



# Becoming an adult: the experience of young Tasmanians today



A Discussion  
Paper to  
guide action

# Acknowledgement 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 the Elders past and present.



I know that there are a lot of welcome to country and acknowledgement of country happening at events and programs ... but just for that, to be everywhere is awesome. I don't know how it feels for a non-indigenous person to hear that [welcome to country]. But I know as an indigenous person just sitting in a room and having that I just feel so sort of heard ... It's just a tiny thing, but it just makes such a huge difference.



**(19, South)**



youth network of Tasmania

## 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 and programs 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.

### For further information

Youth Network of Tasmania  
12/29 Murray Street  
HOBART TAS 7000  
[www.ynot.org.au](http://www.ynot.org.au)

# How to have your say

The Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) wants to hear from you about the issues presented in this Discussion Paper and your responses to the Discussion Questions. This feedback will inform an Action Plan which will follow this public engagement.

Submissions will be treated as public information and published on our website [www.ynot.org.au](http://www.ynot.org.au) once consultations have concluded. Only your name or organisation name will be published with your submission unless you request otherwise. You may also request your submission or parts of it to be kept confidential. This must be clearly stated in writing at the time of making your submission. Please indicate the information or parts of your submission you want to remain confidential. Your submission will not be published to the extent of that request.

Submissions containing defamatory or offensive material or that include information that could enable the identification of others will not be published.

Copyright in submissions remains with the author(s).

For more information, please contact YNOT Project Manager Joanne Horton at [jo@ynot.org.au](mailto:jo@ynot.org.au).

## How young people can have a say

Hearing young people's experiences, opinions, ideas and solutions is essential to this work. It is important that this Discussion Paper is accessible and easily understood by all young Tasmanians.

A shorter, plain English and youth-friendly Discussion Paper has been developed to ensure that young people have the opportunity to provide feedback and input into this important work.

Young people are welcome to respond to either version of the Discussion Paper.

The Youth Transitions Discussion Paper for Young People can be accessed at YNOT's website [www.ynot.org.au](http://www.ynot.org.au).



## Submissions can be forwarded to:

### File Upload

<https://ems.gs/3PHm0bUfm0a>  
(preferred)

### Email

[jo@ynot.org.au](mailto:jo@ynot.org.au)

### Mail

Attn: Youth Network of Tasmania  
PO Box 4679, HOBART TAS 7000

Responses are also welcomed via our online short-form survey.

### Survey

<https://ems.gs/3PHm0hnfmUX>

All submissions must be received by **11:59pm, 28 November 2023.**



# Why is becoming an adult different now?

## Times have changed

**Young people are navigating a world profoundly different from previous generations ... and the pathway to adulthood is now longer and more complicated than ever before.**

In the mid to late 20th century, it was possible to set up adult life at about age 20. Young people moved from school to work at a younger age, married and started a family earlier, often bought a home, and settled into adult life. Now, establishing these stable social structures occurs much later – even during their 30s – with greater challenges than ever before.

The challenges are profound – globalisation, rapid advancements in technology, changes in the job market, evolving social norms, rapidly rising housing costs, and cost of living pressures all directly affect the pathway to stable employment, tertiary education, financial stability and self-sufficiency, and even decisions about starting a family.

While many young people struggle to adapt their life paths and transition to adulthood in this challenging environment, our expectations of them as adults have not changed.

## They're caught between

**Young adults are no longer fully dependent but are not yet fully independent.**

Young Tasmanians are negotiating the complexities and uncertainties of adulthood at a time when they are losing the support and structures of schools, families, and child, youth and family services. They find themselves caught in-between – no longer a child but not yet equipped with the skills, knowledge or experience needed to successfully navigate adult life.

The pathways from dependence to independence have become disjointed, not just for the disadvantaged and vulnerable, but for the whole generation of Tasmanians transitioning to adulthood. Simple lineal pathways have been displaced by complexity and unpredictability, with young people 'yo-yo-ing' between states of dependence and independence.

But many young Tasmanians say they aren't prepared for the responsibilities of adulthood and feel that adults are apathetic towards their requests for support.

As a result, young adults find themselves living precarious lives. They have few or no stable housing options, experience financial insecurity from unemployment, underemployment, and low-paid, low-skills, low-security jobs, and are affected by often fragile relationships. Establishing independence and finding stability becomes overwhelming.



## Support where it's needed

This Discussion Paper recognises that times have changed and the support young Tasmanians need to successfully emerge into adulthood needs to change with them. That's why we know a whole-of-government Action Plan is needed to focus on and support young Tasmanians to emerge successfully into adulthood.

### Navigating the Discussion Paper



#### **Part 1: Emerging into adulthood:**

**A story of change and challenges** sets out the case for serious consideration of emergent adulthood as a life stage that needs focused attention.

#### **Part 2: Young adult experiences**

synthesises and shares the insights and experiences of young people across five key markers of independence identified through both research and consultation.

#### **Part 3: The current service system**

analyses and summarises the current state of play regarding policies and services across Tasmania for young adults.

