



Pathways to Adulthood

Report

Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the palawa and pakana people as the traditional, original and continuing custodians of lutruwita (Tasmania) and the continuing connection that Tasmanian Aboriginal people have to the land, sea, sky and waterways. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

About YNOT

The Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) is the peak body for young people aged 12-25 years and the non-government youth sector in Tasmania. YNOT works to ensure policies affecting young people in Tasmania are relevant, equitable and effective and that young people have a voice on issues that matter to them.

Our Vision A Tasmania where all young people are valued and can achieve anything.

Our Purpose To drive positive change with young people and the youth sector in Tasmania.

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- Association for Children with Disability Tasmania Inc.
- Break O'Day Employment Connect
- TasTAFE
- Youth, Family and Community Connections Inc.
- Circular Head Council
- Kennerley Childrens Homes
- Dorset Community House
- Huon Valley Council

Most importantly, we express a deep gratitude to the young people who participated in the consultations, for volunteering their time and expertise to inform this work.

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Executive Summary

The Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) is developing a whole of government Action Plan that will focus on and address the needs of young people 18-25 years as they transition to adulthood. The Action Plan will align to the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, and will set program and policy direction for young people over the coming years. YNOT sought feedback from young people across Tasmania to understand their experiences of transitioning to independence, to identify the priority areas they want addressed, and to hear their ideas and solutions to make the pathway to adulthood smoother.

What does the pathway to adulthood look like for young Tasmanians?

Young people see adulthood as a double-sided coin, marked by both positive and negative experiences. Being an adult means having choices, but also having to make hard decisions; having a voice, but also facing pressure to conform; having more money, but also more bills; having freedom, but also responsibility; and having autonomy, but also isolation from their previous supports.

Narratives of agency dominated participants' responses, with young people saying that they associated adulthood with overcoming challenges, taking responsibility, and 'choosing your own path'. However, a worrying number of participants used words like 'confused,' 'destabilised,' 'overwhelmed,' or 'stress' when describing 'adulting,' suggesting that this period of transition is not a smooth one for many young Tasmanians.

Some young people saw themselves as already having achieved adulthood due to chronological age, practical skills, or personal qualities such as emotional maturity. Many, however, had mixed feelings, and instead believed that their journey to adulthood was complete not once they turned 18, but when they had set up the stable structures needed to be self-sufficient. This feedback was often accompanied by frustration from those who lacked the supports, knowledge or resources to become fully independent, such as moving out of home.

Importantly, however, the pathway to adulthood looks different for each young person. It is influenced by their personal interests, aspirations, resources and support networks.

Young people's comments on their pathway to independence and the challenges they face centred around five key themes:

Moving out of home and living independently; including entering the private housing market and having the life skills to take care of themselves day to day. Young people want support to help them navigate the legal and practical complexities of the private rental market, address discrimination towards young renters so that they can more readily access private housing, and programs to acquire basic life skills including cooking, cleaning and home maintenance.

Moving into financial independence; including navigating income support options and cost of living pressures, financial literacy and achieving financial stability. Young people want greater consideration from employers, businesses, government and community regarding the financial constraints they experience.

Moving into work; including challenges faced while still in education or training, applying for jobs, succeeding in the workplace, and making enough money to get by. Young people want more programs to connect young people with employers in their area, and to broaden their horizons to the wider world of employment opportunity in Tasmania and nationally. Importantly, young people

want more help in learning how to write a resume or cover letter, obtain useful credentials, apply for a tax file number or open a superannuation account.

Moving into adult services; including the abrupt entry into, and ongoing access of, the adult service system – particularly with health and social services. Young people want greater support during the process of transitioning from child, adolescent and family services to adult services, as well as navigating the adult service system itself.

Moving around; including private and public transport options that allow them to access school, work, services, and social and recreational activities. Young people called for more frequent, reliable and extensive bus services, more free driving lessons and both formal and informal driver mentor programs.

What needs to happen?

Young Tasmanians believe they have a better chance of achieving independence when they have a supportive family to provide financial, practical and emotional support. This includes learning life skills at an early age before they live on their own; access to sufficient income for their needs (something that insecure, insufficient work cannot provide); and gaining a driver's licence and access to a car – a non-negotiable in areas where transport disadvantage is prevalent as well as for many employers. Independence is harder to achieve if young people lack any of the above, are facing physical or mental ill-health, are uncertain about their life path or find themselves without strong support networks in their community.

Young people want to see a Tasmania where all young people can thrive, not just those with the most access to existing supports and resources. Young people want to see:

Better communication of services and supports available to them; a dedicated, youth-friendly and easy to use online hub or directory website, and social media page, for young people to identify relevant resources, services and information to support them on their journey to adulthood.

Supports that specifically target the transition to adulthood; such as adulting 101 courses in school, training or online, as well as integrated and multi-stream services that can address the full range of issues of young people on their journey to adulthood.

Drop-in service centres for young people; ideally services would be co-located, but at the very least providing general advice as well as information on the full range of available supports and services. However, young people also wish for more opportunities to come together themselves in alcohol-free environments to provide each other with emotional and practical support during the challenging transition period.

Recognition of the transition to adulthood and urgent action to address issues hindering independence; including proactive, swift solutions to the housing crisis; a radically different attitude towards getting a license and getting around; a holistic, age-continuous approach to mental health and wellbeing; and greater involvement of young people in strategic policy planning.

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Introduction

Evidence demonstrates that the age 18-25 years is a crucial period of development with high levels of opportunity and risk. This period, termed 'emergent adulthood', is characterised by changes in identity, independence, decision-making and cognitive development. It is a critical, sensitive and developmentally rich period in the life course that can have significant and long-reaching impacts on young people's health and wellbeing, as well as social and economic outcomes. This 'in-between' stage is different from the stage of adolescence that precedes it and the adult period that follows.¹

Research suggests that in a world dynamic where precarity, unemployment and cost of living pressures influence broader wellbeing outcomes, it is critical that emergent adults are supported throughout this pivotal developmental phase.² Equally crucially, research supports the need to empower emergent adults' participation in the co-design of the policies and service systems with which they are interacting to ensure that they have influence in measures that impact them and that their perspectives are considered.

During the development of the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy (2021), the State Government recognised that young people 18-25 years face unique needs and challenges on their pathway to adulthood, and that a whole-of-government response is required to support them to thrive independently. YNOT received funding to develop a 'Youth Transitions' Action Plan for young people 18-25 years that will sit alongside this Strategy and explicitly identify the gaps, priority areas and actions required to support young people on their transition to adulthood.

