

Youth Policy Perspectives

The 2020 PESRAC Interim Report identifies a 'cycle of disadvantage' that produces major impacts on the overall wellbeing of Tasmania's young people. For the sake of Tasmania's future, we need to break this cycle of disadvantage.

YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE TOLD US WHAT THEY'RE WORRIED ABOUT:

They're concerned about having:

- “ A voice in decision-making
- 🎓 Education and training that's fit for employment
- 🎯 Employment opportunities and expectations that match each other
- 🏡 Good physical and mental health and wellbeing
- 🏠 An affordable, secure roof over their heads
- 🚗 Transport so they can get to education, employment, social and cultural events

PESRAC IDENTIFIED THREE FACTORS REINFORCING THE CYCLE OF DISADVANTAGE:

- 1 / Intergenerational disadvantage
- 2 / Geographic clustering of disadvantage
- 3 / Low educational attainment rates

These complex, challenging facts don't need to be a fact of life for the next generation of Tasmanian families.

A POLICY SOLUTION:

Young people want to be heard, understood and included. They want solutions **that work**.

THE YOUTH NETWORK OF TASMANIA IS UNIQUELY PLACED TO DELIVER YOUTH POLICY PERSPECTIVES TO CHANGE THE PARADIGM.

YNOT YOUTH POLICY PERSPECTIVES will bring:

- Intimate knowledge of young people's thinking and needs
- A revitalised focus on policy to address the needs of young people
- An understanding of unintended consequences some policy settings have on young people
- A holistic view across government, with an eye to integrated policy that addresses complex questions raised by the cycle of disadvantage
- Fresh thinking and proven policy ideas based on what needs to be achieved, what might be possible, and what can be agreed on.

THE ASK:

FULL-TIME YNOT YOUTH POLICY SPECIALIST @ \$118,000
to provide specialist, informed, practical support to the Tasmanian Government and make a real difference to the lives and futures of Tasmania's young people

THE NEED

Never have we had a clearer perspective on the needs of young people than that provided by the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council's (PESRAC) *Interim Report*¹.

The Report unambiguously identifies a 'cycle of disadvantage' resulting from the interplay of intergenerational disadvantage, geographic clustering of disadvantage, and low education attainment rates. Together, these impact on the wellbeing and future life success of all young people.

Never has there been a more important time to act – to change the paradigm by building great policy that addresses these factors and changes the lives of Tasmania's young people – great policy that's built on young people's active participation, views and priorities, and the best evidence-based research available. Policy that's targeted to young people, integrated in its scope and clear about its objectives.

The Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) regularly connects and talks deeply with young people aged 12-25 across the State. The Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) is one example of where we are uniquely placed to understand the views, priorities and aspirations of young Tasmanians. YNOT has built strong knowledge of the changes young people want to see in Tasmania including:

- Action on climate change
- Greater engagement and participation of young people in decision making
- Improved education, training and employment opportunities
- Knowledge of the jobs landscape and what's expected of them
- Improved mental and physical health and wellbeing
- Increased access to safe, affordable and accessible housing
- Convenient, reliable, affordable and accessible transport.

Like the factors of disadvantage identified by PESRAC, these issues are all complex, multi-faceted, multi-dimensional aspects of the lives of young people. They are often interconnected. Resolving them requires cross-government consideration with fresh thinking and ideas, and innovative solutions that align values and expectations, and deliver agreement.

YNOT has expert knowledge of the lived experience of Tasmanians aged 12-25, is experienced in policy development limited only by available resources, and is ideally positioned to provide considered, real-life, well-researched, cross-government input.

The challenge for YNOT is its limited grant funding and the absence of a dedicated policy officer to fulfill peak body functions.

YNOT's core recurrent funding is just \$112,493 which, though newly indexed, has steadily decreased in value since 2010. This funding supports a staffing complement of 1.6 FTEs who deliver sector leadership, financial management, stakeholder engagement, media commitments, member relationships, support to the volunteer Board and participation on a multitude of government and non-government round tables, forums, committees, consultations, submissions and working groups across all Government Departments. The COVID 19 crisis has placed even further pressure on YNOT as young people, and the sector that supports them, have been profoundly impacted by the pandemic.

Limited policy advice has only been possible through the efforts of the separately, project-funded position (0.6FTE) whose primary focus is delivery of the Tasmanian Youth Forum and a Youth Sector Workforce Development Project. This has compromised YNOT's ability to meet one of the five outcomes of the core funding grant, to *support policy development and provide advice*.

YNOT is stretched to the limit of its resources but continues to aspire to delivering critical quality policy advice informed by research, the lived experience of young people, and a solutions focus that changes the paradigm.

1 Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council, *Interim Report* July 2020, Tasmanian Government, Hobart

THE SOLUTION

The Solution is to fund a full-time YNOT Youth Policy Specialist with the ability to research, strategically consider and provide high quality policy advice through round tables, forums, committees, consultations, submissions, working groups and direct conversations with Government. This would include comprehensive research and data analysis that adds new value to the discussion and debate on youth affairs and move the conversation from a problem-centred approach to a positively-framed and systematic policy response.

YNOT is uniquely placed to host this critical role, as it brings together direct knowledge of the lived experience of a diverse range of young people with thorough research, innovative ideas and sound policy development. As an independent peak body, it also draws on a strong memberships base and state and national youth sector networks to inform its work.

With employment certainty, the YNOT Youth Policy Specialist will build on this knowledge, and the relationships, to contribute to discussion and debate and provide government with quality policy advice that addresses the 'cycle of disadvantage' and the expressed needs of young people.

YNOT's work recognises not only what needs to be done, but what *can* be done.

In the short term, the role will support the development of the inaugural Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. YNOT will bring specific expertise to address the health and wellbeing needs of young people aged 18-25.

THE ASK

To improve the lives of young Tasmanians for the short, medium and long term, funding for a YNOT Youth Policy Specialist:

- **\$118,000 per annum**

based on Level 6 of the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services (SCHADS) Award.

A SCHADS Level 6 Policy Officer will bring both the experience and expertise needed to provide the quality of policy advice needed.

THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A fully funded YNOT Youth Policy Specialist will influence and support delivery of holistic, integrated policy solutions built on specific knowledge of 12-25-year-old Tasmanians, with a particular focus on 18-25-year-olds in the Tasmanian policy context – the political, economic, social, environmental and historical factors that affect the current policy paradigm.