Tasmanian Youth Forum 2019 Your Online Environment

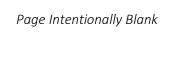


A report on young people's ideas and solutions to address the challenges experienced by young Tasmanians online.









Message from the CEO

As the peak body and leading voice for young Tasmanians aged 12-25, YNOT's vision is a Tasmania where young people are actively engaged in community life and have access to the resources they need to develop their full potential.

A vision that is underpinned by the engagement and participation of young Tasmanians, where young people are front and centre. At YNOT we believe that young people are experts in their own life and that their lived experience, their views and opinions, are vital in solving the challenges that they face.



This is why the Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) is so important.

During our consultations with young Tasmanians, young people have told us that they are disappointed and frustrated by the lack of opportunities available to have their say on issues that impact their lives. This sentiment was loud and clear when the Tasmanian Government announced proposed changes to the Criminal Code Act (1924) to prosecute cyberbullies in 2019. Legislative reform with the potential to have serious implications for young Tasmanians, yet the voice of young people was missing from the conversation. Young people wanted to have their say.

TYF 2019 'Your Online Environment' provided young Tasmanians with the opportunity to share their lived experience of their online environment, the good and the bad, and importantly the solutions that they believe will address some of the challenges they face. TYF remains an invaluable mechanism to meaningfully engage with, and genuinely understand, the issues impacting the lives of young Tasmanians.

Tania Hunt
Chief Executive Officer
Youth Network of Tasmania

About the Tasmanian Youth Forum

The Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) is an initiative of the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT). YNOT is the peak body representing young people 12-25 years and the Tasmanian youth sector. TYF is YNOT's single largest annual youth consultative event bringing together young Tasmanians to discuss issues important and relevant to them as well as solutions and ideas to improve outcomes.

Acknowledgements

YNOT would like to thank young people that participated in the TYF consultation process. We also acknowledge and thank the support of educators, youth group leaders, and the parents and guardians who supported their young people to attend. YNOT thanks the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner for attending and supporting TYF.

YNOT gives a special thanks to the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC), Migrant Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) youth advisory group, and the **headspace** Hobart youth advisory group for actively supporting the event.

TYF Your Online Environment 2019 was supported by the City of Launceston, West Tamar Council and City of Hobart.

YNOT is funded by the Tasmanian Government: Community, Sports and Recreation division.

TYF 2019 Supported by:







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Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Youth Consultation

Consult meaningfully with young people before developing policy or introducing legislation that impacts them. Meaningful consultation requires investment in both time and resources to create a transparent and supportive process. More importantly, young people need to be shown that they have been heard and valued during consultation.

Recommendation 2. Legislation

The government must be proactive and create timely legislation to protect young people online. Corporations operating online in Tasmania need to be held accountable for the content they allow young people and children to access. Terms and conditions need to be transparent and simplified to ensure young people understand their personal privacy and safety rights when using websites, applications and software.

Recommendation 3. Training

Schools need to incorporate peer-led online safety training that focuses on promoting positive community relationships. Parents and adults need greater training to understand how young people use their online environment and to take personal responsibility for how their child uses and behaves online, rather than shifting blame.

Recommendation 4. Support

Create evidence-based and youth-friendly resources that are accessible online for young people requiring support for their social, physical, emotional and mental health needs. Online resources should only supplement, not replace, face to face services available in the Tasmanian community.

Recommendation 5. Access

Access to technology and social media is intrinsic to young people's wellbeing and participation. Significant investment in infrastructure and technology, particularly in remote Tasmania, is required to ensure equal and affordable access for all young people to participate. Educators must recognise that young people may not have access to software or computers outside of school, creating a barrier to completing studies at home. Restrictions are warranted for young people using mobile technology at school for their personal wellbeing.

Recommendation 6. Reporting

Legislative reform of current online reporting practices is needed. Young people need to be supported during the reporting process and connected to professional help and evidence-based resources. Social media, government and organisations must respond quickly to reports of inappropriate online behaviour involving young people and children. Young people need to see fair outcomes from complaints and to be taken seriously when disclosing if they do not feel safe online.

