

Local

Young Labor votes to reject charter of rights

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YOUNG Labor has voted against a federal charter of rights amid fears that conservative governments could distort its original purpose to the detriment of future generations.

In a clear warning to the Rudd Government about the dangers of transferring too much power to unelected judges, 60 per cent of Young Labor delegates voted against a rights charter at their annual conference in Canberra on the weekend.

Outgoing Young Labor president Sam Crosby told The Australian's columnist, Janet Albrechtsen, the case for a charter of rights had been undone from the Left.

``Overwhelmingly, it was the progressive case that convinced them against a charter," Mr Crosby said.

``Ultimately they were concerned that a future conservative Liberal government would be able to get hold of a bill of rights and distort it with seemingly innocuous things."

The Rudd Government has promised to hold an inquiry into a federal charter of rights, which received strong support at the 2020 Summit in April.

However, Young Labor members were concerned about the implications of a charter of rights for issues such as the right to property and the right to life.

``People, for the first time, really started to think about the deeper consequences of what a bill of rights could mean,' Mr Crosby said.

``A charter transfers power away from elected parliaments to unrepresentative judges who don't have to account to anyone, who are not elected and who are largely unscrutinised ... We are not a party that believes in handing massive swaths of power to judges."

Mr Crosby said there was a fear that future generations would be bound by outdated values.

``Look at the situation in the US, where 200 years ago the founding fathers thought it was a pretty good idea to entrench a right to bear arms," he said.