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# Beacon Foundation

## Youth Jobs Strategy Submission

October 2023

## Contents

Executive Summary .....	3
Career readiness is lacking .....	3
The role of the intermediaries .....	4
What is job-ready?.....	6
Recognition of skills and expertise required to work with young people.....	7
Discussion Questions .....	8
Case Study.....	12
Case Study.....	12
Appendix A: Beacon Foundation.....	14
Who is Beacon?.....	14
Why do Beacon exist?.....	14
How is Beacon funded?.....	14
What do Beacon deliver? .....	14
Letters of support .....	15
References .....	19

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## Executive Summary

Beacon Foundation (Beacon) welcomes the Government's commitment to development of a Tasmanian Youth Jobs Strategy.

In summary, our recommendations are:

- ▶ Young people need to be at the centre of any strategy.
- ▶ Career readiness is lacking in the system currently.
- ▶ More investment needs to be made to lift the career awareness, aspiration and motivation of students so that they are able to take up job opportunities as they arise.
- ▶ Develop a clear definition and expectation of what 'job ready' actually means and ensure the definition is agreed to by educators, industry, government and intermediaries.
- ▶ Intermediaries are vital to properly understand and bridge the gap between the education system and the workforce.
- ▶ Many parties have a role to play, but these roles must be clearly defined, agreed, measured and understood.
- ▶ Beacon calls for the creation of a representative Youth Job Taskforce to work on the next stage of the development of the strategy and overseeing the implementation of the strategic direction and initiatives.

The overarching themes that Beacon feels requires more attention in this discussion paper are as follows:

### Career readiness is lacking

The discussion paper is focused on employment outcomes. There is no doubt that this is an admirable goal and there are several organisations working in that space, however not enough attention is placed on the preparation and investment required to achieve that outcome in the paper. The discussion paper presents an Effective Youth Pathways Practice that brings together two references (BSL and SVA) which are focused on employment programs and transitions for young people. Beacon's view is that both individually and combined the two models **fail to focus early enough on career readiness for our young people**. The framework assumes a level of career awareness, aspiration and motivation that is missing in the system (and in many young people), without a heightened and sustained focus in these areas the pathway (employment as defined in the paper) outcomes will be severely hampered.

The discussion paper, by virtue of not including it, assumes career education and specifically engagement with industry, at the earlier stages of development is happening. This is not our experience. Activities that increase career knowledge, connections and confidence accelerate the transition from school to meaningful employment or education (FYA 2018). We believe that there is a significant opportunity to deliver substantially better outcomes by investing in career readiness. We also know one-off programs aren't enough,





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students who participate in four or more industry engagements are 86% more likely to engage in further education, training, or employment after school (Mann 2012). This evidence clearly shows that more attention and investment is required 'up stream' to achieve the employment outcomes sought after.

### The role of intermediaries

One of the biggest challenges for young people transitioning into pathway opportunities post-school is the **bridging between systems** to make the experience seamless for the participants (young people and industry particularly), as an intermediary working between two systems Beacon know and understand this very well (and know how complex it can be).

Often education and employment systems speak 'different languages' and are complex to navigate individually, let alone when you are trying to bridge from one to the other. The intermediary in the middle works with both systems and aims to connect all parties between the two, it sounds simple, but provides significant value to all parties who may not otherwise be able to create these connections.

Intermediaries such as Beacon often have varied funding sources, facilitating philanthropic and private investment into their work which significantly increases government funding. Intermediaries can bring funding into a system that government cannot deliver. In addition to this, intermediaries often collaborate with national and international networks focusing on delivering contemporary, best practice models in their fields and seeking investment to deliver their work.

Evidence suggests that the role of intermediaries in the career education space is of great value to deal with two systems (education and work) that do not naturally work together. Beacon plays a critical role as an intermediary, connecting industry to schools and students, many of which lack the networks, connections and resources to make those connections on their own. Simply put, intermediaries make things easier for schools, industry and students (Tori 2018) and perform a role that Government cannot.