The Pathways to Adulthood consultation process was undertaken to understand the needs, barriers, opportunities and challenges young people experience on their journey to independence and importantly, to provide an opportunity for young people to share ideas and solutions to address the issues they face. This Report will inform the development of the Youth Transitions Action Plan from young people's perspectives, providing information and recommendations that are targeted to address the identified needs of young people, in ways that work for them.

¹ Rudling, E., Shelley, B., Chuah S-H., Hoffmann, R. & Lang, M. (2023). Emergent Adulthood Review of Literature. Hobart: Tasmanian Behavioural Lab, University of Tasmania.

² Orygen (2023) Changing it up: Supporting young people to navigate life transitions.

Consultation Process

What does being an adult mean to you, and what does “adulthood” look like today?

This is the question that the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) posed to young people aged 18-25 years between April and June 2023.

The Pathways to Adulthood consultation methodology was informed by the recent Tasmanian Youth Story 2022 consultation process with young people 18-25 years, a youth steering committee and feedback from the youth sector.

The consultation process included an online survey to capture young people’s perspectives and lived experiences of adulthood and identify their priority areas, and a series of workshops delivered online and in person to explore the key themes, ideas and solutions in greater depth.

The online survey was open from 4 April to 30 May 2023. Available via the YNOT website, the survey was promoted through YNOT member networks and sponsored social media advertising. Youth sector organisations were invited to share and cross-promote the opportunity through their relevant networks to encourage young people to participate. Participants were offered the opportunity to enter the draw for one of five \$100 gift vouchers. A paper version of the survey was also made available on request.

Fifteen (15) workshops were held online and in person statewide throughout May and June 2023. Workshops were promoted using social media, YNOT website and through YNOT networks. Utilising both open community-based workshops and targeted workshops with youth sector service providers ensured that the voices of young people from diverse backgrounds and life experiences, disengaged young people, and those from vulnerable or marginalised population groups, were heard on this important topic. Incentives to participate included catering and gift vouchers valued up to \$100 in recognition of their time and contributions.

Participation in the survey and workshops were not mutually exclusive. When reporting demographic information, care has been taken to remove duplication where known, however limitations in the collection of data means that it is possible some individuals who participated in both activities were not identified.

WHO PARTICIPATED?

253 young Tasmanians had their say throughout April and June 2023*

138 completed the online survey

122 attended a workshop

AGE

14% 15-17 years

86% 18-25 years

PRONOUNS

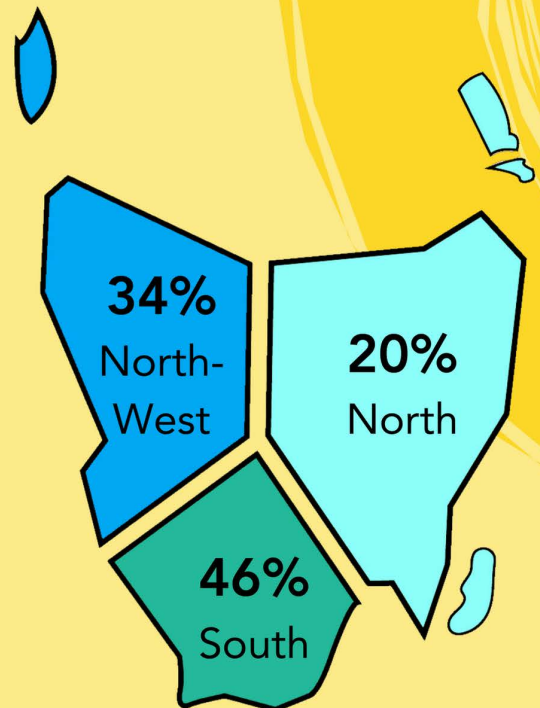
66% she/her/they

29% he/him/they

4% they/them

1% other

REGION



DIVERSITY

144 young people identified coming from a diverse background, and included:

19 migrant or refugee	20 culturally or linguistically diverse
33 living with disability	31 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
74 LGBTQIA+	5 carer 12 parent

*Young people who participated in both consultation activities were counted once in quantitative data analysis.

What young people had to say about adulthood...

What is 'adulthood'?

The responses from participants in this study suggest that young people see adulthood as a double-sided coin, with many positive aspects coming with a flip side. Being an adult means:

Having choices, but also having to make hard decisions. Participants described the pleasure of being able to set their own course, but expressed anxiety that they were doing so with inadequate knowledge or guidance.

Having a voice, but also facing pressure to conform. Participants were happy to have reached the stage where their views are being solicited, but also found that choices at the ballot box or in government policy do not reflect young people's perspectives, or that they are expected to play the role of a quiet subordinate at work.

Having more money, but also more bills. Many participants suggested that any additional income they might have had was being consumed by rent, vehicle registration and running costs, and the high cost of living.

Having freedom, but also responsibility. While some participants were stretching their wings, others were feeling stressed about the sudden influx of responsibilities - from the chores of daily living (cooking, cleaning, car maintenance) to keeping the bills paid and the demands of work life. Some also said that they had caring roles or other responsibilities to fulfill.

Having autonomy, but also experiencing isolation. Participants often said that they had less time to spend with friends, including recreational activities. While some participants who had moved out of home appreciated being able to make decisions without family input, others missed the warmth of a family environment.

"I associate being an adult with independence and control over life decisions including financial, medical and legal. I think I also link having legal responsibilities and consequences with being an adult. While you have more freedom to build the life you want, you also gain the responsibilities that come with those and are not greeted with as much understanding when you make mistakes." Survey participant (20, North)

Notably, a worrying number of participants used negative words when describing 'adulthood': depressed, confused, destabilised, overwhelmed, lack of satisfaction, loneliness, mental health issues and stress were all words young people associated with adulthood. Injury and illness, both physical and mental, were also a fact of adult life for some participants.

"Adult' just means struggle to me, to be honest." Survey participant (23, she/her, south)

Nevertheless, narratives of agency dominated participants' responses, with young people saying that they associated adulthood with overcoming challenges, taking responsibility and choosing your own path. "Managing" was often mentioned, both as a challenge – the need to manage time, money, multiple responsibilities – and as something that could be achieved. This consultation provides insights into how young people are already managing the transition to adulthood, and how services can better support them on this journey.

What defines an adult, and are you there yet?

The moment in which 'adulthood' is reached is a slippery one to define, encompassing both fixed and fluid markers. Young people, in defining 'adulthood,' mentioned:

Chronological age.

Many simply said that reaching the age of 18, with its accompanying legal rights and responsibilities, projects a young person into adulthood - ready or not. Some appreciated this value-free demarcation of the end of childhood, while others found it confronting.

"Some would say that being an adult is the ability to live independently or co-independently, being able to perform 'adult' tasks like paying bills and having a job. However I believe that it is purely aged based, that people shouldn't have to qualify to be an adult by doing one thing or another." Survey participant (23, he/him, North-West)

Practical markers of independence.

