



What *young people* say...

Final Report March 2014

About TYF

The Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) is Tasmania's peak youth consultative body. TYF is an initiative of the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT), the peak organisation for the non-government youth sector in Tasmania, with funding from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, through the Community Development Division.

Acknowledgements

YNOT and TYF would like to thank the young people who participated in the 'Y Your Vote Counts' forum and survey. Thank you to our TYF members, volunteers and sector workers who volunteered their time in the lead up to the forum and on the day. We would also like to acknowledge our event sponsors, Hobart City Council and Community Development Division of Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC) and the support from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) and National Job Link (NJL) with their involvement.



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Executive Summary

This report was developed to communicate the ideas and views of young people who participated in the Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) 'Y Your Vote Counts' Statewide Youth Forum and the responses to our online survey by young Tasmanians.

The forum and survey was an initiative of the TYF which is the peak consultative body for young people in Tasmania. TYF is supported by the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT), the peak organisation for the non-government youth sector in Tasmania.

Young people are often first time voters as the first chance they get to vote is not long after they turn 18. Young people are also less likely to be enrolled to vote, not be familiar with the voting system and not be aligned with a political party. Instead young people engage with other things such as volunteering to contribute to an issue they are passionate about. TYF conducted the forum and online survey to provide young people with the opportunity to discuss what is important to them when deciding who to vote for, information about the voting process and the opportunity to engage in the political process, and find a way to contribute and inform the wider political discussion with their ideas.

The Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) developed the 'Y Your Vote Counts' forum and survey in the lead up to the Tasmanian 2014 election and with background research on youth voting.

The 'Y Your Vote Counts' forum provided young people with the opportunity to learn more about voting, engage in the political process, ask political representatives questions and complete last minute enrolments to vote. The survey also allowed young people to have their say on what they think about voting and what their key issues are when they consider who to vote for.

Background Information

Research is often conducted around the youth vote which refers to the cohort of people aged 18 to 34, however, there are considerable differences between those aged 18 to 24 and 25 to 34. For example, young people aged 18 to 24 are less likely to be enrolled to vote than those who are aged 25 to 34¹. Despite being able to register on the electoral role from the age of 16 in Australia, many young people do not enrol to vote until they are over the age of 18 with some leaving it until their early to mid 20's and a few not enrolling at all. This is significant as it means that a considerable proportion of young people between 18 and 24 who are eligible to be first time voters are missing out on the opportunity to vote. In Tasmania, 11% of young people aged 18 to 25 are not enrolled to vote. This equates to over 5000 voters. (Source: Australian Electoral Commission).

It is important that young people aged 18 to 24 are encouraged to enrol to vote so that they are able to have their say as young voters can really make a difference in elections. While older cohorts of the population are relatively stable in their voting patterns, the youth vote is much more fluid. This means that younger voters are more likely to change their voting intentions and who they vote for from election to election. The changing nature of the youth

¹ R Brooker, *Youth Federal Election Voting Intentions: A statistical and graphical analysis of Newspoll Quarterly data 1996-2010*, (Sydney, Whitlam Institute 2011).

vote is therefore accentuated when compared to the more stable votes of older cohorts making the youth vote more significant in its potential impact ¹.

In response to this research, TYF developed 'Y Your Vote Counts' to allow young people who are first time voters or soon to be first time voters, to engage in the political process by finding out why voting is important, what voting involves, the opportunity to enrol to vote and getting the opportunity to ask political representatives their questions.

Scope

The aim of this report is to communicate the questions asked to the panel of political representatives by young people, the answers given by political representatives and the results of the online survey. The forum and survey allowed a broad and diverse range of young people from across Tasmania to engage in the topic before the State election.

The survey was quite different to the forum as it asked young people what the key issues are for them which they think about when deciding who to vote for and what it is about these issues which they are concerned about.

Part 1: The Y Your Vote Counts Forum

Around 100 young people attended 'Y Your Vote Counts' forum which was held during the lead up to the 2014 Tasmanian election on Tuesday February 18 2014 at City Hall in Hobart. This was also one of the last days that people could enrol to vote or update their details. Young people came from a diverse range of places including New Norfolk, Dodges Ferry, Snug, Dover and city areas.

The day was facilitated by Ben Waterworth, a young Tasmanian MC. Adam Pulford, who was the 2013 UN Youth Representative for Australia, was the guest speaker at the forum. In his role as the UN Youth Representative, Adam travelled around Australia prior to the 2013 Federal Election, speaking to young people about the reasons why young people decide to vote or not to vote.

Adam said some of the top reasons why young people chose not to vote were:

- That young people didn't know that they had to vote
- That the voting process was complex
- That some young people weren't interested in politics and found it irrelevant
- That they saw the major parties as being the same and voting wouldn't change anything

Adam said that some of the reasons why young people voted were:

- That we live in a democracy and part of that is having the responsibility to vote
- That voting is a privilege as a lot of countries do not have this right
- To avoid getting a fine

Adam's key message was that it was important to not just vote but make an informed vote by doing a bit of research on the different parties and finding out which one best represents your own beliefs and interests. Adam encouraged participants to take away what they had

learnt and share it with their friends and family and keep the discussion going after the forum.

Following this was the Question and Answer session. The panellists were Elise Archer MP, representing the Tasmanian Liberal Party, Ald Sharon Carnes, a candidate for the State election representing the Tasmanian Labor Party, and Nick McKim MP, Leader of the Greens Party. Each panel member got to speak for five minutes on issues that they thought affected young people. Following this, young people could ask questions from the floor to the panel.

The last presentation of the day was from UN Youth Tasmania who created a mock ballot paper and demonstrated how to fill out a ballot paper and how preferences are determined in the Tasmanian election.

What the panel said about their work and youth issues

Each panel member was given five minutes to introduce themselves, speak on issues they believed were important and the key issues in the lead up to the election. The panel members went in alphabetical order and the summaries and key points of their speeches are below.

Elise Archer MP – Tasmanian Liberal Party

Elise started by thanking Adam, YNOT and the participants at the forum for coming along to show that they cared about the future in Tasmania. Elise highlighted that it is important for young people to vote in an informed way and vote in line with your own beliefs. She mentioned how when she was younger she voted the same as her parents but later regretted not deciding for herself. Elise said that it was important to research the different parties and that there is a lot of information easily available on parliamentary and party websites.