The work of career intermediaries contributes to better-informed, more confident, and more successful young adults who are better prepared to enter the workforce, undertake further training or pursue further education.

Beacon delivers an intermediary service for the Tasmanian government, this service is focused on work-based learning activities, work experience and work placement brokerage.



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Evaluation results from July–September 2023 showed the following results which support the evidence above:

**Students who agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:**

*I have a good understanding of the knowledge and connections I need to find employment, training or study after school: 85%*

*I am confident in my skills and ability to find employment, training or study after school: 80%*

*I know what to expect in the workplace: 83%*

*I am aware of the employment, training or study opportunities that are available to me after school: 84%*

**Students said:**

*"Being able to have a big insight to what is available for us after school."*

*"Seeing all the different job opportunities and work available."*

*"Being able to learn more about work and how I should approach the opportunity's I have."*

**Industry participants who agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:**

*Beacon's program allowed me to enhance young people's understanding of jobs, careers and pathways available: 92%*

*Beacon's program enabled me to help young people identify their strengths and link them to skills needed in the workplace: 84%*

*Beacon's program provided me with the opportunity to help young people feel more ready for the world of work: 97%*

*As a result of the Beacon program, our industry has established or strengthened our school partnerships: 89%*

**Industry said:**

*"Allowing students to gain skills and confidence leading into adulthood."*

*"Creating connections between students & industry."*

*"Giving young people opportunities to discover a variety of career options and inspiring them to pursue careers that align with their interests and values."*

*"Bridging the gap between the education system and industries."*

**Educators who agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements:**

*As a result of the Beacon event, I have seen an observable change in student career awareness: 90%*

*As a result of Beacon Work-based Learning Services, our school has established or strengthened our industry partnerships: 97%*

*As a result of Beacon Work-based Learning Services, as an educator, I have established or strengthened industry relationships: 97%*

**Educators said:**

*"Being exposed to new industries in the local area."*

*"Experience in an area the students wouldn't otherwise have exposure to, local opportunities and cutting-edge technology."*

*"Amazing having real experience for students. So hard for us to replicate this in the classroom. The work experience will take it to another level."*

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School-based career intermediaries play an important role in helping students explore their career options, make informed decisions about their future, and successfully transition into meaningful pathway opportunities. Some of the reasons that intermediaries are effective are:

- ▶ A gap for educators: many educators are unable to connect with industry outside the school gate due to a range of reasons. An intermediary is connected to industries and businesses and can provide connection opportunities for schools and students in an efficient and effective manner that some educators are unable to achieve.
- ▶ A challenge for industry: industry often find the school system complex to navigate, having an expert third-party intermediary who can make that connection simpler is of great appeal and value to industry, not only are they more likely to participate in work-based learning activities with an intermediary, but the connection will be more likely to be more effective as it will be facilitated by skilled and experienced staff making the connections between the systems.
- ▶ Early exposure to careers: intermediaries introduce students to a wide range of career possibilities from an early age. Many young people have very limited understanding of the types of careers and industries that exists, early exposure helps students develop this understanding which should then generate greater awareness and aspiration and encourage more informed choices about their career paths.
- ▶ Focus on the young person: Beacon do a lot of work with young people to help them identify their interests, strengths, skills and personality traits. This enables students to then seek career alignment based on who they are, this is a critical element to successful career alignment. This focus on the young person is a key to the effectiveness of intermediary work.
- ▶ Access to resources: intermediaries have access to a wealth of resources, including information about Jobs Hubs, University, TasTafe, apprenticeships, and job opportunities. They can connect students and educators with such resources to help them navigate their next steps.
- ▶ Work-based learning: intermediaries facilitate a range of work-based learning experiences, such as work experience and work placements which allow students to gain real-world experience in their chosen fields. These experiences help students build valuable skills and make connections in their industries of interest.
- ▶ Connections: intermediaries have extensive networks of businesses and industry groups. Beacon connects students with such groups as part of all their programs and services, we are agnostic to industry and can provide a breadth of connections and experiences that may not otherwise be possible.
- ▶ Long-term impact: intermediaries aim to increase the likelihood of a successful transition for a young person, this is done by working 'up stream' to build awareness, aspiration and motivation, investing more and earlier to create a more meaningful longer-term impact as the student is better informed to make the best possible decisions for themselves.

