

tasmanian youth forum 2024

*What young people had to say
about housing in Tasmania.*

housing

Consultation Report



Speak up. Be heard. Drive change.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the palawa and pakana people as the traditional, original and continuing custodians of lutruwita (Tasmania) and the continuing connection that Tasmanian Aboriginal people have to the land, sea, sky and waterways. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.



Acknowledgements

YNOT would like to thank the young people who participated in the Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) consultation process. We also acknowledge and thank the educators, youth workers, and parents/guardians who supported young people to participate.

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- Derwent Valley Youth Future Action Team
- Don College
- Dorset Community House
- Future Impact Group auspiced by George Town Council
- Homes Tasmania
- Kennerly
- Port Darymple School
- Riverside High School
- Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (North)
- Waratah-Wynyard Council
- West Tamar Council
- Yolla District School

Artwork and imagery included in the report were produced by young people who participated at TYF. Direct quotes were obtained from the online survey; some minor grammatical changes occurred to improve readability or provide context on their response, annotated by [...].

The Tasmanian Youth Forum is funded by the Tasmanian Government and supported by the City of Launceston.

Enquires about this Report can be directed to the Youth Network of Tasmania by email admin@ynot.org.au or post PO Box 4679, Hobart, Tasmania 7000.

Further information about YNOT and the Tasmanian Youth Forum can be found at our website www.ynot.org.au.

Executive Summary

'What is needed for young people to access and keep a safe, appropriate and affordable home?'

This is the question posed to young people aged 12-25 years who participated in the Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) consultation on *Housing* between January and May 2024.

This is what young people had to say.

What makes a house a home?

Young people believe that housing should be a right, not a privilege. They want to access housing that provides shelter and protection from bad weather, is affordable, close to reliable and affordable public transport, has adequate space and is connected to the internet. But more importantly, young people said that housing should fulfil their social, psychological and emotional needs, providing a safe, secure and supportive environment.

Transitioning to independence: moving out of home.

Many young people find moving out of home challenging due to difficulties securing safe, affordable and conveniently located housing, particularly for those on lower incomes, with no rental histories and/or limited support systems. Rising costs of living further exacerbate these issues with many young people struggling to afford the basics like food, transport and healthcare. Young people said that family support is crucial but often inadequate, leaving many seeking greater help to get by.

Young people's solutions to support their transition to independence include greater income support and protections for young people living on lower wages, updating the school curriculum to teach financial literacy, tenancy rights, and life skills, and investing in accessible programs to support housing navigation and independent living.

Renting a home.

Young people struggle to break into the private rental market. Reports of age-based discrimination by landlords, entering into short-term and informal leases, and experiencing financial stress were common. With longer education-to-employment pathways and lower wages, young people said they often rely on income support, but still struggle to cover their essential needs. Many feel they will never be able to afford their own home, forced to remain in a competitive and unstable rental market.

Young people's ideas to improve access in the private rental market include strengthening tenant rights, increasing awareness of rental rights and responsibilities, discouraging excessive property investments to increase stock, promoting utility-inclusive rentals, and investing in affordable housing and youth-specific rental support initiatives.

Youth housing: social housing and supported accommodation.

Homelessness and housing insecurity are major concerns for young people. Young people said the lack of affordable, safe and secure housing and income instability, can have significant negative impacts on their health and wellbeing, and employment and education outcomes.

Some young people reported difficulties accessing social housing, including long wait times, restrictive criteria and confusing processes. Many also spoke of not knowing where or how they could find housing support, and that it was especially hard for young people who needed to move away from home to complete their studies.

Young people's solutions to improve access to social housing include investing in youth-friendly social housing options, expanding long-term supported accommodation, improved access to crisis housing supports, and incorporating affordable youth housing into residential planning.

Liveable Communities.

Higher rental costs in major towns are pushing young people to the outer fringes of the community or into overcrowded dwellings. At the same time, young people living in rural areas reported fewer affordable housing options amid high unemployment and limited, local entry-level jobs. Young people said these housing challenges can force them to balance financial stress with proximity to family, essential services, and transport, leading to frustration and social and geographical isolation.

Young people's ideas to improve community inclusion include investing in youth hubs, reliable public transport, community engagement programs, and increasing awareness of support services.

Importantly, young people want to be **actively involved in government decision-making** and **policy design** to ensure that their lived experiences are reflected in the development of effective solutions for young Tasmanians.

Recommendations

1. The Tasmanian Government to invest in the design and delivery of a standalone child and youth housing and homelessness plan, under the Tasmanian 20-year Housing Strategy to address and prevent youth homelessness and housing insecurity.
2. Meaningfully engage young Tasmanians in identifying housing solutions to ensure the views, lived experience and housing needs of young people are reflected in policy and programmatic responses.
3. Expedite the review of the Residential Tenancy Act 1997, outlined in the Housing Strategy Action Plan 3.2 .1, to strengthen the rights of renters including young people.
4. Establish a Youth Advisory Committee under the Homes Tasmania Act 2022 to inform decision-making by the Homes Tasmania Board.
5. Invest in the design and implementation of tailored life skills and financial literacy programs to support young people to transition into independent living and maintain tenancies.
6. Ensure the impacts of housing insecurity and homelessness is considered in the review of the State's education system to improve educational outcomes in Tasmania.
7. Increase awareness of, and access to, services that can support young people through investment in a centralised, age-appropriate communication platform.
8. Explore and identify options for State and Local Governments and community to provide place-based, safe spaces for young people, such as drop-in centres and 'one-stop-shops', to support social connectedness, promote positive wellbeing and referral to appropriate services and supports.

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Introduction

The Tasmanian Youth Forum (TYF) is one of the largest annual consultative events for young people 12-25 years in Tasmania. An initiative of the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT), TYF brings together young people from across the state to share their views and opinions on an issue of importance to them. TYF provides young people with a platform to share their ideas and propose solutions to improve outcomes for their peers and communities.

As the peak body for young people 12-25 years and the youth sector in Tasmania, YNOT seeks to drive positive change with young people and the sector. We work to ensure that the rights of young people are upheld and supported by government, community and decision-makers. We do this through meaningful youth participation and engagement, amplifying the views of young people and advocating for the inclusion of young people in decision-making on matters impacting them.



Affordable
Homes for youth

Housing: A significant concern.

Key findings from recent YNOT consultations across Tasmania found that housing is a critical issue for young people.^{i,ii} Challenges breaking into the private rental market, low wages, income instability, reports of age-based discrimination by landlords, and extensive wait lists for social housing make it difficult for many young people to find and maintain stable housing.

Young people increasingly report being pushed to the urban fringes to find housing away from family, school, work and essential services including reliable public transport and healthcare. These challenges are further exacerbated by cost-of-living pressures, significantly impacting the health, social and economic wellbeing of young Tasmanians.

In recent times, the Tasmanian Government has invested in targeted, developmentally appropriate, whole-of-government strategic policy for Tasmania's children and young people including the *Tasmanian Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy*, *Youth Jobs Strategy*, *Child and Student Wellbeing Strategy* and the *Youth Justice Blueprint*. This is recognition by government that strategies and solutions designed for adults are not suitable for children and young people.

However, Tasmania's first 20-year Tasmanian Housing Strategy and 2023-27 Action Plan, intended for all Tasmanians, fails to respond to the unique and often complex housing needs of all children and young people in our State.

