

Income Support

Income support is vital to many young people as it provides them with the opportunity to become independent and live away from their family home. As the rate of unemployment and underemployment rises in Tasmania, income support is becoming a necessity for many young people. Income support, for many young people, allows them to study away from home which they could not afford to do otherwise. However, the current rate of Youth Allowance does not allow young people to live above the poverty line and many young people receiving income support work part time or on a casual basis just to make ends meet. The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) have strongly argued that income support payments are inadequate and suggest that payments are not meeting the basic costs of living and as such, are putting young people into poverty.

Many young people have no alternative to income support. Young people may not have family in a position to financially support them, young people engaged in full time education are often unable to find suitable work to accompany their studies and young people looking for employment are often faced with the difficulty of securing long term, suitable and secure employment. Consequently, many young people are dependent on income support due to circumstances beyond their control. The rate of income support needs to be increased to assist young people in building the best possible future for themselves. Due to stereotypes and common misconceptions, young people receiving income support can be unfairly judged. Community education regarding the reality of income support, unemployment and study demands is needed to reduce the negative perceptions of young people receiving income support.

YNOT is committed to working with national peak bodies to:

- Supporting a review of current welfare payments and their applicability to the current cost of living for young people.
- Advocating for community education programs to reduce the negative perceptions of young people receiving income support.



- Advocating for the discrepancies between Youth Allowance and Newstart Allowance payments to be abolished.
- Advocating for the inclusion of young people in policy discussions relating to reform and evaluation of income support payments.
- Promoting community education opportunities in relation to unemployment, underemployment, income support and the effects these have on young people.
- Encouraging the Centrelink system to be more youth friendly in their application processes and appeals process.
- Advocating for rent assistance to be increased to more accurately reflect the current cost of renting.

Future Vision

A Tasmania where Youth Allowance and Newstart Allowance are increased to meet the current cost of living and studying/working for young people. Young people will have the means to live independently and above the poverty line on an income support payment while they are studying, training or seeking employment. There will be additional support services in place to assist young people looking for work to reduce reliance on income support.

References

Australian Council of Social Services (2011), *Poverty and its Causes*, retrieved from http://acoss.org.au/images/uploads/ACOSS_Poverty_October_2011.pdf