Powered by PROJECT ROCKIT

Our Youth Advisory Council is run in partnership with PROJECT ROCKIT – Australia's youth-driven movement against bullying, hate, and prejudice – because of their deep expertise in youth engagement and empowerment. As trailblazers in creating spaces where young people feel heard, valued, and equipped to lead change, PROJECT ROCKIT brought heart, skill, and serious energy to every step of the journey. A huge thank you to the incredible PROJECT ROCKIT team for helping us bring the Council to life and making it a truly meaningful experience for everyone involved.

About the Australian Youth Digital Index

The Australian Youth Digital Index project aims to identify and monitor the key drivers, issues, and opportunities that relate to young people's relationships with digital technology. The research draws on both quantitative and qualitative data on young people's digital lives, their attitudes, behaviours, perceptions, and experiences. For more information visit www.australiayouthdigitalindex.com