Elise talked about how the election was about looking at the long term future in Tasmania and that unemployment is significant issue as it is very high in Tasmania with many people leaving the state to look for work. It is important that more jobs are created in Tasmania and Elise spoke about a number of policies that the Liberals have announced to address this. Key sectors where job growth would need to happen include agriculture, energy, aquaculture, forestry and tourism. Elise highlighted that jobs in tourism, hospitality and the retail sectors are especially important to young people as that is where a large number of young people are employed. Increasing the number of jobs in rural and regional areas is also important.

The Liberals also have plans to increase the police force and address bullying in particular cyber bullying. Elise mentioned that the Liberals would work with the Youth Network of Tasmania on a youth suicide strategy and the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute on addressing bullying in legislation. Elise finished by saying this election was important to be able to make a difference in Tasmania.

Ald Sharon Carnes – Tasmanian Labor Party

Sharon started by saying she was attending the forum on behalf the Premier who was unable to attend. Sharon stated that she has had a lot of involvement with the Glenorchy Youth Task Force and this has made her well aware of key issues for young people including jobs, education and mental health.

Labor's priorities are for more innovation and jobs growth which are important for the future. Sharon said there was a need to invest in young people to help them stay in Tasmania. The aged care sector is one industry which will have a lot of job opportunities in the future and this is just one area where more young people could find work in the future. The NBN is also key infrastructure which will help young people to access education, health and research opportunities which would allow more opportunities for young people in Tasmania.

Sharon said that retaining young people in education is important and the NBN could also be part of achieving this. Sharon said Gonski funding would also be important as funding will be directly for students and not the schools. Sharon also mentioned the need for ensuring that we have penalty rates, particularly for young people, as young people tend to work unsociable hours and there is need to protect workers' rights.

Sharon also said that suicide prevention and mental health are also important issues in the community and places such as Pulse and Headspace do great work in addressing these issues.

Nick McKim MP – Tasmanian Greens Party

Nick started by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land. Nick said that it was important that young people could stay in Tasmania or return if they wanted to leave for a period of time to study, work or travel which creates good networking opportunities. He talked about his own experience of leaving and returning to Tasmania and said this was a good chance to learn more and bring this back with him.

Nick said that marriage equality is one way of attracting people to Tasmania as it helps to make us to be an inclusive society and community. Public transport such as bus networks and light rail would also encourage young people to stay or return to Tasmania. The Greens also have a policy to allow 16 and 17 year olds to opt-in to vote in election.

Nick said that climate change is a huge issue which our generation has got wrong and this is the key issue to address. In terms of jobs, Tasmania needs to look for job growth in areas where we have a competitive edge like science, renewable energy and ICT. Nick also mentioned the NBN being a key part of economic and social growth.

Question and Answer Session

The Q and A session enabled young people to ask questions from the floor. Each panel member had the opportunity to answer each question with a one minute time limit. The panel member who got to answer the question first rotated. Below are the summaries of the questions asked by young people and the answers which were given by panel members.

These summaries were written from audio and written transcripts which were taken on the day.

What initiatives would you put in place to address youth boredom?

Elise

We know that boredom can create trouble and we need to support young people to become engaged in activities. It's not just up to government to do something; it is a whole of community responsibility. I know in the northern suburbs the Glenorchy Youth Task Force does some great activities. It would be good to see more young people engaged with not for profits.

Sharon

The ALP will consult with young people in the community about what they need as it's important to find out what they think. I know that in the Moonah Business District there has been more tagging and graffiti. Things such as walls for street art would be a good way to address this particular issue. We should keep pushing for these initiatives in the future.

Nick

It's not for older people to say what happens. We need young people to tell government, local government and community groups about what young people need. There is a lot of things we could do. I also like the idea of graffiti walls, but it's not just about activities as it's up to individuals how they fill their time.

Do you support the first home builders grant continuing as an opportunity for young people to build and own a home before they are 25?

Nick

Yes, we've supported this. It makes it easier for young people to own a house but it's hard for a young person to get loans from banks because of how they operate and also house prices.

Sharon

Absolutely. I am in the process of building my own home and I just missed out on this grant but I'm glad that others can benefit from it. It's not just about young people being able to afford their own home; it also has the benefit of providing opportunities for jobs.

Elise

We had this policy originally because we knew that young people found it hard to enter the market but also because of the building sector. It builds confidence for employers to put on more employees.

Nick, would you please stop lying about the statistic that 97 percent of scientists agree on climate change?

Nick

No I won't because what I say is absolutely true and I believe that climate change is the

Please note: The questions and responses are summarised from audio and text transcripts and should not be quoted.

What are your policies for retaining young people in education?

Elise

We won't be closing colleges. The extension to year 11 and 12 will start in rural and regional areas because it is harder to access year 11 and 12 in these areas due to transport and the costs of moving.

Sharon

I think it's important to concentrate on the early years. The ALP has announced that there will be early childhood educators working in child and family centres to assist with the transition into early education. The transition from primary school to high school is also of concern with levels of literacy and numeracy falling behind during these years.

Nick

Our direct retention rate has improved by about 1.5% over the past 5 years in Tasmania. Other places such as the Australian Capital Territory have not extended their school system to years 11 and 12 and they have higher rates of retention. We need to invest in the early years and the value that people place on a good education. Involving parents in the education of their children improves the value we place on learning and the Launch into Learning program is an example of this.

How can I get a political party to listen to my views?

Sharon

The way you can have an influence is to become active in the political party of your interest or choice. Meet your local politician or write to them. We are lucky in Tasmania to have our politicians approachable and accessible. I am open to hearing from anyone.

Elise

We live in a society where we have a right to contact political candidates and representatives. This is an important feature of our democratic system. If you emailed or called me I would certainly reply, we know your vote is important.

Nick

Cast your vote and join a political party. I'm not suggesting which party to join, you need to decide for yourself which best fits your beliefs. In the Greens our policies are member driven

and our members get to influence our policy position. Being a member of a political party also provides you access to that political party's representatives.

Why are all the parties so keen on growing Tasmania's population at the risk of losing our unique lifestyle?

Elise

We have a policy for increasing our population, but not by a huge amount. We have the capacity for a larger population to grow the economy to create the jobs we need and not be over populated. One third of Tasmanians rely on welfare benefits of some descriptions so we need sufficient population growth without going overboard.

Sharon

I think we need population growth, but not a significant amount. One of the drawcards of our state is that we are small and have a small population, but if everyone moves here then that defeats the purpose. It's about investing in innovation which suits our current population and our assets such as areas like agriculture and aquaculture. We need to stay focused on the things that attract people to Tasmania.