#### **Part 4: Opportunities for change**

develops areas that need to be considered to increase the effectiveness of policies and services for young adults.



# Emerging into adulthood: A story of change and challenges

## A crash landing

Turning 18 ... it's a sudden and unforgiving entry to adulthood.

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is triggered by turning 18. At 18, young people gain full legal, economic and social responsibilities of adulthood. They acquire the right to vote, can enter into contracts, purchase alcohol and tobacco products, participate in adult activities

and venues, and can be held legally accountable for their actions. But the moment 'adulthood' is reached, many young people say,<sup>1</sup> is hard to define, with both fixed and fluid markers. It can be chronological age, practical markers or personal qualities.

## The meaning of adulthood<sup>2</sup>

### Chronological age

Turning 18, with its accompanying legal rights and responsibilities, projects a young person into adulthood, ready or not.

### Practical markers of independence

Important moments and skills linked to independence can be more important than chronological age in establishing adult status:

- *Financial independence* – the ability to substantially pay your way.
- *Freedom of movement* – getting both a driver's licence and a car is crucial to an autonomous life in Tasmania particularly rural and other public-transport-poor areas.

- *Moving out of home* – having your own space, and the skills and responsibilities that go with it like cooking, cleaning, maintenance and financial responsibility.
- *Getting a job* – for most young people, employment and adulthood are strongly linked.

### Personal qualities

Age and practical independence aside, adulthood is something reached through a degree of emotional maturity – including self-reflection and a willingness to take responsibility and accountability.

## The evidence

Research shows that age 18-25 is a crucial period of development that comes with both opportunity and risk. Termed 'emergent adulthood', it is characterised by changes in identity, independence, decision-making and cognitive development.

It is a critical, sensitive and developmentally rich period of development with significant and long-reaching impacts on health and wellbeing, social and economic outcomes. This in-between stage is different from the stage of adolescence that precedes it and the adult period that follows.<sup>3</sup>



## Important developmental changes in emergent adulthood<sup>4</sup>

### The emergent adult ...

- brain develops unevenly throughout their 20s and is highly flexible, adaptable and receptive to learning. As social and critical/abstract thinking skills starts to mature, areas responsible for judgement, decision-making and impulse control tends to develop later.
- body is still developing, with physical changes that start in puberty continuing into their early 30s. Despite the potential for 'peak physical fitness', competing priorities, lower health literacy and financial insecurity can prevent them from engaging in preventative health care.
- is highly susceptible to stress and psychological distress as they navigate key areas of change. Social and economic stressors, as well as prolonged periods of instability and uncertainty, can contribute to poor mental health and drive harmful, risk-taking behaviours.
- is establishing their personal and social identity and actively seeking a sense of belonging and connection. Heightened sensitivity to others' social, emotional and mental states makes them vulnerable to influence and peer pressure.
- experiences greater rates of anxiety, depression and stress, attributed with the expectations and responsibilities of adulthood – particularly in those who do not have the means or ability to achieve the best possible outcome.

# The double-sided coin

## What does being an adult mean to you, and what does “adulthood” look like today?<sup>5</sup>

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* – the pleasure of setting your own course, but anxiety about having inadequate knowledge or guidance.
- *having a voice, but also facing pressure to conform* – happy to share your view, but making choices at the ballot box or about government policy which don't reflect your perspective or experience.
- *having more money, but also more bills* – income is consumed by rent, vehicle registration, running costs, and the high cost of living.
- *having freedom, but also responsibility* – some stretch their wings, but others feel stressed by responsibilities, and the demands of work life.
- *having autonomy, but also isolation* – less recreation time to spend with friends, and while able to make independent decisions, missing home and family.