As an intermediary Beacon do not provide specialised individualised career advice, we provide career readiness and work-based learning activities that are developed in consultation with the educator and industry to be most relevant to participating students.

### What is job-ready?

The discussion paper refers to the term 'job-ready', Beacon would strongly encourage further discussion and definition on what this is and what it means to different stakeholders. In **defining what job-ready is, feedback around how to achieve this status can be more objectively provided**. Without this definition this question is far too subjective. Beacon's experience would show that the definition of job-ready varies dramatically between stakeholders including education system, educators, parents, peak industry groups, businesses and intermediaries.

We know that transferable skills and knowledge matters, but do Tasmanian employers expect more than that? Are those working with young people clear on what is required? We need to be clear on this to develop this strategy. Young people in school today will need to navigate 17 different jobs spanning five different industries in their lifetime (FYA 2018). In addition to literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology capability, students must be equipped with skills that transfer across industries and occupations such as critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, citizenship and flexibility (Bakhtiart & te Riele 2019). Beacon delineates between transferrable career readiness skills and more specific work readiness skills, with the latter being more specifically oriented to accredited

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or specialised skills for a workplace. Beacon would strongly suggest that it is important to have a shared agreement on a definition of job-ready to create clarity and shared expectations in a Youth Jobs Strategy.

### Recognition of skills and expertise required to work with young people

Working with young people inside or outside the education system requires skills and expertise. In addition to the ever-evolving compliance requirements, skills, expertise and experience are required to create and deliver programs and services that focus on and evaluate student impact. Further to this, the complex issues that young people are facing require additional specialised support.

Beacon undertook a review of career education policy and practice as delivered by the Tasmanian government to better understand the approach taken to careers education and the skills and expertise required to deliver it. We found that career education and development policy in Tasmania has **shifted from being student-centred** and proactively embedded in the curriculum as per the national strategy, to one aligned to industry priorities which focusses on vocational education and training and provides little direct support or guidance to the schooling system on how to provide high-quality career education, development and transition advice and support to young Tasmanian school students (Denny 2022).

Beacon believes there needs to be a stronger focus on the relevant skills and expertise required by organisations working with and alongside young people to not only meet the compliance requirements, but to be able to design and deliver programs and services that are tailored for the age and stage of the participating young person.

Further to the key themes, Beacon offers the following general feedback on the discussion paper:

