



# Budget Submission to Treasury

for 2018-19

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 young people and the Tasmanian youth sector to the State Government's community budget submission process for 2018-19.

YNOT is the peak body for the non-government youth sector in Tasmania. YNOT represents both the interests of young people and the broader youth sector and community. 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 the distribution of State Government resources, to ensure the lives of young people, particularly vulnerable young people, can be improved. YNOT's budget submission to the State Government for 2018-19, 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, drawing on our consultation process, we have concentrated on providing the State Government with recommendations in areas considered 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 its legal obligations to community sector employees

### *Tasmanian Youth Conference*

**Recommendation:** That the Tasmanian Youth Conference (TYC) receive ongoing funding, including an increase funding, to continue to meet the needs of young people and to enhance and inform the work of the youth sector.

## Part 2. Priorities for Tasmanian Young People

### *Government youth representation*

**Recommendation:** That within existing structures and staffing, the State Government establishes an Office for Youth and allocates 'Minister for Youth' to a ministerial portfolio.

**Recommendation:** That a Strategy for Youth is developed to enable a centralised and cost-effective approach to implementing the various strategies and action plans seeking to address the complex issues affecting young people in Tasmania.

**Recommendation:** That a Youth Engagement Strategy is developed to ensure the State Government effectively engages young people in strategic decision making.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government commit to ongoing funding and support for Youth Week Tasmania beyond 2018.

### *Youth Justice*

**Recommendation:** That the State Government commit to fully funding the implementation and evaluation of the Youth at Risk Strategy key action area initiatives.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government explore and invest in proven, evidence based preventative programs, aimed at reducing the number of young people entering the youth justice system in Tasmania, focusing on 12 to 18 year olds.

### **Housing and Homelessness**

**Recommendation:** That the State Government prioritises and invests in exploring new and innovative medium and long term accommodation options for young people under 16 years of age.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government allocates funding for services that provide supported, long-term accommodation for young mums.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government extend the Out of Home Care exit age to 21 years and ensure consistent, ongoing support and planning for young people who are exiting Out of Home Care.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government commit to the evaluation of the Youth at Risk Centre in southern Tasmania and use this as a basis to inform the establishment of similar centres and service delivery models in the north and north-west.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

**Recommendation:** That the State Government fully fund the implementation of the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy for Tasmania and continue to work with the youth sector on this.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government explore and invest in proven, evidence based programs, aimed at reducing the Tasmanian teenage fertility rate.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government explore and invest in proven, evidence based programs, aimed at increasing access to STI testing and contraception for young people in Tasmania.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government develops a pilot, peer-education program for young people on respectful relationships, to address attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender-based violence.

### **Education, Training and Employment**

**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.

**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 funding the extension of rural and regional high schools to years 11 and 12 to communities with high demand.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government effectively promote cross-campus attendance in areas where students have more options available to them.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government explore and invest in a peer-mentoring employment program for young people to learn from each other and celebrate their contributions to the Tasmanian workforce.

## Transport

**Recommendation:** That the Learner Driver Mentor Program (LDMP) receive ongoing funding, with consideration of a funding increase, to alleviate waiting list demand and reach a wider catchment of young people across the state.

**Recommendation:** That public transport services continue to be reviewed and coordinated to best support young people and increase their access to various education, employment, health and wellbeing services and opportunities.

# YNOT 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 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. 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. YNOT's grant deed has not increased for 2017-20, and without a funding increase and the inclusion of indexation, there will continue to be a discrepancy between funding and the activities associated with the deed.

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 previous grant deed in June 2017, the estimated, cumulative indexation amount that YNOT will have had to wear is \$117,830.00 (Table 1). This amount is continuing to increase for YNOT's current grant deed 2017-20.

**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 YNOT's current 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 the current 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 the current deed by 2020, will be \$258,347.00, which will exceed our current annual grant deed. It is critical that as a part of ongoing financial sustainability, YNOT must be given top up funding to cover the projected cumulative costs of having no indexation over the three year grant deed 2017-20 (Table 2), to ensure YNOT is in a position of financial strength and is able to provide services as required in the grant deed. Only applying indexation to YNOT's current grand deed without an increase in core funding, does not acknowledge the impact of the cumulative effects of not having indexation.

