

# TYF

# LEARNING AND EDUCATION FORUM

# WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAID

**A REPORT ON  
TASMANIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S IDEAS ABOUT  
LEARNING AND EDUCATION COLLECTED BY  
THE TASMANIAN YOUTH FORUM**

**APRIL 2016**



Tasmanian youth forum



youth network of Tasmania

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## About TYF

The Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) is Tasmania's peak youth consultative body. TYF is an initiative of the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT), the peak organisation for the broader youth sector in Tasmania, with funding from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through Communities, Sport and Recreation.

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## Executive Summary

This report aims to communicate the ideas from young people who participated in the Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) *Learning and Education* Statewide Youth Forum and Survey held in November 2015, and the combined key findings from these consultations. TYF is the peak consultative body for young people aged 12 to 25 in Tasmania. TYF is an initiative of the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT), the peak body for the broader youth sector in Tasmania.

Tasmania's low levels of education attainment are frequently discussed by the Tasmanian community, young people, and key decision makers. The Forum and Survey were created to provide young people with the opportunity to contribute to discussions about improving education outcomes for young Tasmanians. The report found that young people are thinking about their learning and education pathways and can identify ways they can be better supported to do this. The results and ideas from the Forum and Survey have been combined to develop key findings.

## Introduction

Education is a frequently discussed within Tasmania in terms of the educational outcomes for young Tasmanians. A lot of this focuses on the rates of low levels of engagement with education that young Tasmanians have than other States and Territories, particularly when transitioning from high school to college, and to pre-tertiary study or training. While the Tasmanian context can impact this, such as having a higher proportion of lower socio-economic families than other States and a more dispersed population, is complicated by multiple contributing factors.

The TYF Learning and Education Forum was developed to provide young people with the opportunity to discuss their experiences of learning and education, what impacts on this and how young people can be supported to learn now and in the future. The Forum had several aims including gathering quality information from young people, encouraging young people to think more broadly about their learning and education, and supporting young people to acknowledge and identify things they can do to support their own learning and education (see appendix 1).

An online survey was created in conjunction with the Forum to enable young people to contribute their ideas if they could not attend the event and reach more young people. The topic Learning and Education was selected to provide young people with the opportunity to discuss learning that may occur outside an education context.

This report outlines the ideas shared by young people at the Forum and who participated in the survey. The key findings in this report are therefore based on both of these consultation processes.

## Key Findings

The key findings are listed throughout the report but have been grouped below into categories to connect key findings that relate to similar issues.

### Young people, education and barriers to reaching learning goals

*Finding 20: A significant barrier for young people who want to continue study or training after Year 12 is not understanding what study or training opportunities after involve or how to plan for these.*

*Finding 21: A critical reason why young people may not want to continue studying or training after Year 12 is because they may not be able to identify what they want to do.*

*Finding 23: Young people see financial costs of training or studying as a significant potential barrier to their learning and education completion or attainment.*

### Young people, education and learning needs

*Finding 2: Young people know that there are certain skills and attributes that will assist them to reach their learning goals, but many need help to identify and develop these skills.*

*Finding 8: Young people believe that learning that is linked to their interests would lead to better outcomes for their future.*

*Finding 13: Young people want opportunities to gain practical experience through work placements or volunteering but need support to identify opportunities to do this.*

*Finding 25: Young people know how they learn best and are the best people to ask about their learning needs.*

### Young people, education and planning for the future

*Finding 18: Young people are making decisions about their learning education from a young age.*

*Finding 19: Young people are making their own decisions about their learning and education based on their interests and what they might need in the future, even though they may need additional information to inform these decisions.*

*Finding 24: Young people feel confident they can achieve their plans if they can identify what they want to do and understand the pathway of how they will get there.*

### Young people's values and aspirations towards learning and education

*Finding 15: Young people value learning and education highly.*

*Finding 16: Young people value learning because they recognise it will prepare them for the future.*

*Finding 17: Young people have aspirations of completing at least a Year 12 education and continuing on to further training or education.*

### **Young people and their learning and education environment**

*Finding 3: Young people learn best when they can identify a practical application for their learning.*

*Finding 7: Young people consider it important to have a positive learning environment because they understand the impact that this has on their learning.*

*Finding 9: Young people understood that while technology is important for their learning it can also be a distraction and they needed support to manage this at times.*

*Finding 12: Young people want detailed information and feedback on a regular basis on their learning at school that they could share with their family.*

### **Young people, education and employment**

*Finding 6: Young people want a specific, skilled support person to assist them to identify potential learning and employment pathways and apply this to their context.*

*Finding 11: Young people see the purpose of their education and learning is to gain employment.*

*Finding 14: Young people understood that learning could encompass many situations, but they focused on learning as a pathway that incorporates education to achieve their goals.*

### **Young people, education and support**

*Finding 1: Young people want and need support from their personal networks, as well as the broader community, to encourage their learning and help them to learn.*

*Finding 4: Young people want their family and support networks to have involvement in their learning in a strategic way in order to support their learning.*

*Finding 22: Young people rely on their peers most for support although their peer network may not be very diverse and limited in terms of the opportunities they perceive are available to them.*

### **Young people, education and community**

*Finding 5: Young people believe negative perceptions of them in the broader community can impact on their education opportunities and wanted to take steps to address this.*

*Finding 10: Young people want to interact with people from different industries and with the broader community to support their learning and open opportunities for their future.*

## Background information

Education is a topical issue in Tasmania and there are several reasons why this is the case. Firstly, Tasmania has some of the lowest levels of Year 12 attainment in Australia meaning there are many young people who have a low level of education compared to other States and Territories. There are also many barriers to education specific to young people in Tasmania such as transport, intergenerational poverty and socio-cultural factors which impact their completion, participation and transition between institutions. This is significant because compared to other jurisdictions within Australia, the average level of achievement of a child or young person from a low socio-economic background, in a low socio-economic school, is on average, three years behind a high socio-economic student in a high socio-economic school. This means many young Tasmanians face additional challenges to attaining education and achieving education outcomes in comparison to national levels.

There have also been many reforms happening in this space at a State and National level. This includes the current review of the *Education Act 1994*, extension of High Schools to Years 11 and 12 and the roll out of Gonski Report funding.

## Scope

This report aims to communicate the ideas and views of young people who participated in the TYF *Learning and Education* Statewide Forum and Survey. Both the Survey and the Forum engaged a diverse range of young people from across the State aged between 12 and 25 years from a wide range of backgrounds.

## Consultation Process: Forum

Young people attended the *TYF Learning and Education* Forum on Wednesday 4 November 2015 from 10:00am-3:15pm. This Forum was held at the Door of Hope Conference Centre in Launceston. The event attracted young people from across the State. Of the registered participants, there were 42 participants from Southern Tasmania, 29 participants from the North-West of Tasmania and 29 participants from Northern Tasmania.

A skilled youth facilitator was engaged to facilitate the Forum and involve young people in the topic and discussions.

An agenda was created for the day but this was flexible to enable the youth facilitator to meet the needs of participants (see Appendix 2).

Young people were given an introduction to the day by the youth facilitator and were welcomed by Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, Guy Barnett MP.

Young people participated in some ice-breaker activities before completing the Survey and breaking into small groups to brainstorm the issues relating to learning and education.

The main focus for the day was to create opportunities for young people to share information and ideas in small discussion groups centred around different topics (see Appendix 3). These topics were developed based on research and consultation with young people prior to the Forum. Each group had a worker who was there to provide support and keep conversations on topic.

James Riggall, founder of BitLink, was the guest speaker for the Forum and spoke to participants about his learning journey, which led him to becoming an entrepreneur and

creating his own business. James spoke about how he had gained experience by seeking out different volunteering opportunities and how he had found what he wanted to study by looking at what people working in technology had studied. Participants also had the opportunity to get information about different study and training pathways from some stalls that had been set up and by participating in the ideas wall activity to share and learn from other participants.

At the end of the day, the groups presented their ideas to the other participants at the Forum and young people had the opportunity to vote for the ideas they wanted to see happen. Participants finished the day by completing feedback forms and summarising the ideas from the day, and were thanked for their contributions.

## Initial Brainstorm about Learning and Education

Participants were asked to form small discussion groups to brainstorm ideas about what encourages them to learn, what helps them to learn and what challenges they may face with learning.

Most of the responses from these groups were related to support. Young people identified that having the support and encouragement of family and friends is important for being encouraged to learn. Being in a supportive environment and having a strong network of friends and family are important for young people but they said that peer pressure, bullying and negative comments towards them can make it challenging to feel encouraged to learn.

*Finding 1: Young people want and need support from their personal networks, as well as the broader community, to encourage their learning and help them to learn.*

Participants recognised that there is support available outside of their personal networks that could help with their learning and other issues that can make learning challenging. This included teachers who can provide extra support, career guidance counsellors and social workers. Beyond this, young people identified that it was important to feel supported by their community.

Participants identified that they also have a role in encouraging themselves to learn and find ways to support their own learning. They identified that skills and attributes such as setting goals, having motivation, being determined, having positive self-esteem and confidence can help young people to believe in themselves so that they are encouraged to learn. Young people were concerned that not having these skills and facing challenges such as boredom, lack of energy, not having a clear mind, or lack of passion would be barriers to their learning.

Participants recognised that having self-awareness is important as they try to identify their strengths, weaknesses, goals and interests. This is because it helps to generate an understanding of potential learning pathways, opportunities for jobs, supports them to make decisions in their best interests and will guide them towards their goals. Young people were concerned that if they could not identify their goals, passions and interests it could be a barrier to learning.

*Finding 2: Young people know that there are certain skills and attributes that will assist them to reach their learning goals, but many need help to identify and develop these skills.*

Many responses from the groups related to some form of learning strategies and tools that the participants could use to help them learn. Participants discussed that flexible learning opportunities are beneficial because the offer a range of learning strategies and tools are available for young people and can use the ones that work for their situation.

