

Your Ref:  
Our Ref:

12 December 2023

Youth Network of Tasmania  
39 Murray St  
HOBART TAS 7000

By email: [jo@ynot.org.au](mailto:jo@ynot.org.au)

Dear Joanne

**RE: YOUNG PERSONS TRANSITIONS PROJECT – RESPONSE TO DISCUSSION PAPER**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your recent Discussion Paper, *Becoming an adult: the experience of young Tasmanians today* (the Discussion Paper)<sup>1</sup>.

I would like to extend my appreciation to the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) for the manner in which it has undertaken this project. The consultation process has captured the complex experiences faced by Tasmanian young people as they navigate the transition to *emergent adulthood*. It is by capturing and describing these challenges that we can begin to formulate and implement policies to better assist young people with this transition.

This significant piece of work also aligns with the Tasmanian Government's Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy<sup>2</sup> designed to improve the wellbeing outcomes of all Tasmanian children and young people under the age of 25. Commissioner McLean recently made a submission in relation to the Tasmanian Government's Youth Jobs Strategy which covers several pertinent issues in this area.<sup>3</sup>

This office is a strong supporter of concerted efforts being made to facilitate and promote the participation of children and young people in the co-design and implementation of policies that affect them.

In performing a function or exercising a power under the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016*, I must act according to the principle that the wellbeing and best interests of children and young people are paramount<sup>4</sup> and must observe any relevant provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> YNOT, *Becoming an adult: the experience of young Tasmanians today*, Hobart, 2023, p 2 [URL: [https://www.ynot.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/2023-11/YNOT\\_Youth\\_Transitions\\_Discussion\\_Paper\\_November2023.pdf](https://www.ynot.org.au/sites/default/files/documents/2023-11/YNOT_Youth_Transitions_Discussion_Paper_November2023.pdf)]

<sup>2</sup> See: Tasmanian Government, *It takes a Tasmanian village – Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy*, 2021 [URL: [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](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)]

<sup>3</sup> See: [Response to Youth Jobs Strategy - CCYP \(childcomm.tas.gov.au\)](https://www.childcomm.tas.gov.au)

<sup>4</sup> *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016*, s3(1)(a).

<sup>5</sup> *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2016*, s 3(1)(b) and article 12 of the UNCRC.



Article 12 of the UNCRC, or the 'right to participate', is fundamental to the exercise and enjoyment by children of other rights. All children and young people have the right to have their opinions heard and taken seriously. Best practice informs us that the right to participate has several complex dimensions that are not always given the emphasis they deserve. These include the following:

- (a) The Committee on the Rights of the Child interprets the participatory right in article 12 as relating not only to individual children and young people, but also to groups of children<sup>6</sup>.
- (b) As such, children and young people as a social grouping have the right to be actively engaged and their views sought and considered in the development of legislative and policy measures that are likely to affect their lives.
- (c) An intrinsic part of giving effect to the best interests principle in article 3, UNCRC is a thorough and fulsome implementation of the participation principle in article 12, UNCRC.
- (d) The right of children to participate in decision-making processes that affect them is a relevant consideration not merely in the *design of reforms* but also in *their implementation and evaluation*.
- (e) Participation is a dialogue, rather than an event. In order for participation to be meaningful, children and young people:
  - Must receive clear information in a way they can understand;
  - Must be provided with the opportunity to respond and to express their views;
  - Must be given assistance to express their views if needed; and
  - Must be advised of how their views have had influence.

I endorse the way YNOT has gone about setting the scene for engagement and consultation with young people for the Transitions Project.

In canvassing the many issues raised in YNOT's thought-provoking Discussion Paper, it occurs to me that we must not only consider the programs and services that can support the transition to adulthood. Additionally, given that a strong foundation for children's wellbeing is established early in life, we must also consider how programs and services can be universally delivered proportionate to need in order to support children's wellbeing during their earlier years as well. This cannot simply be left to the period when they are transitioning out of childhood into adulthood.

As YNOT is aware, children and young people are experts in their own lives and they are cognisant of the need to prepare for life after their secondary schooling. They take great interest in how education is organised and delivered during their childhoods. For example, Commissioner McLean's consultations with the CCYP Ambassadors on education, children and young people robustly asserted the need for education to be relevant to the challenges they will face as young adults.

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<sup>6</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No 12 (2009): The right of the child to be heard*, CRC/C/GC/12 [URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/671444?ln=en>]



During the course of the CCYP Ambassadors' Education Animation project, feedback from children and young people voiced numerous opinions as to how education could be better adapted to meet their needs as they transition to emergent adulthood. Some of the issues the Ambassadors raised (available on the CCYP website) were:

#### *Overview<sup>7</sup>*

- *Schools should be a place of knowledge and acceptance, not a place of success or failure.*
- *They need to be a place where children are prepared for adulthood.*
- *This can't occur when public schools are disadvantaged and when students can't give feedback on their teachers.*

#### *Curriculum & Systems<sup>8</sup>*

- *Australian curriculum is behind many other countries.*
- *We aren't being taught the subjects we need to live in the real world (like TFN, tax, voting, etc)*
- *Life after school can be a big shock (link education to the real world).*
- *We aren't taught how to study or how to teach ourselves new skills.*
- *We are also worried we aren't offered alternatives like TAFE.*
- *We'd also like better health education including sex and mental health.*

Thank you for the opportunity to consider the Discussion Paper and to express my endorsement of the Transitions Project. We eagerly await the results of the consultation.

Yours sincerely,

**Isabelle Crompton**  
**A/g Commissioner for Children and Young People**

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<sup>7</sup> CCYP, *CCYP Ambassadors' thoughts on education – Animations: Overview*, 2022 [URL: <https://childcomm.tas.gov.au/young-people/young-peoples-thoughts-on-education/>]

<sup>8</sup> CCYP, *CCYP Ambassadors' thoughts on education – Animations: Curriculum & systems*, 2022 [URL: <https://childcomm.tas.gov.au/young-people/young-peoples-thoughts-on-education/>]