



THE NEXT GENERATION

Tasmanian Seafood
Industry Workforce

Prepared by

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This report was prepared by Lisa Denny alongside the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council to address Objective 1 of the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Workforce Plan 2019:

Preparing the seafood industry for the new work order

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FOREWORD

The Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC) engaged Dr Lisa Denny, Workforce Demographer, to investigate the next generation of seafood workers with the objective of better informing, and preparing, the seafood industry for the opportunities and challenges to come.

The following report draws on international, national and Tasmanian research to explore the values, concerns, aspirations and expectations of young Australians, and where possible, young Tasmanians, about their future; predominantly their attitudes towards work, life and education and training. It also addresses how the aspirations of young Australian match up with the needs and expectations of employers. This report is complementary to a more detailed workforce analysis provided in the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Workforce Profiles.

KEY FINDINGS

- There is a large misalignment with the next generation's aspirations and workforce needs and expectations; and clear opportunities for seafood to manage this 'gap'.
- Labour market signals are failing to reach young people during the years of making education choices. Choices are instead informed by occupational aspirations, from an age as young as primary school. This is in part due to pressure to conform from parents and teachers, particularly in relation to 'known' career paths that are familiar to previous generations.
- Young Tasmanians are unclear about TAFE and VET related pathways due to parental and education provider misinformation/stigma and out-of-date information. Only 11.7% of young Tasmanians planned to go to TAFE and 11.3% planned to get an apprenticeship. These numbers are alarmingly low considering the needs for seafood workers with these skills.
- Misalignment between educational and occupational aspiration exists. This fuels an unrealistic expectation of young people, creating a skewed attitude to work. This is often exacerbated when academic ability does not align with career aspiration.
- Employers are unrealistically expecting a lot from our next generation, notably that they are 'work ready', productive, skilled, confident, and able to work autonomously from day one.
- Employers need to offer young workers a balance between flexibility, fairness, and remuneration.

- Seafood industry employment opportunity and awareness amongst young people is exceptionally poor.

KEY CONCERNS FOR YOUNG TASMANIANS

- Young Tasmanians are deeply anxious about their future; the competition for jobs, insecure work, rising cost of living, lack of good jobs and having to leave the state for work.
- This is creating significant mental health issues, notably anxiety.
- Young Tasmanians want meaningful work that they are passionate about and are not prepared to settle for anything other than their desired job. Young Tasmanians are more fearful than other young Australians about their ability to secure meaningful work.
- Young Tasmanians aspire to a successful, well paid job.
- There is a clear lack of understanding of the types of jobs that will be available in the future and what their skill requirements may be.
- Young Tasmanians have a strong sense of community and connection to family and friends, particularly those living in regional areas
- There is a lack of confidence in achieving their educational and work aspirations.
- Young Tasmanians do not feel prepared for the future of work
- Young Tasmanian's have a high value of the environment and are concerned for its future more so than other young Australians.

TASMANIAN SEAFOOD INDUSTRY COUNCIL ACTIONS

Based on the Next Generation Report and the recommendations provided by Dr Denny, the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council will aim to:

- 1) Develop a strategy whereby, from a young age, young Tasmanians are inspired to be the next generation of seafood industry workers. The strategy will appeal to young people's passions, their interests, and their concerns. The strategy will aim to increase engagement with young Tasmanians to help shape realistic career aspirations about real jobs and support them to achieve their career aspirations.
- 2) Better understand the career aspirations of young Tasmanians, particularly in regional areas where seafood industry work opportunities exist.
- 3) Undertake research to better understand and map the careers, clusters, and educational pathways available to achieve a career in the seafood industry.

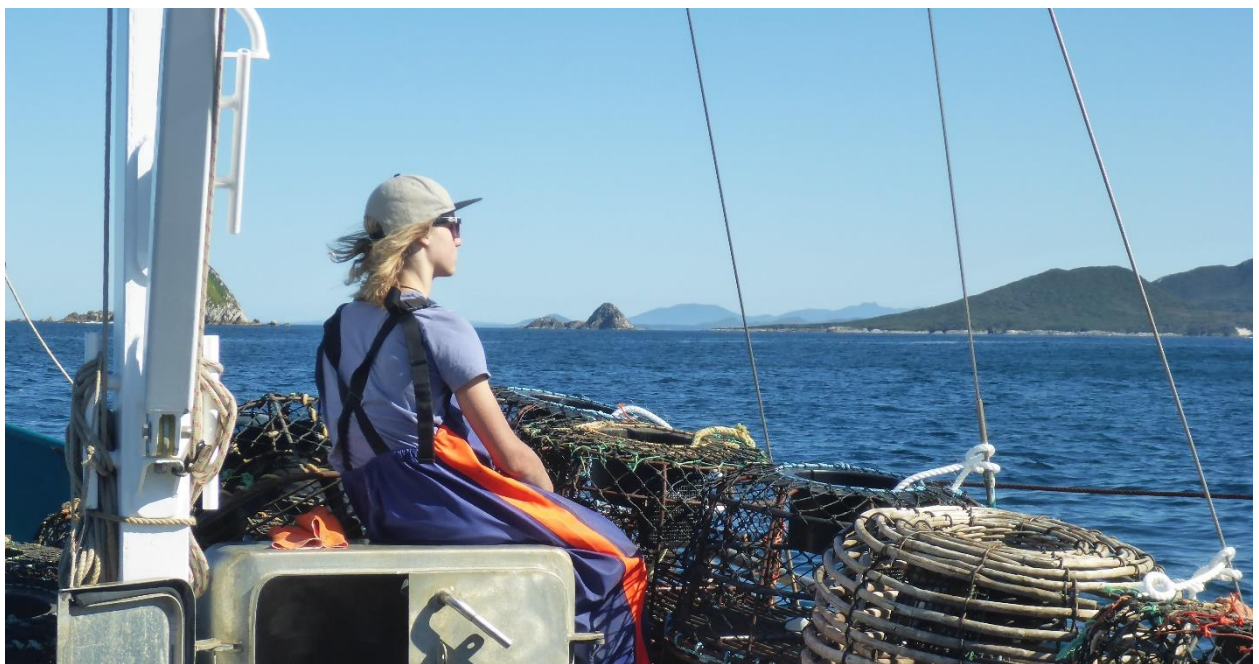
- 4) Work with the Department of Education, the University of Tasmania and vocational education and training providers (e.g. Seafood Marine Training and TasTAFE) to develop and deliver contemporary content.
- 5) Develop a segmentation, targeting and positioning marketing strategy for the seafood industry workforce advertising that:
 - a. Considers the environmental values of young people
 - b. Appeals to young women with travel and activism ideals
 - c. Highlights the ability to align career aspirations and lifestyle desires for young males
 - d. Connects the opportunity to live regionally (stay local) and have the desired lifestyle
 - e. Encourages men to consider vocational pathways
- 6) Work out constructive, practical, and perhaps creative, fair ways to alleviate the concerns of young Tasmanians, particularly in relation to job security, financial security and the opportunity for meaningful career progression.
- 7) Continue to provide mental health support to seafood workers through the dedicated 'Stay Afloat' mental health outreach officer in Rural Alive and Well Tasmania. Recognising that employers need to prepare for future mental health challenges and access to mental health support for staff, particularly in regional areas.