Nick

I don't think small is a disadvantage, small is an advantage. We are connected, flexible and it easier for a small jurisdiction to change. If we want to get ahead and deliver the prosperity we need to respond quickly. We need to think about social infrastructure such as transport and health systems and ensure they can carry an increase in population.

Do you support the NBN and do you think all Tasmanian's should be able to access it?

Sharon

Yes I do support the NBN and support the role out of fibre to every home in Tasmania. It's not just about downloading things quickly. It is possible to do medical consultations online meaning that people do not have to travel long distances to see specialists.

Elise

Yes, it's a shame that it wasn't rolled out quicker. At a state level, the Liberals support the NBN and we will continue to lobby our federal counterparts. We have suggested that it could be rolled out using power poles.

Nick

The NBN has the capacity to drive the economy in this state for the better part of the next century. We can't imagine what will happen and how people will use the internet. Let's not rely on the Commonwealth and let's step up as a state and complete the work.

What is Gonski?

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Sharon

Gonski is the federal funding for schools which was announced in 2013. It's about investing in students and the funding stays with the student and goes to those with the most need. For example, lower socioeconomic students face more challenges and would therefore get more funding. It is currently 4 year funding.

Nick

It's a needs based funding model where the funding follows the student. Students with disabilities, behaviour challenges, and indigenous students will attract more funding. It is essential. If a student moves school the funding moves with the student. The major improvements of funding will occur in the 5th or 6th year of funding and we're only funded up to 4 years because it has been scaled back.

Elise

It is important to remember that education is an area with a dual responsibility that is why it is a bit confusing. I encourage you to look at the party websites to learn more about what is happening.

Where do you stand on the forestry agreement?

Elise

The forestry sector is vital in Tasmania. We don't need our market and brand trashed overseas because it destroys confidence. We do not support the agreement as we believe the industry is viable however we do not believe it was handled well. We don't support the logging of old growth forests; we support logging of native forests which are renewable.

Nick

Forestry has been in the too hard basket for years. It was propped up and is a smaller industry than many people realise. The agreement was an achievement with parties, who previously disagreed, working together.

Sharon

The situation in regards to forestry is not sustainable. There is a lot of conflict in the industry and this agreement was the result of two parties coming together, who had opposing views, to come up with a solution.

How are you going to make a difference on national issues?

Nick

Depends on the issue, but when it's necessary we will take a constructive and collaborative approach, but also, quite happy to let them know when it's not in Tasmania's best interests.

Sharon

There are some issues which span across all levels of government, such as employment and education. It does depend on the issue but I'm not afraid to stand up for Tasmania.

Elise

We need to work constructively with federal government. We need to stick up for our state and that every Member of Parliament does that. It's why we have the senate so that there is equal representation between states at a federal level.

How does volunteering in my local community make a difference and how much of a difference can bigger organisations make? Do you support the work they do?

Elise

It's been an interesting to work as the Shadow Minister for Community Development. YNOT has done some really good work and you should be really proud of the work they do on behalf of young people and they do shape our policy.

Sharon

Don't ever think volunteering at your local community doesn't make a difference, even if it's less than an hour a week. Peak organisations and national organisations can really bring issues to the front, educate the community and influence policy and you can't put a price on that.

Nick

The power and difference you can make by volunteering is awesome. No matter what you can contribute it does make a difference. There are so many organisations that make a difference. There are different people pulling in different ways and doing different things but in the end we can see the overall difference.

What are the advantages for voting for a party rather than an independent?

Nick

We are seeing a rise of independents across Australia and Tasmania. If you vote for a party you have a value set which you can hold members to account. The Greens have a value set

of environmental sustainability, social justice, peace, non-violence and participatory democracy. You can facebook, tweet or email me and let me know if you think I'm going off the rails on these values. With independents it's harder to do that as it's their values are about them as a person.

Elise

With parties you have a set of policies that all candidates and elected members have influenced. It is a common set of beliefs and values. Independents have their own decision but may not make a decision in the best interests of the state.

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have their own individual ideas and beliefs. The Australian Labor Party is about equality, opportunity and fairness.

If laws are not based on religion then why deny equality on same sex marriage?

Sharon

I have no idea why you would deny equality. We tried to get it passed in Tasmania last year but unfortunately it failed. Same sex marriage is a basic right.

Elise

I didn't support it for legal reasons at the time and personal beliefs. We had a conscience vote, people voted on legal reasons and their own beliefs. We need to ensure we recognise same-sex couples in other of the law, not just marriage. I am not homophobic, in fact one of my good friends is gay and who doesn't want to get married, but I believe in the institution of marriage, that's my personal belief.

Nick

No good reason at all. I was the first member to table any laws in 2005 and I couldn't get any support to take it to a committee. I have tabled 4 bills in 2005 2007 2009 and 2013 where the 2013 bill did pass. It's about trying and not giving up. The suicide rate of young people is really high and you can't remove discrimination from our communities unless you remove it from our laws.

How are you going to support the creative industries?

Nick

Creative industry is worth nearly 3% of Tasmania's GDP which is more than forestry. The creative industry is everything from novelists, artists in their own home and community radio organisations. It doesn't just employ people like artists but has benefits for hospitality and transport and it is one of the future linchpins for Tasmania.

Sharon

The creative industry is extremely important to the future of the state and the ALP understands having to put more funding into this area. Crowdfunding is a way to seek funding for creative idea and we have interest free arts loan programs available.

Elise

The creative industries have always been a strong industry in Tasmania. I personally see the value in the creative arts. We are seeing more partnership with private sectors that are also seeing the benefits

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Are there any investments you are going to make for roads in rural areas?

Elise

The Midlands highway funding from the Federal Government will proceed. The Liberals have announced money for the Craggy Ridge development.

Nick

I believe and our party believes that our transport funding has been too skewed towards roads and not public transport. We need to build better transport infrastructure which encourages people to get active and get public transport.

Sharon

State Labor has invested money in upgrades on the Midland Highway, Richmond Bypass. I think we need to invest more in terms of access and infrastructure and also more in our rail network which can create less pressure on our roads by transporting freight.

Why are you running for politics?

Elise

I ran for parliament in 2006 and didn't get in. I was elected to Hobart City Council in 2007 and elected to parliament in 2010. I believed we needed a totally transparent government and I was unhappy at the time with what was happening with the government. I am really glad I ran again as I was elected and have really enjoyed the role. It is challenging but it is more of an honour to represent people this way.

