

# Youth Jobs Strategy

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SUBMISSION TO DISCUSSION PAPER

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## Introduction

A Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy has the potential to alleviate two critical challenges for Tasmania's economic and social prosperity; projected workforce supply challenges and the persistent net loss of young Tasmanians interstate, contributing to the ageing of the population. The Youth Jobs Strategy can only alleviate these challenges with a comprehensive, strategic supply- and demand- side approach.

Tasmania has long suffered considerable loss of young people to education and employment opportunities elsewhere<sup>1</sup>. As such, a Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy should be **aspirational** for young people living, studying and working in Tasmania.

On the supply side, it should provide young Tasmanians with the confidence, knowledge and support services they need to participate in post-school education and/or training to secure meaningful work *and* an aspirational and achievable career pathway in Tasmania.

On the demand side, together with strategic industry policy, it should inform job creation strategies and career pathways for young Tasmanians.

Given that a key message from the Youth Voice<sup>2</sup> is the lack of employment opportunities in Tasmania for young people, and also their desire<sup>2</sup> to stay in Tasmania, **a key objective of the Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy should be to provide young Tasmanians with the option to remain in Tasmania to pursue post-school education and/or training and meaningful work opportunities and career pathways, if they choose to, without the need to leave the state<sup>3</sup>.**

The core principles of the Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy need to reflect this aspiration.

The wide range of skill shortages that Tasmania is currently experiencing are the result of lack of workforce planning in the past in relation to workforce development, including career education, education and training and projecting future skill and labour demand. In addition to skill shortages, a considerable number of Tasmanians are over-qualified and/or experiencing a skill-mismatch in their employment.

The Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy provides the opportunity to alleviate these past inadequacies. In fact, Tasmania is well positioned to take advantage of the labour market implications associated with demographic ageing to provide education and/or training, employment opportunities and career pathways for young Tasmanians, if it gets the policy settings right<sup>4</sup>.

While the Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy Discussion Paper largely focusses on the supply side requirements and employability of young Tasmanians, to plan for Tasmania's future labour demand and mitigate against future skill shortages, as well as achieve a more dynamic economy, it is critical to ensure that young people are also aware of the demand side, that is, future opportunities available to them so they can make informed choices to pursue education and training in career pathways of the future.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://lisadenny.substack.com/p/more-tasmanians-are-leaving-for-interstate>

<sup>2</sup> YNOT, Summary of Youth Feedback, 2023

<sup>3</sup> This objective is also consistent with the objectives of the 2015 Tasmanian Population Growth Strategy

<sup>4</sup> See for further explanation Churchill, B., Denny, L., and Jackson, N. (2014) Thank God you're here: the coming generation and their role in future-proofing Australia from the challenges of population ageing, Australian Journal of Social Issues, Vol 49, Issue 3, pages 373-392 as well as [Baby Boomers, be nice to your grandkids, they may save Australia](#), The Conversation, 2014 and [The IGR focuses on the old, when the future belongs to the young](#), The Conversation, 2015

This brief submission addresses three key issues:

- 1) The lack of meaningful employment opportunities for young Tasmanians
- 2) The opportunities associated with demographic ageing
- 3) The critical need for effective career education aligned with careers of the future

The submission concludes with a summary and recommendations for consideration by the Tasmanian Government.

## The lack of meaningful employment opportunities for young Tasmanians

It is well known that there is a dearth of meaningful entry-level employment and career pathways in Tasmania for school leavers and/or tertiary education graduates. While some young Tasmanians are able to secure meaningful work upon leaving school or completing further education and/or training, many either find themselves in insecure, lower-skilled, casualised jobs or need to leave the state to pursue more meaningful opportunities elsewhere.

At the time of the 2021 ABS Census of Population and Housing almost 70,000 young people aged 20 to 29 years were residing in Tasmania. Of those, almost 20,000 (27.9%) were not working.

Of those who were working, around a third (32.5%) were employed in 15 occupations ranging from Sales Assistants (7.1%) to Motor Mechanics (1.1%). Most of the Top 15 occupations required no more than a Certificate III qualification. Only one (1) occupation in the Top 15 requires a tertiary education qualification, Registered Nurse.

*Table 1 Top 15 Occupations, 20- to 29-year-olds, Tasmania, 2021*

	Number	%	Skill Level <sup>5</sup>
Sales Assistants (General)	3,552	7.1	5
Aged and Disabled Carers	1,664	3.3	4
Registered Nurses	1,383	2.7	1
Bar Attendants and Baristas	1,003	2.0	4
Carpenters and Joiners	993	2.0	3
Waiters	987	2.0	4
Receptionists	949	1.9	4
Child Carers	922	1.8	4
General Clerks	786	1.6	4
Retail Managers	763	1.5	2
Electricians	747	1.5	3
Chefs	738	1.5	2
Kitchenhands	673	1.3	5
Nursing Support and Personal Care Workers	635	1.3	4
Motor Mechanics	577	1.1	3

Source: ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing

<sup>5</sup> Skill Level 1 is commensurate with a Bachelor degree or higher qualification

Skill Level 2 is commensurate with an Advanced Diploma or Diploma

Skill Level 3 is commensurate with a Certificate IV or III (including at least 2 years on-the-job training)

Skill Level 4 is commensurate with a Certificate II or III

Skill Level 5 is commensurate with a Certificate I or secondary education

Of those 20- to 29-year-old Tasmanians who were working, 14,886 (29.6%) were over-qualified for their job. For those 18,109 Tasmanians who had achieved a Bachelor Degree or higher, 38.1% of them were working in a commensurate skill level job, 44.5% were over-qualified and 16.4% were not working at all. *This means that 6 in 10 young Tasmanians with a Bachelor Degree or higher were not being effectively utilised in the Tasmanian labour market<sup>6</sup>.*

The highest level of educational attainment for almost 27,000 Tasmanians aged between 20 and 29 years of age was secondary education – years 10 or above. Of these young people, one third (8,966) were not working, while the majority of those working were employed in skill level four or five jobs.