Learning strategies and tools discussed included timetables, varying school start times, break times, classroom structure, lesson or subject structure, different learning types, technology for learning, and strategies for dealing with distractions. Within each of these there were contrasting views based on what participants said worked for them, highlighting their need for flexible learning options. One idea that was consistent across the majority of discussions was increasing the opportunities to gain practical experience and hands-on learning.

Young people also said that it is important for them to understand the relevance of their learning and how they might use this in the future because it can encourage them and try their best when learning. Participants said that they do not usually have what they are learning explained to them in this way. It can make learning more difficult if this is not explained, particularly when they may find a subject too difficult. Participants said not understanding how a teacher is explaining a topic or what they need to do can make learning challenging and discourage young people from learning.

If they do not understand how it relates to their future, young people said that they were more likely to see it as a pointless activity and thought they were missing out on opportunities to do more relevant and practical learning, such as work experience, and learning how to do various things that they would need in the future, such as taxes.

### *Finding 3: Young people learn best when they can identify a practical application for their learning.*

Participants identified that learning can also be challenging for if they face barriers to attending school. Participants identified ways to address these barriers to support them and other young people to learn. Barriers included structural elements such as distance from school, costs of attending school and having the resources for school, as well as other issues or commitments that could collide with studies.

It can also be challenging for young people to be at school if they have health concerns, particularly mental health concerns, or a disability, or do not have a strong social network at school or have a different religion or culture to the majority of other students. Some participants also said that they were still learning English which made it difficult for them to learn other information. Participants said that this could make it difficult to fit in at school and make the most of the opportunity to learn.

Some groups identified that the environment where they learn and the resources they have access to are important for their learning. These participants said that having access to computers, internet, other forms of technology and books were of great benefit to them when trying to learn. Despite this, some participants said that having access to these resources can be challenging especially when young people or their families cannot afford them.

What was consistent was that, similar to learning strategies and tools, young people prefer different types of learning environments. Some young people said they preferred learning in a social environment while others preferred having quiet spaces to learn. Having a friendly environment and comfortable classroom were seen as important but young people wanted to have flexibility available so that they could learn in places that best suited their learning

styles. Young people identified that being in an environment that did not suit their learning needs would be a barrier to their learning.

## Ideas Wall Activity

Participants had the opportunity during the Forum to contribute their ideas to the two questions listed below. The questions and ideas were placed on a wall so that other Forum participants could read about the aspirations and strategies that other young people use to learn.

### If you had no fears or barriers, what would you do?

Responses to this questions were equally divided in their approach to answering the question. One third of ideas related to a general purpose of helping people, changing the world or making a positive difference. One third of responses had identified a specific career that they would like to pursue. The remaining ideas were about following their dreams and expressing themselves creatively.

### What can make it easier to learn new things?

Nearly half of these ideas referred to having support such as financial support, having skilled teachers, and support from their family and other people. Other ideas were about making the content or way of learning fun and engaging. The remaining responses were about participants identifying that having skills or resources were important such as being able to listen to music and having clear instructions for what they needed to do.

## Discussion Groups

In order to focus discussions and encourage a diverse range of conversations and ideas, participations separated into different discussion group topics. There were 11 topics in total were identified and developed prior to the Forum in consultation with young people. The topics were created as a guide although they were flexible to enable young people to share any ideas that they had. A worker was allocated to each topic group to help aid discussions and explore other issues that young people may have wanted to discuss.

Groups were asked about what they would retain, change and create in relation to their discussion topic and learning and education more broadly. This structure enabled young people to identify what is already working well, what currently exists but needs tweaking, and what could be created to fill any gaps that they identified.

## Discussion Groups: Retain and Change

The following section provides a summary of what participants wanted to retain and what to change across each of the discussion topics. Young people had the opportunity to sit on two discussion group topics during the Forum. The following section combines the discussions from both groups for each topic.

## **Life Skills: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Young people in these groups identified that core and elective subjects can provide them with information and skills that they will find useful throughout their life. They mentioned subjects such as health, maths, home economics and opportunities to gain qualifications while at school through courses such as first aid, child care and surf lifesaving.

Participants also identified that talking to school counsellors and opportunities to learn work skills through work placements and programs, such as the Education Department's Big Picture program, were ways that young people could develop their personal skills and increase their self-awareness.

While the learning through these subjects and training courses was useful, young people wanted to change the content to make them more relevant by including opportunities to learn about rent, stocks, bills, taxes and to develop personal skills such as discipline, independence and communication.

Participants wanted an increase in the level of support available to them including from teachers trained in specific areas and who are passionate about what they are teaching. They also wanted more opportunities to seek support from counsellors and specific career guidance counsellors

## **Stress Creators: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Young people in these groups wanted to keep the support that they had from their family, friends and teachers who can help them with their learning and to cope with stress. They identified that it is important to be surrounded by people who are positive, passionate, supportive and set good examples. Activities or techniques they wanted to keep that they said could reduce stress included outdoor activities, having positive eating habits, taking regular breaks, reading for pleasure, listening to music and spending time with pets.

Young people wanted to change the content of their subjects in school so that they had the opportunity to learn about positive mental health and strategies to address feeling stressed. They wanted to see teachers communicating more with students so that they could understand the needs of each different student. Young people identified that tests, homework and deadlines were stressful for young people at school and wanted teachers to be more understanding.

## **Friends and Family: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants wanted to keep opportunities for family members to be involved with school, such as grandparent days. Young people said that the support from their family is very important and they wanted to have more opportunities for them to be involved. This included having their parents involved when selecting subjects at school and opportunities for them to talk to teachers to get a better understanding of what they are learning at school.

Young people said that they enjoyed the positive social aspects at school, such as seeing their friends, but wanted to avoid other students who were a bad influence for them and those who continuously rebel or are disengaged with learning these are a distraction to their own learning.

They also recognised that sometimes their own friends and family can have negative attitudes towards their learning and do not encourage them. In these circumstances, young people wanted to have more opportunities to develop their independence and become less reliant on those who were not providing them with support that they needed. They also wanted to encourage other young people to not let issues with family and friends get in the way of their education, although they recognised that this can be difficult, especially if there is bullying happening at school.

*Finding 4: Young people want their family and support networks to have involvement in their learning in a strategic way in order to support their learning.*

### **Practical Skills and Experience: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Young people identified several opportunities that can be accessed by young people to develop practical skills and experience that they wanted to retain. This included opportunities to learn on the job such as apprenticeships and traineeships, practical learning experiences such as work experience, access to school farms and flexible learning options such as the Big Picture Program. They also wanted to contribute to their community by doing practical work and attending community events with schools.

Participants wanted to increase the number of opportunities for young people to get outside of the classroom to learn skills and knowledge. Essential to this would be changing work experience to be compulsory for all students, and getting more organisations and businesses to offer work experience placements. Young people also wanted to change the negative attitudes that are directed towards young people by the broader community and have more encouragement from their community to try new things and have a go.

Participants wanted the contribution that young people make to be recognised, particularly when they volunteer. They were concerned that there is often negative attitudes and stereotypes of young people who are struggling to get employment even though they may be doing voluntary work to build up their skills.

*Finding 5: Young people believe negative perceptions of them in the broader community can impact on their education opportunities and wanted to take steps to address this.*

### **Choosing Direction: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Young people in these groups wanted to teachers who they could go to for advice, and the opportunity to talk to people within different industries. In addition, they wanted to retain other opportunities where they could get information about different pathways such as expos, guest speakers and online information. They also wanted to retain work experience opportunities to help them identify industries where they might like to work in the future. Young people in these groups also recognised the importance of having internet and technology in accessing information and wanted to continue to use these.

Participants in these groups identified that having specific support people who could provide information and advice about learning and career pathways were needed to help choose

their pathways. They also wanted access to more opportunities for getting information about workplaces through career expos and workplace visits.

Young people wanted to increase the communication between teachers and students and remove the pressure for young people to get a certain grade in their subject. Overall, they wanted more opportunities to find out information about different pathways and support to find these opportunities.

### **Beyond Year 12: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants in this group wanted to keep classes and subjects that provided them with the skills to be ready for the workplace, and opportunities to put these skills into practice through work experience. While they wanted to keep work experience, they also wanted to make some changes. This included extending work experience placements and having classes to learn about specific workplace skills and workplace culture.

Young people wanted more support to plan their futures. Participants in this group said that they had missed out on the opportunity to have a specific support person available to talk about their future because of the gap left by removing Pathway Planners at their school. They wanted to have a person in a role such as a career guidance counsellor who had the knowledge and skills to support young people to identify training and employment pathways after Year 12. They wanted this support to be available from Grade 7 so that by the end of Year 12, they have a better understanding of what they wanted to do and how to get there.

*Finding 6: Young people want a specific, skilled support person to assist them to identify potential learning and employment pathways and apply this to their context.*

### **Support and Learning: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Young people in this group wanted to keep specific support people and programs that can help their learning. This included counsellors, student mentors and teachers who could assist with learning outside of school hours. Participants said that while these sources of support work for them, they are often not available when young people need them. One area that participants wanted more support was in planning for their education and employment. Young people wanted to have one-on-one support with a career advisor.

Alongside the support, young people wanted to have learning programs and opportunities directed at building personal skills. Young people wanted more opportunities for flexible learning, such as through the Big Picture Program. Participants identified that they wanted to increase opportunities to learn in visual, audio and kinaesthetic ways across all subjects. They wanted to keep opportunities to do hands on, practical learning, but wanted to remove the stigma that is attached to these as students in these classes are often seen as the at-risk or different group.

