

Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Hobart GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, 7001
Launceston PO Box 46, Kings Meadows, Tasmania, 7249
Devonport PO Box 303, Devonport, Tasmania, 7310
Ph 1300 368 550
Web nre.tas.gov.au
Our ref: D23-303378/002



Gary Swain
Acting Secretary
DEPARTMENT OF STATE GROWTH

Att: Tyler Bailey
Project Support Officer
Skills Tasmania
YouthJobsStrategy@jobstasmania.tas.gov.au

Youth Jobs Strategy

I am writing in relation to the Department of State Growth's invitation of 5 October 2023 to provide feedback on the Youth Jobs Strategy Discussion Paper.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania (NRE Tas) has reviewed the Discussion Paper, the questions posed and the principles on which the Strategy is to be based and offers the following general feedback, rather than a detailed response to each question posed.

NRE Tas is supportive of the proposed principles and the development of a Strategy to support Tasmania's youth. NRE Tas regularly partners with educational institutions to provide students with opportunities to work within a range of positions both in the field and in office environments. As part of this placement initiative, NRE Tas actively attempts to engage an Aboriginal identified trainee and currently has such a person employed with the Orange-bellied Parrot Tasmanian Program.

Work placements offer students the opportunity to understand how current studies transition to employment outcomes or to gain insights into career options to guide future studies. NRE Tas also runs a Cadet Program and a Graduate Program. The Cadet Program supports undergraduate students studying management or a related discipline at the University of Tasmania to gain professional experience while working in a multi-disciplined, diverse organisation. The Graduate Program is a structured learning, training and mentorship program giving graduates the opportunity to develop their skills across NRE Tas.

NRE Tas acknowledges the impact the skills shortage has on economic prosperity and offers the following policy considerations on how the Government can better support the diversity of young people transitioning into work and/or further study:

- Providing information on the types of jobs and skills that will be in demand and those that are likely to see reduced demand in the coming years. This information would be helpful to students, schools and businesses in developing curriculum, choosing career paths and may lead to support for appropriate trades and businesses being prioritised for assistance in facilitating relationships with training institutions. This information is going to have even greater significance to the community in the near future as a result of the advance of artificial intelligence.

- Reviewing the current TasTAFE enrolment system could ensure a more equitable enrolment policy. The current arrangement involves opening enrolments at 3am on enrolments day which seems to indicate a first-in-first-served approach. This may discriminate against those that require assistance to enrol and those without access to a computer/internet. Along with a change in enrolment opening times, reserving places for those that live with disabilities will assist with equity of process.
- Unlocking the ability for young Tasmanians with different needs to participate in work, education and training requires training providers to assess capacity of the individual, by focusing on building capabilities, rather than focusing on disabilities or inabilities. This may mean that parts of a qualification can be completed – those skill sets built could be assessed to form a minor qualification or statement on abilities/skill sets. A concurrent focus is needed on building industry/employer awareness of differing abilities and neurodivergent behaviours and this may include the Government looking at employer incentives to employ people for part of a role – this would support a much broader range of capacities for young people.
- There is no denying previous work experience is rated highly by employers. Building avenues into non-traditional after school part time jobs may be one way to increase the variety of work experience and increase relevancy to work pathways for some students. Additionally, teaching greater awareness to young people on management techniques and effective communication in the workplace would increase the benefit of the overall experience for the young person.
- The current labour market may be encouraging young people to leave school early due to the availability of low skilled jobs - young people may benefit from greater awareness of the ceiling they will likely hit in these types of jobs and on the pathways back to education. This could be increasing skill sets through vocational education or facilitating goals for these young people to commence higher education. Government agencies benefit from the employment of heterogeneous teams of people with diverse work and life experience.
- NRE Tas recognises that young people may have caring responsibilities, financial responsibility (such as helping in family businesses on rural properties), language difficulties, neurotypical and/or physical differences and abilities and even those with varying levels of confidence or parental/guardian support. These factors can impact on an individual's pathway into further study, training or employment and require/benefit from different types and levels of support. Building greater flexibility into training and employment arrangements would support a much broader range of capacities for young people.

I would like to thank the Department of State Growth for providing NRE Tas with the opportunity to comment on the Discussion Paper. Should the Department have any queries in relation to the matters raised, please contact NRE Tas's Michelle Richardson, Policy Analyst. Ms Richardson can be contacted by phone on 61 65 4418 or by email at policyteamnre@nre.tas.gov.au



Jason Jacobi
SECRETARY

25 October 2023