Table 2 Utilisation Matrix, Educational Attainment by Skill Level<sup>7</sup> of Occupation, 20- to 29-year-olds, Tasmania, percentage and number

	Skill Level 1	Skill Level 2	Skill Level 3	Skill Level 4	Skill Level 5	Not working	Not utilised	Number
Postgraduate Degree	27.6	7.0	5.2	20.5	18.7	19.7	71.0	5,149
Graduate Diploma / Certificate	52.8	6.5	12.5	11.8	6.3	9.7	46.9	781
Bachelor Degree	41.5	9.6	4.6	15.9	12.0	15.5	57.6	12,179
Advanced Diploma / Diploma	11.8	21.0	12.7	21.6	13.7	18.0	66.0	3,029
Certificate III & IV	7.1	8.4	32.6	24.2	12.2	14.4	50.8	14,773
Secondary Education - Years 10 and above	4.3	4.7	11.4	21.6	23.3	33.3	33.3	26,916
Certificate I & II	0.0	0.0	7.5	30.2	18.9	43.4	43.4	53
Secondary Education - Years 9 and below	1.6	0.5	2.9	9.1	14.9	69.6	69.6	910

Source: ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing

NB. Dark Blue = Over-qualified, Light Blue = Qualification match, Green = Under-qualified, Orange = not working, Red = Not effectively utilised in the labour force

### Comparative analysis: 20 to 29 year olds, Tasmanians and former Tasmanians

To further illustrate the lack of meaningful employment opportunities for young people in Tasmania, a comparison between young people aged 20 to 29 years of age who lived in Tasmania five years prior to the 2021 ABS Census of Population and Housing with those aged 20 to 29 years of age who lived in Tasmania at the time of the 2021 Census and five years prior to the 2021 Census is necessary<sup>8</sup>. This cohort of people would have been aged 15 to 24 years of age and living in Tasmania five years prior to the 2021 Census. It does not capture any former Tasmanians aged 20 to 29 who lived overseas at the time of the 2021 Census.

<sup>6</sup> Note, this analysis is contained to highest level of educational attainment does not consider field of study mismatch which could contribute to the under-utilisation of a person's qualifications.

<sup>7</sup> Skill Level 1 is commensurate with a Bachelor degree or higher qualification

Skill Level 2 is commensurate with an Advanced Diploma or Diploma

Skill Level 3 is commensurate with a Certificate IV or III (including at least 2 years on-the-job training)

Skill Level 4 is commensurate with a Certificate II or III

Skill Level 5 is commensurate with a Certificate I or secondary education

<sup>8</sup> This methodological approach removes most international students arriving in Tasmania during the period of analysis so that it contains the research to a comparison between Tasmanians and former Tasmanians who were more likely to have been through the Tasmanian schooling system and possibly post-school education and/or training.

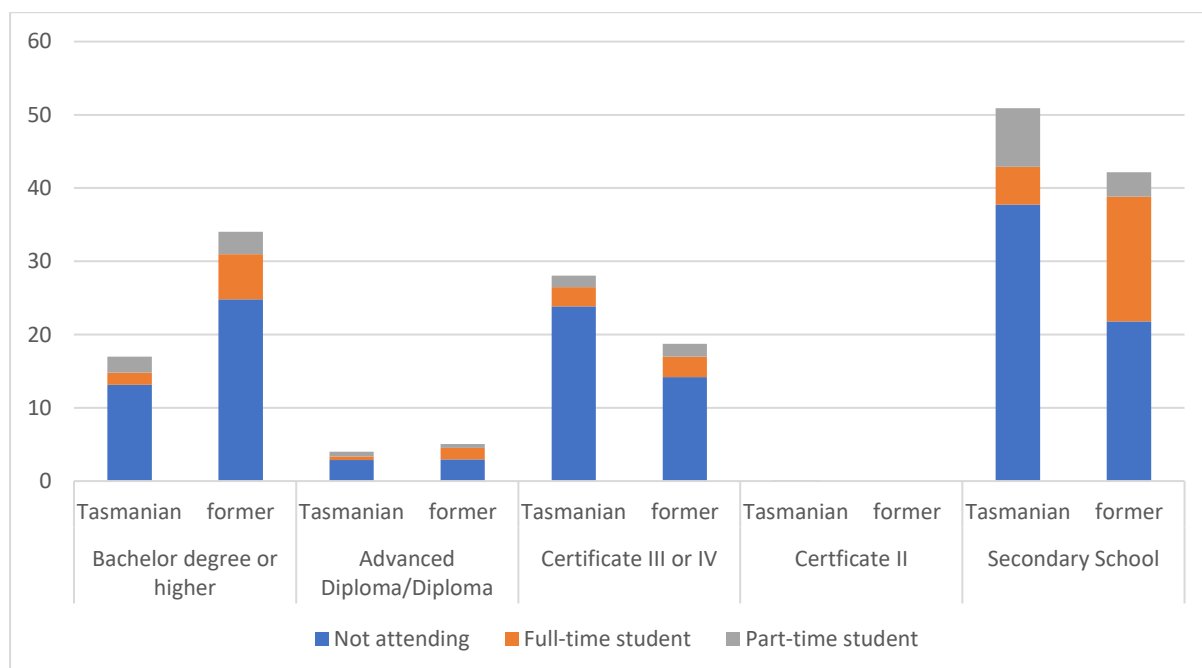
At the time of the Census, 48,466 young people aged 20- to 29-year-olds lived in Tasmania and also lived in Tasmania 5 years prior to the Census while 7,585 former Tasmanians aged 20 to 29 years of age lived interstate.

For the 20- to 29-year-olds who lived in Tasmania 5 years prior to the 2021 Census, those who moved interstate, over a third (34%) had a Bachelor Degree or higher qualification, while for those who stayed in Tasmania, 17% had a Bachelor degree or higher. A greater proportion of former Tasmanians were pursuing further education and training interstate either as a full-time student (6.1%) or part time (3.1%), compared with Tasmanian-based 20- to 29-year-olds (1.7% and 2.1% respectively).

A higher proportion of Tasmanian-based 20-to 29-year-olds had a Certificate III or IV qualification (23.9%) compared with interstate based former Tasmanians (14.2%).

Half (50.9%) of the Tasmanian-based 20- to 29-year-old cohort’s highest level of educational attainment was Secondary School, compared with 2-in 5 (42%) of former 20- to 29-year-old Tasmanians. While half (48%) of those former Tasmanians with secondary school education qualifications were enrolled in further education, only a quarter of the Tasmanian-based 20-to-29-year-olds were enrolled in either full time (5.1%) or part time (8.0%) further education or training.