### **Lifelong Learning: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants wanted to retain having a good environment to learn in as well as support they can get from teachers, social workers and chaplains. However, young people thought that

there could be improvements made to both of these areas. Participants said workspaces at school could be improved by ensuring the best resources are available for students and reducing class sizes so that there could be more one-on-one support available. Young people also wanted to have more support by having more teachers' aids in classrooms.

They wanted to keep the range of subject choices that enabled them to have variety in their learning, but also increase the number of subjects available so that more options were available. They also wanted to update core subjects so that they are more relevant to what young people will need in the future when they enter the workplace.

*Finding 7: Young people consider it important to have a positive learning environment because they understand the impact that this has on their learning.*

### **Hobbies and Interests: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants wanted to keep their hobbies and interests to create a balance between studying and having a break. Young people wanted to keep the opportunity to pursue hobbies and interests at school because they can lead to work in the future and have the potential to develop into a career. Participants thought having more opportunities to try different activities such as sports, music and cooking during school was important to encourage this balance and could lead to them identifying other potential career paths. Young people wanted to remove being assessed in these subjects so that they are not stressful and the focus is on having fun and trying something new.

Participants also said that it was important to have an interest in the subjects they are learning at school. These subjects could also lead to a career, they wanted more opportunities to choose subjects or topics to study within a subject so that young people can explore their interests.

*Finding 8: Young people believe that learning that is linked to their interests would lead to better outcomes for their future.*

### **Getting Advice and Information: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants wanted to keep people that they could go to for support including family, adults they trust, help line services, chaplains, counsellors and teachers. They also identified that the internet is a useful place to find information that they need. Participants in this group said that often young people are unaware of what they might need until they are in need of support. Having a variety of people that they can go to for support is important because they can provide different information and advice.

It is also important that young people feel comfortable asking questions. Participants wanted to change the stigma that is associated with seeking help and to end the discrimination that can occur. They wanted to be able to feel confident when asking for help.

Participants also wanted to increase specialist help by being able to access appointments sooner and have services available for longer hours. They wanted more opportunities to talk face-to-face and this could be done by increasing the number of school counsellors and the times they are available.

*(See Finding 1: Young people want and need support from their personal networks, as well as the broader community, to encourage their learning and help them to learn.)*

### **Technology: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants identified that having easy access to technology is important for their learning. Young people wanted to continue to bring their own devices to school to use for their learning, but recognised not all young people could afford technology so there needs to be support to ensure that everyone has access to the resources they need. They identified that technology helps young people to learn at their own pace and develop specific skills through different apps and tutors like maths games and typing tutors.

Young people identified that they used technology on a daily basis to learn or assist their learning which included learning from YouTube videos, using laptops, computer software, smart whiteboards and mobile phones for apps such as calendars. Participants identified the need to be able to access new technology so that they could keep up with advances in technology, such as 3D printers. Young people recognised that technology has the potential to make learning fun but they identified that distractions, such as social networks needed to be restricted.

*Finding 9: Young people understood that while technology is important for their learning it can also be a distraction and they needed support to manage this at times.*

### **Discussion Groups: Solutions and Ideas**

After each group discussed what they would like to retain and change, they discussed what they wanted to create to support learning and education for young people. Time was allocated for participants to sit on two different table topics if they wanted to explore other ideas. At the end of the Forum, voted for the ideas that they wanted to see happen. The ideas below are listed in order from the highest amount of votes to the least amount of votes.

#### **Stress Creators: what young people want to create**

Participants in these groups wanted to have spaces in schools that students could go to reduce stress or work in a more peaceful environment. This group suggested having a separate learning space that students could go when they are stressed or in conflict where there were animals such as birds and dogs who could be part of a therapeutic process. These areas would include books, computer, desks and couches so that students could work although the care of area would be the responsibility of students. A person such as a counsellor or social worker would also be available to help young people relax and identify what is causing stress.

Another idea to remove stress that this group had is to support young people to plan their future and get work experience and explore options available to them. This would include having career guidance counsellors in schools and creating individual plans for students that build on their interests in years 10, 11 and 12 so that they could experiment and have the flexibility.

Other strategies that young people thought would be useful were access to a room with computers and phones that could directly connect to mental health services, mental health days, regular breaks, and free fruit.

### **Life Skills: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants in this group wanted to create subjects in schools that support young people to develop practical skills and knowledge. Young people wanted to have an approach to learning that encourages young people to be independent and involved in making decisions through more hands on learning.

The subject that would be created would be a life skills class that focused on young people taking care of themselves. Their suggestions were that there would be a program suited to Year 7 and 8 and another one for Year 9 and 10. The class would include learning about budgeting, cleaning, first aid, driving, health, mental health, food and culture, as well as employment specific opportunities such as basic computer coding, shadow days at workplaces, canteen experience, agriculture, work readiness and talking to a career counsellor.

This could also be done within existing subjects such as learning resume writing, communication and conflict resolution skills in English, or learning about banking, stocks, mortgages and budgeting in Maths. The curriculum would need to change to have this focuses on learning that is around the students and their needs.

### **Beyond Year 12: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

These groups wanted more programs that focused on supporting young people to plan their futures, especially over the next five years from Grade 10.

As part of this, they wanted more work experience programs that are offered to all grades in high schools, and an online hub that could provide links to community and link to classes that focus on preparing young people for work.

Young people identified that having a smooth transition between Year 10 and 11 and Year 12, and further training, study or employment are important for young people. They suggested having a career camp where young people could dedicate time to exploring different pathway options in a fun and educational way with the support of career guidance counsellors. The camp would include talks from community and business representatives, work readiness classes, team building activities, fun activities based on making it fun and having information available on career pathways. It would ultimately be an opportunity to learn about what is available in the workforce.

This group also wanted to have more support from career guidance counsellors in schools so that they could to create an individual plan focused around their own interests, school, college and work experience. They also wanted more opportunities to explore different career pathways in different industries.

The group came up with 'Perfect Pathway Planners' (PPP) to highlight what they would like to see in a support person who is a career guidance counsellor. The group said their PPP needed to be open-minded, open to changes, creative, honest, available and connected to local businesses and employers.

*Finding 10: Young people want to interact with people from different industries and with the broader community to support their learning and open opportunities for their future.*

### **Hobbies and Interests: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants wanted to identify new interests by having the opportunity to try different work placements. Participants wanted this to be part of a program that would match interests and hobbies to potential pathways that was not assessed because the focus would be on finding what you want and discovering what you want to do.

Young people wanted to have more guest speakers at school to talk about their hobbies and interests, and a suggestion box for young people to submit ideas for different hobbies. Opportunities could be advertised on a notice board outside the career counsellor office.

Young people recognised that not every school is able to have every resource that they need but it might be available at another school. Schools should therefore be able to share their resources which would include access to recreational hobbies and interests. This would increase the communication between schools both nationally and across the State.

Students wanted more involvement with choosing what they learn with assistance from teachers. Teachers could share their own hobbies and interests with students to build rapport and increase communication.

### **Choosing Direction: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Young people in these groups wanted to create a way for business and community leaders to be involved with schools where they could work one-on-one with students to share information with them.

This group also identified that it would be useful to have a website to explain what different qualifications involve and where they lead. The website could also incorporate a section where the interests of young people could be identified and suggested areas of study. Participants also wanted this website to connect them to opportunities that they could access in their local community. This included where to go for support and workplaces that could offer opportunities to gain practical experience or taster days.

Participants in this group recognised that it is important to build up their skills, which varied from learning a new language to public speaking skills. They wanted more leadership roles and opportunities for everyone to build their confidence. They also wanted to have more peer support throughout all of high school. This would include 'Peer People' who would have a role in supporting and strengthening their fellow students.

### **Getting Advice and Information: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

These groups wanted to create a group called the 'Youth Business Association', which would have work experience groups that teachers or businesses could run that explored different pathways, and more older students lead discussions about different pathways. They also wanted more practical opportunities to explore different pathways before the end of

grade 10 when they had to make more decisions about what they wanted to study. This included more intense opportunities during Year 10 that enables students to meet up and talk about job opportunities and work experience.

*Finding 11: Young people see the purpose of their education and learning is to gain employment.*

Young people also wanted access to information when they needed it and suggested that having an app on their phones to ask questions and get answers would be useful. This would be particularly useful if young people were worried or needed advice. It would be similar to 'Siri' where you could get immediate feedback and information.

### **Lifelong Learning: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants wanted to create more support for people from different cultural and social backgrounds to learn so that everyone has equal opportunities to learn. They also wanted more time to study subjects, such as learning English as a second language, so that they could improve their skills.

These groups said they wanted more support to plan their pathways and increase the availability of teachers aids and permanent support staff. They also wanted to see improved classroom designs for student needs and have outdoor learning environments.

Young people said that having longer courses that suited the needs of individuals and provided them with more choice would support them to learn. They identified that young people may need more support at school to learn about things beyond the classroom. For example, social workers and chaplains who are more involved with all aspects of school and having career guidance counsellors.

Young people said that more funding and resources needed to be placed within schools so that schools could have the best, most modern resources and teachers as possible. This could be done with a new curriculum that teachers study while in training.

### **Technology: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants wanted to utilise new and emerging technologies to create more connections across the world and learning opportunities. Participants said it could help young people learn about different parts of the world by using more realistic images to recreate other parts of the world.

Participants recognised that it is important to use technology appropriately when learning and suggested that students needed to write their work by hand if they were not using technology appropriately.

Young people also recognised that good time management and reducing distractions are important for learning. They suggested creating an app that enables computers or iPads to time out and prevent procrastinating with teachers having control over this.

Participants wanted more types of portable technology, updated computers and more virtual reality within schools to keep up-to-date with technology as it progresses so it they could be used in the best as possible way for their learning.