Many young people said that some important moments and skills linked to the concept of independence were more important than chronological age in establishing adult status. Key among these were:

Achieving a degree of financial independence. The ability to substantially pay one's own way is a key marker of adulthood. Some were proud of having achieved this status; some, on the flip side, didn't consider themselves an adult because they hadn't yet achieved this. Two key issues that some mentioned as markers of adulthood, that also relate to financial independence, were the ability to afford independent housing and their employment status (see below).

Freedom of movement. Obtaining a driver's license and buying and maintaining a safe, roadworthy vehicle of one's own is crucial to an autonomous life in Tasmania, particularly in rural and other public transport-poor areas. Without this freedom of movement young people can struggle to find employment – key to achieving a degree of financial independence – as well as to break free of dependency on others more generally.

Moving out of home. Having your own space, with all the skills and responsibilities this requires – cooking, cleaning and maintenance, a degree of financial planning – is a key marker of adulthood for many young people. However, some indicated that leaving the family home is increasingly hard due to housing affordability and availability issues, leaving young people uncertain of whether they can fully claim adult status.

Getting a job. Most young people see employment and adulthood as strongly linked, because of the link to both financial independence and because of what society subsequently concludes about a person's qualities. Young people believe having a job suggests to the world that you are skilled, reliable and collegial – in short, that you have social worth - earning respect and status as an adult in the eyes of others, as well as dollars. On the flip side, lack of employment, or the wrong employment, can lead others to treat you as less than adult.

"Being over 18 - Having 'adult' responsibilities and independence like driving, a job, tertiary study, bills, living away from parents/carers, having a child/dependents." Survey participant (22, she/her, North)

"Achieving a sense of self-sufficiency and independence from your parents/caregivers. Not just financially, but emotionally having 'found' yourself as a person within this world." Survey participant (21, she/her, South)

Personal qualities.

Age and practical independence aside, adulthood is something that people reach – in their own eyes and the eyes of others – through a degree of emotional maturity. Self-reflection and a willingness to take responsibility and hold oneself accountable for one’s actions were noted as key markers of such maturity. Some also mentioned empathy, resilience, determination and persistence as qualities that they associate with adulthood. And some observed that the quality that supports the acquisition of emotional skills, as well as the practical markers of independence listed above, is the ability to engage in effective problem-solving: not necessarily knowing the answer to a life problem but knowing where to find the answer or the help that you need.

“I don't think there's an age for becoming an adult. Obviously legally it's 18, but I think you become an adult after a certain amount of lived experience. Some people have to grow up and be an adult for others at a very young age, others take their time to mature. I believe it's more about character, maturity, willingness to take on responsibility, more than it is about age.” Survey participant (23, they/them, South)

“[An adult is] someone who has the life skills to be able to independently problem solve issues that arise within day to day life.” Survey participant (20, they/them, south)

When asked whether they see themselves as adults, young people were divided. Many said that they would at least initially answer “yes” simply because they had reached the age of 18, with its legal rights and responsibilities. Many were also proud to claim other markers of adulthood discussed above. The comments of a few indeed suggest that they viewed getting their driving license as their moment of transition to adulthood, even if they had been below the age of 18 at the time. For others, not yet reaching these milestones precluded them from considering themselves an adult.

*“I live away from my parents, I drive, I work, I'm doing tertiary study, I pay bills. I feel independent due to these factors. Yet I also feel like people don't always see me as a legitimate adult. I am 22 but I am often told I look younger; I regularly have people ask what grade I am in at school or assume I am under 18. I also work and study with a lot of people who are in their 30s - 50s, so I feel so much younger and less accomplished than them, like I'm just an adult in training and not a legit adult.”
Survey participant (22, she/her, North)*

“No I don't because I don't have my licence and I live with my sister, I have a part time job and I can't afford to get a car or move out with my partner. People take advantage of the fact that you need help and use it against you. But you need help to get to a spot where you can be independent.” Survey participant (22, she/her, South)

Some said that they felt that they had achieved a level of emotional maturity that they had lacked earlier, which they associate with adulthood. Others don’t consider themselves an adult as they believe they still lack this maturity and judgement. Notably, participants with disability emphasised that the fact that they aren’t always able to do everything for themselves did not make them less of an adult than their peers.

“I do see myself as an adult as I've entered a stage in my life where I look after myself, I'm career orientated and I see my parents as real people, which I always think is a good indicator someone has matured.” Survey participant (23, she/her, North)

“Not really. I constantly make decisions that disservice me and could impact my future. I'm fortunate enough to have a family and support system that influence me into making the right decisions around big things so as not to disservice my own interests.”
Survey participant (19, he/him, South)

Even those who applied an age-based definition of adulthood had mixed feelings about whether, despite having achieved the age of majority, they saw themselves as adults. “Almost” was a word that cropped up often, as young people spoke of final practical hurdles – in particular, the challenge of finding an affordable way to move out of home – to the full independence that they considered adulthood to imply.

“Very almost - I'm still dependent on my parents, but increasingly less so. I think I will feel like an adult when I move out because in all other ways I see myself as an adult.”
Survey participant (21, she/her, South)

“Yes, but only just. I have become a very strong and independent person but I won't consider myself fully an adult until I can financially support myself and move out (although right now that's near impossible for anyone).”
Survey participant (19, she/they, North)

Meanwhile, a few specifically expressed frustration at the clash between societal and bureaucratic definitions of adulthood set up by the current income support system, especially around eligibility for student Youth Allowance and Jobseeker payments. This is discussed in more detail below.

What challenges do young people face when transitioning to adulthood?

Moving out of home and living daily life independently.

The challenges of finding accommodation of one's own were a consistent worry for almost all the young people we spoke with. Many spoke of delaying moving out of the family home to save money, even when family tensions were high. Some noted that to be able to afford rent young people have to work full time, making it all but impossible to pursue further study. A number noted that the stress in renting comes not just from cost, but also from insecurity, with landlords ending leases for minor reasons and the notice period for ending a lease inadequate to find a new place to live. A few also noted the lack of privacy, describing instances of landlords neglecting to give appropriate notice before entering the property without repercussion, leaving tenants disempowered.

*"Scary bit is not owning a house and paying rent; it's the insecurity that comes with it. Will lease be renewed? Will I have 4 weeks' notice to find a new house and move?"
Workshop participant*

*"Navigating renting my first place was very difficult because there were so many hoops to jump through, like police and debt checks, and an unfriendly rental agency."
Survey participant (21, she/her, North)*

The difficulty of finding a rental property, particularly without a rental history or personal connections, was also discussed on many occasions. Indeed, some participants disclosed that they were experiencing homelessness at the time of consultation, or have done in the past. It was noted that young male renters may have a particularly difficult time securing a rental home due to assumptions made by landlords and real estate agents about the type of tenant they will be.