Figure 1 Highest level of education attainment by educational attendance, 20- to 29-year-olds, Tasmanian-based and former Tasmanians



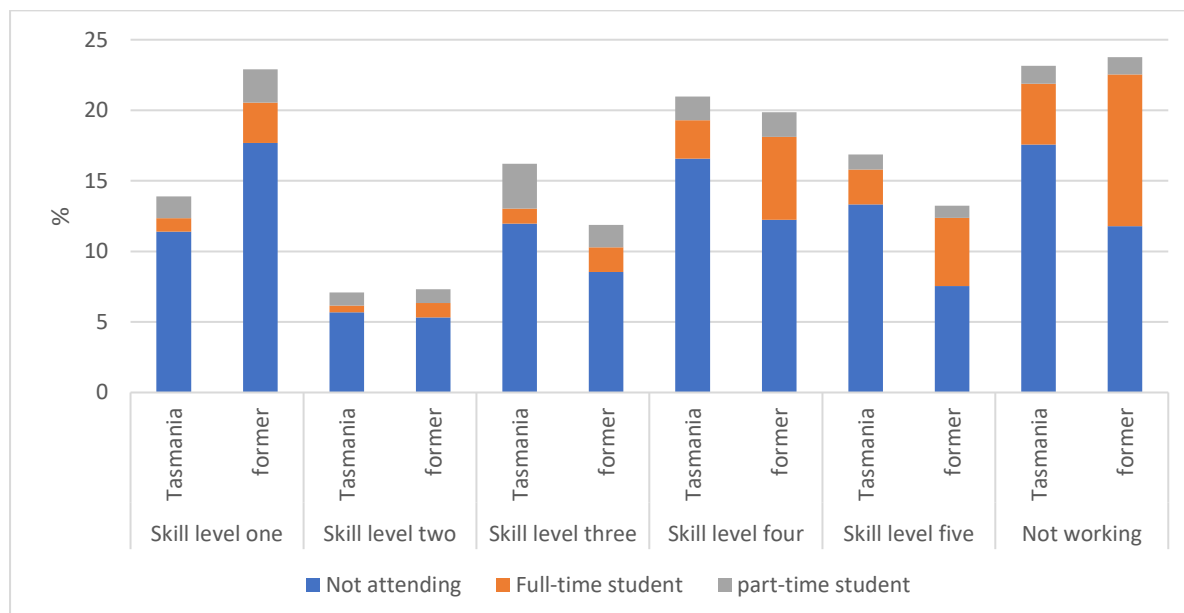
Source: ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing

While a similar proportion of Tasmanian-based and former-Tasmanian 20-to-29 -year-olds were not employed at the time of the 2021 ABS Census of Population and Housing<sup>9</sup> (23.2% and 23.9% respectively), a greater proportion of former Tasmanians were employed in Skill Level 1 jobs (those commensurate with a bachelor degree or higher qualification), 22.9% compared with Tasmanian-based 20 to 29 year olds (13.9%). Additionally, a higher proportion of former Tasmanians were also enrolled in full-time or part-time further education or training. A greater proportion Tasmanian-

<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that at the time of the 2021 ABS Census of Population and Housing, most of NSW and Victoria were in lockdown in response to the COVID-19 Global Pandemic and work was restricted to 'essential services' workers.

based 20- to 29-year-olds were employed in skill level 3, 4 and 5 jobs than former Tasmanians. A greater proportion of former Tasmanians employed in skill level 3, 4 or 5 jobs were enrolled in further education and/or training than similarly employed Tasmanian-based 20- to 29-year-olds.

Figure 2 Skill level of job by educational attendance, 20- to 29-year-olds, Tasmanian-based and former Tasmanians



Source: ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing

Compared with Tasmanians aged 20 to 29 years of age (See Table 3), former Tasmanians aged 20 to 29 years of age have a much higher level of utilisation in the labour force. Over half (54.1%) with a Bachelor degree or higher were employed in Skill Level 1 jobs, while 1 in 4 (25.7%) were over-qualified while 13.1% were not working.

Table 3 Utilisation Matrix, Educational Attainment by Skill Level of Occupation, 20- to 29-year-olds, former Tasmanians, percentage and number

	Skill Level 1	Skill Level 2	Skill Level 3	Skill Level 4	Skill Level 5	Not working	Not utilised	Number
Postgraduate Degree	61.7	6.7	5.5	14.5	2.6	9.0	38.3	345
Graduate Diploma / Certificate	62.4	5.4	6.0	10.7	5.4	10.1	37.6	149
Bachelor Degree	52.2	8.8	4.4	12.6	7.6	14.1	47.3	2,011
Advanced Diploma / Diploma	12.8	15.5	10.9	20.4	16.8	23.6	71.7	368
Certificate III & IV	6.3	9.3	25.4	24.1	11.8	22.1	58.0	1,387
Secondary Education - Years 10 and above	7.3	5.0	12.0	23.8	18.8	32.0	32.0	3,061
Secondary Education - Years 9 and below	0.0	4.1	0.0	17.6	16.2	62.2	62.2	74

Source: ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing

NB. Dark Blue = Over-qualified, Light Blue = Qualification match, Green = Under-qualified, Orange = not working, Red = Not effectively utilised in the labour force

The Top 15 occupations former Tasmanians were employed in at the time of the 2021 Census reflect the above utilisation and the status of co-occurring employment and study.

Table 4 Top 15 Occupations of former Tasmanians aged 20 to 29 years, 2021

Occupation	Number	%	Skill level
Sales Assistant (General)	391	5.2	5
Bar Attendants and Baristas	158	2.1	4
Defence Force Members - Other Ranks	147	1.9	3
General Practitioners and Resident Medical Officers	142	1.9	1
Waiters	138	1.8	4
Registered Nurses	124	1.6	1
Receptionists	114	1.5	4
General Clerks	112	1.5	4
Aged and Disabled Carers	108	1.4	4
Child Carers	82	1.1	4
Retail Managers	81	1.1	2
Storepersons	71	0.9	5
Electricians	58	0.8	3
Cafe Workers	58	0.8	5
Checkout Operators and Office Cashiers	57	0.8	5

Source: ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing

It is clear from this analysis that education and employment opportunities are greater interstate for young Tasmanians than in Tasmania. Interstate, there is greater likelihood to be employed in a job that utilises the qualifications of young, former Tasmanians and provide the opportunity, and perhaps impetus, for further education and/or training, including progressing a meaningful career path than if young Tasmanians were to remain in Tasmania.

***The findings from this analysis confirm the need for a Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy to also include strategic demand side approaches to provide meaningful education and employment pathways in Tasmania to enable young Tasmanians to remain in the state, if they want to.***



## The opportunities associated with demographic ageing

While population ageing contributes considerable challenges to governments, including a declining share of the population which is of prime working age<sup>10</sup>, it also provides opportunities for workforce entrants, including school leavers and post-school education and training graduates.

Restructuring of the economy in response to the fourth industrial revolution, a changing demographic and their needs as well as demand for skills and labour to replace an ageing workforce, create employment opportunities for young Tasmanians.

