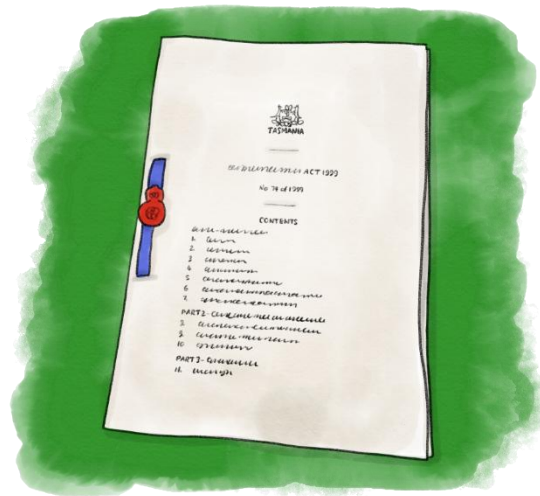# House of Assembly – Classroom role-play Facilitator Script

The Youth Volunteering Bill

A Bill for an Act requiring Tasmanian high school students to complete 10 hours of volunteer work per year.

THE ROLE-PLAY

Speaker's Procession

Background Information: The House of Assembly begins every sitting day with the Speaker's Procession. In the three minutes prior to the Procession starting, bells ring all over Parliament House. The bells call Members of Parliament (MPs) to the House of Assembly Chamber. Once the bells start ringing, Members hurry to the Chamber.

Action: The Clerk of the House or facilitator rings a bell for a few seconds.

Clerk *(standing)*: Honourable Members of the House of Assembly and all visitors, please stand in silence for the Speaker's Procession.

Action: Everyone in the room stands. At the room entrance, the Sergeant-at-Arms announces the Speaker.

Sergeant-at-Arms: The Honourable, the Speaker.

Action: The Sergeant-at-Arms, carrying the Mace over their right shoulder, leads the Speaker to the Chair. Once there, the Speaker remains standing while the Sergeant-at-Arms sits the Mace in a central location (e.g. table in the middle of the classroom) with the head facing the Government Members. The Sergeant stands at their seat.

Background Information: In a Westminster-system Parliament, the Mace symbolises the authority of the Speaker. It remains in-situ while the Speaker or Deputy Speaker is in the Chair. In the House of Assembly, the Mace's cradle can roll into the cabinetry to conceal the Mace when required (e.g. if the House moves into Committee of the whole House and the Speaker leaves the Chair).

Speaker *(standing)*: The House of Assembly begins each sitting day with an Acknowledgement of Country *(pause)*.

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional and original owners and continuing

custodians of this land on which we gather today and acknowledge elders, past, present and emerging

Everyone please sit down.

> *Background Information: The House of Assembly Standing Orders are a set of over 350 published rules, agreed to by the House itself. All Members must follow the Standing Orders, with the Speaker having the ultimate responsibility for applying the Standing Orders. Some Standing Orders reflect complex parliamentary procedures, and as experts on the traditions and procedures of Parliament, the Clerks guide the Speaker and Members on the interpretation of the Standing Orders.*

The House of Assembly is now in session. The *Standing Orders* or rules of the House must be obeyed. Clerk, please read aloud some of the *Standing Orders*.

Clerk *(standing):*
- Elected Members of the House of Assembly must conduct themselves in a respectful manner at all times.
- The Speaker keeps order in the House and Members must follow their instructions.
- If physically able, stand to speak. Otherwise, Members may speak from their seat.
- Only speak when called upon by the Speaker. Begin speeches with 'Speaker'.
- Except for the Minister or sponsor of the Bill, Members may only speak once during the Second Reading *(Clerk sits)*.

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First Reading

Speaker: Thank you Clerk. The first item of business for the House of Assembly today is the tabling of Bills. Does any Honourable Member have a Bill to introduce to Parliament?

Action: The Minister for Education stands and calls to the Speaker.

Minister for Education *(standing)***:** Speaker

Speaker: I call the Minister for Education.

Minister for Education: Speaker,

I present the Youth Volunteering Bill *(Minister sits)*.

The first of two types of parliamentary votes used in the House of Assembly is the 'Vote on the Voices'. The second type of voting, a 'Division', is discussed later and is not commonly required on the First Reading.

During a Vote on the Voices, Members are asked by the Speaker to cast their vote on the Bill. Members indicate their vote by clearly calling out 'aye' (yes) or 'no'. Usually, on the First Reading there are no Members voting 'no' as all Members want to see the contents of the Bill to decide whether to support it or not. A Bill must pass (have a majority support) the First Reading to move to the Second Reading.