We know this because young people are telling us. Young Tasmanians chose 'housing' as the focus topic for TYF 2024.

This report summarises young people's views on housing in Tasmania and their recommendations for ensuring all young people have access to a safe, appropriate, and affordable home.

Why this is important.

Young people's rights to participation and freedom of expression are enshrined by the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, enacted in the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986.¹

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)

Article 12. Children and young people have the right to give their opinion on issues that impact them, and for adults to listen and take their opinions seriously.

Article 13. Children and young people have the right to access and share information freely, and to express themselves in any medium, as long as the information is not damaging to themselves or to others.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976)

Article 19. Everyone has the right to hold an opinion and share their opinions freely. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive and share information and ideas of all kinds across all mediums, as long as the information is not damaging to themselves or to others.

Article 25. Everyone has the right and the opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs and to participate in genuine elections.

MAKE US
A PRIORITY!!!
WE ARE THE FUTURE!

What the data reveals about housing in Tasmania.

Housing issues in Tasmania can have significant and long-lasting impacts on young people's health, wellbeing and life-trajectories.

Young people are overrepresented in the States' homeless population.

Approximately 39% of the state's homeless population is under the age of 25.ⁱⁱⁱ

Young people who have previously experienced homelessness, lack family support, identify as Aboriginal or LGBTQIA+, are engaged with the youth justice system or statutory care are at higher risk.^{iv}

Young Tasmanians aged 13-24 years presented alone 7,125 times to Specialist Homeless Services between April 2023 and March 2024. Of those, 294 were young people under 16 years old.^v

The drivers, pathways into and out of homelessness, and experiences of homelessness are different for young people.

Young people experience some of the most 'insidious, hidden and dangerous' forms of homelessness, including couch surfing, severe overcrowding and rough sleeping. Domestic and family violence, intimate partner violence, living in overcrowded housing, income insecurity and housing stress are primary drivers of youth homelessness.^{vi}

Homelessness significantly harms young people's health and wellbeing, education and employment opportunities, and makes them vulnerable to exploitation, violence and social isolation.^{vii}

There are lengthy wait times for social housing and supported accommodation.

1 in 4 applicants on the Tasmanian Housing Register is a young person aged 16-25 years.^{viii} It takes around 87 weeks to house priority applicants.^{ix}

There were 234 applications for the 147 beds available in Youth2Independence (Y2I) supported accommodation facilities between June 2023 and June 2024. With facilities operating at capacity, just 2 in 5 applicants were accepted into the program.^x

Many young people are locked out of the private rental market.

With average rental prices at \$457 per week,^{xi} Tasmania is one of the least affordable states to rent a home.^{xii} There are no affordable homes for young people living on income support in Tasmania.^{xiii}

Homeownership is becoming a pipedream for many.

Homeownership rates are declining for young people.^{xiv} The proportion of homeownership in younger adults aged 25-29 has reduced by 18% since the 1970s.^{xv} The average age of first-time buyers in Australia is now 36.^{xvi}

Direct parental support increases the likelihood of transitioning into homeownership. Those able to continue living with their parents while saving are up to 40% more likely to purchase their first home. Cash gifts over \$10,000 further increases these odds up to 90%.^{xvii}

The cost to end youth homelessness in Tasmania over 30 years is estimated at \$53 million – for every \$1 spent by Government on affordable housing and wraparound supports for young people, \$2.36 will be returned back to the Tasmanian community.^{xviii}

Methodology

TYF 2024 participants explored the question 'What is needed for young people to access and keep a safe, appropriate and affordable home?'; and were invited to share their views on the following topics through group discussions on:

- Housing suitability.
- Barriers to accessing and maintaining housing.
- Factors influencing housing choice.
- Social and affordable housing.
- Liveable communities.
- Transitioning to independence.
- Private housing market/rental market.

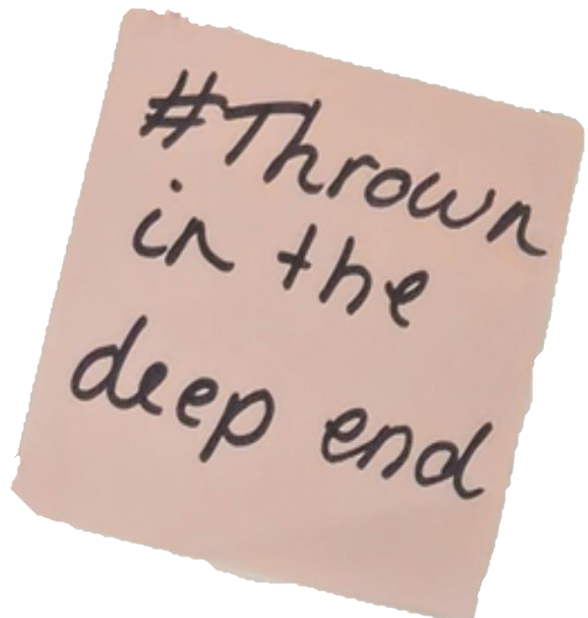
Participants were asked to provide demographic information, including age, region, gender identity and personal identification with marginalised population groups.

An online survey was open for four (4) weeks throughout March 2024, designed to elicit feedback to inform TYF focus areas and activities.

A statewide forum followed the online survey, held in Launceston on Friday 17 May 2024. YNOT worked with service providers and secondary schools to identify and address barriers to participation to ensure that all young people had equitable access to participate.

Participation in the survey and statewide forum were not mutually exclusive, thus demographic information is reported separately.

Data from the online survey and statewide forum was digitally recorded, de-identified and transcribed for data analysis. Aggregated qualitative data was explored using a thematic analysis approach with NVivo14 Software and reported as a summary of key themes and findings.



Participant Snapshot: Who was involved?

Online Survey

77 young people aged 12-25 years completed the online survey.
The average age of respondents was 16 years.

Statewide Forum

128 young people aged 12-25 years attended the statewide forum.*
The average age of respondents was 16 years.

AGE

77.9%
12-17 years

22.1%
18-25 years



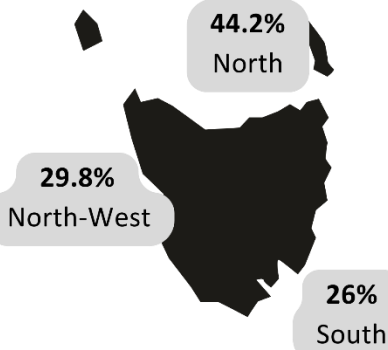
AGE

85.7%
12-17 years

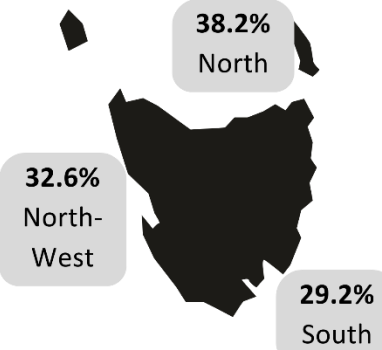
15.3%
18-25 years



REGION



REGION



GENDER IDENTITY

71.1% female/woman

24.7% male/man

5.2% non-binary or other



GENDER IDENTITY

64.8% female/woman

29.5% male/man

5.7% non-binary or other



DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION

41 individuals identified coming from a diverse background, and included:[^]

- 15 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 5 culturally or linguistically diverse
- 9 living with disability
- 21 LGBTIQA+
- 3 parent or carer

DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION

46 individuals identified coming from a diverse background, and included:[^]

- 23 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- 3 culturally or linguistically diverse
- 12 living with disability
- 19 LGBTIQA+
- 1 parent or carer

[^]Individuals may identify as belonging to more than one population or demographic group.

