



# Budget Submission to Treasury

## for 2017-18

### on behalf of the

## Tasmanian Youth Sector



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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 2017-18.

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 2017-18 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.

This submission is divided into two areas:

- Sustainable Youth Peak Priorities
- Priorities for Tasmanian Young People

YNOT is also conscious of the Tasmanian economic climate, 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. Sustainable Youth Sector Peak Body

### **Increase in YNOT Grant deed, including provision of indexation funding**

**Recommendation:** That the State Government increases the YNOT Grant deed and provides indexation funding

### **Ongoing funding for YNOT to meet the pay equity costs**

**Recommendation:** That the State Government provides the full amount of ERO funding to YNOT, to ensure that both the State Government and YNOT can fulfill it's legal obligations to community sector employees

**Recommendation:** That the Tasmanian Youth Conference (TYC) receive an increase in funding to meet the demands of the sector and young people, as well as to enhance and inform the work of the sector.

## Part 2. Priorities for Tasmanian Young People

### **Government Youth Representation**

**Recommendation:** That the State Government fund an Office for Youth, including the appointment of a Minister for Youth

**Recommendation:** That the State Government funds the development of a Youth Engagement Strategy to ensure Government can effectively engage young people in strategic decision making

**Recommendation:** That a Strategy for Youth be developed, to better enable an effective and multifaceted solution to the complex issues effecting young Tasmanians

### **Youth Justice**

**Recommendation:** That the State Government fully fund the implementation of the Youth at Risk Strategy initiatives

**Recommendation:** That the State Government provides recurrent funding into early intervention and diversion programs for young people under the age of 18 who are at risk of offending or reoffending.

### **Young People, Housing and Homelessness**

**Recommendation:** That the State Government provide recurrent funding to the Youth at Risk Centre, including ongoing evaluation of the service

**Recommendation:** That the State Government appropriately resource shelters to assist young people under the age of 16 and that appropriate long term accommodation options for these young people are funded.

### Health and Wellbeing

**Recommendation:** That ongoing funding is allocated to provide youth specific mental health services can be delivered through the adolescent mental health wards at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government provides sufficient funding to ensure the actions outlined in the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy for Tasmania can be met in order to provide the best service to young people in the state and reduce the rate of youth suicide.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government expands the scope of the work of the School Health Nurses to include clinical testing

**Recommendation:** That the State Government expands the scope of the work of the School Health Nurses to include clinical testing

**Recommendation:** That the State Government develop a pilot peer-education program for young people on domestic violence to address concerning attitudes and behaviours

### Education and Employment

**Recommendation:** That the State Government ensures the continued support of already established and successful 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 implement a program to provide face-to-face pathway support for students in high school.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government prioritises the funding of extending rural and regional high schools to year 11 and 12 to communities who are most in need, and promote cross-campus attendance in areas where students have more options 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.

### Safe and Accessible Transport for Young People

**Recommendation:** That public transport services are coordinated and have regular time tables to support young people and the broader community to access opportunities.

# YNOT Budget Submission Recommendations in Detail

## Part 1: Sustainable Youth Sector Peak Body

### *Increase in YNOT Grant deed, including provision of indexation funding*

YNOT is a peak body that consistently performs above expectations on the limited funding that it receives from the State Government. YNOT does not receive indexation on its grant deed funding, and this has impacted on the organisation's capacity to deliver and will continue to do so in a significant way into the future. All peak bodies funded by DHHS currently receive indexation on their grant deeds.

YNOT last received a grant increase in 2010, however, due to the grant not being indexed this funding has effectively decreased since this time, whilst the activities associated with the deed have not. In fact, during the 2015-17 grant the activities and expected outcomes included in the deed increased, for example, an additional priority project was added to the deed at this time.

This means that YNOT has been expected to perform at the same level, despite being given less funds to do so. Indexation on a deed ensures that the funding is maintained at community sector peak bodies to meet rising costs. Indexation provides much needed funds to meet the rising costs of wages, as well as operational costs such as insurance premiums and power. As a result YNOT, by not receiving indexation on our grant, is disadvantaged as we have no choice but to use our core service funding to meet rising costs.

From 2010 until the end of the current grant deed in June 2017, the estimated, cumulative indexation amount that YNOT will have had to wear is \$117,830.00 (Table 1).

