



**Carers Tasmania's submission on
Becoming an adult: the experience of young Tasmanians
today paper**

November 2023



About Carers Tasmania

Carers Tasmania is the Peak Body representing the more than 80,000 informal carers (hereafter carers) in the state.

Carers Tasmania's vision is for an Australia that values and supports carers.

Our mission is to work to improve the health, wellbeing, resilience and financial security of carers and to ensure that caring is a shared responsibility of family, community, and government.

Our values drive everything we think, say, and do.

- **Carers first** – we listen to what carers need, commit to their desired action plan, and deliver results that matter most to carers
- **Care in all we do** – we care for our work, about each other, about Tasmania's family and friend carers, and the bigger world we all share
- **Integrity always** – we are transparent, act ethically, own when things don't go to plan and do what we say we will
- **Quality every time** – we don't accept 'good enough' because carers deserve our very best every time
- **Speed that matters** – we are agile and don't put off what can be done today.

These values represent how we engage with and serve carers, how we work with each other, and our commitment to the broader community. Carers Tasmania encourages partnership with governments and health and community sectors to enhance service provision and improve conditions for family or friend carers through policy development, research and advocacy.

We acknowledge and support people of all genders, sexualities, cultural beliefs, and abilities and understand that carers in Tasmania, whilst sharing the common theme of caring for a family member or friend, are diverse individuals with varying beliefs, experiences, and identities. We value and respect the diversity of carers, their lived and living experiences, and recognise that carers are the experts in their own lives.

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1. Background

Carers Tasmania is the Peak Body representing the more than 80,000 informal carers within the state.

A carer is a person who provides unpaid care and support to a family member, or friend, with disability, mental ill health, a chronic or life-limiting condition, alcohol or other drug dependence, or who is frail or aged. Informal kinship carers who care for a child under the age of 18, because the parent is unable to, are also recognised as carers. Carers are predominantly family members, but may also be friends, neighbours, or colleagues. Informal carers are not to be confused with paid support workers who are often called 'carers', with the difference being that support workers are fully employed and remunerated with all the benefits of employment. On the contrary, informal carers perform their caring duties without remuneration, other than minimal carer payments and allowances from the Australian Government.

In addition to representing carers through the Peak Body activities, Carers Tasmania provides support to carers living in Tasmania through its service delivery arm, Care2Serve. The Commonwealth Carer Gateway program is delivered through Care2Serve in Tasmania, as are other supports and services, such as the Tasmanian Government's Home and Community Care program.

The Carer Gateway program provides a range of services and supports for carers which are designed to build resilience, increase wellbeing, improve quality of life, and sustain carers to effectively continue their caring roles. The available supports include the provision of information, advice and referrals, holistic identification of carer strengths and needs through a carer support planning process, professional counselling, peer support, and coaching which aims to support carers in achieving specific goals.

Care2Serve, through the Carer Gateway, has capacity to fund certain instances of planned, practical support services such as in-home respite, personal care, domestic assistance, and meal preparation. Care2Serve may also fund items such as laptops to assist carers who are studying or trying to enter the workforce. Care2Serve also coordinates the provision of emergency support during instances where a carer may be unable to provide the care that they usually do, resulting from unexpected illness or injury of the carer.

2. Introduction

Carers Tasmania is grateful to have the opportunity to provide a response to the *Becoming an adult: the experience of young Tasmanians today*, Discussion Paper (*the Paper*).¹ We applaud this important work being undertaken by the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) in collaboration with the Tasmanian Government.

Whilst we fully support the development of a whole-of-government Action Plan to focus on addressing the needs of all Tasmanian young people aged 18-25 (*this age range is sometimes referred to as emergent adulthood*),² our advocacy specifically lies in supporting young carers. As a result, our submission is primarily focused on young carers, however, we believe that every young person deserves to have equal and equitable access to enable them to have a good life. It will be important that diverse experiences and ideas are considered in the development of this Action Plan.

YNOT states that the proposed Action Plan will align with the: *It Takes a Tasmanian Village: Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy*,³ and we agree that this is vital. The Tasmanian Wellbeing strategy is for young people up to the age of 25, but for the whole-of-government Action Plan to be successful, alignment with this strategy must occur.

3. Young carers in Tasmania

Tasmania is home to an estimated 9,300 young carers.⁴ A young carer is a person aged under 25 years who is providing support to a family member or friend who:

- (a) has disability; or
- (b) has mental ill health; or
- (c) has a chronic or life-limiting condition; or
- (d) has alcohol or other drug dependence; or
- (e) is frail or aged.