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Finding 8. Young people want the internet to feel safer by having support when they experience something negative online
Finding 9. Young people are concerned with the amount of false information online and can have difficulty identifying reputable information sources
Finding 10. Young people rely extensively on being connected online to complete day to day activities, but do not always have access to appropriate technology or the internet
Finding 11. Young people believe that access to disturbing and illicit content online needs to be addressed as a priority for children
Finding 12. Young people want to be consulted with to help identify solutions to the challenges they experience

Solutions

Solution 1. Have greater parental and guardian involvement when children are online. The amount of social media and technology access should be dependent on the situation and purpose
Solution 2. Create or recommend free applications that discourage excessive online use and restrict use at times that interrupt daily activities such as during study or work and before sleep
Solution 3. Criminalise cyber bulling with a clear definition
Solution 4. Consult directly with young people to define cyber bullying and create peer-led training packages to help them understand their online boundaries
Solution 5. Create online and offline safe spaces for young people experiencing cyber bulling, connecting victims and their support networks to professional mental health services
Solution 6. Make it difficult to screen shot personal information in direct messaging applications by notifying group participants that a screen shot occurred or blocking screen shot capabilities8
Solution 7. Create a single application that can block cyber bullies over multiple platforms. This could involve blocking similar names, following 'digital identities', I.P addresses and linked profiles. Many participants discussed using multiple social media platforms and the ability for bullies to find or target them across different sites.
Solution 8. Keep social media 'influencers' but enforce transparency for paid advertising. Follow and support online personalities that promote positive messages of wellbeing9
Solution 9. Have greater accessibility to free or low-cost youth mental health services to seek professional help outside of their online environment, particularly for rural areas9
Solution 10. Improve young people's accessibility to social and youth workers in schools to provide early intervention and promote positive mental wellbeing9
Solution 11. Create accessible applications connecting users to reputable mental health websites as well as online counsellors to avoid self-diagnosis9
Solution 12. Hold greater accountability to social media corporations and websites to be transparent and easy to understand with their data collection and advertising processes
Solution 13. Encourage social media corporations to default account settings as private. Social media could also be more protective of young people and children by not allowing public settings or some features until they reach a certain age.
Solution 14. Incorporate peer-led cyber safety training in schools and involve young people in designing the programs
Solution 15. Government to provide or recommend free reputable applications and websites to maintain personal security and privacy.

Solution 16. Parents and guardians should take greater responsibility for their child's online environment. Young people can circumvent some 'Parental Block' software, or do not use it as it is too restrictive for their study needs
Solution 17. Change social media terms and conditions to use stricter profile protocols to prevent people from creating false online identities. Have government be proactive and enforce penalties on people misleading, catfishing or deceiving others in this way
Solution 18. Improve current reporting processes to be quicker and easier to understand. Young people have called for the government to have greater legislative influence of online platforms to ensure they are kept safe online
Solution 19. Place higher emphasis on educating young people on how to identify and use online reputable information sources
Solution 20. Improve young people's wellbeing by restricting negative news and information through social media. Young people acknowledge that they need to access news from reputable sources rather than through news bites or clickbait
Solution 21. Use peer-led training to discourage young people from sharing information online that they would not share in real life
Solution 22. Young people want the Tasmanian Government to have greater investment in internet infrastructure and create equitable access for all. A person's geographic location and income should not limit their ability to be connected online
Solution 23. Young people want schools to continue to provide free internet access but think there should be some limits to personal mobile phone usage at schools
Solution 24. Social media corporations to have better control and oversight of illicit or disturbing content uploaded to their platforms, including restricting public access for children
Solution 25. Government to have greater oversight in illicit or illegal online content by restricting websites when needed, while maintaining an open internet
Solution 26. Provide better training to parents and adults to give them the tools to understand how young people use their online environment, encourage openness to discuss their experiences online and enforce restrictions to support healthy online usage
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Youth Network of Tasmania: TYF 2019 Your Online Environment

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Introduction

Young Tasmanians are living in a time of unprecedented change, with technological advances occurring at a remarkable pace. The incorporation of technology in most aspects of their daily lives means that young Tasmanians are truly global citizens.

Young people born between 1995-2009, Generation Z, are the first generation of young Tasmanians whose lives have been saturated with mobile technology and social media¹, many of whom have never known, or cannot recall, life without technology. This reality is in stark contrast to generations of young Tasmanians before them.

The evolution of technology offers numerous advantages and positive experiences for young people including instant and timely access to information, education and training, goods and services, support and social networks.

Young people are interconnected within their online environment through a myriad of personal and shared devices including mobile phones, tablets, computers and laptops, gaming systems, and 'smart' technology such as televisions and watches.