Nick

I got involved because of climate change and intergenerational equity. We often hear that the Greens don't care about people and only about trees. But we are part of the ecosystem. There is research which suggests that 10 billion people who will die or not be born

Sharon

If I'm honest, it was because I wanted to get weekly bin collections at Glenorchy City Council. So 2 years ago I stood for local council and was elected. I've come to realise I can be a more effective representative at a government level. There have been times in the past 4 or 5 years that I've been disappointed in what government has done so I decided to put up my hand and have a go.

Learning How to Vote

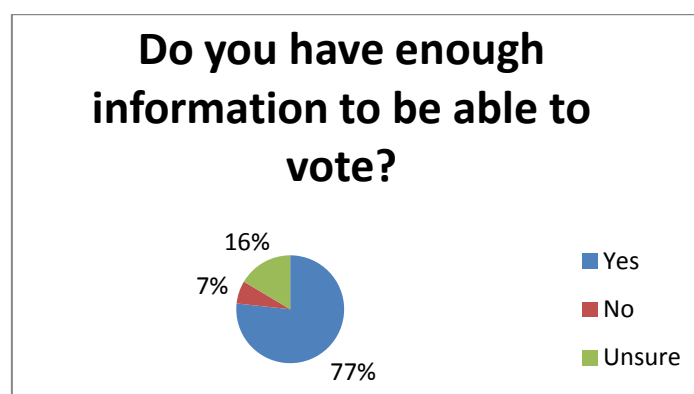
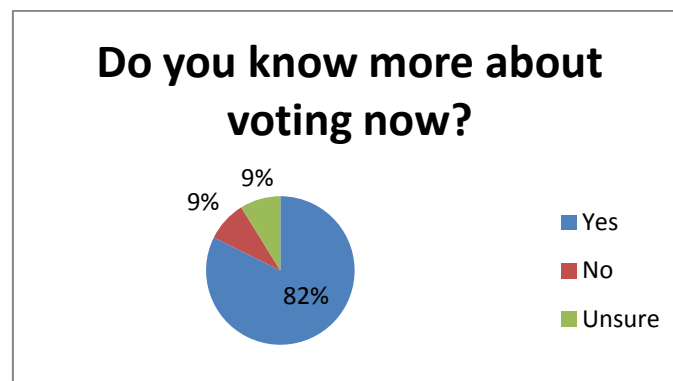
UN Youth Tasmania did a short presentation at the end of the forum to explain the voting

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preferences can make a difference in the election. This presentation was aimed at giving participants a better understanding of the voting system.

Feedback from the Forum

At the end of the forum participants filled out a quick feedback form to get an understanding of whether they had got more information on voting at the forum.



The majority of young people reported that they thought they knew more about voting after the forum. It is positive to know that in less than 2 hours, participants felt like they had learned more about the voting process and how to vote.

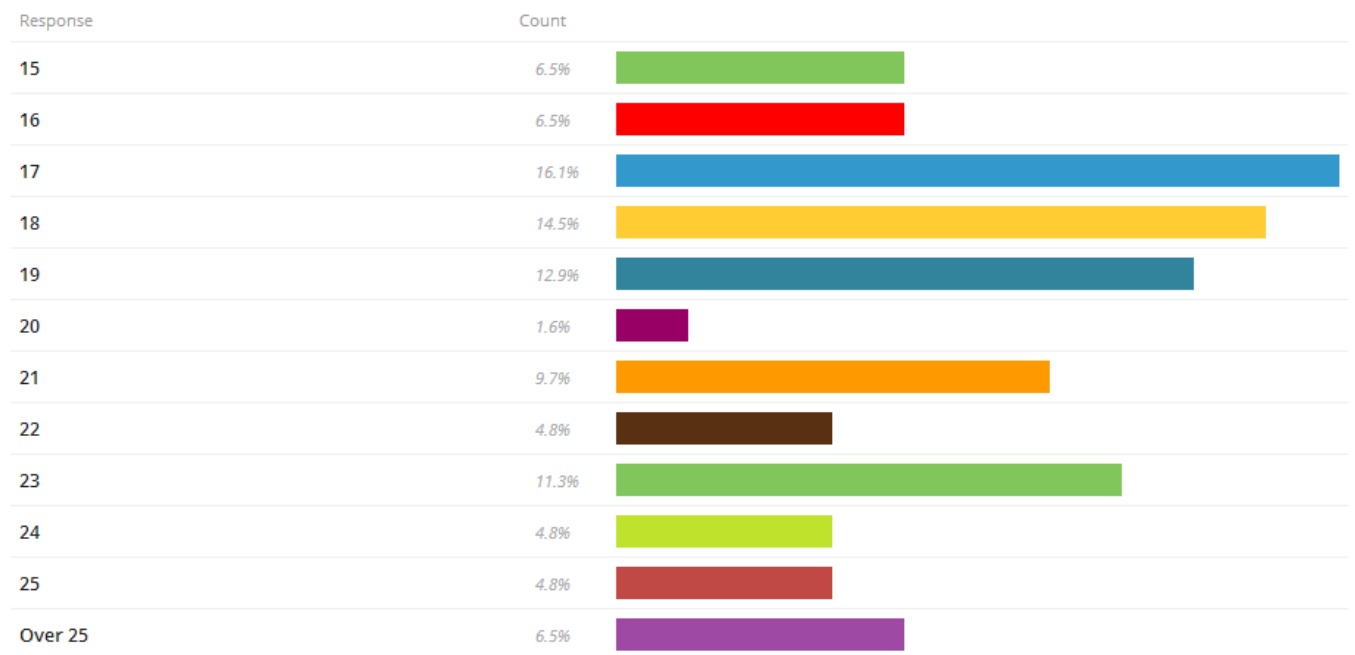
It is also encouraging that the three quarters of participants reported that they felt as though they had enough information to vote. Other information that young people may need which were not available at the forum because of time constraints could include more information about other candidates, candidates in their own electorate and other parties.

This feedback demonstrates that a short forum for young people can be very successful in providing them with more information about how to vote.

Part 2: The Y Your Vote Counts Survey

In conjunction with the 'Y Your Vote Counts' forum, TYF ran an online survey for six weeks. This allowed young people who could not make it to the forum to have their say on their thoughts on voting and what some of the key issues are that they consider when deciding who to vote for. The survey received 79 responses.