This issue has been raised with successive Governments, Ministers and Departmental 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: \$140, 1700 over three years (2018-2020) and \$7,500 cumulatively (indexation going forward).*

### *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 (ERO) 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 2017-18 gap that YNOT has to attempt to cover from within its core deed being \$20 345 (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
Cumulative total				116,993

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 its 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 2015, YNOT was provided with \$40,000 by the State Government to hold two conferences. The conferences held in 2015 and 2017 attracted around 300 sector workers and young people at each and the feedback from both conferences 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 organizations to meet the outputs of TYC. YNOT advocates that continuing to run successful conferences post 2017, is unsustainable without an increase of funding, as costs associated with running 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 workforce development opportunities, for which there is demand as identified in conference feedback mechanisms each year.

**Recommendation:** That the Tasmanian Youth Conference (TYC) receive ongoing funding, including an increase funding, to continue to meet the needs of young people and to enhance and inform the work of the youth sector.

*Responsible Department: DPAC, Treasury and Finance*

*Costing: \$30,000 biannually*

## Part 2: Priorities for Tasmanian Young People

### Government Youth Representation

#### Office for Youth

The State Government should be commended for leading and funding several pieces of important work on youth issues in the 2017-18 budget and recent years. This work has resulted in the development of a number of strategies and action plans, some of which are soon to be implemented, that seek to address youth issues through various initiatives and programs. However YNOT is concerned that this is a fragmented approach to issues that need to be addressed holistically and this concern has also been echoed by workers in the youth sector.

Youth issues currently sit across many portfolio areas such as education and training, justice, health, human services and state growth. 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 leadership of a Minister for Youth and Office for Youth, would allow the complex issues affecting young Tasmanians to be effectively coordinated, for collaboration to occur and a greater impact of funding. Whilst Tasmania does have a Commissioner for Children and Young People to provide some leadership and YNOT as a youth peak body to provide an independent voice and effective consultative mechanism for young people, it's important the State Government recognises the importance of young people and invests in appropriate governance and strategic leadership in this space to provide stability and consistency.

By the State Government appointing the portfolio of a Minister for Youth and establishing an Office for Youth, it shows a statewide, coordinated commitment to elevating and prioritising the needs of young people in Tasmania. 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 best meet the needs of young people.

**Recommendation:** That within existing structures and staffing, the State Government establishes an Office for Youth and allocates 'Minister for Youth' to a ministerial portfolio.

*Responsible Department: DPAC*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### **Whole of Government Youth Strategy**

As mentioned, the State Government has made a significant commitment to addressing youth issues across the state, by leading and funding several strategies and initiatives such as the Youth Suicide Prevention Plan for Tasmania (2016-2020), the Youth at Risk Strategy and the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework.

YNOT believes the rollout of such strategies and initiatives needs to be coordinated to ensure there are no gaps in holistically addressing youth issues across the many areas. Feedback from the youth sector supports this position.

YNOT recommends the Government develop an overarching Youth Strategy to enable this coordinated approach across the important pieces of work the Government already has underway. Eliminating a fragmented approach to implementing the various initiatives and action plans relative to young people in Tasmania ensures a more cost effective approach. Cost savings achieved by a Strategy for Youth allow the opportunity for increased funding allocations into the implementation action plans across the various strategies and support better linkages and communication across government and youth sector. The Youth Strategy could be a key piece of work led and rolled out by an established Office for Youth.

**Recommendation:** That a Strategy for Youth is developed to enable a centralised and cost-effective approach to implementing the various strategies and action plans seeking to address the complex issues affecting young people in Tasmania.

*Responsible Department: Office for Youth/DPAC*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### **Youth Engagement Strategy**

Whilst the government's commitment of funding for important pieces of work to address issues affecting young people across the State is appreciated, it is also just as important for government to capture the voices of young people, in leading and directing the implementation and evaluation plans associated with this work.

Feedback from young people and the youth sector strongly states that young people are best placed to provide feedback on their experiences. However, key decisions that affect them are often implemented without consultation at all, or in a way that suits their needs.

A commitment by the State Government to establish a statewide Youth Engagement Strategy will ensure ongoing and effective engagement of young people in strategic

decision making. This type of inclusion ensures that young people's views, experiences and needs are valued and incorporated into policy and illustrates that their input is considered as a high priority. It also provides an overarching, statewide approach to what local councils are already effectively implementing in their local communities.

The benefits of developing such a strategy would be the role it plays in building capacity and leadership opportunities for young people within their local communities. It would also provide a framework of engagement for government in terms of best practice approaches when consulting with young people. Information and insight gained from young people's contribution to decision making, informs and improves policy from the grassroots and empowers young people by giving them voice. It also provides opportunities for young people to develop leadership capabilities and gain recognition for their contributions to the broader community.