**Table 1. Cumulative cost of no indexation on the YNOT Grant Deed 2011-2017**

Financial Year	A. YNOT Grant amount (actual received)	B. YNOT Grant deed plus CPI from previous financial year (see column D)*	C. CPI on YNOT Grant (based on column B)*	D. Grant plus CPI, rounded 000's (column B plus C)*	E. Difference (column D minus A)*
2011-12	240,165	0	5,404	245,569	5,404
2012-13	240,165	245,569	5,525	251,094	10,929
2013-14	240,165	251,094	5,650	256,744	16,579
2014-15	240,165	256,744	5,777	262,520	22,355
2015-16	240,165	262,520	5,907	268,427	28,262
2016-17	240,165	268,427	6,040	274,467	34,302
				<b>Cumulative Total</b>	<b>117,830</b>

*\*calculations made on assumptions of CPI being provided to YNOT at 2.25% each financial year from 2011-2017*



The State Government applies an indexation formula to an organisation's grant deed, which is a combination of the current CPI figures and the state service award rates.

Without the inclusion of indexation funding on the next YNOT grant deed, the organisation will have to significantly reduce staff hours and therefore reduce the work that is possible. Projected indexation costs will reach \$140,517.00 by 2019, based on current CPI rates and an expected three year grant term ending in 2020 (Table 2).

**Table 2. Projected cumulative cost of no indexation on the YNOT Grant Deed 2017-2020**

Financial Year	A. YNOT Grant amount (projected based on previous deed)	B. YNOT Grant deed plus CPI from previous financial year (see column D)*	C. CPI on YNOT Grant (based on column B)*	D. Grant plus CPI, rounded 000's (column B plus C)*	E. Difference, rounded 000s (column D minus A)*
2017-18	240,165	274,467	6,176	280,642	40,477
2018-19	240,165	280,642	6,314	286,957	46,792
2019-20	240,165	286,957	6,457	293,413	53,248
				<b>Cumulative Total</b>	<b>140,517</b>

*\*calculations made on assumptions had CPI had been provided to YNOT at 2.25% each financial year from 2011-2017*

As noted regardless of indexation being included on the deed, YNOT still must cover the rising costs that are a result of indexation internally. The estimated combined costs that YNOT will have had to meet from within current deed by 2020 will be \$258,347.00 which will exceed our current annual grant deed.

This issue has been raised with successive Governments, Ministers and Department staff.

A priority for the organisation has been to seek further income streams and other work, however, this provides YNOT with revenue and support for the organisation to achieve its strategic roles, and should not be used to supplement the grant deed.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government increases the YNOT Grant deed and provides indexation funding

*Responsible Department(s): DPAC, Treasury and Finance*

*Costing: \$7,500 (dependant indexation rate) cumulatively, plus an increase in YNOT core deed funding*

### **Ongoing funding for YNOT to meet the pay equity costs**

Further to the impact of not receiving indexation on YNOT's grant deed, there is an additional significant impact on the organisation's Equal Remuneration Order funding

received from the State Government. YNOT does not receive an adequate amount of ERO funding to cover the costs that the organisation is legally obligated to pass on to staff, which is a direct result of indexation not being included on the deed.

Fair Work Australia's Equal Remuneration Order is a legal decision to ensure all community sector workers earn an adequate wage for the work they do. The Equal Remuneration Order is jointly funded by the Federal and State Government, and it is legally mandated that these increases be passed on to staff. There is an agreement that community service organisations will not be out of pocket, which is why the additional funding is provided to cover these costs.

The State Government calculated the ERO funding to provide to community organisations based on their core grant deed amount. As YNOT's deed does not include indexation, and has not increased for several years, YNOT does not receive enough funding to cover the costs associated with the ERO implementation. The gap between what the State Government provides to YNOT and what YNOT must pass on to staff grows annually, with the 2016-17 gap that YNOT has to attempt to cover from within its core deed being \$20,641.00 (Table 3). By the end of the ERO implementation this gap will come at a cumulative cost for YNOT of an estimated \$116,993.00 (Table 3).