Young carers aged over 18 may also be informal kinship carers if they are caring for a child under 18 because the child's biological parent is unable to provide care.⁵

The roles and responsibilities of young carers vary from person to person but some of the tasks young carers undertake include cleaning, cooking, washing, shopping, assisting with bills and paperwork, interpreting, helping with medication, personal care such as showering or dressing, and providing emotional and social support.⁶ Some young carers are primary carers, whilst others might assist their parent or other relative who is the main carer.

The 2022 National Carer Survey found that of the 92 young carer survey respondents, (which included 10 young carers from Tasmania), most young carers (65.1%) were caring for a parent, and 34.9% were caring for a sibling. Noting that often people have multiple caring roles, most respondents (80.9%) reported they were caring for at least one person

¹ Youth Network of Tasmania. (2023). *Becoming an adult: the experience of young Tasmanians today*. https://www.ynot.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/2023-11/YNOT_Youth_Transitions_Discussion_Paper_November2023.pdf

² Arnett, Jeffrey Jensen. (2007). Emerging Adulthood: What Is It, and What Is It Good For? *Child Development Perspectives*, 1(2), 68–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1750-8606.2007.00016.x>

³ Tasmanian Government. (2021). *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy*. https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-shapewellbeing-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1716/7643/0269/210301_Child_and_Youth_Wellbeing_Strategy_2021_wcag.pdf

⁴ Department of Premier and Cabinet. (n.d). https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/cpp/community-policy-and-engagement/carer_policy_and_action_plan/carer-action-plan-2021-2025/what-the-data-tells-us-about-carers

⁵ *Tasmanian Carer Recognition Act* (2023). <https://www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/whole/html/inforce/2023-04-20/act-2023-001>

⁶ Carers NSW. (n.d). *Learn about young carers*. <https://www.carersnsw.org.au/services-and-support/programs-services/young-carers/learn-about-young-carers>

with disability. Of the respondents, 46.1% reported they were caring for someone with mental ill health, and 41.6% were providing care to someone with chronic illness. The findings also showed that 4 in 5 young carer respondents reported experiencing financial stress.⁷

There are many positive aspects of being a young carer. It can be intrinsically rewarding and assist the development of empathy, problem-solving, and perseverance. However, caring does come with its challenges. Research shows that there are some negative impacts of being a young carer, such as difficulties in developing and maintaining social connections,⁸ poor wellbeing, and reduced educational and employment outcomes.⁹

Findings show that by Year Nine of school, boys who spent two or more hours per day in a caring role were the equivalent of 1.9 years behind their peers in NAPLAN reading, and girls who provided care for two or more hours per day were 1.6 years behind in NAPLAN reading. Both boys and girls in Year 9 who were caring for at least two hours per day were approximately fifteen months behind their peers in NAPLAN numeracy. Furthermore, young carers were less likely to have completed Year 12 or equivalent than their peers, and nationally, over 60% of primary carers between the ages of 15 and 25 were not studying.¹⁰ These are significant impacts that can have lifelong effects on future educational and employment outcomes.

Despite the large proportion of young carers in Tasmania, there are major challenges in trying to engage them with support due to limited identification and referral from and within educational settings. It's crucial to identify young carers as early as possible, so they can access available supports. This can assist them with information, support, and services. Early intervention and the opportunity to access appropriate support and information is critical to address the barriers that marginalise young carers. Connecting young carers with support can reduce the negative impacts of their caring roles.

4. Response to the questions

The Paper highlights that there are five key markers of independence for young people:

1. Moving out of home and living independently
2. Moving into financial independence
3. Moving from school into the workforce
4. Moving into and accessing the adult service system
5. Moving about and within their communities.