- ▶ The strategy does not have a **vision**. A unified vision for this work is an important way of bringing together all stakeholders.
- ▶ The **purpose of the strategy is not clear**. Having a clear purpose and an outline of the measures of success of the strategy as aligned to the objectives and principles is needed. Without clearly defining this it is difficult to provide clear feedback on the discussion paper.
- ▶ The **duration of strategy (ie number of years) and the age range focus** needs to be made clear, per above, this will have a material impact on the focus of the strategy, measures and eventually initiatives that support it.
- ▶ The discussion paper does not acknowledge the **current operating context of the education system nor industry**, we feel that more emphasis should be placed on being clear on this as it will have a bearing on strategy direction. Some areas that need attention include current and future risk and compliance requirements, educator capacity and skill, workforce shortages, industry growth and potential and industry capacity and skill in working with young people. We know that the education system is struggling to provide students with the generic and technical expertise they need to compete in the job market (PUC 2016).
- ▶ The **role of education at a strategic system level needs to be determined and articulated**, this should also affect the measures of success of our education system and the outcomes being achieved. A clear definition of the role of education in preparing young people to transition to the world of work is essential, as is what age (and data) we utilise to measure outcomes for young people. We would encourage government to think about data gaps that could bridge the education and employment systems to better determine effectiveness of support provided, including expanding data collection beyond the age of 18.
- ▶ The discussion paper is quiet on funding amounts and source/s for this important work. Currently there is duplication of effort happening across government agencies, there is a great opportunity to address this challenge through to create a **whole of government approach** the development of the strategy.
- ▶ The discussion paper provided an opportunity to consider an **evidence basis** and look at **comparative and best practice models** attempting this work globally, the lack of this in the paper must be addressed in the strategy.
- ▶ Several **recent reports and strategies** have been commissioned to address parts of this strategy, including PESRAC, DECYP's Year 9-12 Project, Industry Strategies (including Compacts), and Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy, Beacon are interested to learn of the interdependencies of these reports and where they fit within this strategic direction.



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## Discussion Questions

### Are the principles of the strategy correct?

Beacon firmly supports the principle that young people should be at the centre of this strategy.

We would encourage reference to the role industry and employers play in the strategy as a principle, it is important that the position on these important stakeholders is clear and it is currently not.

The principles as listed in the document appear to be somewhat mixed with objectives, which requires clarification. Principle 7 in the document talks about *leveraging place-based initiatives by encouraging young people to explore the opportunities available in their local community*. This principle could be somewhat limiting to the opportunities that exist for young people as it is currently presented. If we limit pathway exposure opportunities to what exists in a local region we will not be providing for all students. It is important that we also look beyond a place to possibilities in a global and connected world (or even in another region), this is important to raise awareness, aspiration and motivation in our young people. If we are truly young-person centric we have an obligation to look beyond postcode. There should be a principle added stating a whole-of-government approach will be taken to this strategy.

### Do the common elements and phases of the effective youth pathways practice make sense? Are there any more important than others?

The table as presented is heavily focused on youth employment programs, where the steps in the table have been derived from the SVA framework specifically considering effective youth employment programs. Beacon's work is done **up-stream** of such programs as a critical preparatory stage. Our view is that a Youth Jobs Strategy requires far more steps than employment programs (see earlier commentary regarding career readiness) and considers and prioritises the investment required in a young person prior to entering such a 'system' to ensure they do in fact enter such a system. Without work in the career awareness area at key developmental transition points, the number of students entering the employment system – and the students themselves, who are at the centre of these programs - will not reach their full potential.

In the model presented Phase 1 – Guidance and Exploration assumes a level of career awareness and aspiration that we know does not exist. The focus of this phase in the paper is predominantly on pathways rather than the broad career awareness and aspiration work that is a significant gap for most young people in Tasmania. The concept of 'you can't be what you can't see' is the basis of Beacon's work as we know that young people have limited knowledge and understanding of their own strengths and how this might align to the world of work combined with limited career awareness and knowledge. Phase 1 must be more than Guidance and Exploration as it is titled in this paper to address this gap.

Beacon believes that all Phases are important, but significantly more emphasis needs to be placed on Phase 1 to ensure that impact of the other three phases can be maximised.

### How can government, community, business, schools and industry support better connection and continuity of support across these elements?

Beacon strongly supports having clear areas of responsibility and accountability. The work that we do is focused on preparation of a young person, with the ideal outcome to then 'handover' the student to the next stage of their career journey. Handover could be to a range of organisations and/or institutions dependent on the direction of the young person. For us as an organisation, being clear on the roles and responsibilities of partner organisations is key to making that transition seamless for our young people.

Beacon would like to see alignment and where appropriate, integration of services across providers to create great outcomes for young people.

### What is the one thing that you believe could have the most positive impact on a young person's transition pathway from school to further study, training or employment?