Julian Harrington,

Chief Executive

Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council



INTRODUCTION

Through its thorough workforce development program and profiling over the last five years, the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council (TSIC) has identified that not only are the workforces of sub-sectors within the seafood industry evolving over time in response to changing regulatory and legislative frameworks, consumer choice, business practices, and education and training provision as well as changing socio-demographic profiles, but that the potential future workforce is also changing. Not only is the younger generation and thus the future workforce more highly educated and equipped with a diverse skillset, it also has a different mindset and life and career aspirations compared with previous generations of workers.

While much of the public discourse relating to the future of work and young Australians focusses on the needs of the employers in terms of workforce ready skills, as per the recent publication from the Business Council of Australia, *The Modern Worker: A guide to what employers want*¹, the voice of young Australians is often absent from these debates, particularly in relation to education, training and work². While there is a plethora of reports and policy documents that exist which detail the requirements of the future workforce from an employer's perspective, there is also a considerable evidence of the needs, desires, concerns and values of young Australians and their aspirations for work and life. However, there appears little evidence of effort to align these so that both employers and the future workforce needs are better able to be met. In fact, the predictions of the future of work; the type and how people engage in work, is not necessarily what the future generation of workers want. This has implications for employers in attracting and retaining workers. And for the future workforce, this misalignment is causing deep anxiety. This anxiety is being exacerbated by a further misalignment between educational and occupational aspirations, underpinned by a lack of understanding of the labour market including the availability of the type of current and future jobs³.

In planning for its future workforce, as the industry grows and evolves, the Tasmanian Seafood Industry Council recognises that it needs to shift its mindset to better understand the needs of the next generation of workers so that they can attract, train, support and retain a productive, reliable and committed workforce.

The opportunity, and challenge, for the seafood industry to attract a future workforce in a competitive Tasmanian labour market is to better understand the needs and expectations of the new generation of seafood workers; their strengths, motivations, skill requirements and career aspirations and then respond to those needs so that both the industry and future workforce can benefit over the longer term. The seafood industry must also balance the new workforce needs with

¹ BCA (2020), *The Modern Worker: A Guide to What Employers Want*, Business Council of Australia

² The Foundation for Young Australians (2018), *The New Work Reality, The New Work Order Series*

³ OECD and WorldSkills (2019), *Youth Voice for the Future of Work*, OECD

its own current challenges such as regionality, isolation, pay and labour shortages. On top of this is the current relatively unknown impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This report provides an overview of the values, concerns, aspirations and expectations of young Australians, and where possible, young Tasmanians, about their future and their attitudes towards work, life and education and training. This report draws on international, national, and Tasmanian research presented in 28 reports (see the Reference List) to synthesise these needs from the perspective of the seafood industry, including the challenges and opportunities to attract a future workforce.



KEY FINDINGS ABOUT YOUNG TASMANIANS

This review found that, like other young Australians, young Tasmanians;

- have a strong sense of community and connection to family and friends, particularly those living in regional areas
- aspire to work in a job and career they are passionate about
- are deeply anxious about their future; the competition for jobs, insecure work, rising cost of living, lack of good jobs and having to leave the state for work
- value financial security and having a job
- want to be given a fair go
- lack confidence in achieving their educational and work aspirations
- are more fearful than other young Australians about their ability to secure meaningful work
- don't feel prepared for the future of work
- are concerned about their own mental health and stress
- value the environment and are concerned for its future more so than other young Australians

Given these findings, there is a real need to better understand, shape, and engage with, the career aspirations of young Tasmanians. Greater understanding will enable both their career aspirations to be supported and/or shaped and the fears of young Tasmanians about work to be alleviated, provided these aspirations can also be informed by a greater understanding of the future of work in the seafood industry and the associated education and career pathways available.

Key areas of focus are:

- 1) Increase engagement with young Tasmanians to help shape their career aspirations in the seafood industry
- 2) Better understand the career aspirations of young Tasmanians
- 3) Support young Tasmanians achieve their career aspirations in the seafood industry.

OVERVIEW OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF WORKERS

Young Australians aspire to lead happy and satisfying lives. While young Australians acknowledge the everyday stresses of life and that many factors impact on happiness and vary from person to person, they express simple desires, and believe that an ideal world for them would be free of burden and stress, provide financial security and to be surrounded by, and connected with, the family and friends and community they value⁴.

Despite these simple, utopian aspirations, young Australians are also deeply anxious about their future. Young Australians are also passionate global citizens, knowledgeable and aware, and hold very firm views relating to human rights, social justice and the environment.

They fear the rising cost of living, the competition to secure a job, the pressure and expectations on them to perform and conform, environmental degradation and their own mental health. In particular, they fear being stuck in a job they are not interested in or passionate about but have to do, just to pay the bills. While some are hopeful, some fear the window of opportunity is limited. They want to be given a fair chance and a fair go in work.

VALUES

Young Australians are full of ambition, passion and knowledge with a desire to lead a happy life. According to young Australians, their happiness is strongly connected to their community, who and what they surround themselves with and how they interact and connect with others⁵. They value education and work, the environment, the Australian lifestyle and the opportunities attached to it, and possess great hope for the future.

Young Australians have a simple wish list to achieve happiness; to be successful – both in life and their chosen career, to be financially comfortable and to have a job they are passionate about, not just a job to pay the bills.

To young Australians, maintaining a sustainable future is very important to them and they are very conscious of the impact of human activity on the environment. They are also very aware of social injustices both in Australia and globally and aspire to make a positive contribution to change.

There is also a strong sense of home, family and community in their decision-making and aspirations for the future of young Australians, particularly for those living in regional locations. For young men, their decision-making centres around work and their lifestyle, whereas for young

⁴ The Reach Foundation (2017), Hopes and Dreams of Young Australians Report

⁵ ibid

women, particularly before starting a family, decision-making is centred on life aspirations; travel, activism and life experiences⁶.