**Table 3. Current and estimated cumulative cost of insufficient ERO payments to YNOT 2012-2021**

Year	ERO amount required by YNOT	Required amount met yes/no	ERO received from DPAC	Gap in ERO funding
2012-13	1,584	yes		
2013-14	10,232	yes		
2014-15	21,796	no	19,237	2,559
2015-16	32,510	no	26,682	5,828
2016-17*	54,768	no	34,127	20,641
2017-18*	61,917	no	41,573	20,345
2018-19*	69,581	no	49,018	20,563
2019-20*	78,773	no	56,463	22,310
2020-21*	88,655	no	63,908	24,747
			<b>Cumulative total</b>	<b>\$116,993</b>

*\*based on current deed projections, and required cost ERO payments to YNOT*

This issue has been raised with successive Governments, Ministers and Department staff.

A priority for the organisation has been to seek further income streams and other work, however, this provides YNOT with revenue and support for the organisation to achieve its strategic roles, and should not be used to supplement the Equal Remuneration Order which is a legal obligation of the State Government.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government provides the full amount of ERO funding to YNOT, to ensure that both the State Government and YNOT can fulfill it's legal obligations to community sector employees

*Responsible Department(s): DPAC, Treasury and Finance*

*Costing: An additional \$21,000-\$24,000 per year (dependant on ERO rate)*

### **Tasmanian Youth Conference**

The Tasmanian Youth Conference (TYC) is the only conference of its kind in Tasmania, and is open to all young people and youth sector workers. Given the success of the event, YNOT would like to continue to run the conference but needs support from the Government in order to do so. In 2013, YNOT was provided with \$40,000 by the Government for two conferences. The conferences held in 2013 and 2015 had over 300 sector workers and young people in attendance at each, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

YNOT has gone to great effort to deliver a broad and engaging program with a small budget, by relying on volunteers and in-kind support from a number of organisations. YNOT argues that the success of TYC in 2013 and 2015 is unsustainable without an increase of funding for this event as costs associated with the conference have increased over this time.

YNOT understands that several of the other Tasmanian community sector peaks receive considerably more funding to deliver their conferences, and YNOT is asking for parity in this situation. YNOT is particularly concerned about the lack of parity towards the youth sector, given that these peaks also offer their sectors workforce development opportunities and the support of a dedicated workforce development employee. TYC is one of the few opportunities YNOT is able to provide the youth sector in relation to workforce development, and there is demand from the youth sector for this.

**Recommendation:** That the Tasmanian Youth Conference (TYC) receive an increase in funding to meet the demands of the sector and young people, as well as to enhance and inform the work of the sector.

*Responsible Department: DPAC, Treasury and Finance*

*Costing: \$30,000 biennially*

## Part 2: Priorities for Tasmanian Young People

### Government youth representation

#### Office for Youth

Tasmania needs a Minister for Youth and an Office for Youth to elevate and prioritise the needs of young people in the State. YNOT maintains that an Office for Youth, and a Minister for Youth, would be the most effective way to ensure Tasmania can remain at the forefront of youth policy and development in Australia, and best meet the needs of our young people.

Currently Tasmania is the only State or Territory that does not have a Minister for Youth, an Office for Youth or a Strategy to coordinate, implement and evaluate youth programs and priorities. Whilst we do have a Commissioner for Children to provide some leadership and a youth peak body to provide an independent voice and effective consultative mechanism for young people, there is also a need to ensure that the Government also recognises the importance of young people and invests in appropriate governance and strategic leadership in this space.

Youth issues currently sit across many portfolio areas, including education, justice, human services and community development. Not only does this result in additional administration and personnel, it results in an uncoordinated approach to highly complex issues. Combining these areas under the one Office, and under leadership of a Minister, would allow these youth issues to be effectively coordinated, collaboration to occur and greater impact of funding.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government fund an Office for Youth, including the appointment of a Minister for Youth

*Responsible Department: DHHS, DPAC*

*Costing: \$700,000 recurrent*

#### Whole of Government Youth Strategy

The State Government should be commended for leading several pieces of important work on youth issues, including the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy, Youth at Risk Strategy and Strong Families, Safe Kids. YNOT believes that a Strategy for Youth would enable a coordinated approach across the important pieces of work the Government has conducted, such as the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy and Youth at Risk Strategy, as well as ensure a more effective effort in addressing the many issues affecting Tasmanian young people, for example, youth unemployment, the low rates of educational attainment and the high rates of STIs amongst young people. This is a key piece of work that needs to be led by

an expert team on youth issues, such as would be found within an Office for Youth. YNOT believes that within the existing structures there is not an appropriate mechanism, or the necessary capacity, to enable this work to be done effectively and collaboratively.