⁷ Carers NSW. (2023). *2022 National carer Survey, Young carer fact sheet*. https://www.carersnsw.org.au/uploads/main/Files/3.Resources/Policy-Research/Carer-Survey/2022_National_Carer_Survey_Fact_Sheet_2_Young_carers.pdf

⁸ Moore, T., Bourke-Taylor, H., Greenland, N., McDougall, S., Bromfield, L., Robinson, L., & Brown, T. (2019). *Young carers and their engagement with education: 'No space in my brain to learn'*. Adelaide, SA: University of South Australia. https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Young-Carers-Report-FINAL_vsmall_compressed1.pdf

⁹ Becker, Saul, & Sempik, Joe. (2019). Young Adult Carers: The Impact of Caring on Health and Education. *Children & Society*, 33(4), 377–386. <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12310>

¹⁰ Australian Institute of Family Studies. (2017). *Longitudinal Study of Australian Children 2016 Annual Statistical Report Young Carers*

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

To support young carers to transition to independent living, it is critical to improve and embed methods that routinely identify them and ensure they are referred to support, to enable early intervention and better outcomes. As young carers often experience negative impacts on educational and/or employment outcomes, social and emotional wellbeing, and finances, it can sometimes be more challenging for them to transition out of the family home into their own independent space. Significant planning and organising may be required so the person they support is able to manage if they are away from the young carer. In some cases, for a young carer to move into independent living, difficult decisions may have to be made, which can bring feelings of guilt, sadness, grief, or a sense of letting someone down. It is important to note, that despite the incredibly important role that young carers play in supporting others, they also deserve the autonomy to make their own choices which sometimes means having others take over the caring role.

Many young carers carry increased levels of responsibility and can be quite independent, even from a young age. They must be supported so they don't burn out and can continue to sustain and develop their skills of independence. Research shows that the experience of being a young carer has both positive and negative impacts on emergent adulthood.¹¹

We highlight that independent living means different things for different people. There are things that must be considered, such as cultural factors, disability, caring responsibilities, health concerns, socio-economic status, gender-related factors, educational and career aspirations, and geographical location. Young people will want different forms of independence and within different timeframes.

Tasmania is still in the grips of a housing crisis, with many people unable to obtain suitable, safe, and affordable housing. The Homes Tasmania Dashboard reported that as of August 2023, there were 4,634 applicants on the social housing register in Tasmania, and the average time to house priority applicants was 79.9 months.¹²

To support access for young people, we suggest evaluating the Homes Tasmania Y2I Youth Housing programs. Whilst this is a promising initiative, it is critical to raise community awareness about this option. This option may not be suitable for young people who wish to gain independence whilst still undertaking caring responsibilities and who live outside of Hobart, Launceston or Devonport. Eligibility is also determined by the risk of homelessness, which is important in supporting at-risk youth, however, it does not enable independence for those who are not considered to be at-risk.¹³ Another option could be to introduce a KPI ensuring that a minimum percentage of social housing is allocated specifically to young people in Tasmania.

Another topic that has seen significant media coverage is the harmful behaviour of Tasmanian Youth. The term 'youth crime' is being used to describe these behaviours, with specific police task forces and community deterrents being implemented. As The Commissioner for Children and Young People stated, "*We need far greater investment in*

¹¹ *Scand J Caring Sci*; 2020; 34; 539–551 Early caregiving experiences and the impact on transition into adulthood and further life: a literature review

¹² Homes Tasmania. (2023). *Housing Dashboard September*. https://www.homestasmania.com.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/273174/Housing-Dashboard-September-2023.pdf

¹³ Homes Tasmania. (n.d). *Y2I Program*. <https://www.homestasmania.com.au/housing-and-homelessness/Y2I-Program>

programs that support families to thrive and steer children away from engaging in harmful behaviour in the first place.”¹⁴

For young people to be engaged in school, obtain successful employment, and become independent, their basic needs must first be met and sustained. These needs are articulated in the *Child, Youth, and Wellbeing Strategy* and include:

- Being loved, safe and valued
- Having material basics
- Being healthy
- Learning
- Participating
- Having a positive sense of culture and identity.¹⁵

We also suggest that the Action Plan be underpinned by the articles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹⁶ Although children are considered to be those aged 18 and under, the articles in this Convention are relevant for those in emergent adulthood.

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

Financial independence is interconnected to a young person’s socioeconomic status, their wellbeing, their mental health, and ability to participate in the wider community. Young carers may need specialised support to assist them in becoming financially independent. In order to access support, they must be able to identify themselves as a young carer and connect to services that offer support. Initiatives such as the Young Carer Bursary are a great source of support that provide some level of financial support to young carers.