Speaker: The House of Assembly will now have our first vote on this Bill. In addition to making this Bill a public document, the first vote determines if the House is willing to allocate time to debating this Bill. I remind Members that it is a sign of a healthy democracy to debate issues, especially when there is disagreement in our community about a matter *(pause)*.

The question is, "Should the Bill be now read a first time?"
Those in favour say 'Aye'   *(wait for them to say 'aye').*
Those against say 'No'   *(wait for them to say 'no').*
I think the 'Ayes' have it *(pause)*. The Ayes have it.
Clerk, read the title of the Bill for the first time.

Background Information: The Speaker uses their judgement to determine the result of the vote but deliberately uses the words 'I think', opening up an opportunity for the minority to challenge their ruling. In the House of Assembly, a challenge to the Speaker's judgement on the outcome of the vote would be in the form of a Division vote. With no challenge, the Clerk stands to read the long title of the Bill.

Clerk: *(standing reads the long title)*: A Bill for an Act requiring Tasmanian high school students complete 10 hours of volunteer work per year.
 (Clerk sits).

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Second Reading

Speaker: Thank you Clerk. We now move to the Second Reading of the Bill. The Second Reading is the most important stage in the passage of a Bill through Parliament. During the Second Reading, Members debate the main ideas or principles of the Bill, not the details of the Bill. That comes later during the Committee stage.

I call the Minister for Education to begin the Second Reading.

Minister for Education: *(standing)***:** Speaker,
I move that the Bill be now read a second time.

It is my pleasure to introduce this progressive Bill to the House of Assembly. The aim of this Bill is to engage young people in the rewarding activity of community volunteering.

Our government believes that just 10 hours of volunteer work per year will foster the development of empathy and compassion in our young people. These qualities will help build a stronger community and make the leaders of tomorrow more thoughtful and caring of others.

The wide range of volunteering opportunities available will allow young people to develop skills that can help them in future employment. Young people who have shown commitment and responsibility will be more attractive to potential employers across Australia, giving young Tasmanians an edge over their mainland peers.

I believe the Youth Volunteering Bill has the power to change society for the better and I encourage all members to vote in favour.

I commend the Bill to the House *(Minister sits)*.

Background Information: The Minister remains in the Chamber and listens attentively to all the subsequent contributions. Once all Members wishing to speak have done so, the Minister will reply. The Minister will have prepared some talking points in advance, but may need to refine their speech as the debate proceeds. Government advisors sit at the front of the Chamber, also listening carefully to the debate, ready to assist the Minister with specialist subject matter knowledge or technical advice if required. However, the advisors are not elected Member of the House so cannot directly address (speak to) the House.

Speaker: I call the Shadow Minister for Education.

Background Information: In Westminster-system Parliaments, the Opposition has first opportunity to respond to the Government legislation. Many people assume the Opposition will automatically oppose the legislation but in the House of Assembly it is not unusual for Members from opposite sides of the House to have some agreement on the Bill. Not all legislation is contested.

Shadow Minister for Education *(standing)***:** Speaker,
The Opposition have serious concerns about this Youth Volunteering Bill and will not be supporting it.

The Government believes that forcing young people to volunteer will make them better people. We disagree with this assumption and

think that compulsory volunteering will result in a lack of genuine motivation from students to engage with their chosen organisation.

There are also concerns about potential exploitation of young people by some organisations. They may see this initiative as nothing more than free labour, used to do the work that adults don't want to do!

We appreciate that a more thoughtful and caring society will benefit us all, but we don't believe that forced volunteering is the best way to achieve this goal.

I will not be supporting this Bill *(Shadow Minister sits)*.

Speaker: I call the Member for Franklin.

Background Information: It is important that all Members of the House of Assembly have an opportunity to express the diverse views of the Tasmanians they represent. Therefore, by convention, the speaking order during the Second Reading debate on a Government Bill is: Government first, followed by the Opposition, followed by the crossbench.

Member for Franklin *(standing)***:** Speaker,

Tasmania should have laws that are in the best interests of all Tasmanians. Therefore, the crossbench is listening closely to this debate to fully understand the strengths and weaknesses of this proposed law.

In preparation for this debate I asked the people I represent in Franklin about their thoughts on compulsory youth volunteering. They told me that every young person has unique circumstances and commitments outside of school. These might include family responsibilities, part-time jobs or personal challenges. Imposing mandatory volunteering without considering individual circumstances might be unfair and place an additional burden on those who are already overwhelmed.