## **Friends and Family: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

Participants wanted to create more opportunities to involve parents and family involvement such as take a parent to school day, where parents could see how students are learning as they recognised the importance of family involvement. Parents would come to the classroom and experience a lesson where their child is struggling or is confident in. School reports could also have a section where more information could be provided to parents about how their child is going overall at school and to increase the opportunities that parents get to talk to teachers about what their child is learning. Another idea was to have a classroom blog to engage parents and family in their children's learning.

*Finding 12: Young people want detailed information and feedback on a regular basis on their learning at school that they could share with their family.*

Other ideas this group had was to create an app similar to Siri called 'Ask Ada' that you could ask questions and it would provide advice on topics such as family issues. They also wanted to remove the negativity that can surround learning and encourage more communication between schools so that friendships could be made outside of school. This would strengthen social networks and provide more opportunities for young people to learn from their peers.

## **Practical Skills and Experience: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

These groups focused on creating more opportunities to gain experience. This included creating an organisation or club that is specifically focused on work experience for young people. This could help more young people get on-the-job training with opportunities for volunteering, experience and events advertised through a noticeboard at school specifically for these opportunities. They also wanted to remove the stigma of people who volunteer and to encourage people to share their skills to teach others what they know because everyone has different knowledge to contribute.

Participants recognised that there need to be more organisations and businesses that offer work experience and volunteering opportunities, and they should be encouraged to speak to schools so that young people could learn about the opportunities available. Young people wanted to learn about different pathways but also have the opportunity to try these in a way that worked around their study commitments and incorporate more of these opportunities in schools. Young people want to be able to consider a variety of different pathways.

*Finding 13: Young people want opportunities to gain practical experience through work placements or volunteering but need support to identify opportunities to do this.*

## **Support and Learning: what young people want to keep and what they want to change**

These groups wanted to have support people who could specifically help them look at options for study, training and employment and work towards these goals. They wanted all grades in school to have access to this support to remove the pressure of having to decide what to do at the end of Grade 10. Participants also wanted to have more realistic

discussions about courses, changing courses, choosing what to study and selecting pathways. This support is important to help young people plan and achieves their goals.

Young people also wanted to increase the opportunities to study different subjects at school that cover engaging content that is interesting and relevant to students. They also wanted it to be clearer how different subjects linked together.

*(See Finding 3: Young people learn best when they can identify a practical application for their learning.)*

## **Analysis of Retain, Change and Create Discussion**

Young people recognised that everyone learns under different circumstances and this should be encouraged to ensure young people have the best chance at learning. Despite this, there was an overall theme of creating more practical opportunities for young people to develop skills that they thought would be relevant to their needs now and in the future. Young people suggested that new classes could be created to achieve this or new content could be incorporated into existing classes. The discussions that participants had focused on gaining skills and experience that they thought would be relevant to employers, rather than qualifications. This may be because they could more easily identify practical learning and specific skills that could help them in the workplace. Young people also focused on the importance of having access to opportunities with volunteering, work placements within different industries and workplaces, and mentoring to support them to help them learn practical skills.

Young people identified that they needed more support to help them explore different options for their education and get advice on this. They wanted face-to-face, one-on-one, tailored support by a skilled career guidance counsellor who can provide information and advice that is specific to the circumstances and interests of young people. This may be because although young people said, they are keen to access web-based information, they still needed help to apply it to their own context. Young people recognised that there is pressure around making decisions about their education after Year 10 but wanted support to make these decisions earlier in high school as they recognised it involves exploring different options and having the time to do this. This can help ensure that young people are making decisions that will best meet their needs and interests so that they are engaged with study and training.

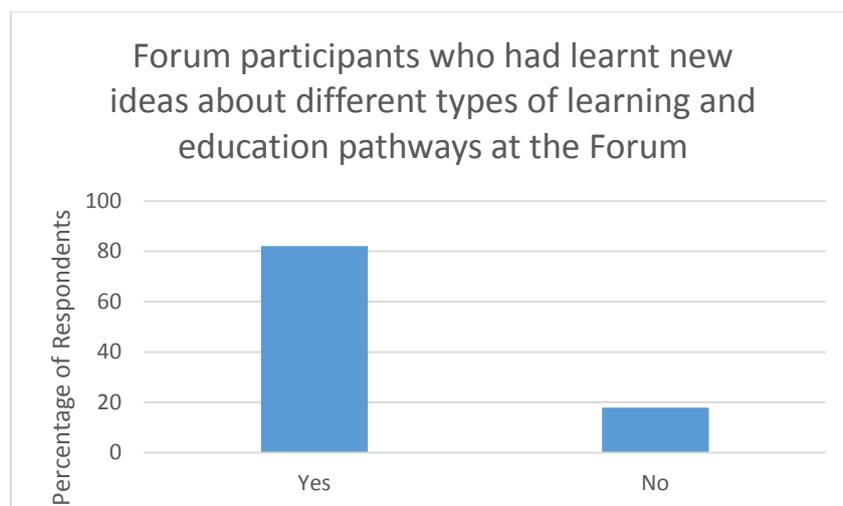
Young people also identified the importance of having support for their learning and education. Participants identified that family and friends were people that they would go to for support although they recognised that these people do not always have a positive influence on them. Young people also recognised that technology can form an important part of their learning experience but that this also does not always have a positive influence. It was important to young people to be aware of the distractions it can cause and the need reduce these distractions or have the support to do this, whether this is from a teacher or an app.

There was a very strong emphasis throughout these discussions on learning as a pathway to employment. This could be because of Tasmania's high youth unemployment rate and discussions in the broader community about this issue and employment opportunities in different industries.

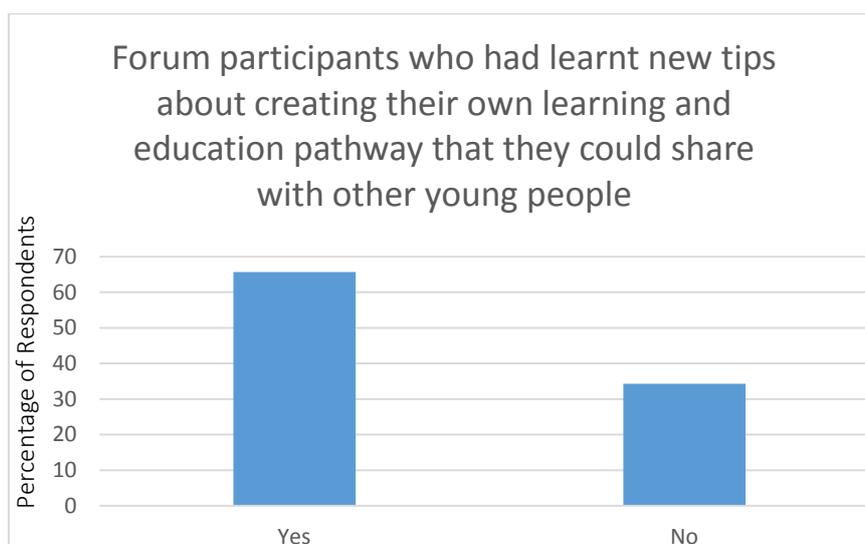
Young people understood that there were different ways of learning and that some of their peers needed more support with their learning. Much of this focused on getting support for their mental health and having information explained to them in a way that they could understand.

## Forum Feedback

Participants had the opportunity to provide feedback on the Forum at the end of the day.



Participants had the opportunity during the Forum to learn about different ideas relating to learning and education. The majority of participants said that they had learnt new ideas at the Forum, including what other young people thought could be done to improve learning and education. A third of participants said that they had learned more about potential pathways they could explore or had identified more options that are available to them while several participants also said that they had learned more about the different ways you can learn information.



Most participants said that they had learned something new at the Forum that they could share with other young people. Most of these responses were about ideas for the future,

planning ahead and ways that young people can achieve their goals. Several responses said that the voices of young people do matter and that they would let other young people know this.

The majority of participants said the best part of the Forum was getting the chance to discuss different ideas, share their opinions with other young people, and hear about the different ideas they had. Participants also enjoyed getting the opportunity to meet new people especially from different schools and areas of Tasmania. The guest speaker, getting to learn new things and the catering were also identified by participants as aspects of the Forum that they enjoyed.

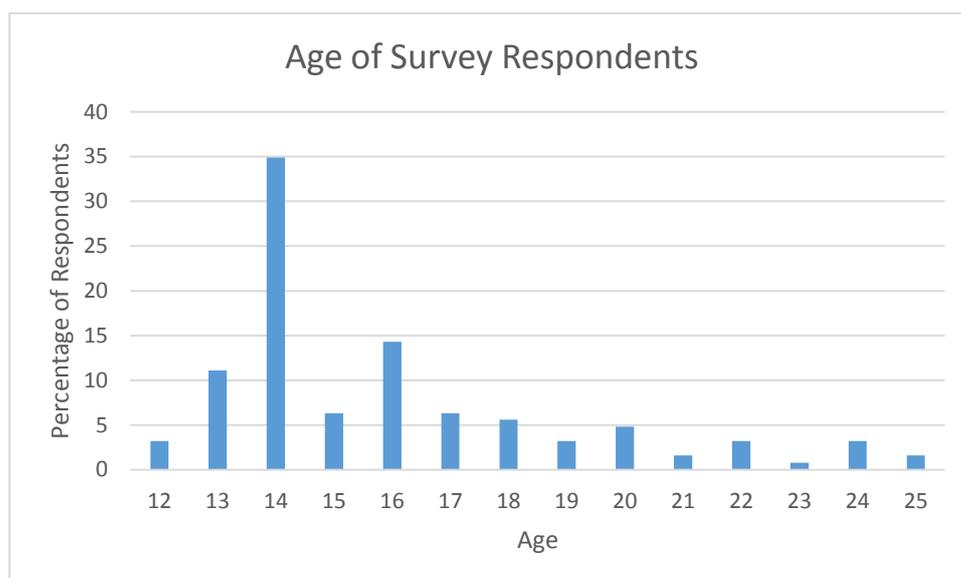
Participants were asked how the Forum could be improved. Most participants said that they enjoyed the Forum as it was or wanted to have more opportunities to attend Forums in the future and get more people to attend the Forums. Despite having some activities on the day, some participants suggested that the Forum could improve with more activities to do.