**Recommendation:** That a Strategy for Youth be developed, to better enable an effective and multifaceted solution to the complex issues effecting young Tasmanians

*Responsible Department: DPAC*

*Costing: These costs would be absorbed within an Office for Youth*

### **Youth Engagement Strategy**

YNOT believes that Tasmania needs a whole of Government Youth Engagement Strategy. YNOT believes that children and young people are best placed to provide feedback on their experiences of the education system, however often key decisions that affect young people are implemented without consulting with them in a way that suits their needs, or at all.

The benefits of a Strategy would be to ensure that the Government knows when to consult with young people and what approach is best, and under what circumstances. Information and insight gained from young people's contribution to decision making informs and improves policy, empowers young people by providing them with experience, develops leadership capabilities and communication skills, and provides young people with opportunities for recognition for their contributions to the broader community.

As nationally and internationally recognised leaders in this field, YNOT has the expertise in youth participation and youth engagement to conduct this work. YNOT's experience includes having developed a youth participation model for the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), audited youth engagement practices for Headspace, the development of youth consultation resources, and through their own youth participation and consultation mechanism, the Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF), which is recognised nationally for its effective, best practice approach. These experiences uniquely position YNOT as an expert in the field of youth participation and engagement, with the specialist knowledge and skills in consulting with young people on how they want to be heard, and best placed to conduct this work for the State Government.

This is a project that YNOT has previously scoped for Education but which could be expanded upon to include a whole of Government approach.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government funds the development of a Youth Engagement Strategy to ensure Government can effectively engage young people in strategic decision making

*Responsible Department: DPAC*

*Costing: \$160,000 (project scoping dependant)*

## Youth Justice

### *Youth at Risk Strategy*

The State Government should be commended for developing the Youth at Risk Strategy to ensure that the Government can respond to the safety and rehabilitative needs of vulnerable young people in Tasmania. This Strategy has yet to be released, but is expected to address a number of high priority issues within the system such as the Ashley Youth Detention Centre, the need to provide support and accommodation for young people under the age of 16 years, alternative education needs and the through care needs of those leaving the justice system, for example.

The development of the Strategy itself is funded, with work set to conclude in early 2017, however, it is not clear how the implementation of the Strategy will occur as funding has not been announced or allocated. In order to ensure that this important piece of work is able to best meet the needs of those most vulnerable it is essential that the State Government commits to fully funding the implantation and evaluation of the actions in the Strategy.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government fully fund the implementation of the Youth at Risk Strategy initiatives

*Responsible Department: DHHS*

*Costing: \$1 million initial investment, \$4 million recurrent*

### *Youth diversion programs*

Tasmania has the highest rate of youth offenders in Australia and YNOT continues to advocate for alternatives to youth detention as research consistently states that youth detention does not effectively deter criminal offending. Early intervention and diversion programs are shown to be more effective at reducing youth offending and literature suggests

that a collaborative approach is needed to ensure such programs are most effective. Unfortunately, the availability of early intervention and diversion programs in Tasmania is limited with the defunding of several successful programs in recent years leaving a significant gap in the Tasmanian youth justice space.

Two programs that are working to support young people in the youth justice system are Save the Children's *Transition from Ashley Youth Detention Centre* and *Supporting Young People on Bail* Programs have proven to be effective at diverting young people from ongoing offending. In an evaluation of these programs it was found that for every \$1 of funding there was a social return on investment of \$3.50, indicating that these programs are extremely effective (Save the Children, 2015). However these two programs do not have recurrent funding and without continued and sustained investment in this space, young people are at risk of not being able to access the supports they need.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government provides recurrent funding into early intervention and diversion programs for young people under the age of 18 who are at risk of offending or reoffending.

*Responsible Department: DHHS, Justice, Treasury and Finance*

*Costing: \$600,000 recurrent*

## Young People, Housing and Homelessness

### *Youth at Risk Response Centre*

The Youth at Risk Response Centre, a joint initiative through the Youth at Risk and Affordable Housing Strategies will go some way to providing crisis support for young people under the age of 16 years. This centre will provide a foundation to break the cycle experienced by young people who have come to the attention of children and youth services and the justice system, and will combine a drop-in centre and short-term supported therapeutic accommodation.

