

POSITIVE YOUTH TRANSITIONS



Peter Underwood Centre

WHAT ARE YOUTH TRANSITIONS?

When young people become successful adults and live a good life, it is positive, not just for them, but for our whole community. But the transition from youth to adulthood is not always linear and straightforward¹¹. This applies especially to the transition from school to further education and work.

A key focus of national and state youth policy in supporting youth positive transitions is to encourage completion of Year 12 or an equivalent qualification to set young people up for better work and life outcomes^{3,12}. The Tasmanian Department of Education states:

“Years 11 and 12 are two of the most important years of school. They might be a student’s last years at a school, but they are the first steps into their future.”³



DATA FROM THE LONGITUDINAL SURVEY OF AUSTRALIAN YOUTH (LSAY)

The LSAY follows groups of young people from age 15 to 25, and asks them about their experiences in education, work and life in general¹⁰. Each group of young people is called a cohort. This fact sheet looks at data about school completion and post-school plans from three cohorts who were 15 years old in 2003 (Y03), 2009 (Y09) and 2015 (Y15)¹⁰.

Completing Year 12

The LSAY asked young people if they planned to complete Year 12. Figure 1 shows that 16-year-old Tasmanians (blue line) were a little less likely to say ‘yes’ than their peers across Australia (green line).

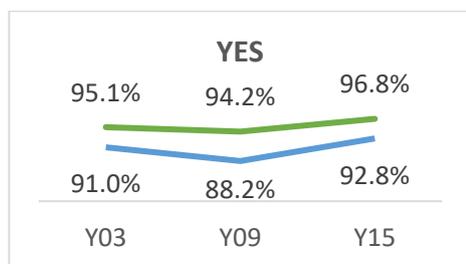


Figure 1. Plan to complete Year 12¹⁰.

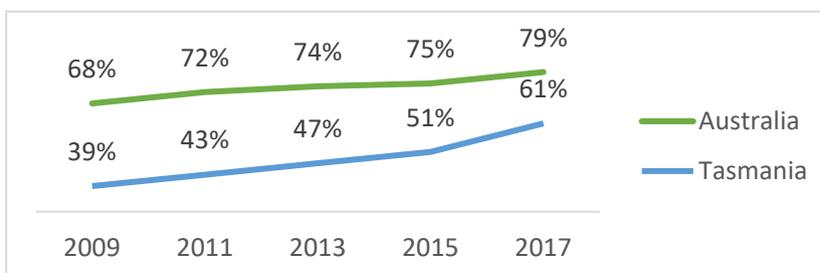


Figure 2. Year 12 Certificate attainment¹.

Both in Tasmania and across Australia, far more 16-year-olds planned to complete Year 12¹⁰ than actually did¹. In other words, young people already have high aspirations, but they are not always able to achieve their ambitions. Figure 2 shows the proportion of students who achieved a Year 12 certificate since 2009¹. Fewer young Tasmanians attain a Year 12 certificate than the national average. Importantly, however:

- ✓ The proportion of young Tasmanians who gain a Year 12 certificate is steadily increasing.
- ✓ The gap for Year 12 attainment between Tasmania and Australia is decreasing, from 29% in 2009 to 18% in 2017.
- ✓ Almost all 16-year-old Tasmanians who are in school plan to complete Year 12 (93% for Y15) and this proportion is almost the same as the national average (only a 4% gap for Y15).

Why do some young Tasmanians leave before completing Year 12?

Based on the LSAY data, the proportion of Tasmanians who had left school at age 16 was about 7% in Y15, comparable to the proportion across Australia (5%). Figure 3 shows that the main reasons (based on LSAY) young Tasmanians gave for leaving school has slightly changed over the years.

- For Y03 and Y09 about one-third had a job, apprenticeship or traineeship lined up. For Y15, none of those surveyed had work lined up but they hoped to get one.
- For Y15, 21% of early school leavers perceived Year 12 as not helpful for securing a job.
- Across all three cohorts about 1 in 6 or 1 in 7 Tasmanian school leavers indicated they simply did not like school. Across Australia this ranged from 1 in 5 to 1 in 8 ratios between the three cohorts.