*91 individuals who provided demographic information for reporting purposes.

What young Tasmanians said about housing

What makes a house a home?

Young people emphasised that housing should be a right, not a privilege. They want to access housing that:

- Provides shelter from bad weather and has adequate heating and cooling.
- Is affordable, allowing them to afford other living expenses such as utilities, food, sanitary items, health and wellbeing services, and social and recreational opportunities.
- Has accessible, affordable and reliable public transportation.
- Provides enough space and bedrooms for the people living there, and has a working kitchen and bathroom.
- Has mobile phone reception and is connected to the internet.

“Somewhere with a warm bed, food, access to basic sanitary needs etc.” 24, North.

“I think that affordability makes a house a home. A home should be something that people are excited about and not something to worry about.” 16, North.

“I believe that a house is made a home when the environment is safe, secure and able to provide adequate shelter, food, clean water and a happy environment.” 17, North-West.

“Somewhere safe, dry and warm to stay. Somewhere where they can unwind and relax after a hard day.” 16, North.

“A place where the physical, social, and psychological needs can be fulfilled.” 21, South.

Moreover, housing should fulfil young people’s social, psychological and emotional needs, providing a safe, secure and supportive environment.

A home is...

A place where young people feel safe and secure.

Young people expressed how important it is to have a home environment where they can relax and unwind after a tough day, and not feel worried about their finances, living arrangements or housing security. Having a safe and welcoming community and living in close proximity to support networks and services are also important for young people to feel safe and secure within their home.

“What makes a house a home is where and when everyone feels respected, safe, comfortable and loved. Everyone feels that they have a voice to how they live and go about life. I think this as nobody can perform their best everyday or have an equal chance at life if they don't have these resources to use or look up to.” 15, North-West.

A place where young people feel loved, valued and have a sense of belonging. Young people said a home must support them to build and maintain positive relationships with family and friends, gives them a sense of love and belonging, builds their self-esteem by making them feel valued and competent, and supports their self-actualisation by allowing them to freely express themselves and achieve their full potential.

“Having your own space and your own things in that space. Independence is so important for young people, and having their own safe space to be themselves and create a comfortable environment is so empowering for every individual.” 23, South.

“Safety, belonging and support. A home requires emotional connections and a sense of belonging, not just the physical things.” 15, North.

The issues with housing and young people's ideas and solutions to solve them.

Moving out of home comes with many new responsibilities that youth are aware of

HOUSING IS NOT A PRIVILEGE IT'S A RIGHT !!!

"We need more money invested into the youth of Tasmania. We are really struggling with the cost of living crisis, minimum wage, high rent, poor mental health, and unfair (and unrealistic) expectations put onto us by older generations. Please help make it possible for us to find affordable, safe homes to rent, and possibly one day even buy." 24, North-West.

"Gosh some key things for myself would be feeling safe and having my own place to be safe in, affordable, safe neighbourhood, easy to deal with landlord, easy access to transport and necessary shops. I've found it hard to access things outside of my home in certain places due to having a rough neighbourhood. As a young person in housing having transport and/or shops around me helped so much as I had little to no support and had to rely on myself as much as possible." 23, South.

"There are so many barriers to accessing suitable housing for everyone, not just youth! But I feel like youth do not have the "on paper" requirements of getting into any form of rental. Having the references, jobs, stability and more is what gets you into a rental. Not a lot of youth have those opportunities. Things are becoming so much more expensive so it's hard for anyone to afford anything right now, rentals, groceries, fuel, childcare, school, so many things are contributing to youth not having suitable housing!" 23, South.

Youth Allowance is not enough for a House & bills...

Government-funded Housing Should look:
Welcoming
Inviting
Safe

KEEP

GOVERNMENT LISTENING TO YOUNG PEOPLE

EXPAND CHEAPER SHARE OPTIONS

HOUSING ALLOWANCE

MORE COMMUNAL HOUSING

INNOVATION TO BUILD FASTER

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

BREAKFAST PROGRAMS

SUPPORT WORKERS IN ALL TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

NO STADIUM WHILE PEOPLE ARE HOMELESS

INCLUDE RENTAL ALLOWANCE ON TOP OF YOUTH ALLOWANCE

GRANTS FOR STUDENTS IN NEED

TASMANIAN YOUTH FORUM 2024

MAKING HOUSING AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE AND APPROPRIATE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

MORE HOMELESS FRIENDLY ARCHITECTURE

FINANCIAL PACKAGES FOR FIRST TIME RENTERS

MORE SHELTERS STATEWIDE - WITH MORE BEDS

ONE BILL PUTTING UTILITIES IN WITH THE RENT

CHANGE

REMOVE STIGMA ON YOUTH RENTERS

DISABILITY ACCESSIBILITY IN MORE PROPERTIES

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW BUILDS

REVIEW FROM THE BOTTOM - SOCIALISM

GET HOUSING OUT OF CAPITALISM

MORE STUDENT HOUSING - ESP. RURAL AREAS

CHANGE ELIGIBILITY - INCLUDE CASUAL INCOME IN ASSESSMENT -

RELIABLE TRANSPORT OPTIONS

CREATE NEW ONES TOO

CAP RENTAL PRICES

RAISE WAGES OR REDUCE COST OF LIVING

NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US

COUNCIL APPROVALS TO FREE UP MORE LAND (EG. UNUSED AGRICULTURE)

MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH VOICES TO BE HEARD!

POSITIONS IN PARLIAMENT FILLED BY PEOPLE WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

CREATE

SERVICES ACCESSIBLE AT SCHOOLS OR MOBILE

SCHOOL

RENTING, LIFE SKILLS, BILLS, BUYING A HOUSE, BUILDING & TRADE SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS ETC.

CREATE

MORE EDUCATION - PREPARE US FOR THE WORLD

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Make youth
Housing a priority



Choosing Between
a Home or Food
is unacceptable...

youth should
get a rent
Allowance instead
of spending their
food, bills, clothing
money.

"The cost to rent/buy is ridiculous and if there is support out there we don't know where or how to access it. We also can't afford to pay fees to get financial literacy help. There needs to be more taught in public education about things like housing, taxes, employment, life skills etc. and less subjects or information that never gets used in day-to-day life." 24, North.

"I've been waiting for ages. [I've been] prioritised with a new born baby and no-one has called me or bothered to help me and I'll be outta this [transitional accommodation program] in August. Then there's others that already have [work] or don't have kids and get one given to them before me [being allocated social housing]. Why are we labelled like we don't need the help as much as the elderly or older generation?" 22, North.

"Rent being unaffordable is definitely a barrier to accessing housing. There is also just a massive shortage of houses for rent. I had to move out of home to Hobart for uni (as the degree wasn't offered in Hobart) and took 5 months to find a house. I applied for 44 different places. The place I did end up getting was too expensive and I had to budget less money on groceries and electricity (avoided using the heater most of the Winter) as a result. I also feel that the fact I was applying with multiple people (as a share house) to keep the costs of living lower meant I was less likely to be a serious candidate for some of the places I applied for which I thought was unfair." 24, North-West.