However, at this stage the State Government has only committed funding for the infrastructure for this service, and not the ongoing implementation and evaluation. Investment into the service delivery model is key and will determine the quality and level of care that these young people receive. An effective evaluation method is vital in determining the success of the implementation, especially when considering what is best practice for much needed similar centres in the north and north west. Furthermore, this data will inform

other areas of much needed multifaceted response in addressing the needs of these vulnerable young people, such as medium and long term supported accommodation options which will also need to be considered.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government provide recurrent funding to the Youth at Risk Centre, including ongoing evaluation of the service

*Responsible Department: Health and Human Services, Treasury and Finance*

*Costing: \$1 million recurrent*

### **Children under 16 years of age in shelters**

YNOT understands that appropriate housing for young people is a complex issue in Tasmania. For young people under the age of 16, in particular, there is a gap in the appropriate accommodation options available to them across the spectrum, from crisis to long term. The Youth at Risk Response centre will provide short-term crisis support to young people in the South, but clearly more needs to be done to address the needs of young people across the State, and to ensure medium and long term option are available. This has been a long standing item for the Tasmanian Youth Housing and Homelessness Group (TYHHG) which is a collaboration between YNOT, Shelter Tasmania, and representatives from youth shelters and services from each region of Tasmania.

Access to secure and long term accommodation is difficult for young people under the age of 16. Although young people under the age of 16 can access income support through the Unreasonable to Live at Home (UTLAH) where they are deemed to be independent as living at home would place them 'at risk', they are unable to access safe, secure and appropriate accommodation because of their age. Often, this results in young people under 16 to access crisis accommodation in a shelter. YNOT does not dispute that young people under 16 living in shelters is less than ideal. YNOT strongly believes that staying in a shelter should only be viewed as a short term solution and that people under 16 need this short term solution available to them when they cannot return home or to out of home care.

Feedback from consultation with stakeholders has indicated that these young people are often directed to services that do not accommodate for young people under the age of 16, such as Better Housing Futures. Therefore, YNOT recommends that shelters are appropriately resourced to accommodate young people under the age of 16 and that specific transitional and long term accommodation options are available for these young people. Having long term, safe, secure and appropriate accommodation for young people is the foundation to ensuring that they remain engaged in education, training or employment. A



focus must also remain on ensuring that initiatives for young people aged 17 to 20 in the Affordable Housing Strategy are consulted on and reviewed as they are implemented to ensure their effectiveness and enable young people turning 17 to transition into the associated programs and initiatives.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government appropriately resource shelters to assist young people under the age of 16 and that appropriate long term accommodation options for these young people are funded.

*Responsible Department: Health and Human Services, Treasury and Finance*

*Costing: Uncosted*

## Health and Wellbeing

### *Adolescent Ward at the Royal Hobart Hospital*

YNOT commends the State Government for their commitment to infrastructure funding towards the development of two dedicated mental health wards for adolescents at the Royal Hobart Hospital. However, further commitment is required to ensure that young people receive the necessary ongoing mental health support and care.

Young people, especially adolescents, have specific needs in terms of how services are delivered due to their stage of development. It is not considered to be appropriate for an adolescent with severe mental health concerns or drug and alcohol issues to be treated on the same ward as sick children. However, it is also considered inappropriate for adolescents to be treated with adults. Extensive studies have been done internationally and an Australian study by Hutton (2008) which have concluded that adolescent wards in hospitals not only provide young people with specialist level care but also give an appropriate level of independence for their age.

YNOT believes that a fully funded and resourced adolescent specific ward is necessary in order to provide best practice care for young Tasmanians.

**Recommendation:** That ongoing funding is allocated to provide youth specific mental health services can be delivered through the adolescent mental health wards at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

*Responsible Department: DHHS*

*Costing: \$1.5 million recurrent*

### *Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy*

Rates of youth suicide are a concern in Tasmania and many community sector organisations are currently working in the youth suicide prevention space to decrease the rate of youth suicide in Tasmania. The release of the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy is an important piece of work to ensure the needs of Tasmanian young people are addressed and met.