Providing increased and sustained investment to provide career readiness opportunities that connect students with industry participants is integral to increasing their likelihood of transition, we would therefore suggest that this is an area of focus of the highest priority.



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Global evidence clearly shows the power of young people having meaningful connections and engagement with industry and the impact that has on their transition to further education, training or employment. Beacon works alongside global specialist Anthony Mann, Senior Policy Analyst, Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD and Dave Turner, Educationalist to integrate their research findings into our work. Beacon knows that the key developmental transition points are high risk 'zones' for students and investing in sustained career awareness and readiness activity earlier will assist in young people building their career confidence and taking agency for their future steps. We also know that multiple meaningful connections with industry correlate directly with positive transition outcomes.

#### **How can we improve access to services and support for young people in our regions?**

The key is to ensure that government, educators, industry and intermediaries are all working together with clearly articulated roles, milestones and objectives. No one party is capable of providing a comprehensive outcome for students, it must be done as a collective effort.

Clear information outlining services and support options for young people is also important. Making sure that influencers, particularly educators, industry and intermediaries, have clear and simple information that they can impart and share with young people and their parents/caregivers is of great importance.

A whole of government approach is key to delivery of this strategic agenda, multiple departments have an interest in this strategy and it must be ensured that there is an agreed and shared approach to ensure that third parties have clarity around their responsibilities and accountability in this work to maximise impact for young people.

#### **What type of support do our young people outside larger metro areas need to succeed?**

Young people outside of larger areas need to be given the opportunity to connect with industry and roles that may not be available in their current geographical proximity. It is important to raise awareness and aspiration beyond geographical borders.

More investment needs to be made in young people understanding themselves (strengths, values, personality and interests) and exploring career alignment, or the application of self to the world of work, this should include exploration of industries and roles of the future, some of which may not exist currently.

#### **How can the service systems between connect and respond to the complex needs of young people?**

Beacon's first and foremost view is that skilled and specialised staff must be enlisted to work with young people with complex needs. Skills, expertise and experience working with young people is essential in providing services and support. Beacon has significant experience working with young people facing a range of barriers, appropriate skills are required to deal with these young people in a positive manner.

In terms of service systems connecting and responding to provide appropriate offerings for young people, we would suggest the following at a minimum:

- ▶ **Youth engagement:** services should be co-designed with young people where possible
- ▶ **Clarity:** organisations need a clear articulation of their focus and what they deliver (and what they do not deliver)
- ▶ **Evaluation and accountability:** clear accountability to what they are delivering, including measurable outcomes that are reported on and shared where appropriate
- ▶ **Collaboration:** spirit of teamwork and collaboration with other service providers should be shown, and integrated services should be explored where appropriate
- ▶ **Sharing:** effective communication with other service providers
- ▶ **Seamless:** referral processes amongst providers to provide maximum impact for young people
- ▶ **Skills and expertise:** specialised skills and expertise to work with young people must be a priority consideration
- ▶ **Processes:** where possible streamlining of processes (and where possible, systems) should be undertaken to avoid duplication of effort
- ▶ **Risk and compliance:** ensuring all obligations are met in a seamless and integrated manner to make the user experience as impactful as possible
- ▶ **Capacity building:** focus should always be on building the capacity in young people or other relevant stakeholder (such as industry volunteer) to mitigate need for the service into the future

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### **What would unlock the ability for young Tasmanians with different needs to participate in work, education and training?**

Beacon's work focuses on delivery in partnership with schools with an ICSEA less than 1,000.

For the young people that we get to work alongside, we firmly believe that more investment in the career readiness phase is critical to transition outcomes. Young people simply do not enter the transition phase 'ready' to take the next step, this not only fails our young people, but also industry and employers.

We see a significant number of young people that do not have the awareness, aspiration, motivation or confidence to take up opportunities. This focus needs to include basic transferrable skill development, often best achieved through expert facilitation and engagement with industry volunteers who can connect with the young person and apply the learnings and requirements to the world of work.

