



Budget Submission to Treasury

for 2015-16

on behalf of the
Tasmanian Youth Sector



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January 2015

ynot is the peak body representing the voice of Tasmanian youth



Mission: To work with young people, the Tasmanian Youth Sector, the community and all levels of government, to increase the participation and contribution of young people in the state.

Vision: A Tasmania where young people are actively engaged in community life and have access to the resources needed to develop their potential.

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Introduction

The Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on behalf of the Tasmanian youth sector to the State Government's community budget submission process for 2015-16.

YNOT is the peak body for the non-government youth sector in Tasmania. YNOT represents both the interests of its members and the interests of young people. Integral to the work of YNOT is the youth participation structure, the Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF). TYF is Tasmania's peak youth consultative and participatory body.

Each year YNOT provides the Department of Treasury and Finance with specific recommendations on how we believe the State Government should distribute its resources to ensure that the lives of young people, particularly vulnerable young people, can be improved. YNOT's budget submission to the State Government for 2015-16 represents the key priority areas that YNOT, in consultation with the Tasmanian youth sector and young people, have identified.

YNOT has taken this opportunity to provide recommendations that also benefit the youth sector, and therefore, the young people they work with. As a result, this submission has been divided into two parts:

1. Youth Peak Priorities
2. Youth Sector Priorities

As always, YNOT is mindful of the economic climate in which we are currently operating, as well as the limitless number of recommendations that could be made. Therefore, in consultation with our members, we have concentrated on providing the State Government with recommendations in areas of highest need or greatest priority at this time.

Summary of Recommendations

Part 1: Youth Peak Priorities

Sustainable Community Sector Peak Bodies

Recommendation: That the State Government, at a minimum, maintain current funding, including direct and indirect work, and provide continued support for all community sector organisations, in all regions of the State.

Part 2: Youth Sector Priorities

Youth Justice

Recommendation: That the State Government builds on the proposed *Continuum of Care* to prevent youth offending and re offending and move to endorse and fund this strategy.

Young People, Housing and Homelessness

Recommendation: That the State Government fully funds the development and service delivery of a Supported Youth Accommodation facility in the North West.

Recommendation: That the State Government allocates funding to expand the current resources to ensure sufficient accommodation for people under the age of 16 in shelters.

Rights of Young People

Recommendation: That the State Government funds a review of current legislation related to child labour and consolidates these laws into stand-alone legislation.

Recommendation: That the State Government funds a review of the current legislation using the work that has already been conducted to determine which laws should be consolidated.

Health and Wellbeing

Recommendation: That the State Government fund education programs designed to inform young people about the consequences of body modification at a young age and the dangers and risks associated with body modification, particularly when not performed by a professional.

Recommendation: That the State Government provides sufficient funding to ensure the actions arising as a result of the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy for Tasmania can be met to provide the best service to young people.

Education and Employment

Recommendation: That the State Government allocates additional funding to be used to continue supporting the already established alternate education options and to develop new programs to assist young people disengaged from, or unable to access, mainstream education.

Recommendation: That the State Government provides funding to ensure all students have access to post year 10 education in a format that best supports their learning styles and needs.

Recommendation: That funding be allocated to create a youth friendly online resource to assist young people looking for work, wanting to maintain work and managing work with education.

Recommendation: YNOT recommends that a mentoring and/or work experience online resource be developed to work alongside the new careers website to give schools and young people the accessibility to these opportunities.

Safe and Accessible Transport for Young People

Recommendation: That there is an increase in safe, reliable and affordable transport services available to young people, particularly those in rural and remote areas of the State.

YNOT Budget Submission Recommendations in Detail

Part 1: Youth Peak Priorities

1. Sustainable Community Sector

Community sector organisations play a vital role in the lives of young people living in Tasmania. Unfortunately, many community sector organisations cannot meet the needs of all the young people trying to access their service due to lack of funding and limited numbers of workers. The rates of youth homelessness and unemployment demonstrate the need for services that are accessible for young people. For example, many youth shelters face the difficult task of turning young people in need away because they do not have the accommodation or resources to meet the demand of young people accessing the service.