**Recommendation:** That a Youth Engagement Strategy is developed to ensure the State Government effectively engages young people in strategic decision making.

*Responsible Department: Office for Youth/DPAC*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### **Youth Week Tasmania**

Despite the recent defunding of National Youth Week (NYW) nationally, YNOT acknowledges the support the State Government has provided to ensure Youth Week can continue across Tasmania in 2018. However, currently, Youth Week Tasmania does not have a commitment of ongoing support and funding from the State Government beyond 2018.

National Youth Week is very well supported by the youth sector and has a legacy that will be continued in the form of Youth Week Tasmania in 2018. This support is demonstrated by organisations providing significant in-kind contributions to run events, organisations working collaboratively to host events, workers actively seeking information about Youth Week each year (including grants and available resources) and including young people throughout event planning and implementation.

YNOT, young people, the youth sector and wider communities would like to see Youth Week Tasmania attract ongoing support and funding from the State Government. Youth Week is an important event because it is an opportunity for young people to showcase their skills, talents and contributions to the wider community and address stereotypes often

associated with young people. It is a week of events where young people are involved in the development and delivery, are encouraged to participate, have the opportunity to raise issues they are concerned about and for their achievements to be celebrated.

YNOT is also asking the State Government to consider increasing the funding allocation for Youth Week as the youth sector has raised concerns about the reduction in funding available for grants. The reduction in grant amounts for organisations to host events for Youth Week Tasmania in 2018, has presented challenges for organisations to collaborate to deliver regional-based events in particular. The sector provides a significant amount of in-kind support to run Youth Week events, however, many organisations are also facing reduced funding and capacity to do so, making grants for Youth Week essential in ensuring they can continue. Without sufficient funding, events will likely need to be scaled back in future years, which impacts on the intended outcomes delivered by Youth Week.

With so much support from the youth sector, young people and broader community for Youth Week, it is essential this is acknowledged in the form continued funding and support for Youth Week Tasmania by the State Government.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government commit to ongoing funding and support for Youth Week Tasmania beyond 2018.

*Responsible Department: Office for Youth/DPAC*

*Costing: Uncosted*

## Youth Justice

### *Youth at Risk Strategy*

The State Government is to be commended for developing the Youth at Risk Strategy, illustrating a significant commitment in responding to the safety and rehabilitative needs of vulnerable young people in Tasmania.

Since the release of the Strategy, feedback from the youth sector has been mostly positive and there is great anticipation for the implementation phase. However, there are some key areas they feel the government needs to consider in implementing the Strategy, to ensure it holistically meets the intersectional needs of all vulnerable young people in Tasmania.

Whilst the development of the Youth at Risk Strategy itself was funded and some actions funded as part of the \$5.6 million 2017-18 budget allocation for programs supporting youth at risk, there needs to be a commitment to fully fund actions to ensure all intended

outcomes of the Strategy are met. 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 implementation and evaluation of the key action areas in the Strategy.

To support the implementation of the Strategy, YNOT also advocates for there to be a centralised, collaborative approach for improved communication. This includes a more robust consultation process with all areas of the sector to provide input into the implementation process and communication with the sector on progress updates. YNOT sees the establishment of an Office for Youth further necessary to be a coordination point for the Youth at Risk Strategy to support this.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government commit to fully funding the implementation and evaluation of the Youth at Risk Strategy key action area initiatives.

*Responsible Department: DHHS*

*Costing: Uncosted (to be considered as part of relevant budget allocations in this area and budgets across interrelated frameworks and strategies)*

### **Young Offenders Preventative Programs**

Early intervention and diversion programs are shown to be more effective at reducing youth offending which is why YNOT strongly advocates for these approaches and programs. There remains to be gaps in programs that holistically work with young people who are at risk of or who have offended, particularly for 12 to 18 year olds. There needs to be a further commitment from government to explore proven, evidence based preventative programs, so that young people avoid reaching the justice system.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government explore and invest in proven, evidence based preventative programs, aimed at reducing the number of young people entering the youth justice system in Tasmania, focusing on 12 to 18 year olds.