In the 2019 Mission Australia Survey report⁷ the three most highly valued aspects of life nationally were friendships (other than family), family relationships and school or study satisfaction (82.5%, 81.5% and 69.0% respectively).

YOUNG TASMANIANS VALUES

Young Tasmanians share similar values to other Australian youths. The top three values in the Mission Australian survey were also echoed by young Tasmanians; friendships, family relationships and school or study satisfaction. Financial security (56.8% for young women and 47.6% for young men) and getting a job (49.3% for young women and 37.9% for young men) also rated very highly for young Tasmanians.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Mental health is a significant issue for young people in Australia today. Young people are struggling financially and finding it difficult to secure employment. This results in feelings of insecurity, loneliness, disappointment and depression. These findings are repeated across a range of recent reports relating to young Australians. While the reports do not specify what is causing mental health concerns for young Australians they imply they are likely to be caused by the cumulative effect of a range of stresses reported by young Australians today; anxiety about their ability to find meaningful work, financial insecurity, equity and discrimination, lack of affordable housing, rising cost of living, the environment and climate change and the sustainability of their lifestyle.

The 2019 Mission Australia Youth Survey reports that for the third year running, mental health is the number one issue for young Australians (36.2%), followed by the environment (34.2%) and equity and discrimination (24.8%). The top four reported personal concerns included issues also related to mental health (stress, school and study, mental health and body image) and mental health was also one of the top three barriers identified by young people to achieving their post-school goals.

In the 2019 UN Youth Australia report⁸ the top three issues for young Australians were education, mental health and the environment whereas the REACH Report⁹ found that the rising cost of living was the greatest issue for young Australians and put all other concerns into perspective. The rising cost of living has a direct impact on the life outcomes of young people which they are acutely aware of. The REACH Report notes that things that were once easier to achieve are now much harder for

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ Mission Australia (2020), Youth Survey Report 2019, Mission Australia

⁸ El-Ansary, K., and Mezo, N. (2020), Australian Youth Representative Consultation Report 2019, UN Youth Australia

⁹ The Reach Foundation (2017), Hopes and Dreams of Young Australians Report

young people, suggesting that young Australians will experience and achieve things that their parents did much later in life, such as moving out of the family home and home ownership themselves. At the same time, young Australians recognise that this is due to the increased time they spend in education and time to secure employment as well as their own life choices to travel and explore.

Young people's concern for the environment has significantly increased from previous years and has tripled since the 2018 Mission Australia Survey. This includes concerns around climate change and other environmental issues. The REACH report also found that environmental factors are high on the agenda of importance and anxieties for most young Australians. These concerns influence the decisions that young people make. To them, maintaining a sustainable future and limiting the impact of human activity on the environment is very important. In numerous reports, Young Australians share ongoing concerns regarding global warming, climate change and sustainability and fear that their current lifestyle is no longer sustainable.

Some young Australians also report they are interested in pursuing careers that will positively impact the environment.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS FOR YOUNG TASMANIANS

Like all young Australians, young Tasmanians also feel anxious for the future and raise concerns about mental health. In terms of personal concerns, the top three issues for young Tasmanians in the 2019 Mission Australia Survey were related to mental health; coping with stress, mental health and school or study problems.

The Tasmanian Commissioner for Children and Young People's 2019 Children and Young People Report¹⁰ also identifies similar areas of importance for young Tasmanians; education and opportunities, equity and diversity, climate change and the environment, bullying and mental health and participation and recognition of children and young people. The Commissioner for Children and Young People Ambassadors reported being concerned about climate change and the natural environment as well as being passionate about improving awareness and finding solutions at a community and global level to collectively address the issues.

In all research reports reviewed, the environment features strongly as a key issue for young Tasmanians, more so than for young Australians living in other states and territories. In the UN Youth Australian report, young people in Tasmania were more likely to feel passionate about the environment and climate change than their peers in other states and territories. In the Mission Australian survey, the environment was the top concern for young Tasmanians with over four in ten rating the environment as the most important issue in Australia today. This concern was followed by

¹⁰ Commissioner for Children and Young People (2019), Children and Young People Report, Tasmania

mental health and equity and discrimination. Since 2018, the proportion of those young Tasmanians reporting the environment as a key national issue has nearly tripled from 15.3% to 40.4%.

ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION

Education is an issue that intersects with many other areas of interest and concern for young Australians. The 2019 UN Youth Australia report found that education was the most important issue for young Australians. Their concerns and issues with regard to education have a range of perspectives; from pressures to achieve, the quality and relevance of the curriculum, the ability to secure meaningful work, disparities in resourcing and equity of access, the shortage of quality educators, bullying and other barriers to learning.

According to the REACH report, there is apprehension among most young Australians as they go through the education system as they feel both a pressure to perform and to conform from parents and teachers, particularly in relation to career paths. They also pressure themselves to perform well. Young Australians report feeling a higher expectation on them to pursue higher education than in the past, and that they pressure extends to workplace expectations.

Despite these concerns, other reports indicate that most school aged students plan to undertake further study after leaving school. Most plan go to university was (64.8%), while many also planned to get a job (33.6%) or had travel/gap year plans (28.0%) while 11.7% planned to go to TAFE or college and 11.3% planned to get an apprenticeship.

However, educational aspirations also differ according to several factors such as socio-economic background and gender. Even so, a study of Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY) data of young Australians aged 24 in 2018 revealed that the majority of young Australians had achieved their post-school educational aspirations¹¹.

While a greater proportion of females indicated that they planned to go to university after school (72.4% compared with 55.0% of males), more than four times the proportion of males indicated that they intended to get an apprenticeship (20.3% compared with 4.6% of females).

Young people from non-metropolitan areas are less likely to aspire to higher education and more likely to aspire to vocational education and training. However, there were noticeable differences in aspirations and attainment for young people from non-metropolitan areas, compared to those from cities. For those young people living in regional areas, barriers to achieving their educational aspirations included financial difficulty (32%), location (21%) and family responsibilities (16%).

¹¹ NCVER (2019), Life at 24: then and now

In terms of readiness for the future of work, young people were far less positive when asked about the usefulness of school. Approximately 56% of young people reported they know what they want to do for work in the future, however they do not feel supported by their education system, and 44% fear that their skills or knowledge won't be in demand in the future¹². For young Australians in an OECD study less than one in ten (9%) Australians believed that school had prepared them for adult working life; the net positive feeling towards the support from school. Australia's result was the 7th lowest of 19 countries compared with the average of 26%¹³.

