



South Australian Debating Association Inc

Junior A, Quarter Final

"That we should lower the voting age."

1. Type of Topic

This is a normative debate. This means that the Affirmative should propose a 'model' (a policy on how this idea would be implemented). This model should be clearly described to outline what changes the Affirmative team will make to the status quo, and how these changes will be enacted. The Negative team can either support the status quo or propose a counter-model. If the Negative decide to choose a counter-model, it must be different from the status quo, but also different from the model the Affirmative team is suggesting. The Negative team should ensure they clearly identify whether they are supporting the status quo or proposing a counter-model.

Both sides should take the approach that this is a policy to come into effect into Australia. Consider what challenges this will alleviate or create. Use logical reasoning to discuss how this policy could come into effect, who it will effect and how this kind of policy can be evaluated as effective or destructive to the current system.

This is an open-ended policy. Therefore, this debate should consider **costs and benefits of the concept** of lowering the voting age, rather than simply enacting an age lower than 18 to be eligible to vote. Both sides must ensure this debate covers the **context of voting in Australia**, the **logic of the current system** as opposed to an alternative option.

2. Background / Context

Should younger Australians be given a say in their country's democratic processes? Currently, the voting age in Australia is 18, a standard that aligns with many democracies around the world.

Those in favour of lowering the voting age argue that lowering the voting age would increase political engagement among young people. They contend that teenagers are already making significant decisions in their lives, such as their education and career paths, and thus should have a say in the decisions that affect their future. It is also believed that granting younger Australians the vote would enhance their sense of responsibility and involvement.

Several countries have already lowered the voting age to 16, including Austria, Germany, and Scotland.

However, it is equally contended that younger Australians may lack the maturity and life experience required to make informed voting decisions. Consider how younger individuals might be more susceptible to influence and less aware of the broader implications of their choices. What possible outcomes could there be? It is argued that the level of political engagement among 16-year-olds may not be as high as among older age groups, potentially leading to lower-quality voting outcomes.

Both teams should answer whether 18 is the most appropriate age. 18 is the legal age of adulthood in many areas, such as drinking alcohol and entering into contracts. Does this therefore mean that it is in society's best interests to maintain this age for voting eligibility as well?

3. Questions for Consideration

- How might lowering the voting age influence the political involvement of young people?
- What evidence is there from other countries where the voting age has been lowered?
- How would including younger voters potentially benefit Australian democracy and policy-making?
- What specific issues do younger voters care about that might be addressed more effectively with their input?
- What educational measures could be implemented to prepare young voters for informed decision-making?
- What are the current levels of political awareness and engagement among young Australians?
- How might the inclusion of younger voters influence election results and the prioritisation of issues?
- How might the maturity and life experience of younger voters impact their voting choices and the quality of their participation in elections?
- Why is the age of 18 considered a more suitable threshold for voting based on other legal rights and responsibilities?
- What are the arguments or data suggesting that lowering the voting age does not significantly increase political engagement or improve democratic outcomes?
- What are the potential risks of lowering the voting age?
- Are there existing programs or initiatives in Australia that effectively engage young people in political processes without lowering the voting age?

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