There is a need for both direct and indirect youth services in Tasmania. Direct client services typically respond to young people on the front line which may include face to face individual client support, implementing strategies to improve service delivery or group work. Many direct practice services will deal with young people in challenging situations or in crisis and it is their job to be the first responder for these young people. In comparison, indirect services are often in a policy, research or development capacity and may not have the same face to face interactions as direct services. Indirect services are responsible for health promotion, ensuring that valuable messages are communicated and that people know where to find help if they need it.

A sustainable community sector needs both direct and indirect services to work at maximum efficiency. It is essential to have both direct and indirect services and it is essential that they are complementary rather than duplicating the services offered. However, a sustainable community sector also relies on collaborative partnerships between the community sector and the Government but also collaborative partnerships between organisations within that community sector.

Recommendation: That the State Government, at a minimum, maintain current funding, including direct and indirect work, and provide continued support for all community sector organisations, in all regions of the State.

Responsible Department(s): DPAC, Treasury and Finance

Costing: Uncosted

Part 2: Youth Sector Priorities

2. Youth Justice

2.1 Continuum of Care

YNOT acknowledges that youth detention is currently the supported model within the youth justice system in Tasmania. However, research is consistent in saying that detention does not effectively deter criminal offending and that early intervention is vital. YNOT believes the early intervention focus in Tasmania should be on maintaining the funding for early intervention programs that have had proven success, programs such as the UTURN program. Literature also suggests that youth offending and reoffending require a collaborative approach and should not be the responsibility of one Government Agency but rather include other stakeholders such as community organisations and local non government organisations.

In 2014 YNOT provided a submission to the consultation paper *A Continuum of Care: to prevent youth offending and re offending* and supported the consultations aim of beginning a conversation about the range of services and interventions required to prevent youth offending and reduce re offending. YNOT advocates for alternatives to youth detention, in particular utilising early intervention strategies. We understand that the *Continuum of Care* has been heard in Cabinet several times however; thus far no further action has resulted. YNOT advocates for the Continuum of Care to be endorsed and funded to improve the youth justice space in Tasmania.

Recommendation: That the State Government builds on the proposed *Continuum of Care* to prevent youth offending and re offending and move to endorse and fund this strategy.

Responsible Department: Justice, Treasury and Finance

Costing: Uncosted

3. Young People, Housing and Homelessness

3.1 Supported Youth Accommodation Facility in the North West Region

Securing long term accommodation for disadvantaged young people in the North West of the State is extremely difficult. This is particularly the case for young people aged 15-17 years who are unable to live at home, but are too young to sign a lease. YNOT acknowledges that in the last budget there was \$500,000 allocated for purchasing in this area. YNOT now believes that this needs to be built on to fully fund a project in the North West.

Thyne House in Launceston is a supported Youth Accommodation Facility for young people, providing stable long term accommodation for up to 30 young people between 16 and 25 years. Thyne House also supports young people to connect with services and engage in employment, education and training opportunities. Trinity Hill is another supported Youth Accommodation Facility which is to be built in North Hobart. Trinity Hill will provide stable accommodation for 46 young people on low incomes as well as accommodation for 16 young people living with a disability.

YNOT advocates for a supported accommodation facility, such as Thyne House and Trinity Hill, to be established in the North West of Tasmania.

Recommendation: That the State Government fully funds the development and service delivery of a Supported Youth Accommodation facility in the North West.

Responsible Department: DHHS, Treasury and Finance

Costing: Uncosted

3.2 Children under 16 years of age in shelters

YNOT acknowledges the work that has already been done in this space in clarifying the roles and responsibilities of workers as outlined in developed protocols. YNOT understands that when a young person under the age of 16 presents in a shelter it is mandatory to inform Child Protection. YNOT also understands that this is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of young people however, it may also create a barrier for young people seeking assistance at a shelter as they may be scared or reluctant to return home or be placed in out of home care due to previous negative experiences in out of home care.