### Employment projections

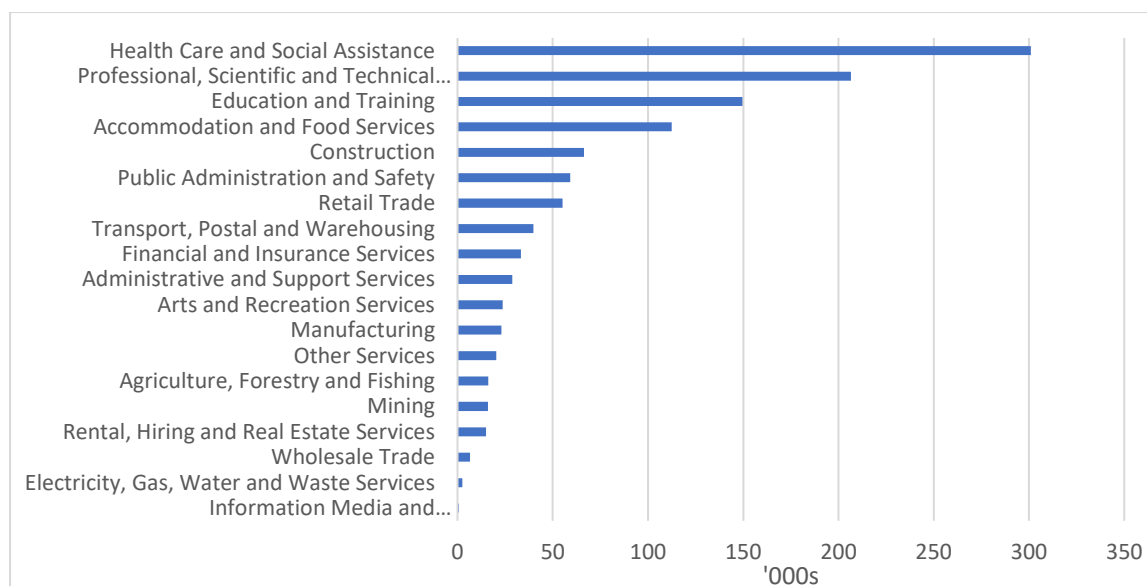
While the National Skills Commission (now Jobs and Skills Australia) no longer produces employment projections by industry or occupation at the state or territory level, inferences can be made for Tasmania based on the national projections.

A restructuring economy due to the fourth industrial revolution, changing demographic needs and proactive industry policies following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy is influencing future skill and labour demand. However, four services industries are projected to provide almost two-thirds (65.4%) of the total projected employment growth for Australia over the five years from 2021 to 2026:

- Health care and social assistance
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Education and training
- Accommodation and food services

Given Tasmania's ageing population and high proportion of the population living with a disability and/or health issues, employment in the health care and social assistance sector will also likely be the greatest contributor to employment growth into the future.

Figure 3 Projected Employment Growth, Australia, 2021 to 2026 ('000)



Source: National Skills Commission, Employment Projections, 2022

<sup>10</sup> 15 to 64 years of age

The National Skills Commission also projects that 9 in 10 new jobs of the future will require post-school education and training. Over half of the projected employment growth will be in Skill Level 1 jobs, requiring a Bachelor Degree or higher qualification. A further 28% of new jobs will require either an Advanced Diploma or Diploma or Certificate IV.

The top 25 jobs of the future reflect the restructuring of the economy.

*Table 5 Top 25 Occupations, ANZSIC 2 digit level, projected employment growth – '000s, Australia, 2021 to 2026*

Occupation	Skill Level range
Specialist Managers	1
Carers and Aides	4
Business, Human Resource and Marketing Professionals	2-1
Health Professionals	1
ICT Professionals	1
Personal Carers and Assistants	4
Aged and Disabled Carers	4
Education Professionals	3-1
Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals	3-1
Legal, Social and Welfare Professionals	2-1
Business and Systems Analysts, and Programmers	2-1
Midwifery and Nursing Professionals	1
Information and Organisation Professionals	2-1
School Teachers	1
Software and Applications Programmers	2-1
Registered Nurses	1
Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians	3-1
General Clerks	3
Business Administration Managers	2-1
General Clerical Workers	3
Architects, Designers, Planners and Surveyors	1
Construction, Distribution and Production Managers	2-1
Database and Systems Administrators, and ICT Security Specialists	2-1
Social and Welfare Professionals	3-1
Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers	2

*Source: National Skills Commission, Employment Projections, 2022*

It will be critical that young Tasmanians are well-aware of the changing economy and the types of jobs and career pathways of the future and are prepared to take advantage of the opportunities<sup>11</sup>.

### Replacement workers

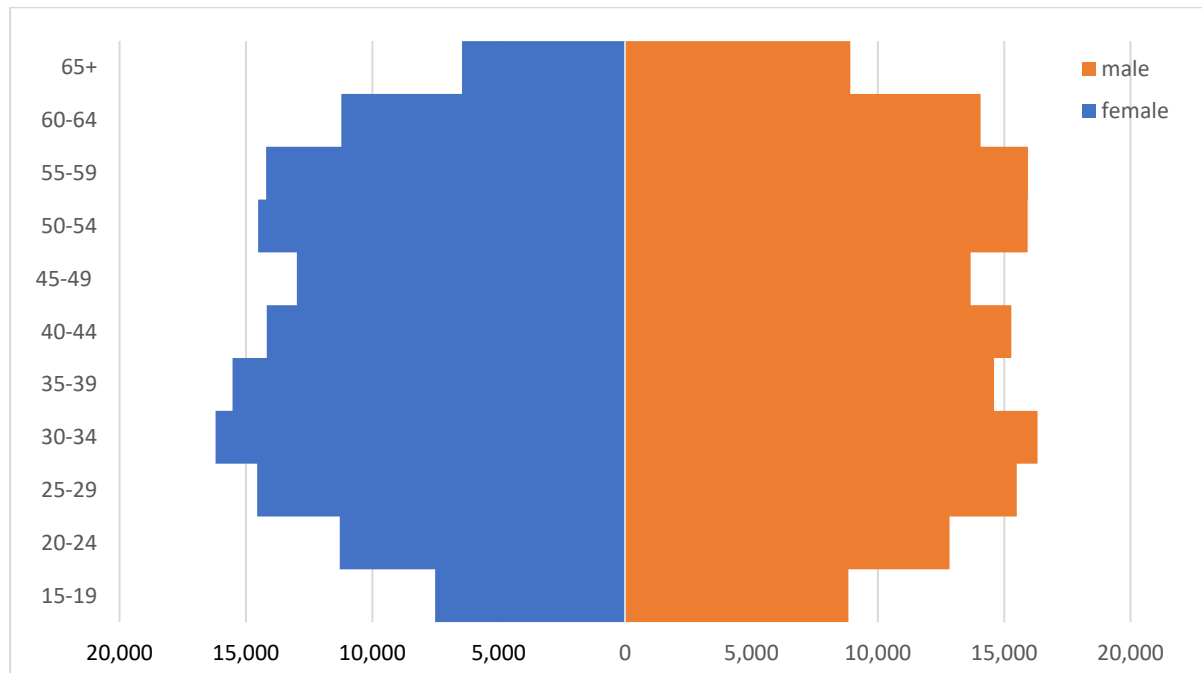
Tasmania's workforce is ageing. Over a third (35.4%) are aged 50 years or older. Over the next 15 years, over 100,000 workers will exit the labour force due to retirement. These workers will likely need to be replaced, creating a pipeline of workforce demand. The products and services these

