



MEDIA RELEASE

Youth Action NSW Urges Stronger Protections for Young People's Right to Safety

Sydney, 12 February 2026 — Youth Action is deeply concerned by reports that a 16-year-old was allegedly injured during a protest in Sydney this week. Any incident where a young person is harmed in a public space should prompt serious reflection about how we protect the safety and rights of children and young people in our community.

“Young people have the right to participate in civic life, express their views and be heard. They also have the right to safety. These rights are not conditional, and one does not cancel out the other,” said Youth Action CEO Lauren Stracey

Young people deserve safe, cohesive communities. That cannot be achieved through fear, intimidation, or division.

“Peaceful public protest is one of the ways many young people choose to engage with the issues that affect them. They should be able to do so without fear of violence or intimidation,” said Stracey.

“All institutions, including the NSW Police, have responsibility to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in every interaction. The use of force against a young person raises serious concerns about how that responsibility is being upheld, and risks weakening trust in the very institution that is meant to keep them safe,” said Stracey.

Youth Action calls for a transparent and independent review of the incident, and clear steps to ensure that young people's safety and rights are protected at future demonstrations. Young people deserve to feel safe in public spaces, including when they choose to participate in peaceful protest.

At a time when many young people are speaking up about decisions that shape their lives, environments must be created where their participation is welcomed, supported, and protected. Participation should never compromise their safety.

END OF MEDIA RELEASE

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About Youth Action NSW:

Youth Action is the peak organisation representing young people and the services that support them in NSW. We work towards a society where all NSW young people are supported, engaged, valued, and have their rights realised.

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