Age

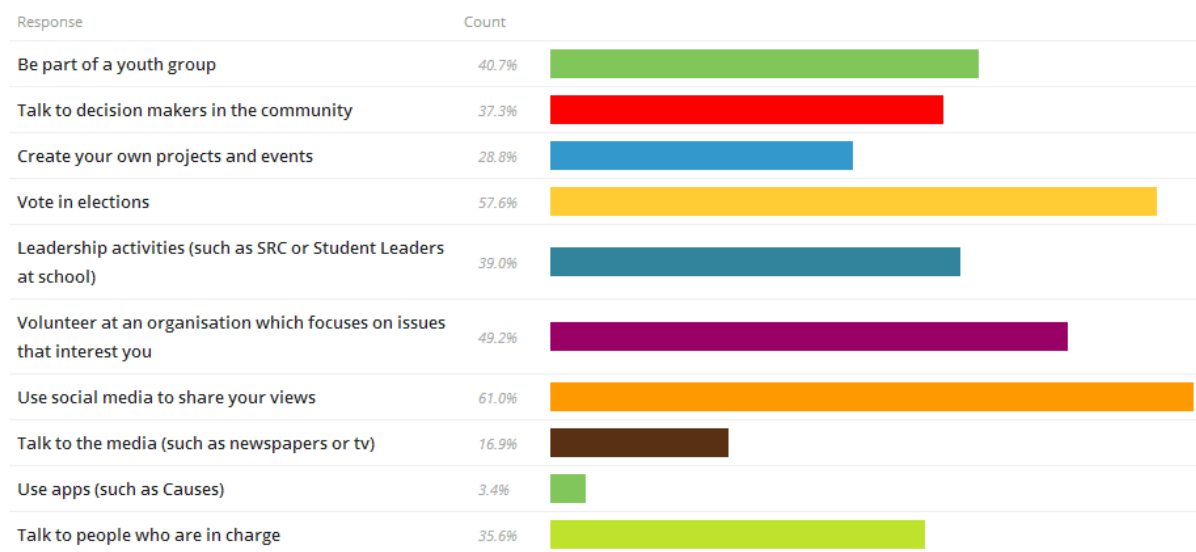


Are you:



The survey received responses from young people of different ages, but most responses were from those aged 17 to 19 where they would be first time voters in this election or soon to be. Responses were received from young people all across Tasmania including areas such as Collinsvale, Smithton, South Launceston, Sandy Bay, Devonport, Bridgewater and Latrobe.

How do you have a say about what happens in your community in Tasmania?

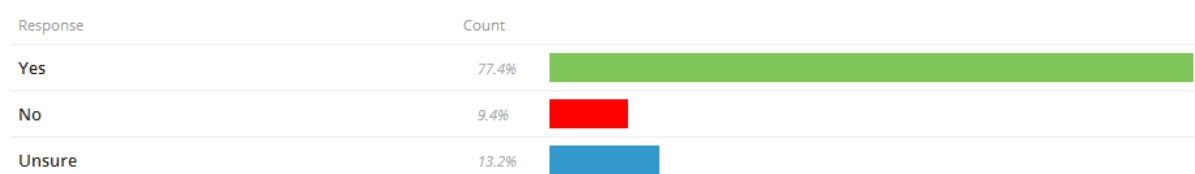


Young people engage with a variety of activities to have their say within Tasmania. Most young people identified with using social media to share their views in order to have their say. Second to this was voting in elections. Although these activities may require a small amount of time and effort, almost half of young people say that they volunteer at an organisation which has a focus on issues that are of interest to them. Around 40% are also involved with leadership activities or youth groups and almost a third create their own projects and events. In addition to those listed here, young people also said being a member of a political party, working within the youth sector, signing petitions and working with local councils were other ways they had a say about what happens in their community. The high response rate to the majority of these options demonstrates that young people are passionate about making a difference in their communities in Tasmania.

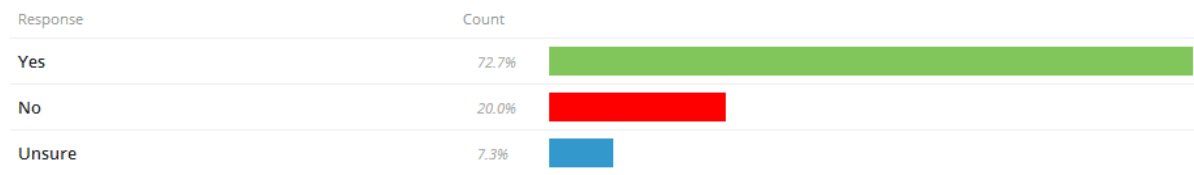
What young people said about the voting process

Some common themes among how young people see voting include viewing it as a chance to have their say, as a chance to be involved with a decision making process and a chance to improve and be involved with their community. These are positive themes but in contrast there are a number of young people who are disillusioned with voting. Some believe that there is limited choice between candidates and that voting doesn't matter because the result is bad no matter what the outcome.

Do you know how to fill out a voting form?

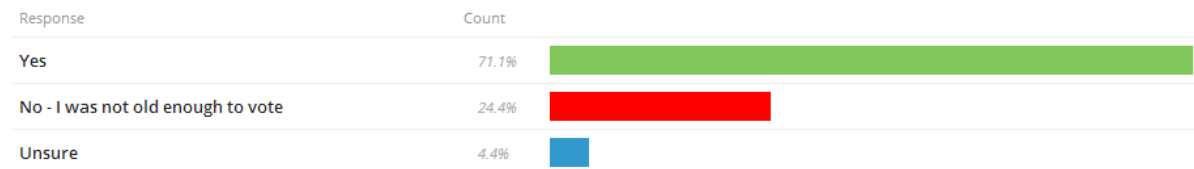


Are you enrolled to vote?



It is positive to see that most young people know how to fill out a ballot paper and most are enrolled to vote. There is still, however, significant proportion of respondents who said they were not enrolled to vote or were unsure. This may be because 29% of survey respondents were under the age of 18. Despite being able to enrol to vote in Australia from the age of 16, enrolments for 16 and 17 year olds is normally very low.

Have you voted before in either a State or Federal election?