"Finding somewhere stable to live, rather than the street. There is a current rental crisis hence the difficulty sourcing accommodation. I am certainly not the only one struggling at this time." Survey participant (19, she/her, North-West)

"I was extremely fortunate that a family friend of my partner's had a rental available which she offered us. If we did not know someone with a rental property, I highly doubt we would have been offered a rental property in the private market, as real estate agents and owners are frequently biased against young people applying for rentals, and there is a chronic lack of rentals that are affordable for the average young person in Tasmania." Survey participant (22, she/her, North)

The challenge of achieving independent housing is made greater by increases in the cost of food and other staples, utilities, petrol, and other goods, leaving less money for rent – or vice versa. The problem is particularly acute in regional areas popular with tourists such as the East Coast, which have lost many long-term rental housing options to short-stay accommodation: prices for foodstuffs etc. are high, reflecting distance, but rent prices are still unaffordable. The main impact of high rents is on food budgets, with participants reporting that they were struggling to afford healthy ingredients.

*"Groceries [are] more expensive [in St Helens], can be 50% more than in other places."
Workshop participant*

"[It's] hard to manage eating healthily." Workshop participant

The costs of living independently are made higher, some young people said, by the fact that many young people lack some of the essential skills of independent living such as cooking for oneself and cleaning. An inability to cook for oneself leads to reliance on more expensive, less nutritious takeaways and frozen meals, or worse, young people going hungry. An inability to clean for oneself can put rental tenancy at risk.

*“Some parents can’t cook -- they don’t know how to, so why would they teach you?”
Workshop participant*

“If unit is not spotless, [you] can be given a notice to vacate.” Workshop participant

Participants particularly appreciated organisations that help people with the cost of living, such as the Link’s pantry program and free food at headspace. A few also mentioned life skills training, such as that offered by UTAS student accommodation services or the Association for Children with Disability (Tas), as helping them to thrive. Some also mentioned that organisations like headspace and Pulse Youth Services provide general support for young people taking on big life changes.

Young people from an out-of-home care background spoke highly of support that they have access to, such as life skills classes run by the CREATE Foundation, and the Moving On program (Kennerley Children’s Homes Inc.). The Moving On Program provides participants with affordable, supportive property management while teaching financial literacy (budgeting, bill paying) and supporting domestic skills like cooking and cleaning, as well as career and education pathways.

Moving into financial independence

Financial independence is not intrinsically linked to having a job for young people. Many indeed spoke appreciatively of the independence that they have achieved through Youth Allowance or other government income supports, whether they’re undertaking further education and training before starting their career or they live with disability and other limiting conditions that stop them from working in the short or long term. However, many more noted the obstacles that young people face in accessing government financial support, particularly Jobseeker, under the current system. In some cases, these stem from age-related eligibility issues; other times, they reflect the deficiencies of the Jobseeker system in ensuring that both partners in a relationship retain a degree of financial independence – a situation that particularly affects young mothers.

*“Getting a stable income was definitely harder than it should have been. Being ineligible for student Centrelink payments until I was in my fourth (!) year of full-time university was difficult. I had to support myself with casual jobs whilst also studying full-time.”
Survey participant (22, she/her, North)*

*“I have a fair amount of agency but I’m still very much reliant on my parents support financially at the moment. I am unable to move out of their house due to the cost of living and being a full-time student. I feel stuck in the middle. I don’t qualify as an independent adult for Centrelink purposes, but in all other legal aspects I am an adult.”
Survey participant (21, he/him, South)*

“My job has always been a casual role and after falling pregnant I wasn’t entitled to paid maternity leave and my partner earned too much for me to gain a Centrelink payment. So the last 12 months has been really challenging not having an income of my own at all.” Survey participant (24, she/her, North-West)

The challenges that young people face in living independently are often compounded by a lack of financial literacy. Participants said that they or other young people did not know, and did not know how to find out, how best to prepare a budget or establish and manage banking and car or personal loans. Those who were thinking ahead to the eventual process of purchasing a property said that they were doubly anxious about the process of saving for a deposit as well as establishing the credentials necessary for a home loan.

The comments of participants suggest that financial literacy is an area that particularly needs better promotion of existing programs and services. Participants noted that many young people are not aware of Tasmanian programs to support home ownership such as the Tasmanian MyHome shared equity scheme, the First Home Owner Grant and Duty Concession or the Commonwealth HomeBuilder Grant.

“Unsure how to save appropriately for a home deposit.” Workshop participant

“Access to information about services and schemes to support young people [is] not readily available - e.g. first home owners schemes. Schools don't equip you for "real world" like applying for home loan.” Workshop participant

Superannuation and taxes were also mentioned by many participants as being poorly understood or causing confusion. Some were also worried about accumulating Centrelink debts by unintentionally not reporting their income correctly.

*“Fear of owing Centrelink money or not receiving a payment on a technicality -e.g. is understanding reporting requirements - especially for those who don't have parents/guardians to fall back on like those who were in out of home care.”
Workshop participant*

Moving into work

Moving from education and training into employment, participants said, is another area where young people face significant challenges:

While still in education or training. Many young people felt that their schools were not able to provide them with adequate career pathway planning, with advice from pathway planners often showing limited knowledge of pathways other than those of their own experience. Some noted that while still studying, mandatory unpaid job placements make it almost impossible for young people to get by economically.

“Expectation/requirement to complete unpaid placements as part of training - this can interfere with young people's ability to attend existing employment leaving them without income.” Workshop participant

Applying for jobs. Many young people felt that they did not know how to write the most effective resume and were not confident in their interview skills. The move into work is further complicated by Tasmania's bias towards word-of-mouth in hiring, and employer preconceptions about young people's reliability and skill levels. Some also said that they were disappointed in the level and quality of support from employment services. Meanwhile, many entry level jobs, particularly in the service industries, require employees not just to perform tasks, but to present themselves in certain ways (cheerful, outgoing) – a situation that can cause challenges for some young people, such as those with neurodivergence.

“Getting a job - got mine through my sister, who was working at the same place I do now. I was 19 when I got my first ongoing job (not random gigs here and there) and would've liked to sooner.” Survey participant (21, she/her, South)

*“Finding a job, if I didn't have a car or a bubbly outgoing personality willing to work customer service no one wanted to hire me. All the job providers treated me like it was my fault and I wasn't trying hard enough.”
Survey participant (25, she/her, North-West)*

Succeeding in the workplace. Once in work, participants were concerned by inadequate inductions and training, and the power and pay disparity between older and younger workers. Some said that it could be hard to pick up workplace expectations and norms, as well as routine tasks that more experienced workers take for granted, such as filling out timesheets and expense forms or applying for leave.