Key idea(s)

- redistribution of wealth. ☆
- raising minimum wage.
- taxing the rich more & more fairly
- filling loopholes where the rich cannot further profit off of funds intended for the poor and less fortunate.
- affordable and reliable + effective public transport.

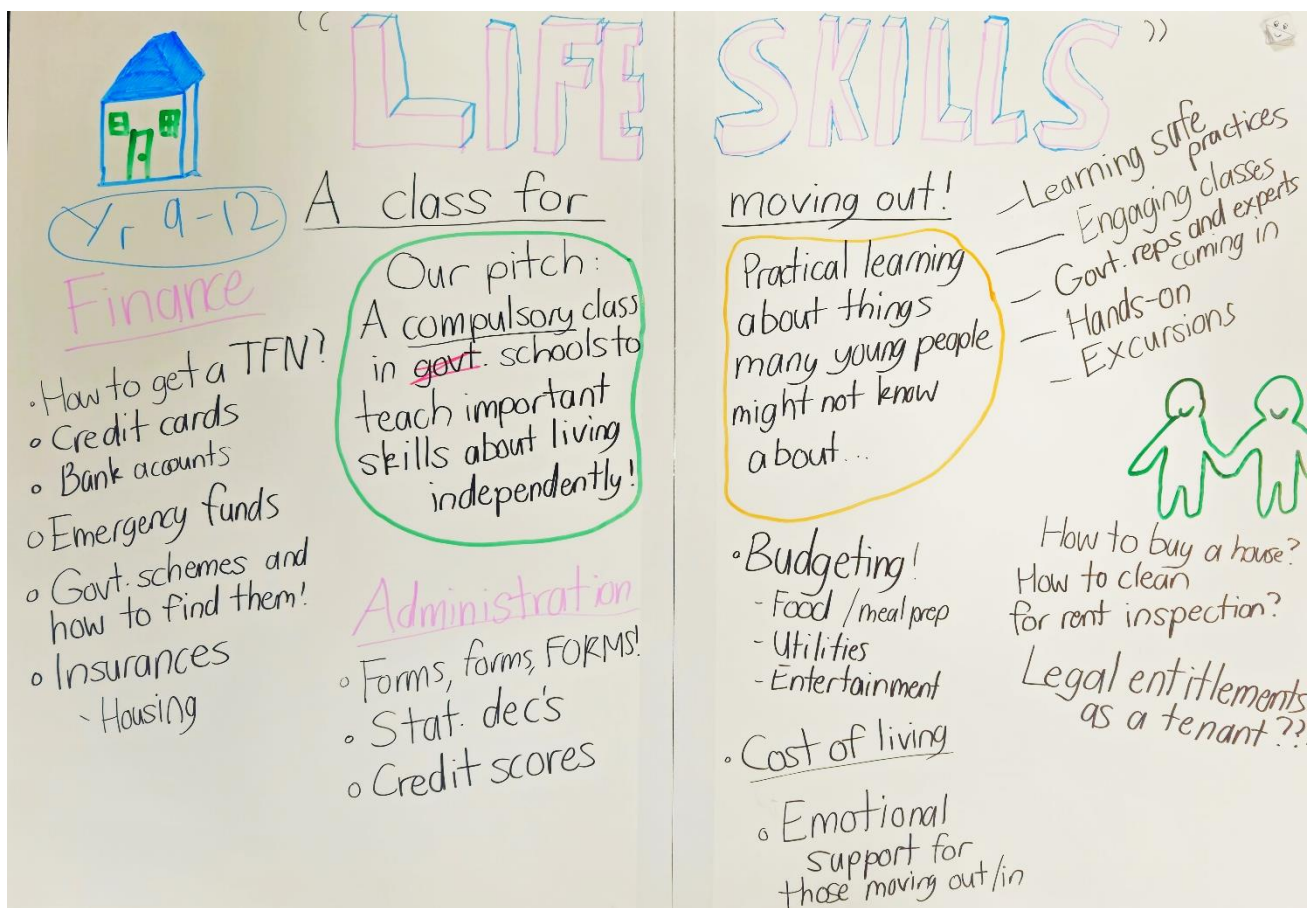


Transitioning to independence: moving out of home.

Young people shared that moving out of home for the first time can be a very challenging experience. Finding a suitable home that is safe and affordable, while also close to school or work, social networks, essential services and public transport is not an easy feat. This is even harder for young people living on low wages or experiencing financial insecurity, with limited or no rental history, living in rural and regional areas, and those without strong existing resources or support systems.

With rising cost of living expenses, young people can find themselves struggling to afford the basics like heating, healthy food, clothes, transport and health services, let alone the costs of maintaining a home or tenancy.

Families play a central role in helping young people prepare for independence. However, young people acknowledged that not all families have the skills, knowledge, capacity or resources to do so. Young people who do not have the option to remain at home, such as those moving away for college, TAFE or University, or those who are forced to leave due to overcrowding or unstable or unsafe home environments, find themselves seeking greater external support to get by.

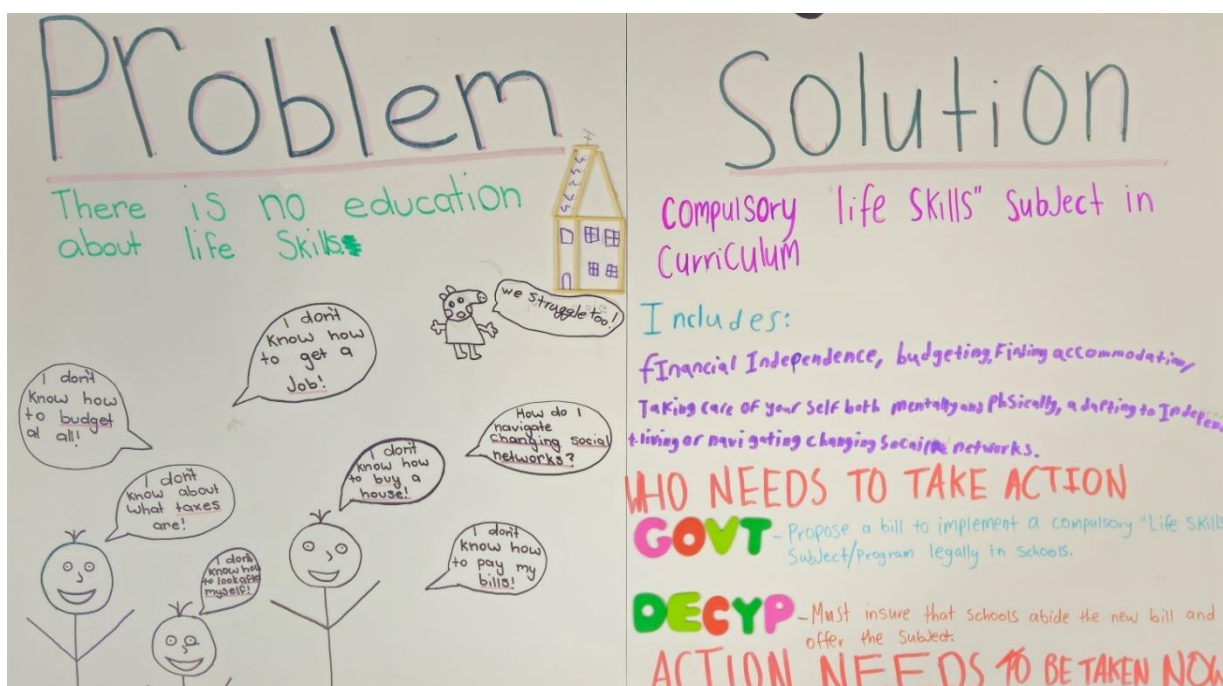


Proposed solutions

Young people stressed the need to be armed with the knowledge, skills and confidence to take care of themselves and, ultimately, to help them succeed in accessing and keeping a home. Young people's ideas to achieve this include:

