



Youth Jobs Strategy Submission

Who we are:

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) – Tasmania Branch is a peak body and voice for young children. A skilled, high-quality and sustainable education and care workforce is critical to children’s lifelong learning and development.

A significant amount of work is occurring supported by ECA Tasmania Branch through the Early Years and School Age Care (EYSAC) Workforce Plan funded through the Department of Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) – Education and Care Unit, to support attraction, retention, sustainability and quality of the education and care workforce. Therefore, the Youth Jobs Strategy has strong alignment with our work.

ECA Tasmania Branch applauds the Government for their commitment to *‘Children and Young People in Tasmania have what they need to grow and thrive’* as outlined in the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy. We believe the Youth Jobs Strategy is another step in achieving this vision through targeted evidence/research and subsequent response strategies which provide clear access and support in navigating what can be described as a complex transition from school to the workforce.

ECA Tasmania Branch recommends that although the Youth Jobs Strategy discussion paper has clear guiding principles, the Child and Youth Wellbeing principles alignment should not be discounted but be embedded to influence collaboration and strategies moving forward. We need to see the alignment and continuum between the Wellbeing Strategy and Jobs Strategy as a clear trajectory for our young Tasmanians.

As outlined in the discussion paper, ECA Tasmania branch supports collaboration as being a core component; however, we would suggest adding to this ‘authentic collaboration’ where all voices including the silent and less vocal voices are heard, respected and actioned. For this to occur, there needs to be a strong commitment from individuals, organisations, government and communities to be open to diverse perspectives, and take responsibility and accountability in achieving common goals bigger than the sum of one; therefore, enabling authentic collaboration to be the bridge to connection.

it will take courage in breaking down silos (real or perceived) within all levels of government, business sectors, and communities to achieve the required outcomes.

Tasmania’s social and economic future is everyone’s responsibility; however a strategic approach is required to limit duplication and streamline access points for youth and businesses to connect; therefore ECA Tasmania Branch believes the Tasmanian Job Hubs

have a key role to play as a place based solution focused connection strategy; however they must be adequately funded, not just in dollars but time-frames to be able to build, leverage and consolidate on the good work already being accomplished within these spaces.

Although ECA Tasmania Branch's primary remit is young children, we understand and acknowledge the continuum of learning throughout all the ages/stages and by providing our youth with access and support to meaningful employment, barriers can be minimised for future generations. We also recognise young people as a workforce pipeline that will contribute to a sustainable quality education and care workforce.

ECA Tasmania Branch agrees that more than one solution is required with flexibility to adapt to specific circumstances and changing needs, one positive thing that has been highlighted through the learnings from the pandemic.

Effective Youth Pathways Practice (Page 16 & 17) - A critical question is 'what is more important'. ECA Tasmania Branch believes the solutions are interrelated and change depending on the need, both for the individual, the workplaces and the community. A critical element is 'investment' which is challenging in a tight fiscal environment, however for change to occur, long term funding (5 years +) is required to support sustainability and change in culture and practice vs short term.

The pathway from school to whatever comes next looks different for everyone – Yes, it is different, and the current complexities and what can be described as uncoordinated approach is not working for our youth. Although our youth need various points of engagement and trusted advice on career planning etc, there needs to be a constant for them. Where do they go or where do the people that are supporting them, go. This is where collaborations and partnerships are vital, with clear and concise information that has been specifically developed for the audience. Again, Job Hubs are an avenue that can drive the partnerships required for impact.

Young people in our regions don't always have access to the same support, services and options as their metropolitan peers – The place-based approach the Job Hubs provide support an increased community capacity building approach with a key outcome of 'local jobs for local people'. However, communities also need the wrap around supports for youth e.g. mental health and wellbeing, transport, housing. A hub can be a trusted and safe place for our youth to access these services or these services provided as outreach. An inclusive approach vs just an integrated approach is required with possible additional incentives for services to locate in regional communities provided.

For some young people the pathway to employment does not start with looking for work – We need to break down the silos and possible duplication so as investment can be far reaching. A whole of government and community response is required. One's socio-economic status or schooling should not define a youth's trajectory.

A cultural shift for workplaces is required as a priority to support the employment of young people. We need to remove the judgement that can be associated across the different generations, and to do this we need 'education' for our workplaces and support structures to enable them to develop safe and respectful places of work for our youth.

Youth need to be afforded opportunities to 'try before you buy' which can be developed at a place-based community level which reflects the needs of the individuals and businesses. This approach needs to be planned, meaningful to both cohorts and include credible information on career pathways and role descriptors. Rather than all schools taking this on, on an individual basis, there needs to be a point of contact to increase opportunities for our youth. We need to move beyond the traditional career expos giving information out, to a 'try before you buy' approach where youth are connected with businesses at the career expos that can develop into work experience opportunities.

In addition to workplace exposure and experience for youth, support for coaching and mentoring in the workplaces (funded accordingly) is a priority. This, together with good practice resources to be developed to support knowledge and understanding of the key elements required for a successful work experience that can be then customised to meet the contextual needs of the business. A successful experience can either be, consolidation of this as a career pathway and/or offer of employment or, insight into this is not what I thought it would be which can reset a person's study/career pathway. Follow up post placement support is definitely required in either circumstance.

It is acknowledged that it is more than getting youth into employment and/or training, it is about retention and career pathways to support meaningful work and therefore increasing confidence, resilience and leading to a better life. With this in consideration, support from a trusted source after securing a role is another key priority.

Our training system needs to be scrutinised and then adequately funded and opportunities for innovative approaches to training to support accessibility offered. Not just through online approaches, but working directly with industry – industry training industry as a model. Continued work on raising the profile of VET needs to continue as a credible pathway.

A youth job strategy is an important step, however it needs to be a living document with clear actions and responsibilities outlined to make the impact needed. The schools are a key stakeholder as they have the connection and/or knowledge about every learner prior to them leaving the school system; therefore, strategies to ensure every learner has a transition connection is vital.

Thank you for the opportunity for ECA Tasmania Branch to put our thoughts in writing.

Regards

ECA Tasmania Branch Executive Committee

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