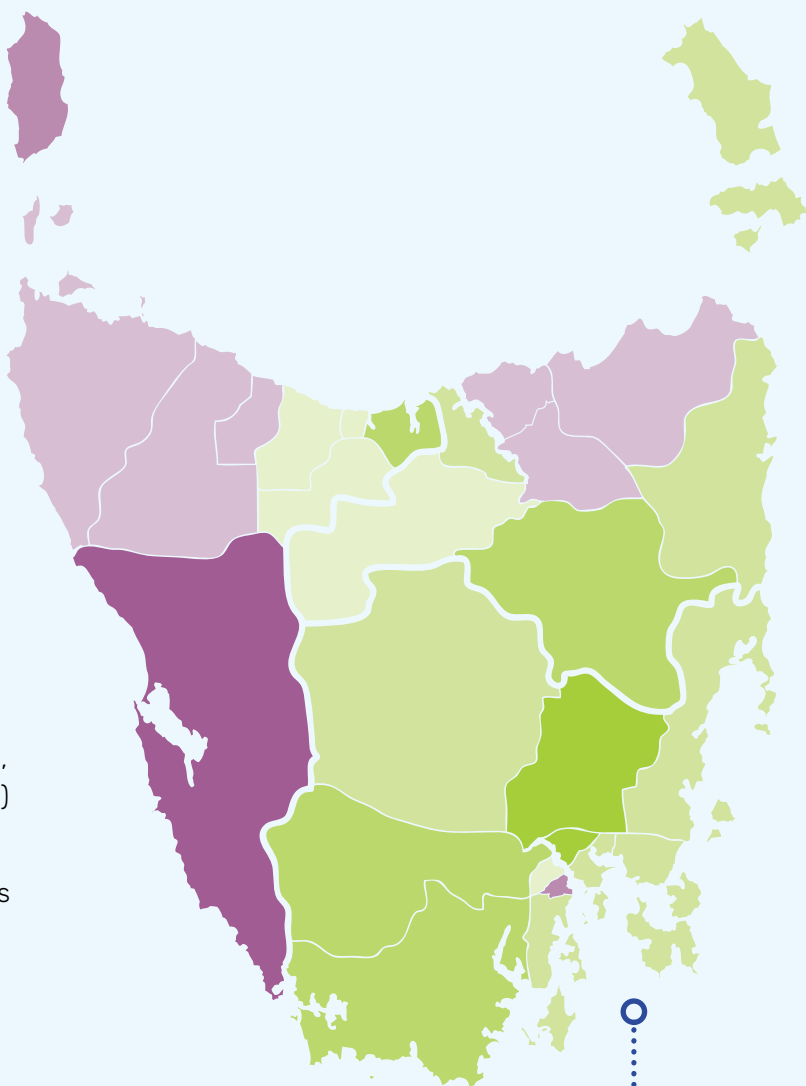


# Who and how many?

There are about 50,000 young Tasmanians aged 18-25 years, 9% of the total population, transitioning from adolescence to adulthood.<sup>6</sup>

Metropolitan and urban Local Government Areas (LGAs) Hobart (11.9%), Launceston (10.7%), Brighton (10.3%), Burnie (9.6%) and Glenorchy (9.5%) record the highest proportion of young adults, while lowest occurs in rural and regional LGAs Flinders (4%), Tasman (4.7%), Glamorgan-Spring Bay (5%), Break O'Day (5.2%) and King Island (5.9%).

The change in population demographics across Tasmanian LGAs from 2011-2021 reveals a different picture, with 20/29 LGAs recording positive growth, nine (9) of which increased by between 15-40%.<sup>7</sup>



## Change (%) in population aged 18-25 years between 2011 and 2021 by local government area

### -20% to -29%

West Coast

### -10% to -19%

King Island  
Hobart

### -9% to 0%

Burnie  
Dorset  
Waratah-Wynyard  
Launceston  
George Town  
Circular Head

### 0% to 9%

Glenorchy  
Devonport  
Kentish  
Central Coast  
Meander Valley

### 10% to 19%

Kingborough  
West Tamar  
Clarence  
Flinders  
Break O'Day  
Glamorgan-Spring Bay  
Central Highlands  
Sorell

### 20% to 29%

Derwent Valley  
Latrobe  
Huon Valley  
Northern Midlands

### 30% to 39%

Brighton  
Southern Midlands

# The lived experience

As 18-25-year-olds transition from school, home and family towards independence, the data tells us many are doing it tough.

## The reality of getting to independence

The young adult ...

- *Is living with their parents longer than ever before* – around 75% leave home later than any previous generation.<sup>8,9</sup> Strained relationships can force them out of home making them vulnerable to financial insecurity and homelessness.
- *Lacks affordable, appropriate and reliable transport to move around* – there are few after-hours public transport options, especially in rural and remote areas; many struggle to afford the cost of getting a licence without a willing mentor and vehicle.<sup>10</sup>
- *Is locked out of the private housing market* – Tasmania's median rental price is now \$437 a week,<sup>11</sup> exceeding Youth Allowance by \$135 and Job Seeker by \$70 each week.<sup>12</sup> Tasmania's low levels of housing affordability means homeownership is a pipedream without additional financial support.<sup>13,14</sup>
- *Faces challenges getting a job* – Tasmania's youth unemployment rate (15-24 years) remains stubbornly high at 10.4%<sup>15</sup> compared to 4.2% for all ages.<sup>16</sup> National figures also reveal underemployment is 14.5% for young people compared to 6.4% for all.<sup>17</sup>
- *Experiences bias and age-related discrimination* – young adults are more likely than any other age to be described as 'bad at managing finances', 'expecting things on a platter', 'being selfish/self-centred' or 'taking more days off for "mental health"'.<sup>18</sup>
- *Experiences mental health challenges* – 15% of young Tasmanians live with a mental health condition, the highest rates of any long-term condition reported.<sup>19</sup> Demand outstrips supply of youth mental health services with emergent adults facing extensive wait lists to access affordable and appropriate support.
- *Can't afford basic healthcare* – the number of young people with private health cover continues to decline, placing pressure on an already stretched public health system.<sup>20</sup> Only 6.9% of GPs offer bulk-billed services.<sup>21</sup>
- *Is choosing to forgo essential health, sexual and reproductive services due to the cost,*<sup>22</sup> despite having higher rates of sexually transmissible infections and lower screening rates than the wider population.<sup>23</sup>
- *Is living below the poverty line* – 39% of young Tasmanians reported earning less than \$499 a week compared to 25% of adults aged 25-64 years.<sup>24</sup>



# Young adult experiences

## 2 PART TWO

We know through research and consultation with young people that there are five key markers of independence.