However, with the many advantages that come from being immersed in the online world, comes an array of challenges and risks. The rise of technology and the digital world has created an online environment where young people are exposed to inappropriate content that can impact their social, physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, and alarmingly infiltrate their world at any time.

The Tasmanian Government has acknowledged the fundamental role technology plays in the lives of young Tasmanians, and the risks associated with the online environment. The Government has acted, through a range of measures, to ensure all young Tasmanians can meaningfully participate and remain safe online. The Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework², implementation of anti-cyberbullying programs in Government schools^{3,4} and legislative reform to prosecute cyberbullies⁵ are examples. It is clear however, that more needs to be done to keep young people safe online.

TYF 2019 *Your Online Environment* provided an opportunity for young people to share their experience of the online environment, both positive and negative, as well as ideas and solutions to the challenges they face.

TYF 2019 Objectives

- Identify and understand positive and negative experiences of young Tasmanians online
- Support young people to identify solutions to the challenges that they face
- Understand young Tasmanian's culture, behaviour, and safety online
- Influence decision makers to respond to the challenges experienced by young Tasmanians online
- Amplify the voice of young Tasmanians

¹ McCrindle Research Pty Ltd (2019). Characteristics of the Emerging Generations. [Online]. Available:

https://mccrindle.com.au/insights/blogarchive/gen-z-and-gen-alpha-infographic-update/. [Accessed September 2019].

² Department of Health and Human Services (2018). *Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework*. Tasmanian State Government.

³ Alannah & Madeline Foundation (2018). Annual Report 2018.

⁴ Department of Education (2018). Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2021. Tasmanian State Government.

⁵ Office of Parlimentary Council, Tasmania (2018). Criminal Code Amendment (Bullying) Bill 2019.

Consultation Process

The TYF 2019 consultation process consisted of two distinct mechanisms: a statewide forum and an online survey. Both mechanisms were designed to address the TYF 2019 Objectives. YNOT provided free transport from Hobart and Smithton on the day and hard copies of the survey on request to reduce barriers to participation.

On the Day

TYF 2019 *Your Online Environment* was officially launched in Launceston on 7 June 2019 by the Hon. Jeremy Rockliff, Deputy Premier and Minister for Education.

TYF was facilitated by an expert in youth consultation, Michael 'Mo' O'Meara, and supported by thirty volunteers including staff from the Office of the e-Safety Commissioner. TYF volunteers engaged with and supported young people throughout the day by facilitating group discussions and activities. The West Tamar Council supported TYF by funding a videographer to film the views and opinions of young people about their online environment.

The **headspace** Hobart youth advisory group were engaged to provide a 'Chill out Zone', creating a safe space for young people if they were feeling overwhelmed or needed time out. This space was used by young people during the event, providing an opportunity to access mental health and wellbeing information and support.

Members of the Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) Multicultural Youth Advisory Network (MYAN) opened the event by facilitating an icebreaker activity. Elvis Martin, National Youth Commission Ambassador, shared his personal experiences with social media with an emphasis on how his positive use has created opportunities to advocate for his fellow young Australians.

Group work began with a 'Think, Pair, Share' activity to explore their online environment by: 1. How they use it; 2. A positive moment or experience; and 3. Their vision for Tasmania's future. Participants then engaged in a World Café activity to discuss what they would 'Keep, Change, and Create' in their online environment on topics including: relationships, mental health and self-esteem, physical health, future Tasmania, news and media, life balance, education, employment and communities.

Groups then chose a key idea from the *World Café* to explore. This included identifying a solution to the challenges they experience as well as innovations for their future. Young people presented their ideas and solutions in round table discussions and voted on actions they supported.

Members of State Parliament were invited to attend during the afternoon presentations. Young people thanked The Hon. Roger Jaensch MP and Josh Willie MLC for attending TYF and listening to their ideas and solutions for improving their online experience.

Online Survey

The online survey was open from 13 June to 31 July 2019. The survey was promoted through social media and email, and targeted towards Tasmanian High Schools and Colleges, local councils and youth reference groups. Two prizes were offered to encourage participation including AFL tickets sponsored by the City of Hobart, and a \$50 JB Hi-Fi Voucher.

Participation

TYF 2019 attracted an unprecedent number of young people making the event YNOT's largest TYF consultation to date. In total, 520 young Tasmanians engaged in the consultation process with 171 young people attending the statewide forum and 349 young people completing the online survey.