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

*Costing: Uncosted (To be considered and funding allocated as part of the Youth at Risk Strategy and interrelated strategies implementation phases)*

### **Housing and Homelessness**

#### **Accommodation for young people under 16 years of age**

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, from crisis to long term. The Youth at Risk Response centre in southern Tasmania will provide short-term crisis support to some young people in the South, however more needs to be done to address the needs of all young people across the State. This includes the consideration of transition from short-term crisis accommodation to medium and long term accommodation options. This has been a long standing item for the Tasmanian Youth Housing and Homelessness Group (TYHHG) which is 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) allowance 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 needing to access crisis accommodation.

As identified through TYHHG and further highlighted by the recent release of the *Too Hard: Highly Vulnerable Teens in Tasmania Report* (Robinson, 2017), there is a significant gap in both crisis and medium to long term accommodation options for young people under 16 years of age, particularly those who fall outside of the OOHC system. Feedback from consultation with stakeholders also indicates that these young people are often directed to services that do not accommodate for young people under the age of 16.

Whilst some initiatives under the *Affordable Housing Action Plan* show a commitment to this area, such as the roll out of Youth Castles and Backyard Units, it is not always safe and suitable for young people under the age of 16 to consider options still linked to the family home. Therefore, YNOT recommends that the State Government prioritises and invests in exploring new and innovative crisis, medium and long term accommodation options for Tasmanian young people under 16 years of age. Such a recommendation can be put into effect by prioritising Action 15 of the Youth At Risk Strategy and expanding the scope to include short and long term options with a robust transition model across all three levels.

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 available to them.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government prioritises and invests in exploring new and innovative medium and long term accommodation options for young people under 16 years of age.

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

*Costing: Uncosted*

### **Medium to long-term supported accommodation for young parents**

Becoming a young parent can be a time of uncertainty. Young mums, in particular, often face mental health challenges, difficulty in finding housing, difficulty returning to school or employment, all while taking care of their children. While there are a number of programs targeted towards getting young parents into employment and building life skills, it can be difficult for them to engage in these programs without stable, long-term accommodation.

There is significant demand for services, such as those provided by Karinya and Hobart City Mission that support young mums by providing them with long-term accommodation combined with support to develop life skills. This approach helps to prevent young mums from becoming homeless and provide them with opportunities to be supported to address the challenges associated with being a young parent. YNOT recommends the State Government invest in programs that deliver supported, long-term accommodation, particularly in the north-west of the State, to address the high level of demand.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government allocates funding for services that provide supported, long-term accommodation for young mums.

*Responsible Department: Health and Human Services*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### **Extension of Out of Home Care Exit Age**

YNOT acknowledges the work the State Government is currently undertaking through *Strong Families, Safe Kids* and *Out of Home Care Reform in Tasmania*. And implementation of recommendations in the Commissioner for Children and Young People's *Children and Young People in Out of Home Care Report* to improve the Out of Home Care system. As part of this process, YNOT recommends the Government strongly consider extending the age of leaving Out of Home Care from 18 to 21, to support the aims of current OOHC system reforms. Many young people in the OOHC system have experiences of abuse and trauma in their childhood and many are at a higher risk of facing homelessness, unemployment and living with mental health issues after leaving care. It can be very difficult

for young people to make this transition at the age of 18 when they are still attending school, trying to find a place to live independently and managing issues associated with this, including getting the support they may require. Extending the age of leaving care to 21 would help to ensure young people have a smoother transition when exiting from OOHC, by allowing more time to develop exit plans and put the appropriate supports in place.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government extend the Out of Home Care exit age to 21 years and ensure consistent, ongoing support and planning for young people who are exiting Out of Home Care.

*Responsible Department: Health and Human Services*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### **Youth at Risk Response Centre**

The State Government is to be commended for allocating funding for the infrastructure of the Youth at Risk Response Centre in southern Tasmania, as well as recurrent funding for the provision of trauma informed, multi-disciplinary support services within the centre. Whilst this initiative through the Youth at Risk and Affordable Housing Strategies will go some way to providing crisis support for young people, a commitment to ongoing evaluation of the centre and its services is needed, to ensure it is addressing the needs of vulnerable young people at risk of homelessness. It is important to note this centre is based in the south and leaves a gap in the north and north-west.

At this stage, the State Government has only committed funding for the infrastructure and operation of this service and not ongoing evaluation. An effective evaluation method is vital in determining the success of the implementation, especially when considering developing models to address similar need in the north and north-west. Furthermore, this data will inform other areas of much needed, multifaceted response in addressing the needs of vulnerable young people, such as medium and long term supported accommodation options which will also need to be considered.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government commit to the evaluation of the Youth at Risk Centre in southern Tasmania and use this as a basis to inform the establishment of similar centres and service delivery models in the north and north-west.