For many young people, they would prefer to seek assistance from a shelter than be placed in out of home care. YNOT agrees that staying in a shelter should only be viewed as a short term solution but that it should be considered as an accommodation option for young people who do not want to, or cannot, return home or to out of home care. Although it is not ideal for young people to be in shelters, it is preferable to the alternative of young people living on the streets to avoid the Child Protection system. YNOT advocates for current shelter resources to be expanded to ensure there are enough beds to accommodate young people under the age of 16. The reality is that there are young people needing these beds and if shelters work collaboratively with Child Protection workers beds in shelters for young people under the age of 16 would work as an alternative to out of home care in cases where young people are at risk of turning to the streets if made to return home or to out of home care.

Recommendation: That the State Government allocates funding to expand the current resources to ensure sufficient accommodation for people under the age of 16 in shelters.

Responsible Department: DHHS, Treasury and Finance

Costing: Uncosted

Rights of Young People

4.1 Introduction of child labour legislation and monitoring workplace conditions

According to their report on child employment in Tasmania, the Uniting Church in Australia (2011) argues that young people in Tasmania are concerned about issues such as fairness, safety and their rights in the workplace, and that they are unsure about how to raise and address these issues. Currently the legal rights of young people in the Tasmanian workforce are contained in several pieces of legislation. YNOT believes that this creates confusion for young people, their parents or guardians and their employers when attempting to obtain information regarding their work rights.

A review of Child Labour Laws was released in 2012 which contained a suggestion that new stand alone legislation be enacted in relation to child labour laws. YNOT advocates for the introduction of specific child labour legislation, which consolidates all aspects pertaining to youth employment that are currently situated in various pieces of legislation.

Recommendation: That the State Government funds a review of current legislation related to child labour and consolidates these laws into stand alone legislation.

Responsible Department: Justice, Treasury and Finance, Children, Workplace Relations

Costing: Uncosted

4.2 Police Searches of Children and Young People

Tasmania is still the only state in Australia that does not have police powers to search young people clearly defined by legislation. Instead these powers spread across multiple pieces of legislation. Police officers are expected to be aware of the specific requirements regarding their powers to search young people that are outlined in multiple pieces of legislation. This requires a high level of knowledge about individual Acts on the part of police officers; a level YNOT believes is unrealistic.

As young people's legal rights in relation to police and searching are not clearly defined and outlined, the existence and effect of these rights is undermined and young people and police

may be confused as to where boundaries lie in different circumstances (O'Connor 1994). In 2014 there was a public consultation on police searches of young people that YNOT responded to. Given the consultation and discussion that has already been done on this topic introducing specific and consistent legislation in regards to police powers and bodily searches of young people in Tasmania would not need to begin from the bottom up.

Recommendation: That the State Government funds a review of the current legislation using the work that has already been conducted to determine which laws should be consolidated.

Responsible Department: Justice, Treasury and Finance, Police and Emergency Management, Attorney General

Costing: Uncosted

4. Health and Wellbeing

5.1 Body Modification Legislation

In September 2013 YNOT responded to a consultation paper related to the *Police Offences Amendment Bill Tattooing, Piercing and Body Modification of Young People*. At that time, YNOT expressed concern for the practices of intimate body piercing and body modification of young people under the age of 18. YNOT was pleased to see the recent legislative amendment on this issue resulting in it now being an offence for body artists to perform tattooing, intimate body piercings and some forms of body modification such as stretching to young people under the age of 18.

However, YNOT are still concerned about the impact of young people performing these body modification procedures on each other or themselves. Home tattoo kits can be purchased relatively easily over the internet and YNOT are concerned that with these new restrictions in place that young people may turn to the internet, and each other, to get tattoos or intimate body piercings. This practice can be extremely detrimental to the health and wellbeing of young people and may cause lasting damage. YNOT would like to see education programs focused on the dangers and consequences of body modification, particularly when it is not performed by a professional, to assist young people to make informed choices.

Recommendation: That the State Government fund education programs designed to inform young people about the consequences of body modification at a young age and the dangers and risks associated with body modification, particularly when not performed by a professional.

Responsible Department: DHHS

Costing: Uncosted

5.2 Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy

YNOT has previously advocated for a Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy to be implemented in Tasmania and are pleased that this work has commenced and there are now people working specifically on this strategy. It is vital that this work is able to continue and be maintained. Now that funding has been allocated to work on this strategy, additional funding will be required to implement the actions that arise as a result of the work done on the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy for Tasmania. Having a strategy in place is a great start, however, little can come of a strategy when it stands alone and cannot be actioned. Therefore, it is vital that funding be allocated to allow the strategy to be actioned.