- Ensure changes to minimum wages and pay rises are passed onto young workers, particularly in retail, tourism and hospitality.
- Revitalise the Tasmanian School Curriculum to include education and capacity-building training for young people from at least Grade 9 on:
 - Financial literacy, including budgeting, taxes, mortgages and income support.
 - Rental tenancy rights, agreements and legislation.
 - Life skills, confidence and resilience to take care of themselves.
 - Career pathway planning and support to help young people get into the workforce and financial stability sooner.
 - Expand and improve awareness of existing capacity building courses across all Tasmanian schools, incl. Career and Life Planning (CLP205118).

- Invest in free, accessible programs that support all young people to:
 - Navigate their housing choices and pathways into the private and public housing sectors.
 - Develop and strengthen essential life skills to live independently including, cooking, cleaning and basic vehicle and home maintenance.
- Policy makers to consider the financial constraints of young people when designing initiatives that impact housing, including HECS/HELP loans and financial insecurity.
- Initiatives that support young people to cover the cost of moving out of home for the first time, such as a small grant to support with moving costs, rental bonds, utilities and purchasing essential furniture (bedding, heaters, whitegoods etc.).
- An increase in minimum Centrelink income support payments so that young people aren't living below the poverty line. Review Centrelink's 'permanent independence' criteria so that young people under the age of 22 in families of low incomes can receive full income support payments to contribute to the family income and save to move out of home.



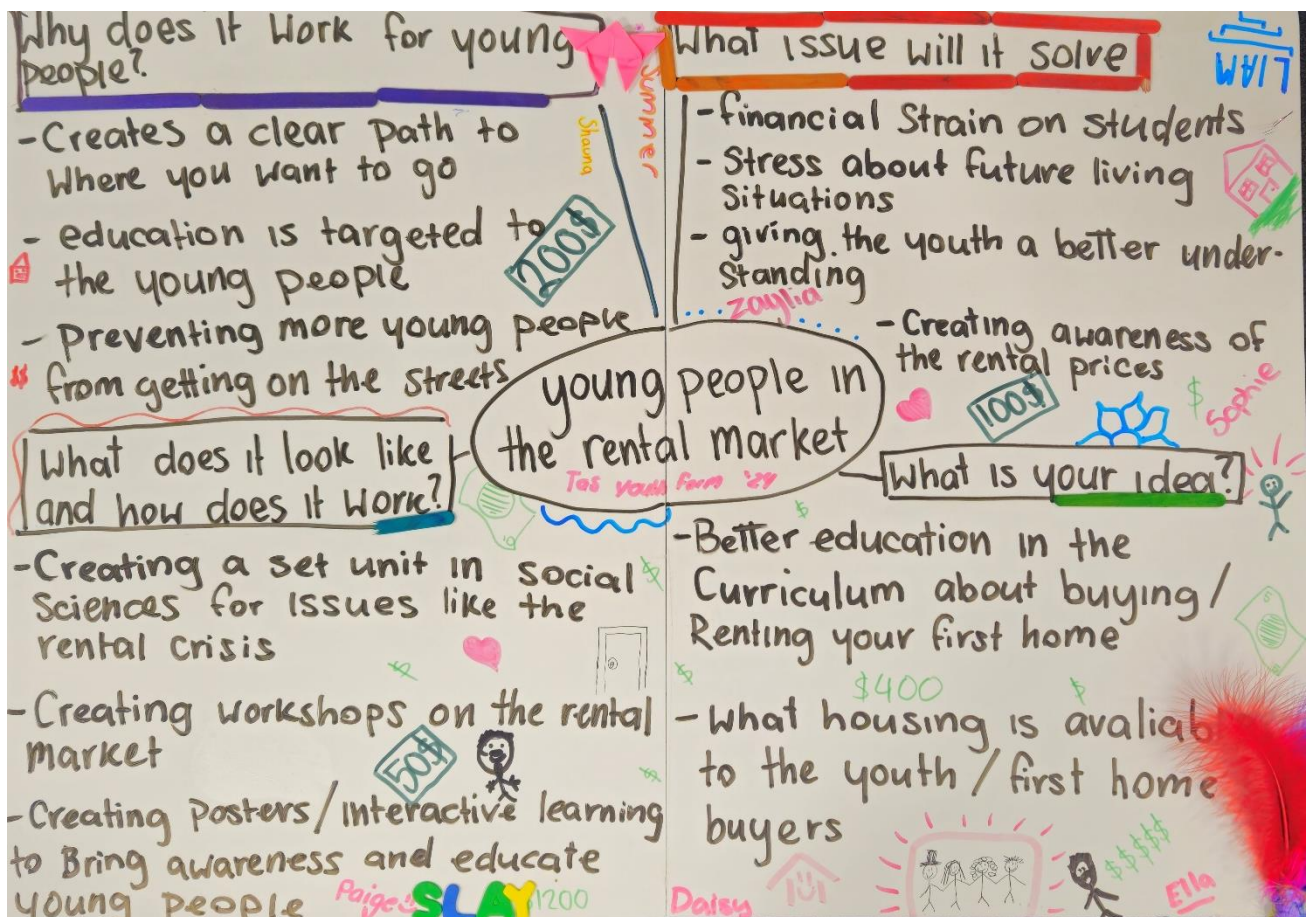
Renting a home.

Young told of their struggles breaking into the private rental market. Too often, young people spoke of being discriminated against based on their age, feeling forced into sub-par housing conditions, informal and/or short-term leases, inappropriate housing or experiencing financial stress to keep a roof over their head.

With education to employment pathways longer than previous generations,^{xix} it is not surprising that young people living on lower wages are struggling to get ahead. Centrelink income and rental supports, and cost of living subsidies were welcomed by young people, however it was noted that many were still struggling to make ends meet. Young people also said they needed to choose

between essential living expenses such as going to the GP, transport costs, heating and eating healthy.

Many young people believed they would never be able to own their own home - that they will be forced to remain in the rental market, unable to save enough money for a deposit to compete with the few affordable homes remaining. This was particularly frustrating for young people who felt that some landlords were placing excessive restrictions on their homes, such as refusing pets or modifications to the home such as painting and hanging pictures, excessive rent increases and invasive property inspections, and even restricting visitors to their home.