<sup>11</sup> See also Denny, L, "Economic restructuring and the polarisation of the workforce: a regional perspective", *Australasian Journal of Regional Studies*, 25 (1) pp. 4-25. ISSN 1324-0935 (2019) This paper won the John Dickinson Memorial Award for best paper in the journal in 2019; Denny, L, "Heigh-ho, heigh-ho, it's off to work we go – the Fourth Industrial Revolution and thoughts on the future of work in Australia", *Australian Journal of Labour Economics*, 22 (2) pp. 95-120. ISSN 1328-1143 (2019); Denny, L, "Choosing a career? These jobs won't go out of style", *The Conversation*, The Conversation Media Group Ltd, Australia, 20 February 2019; and Denny, L, "Insight One: The Changing Nature of Work in Tasmania", *Institute Insights*, Institute for the Study of Social Change, Hobart, Tasmania, 1 (2017)

exiting workers will need and want, will also create further business opportunities and associated workforce demand.

The challenge for Tasmania going forward is ensuring that we have an educated and employable supply of new workforce entrants, alongside succession planning, to meet the needs of this replacement workforce demand. This is an exciting opportunity for young Tasmanians who, in the past, have had to leave the state to pursue more meaningful education and employment opportunities than those offered in Tasmania.

Figure 4 Workforce Age Structure, Tasmania, August 2023



Source: ABS Labour Force, Detailed, August 2023

In terms of which occupations in Tasmania will need replacement labour due to an ageing workforce, Table 6 provides a list of the top 20 oldest occupations and the number of workers who will likely exit the labour force over the next 15 years. While some of these ageing occupations reflect the ‘old industrial economy’ and business services sector which may be replaced by technological advancements including automation or artificial intelligence, other occupations may change and be upskilled as a result of technological advancements. Regardless, the function (‘work’) of these workers will still need to be undertaken and a solution to its provision will be required, be that either technology, re-engineered job role or human capital and whether they are routine, repeatable, predictable processes or non-routine functions which require human problem-solving, creativity, adaptability, flexibility, physical dexterity, and interpersonal and communication skills, beyond machine-learning.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See [Choosing a career? These jobs won't go out of style](#), The Conversation, 2019

Table 6 Top 20 Oldest Occupations, ANZSIC 3 digit level, Tasmania

Occupation	% >50 years	No. > 50 years
Cleaners and Laundry Workers	43.5	3,327
Farmers and Farm Managers	53.9	2,775
General Clerks	43.1	2,209
Truck Drivers	50.3	2,019
Accounting Clerks and Bookkeepers	49.0	1,963
Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators	52.0	1,377
Miscellaneous Labourers	45.5	1,335
Office and Practice Managers	48.6	1,309
Business Administration Managers	41.2	1,218
Accommodation and Hospitality Managers	42.2	1,060
Automobile, Bus and Rail Drivers	59.2	1,003
Building and Engineering Technicians	40.2	969
Horticultural Trades Workers	42.2	951
Tertiary Education Teachers	48.1	884
Clerical and Office Support Workers	47.3	836
Education, Health and Welfare Services Managers	47.7	781
Personal Assistants and Secretaries	47.5	683
Real Estate Sales Agents	45.2	609
Miscellaneous Specialist Managers	44.4	598
Insurance Agents and Sales Representatives	41.7	553

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021

NB For analysis purposes, occupations were restricted to those with more than 100 workers and more than 40% of the workers aged 50 years or older.

## Supply of labour

Combined with new labour and skill demand resulting from a restructuring and growing workforce and the replacement labour requirements of an ageing workforce, overall demand for new workforce entrants in Tasmania will be considerable<sup>13</sup>. This situation is encouraging for young Tasmanians but is contingent on career education and education and training services providing the awareness, knowledge and support that young people need to access meaningful work and career pathway opportunities in the state.

The Labour Market Entrants to Exits ratio (LMEE) calculates the ratio of the number of potential workforce entrants aged 15 to 24 years (typical age of school leavers and higher education graduates) to the number of potential workforce exits aged 55 to 64 years (typical retirement age<sup>14</sup>).

A ratio of more than 1 indicates more potential labour market entrants to exits.

A ratio of less than 1 indicates more potential labour market exits than entrants.

Since 2010, the LMEE ratio for Tasmania has been less than 1. That means, more Tasmanian workers have been exiting the labour market than young Tasmanians have been entering it for the past 12 to 13 years. The lack of new workforce entrants also contributes to placing downward pressure on the unemployment rate and workforce supply issues.