The current work on the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy is due to be completed by June 30 2015. Funding will need to be allocated prior to June 30 to ensure the strategy can be actioned immediately following the conclusion of the development period for this strategy.

Recommendation: That the State Government provides sufficient funding to ensure the actions arising as a result of the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy for Tasmania can be met to provide the best service to young people.

Responsible Department: DHHS

Costing: Uncosted

5. Education and Employment

6.1 Support for alternative education programs

YNOT has continuously supported the need for the education system to offer flexible and alternative education options for young people. YNOT recognises the importance of improving our educational outcomes, and part of this is ensuring that the needs of all young people are being met. Flexible and alternative education options are effective mechanisms by which the education system can offer dynamic, and engaging, learning opportunities to students who may be neglected by mainstream learning. YNOT stresses the importance of schools providing these options to young people, and strongly advocated for their implementation in YNOT's submission to *Government's Review of the Education Act* in early 2015.

YNOT advocates for stronger ties between the education sector and the broader community to not only improve access to flexible and alternative education options, but also as a mechanism by which accountability of public education is improved. There are multiple community based alternative education options in Tasmania, which are delivered in

partnership between schools and services, such as Pulse Youth Health (South) and Youth Arts and Recreation Centre (YouthARC), which have established reputations for providing students with alternative learning spaces, education options and support to students who may have become disengaged with mainstream learning. YNOT strongly advocates that programs such as these be financially supported and integrated more effectively into mainstream education. These initiatives are relatively cost neutral as many of the resources and locations already exist. These initiatives could be run using reallocation of resources and collaborative partnerships.

Recommendation: That the State Government allocates additional funding to be used to continue supporting the already established alternate education options and to develop new programs to assist young people disengaged from, or unable to access, mainstream education.

Responsible Department: Education

Costing: Uncosted

6.2 Exploring options to ensure all students are able to access post year 10 education

YNOT believes that education and learning needs to be accessible to everyone regardless of their circumstance. As such, YNOT advocates for a public education system that better engages students, encourages participation, and results in positive learning outcomes. As such YNOT believes that there needs to be reforms in the public education system so that students feel encouraged to learn, and interested in attending school, as opposed to coerced. YNOT believes that part of this, is ensuring schools are supporting students who may become disengaged and uninterested in attending school after year 10. YNOT advocates strongly for a system that provides strong support networks, including community partnerships, flexible and alternative education options, and early intervention programs that work to prevent disconnection between young people and education.

YNOT argues that the main barrier to students participating in post year 10 studies is a lack of interest which stems from disconnection from mainstream education systems.

Consequently, YNOT advocates that the public education system needs to prioritise the development of alternative education options for years 11 and 12 that offer students the opportunity to receive tailored and supportive approaches to education that encourage connection and participation within the school system.

Recommendation: That the State Government provides funding to ensure all students have access to post year 10 education in a format that best supports their learning styles and needs.

Responsible Department: Education

Costing: Uncosted

6.3 Employment resource for young people

There are many incentives that come with employing young people. Young people bring different skill sets, new ideas and are eager to learn new skills and work hard.

Unfortunately, youth employment is a concern for many young people in Tasmania. Many employers prefer to hire someone with experience as opposed to hiring a young person who may be new to the job market.

At the 2014 TYF Employment Forum young people identified an employment resource as a need (TYF 2014). Therefore, YNOT suggests a resource be developed to assist young people when they are not only looking for work but also maintaining work. This resource would need to be youth friendly in the language used and be available online so it is easily accessible for young people. This resource could bring together information and resources that currently exist for young people regarding employment. This could then be used to identify the gaps in information and resources that young people may need and work can then be done to fill these gaps. Documents that already exist would be used as the foundation of this proposed resource. For example, as an outcome of the TYF Youth Employment Forum, YNOT developed the *TYF Employment Tips from Employers* which is a document of the ideas young people themselves suggested. YNOT also developed a partnering resource for young people looking for work called *TYF Employment Tips for Young People* (TYF 2014).