*“I was taken advantage of by employers and housemates early on in my independent life, it would be fantastic to see some kind of course given in schools to warn young people about this kind of thing and provide strategies for conflict management.”
Survey participant (25, she/her, North)*

Making enough to get by. Participants said that the seasonal quality of many regional jobs, inadequate hours and the comparatively low pay rates of jobs available to young people leave them struggling to make ends meet week to week or across the course of the year.

“Increasing casualisation of the workforce and limited rights for casual workers makes it hard for young people to get a part-time or full-time job which offers them a stable and secure income.” Survey participant (22, she/her, North)

“Cost of living is pushing young people to take unreasonable workloads, risking burnout.” Workshop participant

Moving to adult services

The transition to accessing health, wellbeing and support services in the adult service system was a complex and confounding one for most. Some found many government websites confusing; all who had reason to contact Centrelink found their systems particularly difficult to navigate - participants reported that the information provided was often contradictory, and the quality of information received was often dependent on the employee they spoke with. Some also noted that young people may not be able to easily get all the documents from their parents (for example, birth certificates) necessary for registration for adult documentation or services due to strained family relationships, leaving them in the lurch at a point when they are already vulnerable.

“Dealing with Centrelink with little prior experience was an absolute nightmare. Centrelink attendants would constantly tell me to go online or call the call centre where wait times were over 4 hours long - why couldn't help be provided to me face to face when I had already waited 2 hours to be seen? I hate to think how hard this would be for a non-English speaker, or anyone dealing with a disability.” Survey participant (25, she/her, North)

“Difficulty talking directly to Centrelink - lots of AI in the way that often ends in a loop with you unable to get help from a real person.” Workshop participant

“Centrelink: Someone told me one thing, call back another day and advice is conflicting, they don't even know what's going on!” Workshop participant

Navigating the adult healthcare system was a shock to many, particularly the abrupt transition from free to paid services around dental and mental health. Participants noted the long waitlists and high costs of medical care; the lack of bulk billing; the paucity of rural and regional services; and poor continuity within specialist practices between Medicare-subsidised paediatric and full-fee-paying adult services. They also noted the challenges that young people face when access to support services is dependent on a diagnosis that can take years to access. The problem is particularly acute in relation to mental health support.

"I lost my free dental visits when I turned 18. I haven't seen a dentist in two years now. I take care of my teeth, but I know so many who aren't or ignore tooth problems because it's too expensive to fix." Workshop participant

"No bulk billing GP in local area. Small community, so young people don't feel comfortable going to the Dr to talk about health issues (esp. sexual/reproductive and mental health) out of fear that others will find out." Workshop participant

Very few participants identified any services helping young people make the transition to adult services, although supportive individuals such as psychologists, trusted adults, youth workers, teachers and parents were mentioned appreciatively. Participants who had accessed Centrelink supports through their regular youth service providers, for example on a regular drop-in day, were highly regarded. Engaging with service providers in neutral, youth-friendly or welcoming environments known to them increased their confidence to not only access support, but to feel safe and comfortable to ask 'silly questions' and get the best possible outcome for their needs.

Moving around

As consistently reported in YNOT consultations, access to affordable and reliable transport remains a significant issue for young people in Tasmania, particularly but not exclusively in rural parts of the state. Being able to reliably meet one's commitments – to work, training and services where one has a booking – is crucial to being considered an adult by others.

Young people noted the difficulty of obtaining a driver's license, particularly in regional areas, and for young people who do not have someone who can teach them and support them to get their hours behind the wheel – a situation that is exacerbated by the fact that young people are not permitted to teach or supervise their peers. They also said that public transport is often unavailable, unreliable and/or expensive, especially outside the Hobart and Launceston networks.

While young people appreciated the existence of driver mentoring programs, most felt that these badly need expansion - noting long wait lists, restrictive accessibility criteria and an insufficient number of sessions for those without existing private car access.

"Lack of support for learning to drive if you don't have someone who can teach you, and professional lessons are very expensive." Workshop participant

"Have to drive 15 minutes to get to the bus stop (it's unwalkable, no footpath)." Workshop participant

"The biggest struggle was the inability to get around easily. The public transport system was infrequent and at odd times." Survey participant (22, she/her, North)

What worked well for you or helped you to be independent?

To some extent, 'adulthood' is a matter of practice, with a fair amount of trial and error. Many acknowledged the privileges that have been helpful as they move towards independence, including:

Having a supportive family. Unsurprisingly, many young people emphasised their gratitude for the support - financial, practical and emotional – that they had received, and in many cases continued to receive, from parents and other family members. Financial support is increasingly important, particularly in relation to securing independent housing: at a time of skyrocketing rents, the 'bank of mum and dad' can be crucial to being able to afford even a rental bond, while living rent-free in the family home lets you save up for a deposit.

"My strong support network of friends, family (especially parents) helped me be independent because I knew if something failed like a rental fell through, the loss of a job, being short on money, I'd always have a roof over my head, food, warmth and security." Survey participant (21, she/her, North)

"Looking after myself is still harder than it needs to be sometimes. My mental health gets in the way of how I look after myself sometimes and I know that if I were fully independent, and hadn't had my parents there to make sure I ate and hold me accountable for the chores around the house and stuff, I definitely would not be thriving. Very thankful that my parents are willing to support me like that." Survey participant (20, they/them, South)

Learning life skills from an early age. Many young people who appeared most confident with their 'adulthood' skills said that they had begun the transition to adult responsibilities before they left the family home. Young people who began working before moving out of home found it easier to transition to full financial independence, and young people who had their driving licence and use of the family car found it easier to take on the practical commitment of owning their own vehicle. Similarly, being able to exercise a degree of autonomy while still at home helped young people hone their decision-making skills.

"I was lucky to have been taught at home how to budget my money to allow for when problems arose. How to handle uncertainty and own my mistakes and grow from them. How to take care of basic life skills such as laundry, cooking, etc. Which gave me the ability to function on my own." Survey participant (23, she/her, South)

"Good money habits. Learning what saving could look like and setting goals and boundaries with money before moving out from my parents house. This allowed me to learn and fail with the safety of parental support so that when I moved out I was more prepared and made more informed decisions." Survey participant (22, she/her, North)

Despite their appreciation for family support and an early start, for most young people these served primarily as a backdrop to their own steps towards autonomy. Vital moments in the transition to independence for most young people were:

An income sufficient for their needs. Insecure, insufficient work does not promote independence. Finding a steady, adequate job set them on the road to adulthood. Some also expressed gratitude for Youth Allowance, which permitted them to study and live independently, notwithstanding the challenges imposed by the limitations of such support discussed above.