The Young Carer Bursary program is funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services. It aims to provide eligible young carers aged 12 to 25 with financial assistance to help them return to or continue their education while balancing their caring responsibilities. The bursary amount has recently been increased to \$3,786 per bursary, and at present, funding allocations provided for 1,592 bursaries to be available nationally per year.¹⁷ In 2022, 112 Tasmanian young carers submitted applications for bursary payments. This is a small proportion of young carers who may be eligible to apply, however, it is the largest number of young carer bursary applicants ever from Tasmania. Each application is assessed and although not all applicants are successful, we applaud initiatives such as this which aim to minimise barriers to further education or employment pathways for marginalised groups of young people.

Coaching, which is a service offered through the Commonwealth Carer Gateway Program, could assist young carers who need support to set and achieve their goals. The Carer Gateway website provides free, self-paced, online coaching modules. One of these modules is specifically focused on finances. In addition to online coaching modules, Care2Serve provides free, in-person coaching. This can be delivered face-to-face, over the phone, or via

¹⁴ Commissioner for Children and Young People. (2023). *Tough on crime approach will not make communities safer*. <https://childcomm.tas.gov.au/opinion-piece-tough-on-crime-approach-will-not-make-communities-safer/>

¹⁵ Tasmanian Government. (2021). *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy*. https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-shapewellbeing-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1716/7643/0269/210301_Child_and_Youth_Wellbeing_Strategy_2021_wcag.pdf

¹⁶ United Nations (1989) *Convention on the rights of the child*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

¹⁷ Young Carers Network. (2023). *Young Carer Bursary*. <https://youngcarersnetwork.com.au/bursary/young-carer-bursary/>

Zoom. Coaching can assist people in identifying their goals, understanding the resources they currently have, and mapping out pathways to achieving their goals. Care2Serve can also facilitate referrals to external services such as financial counselling and Centrelink.

Carer coaches, Regional Jobs Hubs coaches and the Your Caring Way Program can work with young carers and the local community to support them in achieving their goals of securing and retaining suitable training and employment options. The Your Caring Way Program is another initiative funded by the Department of Social Services. It is a program available for carers in Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia that provides free support and training pathways to carers or people who have recently been a carer. The program offers mentoring, goal setting, career planning, resume writing, and connection to training and employment options.¹⁸

Research has found that most carers are likely to remain in a caring role for more than 10 years.¹⁹ Although providing care to others is an important role, it is vitally important that young carers can access support with future planning to enable them opportunities to achieve their own goals as well.

Young carers may require specific support to ensure that their employment is sustainable. They may require additional flexibility or have limited availability, they may not be available at short notice, or they might request specific set shifts. There may be times they need to leave early or access personal leave. Research has found that young carers who spend a substantial amount of time caring per week (70 hours or more) are less likely to be employed than young carers providing care for less than 20 hours a week.²⁰ This is likely due to the additional caring responsibilities and the sometimes unpredictable and complex nature of caring.

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

First and foremost, the significant issues that exist with school participation, retention, and completion must be addressed to understand how to support young people to move from school to work. Despite some recent improvements, youth unemployment, and low rates of educational participation have remained significant issues in Tasmania for more than a decade. The Labour Market Data Dashboard reported the overall Tasmanian youth unemployment rate to be 10.5% as of August 2023, in comparison to the national youth unemployment rate of 8.3%.²¹ These rates are higher in some regions of Tasmania compared to others.

Unemployment, underemployment, and low educational participation for youth can escalate experiences of poverty, social exclusion, lower wellbeing, and crime. This also significantly impacts Tasmania's capacity to develop a workforce to effectively meet the needs of future generations in Tasmania.

Research highlights that poor school engagement and educational achievements have negative impacts on employment opportunities for young people, however, this is particularly

¹⁸ Your Caring Way. (2023). <https://yourcaringway.com.au/for-carers/our-program/>

¹⁹ Carers NSW. (2023). *2022 National Carer Survey Report*. https://www.carersnsw.org.au/uploads/main/Files/3.Resources/Policy-Research/Carers-NSW_2022_National_Carer_Survey-Report.pdf

²⁰ Carers New South Wales. (2017). "Young carers: barriers to accessing employment", available at: https://www.carersnsw.org.au/Assets/Files/Young%20Carers_Barriers%20to%20Accessing%20Employment.pdf

²¹ Australian Government, Jobs and Skills Australia. (2023). *Labour Market Dashboard Tasmania*. <https://www.jobsandskills.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-10/Labour%20Market%20Dashboard%20Tasmania.pdf>

pronounced for young carers.²² In light of concerns about student attendance, retention, and Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) attainment rates, targeted and regional approaches are required to assist young people in developing job-ready knowledge, skills, and connections. An example of a place-based approach to reducing school absenteeism is the 'Every Day Counts' campaign, which is an initiative of Burnie Works. Burnie Works collaborated with young people living in the area and supported them to develop communications for their peers encouraging them to return to school.²³ This highlights the effectiveness of place-based approaches, whereby those within the local community are often well-placed to positively influence their peers.