Resources such as these are examples of the types of documents that could be included in an online youth friendly resource for young people in Tasmania. This online resource would need to be structured so it complements the new Pathway Careers website (www.myfuture.edu.au) and the information contained in an online resource is not duplicating the work already published on the Pathway Careers website. Young people also identified that they want a combination of face to face and online resources available to them.

Recommendation: That funding be allocated to create a youth friendly online resource to assist young people looking for work, wanting to maintain work and managing work with education.

6.4 Education providers assisting in providing mentoring and/or work experience

Mentoring and work experience opportunities can be invaluable learning experiences for young people. These opportunities give young people who have not yet entered the workforce the chance to gain work experience before entering the workforce. They also give young people who may already have casual or part time work the opportunity to gain experience in another area. This practical experience is not only beneficial for young people but also beneficial for the business or organisation providing the opportunity to a young person.

Many high schools currently arrange short work experience placements for their students. This is something YNOT praises and encourages. Work experience paired with mentoring gives young people the opportunity to gain experience, learn new skills, contribute to the work of the organisation or business and allows them to showcase their skills and strengths. YNOT believes this type of work experience and mentoring is beneficial for everyone involved and encourages education providers to increase the focus on work experience and have access to the resources needed to allow them to source and provide such opportunities for students. Feedback from the TYF Youth Employment Forum included a finding that young people want face to face work experience and say this is the key; however this should take place alongside online mentoring to be most useful for young people (TYF 2014).

Recommendation: YNOT recommends that a mentoring and/or work experience online resource be developed to work alongside the new careers website to give schools and young people the accessibility to these opportunities.

7. Safe and Accessible Transport for Young People

7.1 Transport options available to access education

Having the means to access education and higher education is one of the biggest issues facing young people living in Tasmania. Transport to educational institutions is one of the biggest barriers to accessing education.

YNOT is pleased to see the extension of years 11 and 12 to many schools around the State, in consultation with communities, as this assists young people to continue their education passed year 10 without having to relocate. This means they may be fortunate enough to

avoid the barrier of accessing transport. However, for many young people, particularly those in rural and remote areas such as parts of the West Coast of Tasmania, they rely on safe, reliable and affordable transport to access the education. This is not available in all areas and this disadvantages the young people living there. The availability of distance education has assisted to reduce this issue however not all areas of study are available via distance education. Many young people are left with no alternative but to relocate.

Recommendation: That there is an increase in safe, reliable and affordable transport services available to young people, particularly those in rural and remote areas of the State.

Responsible Department: DIER, Education

Costing: Uncosted

YNOT Budget Submission Process

The Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) is informed and governed by a Board of Governance, responsible for setting the broad directions and priorities of the organisation. General operational management of the organisation is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer via delegation of authority. The Board of Governance members bring with them expertise and knowledge across a wide diversity of youth issues and needs, and contribute their skills and experience when involved in decision making for the organisation.

The current Board members and their link to the youth sector are:

- Ann Davie, Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies (Chair)
- Matt Durose, Mission Australia (Vice Chair)
- Mark Joseph, Hobart City Council (Treasurer)
- Ros Atkinson, Youth and Family Focus
- Jono O'Neill, National Job Link
- Kate Cross, Rural Youth Health
- Miranda Ashby, Flourish Mental Health Action Inc.
- Collective Member, Karinya Young Women's Service
- Dianne Bester, Individual Member
- Griffin Blizzard, Tasmanian Youth Forum
- Zoe Jay, Youth Member

YNOT's aim is to ensure that recommendations to the State Government are informed by the youth sector and young people. In order to achieve this, YNOT performed extensive consultation with local and regional organisations operating in the Youth Sector, including with the coordinating groups of NYCC (Northern Youth Coordinating Committee), NWAY (North West Action for Youth) and YAP (Youth Action Priorities), as well as through the Statewide Youth Collaborative (SYC) Group (which is co-chaired by YNOT and the Department of Health and Human Services), and with young people through the peak youth consultation body, the Tasmanian Youth Forum. YNOT also conducted a survey open to members, young people and the youth sector in order to inform its 2015-16 budget submission.

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