A NSW study of vocational education and training¹⁴ found that many students were unclear about TAFE or conveyed outdated rather than contemporary understanding of vocational education. The study found that there was more interest in VET-related occupations than in VET as an educational pathway, indicating a clear misalignment between educational and occupational aspirations, along with confusion about what TAFE offers and the pathway required to a VET-related occupation.

Primary and junior secondary students seem to have formed negative perceptions of TAFE (technical and further education), and their views of TAFE do not reflect contemporary realities. School students, even from a young age, and with limited understanding, form and retain an impression that university is preferable to VET as a future study aspiration.

Only a small number of students expressed interest in vocational education. Many students were uncertain of the pathway to a VET-related occupation and/or held views of VET as only for those unable to make it to university. In addition, a substantial number of students who showed some interest in VET became disengaged from the idea of a vocational education as they moved through school.

YOUNG TASMANIANS ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION

Education was also an issue that young Tasmanians felt passionate about more frequently than their counterparts in other states and territories.

For young Tasmanians, the 2019 Mission Australia survey found that around three in five were satisfied with their studies and 95.4% intended to complete year 12, however, less than half (47.5%) indicated they were confident they would achieve their work or study goals. Following school, around six in ten intended to go to University, a third intended to get a job, three in ten were going to have a gap year, one in eight aimed to get an apprenticeship and one in ten intended to go to TAFE or the Australian Defence Force.

¹² Chambers, N. (2019) Young people don't feel ready for the future of work, OECD Forum

¹³ OECD and WorldSkills (2019), Youth Voice for the Future of Work, OECD

¹⁴ Gore, J., Ellis, H., Fray, L., Smith, M., Lloyd, A., Berrigan, C., Lyell, A., Weaver, N., and Holmes, K. (2017) Choosing VET - investigating the VET aspirations of school students, NCVET

ATTITUDES TO WORK

Young Australians are starting on the back foot when it comes to employment, despite their desire to work. A number of studies report that young Australians are deeply anxious about their ability to find meaningful employment. Each report consistently finds that young Australians lack the confidence to achieve their work aspirations. These anxieties are linked to the competition for jobs, inadequate education and training and a lack of skills and experience. They want to be given a fair chance and a fair go when seeking employment¹⁵. At the same time, young people fear working in a job they are not interested in or passionate about. Young Australians report that they feel they only have one chance to end up in a career they want, they feel their opportunities are limited, they feel they are not progressing and they are struggling to navigate a career path in a rapidly changing world for work. At the same time, they don't want to settle for anything less than their desired job.

An OECD report¹⁶ explores what young people think about their futures as working adult. The study of 19 of the G20 nations found that the only 39% of young Australians were confident they would be able to find a job they really wanted to do. Compared with a 50% average, Australia ranked 14th out of 19 in terms of Net Positive Job Confidence (NPJC)¹⁷.

A Foundation for Young Australians report¹⁸, *The New Work Reality*, reported that young Australians lack confidence about their working futures. Among 18 to 24-year-olds looking for work, 28% reported anxiety in the previous year and more than 40% said they were affected by stress. The report stated that the new work reality is that full-time work is increasingly precarious and difficult to attain and that it is becoming increasingly out of reach for young people today. This causes anxiety for our next generation of workers. The report estimates that it takes on average 2.6 years to transition from leaving education to full-time work (excluding time taken for a 'gap' year/s) and that 18% of young people are currently working in multiple jobs simultaneously to reach full-time working hours. Young people identified four main barriers to gaining full time work; not enough work experience, lack of appropriate education (that is, technical skills), lack of career management skills and that there are just not enough jobs available, as reported by 7 in 10 young Australians.

According to the 2019 Mission Australia Youth Survey, less than half (47.0%) of young Australians were confident in their ability to achieve their work and study goals, despite 95.8% reporting that they intended to complete year 12. Almost half (48.9%) of the respondents to the survey felt there were barriers to achieving their post-school aspirations, young women more so than young men (54.5% and 40.5% respectively). Nationally, the top three barriers young people considered to be

¹⁵ The Reach Foundation (2017), *Hopes and Dreams of Young Australians Report*

¹⁶ *Youth Voice for the Future of Work*, OECD

¹⁷ the sum of those who agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident they would be able to find the job they really wanted to do, minus those who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

¹⁸ *The Foundation for Young Australians (2018), The New Work Reality, The New Work Order Series*

impacting their goals after finishing school were academic ability, mental health and financial difficulty (20.2%, 16.6% and 12.4% respectively).

A Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth (LSAY) report compared the work outcomes for young Australians aged 23 in 2017 to 2009 and found that young people are struggling more than ever to find full time employment in a job that uses their education and skills¹⁹. Young people reported that a lack of work experience (75%), a lack of jobs (72%) and lack of the right education and/or training (50%) as the key barriers to finding suitable employment. They also reported a lack of confidence and believed their age was also a barrier to employment. Young people's satisfaction with life had deteriorated since they were 16 years of age and less than half were satisfied with the state of the economy and how the country is run. Less than half reported being able to manage their finances easily and reported a rising concern for personal debt.

A subsequent LSAY report²⁰ compared the life of young Australians aged 24 to those ten years prior and found significantly higher rates of young people were uncertain whether the job they had was the one they would like as a career. Around half (53%) the 24-year old's in 2018 believed the job they had they would like as a career, less than the 65% in 2008. Despite a greater proportion of 24-year old's in 2018 being more qualified than those in 2008, less were employed full time (64% compared with 71%), more were employed part time (25% compared with 18%) and more were under-employed (10% compared with 6%) or under-utilised (14% compared with 9%).

Almost 2 in 5 (36%) of 24-year old's reported a shortage of money to meet basic needs.

The 2019 UN Youth Australia report identified that young Australians are deeply anxious about their ability to access employment, particularly for those in regional, rural or remote locations who feel increasingly neglected and disconnected from the rest of the country. The issues of employment, the future of work and education were raised most frequently among the 20 to 25 year old's who took part in the study.

In addition to a lack of confidence, young people don't feel ready for the future of work. While young people report being aware of the challenges of the changing nature of work, just over half feel optimistic that new jobs will be created through technological advancements. At the same time, many (almost half) of young people fear that they won't have access to permanent, full-time jobs due to digitalisation²¹.

While young Australians are keen to follow the dream or passion and not be confined to a workplace they are not passionate about, young Australians are acutely aware of the pressures of expectation and feel conflict between expectations and the career path that they want to pursue.