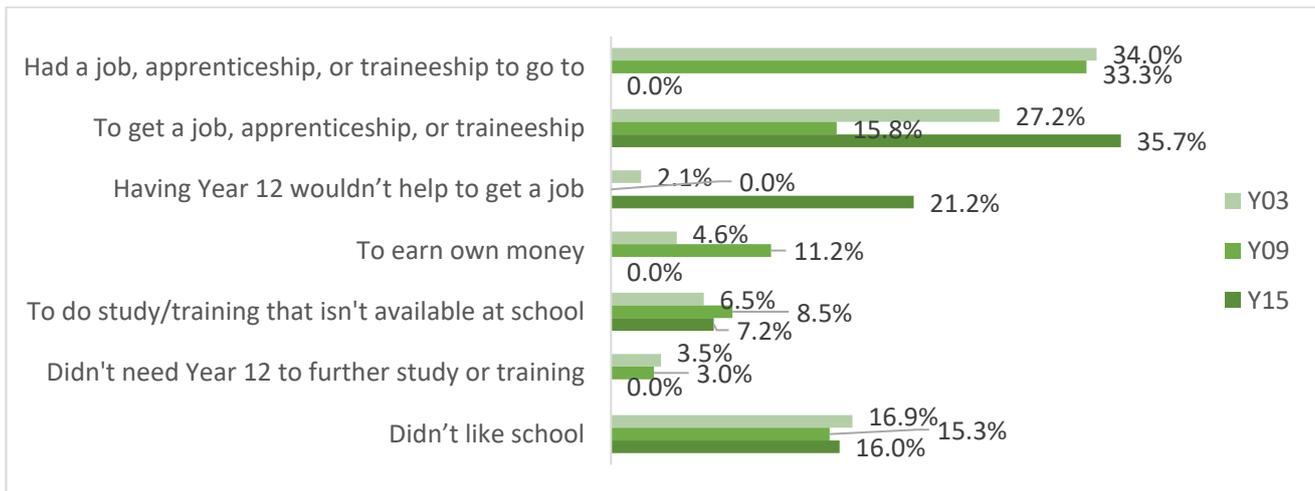


Figure 3. Main reasons Tasmania 16-year-olds leave before completing Year 12. Responses that included *Don't know*, *Prefer not to say*, and *Other* are not shown in the graph.

What do young Tasmanians plan to do post-school?

LSAY also asked young people for their post-school plans. The Y09 and Y15 cohorts were given an extra response option which the Y03 cohort did not have: "taking a gap year". This helps explain the drop in young people planning to go directly to university. The findings for 16-year-old Tasmanians are in Figure 4.

- Going to university is the most common choice across all cohorts. However, nationally, a higher proportion plan to go to university than in Tasmania: 50.6% versus 36.8% for Y15.
- Far fewer students in Y15 than in Y03 and Y09 considered doing an apprenticeship or traineeship but more considered enrolling into TAFE.
- Overall, 85% of Tasmanian 16-year-olds in the Y15 cohort had an idea for their pathway after school: almost half planned some form of study (university, TAFE or other), one-fifth planned employment (apprenticeship or looking for work) and 15% intended to take a gap year.

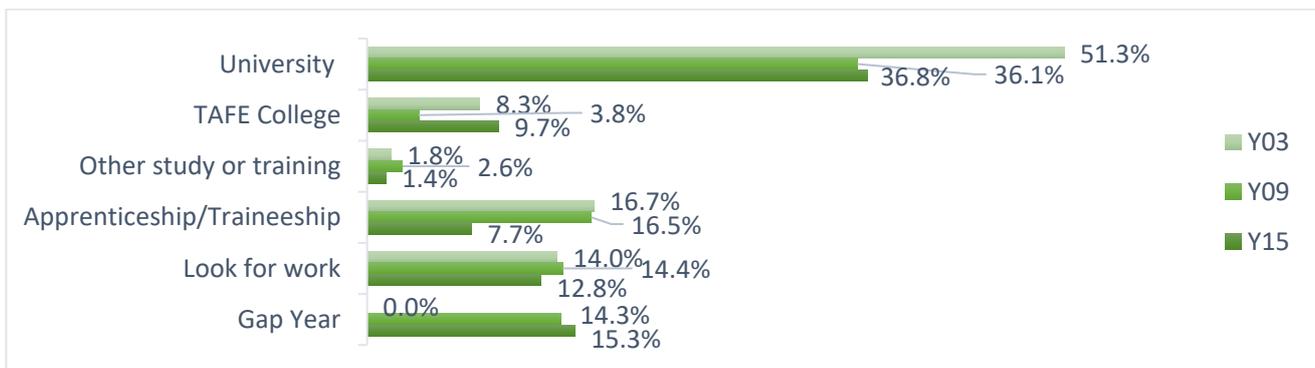


Figure 4. Post-school plans of Tasmanian 16-year-olds. Responses that included *Don't know*, *Prefer not to say*, and *Other* are not shown in the graph.

What is happening in Tasmania?

The Education Act:

In 2016 the Education Act was changed in Tasmania. From 2020, students must continue in education or training until they complete Year 12, obtain a Certificate III or turn 18³. To help young people meet this new requirement many government high schools are extending from Years 7-10 to also offer Years 11 and 12⁶.