Young people need to be given the opportunity to build these skills over time to best prepare them to take up the opportunities as they present. Beacon's experience would suggest that without this the outcomes that might be achieved may not be optimised and may not be in the best interest of the young person.

### **What are some innovative approaches to address transport issues for young people that keep safety as the highest priority?**

Transport is a definite barrier for young people embarking on the world of work (and for the rest of the population for that matter). We are not the best placed organisation to comment around innovative approaches to transport issues, however we would welcome any approach that would see barriers to accessing safe transport reduced for young people and the community more broadly.

### **Where do young people currently get information from to support them to make decisions or connect to employment and training opportunities?**

Beacon's experience would suggest that young people continue to rely heavily on educators and their parents/family/caregivers as their predominant support in gaining information about employment and training opportunities.

We know that this frame of reference is often limited due to the experience of those providing the information, hence the focus of Beacon's work to provide connections to multiple industry participants to assist in gaining new and further information. In addition to this, Beacon often invites providers such as RTOs (e.g. TasTafe), University of Tasmania, employers and employment 'intermediaries' such as Jobs Hubs and Transition to Work providers into the classroom to assist in providing transitional information and direction to students.

Intermediaries need more access to simple and clear information around training and employment opportunities to communicate and share with young people and their influencers (educators and parents/caregivers particularly).

We need to find ways to create more connection points that are simple to understand and navigate for young people, but also to provide to those that are supporting young people on their journey, including educators and parents/caregivers and intermediaries working with students.

### **What does it take to be 'job-ready'?**

There is currently a spectrum of definition and interpretation of 'job-ready' depending on the relevant stakeholder engaged in the conversation as outlined earlier. Beacon's experience is that there is currently incongruence in expectations of job readiness between the education system and employers and this is problematic.

More support needs to be given to both the education and employment (industry) systems to work through this to define expectations and then work with students to 'bridge the gap'. The two systems speak different languages and approach this issue from different perspectives, an intermediary who can navigate and translate both systems is essential to ensure that the needs and expectations of both parties can be successfully met.

Beacon's view on job-readiness is that support is required on **both** the education and industry system 'sides' to create outcomes that will work for both students and employers. In our experience many schools and industry participants

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cannot do this work (due to skills and/or capacity) and in that instance the best outcomes are achieved by an intermediary who can provide that service and support. In addition to this, we often find that industry require significant support to successfully engage with a young person, support is required in all areas including participating in an in-school program, hosting a work placement or work experience student or hosting a site tour.

Importantly, Beacon separates the career journey into **career readiness and work readiness**. Career readiness including broader transferrable skills and relationships and work readiness constitutes more specific (and often accredited) skills and development required for a specific line of work. Both of these stages on the career journey are of great importance and often they get combined together in terms of training and development and expectations of young people. Different approaches are required to build the two elements in a young person, per above Beacon's work is focused in the career readiness area rather than the more specialised work readiness space.

### **What can employers to do help build those work readiness skills? Can you share any examples of best practice?**

Beacon's work is not possible without the full engagement of employers and industry volunteers, it is the facilitated connections with industry that create incremental career confidence and career readiness growth in young people.

Global evidence clearly shows that the more meaningful engagements that young people can get with industry volunteers as they build their career readiness, the more likely they are to transition to a meaningful pathway outcome (Mann 2012). It is on this basis, and our 35 years of operational experience with young people and industry that we believe the more industry engagement opportunities we can create before the young person is making career decisions the better placed the young person will be into the future.

We cannot expect industry to undertake work readiness and job readiness activity without support and capacity building, specifically with connecting into the education system and working with young people. Industry often requires the support of an intermediary to make those connections and to facilitate the career readiness activity that they can participate in, generally by providing significant investment of resources (including financial and human).