Basic demographic data was obtained from participants (Table 1), with the total reach of young Tasmanians including remote regions of the West Coast, far North West, East Coast, and South East Tasmania. The online survey was extended to King Island and Flinders Island; however, no responses were recorded for these areas.

The online survey had a total of 381 responses, with 32 responses excluded for exceeding the age range or not completing the survey beyond demographic data. Survey responses were not mandatory resulting in some questions having a lower sample size.

Table 1. Tasmanian Youth Forum 2019 participant demographics and characteristics.

		On the Day	Online Survey		
Participants		171	349		
Age					
	Range	12-21 years	12-25 years		
	Median	16 years old	15 years old		
Gender					
	Male	29.5%	42.4%		
	Female	69.9%	54.2%		
	X, Other	0.6%	3.4%		
Region					
	North	24.4%	6.8%		
	North West	46.5%	55.1%		
	South	29.1%	38.1%		
Other Identifiers					
	ATSI	7.7%	13.8%		
	CALD	3.8%	3.4%		
	Disability	1.9%	6.0%		

TYF Data

Data obtained through the TYF consultation process were combined and analysed collectively to determine key themes. Unless otherwise stated, findings of this report represent all TYF data. Recommendations (Figure 1) were identified by the key issues and solutions discussed by young people. Important topics identified during the TYF consultation include:

- Connections
- Cyber Bullying
- Mental Health
- Safety, Security and Privacy

- Information
- Accessibility
- Vision for Future Tasmania

Figure 1. TYF 2019 Your Online Environment: Summary of key themes and recommendations identified by young Tasmanians.

















Connections

"It is fun to be online and connect with friends. You can share proud moments and inspire others. It makes you feel recognised and gives you a sense of achievement."

Finding 1. Young people rely on online platforms to be connected to their friends and family.

Finding 2. Young people rate their feeling of connection by their awareness of the latest information and entertainment relevant to their personal interests and social groups.

Young Tasmanians rely extensively on their online environment to be connected from the local to global scale. While young people have access to an open internet, they create their online community seeking out areas that support their needs, ideas, interests and social circles. Importantly, young people mentioned how connected they feel to people from around the world, including distant family and friends.

Socialising online with their friends and family were of higher importance to young people compared to accessing entertainment and other services. The most popular social media platforms used by TYF participants were Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook, noting that Reddit, Discord, Twitter, YOLO and Kik were also mentioned. TYF survey responses identified variances in median ages for their primary preferred social media; 18 years old for Facebook, and 15 years old for Snapchat and Instagram. Comparatively few young people stated that they have never or no longer use social media.

TYF participants stated other online platforms as highly important to remain and feel connected. Responses showed that the feeling of being connected was strongly linked to their entertainment awareness of the latest games, television shows and movies, internet memes, jokes, and videos. Young people access online entertainment through reputable websites such as YouTube, Spotify, iTunes and Netflix, and will access illegal websites or adult content dependent on social acceptability.

Young people have expressed how important social media and remaining connected online are to their physical social circles. Consequently, some young people were concerned that other young people have become too reliant on and have developed a dependence for their online environment.

Solution 1. Have greater parental and guardian involvement when children are online. The amount of social media and technology access should be dependent on the situation and purpose.

Solution 2. Create or recommend free applications that discourage excessive online use and restrict use at times that interrupt daily activities such as during study or work and before sleep.

Cyber Bullying

"We need to change our online outrage culture and take a moment to think. Stay true to yourself but don't say or do anything online you wouldn't do in real life."

Finding 3. Cyber bullying was identified by young people as their largest single concern for their online environment and have called for this to be addressed by government and their peers.

Young Tasmanians are highly concerned about cyber bullying and the impacts on the victims. Young people discussed that cyber bulling occurs in a range of ways and through almost every part of their online environment. Young people have called for action on cyber bullying including legislation and punishments for perpetrators, and better support for victims.

Young people stated that social media is currently inadequate at preventing or responding to cyber bullying. Young people want corporations to be held more accountable to help protect their users and quickly respond to reports of cyber bullying. Young people also stated that stricter penalties, including legislative, should be implemented to deter cyber bulling behaviour.

TYF survey participants were specifically asked if they would support the criminalisation of cyber bullying in Tasmania. Only 11% of surveyed participants stated that they would not support this. These young people responded that a social response was required including taking greater personal responsibility for their actions and to ignore or block other users if needed.