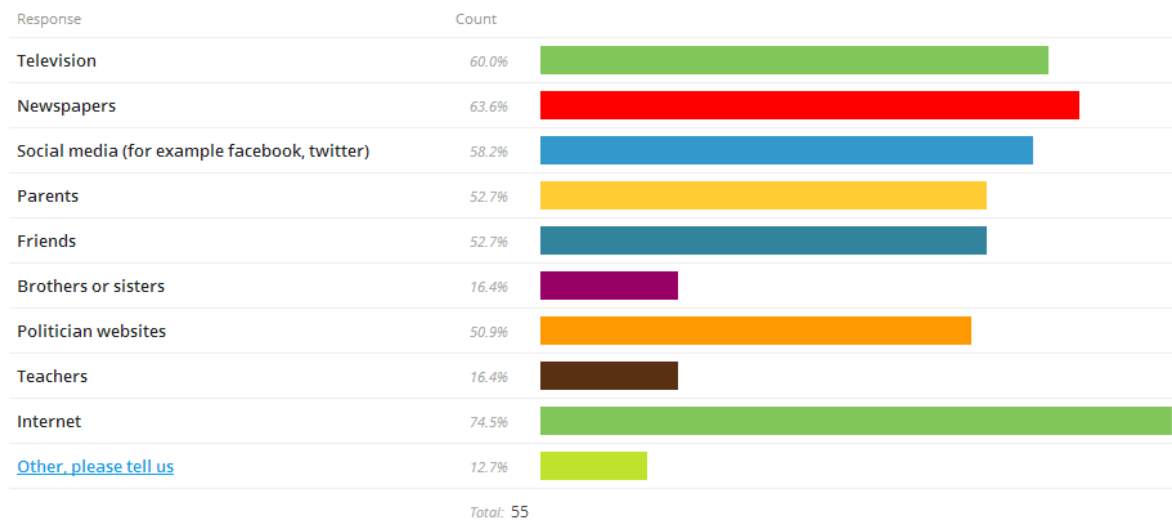
Do you remember who you voted for?



Of the respondents who said they voted in an election previously, 30% could not remember who they voted for. It is difficult to suggest why this may be without further research.

When asked why they voted for the person that they did, most respondents said that it was because the candidate or party had good policies or they felt like they could best represent their electorate. This is positive to see as it demonstrates that the majority of young people take voting seriously and really think carefully about who they vote for and why.

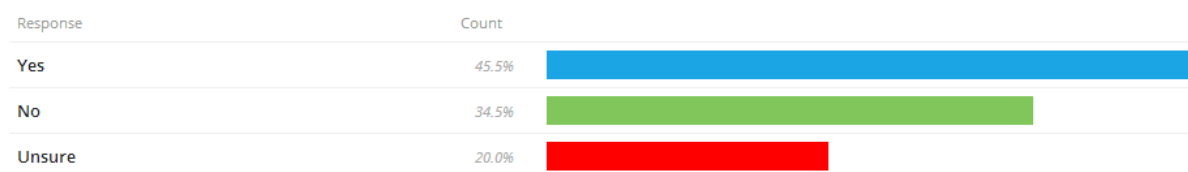
Where do you go for information to help you decide who to vote for? (Even if you can't vote yet you can answer this question by thinking about where you might go for this information)



Young people access a variety of sources when trying to find out more information when deciding who to vote for. The most frequent response was the internet but television, newspapers, social media, friends, parents and politician’s websites also had a lot of responses. Other places young people said they got their information from included talking to local policies, work colleagues and attending community events.

It is positive to know that young people are actively seeking information by doing their own research and having discussions with others.

Do you think you have enough information to help you decide who to vote for in the election? (Even if you can't vote yet, do you think you would have enough information if you had to vote?)



Despite accessing a wide range of sources of information, over half of the young people surveyed said they didn’t think they had enough information to help them to decide who to vote for in the upcoming election or were unsure. This could suggest that young people may not be able to find the information or answers they are looking for when searching for information.

When asked what extra information young people think they needed to vote, most responses suggested having a more youth-friendly summary of each parties policies. This included having short summaries of what the political parties stand for or dot points of their policies.

Other responses also wanted more honest, straight to the point facts and answers from politicians to help them make up their mind easier without having to work out what to believe or who to trust. A few responses also mentioned having better education in schools about voting and political parties.

What young people said about issues that matter to them

The survey covered 16 different issues. With each issue, young people were asked what it is about the issue which is important to them and what they thought could be done to improve the issue. Respondents also had the opportunity to add any other issues which they thought were important when deciding who to vote for at the end.

It is important to note that although young people may not identify an issue as important when deciding who to vote for, this does not mean the issue is not important to them. It just may not be an important factor when deciding who to vote for.

The following issues are listed in order from the most respondents who said the issue was important to the least.

Employment

Is employment an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	86.7%
No	13.3%

Employment was identified by the highest number of respondents as an issue they thought was important when deciding who to vote for. Most of the responses to this issue said that it was about the high rates of unemployment and youth unemployment. Some important aspects of this were being able to access entry level jobs for young people who have recently completed their education or training and ensuring businesses are encouraged to create more jobs and opening up new industries.

Some suggestions for how to approach this issue included developing more sustainable industries, more job opportunities specifically for young people, investing in new technology and creating incentives for businesses to take on young employees.

Equal Access to Services

Is having equal access to services (This might be health services or services which help you with employment for example) is an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	86.7%
No	13.3%

This is an issue which is not necessarily a focus during the election campaign period but it was identified as an important issue by an equal number of respondents who said employment was an important issue. Many of the young people who saw this issue as important said it was a basic right for people to access the services they need. Most responses included issues such as costs for services and transport to services were important aspects to them.

Responses said having more advertising of services, increased transport in regional areas to access services, having some services available online and more investment in key services to be able to keep up with demand as ways that this issue could be addressed.

Education and Training

Is education and training an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	82.2%
No	17.8%

Young people had varied responses on what it is about education and training which is important to them. Some of the key aspects of this issue which were mentioned included class sizes, retention rates, funding, costs, quality and access.

Young people thought that having smaller class sizes, affordable and accessible education and training, more flexible learning options such as distance education and having a better funding model for schools would improve young people being able to access education and get the most out of their time at school or training.

Mental, Sexual and/or Physical Health

Is mental, sexual and/or physical health an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	80.4%
No	19.6%

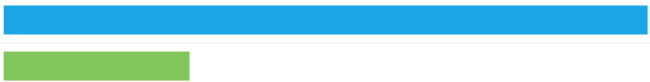
The majority of responses to this question said that mental health was the important aspect of this issue. Many young people said this was important because they know people who are struggling with mental health issues, that there are not enough mental health resources where they live, the stigma which is attached to mental health and the effects it can have on friends and family. There were also a few responses which mentioned the health system as being important issue for them, such as hospitals. Aspects of physical health that were important were focused around being able to access better health services, particularly in rural areas.