¹⁹ NCVET (2018), Life at 23: then and now

²⁰ NCVET (2019), Life at 24: then and now

²¹ Chambers, N (2019), Young people don't feel ready for the future of work, OECD forum

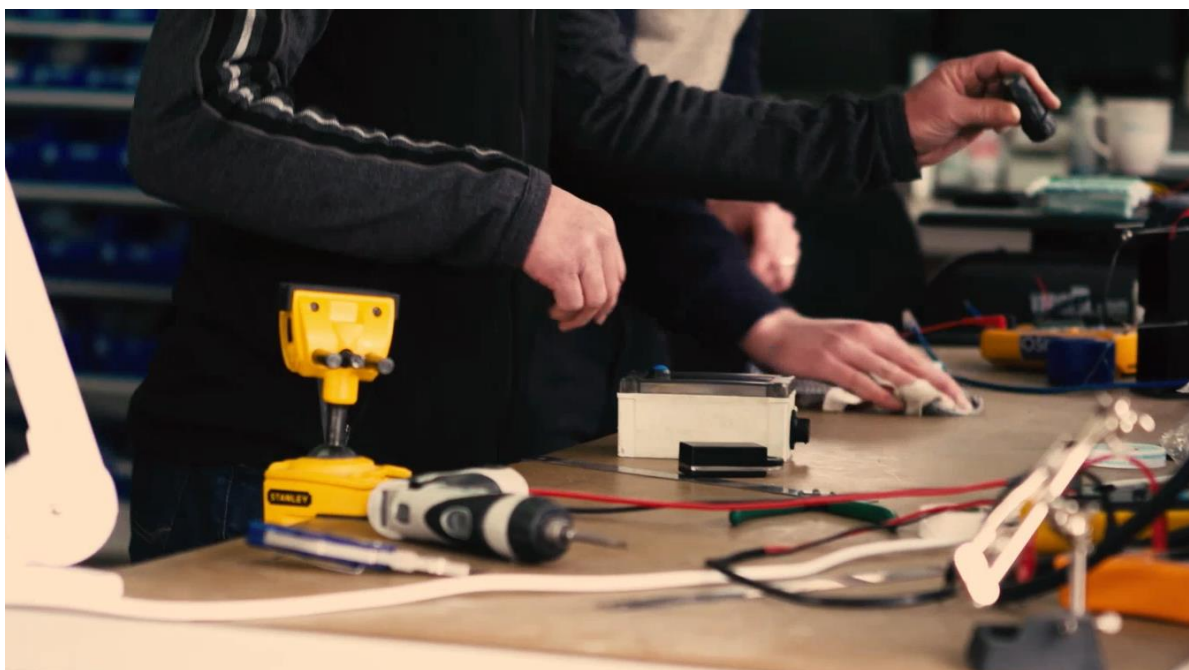
YOUNG TASMANIANS ATTITUDES TO WORK

Young Tasmanians share similar attitudes to work as other young Australians. Less than half (46.6%) the young Tasmanian respondents to the Mission Australia Survey indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals (52.2% of young men and 40.9% of young women).

Close to half (47.5%) of young Tasmanians indicated that they felt there were barriers that would impact upon their ability achieve their study/work goals, with a much greater proportion of females (55.5%) than males (40.5%) reporting the presence of barriers.

Academic ability, mental health and financial difficulty were the top barriers that young Tasmanians believed to be impacting upon the achievement of their study/work goals after school (16.3%, 15.9% and 11.1% respectively). Around one in ten young Tasmanians reported that where they live (10.0%), a lack of jobs (8.8%) and job requirements (8.8%) are also barriers impacting upon the achievement of their study/work goals.

These concerns were also echoed in the 2019 UN Youth Australia report which found that young Tasmanians were the most likely to express fears of not finding employment compared with those from other states and territories. Young Tasmanians expressed concern about a lack of well-paying full-time jobs that meant people had to leave the state for employment. Tasmanians also expressed concerns about the increasing casualisation of the workforce as well as a lack of access to public transport impacting on their ability to secure employment.



CAREER ASPIRATIONS

Dream jobs and aspirations for young Australians vary, but the majority want a successful, well paid job they enjoy that enables them to live comfortably. Many even dream of business ownership.

A young person's career aspirations is influenced by many factors, not just their participation in education and training and academic ability. A young person's dreams and aspirations are primarily influenced by the intersect of their complex lives; their personal background and their families, their gender and their socio-economic status as well as their knowledge of the labour market and the world of work. Gender stereotypes pervade student ideas about their futures, particularly with regard to career choice. While virtually every child is asked, 'What do you want to be when you grow up?', only 6% of adults end up in the careers they wanted when they were younger.

While a key source of motivation for young people to pursue higher education is to realise their dreams and aspirations for work and life, it is clear from a number of studies, that there is a serious misalignment between the understanding of the level and type of education required for their occupational goal²². Not only is there a lack of understanding of the match between the educational requirements for particular jobs, but there is a lack of understanding of the types of jobs which will be available into the future.

Young people's potential to achieve their dreams and aspirations may be compromised by confusion about how education and qualifications are related to jobs and careers. A key indicator of young people's capacity to understand and progress in the labour market is the extent to which their educational and occupational aspirations are aligned. That is, whether the educational expectation of a young person while in school is appropriate to their occupational expectation.

An OECD study of PISA data shows that across OECD countries, one young person in five is negatively misaligned. That is to say, the level of education and qualification to which they aspire is lower than that typically required of their occupational goal.

While the world of work has undergone major changes since the first PISA survey was carried out in 2000, the results of the study show that the career expectations of young people have changed little over the same period. In fact, career aspirations have become more concentrated in fewer occupations. In the 2018 PISA survey, 47% of 15-year-old boys and 53% of 15-year-old girls from 41 countries and economies (those that also took part in PISA 2000) said they expect to work in one of just 10 jobs by the age of 30 – an increase of 8 percentage points for boys and 4 percentage points for girls since the start of the century. For young Australians, 41% of Australian students expect to work in one of the top 10 occupations by the age of 30 (52% of girls/42% of boys).