45% of those surveyed supported the criminalisation of cyber bullying, and 44% stated that they were unsure if they would support this measure. However, both groups acknowledged the severe consequences and impact cyber bullying can have on individuals including suicide. Respondents supporting and/or unsure about criminalisation were concerned about the impacts on young people, including:

- not understanding or recognising that a behaviour or action is 'cyber bullying'
- younger people's impulsivity resulting them to overlook the consequences of their actions
- misinterpretation of online interactions due to the nature of writing (no vocal tone, expression or body language)
- needing a clear understanding of their actions and the legal consequences

89% of young Tasmanians surveyed conditionally supported the criminalisation of cyber bullying, providing it was clearly defined. Young people highlighted that cyber bullying can vary significantly depending on the situation, but made general comments on the perpetrator's intent, personal impacts to the victim, the public extent and length of time the bullying occurs.

Cyber bullying was the top concern for young people online.

89%

of those surveyed would support the criminalisation of cyber bullying as long as it is clearly defined to understand the boundaries and consequences.

Solution 3. Criminalise cyber bulling with a clear definition.

Solution 4. Consult directly with young people to define cyber bullying and create peer-led training packages to help them understand their online boundaries.

Solution 5. Create online and offline safe spaces for young people experiencing cyber bulling, connecting victims and their support networks to professional mental health services.

Solution 6. Make it difficult to screen shot personal information in direct messaging applications by notifying group participants that a screen shot occurred or blocking screen shot capabilities.

Solution 7. Create a single application that can block cyber bullies over multiple platforms. This could involve blocking similar names, following 'digital identities', I.P addresses and linked profiles. Many participants discussed using multiple social media platforms and the ability for bullies to find or target them across different sites.

Mental Health

"... It's the constant comparing and false perceptions of people that social media creates. That is what truly damages people because it seems like society is full of perfect people and you're just not good enough. ...it's the loss of self-worth and love for myself because of the 'perfect' people and lives I see online. "

Finding 4. Young people use the internet to access mental health resources but are concerned that people are self-diagnosing in lieu of seeking professional help.

Young people use the internet to access help in a range of areas. Mental health continues to be one of the leading health concerns for young Tasmanians and appears to be greatly entrenched with their online use. They have expressed that they are being exposed to or involved in online content that can evoke feelings of depression, anxiety, shame and fear.

Young people admire social media and internet influencers but worry about the negative impacts of non-transparency. Subliminal advertising, feelings of lowered self-worth and a negative personal body image were of high concern to young people when considering the impacts of social media and online platforms.

Young people are aware of a range of online mental health supports including reaching out to others and accessing services, however the greatest benefit of accessing online support was identified as a reduction in the stigma young people feel when seeking help. With mental health resources readily available online, young people discussed that their peers may not seek further professional help due to embarrassment, cost or a lack of services available in the community. Young people are concerned some may not be able to distinguish between mental wellbeing and ill-health, and that young people are self-diagnosing mental ill-health conditions.

Solution 8. Keep social media 'influencers' but enforce transparency for paid advertising. Follow and support online personalities that promote positive messages of wellbeing.

Solution 9. Have greater accessibility to free or low-cost youth mental health services to seek professional help outside of their online environment, particularly for rural areas.

Solution 10. Improve young people's accessibility to social and youth workers in schools to provide early intervention and promote positive mental wellbeing.

Solution 11. Create accessible applications connecting users to reputable mental health websites as well as online counsellors to avoid self-diagnosis.

Safety, Security and Privacy

"It's tough to know when something isn't appropriate, especially as a teen because you want to be seen as mature."

Finding 5. Young people have a good understanding of personal online safety, but do not believe their family, friends or peers have the same standard.

Finding 6. Young people perceive parents and adults as being ineffectual at providing them with correct resources to be protected online.

Finding 7. Young people are concerned about their personal privacy online and report being targeted through advertising algorithms.

Finding 8. Young people want the internet to feel safer by having support when they experience something negative online.

TYF participants generally feel safe online and most had received training or advice from a school, family member or peer. Young people have an overall feeling of positivity and good personal safety online based on their own capabilities and awareness, as well as a better understanding compared to their families. However, there is concern by young people for how corporations store, use and share their personal information with third party groups. Regardless of age, young people stated that they are concerned about the level of content children are exposed to, referencing adult, violent or generally inappropriate material.