Young people thought that there could be more done to reduce the costs for young people to see health care professionals and increase funding to those organisations who provide low cost or free health services. Some responses focused on the need for there to be more education and awareness of health issues, particularly mental health. Others also suggested being more inclusive of those who are usually marginalised within society would help improve their mental health.

Preventing Suicide

Is preventing suicide and self harm an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	77.6%
No	22.4%




A lot of young people who said this was an important issue to them mentioned that they knew someone, particularly their peers, who had died by suicide. Many also said that the feelings of isolation and seeing self harm and suicide as the last resorts were something that no one should have to experience. A couple of responses also noted the negativity which is placed around suicide such as the stigma and victim blaming.

Most young people said that changing perceptions in the community was important to addressing this issue and letting people know that they have support within the community. In terms of services, young people identified things such as more early intervention programs, education, campaigns and training for people working with young people are needed. Essentially, all the responses identified that early intervention needed to happen, before people get to the point of feeling like they have no other options.

Accepting Other Cultures and Backgrounds

Is being accepting of people from other cultures and backgrounds an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	75.6%
No	24.4%



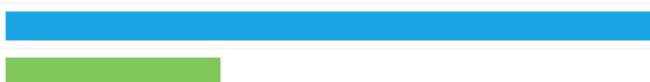
Most respondents mentioned racism as being a key aspect of this issue which is important to them. Many also noted helping to support people who arrive in Australia, such as migrants and refugees, as important so that they felt included within our community.

Most responses either said that there needed to be greater awareness, tolerance and acceptance in the community and more support available to groups of people from different backgrounds that are coming to Australia. This included helping them to work through government processes or accessing services in the community.

Marriage Equality

Is gay marriage an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	75.0%
No	25.0%

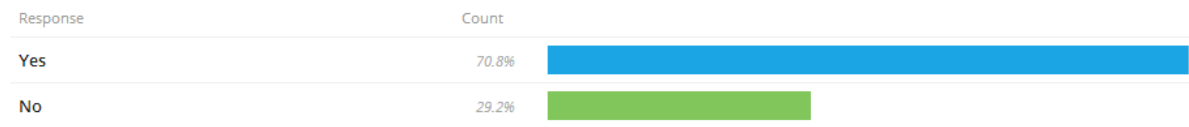


Most responses said that the important aspect of this issue was ensuring equality for same sex couples. Many responses included that it was time for discrimination in this way to end.

The majority of responses said the best way to address this issue is to legalise same sex marriage, but also have more education and awareness in the community about diversity, acceptance and equality.

Housing and Homelessness

Is housing and homelessness an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

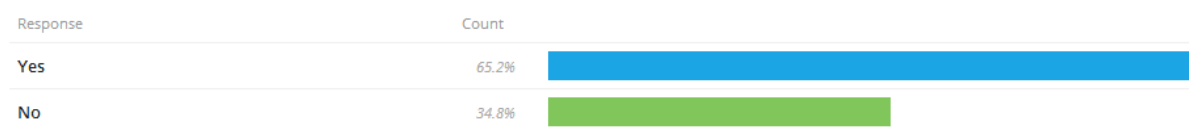


Young people who saw this as an important issue identified that housing is an important part of having a good standard of living. Many said the rates of homelessness within their own communities were of concern to them and that those people who are homeless are not getting the help that they want or need. A few responses also mentioned the high costs of moving out of home which make it difficult for young people to get housing in the first instance.

Most young people said that the price of housing needed to be lowered to make it easier to afford housing. In terms of public housing, young people suggested having better strategies and more disperse placement of houses so that disadvantage is not concentrated in the one place so those people can be better supported by their communities. Young people also identified the need to have more services such as transition housing, shelters and support agencies available to be the first point of contact for those who are homeless.

Income Support

Is income support an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)




Many responses to this issue said that income support is important because it is difficult to gain employment, balance work and study, and support your family. In addition to this there were a number of responses which said it was important to them that people who receive income support to have the opportunity to gain more education and work experience to gain more employment in the future.

Some of the suggestions to improve this issue included aligning the different forms of income support so they are consistent with each other, reducing the obstacles for people trying to get income support, encouraging more people to work or study while on income support and investing and encouraging more jobs so people do not have to rely as much on income support.

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Is drugs, alcohol and tobacco an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	62.3%
No	37.7%




Some common themes around the issues of drugs, alcohol and tobacco were their accessibility and consequences of these drugs such as health issues, violence, crime, decreasing quality of life and unhealthy relationships. It was also how people, particularly other young people, use these drugs in dangerous ways such as binge drinking or heavy smoking.

Many responses identified that there needed to be more control around drugs, particularly alcohol. Some responses wanted more drugs to be legalised so they could be controlled with laws and regulations while other responses wanted more bans on already available drugs and lifting the age that a young person is able to buy them. Other responses also suggests treating drugs, alcohol and tobacco as more of a health issue rather than a legal issue, changing the culture around drugs to make it less appealing, more rehabilitation and counselling for those who need it and more harm minimisation strategies such as syringe exchanges.

Bullying and Violence

Is bullying and violence an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	60.0%
No	40.0%



Most of the responses focused on issues to do with bullying. This included that many young people saw that bullying is getting worse, particularly cyber bullying and in schools and this was a concern for them. A few responses also mentioned violence being an issue in public and the impact this has on community members feeling safe.

Young people suggested having more investment in programs which encourage resilience in young people, education and raising awareness in the community and particularly running them in schools as a way of empowering people.

Disability

Is disability an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	54.5%
No	45.5%



Responses on this question said that it was important to them that people who have a disability are supported in their decisions and have the ability to be part of the community and treated equally. Some responses also mentioned that it is important that there is more support for those with a disability, both younger and older people.

Responses focused on needing a whole of family approach for support and not just for the individual with the disability. Also focusing on the skills that those with disabilities have and utilising them in a job sense.

Transport

Is transport an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	52.1%
No	47.9%

A lot of young people identified public transport as being their main concern about the issue of transport. This included there not being enough or it costing too much to get to places. A few responses also mentioned that it was very difficult to get around if you were unable to drive and that there needs to be more energy efficient options for transport.