While on the whole I support this Bill, but could the Minister please explain how individual cases will be reviewed and managed if necessary?

Thank you *(Member sits)*.

Speaker: I call the Premier of Tasmania.

Premier *(standing)*: Speaker,
My Government is committed to making meaningful social change for all Tasmanians. This Bill is an opportunity to reframe young people's understanding of community and their place within it.

The Minister has put a great deal of effort into consulting with community organisations and they all believe that this is a positive initiative for our State.

While helping others, young people will be able to explore new interests and passions through their volunteer work. By trying out various volunteer roles, they can gain exposure to different sectors and social causes, helping them discover their passions and potentially shape their career paths.

I urge all Members of the House of Assembly to vote for this excellent Bill *(Premier sits)*.

Speaker: I call the Leader of the Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition *(standing)*: Speaker,
While the Opposition is dedicated to providing our young people with the best possible start in life, we don't believe that making them volunteer against their will helps to achieve this goal.

The academic and vocational training pressures currently facing our young people are enormous. To add yet another requirement to our already overloaded young people is a recipe for burnout, not personal growth.

If we were in Government, we would ensure there is ample funding and opportunity available for students who want to volunteer to be able to do so.

As we will not be supporting a mandatory requirement, I cannot support this Bill *(Leader of the Opposition sits).*

Speaker: I call the Member for Clark.

Member for Clark *(standing)***:** Speaker,
I want the best outcomes for the Tasmanians I represent, so I am closely examining this Bill. On the whole, the Bill has merit. The idea that youth volunteering will create better adults is sound in my opinion.

While I support this Bill, I would also like to suggest an amendment. I would like the Minister to increase the requirement to 20 hours per year, so that students can try 2 different volunteering roles each year. This will further increase their personal growth, and their extra work in the community will benefit us all.

Thank you *(Member sits).*
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Speaker: I call the Member for Braddon.

Member for Braddon *(standing)***:** Speaker,

My electorate of Braddon has traditionally struggled with high youth unemployment. Volunteering experience can significantly enhance young people's academic and employment applications. It demonstrates their commitment, dedication and initiative to potential institutions and employers, helping them stand out from other applicants. Volunteering can also serve as a valuable talking point during interviews, highlighting their diverse experiences and character.

I will vote for this Bill because I want young Tasmanians to have every opportunity to better themselves *(Member sits)*.

Speaker: I call the Member for Lyons.

Member for Lyons *(standing)***:** Speaker,
 I know that many young Tasmanians already face significant time constraints due to academic commitments, extracurricular activities, and personal responsibilities.

Mandating 10 hours of volunteering may add to undue stress to young people. It may impact their ability to manage their time effectively, their academic performance and overall well-being.

We should not be legislating to make young people's lives harder.

I will be voting against this Bill *(Member sits)*.

Speaker: I call the Member for Bass.

Member for Bass *(standing)***:** Speaker,
May I remind those Members opposite me that 10 hours volunteering over a whole year is not very much! Young people could easily give up some time on their phones to help others in the community.

The volunteering can be undertaken in holidays when there are no academic pressures to consider.

We need to stop with the negativity and work together to make it happen!

I encourage all Members of the House to vote for this important bill *(Member sits).*

The Speaker invites other Members to join in the debate.

Background Information: Members quickly stand, known as 'getting the jump', to catch the Speaker's attention and be allocated the call (speaking turn). Under the Standing Orders, the Speaker should select whoever stood first, whilst aiming to keep the debate fair and inclusive of all. In the House of Assembly, each Member may only speak once and strict time limits apply. Members usually prepare a written speech or detailed notes to speak from.

Members are not required to make a contribution on every Bill before Parliament and it is not unusual for non-contested legislation to have one representative from each political party make a contribution on behalf of their party, with debate proceeding smoothly.

Speaker: Would any other Member of the House of Assembly like to contribute to the debate on this Bill?

Stand if you wish to speak   *(wait for people to stand).*

I call the Member for _____ *(say student name).*

Background Information: In the House of Assembly, Members are identified by the electorate they represent or by their parliamentary position (e.g. Member for Braddon or Minister for Education). For convenience, classes could use student names. E.g. 'I call the Member for Jane' or 'I call the Member for Smith'.

Action: Students wishing to speak stand in their place. To replicate House of Assembly procedures, the teacher should set a maximum time limit for each speech. As a guide, 1 minute would suit most students. Technically each student should only speak once, however, teachers may find allowing repeated contributions subtly encourages any reluctant or shy students to generate the courage to participate. Brainstorming ideas in 'Party Meetings' either before the role-play starts or at this point, may help stimulate student ideas and encourage all students to participate.