The "No Space in My Brain to Learn" paper provided the following quote:

*"The caring role I have has a big impact on my studies and education. I have missed out on a lot of school due to having to participate in appointments but also stressing about my parents while I am at school which gives no space in my brain to learn. At school I get fidgety due to worrying about what's happening at home, is everything okay, is anyone dead, has anyone killed themselves, I have no focus but I try really hard. I have had many issues in getting a supply of school items such as pens and books, and I miss out on a lot of learning and activities due to not being able to afford school fees. Lucky my school has helped out a little but it's still hard for me. My caring role feels full-time even though I am at school during the day."*²⁴

At the conclusion of Term 1, 2023, the public school attendance rate for children from Prep to Year 10 in Tasmania was 87.8%.²⁵ Furthermore, student retention reports indicated that the proportion of Year 10 students (from two years prior) who were retained to Year 12 was 63.2%. Data shows that for 2022, the number of students potentially eligible for Year 12 education in Tasmania was 6,197. Only 4,176 of these potential students participated in Year 12, and of these, only 79.7% attained their TCE.²⁶

This TCE achievement rate has remained at a similar percentage since 2016. Some Tasmanian colleges have much lower rates of TCE completion at Year 12 when compared with others. Colleges that have significantly lower TCE completion rates should be examined so the barriers to TCE completion can be addressed. The Australian Government's 2023 *Working Future White Paper*, stated that over the next 10 years, more than 9/10 new jobs will require post-secondary qualifications.²⁷

The 2022 *Mission Australia Youth Survey* reported that of the 621 Tasmanian respondents who were aged between 15 and 19, 45.2% reported experiencing barriers to achieving their

²² Hutchings, K., Radford, K., Spencer, N., Harris, N., McMillan, S., Slattery, M., Wheeler, A. and Roche, E. (2023), "Addressing the challenge of engaging in paid work while undertaking unpaid caring: insights for improving employment inclusion of young carers", Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-12-2022-0351>

²³ Burnie Works. (2023). *Every Day Counts*. <https://burnieworks.com.au/our-focusareas/education/ev>

²⁴ Moore, T., Bourke-Taylor, H., Greenland, N., McDougall, S., Bromfield, L., Robinson, L., & Brown, T. (2019). *Young carers and their engagement with education: 'No space in my brain to learn'*. Adelaide, SA: University of South Australia. https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Young-Carers-Report-FINAL_vsmall_compressed1.pdf

²⁵ Tasmanian Department for Education, Children and Young People. (2023). *Student engagement and participation data*. <https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/about-us/policies-legislation-data/data-and-statistics/student%20engagement-participation-data/>

²⁶ <https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/TCE-Attainment-data-2018-2022.pdf>

²⁷ Commonwealth of Australia. (2023). *Working Future White Paper*. <https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-10/p2023-447996-working-future.pdf>

study or work goals. Furthermore, only 63.4% of respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their studies. Of respondents, 53% indicated they were employed.²⁸

We note that although the focus of the proposed strategy is those aged 18-25, school participation and retention rates have direct impacts on success later in life. To improve educational and employment outcomes for young people, it's critical to understand the prohibitive barriers they face. Young carers are one of the many groups of young people who, because of caring for someone else, experience significant challenges that often pose lifelong impacts on their educational and employment achievements.

Enabling more young people to access quality career planning is important. The *Tasmanian Youth Story Consultation Report*²⁹ describes inadequate pathway planning across Tasmanian schools, with limited access to affordable and relevant training. There are also significant transport issues across the State, which are worse in more regional parts of Tasmania. Expanding the Regional Jobs Hubs, so they have staff who can more regularly provide career planning at schools, would assist more young people to better transition from school to employment. Career planning must be strengthened across all Tasmanian schools, specifically focusing on students who are at risk of/ or currently are disengaged or marginalised, such as young carers. In addition, we suggest employing additional coaches across the Regional Jobs Hubs who can support the specific needs of young carers.