“I am now in a position where I am in a role I actually studied about and am passionate about and working fulltime earning a fulltime wage at 21. I feel like it goes against the general norm but I actually right now in my life enjoy working fulltime -- I hated my retail job while studying and now I feel like with this job I have more responsibility and just feel more satisfied.” Survey participant (21, she/her, South)

Getting a driving licence. Particularly in Tasmania’s public transport-poor areas, the importance of achieving independent freedom of movement for young people moving towards adulthood – in particular, but not exclusively, for employment – cannot be ignored. Many young people described the moment of getting their driving licence as a key moment in the transition to adulthood.

“Having my driver’s licence gave me a lot more independence. Holding down a job, meeting up with friends, attending classes, going to the gym were all difficult beforehand.” Survey participant (21, he/him, South)

“Getting my licence and buying my first car was a really big step to becoming independent for me. Something that really helped me was having access to a no interest loan. As a low income earner it’s really difficult to save for big purchases like a car and it’s also really difficult to secure a loan and be able to afford repayments.” Survey participant (23, they/them, South)

What made these harder than they needed to be?

You don't have parents to teach you or support you. Adult life takes for granted many skills that, in best-case scenarios, parents pass on to their children – but not all young Tasmanians are lucky enough to learn these at home. In addition to domestic skills and financial literacy, young people said, parents are vital facilitators of obtaining a driving licence.

“School does not prepare kids for 'life', school prepares kids for further education... and when the 'real world' hits, kids don't know how to do 'adult shit' like apply for loans, pay accounts etc.” Survey participant (24, he/him, South)

“Getting my licence [has been hard] -- none of my family wanted to help. In my progress towards it I had to pay for lessons every time I wanted to learn how to drive. It's been 3 years that I have been on my learners. Also getting a stable job without a licence is difficult as well.” Survey participant (22, she/her, South)

You're facing physical and/or mental ill health. Chronic health conditions are far more common among young people than often assumed: in 2017-18 around 43% of Australian children had one or more long-term health conditions, and 15% of young Tasmanians 15-25 years reported having a diagnosed mental health condition at the last Census.^{3,4} Beyond the general challenges of accessing the health care system, young people with chronic health conditions, physical or mental, face additional financial and emotional burdens.

“Because of my challenging childhood I do suffer from a multitude of environmental mental illnesses[...]. Because of this, it's been extremely difficult to handle as much stress as I have. Between work, study, and caring for my siblings, I will often have seizing attacks from exhaustion or stress. This has made it extremely difficult to stay independent.” Survey participant (18, she/her, South)

“Sometimes illness is a hard part for me to be independent because I can't take care of myself sometimes.” Survey participant (22, she/her, South)

You live in a rural area. Young people noted the range of constraints faced by young Tasmanians in rural areas, from limited employment opportunities to limited transport options; limited opportunities to network and seek out emotional and practical support to limited internet services.

“Internet isn't reliable in rural areas. Everything is digital these days and many don't have stable internet at home or a computer to access it.” Workshop participant

“Word of mouth is very powerful in local community. It can help you but very easy to become a target and be ostracised. If you get known as a 'problem' you won't get any work and no one will want to help you.” Workshop participant

You're out of your community. A geographical move often comes with added challenges. In some cases, it's social isolation; in others it's the challenge of finding new services to replace those you are familiar with. Some young people mentioned that in Tasmania's word-of-mouth-dependent employment environment, it can take a while to break into a new place's job market as well as social scene.

³ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/australias-children/contents/health/chronic-conditions-burden-disease>

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021 Census of Population and Housing.

“Feeling lonely and establishing community. I moved to a new state so left my friends and family behind. Regularly travelling home for visits wasn't financially possible and I took a little bit to find community things to do to meet others (e.g. netball).”

Survey participant (22, she/her, North)

“Making friends as a young adult who is a ‘new Tasmanian’ is extremely difficult.”

Survey participant (23, he/him, North)

You're not ready to commit to a particular life path. In an age filled with options around study, employment and other life course choices, young people said that the tendency by some to associate adulthood with clear and lasting choices is not helpful. It will take time for some young people to figure out the next steps on their life path, and this does not make them less of an adult than someone with a clear vision of where they want to be in ten years.

“I just like a bit of everything and committing to a long term education commitment at UNI wasn't for me.. particularly because it's so expensive. I think I'm discovering what I like and I can study (if I have the time) to get better skills and be good at what I do with confidence. It's just that pressure from people and other adults saying.. "what are you going to do?" Survey participant (24, she/her, South)

“Working out what I want to do for a job [was harder than it needed to be]. I changed my mind several times.” Survey participant (25, she/her, South)

You don't know where or what support is available. Participants appreciated the fact that some services, programs and resources to support young people already exist, and often hoped that these could be expanded or replicated in different locations. Notably, however, many did not know of programs that support young people in their transition to adulthood or were surprised to learn of their existence in workshops, suggesting that many programs need to be more effectively promoted.

“I started doing YNOT stuff last year... and honestly it was about the money [gift voucher incentives] to start with. But it was a really great experience and I've done another mental health suicide workshop at The Link [referring to the Tasmanian Suicide Prevention Strategy 2023-27 Implementation plan February workshop] and now this today... I had no idea how many services are actually out there and what's available to me. I'm pretty lucky and have a lot of family support, but I cannot believe that there were options available to me outside of that. I will keep doing this stuff because I feel like I'm learning about where I can get help as well as having a say.”

Workshop participant

What could make the pathway to adulthood smoother?

Participants had a wide range of specific suggestions for programs, facilities and approaches that could support young people in their transition to adulthood.

Moving out of home and living daily life independently

As noted, most participants felt that the transition to independent housing was the biggest issue facing young people wishing to establish an independent life. Many suggested programs to help young people navigate the requirements and legal and practical complexities of private rental. Some called for more social and supported housing as well as the construction of more housing close to employment and services. Colony47's *JumpStart* program, currently in its infancy, was recognised as a step in the right direction, with young people eager to see the outcomes of the pilot and hopeful that it can be expanded.

"Access to an apartment building for people moving out of home to get a rental reference (like Youth Foyers, but for people not eligible for social housing)." Workshop participant

"Cheaper rent housing etc but also better sharehouse services that show potential roommates and sharehouse possibilities." Survey participant (19, he/him, South)

Life skills were another area where participants hoped for more support. Some participants, for example, suggested that local governments could sponsor cooking classes as part of youth engagement activities, perhaps partnering with local community groups. One participant suggested that attendance at such courses should count towards Centrelink mutual obligation requirements.