While there is software available to help young people stay safe online such as anti-virus, spam ware and VPN applications, TYF participants reported that they cannot always afford the software or find free reputable services. Young people feel targeted with free applications and software that offer services addressing privacy and security, but additionally collect personal data for targeted advertising or scams. Many young people commented that they had received youth-directed advertising for gambling games or costly gaming applications.

A common theme discussed by young people regarding their safety and privacy was their feeling of being supported and accessing support when needed, underpinning their personal wellbeing. Young people experiencing cyber bullying or witnessing inappropriate content online felt that current reporting methods were insufficient at protecting victims. Young people reported that they were more confident to discuss difficult issues with a friend or anonymous person online compared to a family member or trusted adult. Several TYF participants stated that they, or a friend, had reported content to social media, finding the process difficult to understand, slow to respond, or be dismissive of their concerns.

Solution 12. Hold greater accountability to social media corporations and websites to be transparent and easy to understand with their data collection and advertising processes.

Solution 13. Encourage social media corporations to default account settings as private. Social media could also be more protective of young people and children by not allowing public settings or some features until they reach a certain age.

Solution 14. Incorporate peer-led cyber safety training in schools and involve young people in designing the programs.

Solution 15. Government to provide or recommend free reputable applications and websites to maintain personal security and privacy.

Solution 16. Parents and guardians should take greater responsibility for their child's online environment. Young people can circumvent some 'Parental Block' software, or do not use it as it is too restrictive for their study needs.

Solution 17. Change social media terms and conditions to use stricter profile protocols to prevent people from creating false online identities. Have government be proactive and enforce penalties on people misleading, catfishing or deceiving others in this way.

Solution 18. Improve current reporting processes to be quicker and easier to understand. Young people have called for the government to have greater legislative influence of online platforms to ensure they are kept safe online.

Information

"A lot of what you may read on the internet is false and must be analysed critically... people can be way more harsh and critical than in real life. Words on the internet mean significantly less than in real life."

Finding 9. Young people are concerned with the amount of false information online and can have difficulty identifying reputable information sources.

Young people use their online environment to access information for education, employment, entertainment and news. The ability to easily access information has added to their feeling of being connected by allowing them to stay up to date with the latest news both locally and globally. TYF participants stated that this has given them opportunities to better understand different people and cultures and has a positive impact on their personal wellbeing.

However, with open access to an online environment, it is pertinent that young people have identified information integrity and content exposure as a major concern. The online environment has given people a public platform to express themselves in a range of ways, from sharing thoughts, opinions, personal creative ventures (videos, poems, photography, drawings, and graphics) and news. Young people believe that this is not always a good thing, with many TYF participants noting that they have seen disturbing, negative, discriminative and racist information shared online, or have been personally targeted for expressing their own opinions or creativity.

Solution 19. Place higher emphasis on educating young people on how to identify and use online reputable information sources.

Solution 20. Improve young people's wellbeing by restricting negative news and information through social media. Young people acknowledge that they need to access news from reputable sources rather than through news bites or clickbait.

Solution 21. Use peer-led training to discourage young people from sharing information online that they would not share in real life.

Accessibility

"I think that the age children are allowed to own or access social media is much too low, and parents should take a more active role in their children's online life. "

Finding 10. Young people rely extensively on being connected online to complete day to day activities, but do not always have access to appropriate technology or the internet.

Finding 11. Young people believe that access to disturbing and illicit content online needs to be addressed as a priority for children.

Young people can now use their online environment for all aspects of their lives including socialising, education, employment, shopping, finances, entertainment, accessing services and simply to 'fill in time'. TYF survey participants reported their online usage with 48% of stating they were online for 3 to 6 hours per day and 22% online between 6 and 12 hours per day.

Young people feel that there is an assumption that every person has equal opportunity to access their online environment. However, young people state that the Tasmanian online environment is currently inequitable. Some young people and their families cannot afford personal technology or internet data, while many have limited internet access due to a lack of infrastructure.

Young people also reported an over-reliance of the online environment for their education and that many teachers assume that all students have access to appropriate technology at home to complete their studies. While mobile technology has created lower cost access online, some young people only have access to computers or specific software at schools and libraries.