Beacon most commonly works with industry in the forms of volunteering (participating in programs in schools), hosting students (work placements and work experience) and hosting students on site for programs.

Beacon has recently launched the Beacon Career Program pilot. This program is a career readiness program that focused on building the career confidence of participating students by working through three phases that address awareness of self, exploration of career alignment direction and work experience which the student's take agency in securing. The program has been recognised globally as best practice in career education and was recently invited to present at the OECD international conference for career education, we believe that this model of consultation and co-design, as well as the program design and content is best practice globally. For more information on the program and its results, please see the case study on page 12.

For more information on the impact of this program Beacon can provide detailed evaluation reports.

### **What do (or should) quality work exposure activities look like for young people? What are some examples of this being done well.**

In terms of 'work exposure activities' (Beacon prefer to not use 'exposure' terminology, rather work-based learning activities.)

As already outlined, Beacon would support investing in career readiness activity prior to engaging in 'work exposure' activities, this will allow participating young people to build the confidence to be present and engage in the activity. Assuming that career readiness investment has been made, Beacon would suggest the following points would contribute to a quality work-based learning activity:

- ▶ **Evidence basis:** work-based learning activities should draw on evidence on best practice and also clearly link to a Theory of Change.
- ▶ **Clear learning objectives:** clearly defined learning objectives should be established before the activity begins. These objectives should align with the educational goals of the program and the specific skills or knowledge students are expected to gain.

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### Case Study: Beacon Career Program

In 2022 Beacon made a significant investment into the research and design of a new multi-engagement career program which is receiving global attention for best practice in career education. We undertook this work because the global evidence was showing that increased impact could be achieved by providing students with multiple meaningful industry engagements.

Beacon undertook a comprehensive literature review, as well as significant consultation and co-design with students, parents, industry, educators, partner not-for-profits and academics. This research and design clearly showed the evidence based around the need for investment earlier, and specifically starting with a focus on 'self' to promote positive transition outcomes through career alignment.

Beacon welcomes the opportunity to present this work and the pilot findings to the government, there is a significant amount of learnings that can be generated from the pilot to date. Below is a video outlining the new Beacon Career Program: [Click here](#)

Beacon was invited to present at the OECD International Career Readiness conference that showcased global best practice in career readiness delivery, below is the presentation which has a more detailed overview: [Click here](#)

And here is the testimonial video from some of the inaugural program participants: [Click here](#)

This program is having great impact, we are seeing that through the response from students and the evaluation that we are capturing. We know the design methodology and the content is strong, the rigour and robustness of both academic and 35 years of practical expertise has impacted this.

### Case Study: An integrated approach to Work-Based Learning

Beacon is delivering work-based learning experiences for students across Tasmania through a partnership with Department for Education, Children and Young People. A full and independent evaluation of this service has been undertaken showing the effectiveness of the service.

This service includes working with secondary schools to develop customised work-based learning plans including work-based learning experiences and the brokerage of work placements and work experiences. This service involves Beacon acting as an intermediary working alongside the school and their students to develop activities and experiences that build the career confidence of the participating students. Beacon does this by working with industry to create these opportunities, making it a more effective engagement for both the school and for the participating industry partners.

By way of example, in the nine months of 2023 at the time of writing this report there is a secondary extension school in southern Tasmania that has engaged in the following activities that Beacon has facilitated:

- ▶ Provided industry connections to the school x 6
- ▶ Work experience x 17 placements
- ▶ Site tour x 3 conducted
- ▶ Guest speakers x 2
- ▶ Career readiness programs x 2 delivered

Through the partnership with Beacon this one school has tapped into the service and created a significant number of opportunities for many students as they plan their transition post-school. The compounded impact of this work across schools and students is providing significant value as outlined in the independent evaluation of this work.