"Skills support; basic gardening to grow food, checking your car, changing a tyre, oil, fuel, insurance, rego; cooking, washing up, clothes, food plans, employment." Workshop participant

"If there was free or cheap short courses/information days for young adults on basic life skills for independence that would always be available, it could help so much." Survey participant (24, she/her, North)

Moving into financial independence

Training in financial literacy was the area that most participants specifically called for from the education system. Most participants wanted training in financial literacy to be broadly available to young people starting from an early age; some wished that it could be made a core unit by Year 10. The comments of a few participants suggest that young people's financial capabilities, as well as general life skills, would benefit from simple training in the cost-benefit analyses involved in decision-making. And a better understanding of how to decode legal jargon has the potential to help with financial contracts related not only to employment, but also to housing and consumer purchases. In all these areas, one participant suggested, young people may find it easier and more enjoyable to engage in new learning forms, such as games.

"More school based education towards life preparation. Financial literacy, superannuation, taxes, interest rates, budgeting" Workshop participant

"Online classes on bill paying, budgeting and taxes. Something that is interactive and helps educate." Workshop participant

Moving into work

Many participants felt the need for more programs to help young people connect with employers in their area and broaden their horizons to the wider world of employment opportunity in the state and nationally. Local and state-level jobs expos, work experience, and talks by school alumni were all suggested by participants as ways of opening young people's eyes to different opportunities.

Participants also wanted more help to be available for young people to learn how to write a resume or cover letter, apply for a tax file number, open a superannuation account, or navigate the complexities of starting their own business. Financial support to obtain useful credentials such as first aid certificates, occupational tickets, Working with Vulnerable People cards, or professional insurance would also help young people gain appropriate, meaningful employment.

"Why isn't there more training to help us start and manage a local business? Derby is booming, but it's mostly mainlanders there. If we don't want to dig up potatoes and don't want to move away – why can't we start our own jobs?" Workshop participant

"I would've loved to have entry level opportunities to at least try different industries and jobs. I chat with some friends about what it would be like for year 12 for example, or a year 13 where you can do 3 months of work in hospo, then 3 months in agribusiness, 3 in healthcare (even if it's just watching or helping with admin) and 3 in retail... that way you come out of school with 1 year experience in pretty much every industry looking to employ people right away. That would be awesome!"

Survey participant (24, she/her, South)

Moving to adult services

Many participants wanted more advice on the process of migrating from services aimed at children and young people to adult services as well as navigating the adult service environment, both from the services that they were leaving and those that they were entering. Many participants said that they badly needed advice around entering and navigating adult medical services, in particular in relation to mental health -- an already challenging transition that is made harder by the long waitlists and high costs of adult mental health support. Indeed, this was the area where participants were most likely to identify the expansion of both youth and adult services as crucial to their transition to independence.

"Information sessions about dental and health care costs. When how to book an appointment, understanding what bulk billing is." Workshop participant

"Cheaper counselling for youth and their families to strengthen relationships, support networks." Workshop participant

"Programs to develop personal skills and build emotional intelligence and self-awareness." Workshop participant

Moving around

Given the importance of being able to get to where you need to go to be considered an adult, participants emphasised the need for better transport options for all young Tasmanians, but particularly young people living rurally. Young people called for more frequent, reliable and extensive bus services, more free driving lessons and both formal and informal driver mentor programs (with compensation for costs and discounts on vehicle registration to create incentives for mentors). Several participants strongly argued that young people – who often have the freshest understanding of road rules, having recently passed their licensing exams – should be part of the solution by being permitted to teach and supervise their peers. One participant also noted that Victoria is helping young people cover the high cost of running a vehicle by offering free vehicle registration for apprentices, and wished something similar would be implemented in Tasmania.

“Being able to supervise learner drivers immediately after coming of P’s if you haven’t had any infringements on your P plates [or] a course to check you off to teach people?”

Workshop participant

“Incentives for volunteer driver mentors (e.g. discount on rego)”.

Workshop participant

What needs to change in Tasmania for young adults to thrive and be independent?

Young people recognise that challenges in Tasmania are not necessarily unique to the state. They felt that Tasmania could nevertheless step up to a range of big-picture changes to support young people moving into independence, including:

Proactive, swift solutions to the housing crisis. Housing policy topped the list of young people's calls for change. To make rentals accessible and affordable for young people, those we spoke with called for more construction of housing close to employment and services, greater state intervention in the private market—including rent caps and secure leases-- and a rapid expansion of supported housing options.

"Banning landlords from evicting people to turn into AirBnBs and short stay houses, prohibiting landlords from raising rental prices, having someone from the council check if the house is actually safe to live in." Survey participant (21, she/her, South)

A radically different attitude towards getting a license and getting around. On the one hand, young people said, the process of getting a driving license should be made faster and more equitable. On the other hand, they said, the ability to lead a good life in Tasmania should not be contingent on owning a vehicle. This means more extensive, affordable public transport; integrated transport and land use planning; employers dropping the requirement for a driver's license for jobs not requiring it; and innovative approaches to peer driver mentorship.

"Reduction of reliance on cars as a society. Cars are expensive and sometimes unachievable/unwanted, especially by young people but they have become mandatory to be independent. This does not have to be how it is! Removing the need for cars allows youth to start being independent far younger and hence makes the transition smoother. This is also contributed to by the lack of houses available for young people close to the city. They are driven away to the outer suburbs which then restricts their social life and limits them in what they can do." Survey participant (24, he/him, South)

A holistic, age-continuous approach to mental health and wellbeing. While not unique to the transition to adulthood, mental health and wellbeing issues are a key concern of young Tasmanians, as further discussed in YNOT's Tasmanian Youth Forum 2023 report. Young people noted the challenges of transitioning from youth to adult mental health services and argued for greater continuities of support, including for young people who outwardly appear to be ticking all the boxes of success.

"Most of the 'independent' young adults I know...are reaching the goals they want to reach, but I don't know a single person that has good mental health." Survey participant (20, they/them, South)

Greater involvement of young people in strategic policy planning. Young people, the ones we spoke with said, have the best sense of the issues that they and their contemporaries are facing, and can offer innovative suggestions as well as being able to ward off policy dead ends. But young people's involvement in policy planning should not be limited to youth issues: young people will have to live the longest with the impacts of the full range of policy decisions made today, and therefore should be involved in their formulation across the board.

"Local, state and federal governments to all have more input from young people (e.g. more active youth advisory boards, having community consultation sessions with young people)". Survey participant (22, she/her, South)

How could changes be implemented?

All these changes will benefit from new modes of implementation that make it more convenient, more affordable, and less stressful for young people to access services, as well as drawing on young people's own skills and resilience to support each other.