The development of a youth specific suicide prevention strategy is a great start, however, little will come of a strategy when it stands alone and is not adequately resourced for implementation and evaluation. It is vital that the work initiated by the development of the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy is continued and maintained. Funding needs to be allocated to ensure the strategy and the actions can be implemented fully to ensure the strategy is effective and achieves the best outcomes for young people in Tasmania; with the overall aim of reducing the rates of youth suicide in Tasmania.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government provides sufficient funding to ensure the actions outlined in the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy for Tasmania can be met in order to provide the best service to young people in the state and reduce the rate of youth suicide.

*Responsible Department: DHHS*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### *Teenage pregnancy*

Teenage pregnancy can often be an unplanned experience for young people that is met with uncertainty. As a result of a multifaceted response and ongoing commitment from the State Government Tasmanian's teenage fertility rate has dropped considerably over the last decade (ABS 2016). While this is positive, investment into this area must be maintained to ensure that Tasmania's fertility rate does not again become the highest in the nation.

Government and the community sector have been working on increasing the access to information and services for young people so they can make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. Relationship and Sexual Education (RSE) in schools is a key aspect for delivering information to young people around these topics. For example the Safe Landing program is an evidence-based program, with proven results, which trains secondary teachers to assist schools directly address barriers they face in delivering relationships and sexuality education. However, this program does not have continued funding and is at risk of not being able to continue its work.

Whilst the School Health Nurse program has been a welcome investment in this area, there is considerable work to be done outside of their scope. It is important that we do not lose focus on this area in order to continue reducing the Tasmanian teenage fertility rate.

Therefore, YNOT asks that the State Government continues to provide investment into this area, by providing funding to programs with a proven record, such as Safe Landing program, in reducing the Tasmanian teenage fertility rate.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government continues to invest into proven, evidence based programs aimed at reducing the Tasmanian teenage fertility rate.

*Responsible Department: DHHS*

*Costing: \$100,000 annually*

### *Young people and STIs*

YNOT commends the introduction of the School Health Nurses program into Tasmanian schools, however, believes that there is potential to widen the scope of their practice to offer much needed services for young people. Currently School Health Nurses are unable to undertake STI screening and pregnancy tests.

Given the success of this initiative in reaching young people and its accessibility to young people, and the high rates of STIs, particularly Chlamydia, amongst young people, School Health Nurses are ideally placed to undertake this important and much needed work.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government expands the scope of the work of the School Health Nurses to include clinical testing

*Responsible Department: DHHS, Education*

*Costing: \$100,000 annually*

### *Young people and respectful relationships*

YNOT commends the Government for the investment that has occurred in the areas of family violence and respectful relationships, however, there is a high need for further work with young people in this space. Young people are likely to report they are concerned about issues relating to relationships, family and violence, but are also more likely to hold beliefs about violence that can be problematic and contradict these concerns.

Attitudes towards women remain fairly consistent across the population, regardless of education level, occupation, geographic location or socio-economic status. However, an

exception to this is young people, particularly young men, who are a cohort more likely to endorse violence-supportive attitudes and have a poorer understanding about what constitutes violence against women (Vic Health 2013). This is concerning given that 13% of young women aged 18 to 24 experience violence by a man each year, which is the highest of any other age group (ABS 2013). Young men are also more likely than any other age group to be perpetrators of violence towards women (Vic Health 2013).

Consultations YNOT has held with young people has shown that while young people may say they do not condone violence, some have difficulty identifying what behavior is violence or the understanding of the complexities associated with domestic violence. Young people often have a limited experience of intimate and family relationships, which can make it difficult for them to comprehend the structural and societal issues surrounding domestic violence (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation 2010).

Given that often young people often think they do not condone violence, there needs to be a targeted approach to working with young people on attitudes towards violence. Public campaigns can raise awareness but are not effective for those young people who do not believe they condone violence, but have other views or behaviours that would suggest otherwise. Current strategies at the State and Federal level to address family violence do not include strategies for working with young people in this way.

YNOT argues a peer-education model in school settings would be effective at addressing these issues. Peer-education empowers young people to learn from each other and it has been recognised that working with young men as agents for change in violence prevention programs in this way is key to addressing domestic violence (Victorian Health Promotion Foundation 2010). Research has also shown that peer-education is an effective early intervention strategy, which has been used for other issues such as drugs and alcohol and mental health with young people (Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services WA 2007). YNOT argues a pilot program for a peer-education model on domestic violence run by a not-for-profit organisation would complement existing Respectful Relationships Program that is currently being rolled in schools out by the Tasmanian Government. A pilot program would also provide an opportunity for evaluation and input to further work.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government develop a pilot peer-education program for young people on domestic violence to address concerning attitudes and behaviours.

