



Submission to Jobs Tasmania

In response to

Youth Jobs Strategy Discussion Paper

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About Youth, Family and Community Connections (YFCC)

Over 42 years of operation Youth, Family and Community Connections (YFCC) has amassed a broad range of service delivery experience. Each year YFCC provides support, assistance and information through sixteen services/programs for around 12,000 individuals through programs which are client centred, solution focussed, holistic (addressing social determinants of health, and psychosocial domains) and focussed on improving health and social outcomes within a harm minimisation framework.

YFCC has built a strong reputation for effective service delivery and a centre of information, support and guidance for all members of our communities. Our holistic approach to supporting clients is further enabled through our range of internal services on offer and collaboration with an extensive network of external partners delivering a vast range of specialist support services.

YFCC Experience in the Planning and Delivery of Youth Employment Focused Projects.

YFCC currently operates the Fit For Work[®] programs in the Devonport and Burnie regions, working with local Job Service agencies in the Devonport and Burnie regions to identify young jobseekers (aged between 16 and 24 years) with complex barriers to employment and need additional supports to enter the workforce.

In addition to Fit For Work[®], YFCC also delivers three complementary programs – Youth Pathways, Project Detour and the Career Connector Service.

YFCC was also the North-West service partner for the Youth Navigator Program (completed 31/3/23), providing career and employment supports for 2020/21/22 school leavers impacted by the covid pandemic, across the North West and West Coast.

This range of employment projects, all delivered in North West Tasmania, has enabled YFCC to develop extensive networks with employment, business and community groups working in or relevant to the labour market sector, including strong connections with the local Jobs Hub, West North West Working. YFCC has developed a strong reputation for project delivery in the employment sector through this range of projects.

Other YFCC Services

YFCC delivers a range of services that can also support clients accessing our employment programs to address barriers to employment such as homelessness and drug and alcohol issues. These services include;

- Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Services
- Family Support Services
- Crisis Accommodation Support Services
- Transitional Accommodation Support Services
- Emergency Relief Services
- Health promotion and education services and activities
- Junction Hubs (providing youth engagement programs and school holiday activities)

Key Recommendations

As an organisation with employment services specialising in supporting vulnerable and at risk youth, YFCC has the following key recommendations in relation to development of the Youth Jobs Strategy:

1. Young people with complex barriers (often not “work related”) to employment, training and education are not adequately supported by the traditional Australian Government funded employment service providers, nor by the current Jobs Hubs Network. The community services industry (e.g., YFCC) are a more appropriate and effective sector in supporting the capacity and capability of young people with complex needs to engage in education, training and employment, supporting them both holistically and therapeutically to achieve their goals.
2. Increased career awareness and professional career guidance in secondary schools and colleges is a crucial factor in supporting young people to make informed decisions on the pathway to their career goals and/or transition into employment. Professional career guidance staff in schools to provide these services, or contracted external specialists, need to be sufficiently funded to better support this important phase in a young person’s life.
3. Transport for young people to attend education, training and employment are major barriers for many young people, particularly in the more remote and regional areas. The strategy needs to develop and trial programs to alleviate these issues through place-based local solutions that are adaptable and transferable to other regions of the state.
4. Many employers struggle to cater for young people as new employees in their business/organisation, especially for those young people experiencing issues with mental ill health. The strategy needs to include a significant focus on not only addressing the supply side of the economy (young people seeking employment) but also the demand side, educating and empowering businesses and organisations to successfully integrate young people into their workforces.

Youth Jobs Strategy Guiding Principles

Are these principles right or are there other best-practice principles that we should consider in our approach to this strategy?

Effective Youth Pathways Practice – Phases 1 to 4

Do the common elements and phases listed make sense? Are any one or two more important than others?

- Yes, the 4 phases confirm the work already under way through YFCC's Fit For Work Program.
- The increased focus in schools for appropriate career guidance and information needs to be made available to younger students to ensure they have the time and information to make informed choices in their career pathways.
- There needs to be an acknowledgement and service provision for the high numbers of young people currently dis-engaged from the education system.

How can Government, community, business, schools and industry support better connection and continuity of support across these elements?

- Longer funding terms for services delivering supports to young people are needed to enable the flow of support from their school period through to transition into their post-education period, ensuring ongoing supports through the same worker or organisation to maximise the relationships built over time. This continuity of service delivery and support contributes positively to enabling the young person to reach their career goals and aspirations.

The Pathway from school to “whatever comes next” looks different for everyone

What is the one thing that you believe could have the most positive impact on a young person's transition pathway from school to further study, training or employment?

- Accessibility for young people across Tasmania, particularly in regional and remote areas significantly impacts on their transition from school. Being able to participate can be determined largely by a young person's ability to secure their licence. Young people, particularly those with a lack of social supports are unable to secure the hours required to obtain their licence. Regardless of what comes next for a young person as they leave the education setting, being able to secure their licence will undoubtedly have the most positive impact on their transition into employment.

Young people in our regions don't have access to the same supports

How can we improve access to services and support for young people in our regions?