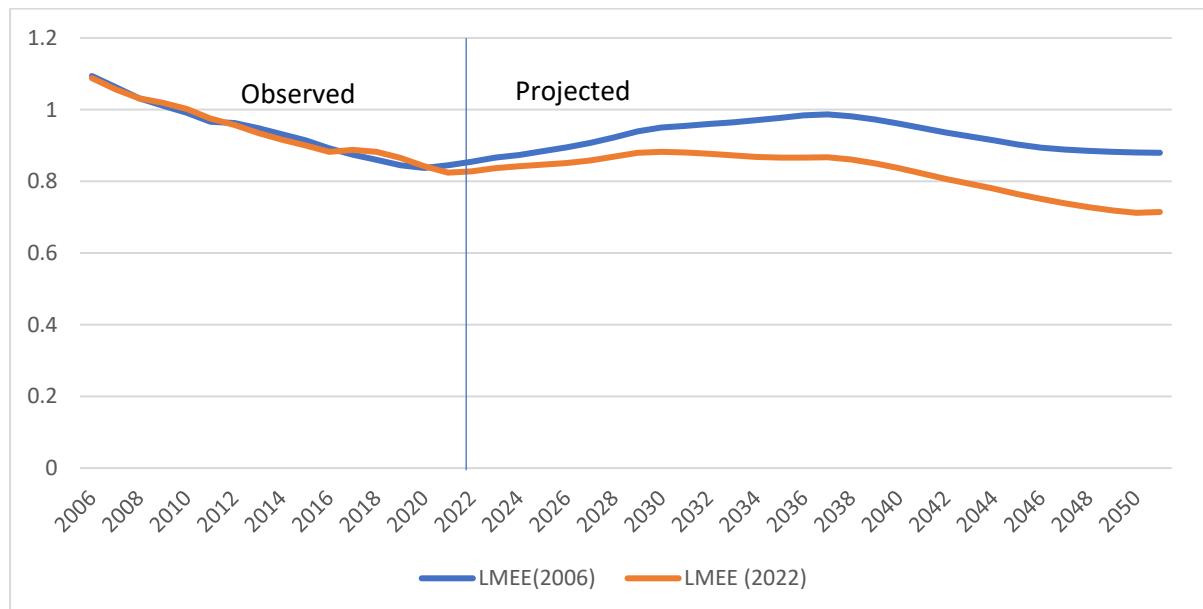
<sup>13</sup> See <https://lisadenny.substack.com/p/explainer-why-tasmania-has-a-workforce>

<sup>14</sup> Tasmanians' expected and actual retirement age is younger than interstate counterparts

Figure 5, below, illustrates Tasmania’s LMEE ratio since 2006, using observed data and two sets of population projections; the 2006 ABS population projections and the 2022 population projections produced by Tom Wilson from Advanced Demographic Modelling using assumptions informed by the population change patterns identified from the 2021 ABS Census of Population and Housing. As is evident, the LMEE has been steadily declining since 2006. While it is projected to improve slightly over the next decade or so, it is not projected to exceed 1, that is, there will *not* be more entrants than exits. While this will continue to create workforce supply issues for Tasmania into the future it also provides opportunities for young Tasmanians to pursue education and employment opportunities in sectors and occupations experiencing increasing demand.

What is also evident from this graph is that the LMEE actually deteriorated between population projections. The 2022 LMEE is projected to be lower than 2006 projections. This shows that while Tasmania’s population has been growing (a government objective) it has been growing in older age groups and non-reproducing cohort (e.g. international students). Combined with a lower total fertility rate for the state, the population growth that Tasmania is experiencing is not going to produce more future workforce entrants going forward.

Figure 5 Labour market entrants to labour market exits (15-24:55-64), observed and projected, Tasmania – 2006 to 2050



Source: ABS National, State and Territory population; ABS population projections (2006); Advanced Demographic Modelling, population projections, Tasmania (2022)

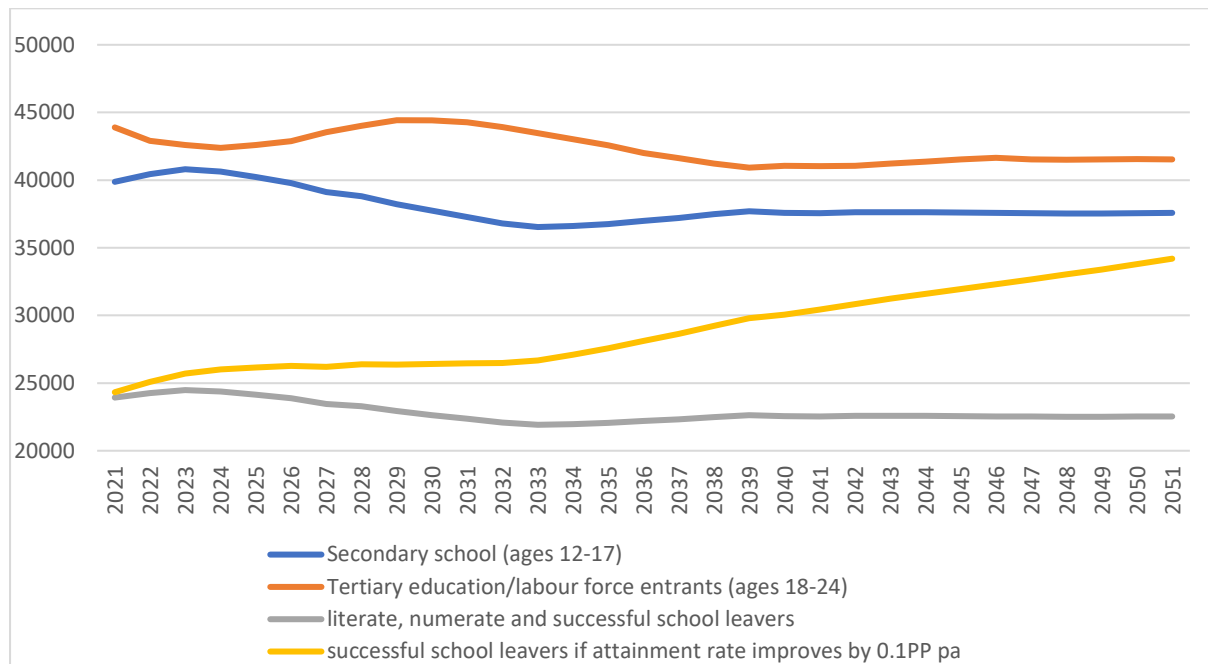
### Threats to meeting demand

A threat to the employability of young Tasmanians and future workforce entrants is that Tasmania has the poorest educational attainment rates of all states. Around 3 in 5 young Tasmanians successfully complete year 12. Around 2 in 5 students in year 9 meet the expected level for writing proficiency, which is an indicator of successful school completion. This writing proficiency has been declining since NAPLAN was first introduced. This means that many young Tasmanian students do not have sufficient literacy levels to successfully complete school and either pursue higher education and/or training or enter the workforce.

Figure 6, below, shows that the number of secondary school students (blue line) and the number of higher education/workforce entrants (orange) is projected to decline from around 2023 and 2029 respectively.

If only 3 in 5 Tasmanian students successfully complete school throughout the projection period (grey line), the number of literate, numerate and workforce ready young Tasmanians will continue to decline. If the Tasmanian Government is able to improve retention and attainment rates through its literacy and education policies by 0.1 percentage point each year over the projection period so that 4 in 5 students successfully complete school by 2050, the number of literate, numerate and workforce ready young Tasmanians will increase. But, the LMEE will still be less than 1.

Figure 6 Potential new workforce entrants - projections by age group, Tasmania, 2022 to 2051



Source: Advanced Demographic Modelling, population projections, Tasmania (2022)

## The critical need for effective career education

Critical to the supply of skilled workers for the future workforce will be ensuring that young Tasmanians are aware of the occupational and sectoral opportunities into the future and that effective career education during their schooling years provides them with a sound understanding of the associated education and training requirements for respective career pathways.