### The five key markers are



Moving out of home and living independently



Moving into financial independence



Moving from school into the workforce



Moving into and accessing the adult service system



Moving about and within their communities

Young adults told us that “adulthood” is a matter of practice, with a fair amount of trial and error. It’s easier to achieve if you have a supportive family, you start learning life skills at a young age, you have an income sufficient for your needs, and you have a drivers licence.

However, transitioning to independence can also be very challenging if you don’t have parents to teach life skills or provide support to get a licence, you face mental or physical ill-health, you live in a rural area, you’re out of your element, and/or not yet ready to commit to a particular life path. It can be overwhelming dealing with Centrelink and other bureaucracies, getting your licence without parental support, and establishing a rental history as a young adult.

Further insights into the experiences and views of Tasmanian’s young adults are presented in YNOT’s recent consultation reports, *Pathways to Adulthood* and *Tasmanian Youth Story*, available at [www.ynot.org.au](http://www.ynot.org.au).

**The pathway to adulthood for young Tasmanians 18-25 years: Young adults must navigate changes in these important life domains ...**

# Moving out of home and living independently



## Young adults need to be able to ...

- move out of the parental or family home if they choose to
- take care of themselves day-to-day
- enter into stable housing arrangements
- have housing options that support their needs
- have housing options nearby to school, work, support services and public transport

## which is influenced by ...

- housing affordability and availability
- income and cost of living pressures
- access to supports and resources
- access to additional supports and resources
- discrimination towards young renters
- access to healthy foods and cooking skills
- personal and household hygiene

## which impacts on ...

- family and personal relationships
- ability to attend and engage in education, training or employment
- mental health, health and wellbeing
- sense of empowerment and agency
- taking other steps to independence
- confidence and resilience

Finding a living space is hard for many young adults especially without personal connections or a rental history. Many delay moving out of home to save money, even when family tensions are high. To afford rent, they need full-time work, making it difficult to pursue further study. For some, the stress of renting comes not just from cost, but also from insecurity, with landlords ending leases for minor reasons and with inadequate notice.

Increased costs of living make the challenge of achieving independent housing even greater. This is particularly acute in regional areas where food and other essential items can be more expensive and rents unaffordable. Many young adults also lack essential independent living skills, such as making a budget, and cooking and cleaning, leading to a reliance on more expensive, less nutritious takeaways or, worse, going hungry.

### Question #1

**What are some innovative ways that can support young adults to transition out of the family home into independent living?**





# Moving into financial independence

## Young adults need to be able to ...

- have knowledge and skills to manage personal finances
- afford material basics

## which is influenced by ...

- lower median wages
- high youth unemployment and underemployment
- level of income supports
- financial literacy
- unpaid caring responsibilities
- intergenerational disadvantage

## which impacts on ...

- financial wellbeing
- ability to move out of home and retain accommodation
- ability to afford services when needed
- ability to pay bills
- ability to undertake volunteer and unpaid work experience

Financial independence can be achieved by having a job or receiving income support. However, young adults encounter obstacles in accessing financial support as they may be ineligible due to their parents income if living at home, or they do not meet other eligibility criteria.

The challenge of financial independence is often compounded by a lack of financial literacy. Many don't know about, or know where to find out about, how to prepare a budget or establish and manage banking and car or personal loans. Those planning to buy a property are anxious about the process of saving for a deposit, establishing the credentials for a home loan, and understanding first home-owner schemes.

## Question #2

**What is needed to assist young adults to become financially independent and to manage their financial affairs well?**



# Moving from school into the workforce



## Young adults need to be able to ...

- actively participate in education, training and employment
- be work-ready when entering the workforce
- know and understand their workplace rights and responsibilities
- gain the knowledge, skills and confidence to apply for work
- find pathways into their chosen industry or field
- gain employability skills and work experience through both paid and unpaid opportunities

## which is influenced by ...

- cost of study and availability of income support
- being work-ready, especially with 'soft' skills
- local networks for word-of-mouth opportunities
- support networks that build confidence and resilience
- skills in resume writing and interview performance
- employer perceptions

## which impacts on ...

- ability to attend and engage in education, training or employment
- sense of empowerment and agency
- taking other steps to independence
- ability to access health and social services
- ability to participate in the community

Moving into work is a big step for many young adults. It's a big leap from education and training to applying for a position with an effective resume and interview skills and then succeeding at work and making enough to get by. Tasmania's bias towards word-of-mouth hiring, employer preconceptions about young people's reliability and skill, and the level and quality of support from employment services, complicate the picture.

Once in work, young adults experience disquiet about inadequate induction and training, and picking up workplace expectations, norms, and routine tasks. The power and pay disparity between older and younger workers, the seasonality of many regional jobs, and inadequate hours and comparatively low rates of pay for casual jobs, leave many young adults struggling to make ends meet even while working.