The inclusion and support mechanisms for students with disability across Tasmanian schools must be improved. This must also include targeted and relevant support for young people with disability to access appropriate training and employment. Some carers have identified that Disability Employment Service Providers are not always adequately supporting young people with disability, possibly stemming from rigid KPIs. We encourage further consultation to understand what is needed to achieve better employment outcomes for young people with disability.

Carers of children and young people with disability or additional needs have highlighted concerns about high suspension rates in Tasmanian schools. It was reported in June 2023 that there were expected to be approximately 10,000 suspensions in Tasmanian public schools this year.³⁰ Furthermore, in 2022, 55% of all suspensions in Tasmanian public schools were administered to students with disabilities, those identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, or students in out-of-home care.³¹ Research shows that frequent suspensions can lead to long-lasting negative impacts on the educational outcomes of young people. Recommendations 7.1 to 7.3 in the *Disability Royal Commission Final Report* provides further advice on how to better support children with disability within the education system.³²

²⁸ Mission Australia. (2023). *Annual Youth Survey 2022 Tasmanian data*.

<https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey/2618-youth-survey-2022-report/file>

²⁹ Youth Network of Tasmania. (2023). *Brand Tasmania Youth Story Report*. [BrandTasmania_Youth-Story-Report_Final_Pages_HR.pdf \(ynot.org.au\)](#)

³⁰ The Mercury. (2023). *Tasmanian government schools in crisis*. <https://www.themercury.com.au/tasmania-education/tasmanian-government-schools-in-crisis-as-suspensions-escalate/news-story/c09dbbca3072e914ff8d75d7cc579e31>

³¹ Ibid.

³² Commonwealth of Australia. (2023). *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability*. <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2023-09/Final%20Report%20-%20Executive%20Summary%2C%20Our%20vision%20for%20an%20inclusive%20Australia%20and%20Recommendations.pdf>

How can workplaces better support young adults?

We believe that expanding the capacity of the Regional Jobs Hubs is necessary. This will create additional capability, not only in career planning stages but will also enable the development of partnerships with local businesses that can commit to providing safe and supportive workplaces for young people. A good example of this is the Glenorchy Jobs Hub,³³ which outlines their local businesses that are 'pledging partners'. Burnie Works has also developed a similar initiative whereby they request local partner employers to sign a student-friendly workplace pledge.³⁴

Some workplaces and employers simply do not understand how to best support young people. Therefore, it would be wise to introduce targeted educational campaigns on how to better support young workers. This could align with the rollout of the Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework,³⁵ which is an incredibly important initiative. This could also be teamed with education for businesses on the benefits of offering traineeships or work placement opportunities to those who require it.

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

Transitioning from youth and adolescent services to adult services can be challenging. It is often a time of great risk for young people, particularly those accessing mental health support and for those who are leaving out-of-home care. Transitioning into an adult service or independent living must be planned carefully.

It is critical for collaboration and good communication to occur between both services and the young people involved. When transitioning from a youth or adolescent service to an adult service, warm referral and handover should occur. A transitional support period could also be beneficial. Any dramatic changes in service design or provision should be addressed. It is important that these services allow for co-design with young people so that these transitions can be more effective, safe, and inclusive.

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

Tackling the significant transport issues experienced by young adults in urban and rural areas requires a multi-faceted approach. Transport issues could be resolved by increasing the number of community mentor-driver programs, with the capacity for the drivers to pick up students if they cannot get to the venue. Care2Serve is sometimes able to assist young carers financially to access driving lessons, but young carer identification and referral to Care2Serve is first needed. The Tasmanian Government could also investigate the possibility of a small subsidy to support those in rural areas to access driving lessons.

Metro Tasmania has engaged 3P Advisory to undertake community consultation to assist in developing its comprehensive Accessibility and Inclusion Plan.³⁶ We would encourage any feedback from young people provided as part of this consultation to be considered. We also suggest that local consultations could be conducted with young people across the State to

³³ Glenorchy Jobs Hub. (2023). <https://www.jobshubglenorchy.com.au/pledging-partners/>

³⁴ Burnie Works. (2023). *Student Friendly workplaces*. <https://burnieworks.com.au/student-friendly-workplaces/>

³⁵ Tasmanian Government Department of Justice. (2023). *Child and Youth Safe Organisations Framework*. <https://www.justice.tas.gov.au/carcru/child-and-youth-safe-organisations-framework>

³⁶ Metro Tasmania. (2023). *Accessibility and Inclusion Plan Consultation*. <https://www.metrotas.com.au/communication/blog/2023/accessibility-and-inclusion-plan-consultation/>

find out what their specific transport barriers, needs, and ideas are, and that any changes be reviewed after implementation with young people to understand if they are providing effective solutions or if further work is needed.