Year 9 to 12 Project:

All the key Tasmanian education stakeholders are collaborating to make education in Year 9 through 12 more engaging in order to improve student attendance, retention and attainment⁴.

School-Based Apprenticeships:

As an action from the Year 9 to 12 project, in 2019 the State Government provided extra funding to expand Australian School Based Apprenticeships (ASbA) for Year 10-12 students in government schools⁷.

How can families, teachers and communities help young people's positive transition?^{5,9,11,14, 15}

RECOGNISING STRENGTHS, INTERESTS, AND GOALS



- *What are my dreams?* With a young person create a “story board” of their life in the next 10 years, for example with words, stories and pictures.
- *Who am I?* Talk with young people about the top things they like to do, that they do well and that are important to them.
- *What careers match my interests?* Check out online government resources, such as Job Outlook² and myfuture⁸, to get information about specific careers and help young people decide which ones capture their interests.
- Expand opportunities for students to discover their interests and purposes through participating in extra-curricular activities, volunteer work and community services.

UNDERSTANDING PATHWAY OPTIONS



- *What are my options?* Give young people information about possible education and training pathways that are related to their interests.
- *What are University and VET like?* Invite students and recent graduates to share their stories.
- Encourage students to attend and ask questions at open days, campus tours or careers expos.
- Use an existing (or develop your own) mentoring program which matches secondary students with university or VET students (see reference ¹¹ and ¹⁵ for advice).

ACADEMIC SUPPORT & LEARNING SKILLS



- Make sure young people who are experiencing difficulties with learning and engagement get help early, for example one-to-one tutoring, homework clubs, small group tuition and early intervention for literacy or numeracy.
- Help young people develop their study-success toolkit, including skills for effective essay writing, note taking, time management, goal setting and metacognitive strategies.

SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY



- Engage in conversations and listen to young people's ambitions and plans with open minds.
- Research possible educational and career pathways together with young people.
- Set challenging but realistic expectations for success—knowing that others believe in their ability helps build confidence and self-esteem.
- Respond to young people's diverse needs and challenges, such as mental health, disability, and poverty, by connecting them to relevant support services.

REFERENCES & FURTHER READINGS

- ¹ Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2019) *Year 12 certification rates*. See: <https://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/national-report-on-schooling-in-australia-data-portal/year-12-certification-rates>
- ² Australian Government. (n.d.). *JobOutlook: Your guide to Australian careers*. See: <https://joboutlook.gov.au/>
- ³ Department of Education Tasmania. (2018). *Staying in education: increased minimum education and training leaving requirements from 2020*. See: <https://www.education.tas.gov.au/2018/06/staying-education-increased-minimum-education-training-leaving-requirements-2020/>
- ⁴ Department of Education Tasmania. (n.d.). *Years 9 to 12 Project*. See: <https://www.education.tas.gov.au/about-us/projects/years-9-12-project/>
- ⁵ Department of Education Tasmania. (n.d.). *Anything can happen with an education*. See: <https://www.anything.tas.gov.au/>
- ⁶ Department of Education Tasmania. (2019). *Years 11 and 12 extension schools*. See: <https://www.education.tas.gov.au/parents-carers/school-colleges/years-11-12-extension-schools/>
- ⁷ Department of Treasury Tasmania. (2019). *Budget papers 2019, Chapter 3 Department of Education*. See: <https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/BudgetPapersHTML/Budget2019/BP2/2019-20-BP2-3-Department-of-Education.htm>
- ⁸ Education Services Australia. (2019). *Myfuture: Shape your future*. See: <https://myfuture.edu.au/>
- ⁹ Gemici, S., Bednarz, A., Karmel, T., & Lim, P. (2014). *The factors affecting the educational and occupational aspirations of young Australians*. NCVET: Adelaide.
- ¹⁰ Longitudinal Survey of Australian Youth. *Data from 2003 cohort (Version 7), 2009 cohort (Version 7), 2015 cohort (Version 2)*. Downloaded from the Australian Data Archive.
- ¹¹ National Mentoring Resource Center. *What works in mentoring?* See: <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/what-works-in-mentoring/resources-for-mentoring-programs.html>
- ¹² Ryan, C. (2011). *Year 12 completion and youth transitions: Longitudinal surveys of Australian youth research report 56*. National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide.
- ¹³ Te Riele, K. (2004). Youth transition in Australia: Challenging assumptions of linearity and choice. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 7(3), 243-257.
- ¹⁴ Victoria Council of Social Service. (2015). *Creating engaging schools for all children and young people: What works*. See: <https://www.vcross.org.au/policy/creating-engaging-schools-for-all-children-and-young-people/>
- ¹⁵ Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2015) Youth Mentoring hub. See: <http://youthmentoringhub.org.au/>

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