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

*Costing: Uncosted*

## Health and Wellbeing

### Young people and mental health

YNOT acknowledges the work done by the State Government on the Youth Suicide Prevention Plan, which includes a number of actions to reduce Tasmania's high youth suicide rate and improve young people's mental health. While some actions are currently being implemented and funded, YNOT is advocating for the State Government to fully fund the Plan. While the Plan does aim to deliver outcomes over several years, feedback from the youth sector has indicated there is a high demand for youth mental health services from early intervention to crisis, and gaps in outreach services, particularly those that can support young people with complex needs. YNOT recommends funding be allocated to implement the Plan in order to meet these service demands and address existing gaps. This will ensure actions identified within the Plan can deliver the intended outcomes.

In addition to this, YNOT and members of the youth sector are concerned that the Youth Suicide Prevention Committee has not been regularly meeting and there has been little communication about the Plan and progress updates on action items. Ensuring there is sector involvement through consultation and collaboration, along with effective information sharing, ensures that the Youth Suicide Prevention Plan can be effectively implemented.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government fully fund the implementation of the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy for Tasmania and continue to work with the youth sector on this.

*Responsible Department: Health and Human Services*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### Young people and sexual health

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

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. School Health Nurses are unable to undertake STI screening and pregnancy testing. Further, there is no consistency across

high school and college campuses, with regard to visiting doctor clinics and other outreach services that provide support to young people with regard to their sexual health. Further, young people continue to face barriers accessing bulk billing general practitioners and other services that may be able to provide STI and pregnancy testing and information.

It is important the State Government does not lose focus in this area, to ensure an ongoing commitment to reducing the Tasmanian teenage fertility and STI rates and improving accessibility and affordability with regard to contraception. Therefore, YNOT asks that the State Government continue to provide investment into this area, by exploring and funding evidence based programs in supporting these key areas.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government explore and invest in proven, evidence based programs, aimed at reducing the Tasmanian teenage fertility rate.

*Responsible Department: Health and Human Services*

*Costing: Uncosted*

**Recommendation:** That the State Government explore and invest in proven, evidence based programs, aimed at increasing access to STI testing and contraception for young people in Tasmania.

*Responsible Department: Health and Human Services*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### ***Young people and respectful relationships***

YNOT commends the State 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 and family 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 shows 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 suggests 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 dependence and mental health issues experienced by young people (Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services WA 2007). YNOT believes a pilot program for a peer-education model on domestic violence run by a not-for-profit organisation would complement an existing Respectful Relationships Program that is currently being rolled out by the Tasmanian Government in schools. A pilot program would also provide an opportunity for evaluation and input to further work.

This could also build upon existing resources, such as the *Girls Gotta Know* and *Guys Gotta Know* websites, developed by the Women's Legal Service.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government develops a pilot, peer-education program for young people on respectful relationships, to address attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate gender-based violence.

*Responsible Department: Premier and Cabinet, Education*

*Costing: Uncosted*

## Education, Training and Employment

### *Continued support for alternative education programs*

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 acknowledges the additional funding of \$5 million over the forward estimates by the State Government in the 2017-18 budget for alternative education options, however, there will still be gaps in this area as the demand is so high and this has been reiterated in consultation with the youth sector.

YNOT understands there are limited alternative education opportunities in the north-west of Tasmania. For example, there is currently no Big Picture Program in this region but it exists in the north and south of the State, and there does not appear to be plans at this stage to have this program available in the north-west. This program can exist within a school or as a stand-alone campus, with both of these options currently existing 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 for 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 therefore argues more investment to alternative and flexible education options should be allocated, with a continued focus for the north-west.

**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: Uncosted*

### *Support for young people to plan pathways beyond Year 10*

The State Government is to for its commitment to ensuring young people have access to Year 11 and 12 education, however, there remains to be a gap in the support for young people in their transition to post-year 10 education, to ensure they continue to onto Years 11 and 12. This issue has consistently been raised in consultation with young people and the youth sector. Young people need to be able to make informed choices about their education and learning pathways post-Year 10, to ensure they understand how to access 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.

**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 in Tasmania. YNOT advocates that the priority to extend high schools to Year 11 and 12 needs to be primarily in rural and regional areas, to support students most in need and 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 dedicated teaching staff for the year 11 and 12 curriculum. However, YNOT also recognises the limitations of this, in that not all students, particularly those in regional and remote areas, are in proximity to college campuses to have access to the opportunity of subject variety. 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, college campuses and other learning institutions.