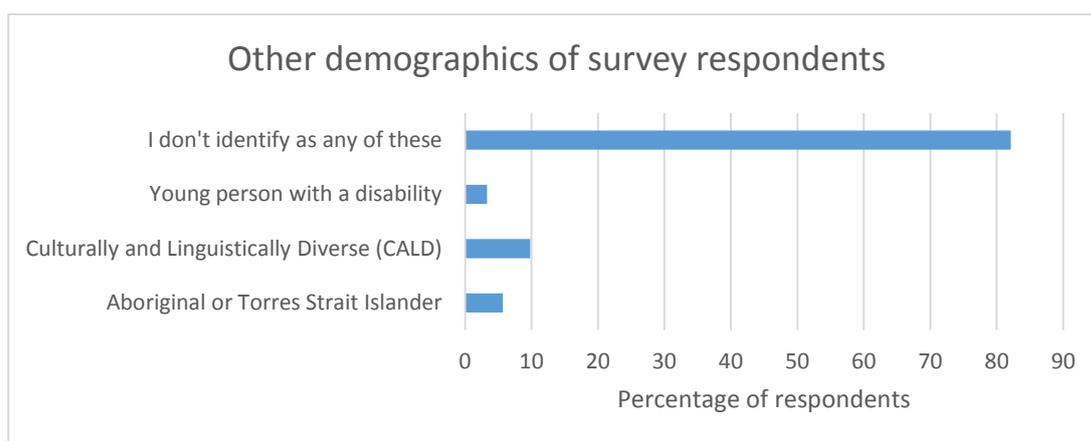
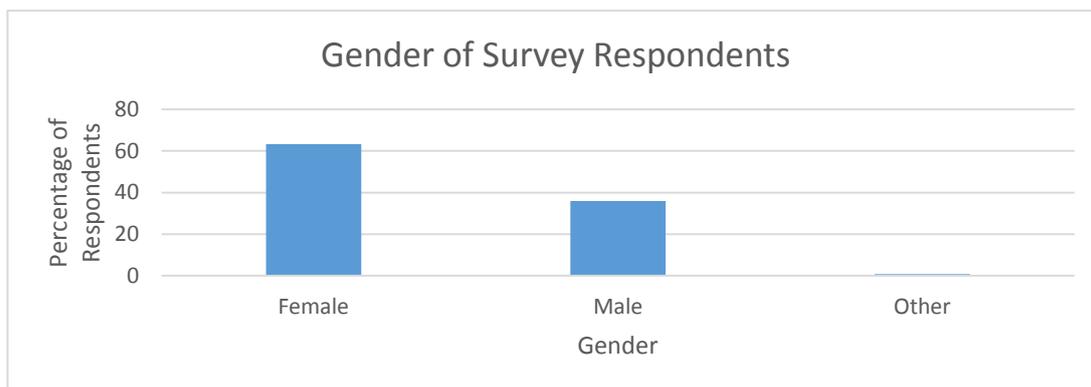
Other comments from participants were that they enjoyed the Forum and the opportunity to have their say and come along.

## Consultation Process: Survey

A survey was conducted to accompany the TYF *Learning and Education* Forum to enable more young people to contribute their ideas if they were unable to attend the Forum. The Survey could be accessed online or a hard copy could be printed and returned.

There were 130 responses to the survey, 78 of these respondents were participants who had attended the TYF *Learning and Education* Forum and completed a hard copy of the survey at the event. Three people who responded to the survey indicated that they were over the age of 25 and these responses have been excluded from the analysis of the survey responses as TYF works with young people aged 12 to 25.





The high proportion of respondents aged 13 to 16 reflects the demographics of participants at the Forum that attracted a number of larger school groups. Of these respondents, 27 were from Northern Tasmania, 30 were from North West Tasmania and 67 were from Southern Tasmania. The Survey had a high proportion of respondents that identified as female or from a Culturally or Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background.

## Young people, learning and education

Respondents were asked to describe learning and education and identify what they thought is important about both of these.

### Describe Learning and Education

The majority of respondents described learning as a process that is gone through to gain more knowledge, understand information or develop skills. There were also responses that described the experience of learning, including fun, enjoyable and interesting. Others described learning based on the context where it happens, such as in a school, and how it happens, such as someone else explaining information.

Young people also described learning by what they can gain from it. This included not getting left behind at school, being able to do tasks such as cook or ride a bike, have skills for the future, the opportunity to socialise and meet new people, and gain an education. Some of the responses also described learning as a lifelong process.

When describing education, most respondents described education as something that gives you the opportunity to learn and have your skills and understanding recognised by other people, which can lead to an outcome such as getting a better paying job. Young people also said that education is a building block of society because it is part of life. Others referred to education as learning in a formal way that has structure, happens within a system, with expectations to learn in a way according to a curriculum, which is something that everyone needs to do.

*Finding 14: Young people understood that learning could encompass many situations, but they focused on learning as a pathway that incorporates education to achieve their goals.*

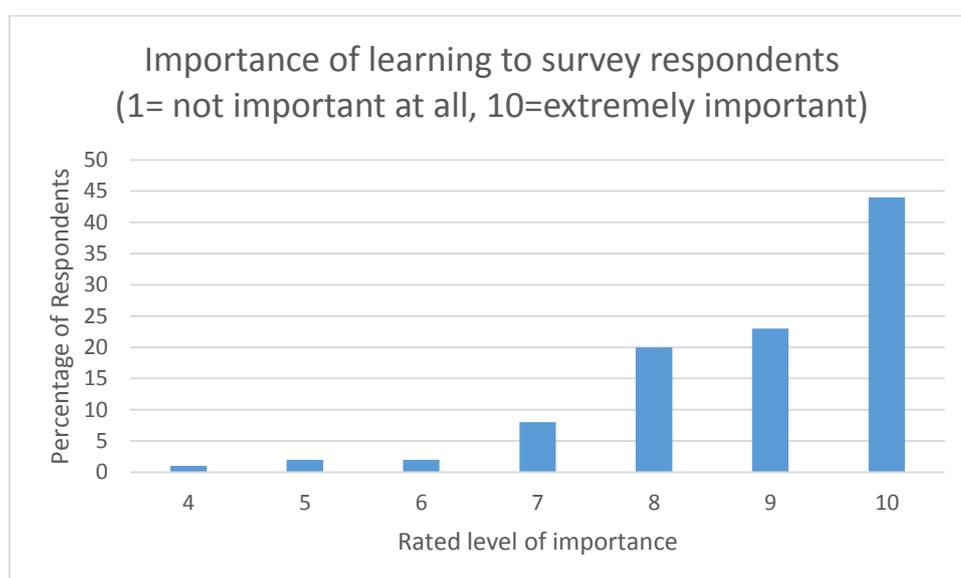
### Young people Value Learning and Education

Young people identified what they value about learning and education. Young people said that they value learning because it could help them learn new information, work with other people, share information and develop new skills. They also value learning because it has the ability to create opportunities in their lives. For some young people it meant they could learn to be a better person or have the opportunity to grow and change. Other responses were about the value of handing down information from different generations and being able to explore pathways for education, training and work in the future.

Young people said that they valued education because it could provide them with the opportunities to learn and achieve these aspects mentioned above. In particular, young people valued education because it could help them to gain employment, support their family and create opportunities in the future that they would not be able to access otherwise. Some respondents also identified that having the opportunity to get an education is valuable in itself because not everyone has access to this. Young people also valued the support they can get from education staff including teachers and teacher aids, and their peers who support them.

*Finding 15: Young people value learning and education highly.*

### The Importance of Learning and Education



Respondents rated how important learning is to them on scale. Learning was rated an 8 or above by 87% of respondents. Only 5% of respondents rated the importance of learning as a 6 or lower. The majority of respondents indicated that learning and education are important to them because it enables them to have a good life. This included making it easier to navigate through life and prepare for adulthood. Young people said that it was important to gain new skills and knowledge so that they could do more things and gain a better understanding about the world.

Some young people were more specific about why learning and education was important for them, for example helping them to gain employment, getting them ready for the workplace, helping them understand themselves and making better decisions for their life.

A few responses also related to the broader importance that learning and education have in society. This included being essential for societies to develop and understanding what has shaped our society, and the value that society places upon learning and education.

*Finding 16: Young people value learning because they recognise it will prepare them for the future.*

### **Useful ways of learning**

Respondents identified what they found useful when trying to learn something new and what they thought other young people find useful. The responses to these questions were very similar.

The majority of respondents either identified a way of learning that they preferred or having support from someone else to learn. The learning styles that young people identified included a mixture of visual, audio and kinaesthetic approaches such as watching someone else demonstrate a task, listening to other explain information, working in groups to discuss ideas, taking notes, reading and learning while having a go at a task.

A large proportion of respondents also identified that having support from others helped them to learn. Many of these responses referred to having effective and open communication with their teachers who are patient with their learning and can spend one on one time with students to help them learn. This is important for young people as they wanted to be able to access individualised support.

A large number of responses also referred to having an environment that encourages young people to learn. This varied depending on the preferred learning styles of young people but some examples included having space, lots of light, quiet areas to work, music playing in the background and places to discuss work in small groups. A few of these responses referred to having access to resources such as materials to read, computers and books and making learning relevant, fun, understandable and useful.