Suggestions for improving this issue included having more services, particularly in regional areas of Tasmania, more options for alternative transport such as bikes and trains and, having more trains between Hobart and Launceston to transport passengers and freight.

Public Spaces

Is the use of public spaces an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	45.7%
No	54.3%

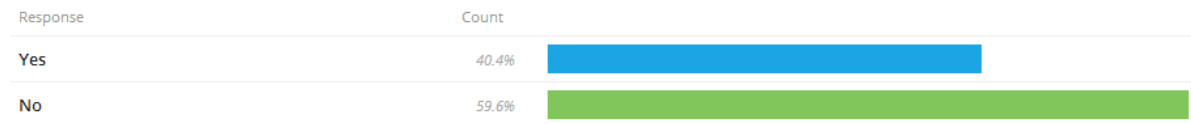
There were more young people who said that this was not an issue for them when deciding who to vote for. Young people who did see this as an important issue said it was because public spaces needed to be welcoming and available for all members of the community to use. Some of the aspects that were important included safety, environment, atmosphere, public art and culture.

Young people suggested that public spaces which were flexible in their design and were better planned would encourage more people to use these spaces. More consultations conducted with the community about what they want from public spaces were also noted as something that would be helpful.

Cyber Safety

Is cyber safety on social media an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	40.4%
No	59.6%



Again, more young people said this was not an issue for them. It is interesting to note that more people were concerned with bullying, and in particular cyber bullying, but cyber safety was not seen as much of a concern. There seems to be a disconnection between the cyber safety and cyber bullying. Those who did see cyber safety as an issue said it was the cyber bullying aspect which was of concern to them. Other responses also identified abuse and predators which were the main aspects of this issue for them. A few responses also mentioned that censorship with some in favour and some against this.

Young people saw that having tighter regulations on social media sites to be responsible for what happens on their sites to help decrease cyber bullying. Having some sort of internet surveillance was also mentioned in a few responses but others said that this should not happen. Others also mentioned having more help available for young people experiencing issues with cyber bullying and tougher penalties.

Body Image

Is body image an important issue for you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	30.6%
No	69.4%



This was identified by the least number of respondents as an important issue when thinking about who to vote for. Young people who said that this was an issue when deciding who to vote for said it was the images of people portrayed in the media and the effects that this has on young people's self esteem.

Suggestions about what could be done included having more restrictions on the media such as photo-shopping and models in addition to having education for young people on this issue creating more awareness and skills for them to deal with this issue.

Other Issues

Are there any other issues which are important to you when deciding who you might want to vote for? (You can still answer even if you can't vote yet.)

Response	Count
Yes	34.9%
No	65.1%



Other issues which young people identified as important to them when deciding who to vote for included climate change, the environment, arts and culture, women’s role in society, the NBN, tourism, and sport and recreation.

Those who said climate change was important to them wanted to see more sustainable energy options and being more aware of how to lessen our impact on climate change. This also linked in with environment where some young people said that they wanted to ensure that our environment is protected.

The NBN was identified as something which could deliver more opportunities online for Tasmanians and increase job opportunities. Those who talked about tourism also suggested it could create more jobs within Tasmania.

Arts and culture, women’s role in society and sport and recreation were all topics which young people thought that there needed to be more opportunities for participation by all people.

What young people said about the 2014 Election

Have you thought about who you would like to vote for in the 2014 Tasmanian election on March 15?

Response	Count
Yes	52.4%
No	26.2%
I'm not old enough to vote in this election	21.4%

Over half of respondents said that they had already thought about who they would like to vote for in the upcoming election. This is very positive as it demonstrates that young people are engaging in politics and are spending time thinking about who they want to vote for in the lead up to the election. Although young people who are old enough to vote in this election may not have thought about who they would like to vote for, they will have most likely thought about the issues which are important to them in the lead up to the election.

Key Findings from the *Y Your Vote Counts* Forum and Survey

Finding 1: Young people in Tasmania are interested in engaging with political candidates if given the opportunity to do so.

Finding 2: Young people in Tasmania are concerned with a diverse range of issues which affect all Tasmanians.

Finding 3: A short forum on voting for young people in Tasmania has the ability to increase their knowledge on how to vote.

Finding 4: Most young people in Tasmania want to have a say within their community in ways which interest them.

Finding 5: There is still a significant proportion of young people in Tasmania who are not enrolled to vote.

Finding 6: Young people in Tasmania understand the importance of considering different policies and what candidates stand for when deciding who to vote for.

Finding 7: Young people in Tasmania access a variety of sources for information when deciding who to vote for with the most common source being the internet.

Finding 8: Young people in Tasmania report not being able to access information easily on what they want to know when considering who to vote for.

Finding 9: Employment and equal access to services are the most common important issues that young people in Tasmania say that they will consider when deciding who to vote for.

Finding 10: Young people in Tasmania will often think of whole of community solutions to address issues as opposed to solutions which will only affect them and their peers.

Finding 11: Most young people in Tasmania are engaged in thinking about who they would like to vote for in the 2014 Tasmanian election early in the election campaign period.

Overall Conclusion

Young people were engaged in both the forum and survey. Participants at the forum were engaged in asking questions about a variety of different issues and hearing what the politicians had to say. Some participants who were not already enrolled to vote took this opportunity to enrol, update enrolment details and find out more about voting.

The survey was able to provide some more in depth information about what young people think about voting and what their key issues are. It is clear that young people want to make a difference in their community and to have their say using different ways of achieving this.

When it comes to issues, employment and equal access to services were identified by the most number of respondents as important issues when it comes to thinking about who to vote for in an election. Employment is a very current issue but it is surprising that equal access to services was also identified by so many respondents.

When developing ideas for possible solutions for all issues, young people often referred to whole of community responses or responses which would benefit other cohorts in the community. This is positive as it demonstrates that young people are thinking about these issues within a bigger picture and not just what is affecting their own lives now, but what it will mean for others and in the future.

The majority of young people know that they need to consider the different candidates in elections and make an effort to do some research and become more informed. Sometimes, despite getting information from a wide range of sources, young people struggle to find the answers or information they are looking for which can make it harder for them to make an informed vote and engage in the political process. Making information easier to understand and access may help young people, particularly first time voters.

Young people will take the opportunity to engage with learning about the political process, find out more about voting and have their say on what issues are important to them and the aspects that they are most concerned about.