### Question #3

**How can young adults be better equipped to move from school to work?**

### Question #4

**How can workplaces better support young adults?**



# Moving into and accessing the adult service system

## Young adults need to be able to ...

- access health and social support services on their own
- know what services are available to them and how to access them
- understand their personal needs and identify the types of services or supports that they may require
- access supports in a timely manner, when and where they need them
- access developmentally and age-appropriate services that meet their needs

## which is influenced by ...

- income and cost of living pressures
- access to affordable and appropriate transport
- appropriate and accessible services
- service demand and availability
- understanding and awareness of services
- effective communication networks
- experiences of friends and peers
- support from trusted adults

## which impacts on ...

- continuity of treatment
- ability to access timely and appropriate support
- ability to participate in education, training and employment
- mental health, health and wellbeing outcomes

The adult health, wellbeing and support service systems are often complex and confounding for young adults. Entering a healthcare system designed for adults is a shock for some with the abrupt transition from free to paid services for dental and mental health, and poor continuity between Medicare-subsidised paediatric and full-fee-paying adult services. There are often long waitlists and high costs for medical care, a lack of bulk billing, and paucity of rural and regional services. Young adults can face significant delays accessing support that's dependent on a diagnosis, especially mental health support.

Navigating services for income support, employment or education and training are also overwhelming for the uninitiated. Young adults find many Government websites confusing, advice contradictory, and processes challenging, which can be compounded for those needing access to documentation from less supportive parents – birth certificates, medical records and so on.

### Question #5

**What would help smooth the transition from the youth and adolescent service system (up to age 18) to a service system designed for adults?**

# Moving about and within their communities



## Young adults need to be able to ...

- move freely about their communities without relying on others
- have affordable, reliable and safe transport options that meet their needs
- travel between home, school, work, and essential services when they need to
- obtain a licence and access a personal vehicle

## which is influenced by ...

- access to driver mentors and personal vehicle while learning
- costs associated with private vehicle ownership, maintenance and use
- public transport availability, including routes, timing and service areas
- costs to use public transport

## which impacts on ...

- ability to attend and engage in education, training or employment
- sense of empowerment and agency
- taking other steps to independence
- ability to access health and social services
- ability to participate in the community

YNOT consultations have consistently reported that access to affordable, reliable and safe transport remains a massive issue for young adults in Tasmania, particularly but not exclusively in rural areas. Being able to reliably meet commitments to work, training and services is crucial to being considered an adult.

A current driver's licence is often a precondition for a job whether it requires driving or not and there are difficulties for many in getting their licence, particularly in regional areas and among those who do not have someone to teach them for the time required – a situation exacerbated by the fact that young people are not permitted to teach or supervise their peers. Public transport is often unavailable, unreliable and/or expensive, especially outside Hobart and Launceston.

### Question #6

What can be done to improve transport options for young adults in urban and rural areas?







# The current service system

## Mapping of policies and services

In 2023, YNOT undertook a mapping exercise as part of developing this Discussion Paper and the subsequent Action Plan, to better understand the number and types of services and policy settings that impact the wellbeing of 18-25-year-olds and support their journey to adulthood in a vastly changed world.

# Policy settings

Thirty (30) Tasmanian State Government policies, and one Federal Government policy were identified as impacting on the 18-25-year-old population. Ten local governments have youth plans or strategies.

## Of the Tasmanian State Government policies:

### 2/30

policies/strategies specifically included this age group – the Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, It Takes a Tasmanian Village targeting 0-25-year-olds from which this project is derived; and the emerging Youth Jobs Strategy, also currently at discussion paper stage, which targets 15-24-year-olds.

### 5/30

policies/strategies targeted age groups up to 18 (Strong Families, Safe Kids, Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework, Tasmanian Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy, Youth Justice Blueprint, and the Government response to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Strategy).

### 15/30

policies/strategies targeted ‘whole of population’ – some referenced, or acknowledged/recognised young people as a “key life stage” or “priority population group” although the age range was unclear or referenced under 18s. Some strategies/ action/implementation plans had some actions aimed at supporting young people.

### 3/30

policies/strategies addressed Aboriginal Tasmanians; two had a specific action aimed at “young Aboriginal Tasmanians”, or “youth” aged 15-24 years.