Given Tasmania’s ageing workforce and projected employment growth, effective career education in Tasmania is critical for ensuring that the supply of future workers meets the projected demand.

To plan for Tasmania’s future labour demand and mitigate against future skill shortages, young people need to be aware of, and knowledgeable about, the opportunities available to them so they can make informed choices to pursue education and career pathways for jobs of the future.

Several Australian studies<sup>15</sup> using Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY) and the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) data conclude that young people do not have a full appreciation of the types of jobs available to them, resulting in their career aspirations falling within

<sup>15</sup> NCVER (2018), Generation Z at school, NCVER; Baxter, J. (2017), The career aspirations of young adolescent boys and girls, Chapter 2, LSAC Annual Statistical Report 2016 chapter— August 2017, The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children; Department of Employment, Education and Skills (2020), Career Aspirations and Outcomes, Australian Government

a narrow set of occupations, not all of which are realistic, and which have been narrowing further over time.

A key indicator of a young person's capacity to understand and progress in the labour market is the extent to which their educational and occupational aspirations are aligned. However, these studies have also found that there is considerable confusion relating to educational pathways and their alignment with occupations.

From an international perspective, a joint OECD and the Education and Employers UK charity research report<sup>16</sup>, took the findings of previous studies further by concluding that the skills mismatch observed in the labour market has its roots in primary school. The report recommended that the key to widening their view of the world of work is by giving all children, regardless of gender and social background, the same chance to engage with workers in a variety of fields.

Studies<sup>17</sup> out of the UK and New Zealand conclude that teenagers' career aspirations are shaped at very young ages, between 7 and 11 years. These studies further link labour market skill mismatches to the career aspirations of primary school children and further conclude that there is 'nothing in common' between young people's career aspirations and the reality of the labour market.

The OECD Dream Jobs? Teenagers Career Aspirations and the Future of Work study highlights the extent to which the career aspirations of young people reflect actual and anticipated labour market demand. The report finds that labour market signals are failing to reach young people during the years of making education choices informed by occupational aspirations.

This is also evident in another UK Education and Employers research project<sup>18</sup>; which involved a study of 11,000 17-18 year-olds to map their career aspirations against jobs in different economic sectors. The study found that there was statistically 'nothing in common' with adolescents' career aspirations and projected labour market demand.

All these findings matter because aspirations can predict, and limit, study and career choices later on and thus, the supply of critical workers into the future.

### Career education in Tasmania

In Tasmania, over the past 12 to 15 years the provision of career education in Tasmania has shifted from a program delivered to predominantly secondary school students which was adjunct to education provision within a school community, to one integrated and embedded within the curriculum at a whole-school level for a whole-of-life, student-centred approach from kindergarten to grade 12 aligned to the national career education policies, and then to one that has repositioned career development as vocational learning in secondary education, aligned to industry needs and priority industry sectors identified by the Government<sup>19</sup>.

By 2022, following a plethora of changes to career education provision since the early 2000s, career education, development and transition policy in Tasmania appears to be informed primarily by the

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<sup>16</sup> Envisioning the Future of Education and Jobs: Trends, Data and Drawings.

<sup>17</sup> TEC (2020), Drawing the Future: exploring the careers aspirations of New Zealand children; Nothing in Common: The Career Aspirations of Young Britons Mapped Against Projected Labour Market Demand 2010-2020

<sup>18</sup> Nothing in Common: The Career Aspirations of Young Britons Mapped Against Projected Labour Market Demand 2010-2020

<sup>19</sup> Denny, L (2022), Career education, development and transition to employment : A review of policy positions and investment in Tasmania since 2010, A report for Beacon Foundation

Years 9 to 12 Project and the recommendations from the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council, with a focus on vocational education, training and learning.

Career education and development policy in Tasmania has shifted from being student-centred and proactively embedded in the curriculum as per the national career education strategy launched in the early 2010s, to one aligned to industry priorities which focusses on vocational education and training rather than aligning career aspirations with future labour market demand. Furthermore, there is little direct support or guidance to schools on how to provide high-quality career education, development and transition advice and support to young Tasmanian school students<sup>20</sup>.

### Sources of career information for Tasmanian students

A recent research project<sup>21</sup> undertook to identify the views of young Tasmanians relating to their experience with career education and development in the schooling system and their preparedness to transition successfully from education to employment. Some clear trends were identified. While the understanding of the types of post-school options available to young people is consistent, there has been a shift in the primary sources of information to inform this understanding.

In 2016, most young Tasmanians reported being somewhat well prepared to make decisions about their future study or work plans. However, since 2016 there have been substantial changes to the delivery of career education in the Tasmanian schooling system. In a 2020 survey, for young people who were choosing to get a job immediately following their schooling or take a gap year, two-thirds reported that they were choosing that option as they 'can use it as an opportunity to work out what I really want to do'. This suggests that the career education and development experience during the schooling years has not been successful for all students.

Overall, the findings suggested that traditional perceptions about post-school options and career pathways are being perpetuated within the family, community and school sector. That is, pursuing a higher education (university) pathway is preferable for the stronger academic performers seeking prestige and to expand their knowledge and networks and that vocational pathways are preferable for less academically successful students who seek an employment pathway. This perception about vocational education is consistent with the findings of the 2012 Simmons Review<sup>22</sup> which identified a widely held perception at the time that the status and reputation of VET had a diffused identity and a damaged image with students, parents, industry and employers following a period of ongoing reform and restructure within the vocational education and learning sector.

However, the report also found that there has been a shift away from family and the community as the primary sources of information about post-school options for young people, to online sources of information and the school sector. Young people now predominantly report that their family and friends generally just want them to be happy and are less likely to directly influence their post-school choices.

This shift is consistent with the embedding of career education in the curriculum nationally and in Tasmania through My Education from Kindergarten to Year 12, including online resources such as

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Denny, L (2022), The views of young Tasmanians: career development, support, preparedness and transitioning to the world of work, A report for Beacon Foundation

<sup>22</sup> Simmons, V. (2012). The review of the role and function of Tasmania's public sector Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers. Hobart: Department of Education, Tasmania.



ME Online<sup>23</sup>, myfuture and careerify as well as and the prevalence of technology and social media in everyday life.

The reliance on the internet as a source of information for career education and development could also suggest that young people are not getting the information they need from other sources. Given that career education is now embedded in the curriculum, teachers now play a substantial role in supporting young people to make choices about their future. However, teachers' own knowledge and understanding of available careers and education pathways may be limited<sup>24</sup>.