²² Dream Jobs? Teenagers Career Aspirations and the Future of Work, OECD

Table 1: Top 10 Expected Occupations of 15-year-olds at age 30, OECD nations

	Girls	Boys
1	Doctor	Engineer
2	Teacher	Business Manager
3	Business Manager	Doctor
4	Lawyer	ICT Professional
5	Nurse or Midwife	Sportsperson
6	Psychologist	Teacher
7	Designer	Police Officer
8	Veterinarian	Motor Vehicle Mechanic
9	Police Officer	Lawyer
10	Architect	Architect

Source: OECD, Dream Jobs? Teenagers Career Aspirations and the Future of Work

The study highlights the extent to which the career aspirations of young people reflect actual and anticipated labour market demand. In fact, labour market signals are failing to reach young people during the years of making education choices informed by occupational aspirations. The study essentially found that it is jobs with origins in the 20th century or earlier that are most attractive to young people rather than jobs of the future and raises the questions about whether young people are aware of the availability of both current and future jobs.

The OECD report concludes; ‘that increasingly the expectations of young people may be out of date and unrealistic. Over the period of the greatest accumulation of human capital during a lifetime, the data indicate that many young people are intent on pursuing jobs that they have little chance of securing’.

These career aspirations are also reflected in an Australian study²³ using Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth data. The top three occupations for young women were registered nurse, solicitor and primary school teacher, while for young men the top three occupations were engineering professional, policeman and electrician. While half intended to go on to university following their schooling, many perceived barriers to achieve their ambitions. A third believed their own motivation was a barrier while a quarter stated financial difficulties would prevent further study²⁴.

Another Australian study using data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)²⁵, draws similar conclusions; that young adolescents do not have a full appreciation of the types of jobs available to them, resulting in their career aspirations falling within a narrow set of occupations, not all of which are realistic. The desired occupations were quite varied and gendered, and did not reflect the distribution of the labour market at the time of the study. The majority stated a desired occupation classified as a professional or manager (60% compared with 35% in the actual labour market). A smaller proportion overall said they desired to work in trades or technical jobs (16%

²³ NCVET (2018), Generation Z at school, NCVET

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ 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

compared with 15% in the labour market), and fewer again said they desired to work in service or miscellaneous jobs (14% compared with 49% of the actual labour market), such as sales, administration or hospitality. Another 11% of those with a desired occupation named a job in sports or performance arts/production, considerably higher than the 1.3% in the actual labour market.

As found in other studies, some young people appear to have insufficient information about the labour market and about the pathways they need to take in order to achieve their career aspirations. The report concludes that these aspirations may have been shaped at much earlier ages, perhaps influenced by children's interests and abilities as well as their perceptions of available jobs as viewed through gender norms, parents' occupations or the local area labour market.

Another report using LSAY data²⁶ found that and that nearly two thirds of all young people wanted to work in the most highly skilled occupation groups, Managers and Professionals; more specifically, education, health or specialist professionals but that less than half of all young people were working in their aspired to occupation by age 25 (48%). The report also found that careers aspirations impacted on the decision about where young people choose to live and work and influences young people's decision to move away from regional locations to metropolitan areas where more professional occupations are likely to be available. Those young people who aspired to work in occupations in the technicians and trade workers occupational grouping were more likely to live in regional areas and stay in regional areas, however they were not as likely to meet their career aspirations as those who moved to metropolitan areas to work in a technical or trade related job.

From an international perspective, a joint OECD and the Education and Employers UK charity research report²⁷, 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.

In the UK study, over half (59%) of the 7 to 11 year-olds who participated in the Drawing the Future survey said that they had heard about their preferred job from parents/guardians or other family members. Of those who didn't know someone who did the job, 56% heard about it via TV/film and social media. Less than 1% heard about it from someone who did the job and had visited their school.

A similar study²⁸ of children in New Zealand also found that that the career aspirations of young people across the country are set from a young age and with a large percentage of children aspiring to the similar types of jobs. In New Zealand, more than half the drawings of 7 to 11 year old's were of just nine jobs; sportsperson – way ahead at almost 17 percent – vet, police officer,

²⁶ Department of Employment, Education and Skills (2020), career Aspirations and Outcomes, Australian Government

²⁷ Envisioning the Future of Education and Jobs: Trends, Data and Drawings.

²⁸ TEC (2020), Drawing the Future: exploring the careers aspirations of New Zealand children

teacher, social media influencer, artist, doctor, military or firefighter, and farmer with marked differences between boys and girls.

The findings from both New Zealand and the UK show that there is a disconnect between the career aspirations of young children, 7 to 11 years of age, and the current jobs available, let alone the future of work. These findings matter because aspirations can predict, and limit, study and career choices later on.

This is also evident in another UK Education and Employers research project²⁹; 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. It also found that these young people's aspirations reflected a narrow view of the world of work.

²⁹ Nothing in Common: The Career Aspirations of Young Britons Mapped Against Projected Labour Market Demand 2010-2020

WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

The way in which people engage with work has been changing alongside the structural shifts within the economy changing the type of jobs available in the labour market. Historical linear career trajectories have dissipated and, according to the Foundations for Young Australians, The New Works Smarts report³⁰, young people will now experience a 'portfolio career' over their lifetimes and will need to be prepared for a journey of lifelong learning. This will require young people to change their understanding of work, and rethink the skills and attributes they will need into the future. This will include work involving paid employment, unpaid employment (internships or volunteering), self-employment and/or business ownership.

Research relating to the requirements of the future workforce from an employer's perspective suggests that new workforce must be 'work-ready'³¹; productive, skilled, confident and able to work autonomously from very early in their career. They need to be critical thinkers and problem solvers, as well as have strong communication skills to interact with people built on the sound foundations of functional literacy, numeracy and digital capabilities. They will have a strong work ethic and strive for continuous improvement. They will also need to be flexible, resilient and adaptable. They will need to be more autonomous and self-directed, working on tasks independently with less supervision and support from managers or supervisors. They will need to manage their own time more, make more decisions about priority and importance of tasks and be more personally motivated and driven.

These workplace expectations from an employer's perspective are not necessarily inconsistent with the desires of young Australians and their engagement with work. However, young workers report an imbalance between flexibility and fairness³². The value being able to contribute to a cause or area of interest they are passionate about. They despair being stuck in a job where they are unable to focus their energies on their passion. They feel they are being sculpted by the education and work systems that prevents them using their skills, knowledge and passion.