### 5/30

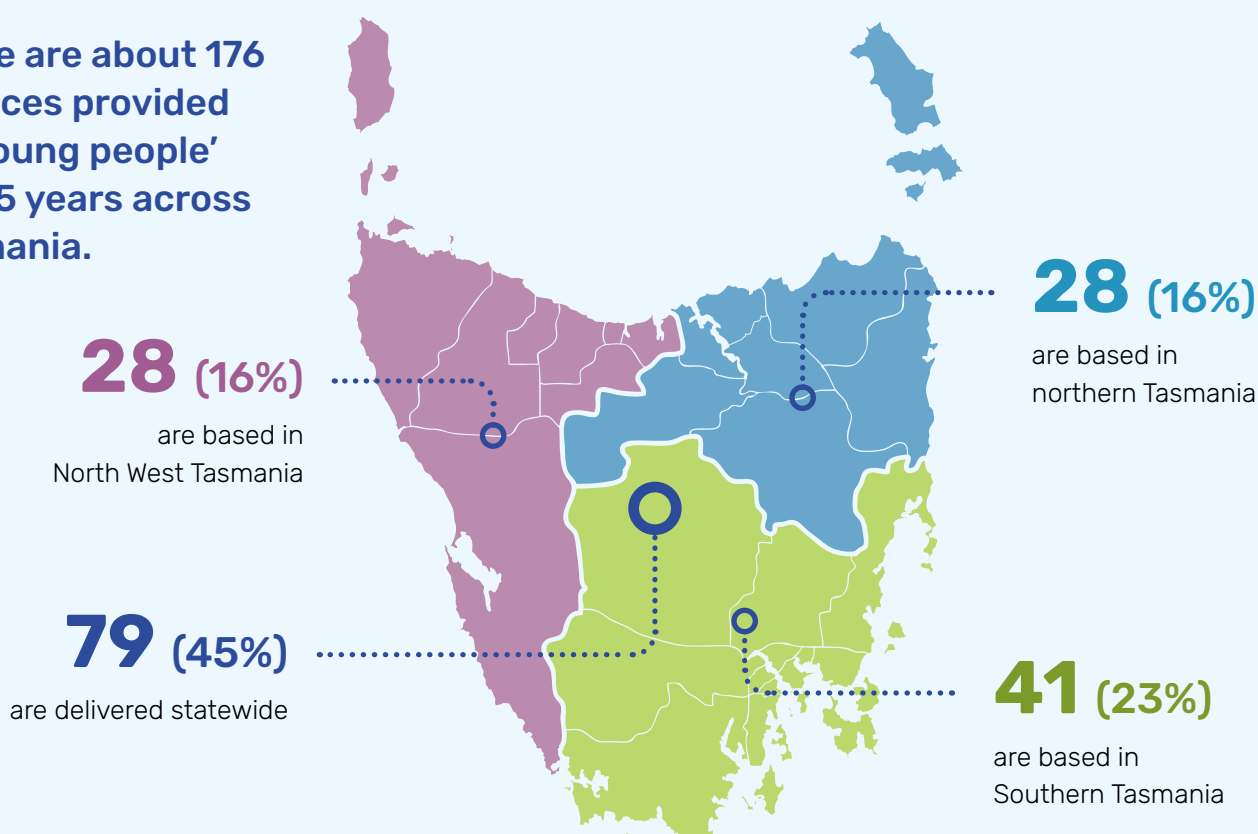
population-specific policies/strategies variously addressed people with disability, their families and carers (18-25-year-olds not mentioned), multicultural Tasmanian (some limited actions), LGBTQI+ and women (no specific mention), and victims-survivors of child sexual abuse (expected to have a direct impact on 18-25-year-olds).

### 1/30

The Federal Government’s whole-of-population Strategic Regional Plan for Tasmania identifies young people and “youth”, but doesn’t specifically mention young adults aged 18-25 years.

# Number of, and eligibility for, services

There are about 176 services provided to 'young people' 18-25 years across Tasmania.



The service mapping revealed a wide variation in the defined age range to whom services were offered, raising questions about the targeting of services to young adults.

- Some services set eligibility across a very wide age range, for example, 0-25, 10-24, 12-25, 13-20, under 19, under 25. These accounted for 64 services (over 50%) where the age range was defined.
- Some services started their service offering at 14 (5) or 15 (25) and included ages up to 25.

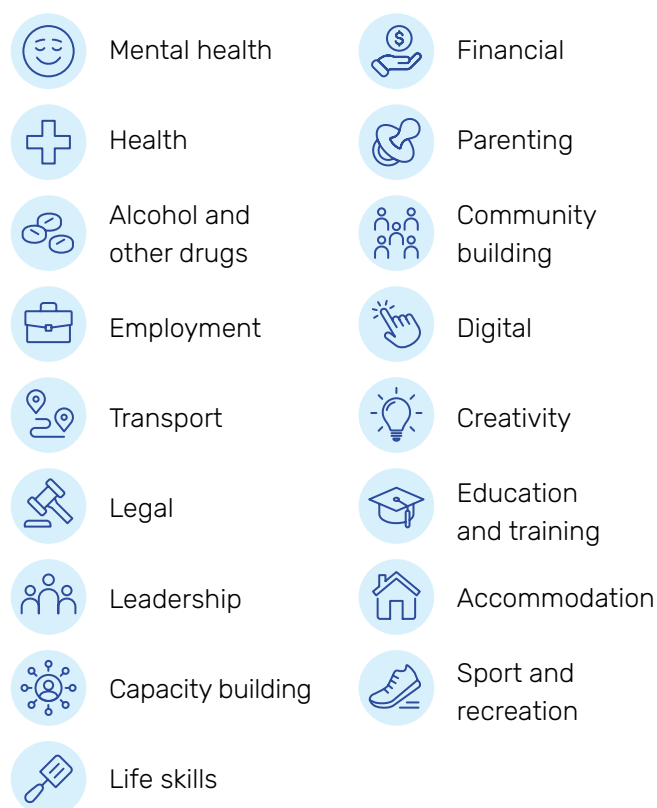
- 28 services were offered to young people aged 16+ or 18+ and 20 services did not define age eligibility but young adults aged 18-25 were included.