Proposed solutions

Young people want to see a private rental market that is accessible, equitable and affordable for all. They believe it can be achieved by:

- Strengthening young people's rights in the Residential Tenancy Act 1997. Young people want to see greater protections particularly around allowing pets and non-permanent modifications to rentals and preventing age-based discrimination by landlords.
- Increasing awareness of rental and landlord rights and responsibilities with young people, and how they can get help if they need it. This could be achieved through school programs, housing and legal support services, and community services, as well as online resources.
- Disincentives to deter excessive house purchases or investments in multiple dwellings, and purchases by non-Tasmanian resident investors. This could include an increased tax on multiple house ownership, and a cap on short-stay rentals.
- Encouraging utility-inclusive rental agreements so that young people are aware of the total potential costs and budget more effectively.
- Investing in youth-specific initiatives that can help young people break into, and stay in the private rental market, such as:
 - Increasing supply of affordable housing options for young people, capped at 30% of total income.
 - Rent to buy home loans for young people.
 - Share homes with supports to ease the transition to independence and help manage interpersonal relationships in the home.
- Programs that ease cost of living, especially with accessing health and wellbeing services, such as the GP, dentist and psychology, as well as groceries, fuel, clothing and utilities.

Young People in the Rental Market

- Renter discrimination against young people
- Which is preventing young people from renting

Solutions

1. Creating areas for only young people to rent
- Community housing for people under 25
2. Young people are less informed and so having methods to inform & educate them will help to appear more competent
3. Free access to personal documentation and make it more easy to access

What does this do for young People?

1. Easier access to housing resulting in young people having a place to stay & not resorting to unsafe areas
2. Educate & make them more knowledgeable about housing
3. Will make the process easier for young people attempting to get housing
1. Less competition in the renting market

Diagram: A circular flow diagram showing the relationship between 'inflation', 'Mental Health', 'Healthy', 'Homelessness', 'Cost of Living (Food/Fuel)', 'interest/debt', and 'house Rent'. Arrows indicate a clockwise cycle: Inflation leads to Mental Health, which leads to Healthy, then Homelessness, then Cost of Living (Food/Fuel), then interest/debt, then house Rent, and finally back to Inflation.

Youth housing: Social housing and supported accommodation.

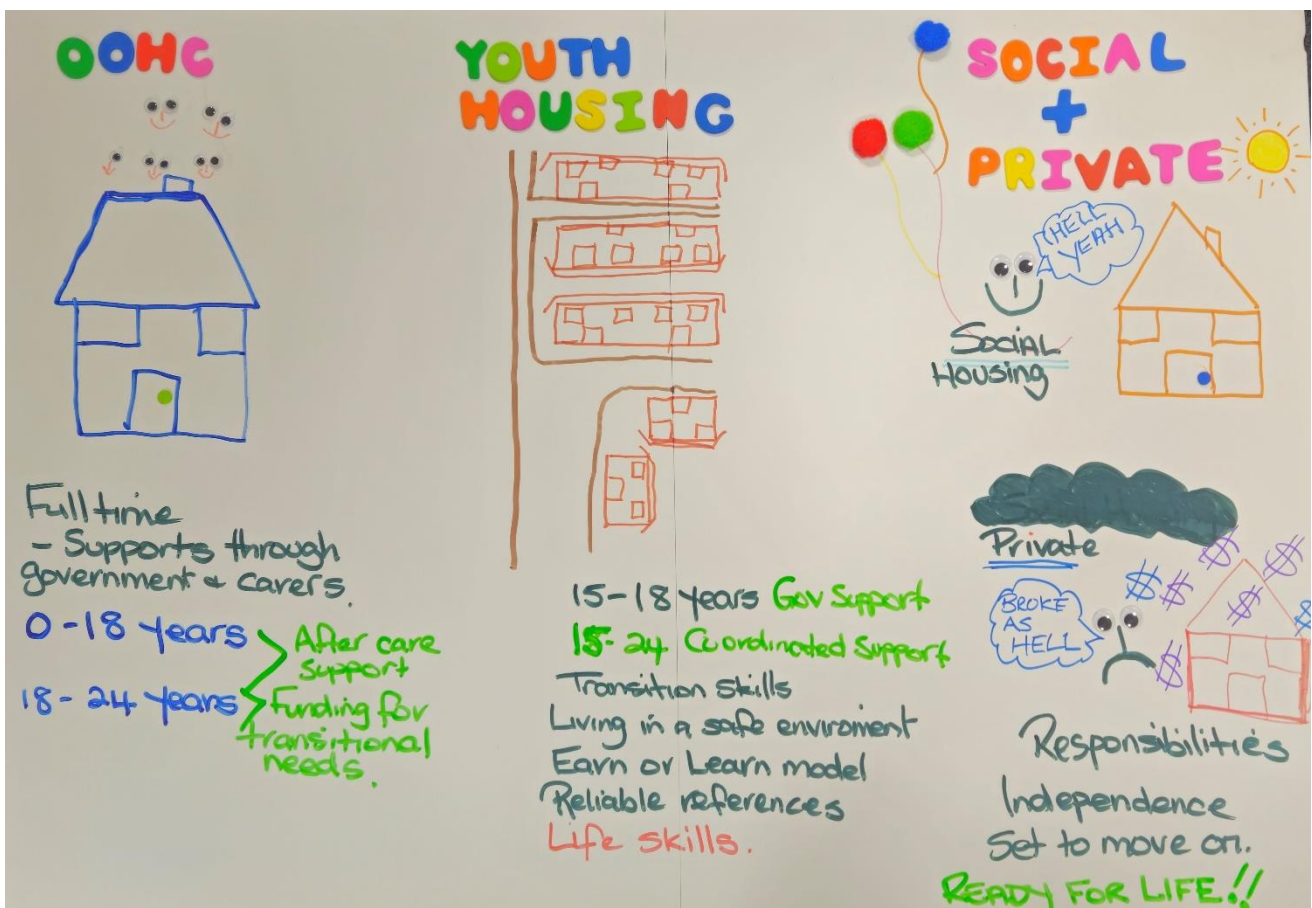
Homelessness and the risk of homelessness is a high concern for many. Young people said that a lack of affordable, safe and appropriate housing, unawareness of available services and income insecurity drive poor outcomes, forcing young people to stay in unsafe conditions and pushing the most vulnerable into homelessness.

Young people also stated that housing insecurity and homelessness can have significant and negative effects on their mental and physical health, ability to find and keep work, and to remain engaged in school.

Young people who had accessed social housing supports found the process incredibly challenging and stressful, reporting excessive wait times with

little communication, restrictive eligibility criteria and confusing application processes. Those living in crisis and transitional housing, and some living in long-term supported housing, were worried about where they would go next – locked out of the private rental market and left waiting on the social housing register.

Furthermore, young people living on lower incomes needing to move away from home to pursue school, training or work had few youth-friendly options available to them, unable to afford the costs of local boarding schools or appropriate shared housing. Some young people spoke of changing their education and career plans altogether as they couldn't afford to live away from home while studying.