- Outreach services are crucial to meeting a young person's needs in our more remote regions, with services coming to them.

What type of support do our young people outside larger metro areas need to succeed?

- Improved transport options for young people in remote regions, through innovative responses such as improved driver mentor programs to support them to gain the driving licence and an expansion of funded transport services such as Area Connect.

The Barriers for young people are complex and can't be resolved in isolation

How can the service systems better connect and respond to the complex needs of young people?

- Young people with complex barriers and needs require more intensive, one-to-one supports that offer a holistic service approach, supporting the young person with work and non-work-related barriers to their engaging with education, training and employment. A primary support worker for a young person should provide case management and case coordination, acting as the linchpin for the young person to access specialist supports. This approach has proven successful for YFCC and young people accessing the Fit For Work Program.

Some young people need additional, targeted support to participate in the workforce

What would unlock the ability for young Tasmanians with different needs to participate in work, education and training?

- Support services for young people need to be:
 - Allowing small, manageable caseloads for workers supporting young people, ensuring there is sufficient time to deliver meaningful support to individuals, provide flexibility in that support delivery and build rapport and trust with the young person over time.
 - Holistic in their service approach (don't just pull people out of the river, find out why they are falling into the river and address that too).
 - Provide innovative solutions to transport issues for young people.
 - Celebrate positive steps forward with the young person, recognising their journey and their achievements on that journey.

How do young people get into work or training if they can't get to work or training?

What are some innovative approaches to address transport issues for young people that keep safety as a highest priority?

- A paid Driver Mentor Program over volunteer-based programs to support young people to gain their driver's licence
- Subsidised or fully funded driving lessons with professional driving schools
- Expand on transport services already proving effective for young people, such as Area Connect.
- Expansion or adaption of the Rotary Youth Driver Awareness (RYDA) program to be delivered in all Tasmanian schools and colleges.

Young people don't know what they don't know or should know

Where do young people currently get information from to support them to make decisions or connect to employment and training opportunities?

- Social media platforms seem the obvious medium for connecting to young people. It would also be useful to inform the "influencers" in their lives such as teachers, family and friends, so that they can encourage young people to consider their career aspirations.

What does it take to be job-ready?

- Employers continue to tell us about the basic work-readiness and employability skills they are looking for in young people (often ahead of academic and other factors). The formation of these skills sets needs to start early in high school years to provide individuals with the best opportunities to secure employment once they transition out of education.
- For many young people, particularly those from challenging socio-economic backgrounds, there is often no mentoring influence within their family group, and, if long term welfare dependence is a feature of their family environment, then the fundamental skills and attitudes around work ethic, motivation and reliability are not inherently learned. It takes time for a Support Worker to build rapport with and the trust of a young person to start to build positive behaviours around these fundamentals. Cookie-cutter support services will not enable this to happen. Individualised service delivery delivered within a holistic framework have been proved by YFCC to develop these skills and attitudes for young people over time.

What can employers do to help build those work readiness skills? Can we share examples of best practice?

- Business and Industry to work with the education sector to ensure that VET training pathways and associated career opportunities available in Tasmania are promoted. There are significantly more opportunities for work in Tasmania in skill level 3 and above (trades etc.) than skill level 1 roles (requiring a bachelor degree or higher), and every one of these roles contributes to a vibrant community and provides meaningful employment for those that choose this career pathway.
- Business and industry to provide increased pre-employment programs to give young people insight into the range roles and career pathways available in various sectors.
- Professional career advisors in schools, with real life experience and knowledge of the VET sector and associated employment opportunities are a key ingredient in making these vocations a career option for young people.

Try Before You Buy

What do (or should) quality work exposure activities look like for young people? What are some examples of this being done well?

- The issue of insurance cover costs for work experience activities needs to be addressed to enable any significant increase in meaningful work experience opportunities for young people.

A first job might be only a first step – young people need ongoing support and opportunities for continuous learning and development to maintain decent, meaningful work.

How do we balance and support work and learning for young people?

- Casual and part time work for young people still in education are often crucial to the ability to fund themselves during this period. Working students also gain important work environment skills, references and employment networks that will benefit them for future employment post education. Existing youth employment programs should be encouraged to include this cohort for support.

- Greater investment by government is needed to enable employers to upskill their young employees (either via funding or other incentives).

Industry and employers want young people to be part of their workforce – but they need help to make the connection.

How could your business or industry be better supported to provide opportunities for young people?

- The social services sector and/or its training/employment provider partners, need to be funded to offer more pre-employment programs to provide young people with more insight into the sector and the wide range of career opportunities on offer.

What information or resources are needed to make Tasmania's training system more accessible and streamlined?

- Improve the design of pre-employment programs to provide flexibility to meet the needs of a young person's educational schedule and/or casual employment activities.

Tasmanian Youth Employment Alliance

As a founding member of the Tasmanian Youth Employment Alliance, YFCC has contributed towards and provides its full support for the recommendations made in the Alliance's submission in response to the Youths Jobs Strategy Discussion Paper.