*Responsible Department: Education*

*Costing: \$150,000*

## Education, Training and Employment

### *Support for alternative education programs*

YNOT supports 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 not be suited to mainstream learning. YNOT stresses the importance of schools providing these options to young people.

The Big Picture Program is an alternative education option that currently exists in several schools in Tasmania. Big Picture provides students with the opportunity to engage in learning through their own interests and work placements to develop practical work-ready skills, while still meeting curriculum requirements. This enables students to learn in a flexible environment that caters to their learning needs. The Big Picture Program also has the benefit of extending to Years 11 and 12 with options alternative pathways into post-year 12 study and training, which aligns with the Government's priorities of increasing student retention in senior secondary years. YNOT recommends the Big Picture Program be extended to more schools across the State.

YNOT recognises there also needs to be stronger ties between the education and broader community sector to improve access to alternative education programs that exist outside of a school structure. There are multiple community based alternative education options in Tasmania, which are delivered in partnership between schools and services, such as at Youth Arts and Recreation Centre (YouthARC), which has an established reputation 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.

YNOT understands there are limited alternative education opportunities in north-west Tasmania. For example, there is currently no Big Picture Program in this region but it exists in the north and south of the State. YNOT therefore argues the north-west should be the first point of focus for increasing alternative education options.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government ensures the continued support of already established and successful alternate education options and to develop new programs on the north-west of Tasmania to assist young people disengaged from, or unable to access, mainstream education.

*Responsible Department: Education*

*Costing: \$1 million per year for programs in the north-west*

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

Young people need more support for their transition to post-year 10 education to ensure they continue to Years 11 and 12. YNOT believes that education and learning needs to be accessible to everyone regardless of their circumstance. 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, are interested in attending school, and are supported to make informed decisions relating to their learning and education, as opposed to being coerced, and advocated for this in a submission to the Review of Years 9-12 in Tasmania.

Young people need to be able to make informed choices about their education and learning pathways post-Year 10 in order to ensure they understand ways they can access their education in a way that meets their needs. They also need to understand what barriers or challenges they may face and how they can overcome them by being prepared with strategies and information. YNOT believes that having a person placed within schools that can specifically work with students to identify post year 10 education options that address their needs, interests and barriers is a key aspect of encouraging students to continue study beyond year 10. YNOT argues this is best supported through a combination of face-to-face support specific to planning for their future to sit alongside existing online resources such as MY Education, as this has been identified as essential planning for post year 10 education options by young people (TYF 2014).

**Recommendation:** That the State Government implement a program to provide face-to-face pathway support for students in high school.

*Responsible Department: Education*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### *Support cross campus attendance for students in Year 11 and 12*

As before mentioned, young people find it challenging to make decisions about their education and employment future in the current environment. YNOT argues that the priority to extend high schools to Year 11 and 12 needs to be in rural and regional areas to support students most in need, who would otherwise have no other option to access post-Year 10 education. YNOT recognises the benefits of the college system to provide more subjects on campus and with a dedicated teaching staff for the Year 11 and 12 curriculum, but also recognises the limitations of this of not all students being in proximity to college campuses to access this and the need for high schools to offer Years 11 and 12. It is not possible for high schools providing Year 11 and 12 to deliver a comprehensive selection of courses and YNOT argues these students would benefit from having the option for cross campus attendance both across high schools with a Year 11 and 12 program, colleges and other learning institutions.

While cross campus enrolment already exists in some instances, young people are often unaware about these options available to them. YNOT argues increased promotion and opportunities for cross campus enrolments can provide young people with information they need to make an informed decision about their learning and education, particularly for those in rural and regional areas, and use resources more efficiently.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government prioritises the funding of extending rural and regional high schools to year 11 and 12 to communities who are most in need, and promote cross-campus attendance in areas where students have more options available to them.

*Responsible Department: Education*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### *Employment resource for young people*

Despite the media rhetoric around high rates of youth unemployment, we know that young people want to work; they just need the right information and support to do so. There are many incentives that come with employing young people. Young people bring different skill sets and new ideas to the workplace, 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.