While cross campus enrolment already exists in some instances, young people are often unaware of the options available to them. YNOT advocates for increased promotion and opportunities for cross campus enrolments that can provide young people with the



information they need to make an informed decision about their learning and education, particularly for those in rural and regional areas.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government prioritises funding the extension of rural and regional high schools to years 11 and 12 to communities with high demand.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government effectively promote cross-campus attendance in areas where students have more options available to them.

*Responsible Department: Education*

*Costing: Uncosted*

### ***Peer-to-peer employment mentoring initiative for young people***

YNOT recognises the Tasmanian Government's efforts to address youth unemployment through the Youth Employment Strategy. However, many young people still find it challenging to navigate the transition to employment or secure their first job. This includes understanding the support that may be available to them.

Approaches to addressing youth unemployment often involve communicating to young people looking for work what employers need from their employees. Whilst this is approach is important, YNOT believes it would also be valuable to establish and invest in a peer-mentoring employment program for young people under 25, by those of the same age cohort already in the Tasmanian workforce.

Peer-to-peer mentoring empowers young people to learn from each other. Research has also shown that peer-education is an effective early intervention strategy, which has been used for other issues such as drug and alcohol dependence and mental health issues experienced by young people (Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services WA 2007).

A key part of the initiative would be providing a peer mentorship platform for young people to communicate from a peer perspective, rather than an employer perspective, when discussing the barriers they face in seeking and securing employment, and the information and support available to them. It would also highlight and celebrate young people's contributions to the Tasmanian workforce, and provide the opportunity for young people to illustrate and discuss with employers, the benefits of employing young people and the best ways to engage and communicate with them regarding employment opportunities.

**Recommendation:** That the State Government explore and invest in a peer-mentoring employment program for young people to learn from each other and celebrate their contributions to the Tasmanian workforce.

*Responsible Department: State Growth*

*Costing: Uncosted*

## **Transport**

### ***Safe and accessible transport options for young people***

YNOT acknowledges the State Government's funding commitment for the Learner Driver Mentor Program, however, there remains to be high demand for programs that support young people to get their license. Young people need access to private transport in order to access opportunities, such as job opportunities with night shifts and those located outside urban areas. YNOT recommends further investment in this area to support young people to get their license.

Additionally, YNOT recommends that ongoing review of public transport services continues to ensure they are accessible to young people. Young people have consistently raised in our consultations that having access to public transport is important to them as it enables them to access education, training and employment. The combination of solutions for access to private and public transport is required to meet the needs of young people in Tasmania.

**Recommendation:** That the Learner Driver Mentor Program (LDMP) receive ongoing funding, with consideration of a funding increase, to alleviate waiting list demand and reach a wider catchment of young people across the state.

*Responsible Department: State Growth*

*Costing: Uncosted*

**Recommendation:** That public transport services continue to be reviewed and coordinated to best support young people and increase their access to various education, employment, health and wellbeing services and opportunities.

*Responsible Department: State Growth*

*Costing: Uncosted (To be considered when implementing the Transport Access Strategy and other linked policies and initiatives).*

## YNOT Budget Submission Process

The Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) is informed and governed by a Board who are 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 the delegation of authority. The Board of Governance members bring with them expertise and knowledge across a wide diversity of youth issues 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:

- Lisa Amerikanos, Individual Member (Chair)
- Griffin Blizzard, Tasmanian Youth Forum (Vice Chair)
- Brett Maryniak, Individual Member (Treasurer)
- Miranda Ashby, The Link Youth Health Service
- Simone Zell, Individual Member
- Damian Collins, Youth, Family and Community Connections
- Rebekka Gale, Anglicare Tasmania
- Hannah Farrow, Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF)
- Dudley Billing, Rural Health Tasmania
- Kathryn Cranny, Mission Australia
- Troy O’Konnah, National Job Link

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 regularly consults with local and regional organisations operating in the youth sector, including coordinating groups NYCC (Northern Youth Coordinating Committee), NWAY (North West Action for Youth) and YAP (Youth Action Priorities) through various meetings and events. Further, YNOT sought input from the Statewide Youth Collaborative (SYC) Group, which is co-chaired by YNOT and the Department of Health and Human Services). The important voice of young people and their input was sought through the peak youth consultation body, the Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF). In developing their 2018-19 budget submission, YNOT primarily consulted via an online survey that was open to young people, the youth sector, members and stakeholders.

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