Teachers are often time poor, and, in what is a packed curriculum already, educators can struggle to stay up to date with changes in the world of work, including jobs that are available within and outside communities, the skills that are needed and valued, and the educational pathways to career pathways that will allow people to transition successfully between the many jobs that today's school students will have in their lifetimes<sup>25</sup>.

The report also found that Tasmanian educators often lacked confidence and up-to-date knowledge on what was available to their students locally with respect to further education, training and career opportunities and that professional development in this area was welcomed<sup>26</sup>. The need for career planning to be better situated within the Australian curriculum and included in ongoing professional development was clearly articulated by educators in both interviews and surveys. However, it was also acknowledged that this professional development took teachers' time and required ongoing support from school leaders. New teachers also spoke of the need for universities to consider career education as part of their training of graduate teachers as many were unable to speak about disciplines in which they were not trained themselves.

Overall, these findings suggest that Tasmanian secondary school students are participating in career education and proactively considering post-school education and career pathways but that this consideration is often undertaken with a short-term lens, with a view to what would meet with their current interests which would make them happy<sup>27</sup>, and is limited to the advice they are receiving within the schooling system and from networks. This advice is further limited by the knowledge of educators and networks of individual students.

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<sup>23</sup> Now decommissioned in Tasmania

<sup>24</sup> Groves O, Austin K, O'Shea S, et al. (2021) 'One student might get one opportunity and then the next student won't get anything like that': Inequities in Australian career education and recommendations for a fairer future. *The Australian Educational Researcher*: 1-18.

<sup>25</sup> Woodroffe, J., Kilpatrick, S., Williams, B., and Jago, M., (2017), Preparing rural and regional students for the future world of work: Developing authentic career focussed curriculum through a collaborative partnership model, *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*, Vol 27 (3), pp 158 – 173.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> See Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania (2021) We call it happy.. CCYP Wellbeing consultations with 0 to 18 year old Tasmanians

## Recommendations

A Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy has the potential to alleviate two critical challenges for Tasmania's economic and social prosperity; projected workforce supply challenges and the persistent net loss of young Tasmanians interstate, contributing to the ageing of the population. The Youth Jobs Strategy can only alleviate these challenges with a comprehensive, strategic supply- and demand- side approach.

Young Tasmanians despair the lack of employment opportunities in Tasmania, particularly meaningful and secure work and this impacts their health and well-being.

While the workforce supply challenge in Tasmania resulting from an ageing demographic threatens the future economic prosperity and productivity of the state, this threat is an opportunity for Tasmanian youth to meet future workforce demands. To meet this demand, young Tasmanians will need to successfully complete their school years as literate, numerate and digitally competent individuals and have participated in comprehensive career education opportunities throughout their schooling so that they are well-prepared for the future of work and participating in further life-long education, training and/or up- or re-skilling.

A Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy ***must be integrated with, and expand upon, other strategic objectives*** set by the Tasmanian Government. In addition to the Child and Youth Well-being Strategy mentioned in the Youth Jobs Strategy Discussion Paper, the 2015 Population Growth Strategy and its refreshed version<sup>28</sup>, as well as the more recent Lifting Literacy Literacy Advisory Panel Priority Recommendations<sup>29</sup>, which were accepted by the Government, and the yet-to-be released Youth Justice Framework all contain initiatives and policy positions pertaining to young Tasmanians.

Following an aspiration for 100% (functional<sup>30</sup>) literacy in Tasmania, in 2021, the Tasmanian Government set a target that all year 7s will start high school able to read above the expected level by no later than 2030. In 2023, the Premier's Literacy Advisory Panel then recommended an expansion of that target so that by 2035, all year 12 students attain the Everyday Adult Standard for Reading, Writing and Communication. In the milestone targets, the recommendations also include an aspiration that all Year 12 students attain the Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) or equivalent qualification but does not set a timeframe.

The Youth Jobs Strategy should ***set a target for increasing school retention rates to 90% by 2040 and the successful TCE attainment by all year 12 students by 2042.***

The 2015 Population Growth Strategy included 52 actions items relating to the themes of job creation and workforce development; migration; and liveability. Actions items relevant to young Tasmanians included:

*Identify and project current and future employment opportunities*

3. Develop a framework for industry workforce planning
4. Develop a model for projecting future employment opportunities

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<sup>28</sup> To be released by the end of 2023 see [here](#)

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0027/297711/Final-Report-to-Government-Literacy-Advisory-Panel.pdf](https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0027/297711/Final-Report-to-Government-Literacy-Advisory-Panel.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Noting that "Functional literacy is not an aspiration. When we settle for functional literacy, we conspire with the soft bigotry of low expectations", Professor Pamela Snow, Towards 100% Literacy, Oral language is the engine and high-quality instruction is the fuel, September 2021

*Invest in real skills for real jobs*

5. Release annual Ministerial Priorities for Training and Workforce Development
7. Work with the University of Tasmania under the Partnership Agreement to align higher education programs with Tasmania's workforce needs

*Retain our best and brightest*

8. Undertake research to better understand education and career pathways for young Tasmanians
9. Enhance kindergarten to Year 12 career and life education through the My Education initiative.
10. Promote and support graduate programs
11. Encourage intergenerational knowledge transfer and succession planning
12. Promote secondment programs in the public and private sectors

It is not known how many of the action items were actually actioned and/or evaluated<sup>31</sup>, however, they remain relevant actionable items to the Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy.

The Tasmanian Government also needs to **develop a strategic industry policy**<sup>32</sup> that contributes to growing a dynamic economy which creates not only entry-level jobs for Tasmanian youth, as suggested by the Youth Jobs Strategy, but career pathway opportunities in sustainable, endogenous industries which maximise the state's comparative advantages and are not dependent on consumption generated by population growth, which is diminishing.

Finally, the Tasmanian Government should **review its career education policy and practices** to ensure that young Tasmanian students are active and engaged in understanding the wide range of career opportunities available to them and the educational pathways required to achieve their aspirations. This wide range of career opportunities needs to reflect labour market demand now and into the future for all jobs and professions, beyond just those in vocational education streams or priority industry sectors which tend to be politicised, particularly given the projected growth in the services sectors and that a majority of future jobs will require a tertiary education qualification.

END.

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<sup>31</sup> The most recent, publicly available, evaluation of the Tasmanian Population Strategy was undertaken in 2018

<sup>32</sup> As opposed to economic growth policies, strategic industry policy refers to proactive efforts to shape an economy's industrial base i.e. strategic restructure and economic transformation