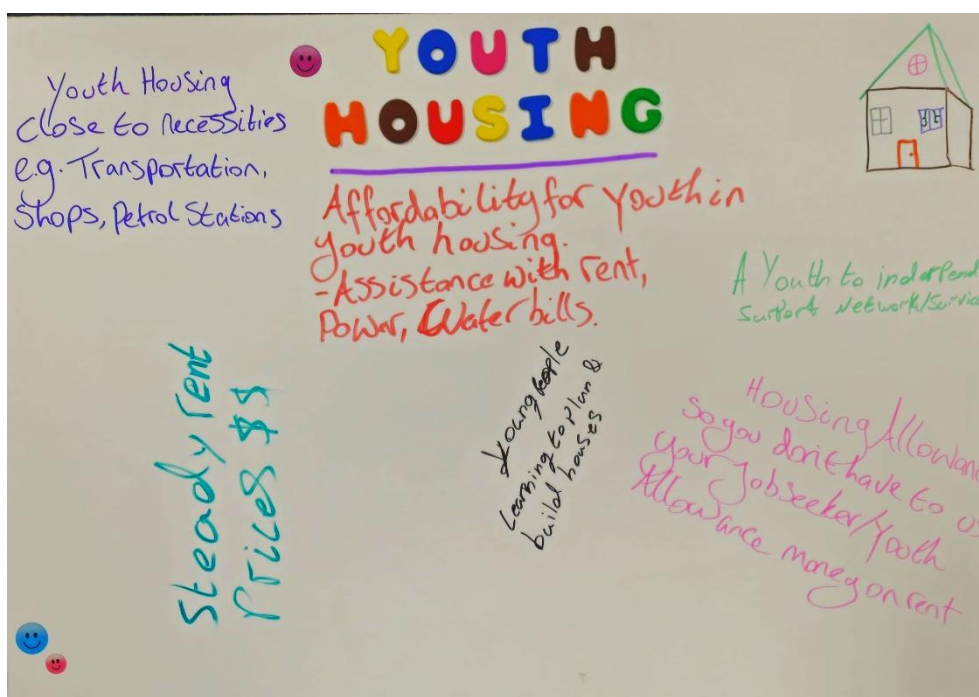


Proposed solutions

Young people want more youth-friendly housing options available to them in both the public and private housing sectors. They stressed the need for a variety of housing models that can support young people based on their individual needs and life stages (students, young families, working singles, single parents etc.). Importantly, these initiatives must be affordable, safe and appropriate, and available to all young people.

Young people want to see...

- Greater investment in, and expansion of, long-term supported accommodation models for young people across the state. Ensure that options are available for young people exiting crisis and transitional accommodation who are not yet ready to re-engage with school, training or work.
- Support for young people entering shared housing in the private market. Young people suggested a supported group share-home model with a resident peer who could help them manage the home environment and social dynamics. The peer should be a positive role model who can support them to transition to independence by giving advice on accessing helping them to connect to vice on useful services, and essential life skills like cooking, cleaning and budgeting.
- Youth housing options that consider the holistic needs of young people, helping them build capacity, confidence and capabilities to be independent, engage in education, training and employment, and supports social engagement and competency, and builds essential life skills needed for home ownership and financial literacy.
- Improved access to crisis housing supports and invest in shelters and safe spaces in rural areas.
- Investment in communal housing options for young people to reduce home ownership/rental costs by sharing essential infrastructure and facilities. Young people suggested that the government consider repurposing existing hotel infrastructure, such as the Midcity and Fountainside Hotels, to provide a quick and greatly needed injection of affordable youth housing.
- Affordable, youth-friendly housing options embedded in residential planning, ensuring that housing is spread out amongst neighbourhoods to avoid over-concentration. Consider proximity to public transport so that young people can continue to access essential services, school and work.



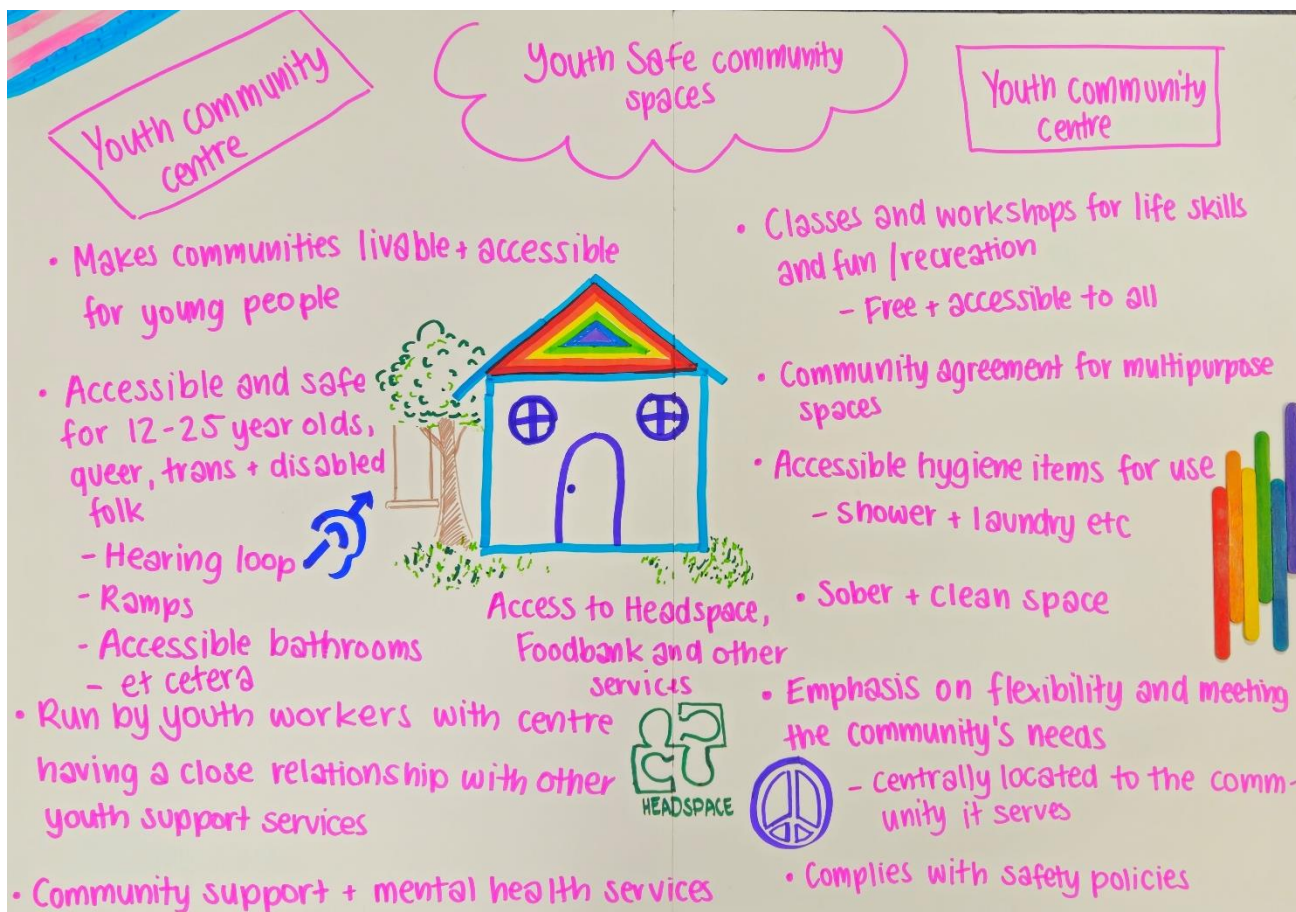
Liveable communities.

Higher rental costs in major towns and suburbs are forcing many young people into the outer fringes, or to live in over-crowded dwellings to combat housing stress. Young people living in rural areas spoke of having even fewer affordable and appropriate housing options available to them - a situation worsened by a competitive job market, high unemployment rate and a lack of entry-level jobs.

Young people said that these housing choices have a significant impact on their lives – making tough decisions to balance housing and financial stress, with their proximity to family, friends and support networks, essential services, and school and work. Access to affordable and reliable public transport is also an important factor, with young people

who lack transport options feeling frustrated and isolated, unable to easily move about where they need to go.

