

# 2025 Federal Election Priorities for Young Tasmanians



The Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) Youth Advisory Council<sup>1</sup> calls on all candidates and political parties to take more decisive and meaningful action to improve the health and wellbeing of young Tasmanians.

## Cost of Living – making ends meet.

Young Tasmanians are struggling to keep pace with rising inflation and cost-of-living pressures, exacerbated by lower incomes and unaffordable housing. Many are juggling the expenses of daily living – food, utilities, transport, healthcare – with reports of rationing food, dumpster diving, going without heating, living in precarious accommodation and foregoing or delaying access to healthcare to make ends meet<sup>2,3</sup>.

We urge the Australian Government to alleviate poverty and inequality by supporting;

- The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS)<sup>4</sup> campaign to raise the base rate of Job Seeker and Youth Allowance to \$82 per day and increasing the threshold for Commonwealth Rental Assistance payments.
- The National Union of Students<sup>5</sup> call to lower the Age of Independence for Centrelink Payments from 22 to 18 years old.
- The Australian Council of Trade Union<sup>6</sup> call for junior and trainee awards to be brought in line with adult wages or to be abolished.

## Mental Health – when and where young people need it.

Systemic barriers and social pressures continue to adversely impact the mental health and wellbeing of young Tasmanians. The lack of accessible programs, long wait-lists, low rates of bulk billing and mismatches between service delivery and young people's needs, are significant issues preventing young people from getting the timely support they need.

Issues with housing, cost of living, climate change and environmental degradation, discrimination, bullying, marginalisation, job market barriers, transport disadvantage and limited social and recreational opportunities are taking a toll on young people's mental health and wellbeing - particularly when support is not readily available for many<sup>7,8</sup>.

We call on the Government to invest in improved mental health support for young people in Tasmania by endorsing Mental Health Australia's plan<sup>9</sup> to:

- Establish pathways to FREE mental health care for all individuals under the age of 25.
- Increase investment in community-based youth mental health support services that GPs can refer to, as well as appropriate alternative pathways online, through schools, and through walk-in hubs, ensuring young people can access support when and where they need it.
- Invest in prevention and early intervention programs to change the mental health trajectory for young people.

## Adequate and Secure Housing - a fundamental human right.

Child and youth homelessness and housing insecurity has reached unprecedented levels in Tasmania impacting the health and wellbeing, safety, educational attainment, employment outcomes and social participation of many young Tasmanians<sup>10</sup>.

Housing affordability and availability, coupled with high youth unemployment, transport disadvantage, low incomes and the rising costs of living means that young people are currently locked out of the housing market. If a young person turns to social housing to assist, they face wait times of more than a year<sup>11</sup> to be potentially offered an affordable place to call home. Sadly, many young Tasmanians are giving up on the idea of ever owning a home. The federal government must act to end youth homelessness and housing insecurity for all young people.

We endorse;

- Yfoundations call for Government to invest in the development of a standalone National Child and Youth Homelessness Strategy<sup>12</sup>. This strategy must address the complex needs of children and young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, ensuring a comprehensive, whole-of-government and community approach to tackling this critical issue.
- The National Home Time campaign, which calls for investment in a range of housing and support options for young people<sup>13</sup>. This includes support for youth housing programs delivered by specialist providers, ensuring young people have access to the appropriate services and stable housing they need.

## Climate Action – If not now, when?

Many young Tasmanians have a strong connection to the environment and are growing increasingly concerned about climate change. The perceived gap between the urgent need for action to address climate change, halt environmental damage and protect biodiversity, and the continuation of unsustainable practices weighs heavily on many.

Young Tasmanians want to see more decisive action, and greater accountability by decision makers, in addressing the drivers and impacts of climate change<sup>14,15</sup>. The Government needs to increase the participation of young people in developing climate change policy and:

- Commit to a co-design process with young people, in collaboration with representatives from key national climate change youth advocacy groups, to enhance climate change action and implementation.

## Tertiary Education – rising costs, rising debt.

For many young Tasmanians, the pathways to and experience of tertiary education can be overwhelming, unclear, and costly. The feeling of being unprepared, combined with higher education fees, student loan debt, and unexpected expenses like student services and amenities fees, textbooks, and other learning materials, adds to the financial burden experienced by young people, both in the short and long term<sup>16</sup>.

To enhance student pathways, promote educational equity, increase educational attainment, and tackle the costs of education for young people, the Government should:

- Commit to supporting young people’s participation in the establishment of the Australian Tertiary Education Commission (ATEC) to advise on tertiary education reform in Australia<sup>17</sup>.
- Continue to invest in fee-free TAFE and vocational education and training places, ensuring young people remain a priority population group eligible to access free education and training qualifications.

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<sup>1</sup> Youth Network of Tasmania (2025, 11 March). Youth Advisory Council.

<sup>2</sup> YNOT (2023). Tasmanian Youth Story Consultation Report.

<sup>3</sup> YNOT (2023). Pathways to Adulthood Consultation Report.

<sup>4</sup> Australian Council of Social Services (2025). Raise The Rate For Good. Accessed 31 March 2025.

<https://www.raisetherate.org.au/>

<sup>5</sup> National Union of Students (2025) Lower the Age of Independence for Centrelink Payments to 18. Accessed 8 April 2025. <https://nus.asn.au/index.php/campaigns/change-the-age/>

<sup>6</sup> Australian Council of Trade Unions (2024). ACTU seeks wage justice for young workers. Media Release 6 June 2024. <https://www.actu.org.au/media-release/actu-seeks-wage-justice-for-young-workers/>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* YNOT (2023). Tasmanian Youth Story Consultation Report.

<sup>8</sup> YNOT (2023). Tasmanian Youth Forum: Mental Wellbeing and Resilience Report.

<sup>9</sup> Mental Health Australia (2025). Free mental health support for children and young people.

<https://mhaustralia.org/our-work/MHA-federal-election-platform-2025>

<sup>10</sup> YNOT (2024). Tasmanian Youth Forum 2024: Housing Report.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* Page 8. YNOT (2024). Tasmanian Youth Forum 2024: Housing Report.

<sup>12</sup> Yfoundations (2025). Sign Our Petition to End Child and Youth Homelessness. Accessed 31 March 2025.

<https://www.yfoundations.org.au/end-child-and-youth-homelessness/>

<sup>13</sup> Home Time (2025). Take Action for Young People this Election. Accessed 31 March 2025.

<https://www.hometime.org.au/>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* YNOT (2023). Tasmanian Youth Story Consultation Report.

<sup>15</sup> YNOT (2021). Tasmanian Youth Forum 2020: Building a Better Tasmania for Young People Report.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* YNOT (2023). Pathways to Adulthood Consultation Report.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Education (2024). Australian Universities Accord – 2024–25 MYEFO Summary.

<https://www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/resources/australian-universities-accord-202425-myefo-summary>