

## Aboriginal Young People

YNOT recognises Aboriginal Australians as the traditional owners and occupants of this country and respect the connection between Aboriginal Australians and the land. Young Aboriginal people make up a significant proportion of all Aboriginal Australians and young Aboriginal Tasmanians face numerous barriers, many of which can be overcome. There is a substantial gap in the health and employment rates between young Aboriginal people and young non-Aboriginal people, which can be attributed to continued disempowerment of Aboriginal communities. Young Aboriginal offenders are overrepresented in the youth justice system in Tasmania and Aboriginal young people, particularly young men, are also overrepresented in national young suicide rates. The youth justice system needs to incorporate strategies that build upon strengths and work to empower young Aboriginal offenders to make positive changes in their lives.

Many Aboriginal young people find it challenging to make a smooth transition through the education system and into employment due to social disadvantage. There is a low retention rate of Aboriginal young people in all levels of education and this is a concern for their future prospects. The study of Aboriginal language and culture in Australian schools is extremely limited and research suggests that there are not enough Aboriginal teachers and workers to meet the numbers of Aboriginal students. Expectations to fit in with other young people can have an isolating effect on Aboriginal young people and can impact on the retention rate, lower literacy and numeracy ability and lower levels of completion. A multi-faceted approach that supports strategies for Aboriginal young people, such as culturally relevant material in the curriculum and open approaches to learning, are needed in Tasmania to achieve best practice and to give young Aboriginal people many future opportunities.

### *YNOT is committed to:*

- Advocating for improvements to the standards of education, health, housing and employment opportunities for Aboriginal young people living in Tasmania.



- Advocating for culturally appropriate support services to assist young Aboriginal people in engaging with or navigating education and employment.
- Supporting the roles that Aboriginal young people play in the Tasmanian community.
- Promoting cultural awareness through education programs and initiatives in Tasmanian schools and the broader Tasmanian community.
- Reducing racism towards Aboriginal young people in the Tasmanian community, in particular, bullying in schools.

### *Future Vision*

A Tasmania where Aboriginal young people have equal access to services and assistance to achieve their goals. An education system that encourages and celebrates Aboriginal young people and aims to provide culturally relevant material, creating acceptance of Aboriginal young people in the mainstream education system and providing knowledge of Aboriginal culture to other young people in the education system.

### *References*

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