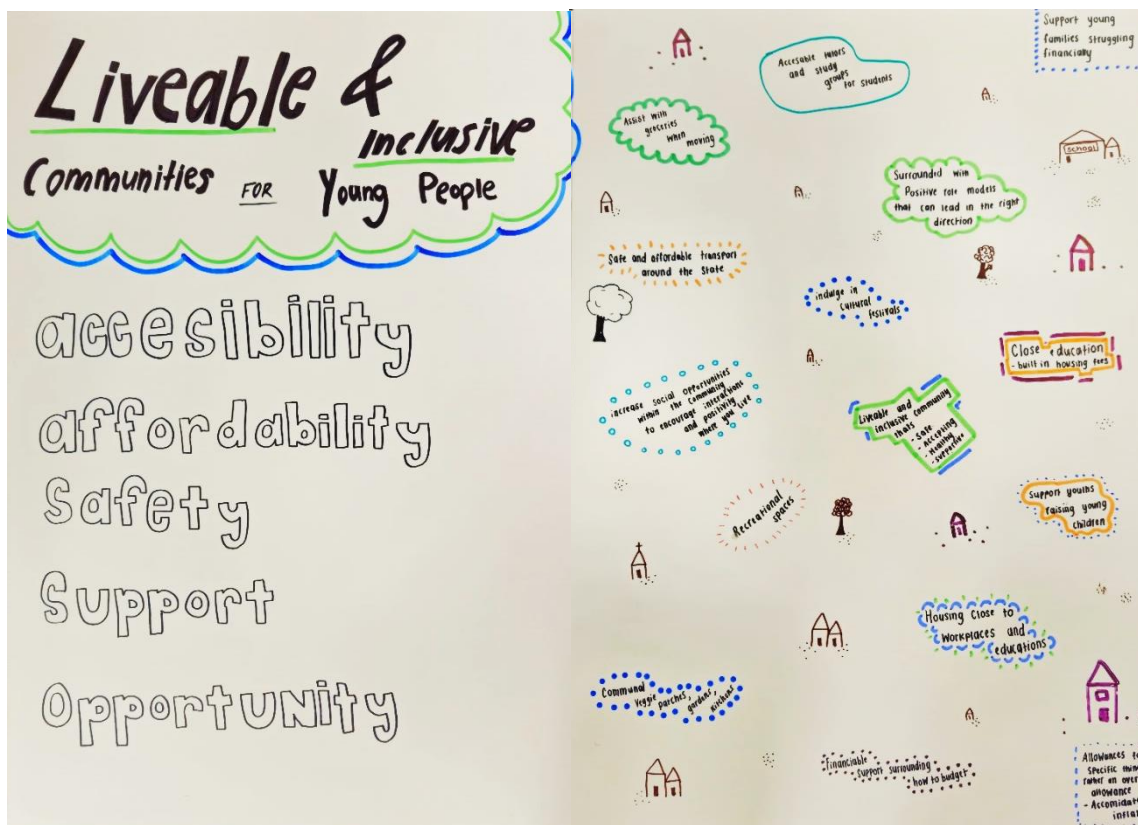
Initiatives that supplement cost of living expenses, such as The Link Youth Health Service ‘Youth Health Fund’, Neighbourhood House food collectives and community gardens, and Tasmanian Government school breakfast programs were highly welcomed. However, they also noted that many young people are not aware that these initiatives exist or lack the confidence or support to access them – emphasising the importance of maintaining social networks to connect young people to support and help when they need it.



Proposed solutions

Young people want to feel welcomed, supported and connected to their local community, and want to see a community collective approach to combat the housing and cost of living crisis. Solutions to do this include:

- Invest in youth hubs and safe spaces that offer a place for young people to hang out, socialise, find relevant information and support services. Spaces need to be open access, free and developed in consultation with young people who will access them.
- Provide reliable, accessible and affordable public transport options in outer suburb areas. Consider ways to provide alternative transport options to support young people to access social and recreational opportunities, as well as school, training and work.
- Invest in programs that encourage young people to proactively engage in their community and expand their social networks. These programs should focus on building confidence, resilience, and self-esteem and connecting them to positive role models in the community.
- Engage young people in community and government consultation processes, especially in the design of social and recreational initiatives and local planning of shared community spaces. Continue to invest in public shared spaces for young people to socialise and recreate, including local parks, sporting facilities and equipment and public shelter areas.
- Increase awareness of and access to existing community supports that help with cost of living expenses. Work with young people to ensure that the programs are safe, relevant and appropriate for them.
- Continue to invest in free social and recreational events that bring community and young people together such as local markets and festivals. Young people want to see a strong emphasis on celebrating diversity and social cohesion.



Conclusion

“Housing in Tasmania could be the key to supporting young people who are having a hard start in life, or don’t have access to a safe and supported home, if done correctly.” 15, South.

The 2024 Tasmanian Youth Forum has highlighted the critical and complex housing challenges faced by young Tasmanians. Consultation findings show that young people see housing as a fundamental right that is essential to their physical, psychological and social health. They emphasised the importance of having a safe, affordable and suitable home environment that allows them to thrive.

Young people face significant barriers to accessing suitable housing in Tasmania, including unaffordable rent, a shortage of appropriate housing, and age-based discrimination in the housing market. Financial insecurity, a lack of rental history, and limited resources and supports further exacerbate these challenges.

To address these issues, young people believe that greater income supports, initiatives that ease cost of living pressures, providing education on housing, financial literacy and life skills, are essential. Young people want to see government investment in affordable youth housing options that support their social, health and wellbeing and economic needs, along with improved access to essential services and public transport. Engaging young people in community planning and increasing awareness of supports, resources, and programs are crucial for creating inclusive, welcoming, and supportive communities.

The Tasmanian Youth Forum has highlighted young people’s desire to be actively involved in designing solutions that work for their peers and community, and having their lived experience recognised for effective policy design. They want to share their views and experience in decision-making processes and are looking to decision-makers to provide them with opportunities to do so.

Recommendations

1. The Tasmanian Government to invest in the design and delivery of a standalone child and youth housing and homelessness plan, under the Tasmanian 20-year Housing Strategy to address and prevent youth homelessness and housing insecurity.
2. Meaningfully engage young Tasmanians in identifying housing solutions to ensure the views, lived experience and housing needs of young people are reflected in policy and programmatic responses.
3. Expedite the review of the Residential Tenancy Act 1997, outlined in the Housing Strategy Action Plan 3.2 .1, to strengthen the rights of renters including young people.
4. Establish a Youth Advisory Committee under the Homes Tasmania Act 2022 to inform decision-making by the Homes Tasmania Board.
5. Invest in the design and implementation of tailored life skills and financial literacy programs to support young people to transition into independent living and maintain tenancies.
6. Ensure the impacts of housing insecurity and homelessness is considered in the review of the State’s education system to improve educational outcomes in Tasmania.
7. Increase awareness of, and access to, services that can support young people through investment in a centralised, age-appropriate communication platform.
8. Explore and identify options for State and Local Governments and community to provide place-based, safe spaces for young people, such as drop-in centres and ‘one-stop-shops’, to support social connectedness, promote positive wellbeing and referral to appropriate services and supports.

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Youth Network of Tasmania
12/39 Murray Street, Hobart, Tasmania 7000
PO Box 4679, Hobart, Tasmania 7000

admin@ynot.org.au
www.ynot.org.au