Mostly, young people aspire to a job that is, first, of interest to them and provides enjoyment and, second, provides benefits aligned with their lifestyle needs and desires³³ and that the way in which they are engaged to do the work is fair. This means a balance between flexibility, remuneration and employment conditions. Nearly two thirds of young people (63%) view the possibility to work flexibly as an exciting prospect³⁴. All workers value flexibility but also need security. This extends beyond just security of tenure to the benefits and entitlements that provide protection and support

³⁰ The Foundation for Young Australians (2017), The New Work Smarts, The New Work Order Series

³¹ BCA (2020), the Modern Worker: a Guide to What Employers Want, Business Council of Australia

³² Aphabet (2020), What matters to workers in the new economy, alfabeta

³³ Gore, J., Ellis, H., Fray, L., Smith, M., Lloyd, A., Berrigan, C., Lyell, A., Weaver, N., and Holmes, K. (2017) Choosing VET - investigating the VET aspirations of school students, NCVER

³⁴ OECD and WorldSkills (2019), Youth Voice for the Future of Work, OECD

for unforeseen circumstances, such as sickness or time with family. As the Foundations for Young Australians New Work Standards report³⁵ explains, using data collected through the Household Income and Labour Dynamics of Australia (HILDA) representative survey, that while 14% of Australian workers expressed a strong preference for flexibility and 29% express a strong preference for job security, the overall majority – 45% – expressed a preference for both flexibility and job security.

For young people, benefits of a particular career predominantly include reference to remuneration as young people cite financial security as a primary concern, but benefits also extend to, flexibility, particular experiences and conditions such as holidays, paid training or tuition, and job security. Other benefits identified by young people included the achievement of personal goals, such as owning one's own home.

At the same time, young people are disproportionately represented in non-standard forms of work; casual, part time, contract and gig economy work so forth. They also often hold multiple jobs to secure enough income to meet their cost of living expenses. Since 1992, the number of young people estimated to be in full-time casual employment without access to the security or benefits of permanent work has doubled³⁶. While for some, casual work is a preference, but for many it is driven by necessity, due to the inability to find more secure work with more hours and benefits. It is this scenario which is contributing to the rising anxiety among young Australians.

In response to the research undertaken by the Foundation for Young Australians in their New Work Order series, the FYA has developed a 'Good Work Standard' to help address the gap between current regulation and the changing nature of work for young people.

According to the FYA, the Good Work Standard principally applies to forms of work that are not underpinned by an agreement, award or specific legislation; where risk is primarily worn by the worker; and, where there is control/autonomy over how and when the work is performed.

The Good Work Standard is designed to help set expectations from both the employer and the worker perspectives. It can give confidence to organisations to go beyond the minimum of what is required and facilitate good work experiences that allows for attraction and retention of talent, while offering workers the chance to compare and contrast employment opportunities.

In addition to fair standards in relation to remuneration and access to benefits, the FYA Good Work Standard for young Australians also includes in its four pillar framework, below, a career development and progression criterion recognising that for many young Australians initial post-school jobs are often stepping stones in achieving their career aspirations.

³⁵ The Foundation for Young Australians (2020), The New Work Standard, The New Work Order Series

³⁶ Ibid.

1. Access and inclusion: ability to secure work through an equitable approach to hiring and contracting
2. Protection and wellbeing: protection against injury or harm, access to income security and provision of support for personal or community events
3. Quality and control: fair agreements, contracting and processes for work and the ability to earn a living wage, access to fair pay and standards for wages
4. Growth and development: access to opportunities for progression including ways to build skills and networks as well as recognition of skill development and portability across work



IMPLICATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE TASMANIAN SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

This greater understanding of the values, concerns career aspirations and workplace expectations of young Australians, and young Tasmanians, provides the Tasmanian Seafood Industry with more clarity regarding the opportunities and challenges in attracting and retaining the next generation of seafood industry workers.

There are clear challenges that must be better understood and addressed to ensure seafood is a chosen place of employment. These challenges relate to the concerns of young Australians about their ability to secure meaningful work, aligned to their passion and the anxiety surrounding the lack of financial security and the rising cost of living. The next generation of young workers will have significant mental health pressures and issues, which could be exacerbated by the current Covid-19 pandemic.

There is a complete lack of awareness and knowledge about the seafood labour market and the type of work available both currently and into the future. This challenge is further exacerbated by a mismatch between educational pathways and career aspirations and the status and expectations attached to pursuing higher education. While vocational careers may be attractive to some young Australians, particularly men, pursuing vocational or technical education and training does not rate highly for the future generation of workers. Unfortunately, there is significant employment opportunity for this level of educational attainment within the seafood industry.

Young people have had little exposure to the world of work; they cannot (aspire to) be what they cannot see. Despite this, thinking about jobs and careers starts at a very early age in a person's life. For young Tasmanians, transport to work is also a challenge. This creates some challenge for a largely regionally based seafood industry.

In addition to these educational and narrow careers aspiration challenges, young Australians are increasingly concerned about the environment and are engaging in knowledge acquisition and activism, to the point that some young Australians are considering careers that will contribute positively to environment. Although the seafood industry has the unfortunate perception of overfishing and environmental harm, this is not the case for the modern seafood industry. Hence, this could also be an opportunity for the Tasmanian seafood industry.

Alleviating the concerns and anxieties being experienced by young Australians and young Tasmanians is an opportunity for the seafood industry to attract a new generation of workers. For some sector of the seafood industry, this could be achieved through offering contemporary work agreements, such as 7 days on 7 days off. This would allow young workers a balance between working and other aspirations.

There are also clear opportunities for seafood employers.

Young people want to work, and they want career paths and opportunities for progression. They also deeply want to contribute to something they are passionate about. They are happy to work flexibly, provided it is fair and they have access to benefits that provides them with security and alleviates their anxieties. Young Australians, and young Tasmanians, have a deep connection to their community and their place, particularly those living in regional areas and particularly young men. Young people who pursue technical qualifications at either a tertiary level or a vocational level are more likely to secure jobs following their education and be satisfied with their work. Young people care about the environment and want to make a positive contribution to the sustainability of their future and their lifestyles. The Tasmanian seafood industry provides significant opportunity in all these areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a real need to better understand, shape, and engage with, the career aspirations of young Tasmanians. Greater understanding will enable both their career aspirations to be supported and/or shaped and the fears of young Tasmanians about work to be alleviated, provided these aspirations can also be informed by a greater understanding of the future of work and the associated education and career pathways available.

- 1) Increase engagement with young Tasmanians to help shape their career aspirations in the seafood industry
- 2) Better understand the career aspirations of young Tasmanians
- 3) Support young Tasmanians achieve their career aspirations in the seafood industry.

1. INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG TASMANIANS TO HELP SHAPE THEIR CAREER ASPIRATIONS IN THE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

From a young age, start to inspire the next generation to work in the sector – appeal to their passions, their interests, and their concerns. Educate, inform, engage. Inspiring young Tasmanians to work in the seafood industry will also need to be accompanied by clear advice relating to the careers, clusters, and educational pathways available and required.