Once the student contributions have concluded, the Speaker calls the Minister to conclude the debate.

Speaker: To conclude the debate, I call the Minister for Education to reply to the Members' contributions.

> *Background Information: During their reply, the Minister reaffirms the Government position on the Bill and addresses any questions or concerns raised by the other Members. On occasions, the Minister's reply may clarify any misunderstanding or confusion on the Bill, forgoing the need for the House of Assembly to move into Committee of the whole House.*

Minister for Education (*standing*)**:** Speaker,
Thank you to the Members of the House of Assembly who contributed to this debate. As Members of Parliament, it is our job to speak on behalf of the Tasmanians we represent.

I would firstly like to restate that requiring young individuals to volunteer fosters a sense of community engagement and responsibility from a young age. It instils the importance of giving back to society and being active participants in the community.

I wish to address some of the concerns raised during this debate.

I acknowledge the Member for Clark's position that 20 hours may be better for the participants and this is something we will promise to review in 2 years' time.

The Department of Education, Children and Young People will use its judgement when facilitating this program and if there are individuals who cannot participate for personal reasons, this will be considered.

Finally, there was a question about potential exploitation of students in the program. That is an important consideration, and the Department of Education, Children and Young People will be creating policies to ensure this cannot occur.

In conclusion, with this Bill Tasmania will lead the nation in youth volunteering participation and this will make a positive contribution

to our society as a whole. I encourage all Members of the House of Assembly to be forward thinking and to vote in favour of it.

I move a motion to vote on the Bill *(Minister sits)*.

Speaker: Thank you Minister. We will now have our second vote on the Bill.
The question is, "Should the Bill be now read a second time?"
Those in favour say 'Aye'   *(wait for them to say 'aye')*.
Those against say 'No'   *(wait for them to say 'no')*.
I think the 'Ayes' have it *(pause)*. However, I may need to confirm the result with a Division. Opposition Whip, is a Division required?

Background Information: A 'Division of the House', commonly known as a Division, requires Members to register their vote for or against an issue by physically moving to either side of the Chamber. Divisions are called for two main reasons. Firstly, to challenge the Speaker's ruling on the 'Vote on the Voices'. This is not unusual if the vote sounds close. Secondly, the vote in the minority (the side that lost the vote) is requesting a formal record of how individual Members voted. Divisions are common if the legislation is in dispute.

In the House of Assembly, the Members signal to the Speaker the need for a Division by simply calling 'divide' from their seat. If there is no Division called, the House has effectively signalled that it agrees with the Speaker's ruling, and the Speaker asks the Clerk to read the long title of the Bill a second time.

In this role-play, the Opposition Whip calls for a Division.

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Division

Opposition Whip *(standing)***:** Speaker,

A Division is required so the people of Tasmania can see exactly how their elected representatives voted. Thank you *(Whip sits)*.

Speaker: A Division is required.

Clerk, ring the bells *(pause for five seconds while the bells ring)*.

Background Information: As with the Speaker's Procession, the ringing bells call all Members to the Chamber. While the House of Assembly is sitting, Members do not usually leave Parliament House. However, they may take a break from the Chamber, often retreating to their Parliament House office, to work on another dimension of their job, whilst simultaneously watching a live stream of the Chamber. If the bells ring, all Members quickly return to the Chamber. The Speaker checks informally with each Whip that everyone is ready to proceed with the Division.

Stop the bells.

Sergeant-at-Arms lock the doors *(pause while the doors are locked)*.

The question is, "Should the Bill be now read a second time?"

Those who support the Bill move to the right of the Speaker's Chair.

Those who oppose the Bill move to the left of the Speaker's Chair *(pause while Members move)*.

Whips, count the votes and then come and tell me the results.

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Background Information: In the House of Assembly, a written record of all Division votes is kept, with a Member appointed as a teller (official counter) for each side. The Clerks closely observe a Division and record the results. Ultimately, the Clerks are responsible for the accurate recording of the votes within the House of Assembly.

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*Action: The Speaker announces the result with **one** of the following statements.*

Speaker:

(If the Ayes win say):

The result of the Division is:

Ayes _____ *(say number)*   Noes _____ *(say number).*

Therefore, the 'Ayes' have it. So far, the Bill is agreed to.

Clerk, read the title of the Bill a Second time.

Clerk reads the title of the Bill.

✔

OR

(If the Noes win say):

The result of the Division is:

Ayes _____ *(say number)*   Noes _____ *(say number).*

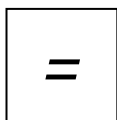Therefore, the 'Noes' have it. The Bill is defeated.