How, and in what ways:

- Can the service system and policy settings be more responsive to the needs of young adults?
- Can services be better designed to acknowledge and meet the needs of young adults?
- Can government and the services sector better integrate and coordinate service development and delivery for young adults?

To assist in the appropriate design of services for young adults, authentic collaboration and co-design between services, policymakers, and young people must occur. This should not just be completed in a tokenistic manner, but the intention must be to gain a true understanding of issues and what is required to improve. It is important for new programs to be evaluated for effectiveness, and for other validated best-practice models to be reviewed and considered.

The Action Plan could highlight the importance of relevant Government departments and services embedding opportunities such as Board Director traineeships and other relevant committee positions for young people, so young adults have opportunities to provide governance support to services for young people.

This really ties into taking an approach of *“nothing about us without us.”*³⁷ Simply put, policies, programs, interventions, and decisions that impact or are relevant to young people should always occur in true collaboration with young people. Consideration of young people must be built into policies, procedures, and services, and this includes actions that will meet the needs of diverse or marginalised young people such as young carers.

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

To better support young adults in navigating the adult service system, collaboration, co-design, and ongoing review with young adults from different circumstances and geographical locations is needed. Support needs will differ depending on preferred methods of accessing information, and what information or services are needed. Through several co-design sessions with Tasmanian young carers, they have all expressed different preferences for obtaining information and accessing services, and these preferences are as individual as each person is. Some young carers have told us that they aren't always comfortable accessing information in the first instance by contacting a service directly, but when there are expos and information sessions within schools, they are more likely to engage as many of their peers will also be. There is often less fear of stigma or bullying this way. It's also important that there are specific people within local communities that young adults can trust to support them with navigation.

³⁷ UNFPA. (2022). *Nothing About Us Without Us*. https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa.apro_youth_2022.pdf

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

We note that YNOT already facilitates specific groups and forums across the state, such as the Youth Action Priorities (YAP), the Northern Youth Coordinating Committee (NYCC), and North West Action for Youth (NWAY).³⁸ Several other youth advisory groups exist across Tasmania which are supported by local councils and organisations. These groups provide important avenues for young people to discuss their needs and those of their peers within their local communities. Consideration could be taken on how to best harness this great work and amplify these voices to the broader sector, service system, and governments, to prompt collaborative progress. These groups could also consider partnering with local colleges, perhaps including a student representative who would bring forward the needs of their peers and share information back to their school.

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

In addition to the elements outlined in the Paper, support for strong collaboration with specific and relevant organisations and peak bodies outside of the youth sector is highly recommended. This will ensure that a diverse range of experiences and ideas can be considered. YNOT is already fostering initiatives such as this, with a great example being the Tasmanian Youth Employment Alliance.

5. Recommendations

Carers Tasmania recommends that the Action Plan includes the following actions:

- Implement a targeted and strategic approach to routine identification and referral of young carers in educational settings.
- Commit and introduce a plan specifically focussing on increasing the rates of school participation, retention, and achievement of the Tasmanian Certificate of Education.
- Expand the capacity of the Regional Jobs Hubs, specifically with coaches who specialise in supporting carers/young carers and work with programs such as Your Caring Way.
- Strengthen and improve career planning across all Tasmanian schools and colleges, specifically focusing on students who are disengaged or marginalised.
- Increase and improve inclusion and support mechanisms for students with disability across Tasmanian schools and colleges.
- Improve support for young people with disability to access employment and training.
- Embed continued co-design and collaboration with a diverse range of young people at all stages of service, policy, and program design.
- Ensure there are more opportunities for young people to participate in work placement, traineeships, and governance activities.
- Evaluate, review, and redesign as needed, the transitional pathways between youth and adult services. This must occur in collaboration with young people.
- Additional support must be provided to strengthen pre-existing local youth forums and ensure their feedback is shared with other young people, services, and governments.

³⁸ Youth Network of Tasmania. (2020). *Youth Sector*. <https://www.ynot.org.au/youth-sector/regional-youth-sector-committees>