Young people start to understand the concept of work and develop career aspirations from a primary school age. They develop these understandings and aspirations based on their own experiences and interactions with people they know and trust. Increasing young people's exposure to and experiences in seafood industry related activities from a young age will help increase the awareness, understanding and engagement in these activities.

Given the strong sense of community young people have, undertaking engagement activities in regions where there is a higher proportion of seafood industry related work should be a priority.

Activities targeting young people could include:

- Promoting and facilitating increased recreational fishing activities by young people
- Offering school holiday programs in conjunction with councils and other youth programs; fishing courses, marine/beach exploration, seafood cooking classes, educational activities, boat licence and handling courses for adolescents
- Having industry open days for young people and their parents/carers

2. BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF YOUNG TASMANIANS

Greater understanding of the career aspirations of young Tasmanian students may be possible through the analysis of MyEducation data in collaboration with the Department of Education.

My Education is intended as an online, supportive, and inclusive approach to career education to inspire and guide students from Kindergarten to Year 12 in all public schools in Tasmania. Its intent is to support students to identify their personal interests, values, strengths, and aspirations, and to teach them how to use this knowledge to make decisions about their future learning, work and life opportunities.

Potential analysis of this data may reveal the aspirations of young Tasmanians - future workforce entrants - to work in the seafood and fisheries industry, and what their values and strengths are. This information could assist and inform attraction strategies and school-based programs, as stipulated in the listed actions under Objective 3 of the TSIC Strategic Plan – promoting seafood within the primary school structure and understanding current pathways into the school environment.

Secondary school students focus on four questions when using MyEducation to explore career pathway options and suggests to the types of occupations that suit them based on their interests:

- Who am I?
- What are my opportunities?
- Who do I want to become?
- What is my plan for achieving my goals?

Analysis of this data, particularly by regional location, will identify the level of interest in working in seafood industry related careers and assist inform targeted strategies to attract young people to the industry.

3. SUPPORT YOUNG TASMANIANS TO ACHIEVE THEIR CAREER ASPIRATIONS IN THE SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

It is imperative that those young people who aspire to work in seafood industry related jobs are supported to do so. Not only does this mean ensuring that young people and their parents, carers and/or career influencers have a clear understanding of the educational and career pathways available, but that the process of undertaking that pathway is also supported. This is particularly important given the high level of concern young Tasmanians have around stress and their mental health, their confidence in securing employment and their fear that they are not well prepared for work. In addition to industry specific education and training, young Tasmanians may also need a

range of other supports to assist them achieve their career aspirations to become productive, satisfied, and happy in their lives. This could include financial support, mental well-being support, language, literacy and numeracy support and/or transport and logistics assistance.

This will mean that the seafood industry will need to work out constructive, practical, and perhaps creative, fair ways to support their new and workforce entrants as well as retain their current workforce. This should be informed by the practical New Work Standard principles developed by the Foundation for Young Australians as outlined above.

It should be noted also that some aspects to support new workforce entrants may be more difficult for some sub-sectors of the industry. Therefore, constructive, practical, and perhaps creative, fair ways to support the workforce may need to be sub-sector specific. For example, as the fishing sub-sector distributes income based on share of catch arrangements, providing financial security is more challenging. However, one example approach could be to estimate the seasons catch in advance and spread payments equally over a 12-month period.

Also, given the often regional or remote locations for working in the seafood sector, the provision or coordination of transport and accommodation may also assist young Tasmanians consider the sector as a career choice.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR TASMANIA

- 1) Increase workforce engagement with young Tasmanians to help shape realistic career aspirations about *real*/jobs.
- 2) Ensure that the Department of Education (primary and secondary) and TasTAFE deliver contemporary content and have a real understanding of current and future career prospect within industry.
- 3) Provide greater awareness to young people of real career opportunity in an attempt to align their career aspirations with real employment offerings.
- 4) But at the same time, support young Tasmanians to achieve their career aspirations
- 5) Recognise that the environment and sustainability features strongly for all young Tasmanians career aspirations.
- 6) Employers to prepare for future mental health challenges and access to mental health support for staff, particularly in regional areas.

FOR THE TASMANIAN SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

- 1) Develop a strategy whereby, from a young age, young Tasmanians are inspired to be the next generation of seafood industry workers. The strategy will appeal to young people's passions, their interests, and their concerns. The strategy will aim to increase engagement with young Tasmanians to help shape realistic career aspirations about real jobs and support them to achieve their career aspirations.
- 2) Better understand the career aspirations of young Tasmanians, particularly in regional areas where seafood industry work opportunities exist.
- 3) Undertake research to better understand and map the careers, clusters, and educational pathways available to achieve a career in the seafood industry.
- 4) Work with the Department of Education, the University of Tasmania and vocational education and training providers (e.g. Seafood Marine Training and TasTAFE) to develop and deliver contemporary content.
- 5) Develop a segmentation, targeting and positioning marketing strategy for the seafood industry workforce advertising that:
 - a. Considers the environmental values of young people
 - b. Appeals to young women with travel and activism ideals
 - c. Highlights the ability to align career aspirations and lifestyle desires for young males
 - d. Connects the opportunity to live regionally (stay local) and have the desired lifestyle
 - e. Encourages men to consider vocational pathways
- 6) Work out constructive, practical, and perhaps creative, fair ways to alleviate the concerns of young Tasmanians, particularly in relation to job security, financial security and the opportunity for meaningful career progression.
- 7) Continue to provide mental health support to seafood workers through the dedicated 'Stay Afloat' mental health outreach officer in Rural Alive and Well Tasmania. Recognising that employers need to prepare for future mental health challenges and access to mental health support for staff, particularly in regional areas.

CONCLUSION

The Tasmanian seafood industry has the potential to offer young workforce entrants a range of jobs and career paths which will meet the needs of the next generation of workers and employers as well as alleviate concerns about the future of work.

To do this, the seafood industry will need to change the way it communicates its contribution to the economy, to the workforce and to the environment and society more widely. It will need to engage with young people from a young age as well as their parents, their teachers and other career influencers.

This is because, more broadly, the sectors that young people aspire to work in differ greatly from the jobs available. There is an increasingly concerning disconnect between the career aspirations of our young people and opportunities in the labour market. This issue is exacerbated further when the educational aspirations also do not connect with occupational aspirations. It is also because young people are becoming more active and engaged with broader environmental and social issues, which is both a threat and an opportunity to attract young people to work in the seafood industry in Tasmania.

There must be a concerted effort to tackle the aspiration-reality disconnect and provide support and pathways through the education and training system, in conjunction with the overall perception of the seafood industry.



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