As the Bill has not passed, the House of Assembly will no longer debate it. There is no change to the existing Tasmanian laws.

Clerk does not read the title of the Bill.

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OR

(If the votes are tied):

The result of the Division is:

Ayes _____ *(say number)*   Noes _____ *(say number).*

The result of the Division is a tie. Under *Standing Order Number 167*, to break a tie, the Speaker shall give a casting vote.

Therefore, with my vote included, the result of the Division is now:

Ayes _____ *(say number)*   Noes _____ *(say number).*

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Therefore, the 'Ayes/Noes' have it.

The Bill is/is not agreed to.

(if the 'Ayes' win) Clerk, read the title of the Bill a Second time.

Clerk does/does not read the title of the Bill.

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*Background information: (If the Ayes win): With a **majority** Government the Ayes will usually win the vote as the Government has the most Members. While the Opposition or crossbench know they will lose, they may still vote against the Bill to show their dissent. When there is a **minority** Government, the Government needs the support of enough Members of the crossbench or Opposition to make a majority and to pass the Bill. Once the House has voted that is the end of step 2. In the real Parliament, the House may go into Committee of the Whole after the Second Reading has been agreed to. This is when the Bill is examined in detail and amendments can be proposed and voted on. If an amendment is successful, it becomes part of the Bill.*

*Facilitator (If the Noes win): With a **majority** Government, it is rather unusual for the Noes to win the vote, as the Government has the most Members and they would normally vote for their own Bills. If the Noes did win, it would mean that at least one Government Member has "crossed the floor" to vote against their own party and the Bill. In the modern Parliament, this is a rare event. When there is a **minority** Government, a Government Bill can be defeated if the Government does not secure the support of enough Members of the crossbench or Opposition to make a majority. If the Noes win, the Bill does not progress to Committee of the Whole or the Third Reading.*

In the real Parliament it is more likely that the "ayes" win the second vote and the House moves to Committee stage. This is when the Bill is examined in detail and amendments can be proposed and voted on. If an amendment is successful it becomes part of the Bill.

(If required) Clerk *(standing reads the long title)*: A Bill for an Act requiring Tasmanian high school students complete to 10 hours of volunteer work per year *(Clerk sits)*.

Speaker: All Members please return to your seat.

Committee of the Whole House

Speaker: Members may wish to suggest some amendments to the Bill but this can only happen in Committee of the whole House. Therefore, does the House wish to go into Committee?

Leader of Opposition Business *(standing)***:** No thank you Speaker.

At the moment, the Opposition does not wish to propose any changes to the Bill, so the Committee stage is not required. However, if the 'upper House', the Legislative Council, amends this Bill, and it returns to the House of Assembly, the Opposition will carefully consider the proposed changes *(Leader sits)*.

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Third Reading

Speaker: Thank you Leader of Opposition Business. We will now conclude debate on the Bill by voting on it for the third and final time.

The question is, "Should the Bill be now read a third time?"
Those in favour say 'Aye'   *(wait for them to say 'aye').*
Those against say 'No'   *(wait for them to say 'no').*
I think the 'Ayes' have it *(pause)*. The 'Ayes' have it.
Clerk, read the title of the Bill a third time.

Clerk *(standing reads the long title):* A Bill for an Act requiring Tasmanian high school students to complete 10 hours of volunteer work per year *Clerk sits)*.

Background Information: If the Bill passes the House of Assembly it does not mean the Bill is now an Act of Parliament, as it also must pass the Legislative Council and receive Royal Assent from the Governor of Tasmania (His Majesty's representative in Tasmania).

Speaker: The Bill has passed the House of Assembly. I will ask the Clerk to send the Bill to the Legislative Council for further debate.

Background Information: In the House of Assembly, the Speaker certifies (signs) the Bill and a Clerk physically delivers the Bill with a message to the Legislative Council. The message is addressed to the President of the Legislative Council and asks for Legislative Council agreement to the Bill.

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Adjournment

Background Information: At the end of the sitting day in the House of Assembly, a number of Members may make an adjournment speech, generally on a topic of their choosing. Commonly, these speeches reflect a celebration from their electorate, often highlighting an individual or community achievement. Alternatively, the speech may be a response to, or an update on, a matter debated earlier in the day. Adjournment debates are not included in this role-play.

Speaker: The House is now adjourned.

Clerk *(standing)*: All stand in silence.

Carrying the Mace, the Sergeant-at-Arms leads the Speaker from the Chamber.