Young people face the additional challenge of preparing for a workforce where they will have multiple and varied jobs. Research shows young people need to move beyond thinking about linear career pathways and start thinking about 'clusters' of skills that match their needs and interests, which can be transferred between a number of different jobs (FYA 2016). YNOT argues there are very limited resources that support young people to think about their future in this way.

At the 2014 TYF Youth Employment Forum, young people identified that an employment resource is needed to provide them with information about gaining employment and the workplace, as well as how to access opportunities to gain experience and employment (TYF 2014b). This was supported by findings from a Youth Employment Workshop which included an outcome around the need to support both young people and employers (Colony 47 2015).

Therefore, YNOT suggests a resource be developed to assist young people when they are not only looking for work but also maintaining work. The resource would also include information for parents and employers who are supporting young people who are looking for work or who are working. This resource could bring together information and resources that currently exist for young people regarding employment and include additional information that gets young people to think about transferrable skills in the workplace. It could also link young people to work experience, volunteering and mentoring opportunities. 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.

This online resource would need to be structured so it complements the My Education program and the Pathway Careers website (Education Services Australia 2015). The online resource 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 so that work is not duplicated.

Young people also identified that they want a combination of face to face and online resources available to them (TYF 2014a), and highlighted the importance of having a resource that could link them to opportunities to gain experience, mentoring opportunities and access support.

Many high schools currently arrange short work experience placements for their students. This is something YNOT praises and encourages, however, many young people have identified that they want to access more opportunities for work experience (TYF 2014a).



YNOT believes this is something that should be encouraged and could be incorporated with an online resource that links young people to these types of opportunities.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government allocates funds for a youth friendly online resource to assist young people looking for work, wanting to maintain work and managing work.

*Responsible Department: Premier and Cabinet, State Growth, Education*

*Costing: \$300,000 development, plus maintenance costs to be scoped*

## Safe and accessible transport for young people

### *Transport options available to access education and employment*

One of the biggest barriers young people face when accessing education is the limitation of available transport. Young people living in rural and remote parts of Tasmania are particularly impacted by the limited availability of safe and reliable public transport, especially when they are not yet qualified or old enough to drive independently. When public transport is not available many young people are required to relocate to continue their education. While this is indeed an option, it is not a viable option for all young people and it brings a whole other set of barriers such as finding employment, suitable housing and meeting the basic costs of living.

YNOT is pleased with the expansion of schools in rural areas around the state to include Years 11 and 12. This enables young people to continue their education without relocating or extensive travel. Distance education has also provided an opportunity to study further without relocating. However, distance education relies on having a reliable internet connection and not all courses of study are available via distance education. This means that distance education will only be accessible and suitable to some young people. Accessible and affordable public transport is needed in all regions, particularly in rural and remote areas, to ensure all young people have equal access to transport to enable them to continue their education post year 10.

Young people are also disproportionately affected when it comes to accessing transport to access work. Issues with accessing transport for work is an issue for a bigger proportion of young people under 25 than any other age bracket (Brotherhood of St Laurence 2016). This can make it difficult for young people to search for jobs and maintain employment. As young people often have fewer assets and lower incomes, they are more sensitive to transport cost increases and are more likely to rely on public transport services, which can be limited in

certain areas and times of the day (Brotherhood of St Laurence 2016). This was highlighted in YNOT's submission to the Government's *Draft Transport Access Strategy*.

YNOT has also received anecdotal evidence of cases where young people have missed an employment opportunity due to not having their license to drive and not having the funds to pay for lessons or tests to get their license. Many growth industries in Tasmania mean there are jobs available outside urban and suburban areas, but young people need access to transport in order to take advantage of this.

**Recommendation:** That public transport services are coordinated and have regular time tables to support young people and the broader community to access opportunities.

*Responsible Department: State Growth, 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, Individual Member (Chair)
- Matt Durose, Mission Australia (Vice Chair)
- Brett Maryniak, Tasmanian Youth Forum (Treasurer)
- Miranda Ashby, The Link Youth Health Service/Headspace
- Damian Collins, Youth, Family and Community Connections
- Lisa Amerikanos, National Job Link
- Adam Wilson, Rural Youth Health
- Collective Member, Karinya Young Women's Service
- Simone Zell, Individual member
- Griffin Blizzard, Tasmanian Youth Forum

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 2016-17 budget submission.

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