*(See Finding 7: Young people consider it important to have an positive learning environment because they understand the impact that this has on their learning.*

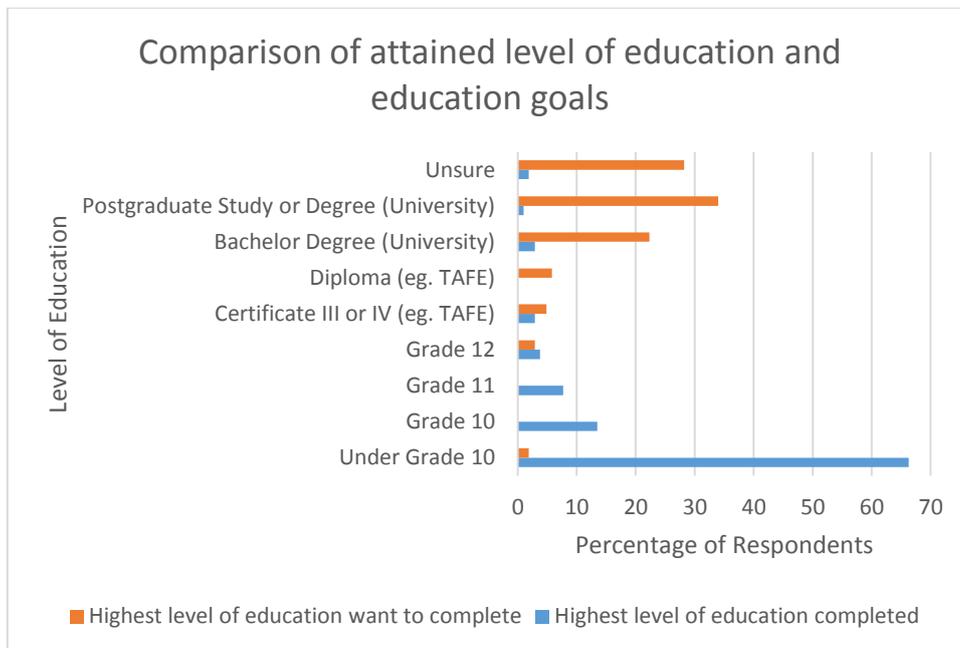
### **Connections between learning and education**

Young people described how they thought learning and education are connected. About half of respondents referred to education being a way of learning in a structured way or in a structured environment. Another third of respondents saw that education and learning went

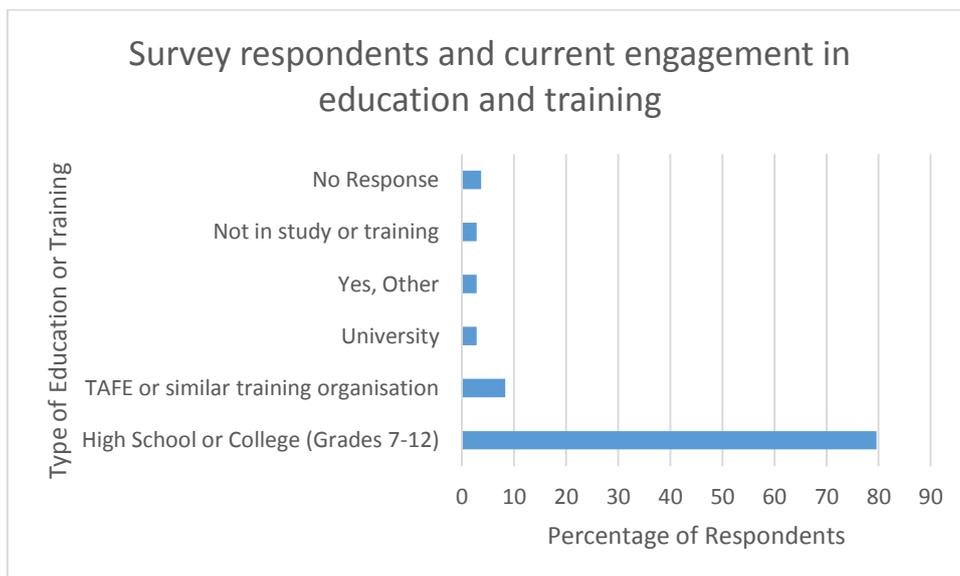
together and you could not have one without the other. Other respondents referred to education as one way or place of where learning occurs.

## Learning Experiences of Respondents

Respondents were asked about the highest level of education they had completed, their goals for the level of education they wanted to complete and what their current engagement with education is.



The high proportion of respondents who identified that their highest level of education they had completed was a grade in high school or college reflects the demographics of respondents. Despite this, a significant amount of respondents indicated that they wanted to achieve a university qualification. Nearly 30% of young people said they were unsure about when they would like to finish study.

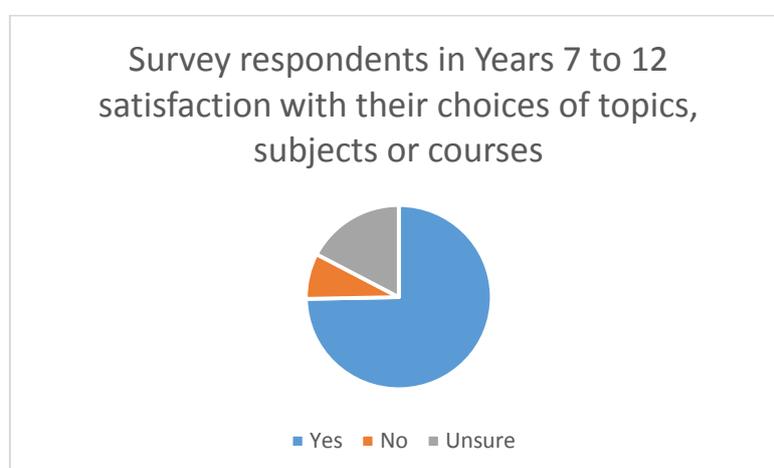
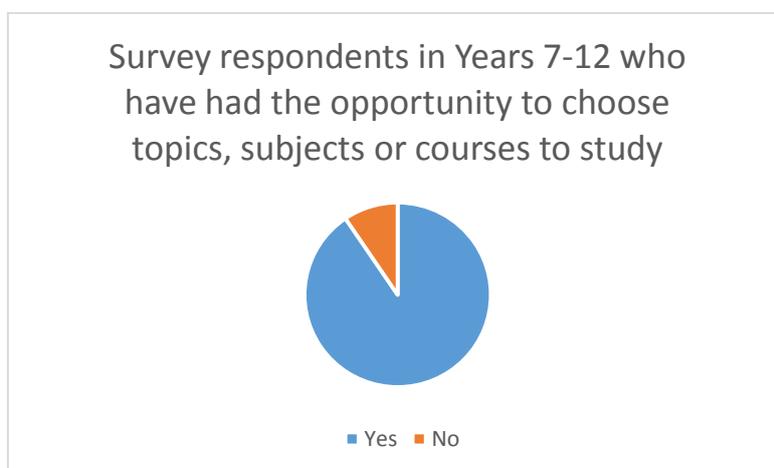


The majority of respondents identified that they were in Years 7 to 12, which is a reflection of the demographics of the respondents who completed the survey. Based on their answers to this question, respondents then completed different sets of questions that were targeted to their current situation and experiences they may have had.

*Finding 17: Young people have aspirations of completing at least a Year 12 education and continuing on to further training or education.*

### Respondents in High School or College

Respondents who stated that they were currently in high school or college identified if they had the opportunity to make decisions about their learning and education and what factors may influence these decisions.



The majority of respondents in high school or college already had the opportunity to choose topics, subjects or courses to study or learn. Of these respondents, the majority identified that they were happy with the choices that they had made about these decisions. Almost 20% of these respondents said that they were unsure. This may be because they had selected courses or subjects for study but had not yet started them.

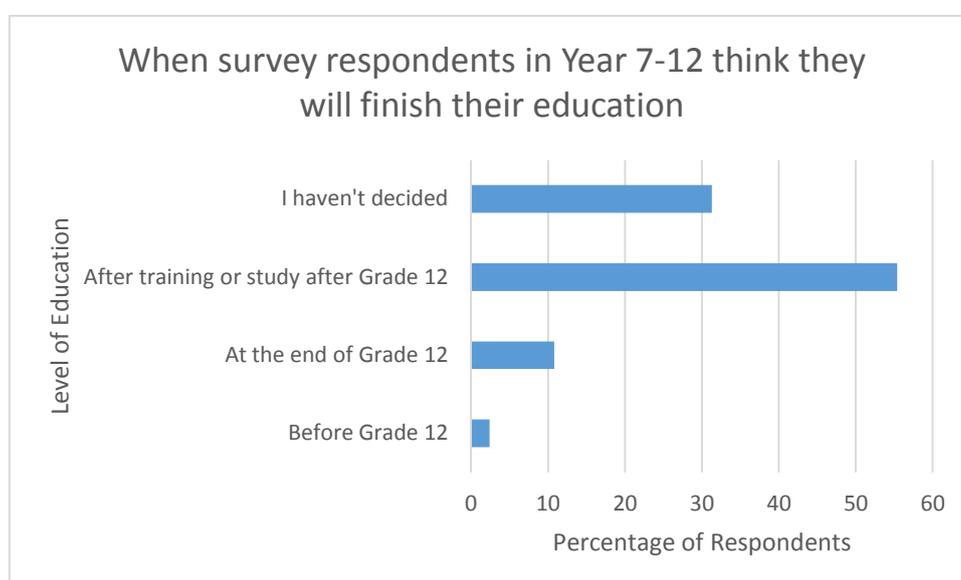
Young people identified what had influenced the decisions they had made about their education and learning. Most respondents said it was their own personal opinions and ideas that influenced the decisions they made. This included considering what they were

passionate about, what they thought they wanted to do in the future, and what they enjoyed learning.

A large proportion of responses also related to making decisions based on what they thought would be beneficial for them in the future. This could be general in nature or a specific subject or course they needed to help them get a job in an industry they are interested in. Only a few responses referred to friends, teachers and parents influencing the decisions young people made about their learning and education. A few responses also referred to the experience they had already had in a previous class or course.