Ninety-two (92) services (or more than 50%) had specific eligibility criteria in addition to age, with many services offered to children and young adults with a specific need or life experience: out-of-home care, young pregnant women, carers, young multicultural or Aboriginal people, or those with a disability, LGBTQI+, homeless and low income.

# Types of services

To better understand the targeting of services to the broad range of needs of young adults, the service mapping identified a number of service types.

Some services were quite targeted, delivering programs that addressed just one service type, while others addressed a collection of service types. The service types analysed included:



The analysis reveals a scarcity of services available to the broader young adult population aged 18-25, where there is no additional eligibility criteria. Services that young adults wanted but were particularly scarce included just one service relating to digital skills, two for accommodation, legal and/or financial advice, and sport and recreation, and five relating to life skills and creativity. The largest number of services were aimed at employment, and education and training (both 15).

Services were also mapped to the Tasmanian child and youth wellbeing domains; some services supported more than one domain.



**14%**

supported *being loved, safe and valued*



**22%**

supported *having material basics*



**23%**

supported *being healthy*



**25%**

supported *learning*



**36%**

supported *participating*



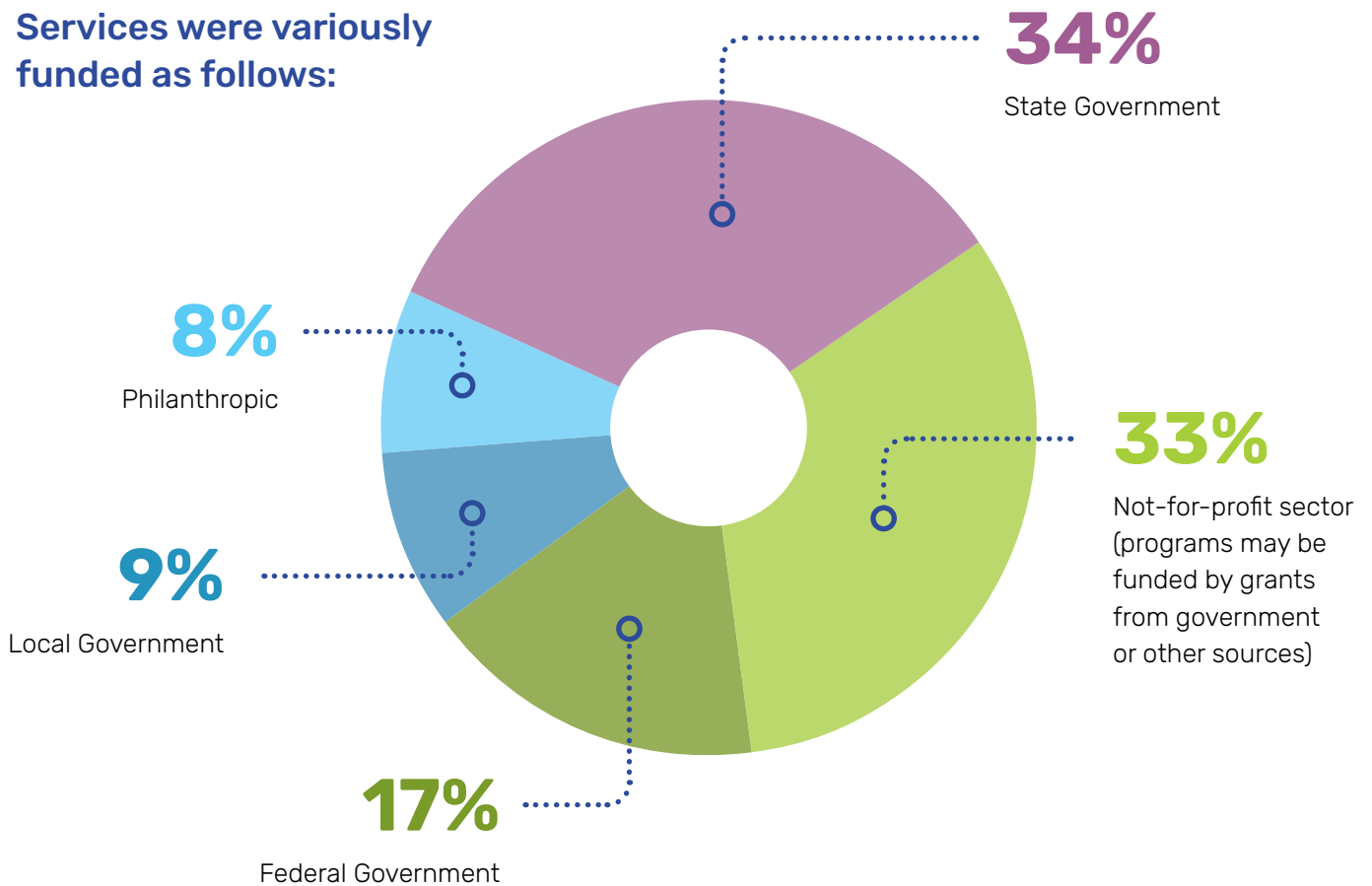
**39%**

supported *having a positive sense of culture and identity*



# Funding of services

Services were variously funded as follows:



## Question #7

How, and in what ways, can the service system and policy settings be more responsive to the needs of young adults?