One-stop drop-in services

The single most valuable addition to the service landscape would be drop-in centres for young people, ideally where services would be co-located, but at the least providing general advice as well as information on the full range of available supports and services, as well as recreational space for young people to meet with friends or meet new people, without having to spend money at a café or pub. Such co-location, young people said, will save them and their peers time, money in transport costs, and significant stress in accessing the full range of services that they need. Participants with disability in particular stressed that such centres should be genuinely accessible and understanding of all young people's needs.

"Adulthood 101 is teaching young adults how to transition into adulthood. Financial advice, career support, health services support, rental assist, life skills, everything you'll need to become a successful adult." Workshop participant

"I would like services to be centralised, like a central drop in hub where you can come in, ask for help and be pointed in the right direction for the best service or support."

Workshop participant

These one-stop shops, as well as other services, should also provide opportunities for:

More one-on-one support and mentoring. Many young people need generalist advice and presence as well as/rather than specialised support, something that can be provided by peer and community mentors as well as professionals.

"Actual mentor programs. Adults to ask general questions to, having someone who can go to appointments with [you]." Workshop participant

More respect for young people's capabilities and personal boundaries. Some participants felt that services often treat young people differently to older people – an implicit judgment around their relationship to 'adulthood' – and that young people deserve the same respect and consideration as people of older ages.

"'No questions asked' and 'no stupid questions' - be supportive but not pushy or nosey." Workshop participant

More support with the cost of living, particularly food relief. As noted above, participants said that food programs are appreciated by young people on tight budgets, who don't know how to cook, or who lack cooking facilities.

"Offer food at services, like The Link and headspace do -- people might not have had food that day." Workshop participant

Targeted support for young people with diverse identities and backgrounds. Some groups of young people require extra support in order to be on equal footing with their peers. Participants from migrant backgrounds, for instance, called for more support with English skills as well as general induction into Australian social and business cultures.

More opportunities for young people to come together and help each other

Young people's wish for more opportunities – places and programs – for young people to get together, particularly in rural Tasmania, has been well-documented in YNOT surveys and projects. While such opportunities are often presented as primarily beneficial to overcoming social isolation, comments from young people we spoke with suggest that these have the potential to play an important role in the transition to adulthood as well, by:

Giving young people the opportunity to support each other and network. Young people benefit as much from being peer mentors as they do from learning from people facing the same challenges, participants said. Meanwhile, in Tasmania's word-of-mouth-dependent employment environment, social connections – or the lack of them – can facilitate or hinder employment opportunities.

Giving young people the opportunity to explore socialising as adults outside of a pub. As noted in this year's Tasmanian Youth Forum as well as in the context of this consultation, young people's wellbeing 'resilience toolkits' increasingly include a range of positive coping strategies, an important one of which is contact with friends. At the same time, however, the coping strategies of others are less healthy: alcohol and drug abuse receive consistent mentions. Alcohol-free options for social contact, or ones not centred around drinking culture, support wellbeing and good mental health while avoiding reliance on what is increasingly recognised as a harmful, albeit legal, substance.

"Having programs, networks outside of school other than just drinking and partying on weekends." Survey participant (23, she/her, North)

"Better culture and more opportunity to mingle. For most young adults the main way they socialise is by clubbing and binge drinking which I believe is due to lack of alternatives." Survey participant (25, she/her, North)

Better advertising, awareness and help finding existing resources and supports.

Tasmania has a range of services, programs and initiatives available to young people 18-25 years, but many young people have no idea that a support or opportunity exists, or find out about it too late. Throughout consultations, young people expressed significant frustration learning about different services or supports that they could have benefited from had they been aware. The consistent call for a single information-point website suggests that existing databases are not suitable for, known of, or being accessed by young people.

However, in addition to a youth-appropriate and trusted information source, young people acknowledged that digital literacy and access to technology isn't always great in Tasmania, and that a mixed approach is needed to share information through the various networks and channels. Participants want to see service providers place greater emphasis on communicating their programs and supports that are available to young people, indicating a mixed approach using:

- Online, centralised and easy-to-use, youth-friendly database of relevant supports, resources and information.
- Social media posts on YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and/or Twitter. YouTube and Facebook appeared particularly popular with this group of young people.
- Promotion through schools.
- Advertisements on social media, streaming services and games.
- Posters and brochures at schools, on buses and at bus stops, on local noticeboards, in businesses where young people are employed (supermarkets, fast food outlets) and in shops, cafes, GP and dental surgeries and other health facilities, or other places that young people visit.

- Promotion through non-service outlets such as sporting or recreational clubs and groups
- Training to place local leaders (sports coaches, for example) as people to go to for advice around where to find services
- Promotional events
- Guest speakers in school and work environments
- TV and radio ads and guests

*“Website content needs to be relatable, made for young people, connect us to places.”
Workshop participant*

“Most of all - and this is SO IMPORTANT - speak in conversational English. Many young people haven't had a chance to learn corporate jargon yet, and the ones most in need are likely undereducated. Information is lost if it isn't communicated in a way that is easily understood.” Survey participant (25, she/her, North)

Conclusion

Young Tasmanians aged 18-25 years are experiencing a prolonged period of transition to adulthood that is distinctly different to that of previous generations. Whilst transitioning to independence is different for everyone, most notably young people with limited social capital, there are some distinct themes that have emerged through this report. Transitioning from education to work, transport disadvantage, housing insecurity and cost of living pressures featured heavily and are considered significant barriers to living independently in Tasmania.

Young people's views of adulthood revealed the paradoxical nature of their experience, with many describing it as a double-sided coin. Not only did they recount the barriers and challenges to independence but importantly the benefits of adulthood - having more money, freedom, autonomy and responsibility. This narrative aligns with what the evidence tells us, that emergent adulthood is characterised by increased independence, decision-making responsibility and capacity, and cognitive development.

In addition, this period of development for young people 18-25 years presents one of risk and opportunity. It is clear that many young Tasmanians need additional support to transition from adolescence to adulthood and that these supports are currently lacking for many. Failure to respond to the needs of young people during this developmentally rich and critical time has the potential to alter a young person's trajectory with long reaching impacts on their health, social and economic outcomes.

The findings of this consultation clearly show that young Tasmanians aspire to manage the transition to adulthood through their own agency, and indeed that the ability to manage this transition is in itself a mark of adulthood. Nevertheless, this report demonstrates how relatively small boosts along the way – from services, trusted adults and peers – can help to make the path smoother: facilitating young people's shift from dependence to independence without condescension or paternalism.

When do you become an 'adult' according to young Tasmanians?

"It's when I..."

- turn 18.
- mature, both socially and emotionally, and can take responsibility for myself and my actions.
- have the resources, knowledge and skills to live independently.
- have the confidence and ability to make informed decisions for myself.
- become financially independent and can afford the material basics like housing, food, healthcare and transport.
- no longer have to rely on my parents or family for support, but can choose to if I need to.