*Finding 18: Young people are making decisions about their learning education from a young age.*

*Finding 19: Young people are making their own decisions about their learning and education based on their interests and what they might need in the future, even though they may need additional information to inform these decisions.*



The majority of these respondents thought that they would finish their education after completing further study or training after Year 12. Despite this, a significant proportion had not yet decided what they wanted to do. Further information about why these respondents thought they would complete their education at these different points is outlined below.

### Respondents who wanted to finish study before Year 12

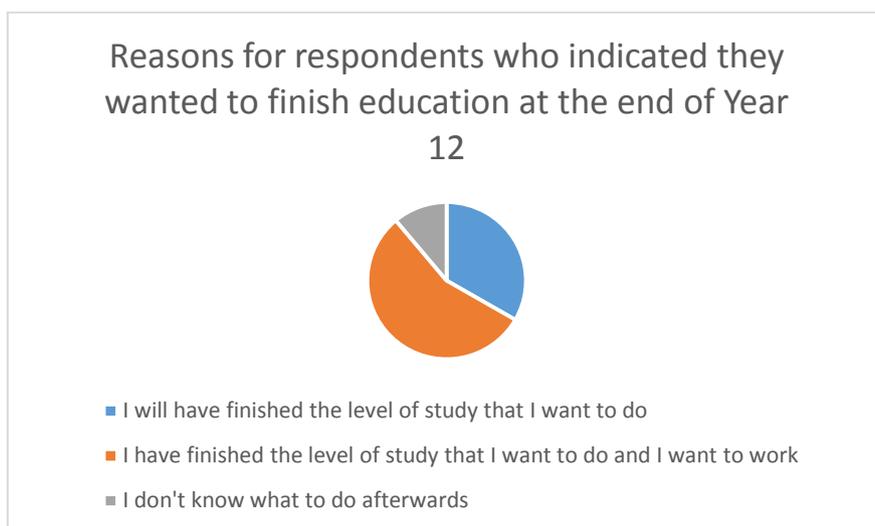
A third of these respondents indicated that they would finish study before Year 12 because it would be difficult to continue studying due to personal reasons. Another third said that it might be difficult for them to get transport to and from school. Some of the respondents who said they had thought about doing further study were unsure what to study or how to overcome the challenges they may face to doing this. The final third of responses said that they would be pursuing other study or training opportunities such as joining the Army.

Some respondents said they had considered completing Year 12 but thought it might be too difficult for them and other young people who might be trying to finish Year 12. This included the pressure of exams, not knowing what to study, and difficulties trying to address the

challenges they may face. To overcome this, the respondents said young people have access to the support and resources that they need to finish Year 12.

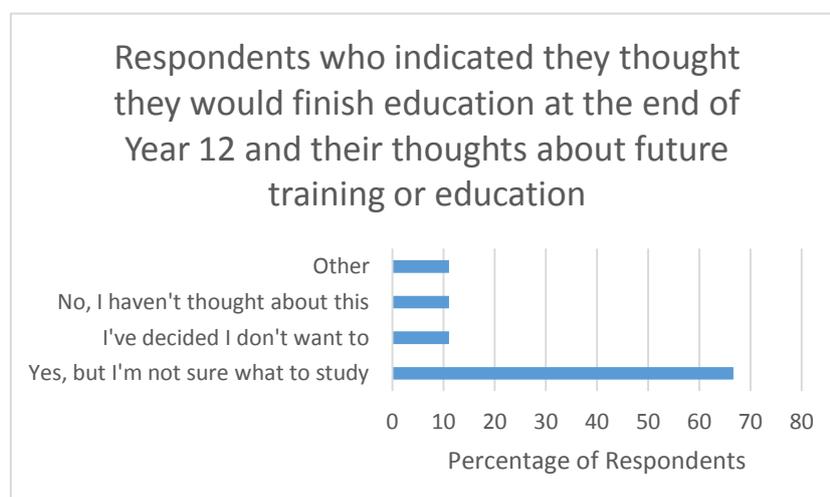
*Finding 20: A significant barrier for young people who want to continue study or training after Year 12 is not understanding what study or training opportunities after involve or how to plan for these.*

### Respondents who wanted to finish study at the end of Year 12



Over half of these respondents indicated that they wanted to finish at the end of Year 12 because they wanted to start working. A third of responses said they thought they will have completed the level of study that they want to do. The remaining respondents indicated that they wanted to finish study at the end of Year 12 because they did not know what they wanted to do afterwards. What these respondents considered when thinking about their education varied. This included the desire to gain employment, their own interests, not enjoying school, or getting the level of education they needed for what they wanted to do.

*Finding 21: A critical reason why young people may not want to continue studying or training after Year 12 is because they may not be able to identify what they want to do.*



Despite these respondents indicating they wanted to finish their education at the end of Year 12, a significant proportion of these had considered further study or training but were unsure of what they wanted to do. A few respondents indicated that they had not thought about further study or training after Year 12 or that they did not want pursue this because they thought it would be too difficult. Even though many respondents said they wanted to finish in Year 12 to work, it did not mean they had not thought about study or training after this.

When asked about what would help them to finish Year 12, the majority of respondents in this category said that it would be support from teachers, parents and friends. Respondents thought that other young people would also benefit from this support, but also identified that making learning fun, accessing transport and being able to choose subjects, and having confidence within themselves would encourage young people to finish Year 12.

*Finding 22: Young people rely on their peers most for support although their peer network may not be very diverse and limited in terms of the opportunities they perceive are available to them.*

### Respondents who wanted to continue studying or training after Year 12

The majority of respondents currently in high school or college who said that they wanted to continue studying or training beyond Year 12 identified that it was because they wanted to study a particular course that would lead to employment. Some respondents were more general with their reasons for wanting to do further study beyond Year 12, such as wanting to learn more or achieve their own goals and increase the opportunities available to them.

For these respondents, the main influence for their decision was a particular career or job, or their interests that they wanted to pursue. The remaining responses said that it was people they knew, particularly their parents, and the experience they had with education that had influenced their thinking. This included parents who had a positive and negative experience with education. A few young people also identified that they wanted a particular lifestyle or to pursue goals and would need a good education and job to do this.

These respondents were concerned that finances would make it harder to complete study and training beyond Year 12. They were also concerned that they might not have the study skills, motivation or ability to cope with extra workload, harder work or tests, and this could make it challenging for them. Having to move away from home was also a concern for these young people because they would be away from their family and supportive people. A few respondents also identified that health concerns or needing to work may be challenging when trying to pursue further study.

Respondents indicated that having support and confidence would help young people to reach their study goals after Year 12. Young people also thought it was important to have access to financial help and develop good study skills and work ethic. The responses were identical for things they thought could help other young people finish study or training after Year 12.

*Finding 23: Young people see financial costs of training or studying as a significant potential barrier to their learning and education completion or attainment.*

## Respondents who had not decided

Respondents in high school or college who had not decided when they might want to finish education were asked to identify what would help their thinking or make a decision. Half of these young people said having additional information or understanding about what they could do in the future and what they wanted to do would be useful. A quarter of responses were about waiting to see what they enjoy or are good at during high school and college to help them identify what they want to do afterwards. A few responses also indicated they wanted more support to help them identify what they could do after Year 12.

Young people thought that their decisions about what they would do would be influenced by their own goals, interests and passions and the opportunities they had to pursue these. These respondents said that having more knowledge and information about pathways would also help other young people to make this decision. This included having support to identify interests and passions. Several respondents also said it is important young people are given time to think about different pathways and not make rushed decisions because there can be a lot of pressure placed on them about their learning and education.

*Finding 24: Young people feel confident they can achieve their plans if they can identify what they want to do and understand the pathway of how they will get there.*

## Currently studying after Year 12 TAFE or similar, University

Respondents who identified that they were currently in a post-Year 12 study or training course were asked to identify why they had made a decision to do this. A large proportion of respondents were of refugee and migrant backgrounds and indicated that they needed to learn English so had gone to TAFE to do this although they may not have completed Year 12 in Australia. For these respondents, support from family was one of the key influences for their decision to pursue further study.

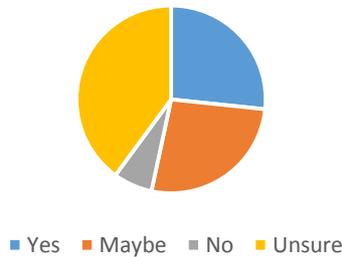
Other respondents indicated they had pursued further study because they wanted to get a particular job or work in an industry, and a few responses were about gaining more knowledge or learning about something that was of interest to them and this is what had influenced their decision.

These respondents reflected on their experience about what could have made it more difficult or easier for them to complete Year 12, keeping in mind that not all respondents to these questions had completed Year 12. Most respondents said that having a lack of money or resources was one of the key things that could have made it harder for them to study after Year 12. A few responses mentioned needing to move, balancing study with other commitments and not being prepared or knowing what to expect from their training or course.

Most of the respondents in this group identified that support services and support from people could help them to complete their study and training. Access to transport was also something important, particularly personal transport. A few responses also mentioned having a clear pathway from school to training or further study would have been beneficial.

*(See Finding 23: Young people see financial costs of training or studying as a significant potential barrier to their learning and education completion or attainment.)*

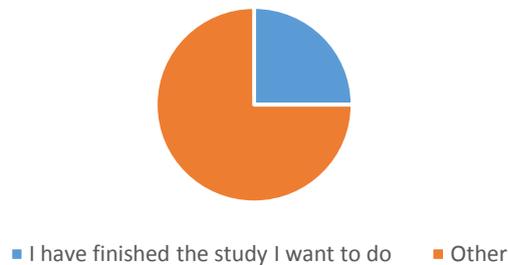
Respondents who indicated they were in post Year 12 training or study and their consideration of further study or education after completing current course



Respondents in this group identified whether they were considering going on to further study or training after they had completed their current course. A quarter of respondents were planning to do further study after completing their current course. A quarter said that they might consider it in the future, and the majority of respondents said they were unsure.