# 4

## PART FOUR

# Opportunities for change

## Change essentials

Through our research and consultation, we know that young adults face significant barriers to accessing, and fully benefitting from, necessary support services, even when they are available. Services are often not designed in a way that meet their needs, are hard to find even when they exist, are hard to navigate so you get what you actually need, and are often siloed. Consideration of these issues are important to improving the service experience of young adults.

## Service/program design

While services may be available for young adults, their design often means they are not as accessible as they need to be. They can be costly and have limited opening hours, and despite being legally an adult, don't necessarily provide understanding of the many challenges being faced at this time of life. There are also barriers to getting to appointments at all, particularly in rural areas.

Young adults need a more guided, holistic approach to service design that addresses their overall health and wellbeing, with a focus on coordinated local services that recognise their challenges and don't assume their capacity – services that meet young adults 'where they're at' as they journey the transition to adulthood.

### Question #8

How can services be better designed to acknowledge and meet the needs of young adults?

## System navigation

It can be difficult for young adults to know what services are available and which one best suits their needs. Navigating the transition from the youth into the adult service system is often daunting – entering the adult service system places responsibility squarely onto the individual who, in many cases, is not yet be ready for it. This period of transition also brings many young people face-to-face with bureaucracy for the first time, an often confusing and frustrating experience.

Young adults need to know where to go and what to do in this confusion. They need a better appreciation of the service 'system' so they can increase their ability to solve problems, gather the resources, and take responsibility for the issues before them.

### Question #9

How can young adults be better supported to navigate the adult service system?



## Communication

Despite young adults being more connected than ever through digital technology, they struggle to access appropriate, reliable and timely information. There is currently no single, reputable, accessible information source – information is spread across various websites, social media and broader directories designed for adults with familiarity of the service system.

Young adults often hear about opportunities or supports too late, and for many, not at all. The situation is compounded because these emerging adults don't know what they don't know – they often don't know the right questions to ask or information to look for, and funding cycles mean that programs come and go. Service providers also lack resources and in some case, know-how, to effectively communicate with young people, meaning young people don't find out about them.

Communication with young adults needs to be varied and age-appropriate – posters, banners and flyers where young adults hang out can supplement and link to online information and avoid digital exclusion. Anyone who supports a young adult – parents, teachers, social workers, youth workers, sport coaches, employers – also plays a crucial role in supporting access to the right information at the right time.

### Question #10

How can we strengthen communication networks to enable better information sharing across the sector, community and with young adults?

### Question #11

What would a centralised, age-appropriate communication platform for young adults look like?

## Breaking down silos and coordinating effort

Issues impacting young adults are interconnected and cannot be addressed in isolation. While a focus on individual markers of adulthood is needed to understand and address the complexities of each area, an isolated approach can result in important changes being overlooked. 'One-size-fits-all' approaches don't fit all and actually helps very few.

Young adults need a deeper understanding from government and the services sector of the five key markers to independence and their inter-relatedness; an appreciation of opportunities for coaching and mentoring, and warm handovers that help young adults emerge from this life stage unscathed; and that recognise they all take their own path to adulthood based on their unique needs, interests, aspirations and life experience.

### Question #12

How can government and the services sector better integrate and coordinate service development and delivery for young adults?



## A transition model

Transition models for young adults are becoming more prominent across the world, including Australia. Currently, transitional models delivered in Tasmania typically:

- Address education to employment outcomes
- Support key developmental stages in childhood and adolescence up to age 18
- Support transitions for vulnerable and at-risk cohorts including people living with disability, migrants and refugees, and people living in out-of-home care.

While these are important, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive transition model in Tasmania to provide tailored, age-appropriate support to young adults that provides flexible tailored services and support with access to essential services and full participation in their communities.

Based on our research, a transition model should:

- Recognise the distinct needs of the emergent adult, acknowledging that this life stage is a critical time of social, behavioural, physiological development
- Be emergent adult-centred and informed, with young Tasmanians given a voice in policies and actions that affect them
- Adopt a strengths-based approach that focuses on young adult's values and strengths rather than deficits
- Focus on wellbeing and safety – support is flexible and contextualised to individual needs and circumstances
- Builds on, and invests in, what's already in place and working well
- Match resources as part of an equitable policy landscape – one that supports and builds capacity of young people to navigate key areas of change and develop independence.

### Question #13

Do these elements capture what's needed for a comprehensive approach to the transition to adulthood?

# Important further reading

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