While access to an open and free internet is essential to all young people, there is also a converse feeling that restrictions can be warranted. With the online environment accessible through a range of technological platforms, TYF participants were concerned that some young people may be addicted to technology. Young people think that simple measures such as restricting mobile phone use at schools or limiting mobile access to school WIFI could help promote better socialising behaviour and physical activity.

Solution 22. Young people want the Tasmanian Government to have greater investment in internet infrastructure and create equitable access for all. A person's geographic location and income should not limit their ability to be connected online.

Solution 23. Young people want schools to continue to provide free internet access but think there should be some limits to personal mobile phone usage at schools.

Solution 24. Social media corporations to have better control and oversight of illicit or disturbing content uploaded to their platforms, including restricting public access for children.

Solution 25. Government to have greater oversight in illicit or illegal online content by restricting websites when needed, while maintaining an open internet.

Solution 26. Provide better training to parents and adults to give them the tools to understand how young people use their online environment, encourage openness to discuss their experiences online and enforce restrictions to support healthy online usage.

Vision for Future Tasmania

"Let's continue to move forward with an open mindset for the State. We can use the online environment to connect our communities with cultural and fun activities and show how unique we are. "

Finding 12. Young people want to be consulted with to help identify solutions to the challenges they experience.

Young people are highly creative and innovative when identifying solutions to the barriers they experience. TYF participants stated that they view government as reactionary and with the lowest understanding of how young people use and consume their online environment. Young people find government websites least useful for accessing services as they can be difficult to navigate, outdated or not youth-friendly in content or language.

Young people have a vision for an equitable and inclusive Tasmanian online environment, calling for government and industries to embrace technology to overcome the barriers and challenges Tasmanian communities experience.

Solution 27. Invest in renewable energy, sustainable resources and technological development that reduces the impacts of climate change and human footprint on the Tasmanian environment.

Solution 28. Meaningfully consult with young people to identify emerging challenges and solutions.

Conclusion

TYF 2019 has clearly demonstrated the benefits of engaging directly with young people to identify opportunities, challenges and solutions to issues that impact their lives.

This report highlights just how important the online environment is to young people; what works well and what needs to change to make their online environment safer. It is important to acknowledge that while there are many risks for young people online, there are also incredible advantages to using and interacting in the digital world.

The introduction of legislation that improves the experience of young people online has been identified as a key priority area for young Tasmanians. Young people want to see more accountability of individuals and corporations operating in the digital world, including legislative and policy reform to address key privacy, safety and security concerns.

The online environment has provided a platform for individuals to share their thoughts, opinions and beliefs publicly. Young people report a blurred understanding of what is considered appropriate online behaviour and are highly critical of the impulsive and unpredictable nature of people's behaviour online. Young Tasmanians believe that a whole of community response is required to change online social and cultural norms.

Young people want to be involved in the co-design of peer-led training and youth appropriate resources, with a greater focus on positive online behaviours. Importantly, young people believe adults, parents and guardians need a greater understanding of their online environment to take responsibility for their child's, as well as their own, actions online.

Young people have a vision for Tasmania to embrace the power of the online environment positively and want to be included in the development of government policy and legislation to achieve this end.

Acronyms and Definitions

ATSI Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

CALD Culturally and Linguistically Diverse.

Catfish/Catphish Malicious behaviour where a person uses a fake online identity to

deceive another into an emotional or romantic relationship.

Clickbait Online content purposefully placed to entice a person to click a link to

visit another website. Commonly used for advertising purposes.

IP address A network address for technology at the time it is connected directly

to the internet. IP addresses can be used to identify the user's location

and can be used to profile personal online activity.

online by human use. The online environment term is broad and perceived based on personal use and experiences. Therefore, it is important to note that the term's meaning will vary between individuals for a myriad of factors including age, gender, socioeconomic status, education, employment, family and friends, and

personal health and wellbeing.

TYF Tasmanian Youth Forum.

VPN software Virtual private network (VPN) software secures a private network

connection for the user. Personal data is encrypted, improving privacy

and reducing the risk of cybercrime against individuals.

World Café Consultation method using groups to discuss topics to identify benefits

and opportunities, barriers and challenges, and their solutions

YNOT Youth Network of Tasmania.

TYF Supporters

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Kennerly Kids

Circular Head Council

Derwent Valley Youth Future Action Team (D'FAT)

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City of Hobart

George Town Council

City of Launceston

Waratah-Wynyard Council

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Smithton High School

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