### Not currently studying

Reasons for survey respondents who are not currently studying



There were very few respondents who indicated that they were not currently engaged in study or training. One young person indicated that they had finished studying because they had completed the level of education that they wanted, which was a Masters degree. The remaining respondents said that they were taking time off in between studying or were comfortable with what they had already learned so far so were not currently in study or training.

Respondents had varied answers for what had influenced their decision to stop studying. Some had finished their course, others did not enjoy the experience of having a formal structure for learning, some faced financial barriers and others were unsure of what they wanted to do next. These respondents thought that other young people who were deciding to finish study would consider their work, family commitment, employment, money, location, interests, health, travel, and experience in the education system.

## Other young people, learning and education

Respondents thought other young people would value learning and education because it would enable them to learn new information, skills and have the opportunity to study something of interest, which was similar to why young people identified that they valued learning and education. A quarter of responses referred to young people valuing learning and education because of the opportunities it could create for them in the future and help them live their life. Other respondents also said that other young people would value the social aspects of learning such as meeting new people at school and being able to get a job that they wanted. A few respondents mentioned that they did not think other young people value learning and education. While young people may indicate they value learning and education they may not demonstrate this and it may not be visible.

Young people also identified where they thought young people would go for support with their learning and education. Nearly every response to this referred to young people going to either their friends or family, or teachers for support with their learning. About a quarter of responses also mentioned support services or people such as mentors, tutors, social worker or guidance counsellors that they young people might access for help with their learning and education or issues that may impact this. A few responses said that young people might seek support from their school or university.

## Ideas to support young people and their learning and education

Most respondents wanted an online information resource that young people could access. This resource would include detailed information about courses, places to study, training opportunities and pathways to help young people understand what they all mean. It would also refer young people to where they could go to get extra support or speak to someone about planning their education pathway. Respondents said the resource needed to be in youth-friendly language and not use academic terms that young people are yet to understand or recognise. It also should include videos so that young people can hear from different people across Australia, the world, and the opportunities that they could pursue

Participants also wanted support to develop their study skills. This included ideas for creating apps to limit distractions when using computers and apps that could help you learn while doing homework when young people might not have access to the support they need.

*Finding 25: Young people know how they learn best and are the best people to ask about their learning needs.*

Young people also wanted to create more flexible and individualised learning spaces and programs so that young people can use their strengths to help them learn. This included having specific courses tailored to the needs and interests of young people and being able to access learning opportunities online. They also wanted to have different types of learning areas in schools so they could go to the area where they would learn best.

Lastly, there were ideas about creating more support for young people and their learning. This included older students to support younger students, working with peers, a support group with similar young people and more teacher support available.

## Analysis of Survey Results

A critical tipping point for young people appears to be when they do not know what they want to do in terms of their learning and education. The survey indicated that due to a number of factors at this point, young people either continue studying despite not knowing what they want to do but think they will work out along the way, or will stop studying because they do not want to spend time learning something that they do not think will be useful for them in the future. There was a significant proportion of respondents who indicated they were unsure about when they thought they would finish their education meaning that these young people may reach this critical tipping point. There are a range of factors that will influence which way a young person goes including their support networks, perceived opportunities available to them, mental health, their goals for the future and societal expectations.

Young people recognised that in order to make a plan for their learning and education, they needed a skilled specialist who had specific knowledge about learning and employment pathways so that they could be provided with support and advice specific to their circumstances and interests. The focus on this could be because at the time of the Forum and Survey, Pathway Planners were not in schools and the new program developed to fill this gap was not yet implemented. Schools and teachers may not be specifically trained in this area where teachers assisting young people to navigate these decisions in addition to teaching and this was something that young people were able to identify.

Finance was raised as a concern by young people because of the impact this can have on the opportunities they can access. This includes access to transport, the costs of having personal transport and housing costs if a young person needs to move. Focus on this may be due to the many changes around income support and the subsequent delays in accessing this, as well as the additional pressures this places on families, high unemployment rates and access to affordable housing.

Many young people face additional barriers to their learning, such as their mental health or lack of support network, and this influences them from as early as they start to develop aspirations about learning and make decisions about their learning.

## Conclusion

This Report demonstrates that young people are thinking about their learning and different issues that can affect this. Young people who participated in the Forum and Survey value learning and education highly. They were able to identify ways that their learning and education is encouraged and supported but they also recognised that there are gaps that exist in this support. Young people wanted more face-to-face support from skilled career guidance counsellors who can provide tailored information and advice, and support young people to apply this to their own context. This is because young people identified having practical skills and experience important to connect their education to employment as one of their biggest concerns.

It is critical for young people to have this support so they can plan for their future as not knowing what to do or how to get there can be a critical tipping point for young people's education. Young people who have not yet identified what they want to do in terms of their learning and education may think they will work this out along the way or may not see the point in continuing education if they cannot see how it will be useful to them in the future.

Young people identified that they learn best when they understand how their learning is relevant to their future and has a practical application.

Young people could identify a range of factors that affect their learning including the environment they are in, their personal support networks, connections to the broader community and perceptions of them in the community. While these aspects can have a positive influence on learning, young people recognised this is not always the case. For example, young people identified that their friends and family are not always a source of encouragement for their learning.

Young people are making decisions about their learning and education from an early age so it is important to consider how their learning is impacted and how they can be best supported to learn to encourage better long-term outcomes.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Aims of the TYF *Learning and Education Forum*

Aim	What this means	How we will do it
1. Gather quality data and feedback from young people to feed into policy development	Providing young people with the opportunity to contribute their ideas and solutions based on their experiences and influence the policies that will have an impact on them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have small discussion groups for young people to discuss issues they are concerned about and develop ideas and solutions to these</li> <li>• Let young people know what is already available in terms of education pathways and support so that they can identify if there are gaps</li> <li>• Detailed survey of young people statewide and forum participants</li> <li>• Development of report combining all the findings</li> </ul>
2. Getting young people to start thinking more broadly about their education opportunities and pathways	Within one company, sector or industry, there may be a lot of job opportunities that may or may not have an education or training course directly related to them. For example, eg. Growth industry of fisheries there are opportunities for Marketing, HR, and this is something that young people do not immediately think of. Shifting the focus to learning transferable skills that can be used in multiple situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have stalls with information from organisations and education providers such as TasTAFE, University of Tasmania, online colleges, apprentices, etc. to demonstrate the different opportunities available for study</li> <li>• Provide participants with booklets that have profiles of people sharing their diverse education and employment pathways.</li> <li>• Have a resource of links and available resources to aid learning</li> </ul>
3. Young people acknowledging that although it is challenging to find your way sometimes, there are things that they can do	Young people can actively seek opportunities within or outside of the education system to support their learning. This can include support, volunteering, work placements, and researching different education and training pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through the survey to see what young people are already thinking about/might think about</li> <li>• Split the discussion of ideas in topic groups and then into 1. what you can do as individual and; 2. what you think a school teacher, education provider, support service, or workplace could do to help young people in their learning</li> </ul>
4. Industry, community and sector exploring the role each has in helping young people through their learning.	Young people can find it challenging to navigate their learning and need assistance. This aim will involve looking at what each area is doing to support young people through their education pathways and provide the opportunity for young people to provide feedback on this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an 'ideas wall' where young people can provide their responses to questions (eg. What ways do you learn best, what things do you want people to let you know about education pathways)</li> <li>• Have James Riggall as a guest speaker. James has created his own business that focuses on helping find ways to use technology in innovative ways for different groups of people and businesses. He was interested in becoming a gaming designer in high school currently went on to study at UTAS.</li> <li>• Invite key stakeholders such as government, education providers, industry and support services along to hear the reporting back of ideas at the end of the Forum</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: Agenda for the TYF *Mental Health Matters* Forum

Time	Activity
9:30-10:00	Registration
10.00 - 10.05	Arrival and taking of seats
10:05 – 10:10	Welcome by Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier, Guy Barnett
10.10 – 10.25	Introduction by Facilitator, Mo
10.25 - 10.45	Fill out the TYF Learning and Education survey
10.45 – 11.05	Big Picture Brainstorming
11.05 – 11.25	Morning Tea
11.25 – 11.45	Solutions Group 1
11.45 – 12.15	Guest Speaker: James Riggall, Founder of BitLink
12.15 – 12.45	Lunch Break
12.45 - 1.20	Solutions Group - Session 2
1.20 – 1.35	Ideas Wall
1:35 – 1:50	Afternoon break
1:50 – 2:40	Reporting back of Solutions Group 2
2.40 – 2.50	Forum Wrap Up
2.50 – 3.05	Feedback forms, Thank you and conclusion by YNOT and TYF

### Appendix 3: TYF Learning and Education State-wide Forum Discussion Groups

TOPICS	DESCRIPTION
<b>Life Skills</b>	The skills to get you through life and where or how these are learnt
<b>Stress Creators</b>	who, what, when, where, why and how do you approach the things that create stress
<b>Friends and Family</b>	The influence that these people and commitments have on learning and education
<b>Practical Skills and Experience</b>	Getting experience volunteering, on the job or in training
<b>Choosing Direction</b>	Decisions about what to learn, where to go and when
<b>Beyond Year 12</b>	Moving between and combining school, study, training and work
<b>Support and Learning</b>	Support to get you through learning and education
<b>Lifelong Learning</b>	Different places and ways of learning after study or training
<b>Hobbies and Interests</b>	Combining your interests with learning and education
<b>Getting Advice and Information</b>	What to ask, where to go and how to find out
<b>Technology</b>	Balancing and using technology with learning and education