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- ▶ **Relevance to curriculum (specifically in a school setting):** work-based learning activities should align to the curriculum of the educational program or course where applicable. They should integrate classroom learning with real-world application.
- ▶ **Engagement and relatability:** work-based learning activities should be designed with an age and experience-relevant focus. Activities should be engaging and promote relatability, whilst also being flexible and adaptable to changing needs and requirements as the activity is implemented.
- ▶ **Industry involvement:** inclusion of industry volunteers into the activities, volunteers can provide valuable insights, resources, and opportunities for students to connect.
- ▶ **Structured experiences:** structured experiences that includes specific tasks, responsibilities, and expectations for students and industry volunteers optimise impact. Activities should be designed to challenge students as they progressively gain career confidence.
- ▶ **Facilitation:** expert facilitators create meaningful connection opportunities for students and industry, the value-add from having this expertise involved is significant for all participants.
- ▶ **Evaluation:** evaluation of work-based learning activities should be undertaken for all participants, this evaluation should assist in continuous improvement of work-based learning activities.
- ▶ **Risk and compliance:** work-based learning activities comply with risk and compliance requirements of all participating stakeholders.

#### How do we balance and support work and learning for young people?

Beacon often receives anecdotal feedback from educators around the role of casual work for students in the education system. Increases in cost-of-living pressures we have also seen increased concern from educators about the paid workload of students and how this is impacting their studies.

Further to this, we experience feedback from students and educators around unpaid work experience and work placements and the detrimental impact that this has on students and their ability to partake in that experience (particularly if they having to forego paid work).

Both matters need to be addressed to ensure that young people have greater incentive to study and undertake work experience and/or work placement that have the intent of improving outcomes for the participating young people.

#### How could your business or industry be better supported to provide opportunities for young people?

- ▶ At times, inconsistent views between government agencies responsible for employment, industry and education make clarity difficult. Consistent and shared views around our work would be of great benefit to all parties.
- ▶ A clear understanding of the role of intermediaries and why they are important, particularly the relationship development component of the work that we do would be helpful, at times our role is seen as transactional when in fact, a significant amount of work that we undertake is around building relationships, connections and trust, all of which are undertaken to improve opportunities for young people.
- ▶ Longer term funding agreements with less onerous reporting requirements would be preferred. We would be happy to detail experiences that Beacon have had whereby the administrative burden disproportionately outweighs the work.
- ▶ Government sharing and promoting the work of all of their contracted providers with clarity and clear accountability would be helpful in promoting healthy supplier relationships and collaboration.
- ▶ Beacon would like to be seen as an innovation partner to government. A trusted third-party that can do work that government can otherwise not do. To make this shift a change in how suppliers are viewed and managed would be required.

#### What information or resources are needed to make Tasmania's training system more accessible and streamlined?

Clear and simple information that outlines pathways, providers and how to connect to them would be ideal. Intermediaries could benefit from annual training and resource updates to assist them in sharing correct, current and relevant information to stakeholders (including students, schools, educators and industry).

- ▶ Supporting young people to have the aspiration, motivation, and ability to determine their working future.

## Appendix A: Beacon Foundation

### Who is Beacon?

Beacon Foundation (Beacon) is a national for-purpose organisation that is committed to creating brighter futures for young Australians that need it most. Beacon was founded in, and is based in Tasmania.

Beacon delivers programs and services in the school system that aim to increase the career confidence and career readiness of all participating students. The way that we achieve this is by connecting young people directly to industry volunteers to bring awareness, inspiration and real-world relevance to the classroom.

Beacon is a specialist third-party that brings together stakeholders that otherwise cannot connect in a meaningful manner. We have strong partnerships with both schools (and the education system) and industry.

Beacon predominantly works with students in years 9-12 who attend schools with an ICSEA of less than 1,000.

### Why do Beacon exist?

Beacon is often considered as an intermediary, a connector or a facilitator - we are an organisation that connects the education system and the world of work because the two systems need extra support to make the connections happen. We focus on building the capacity of educators and of industry to foster these connections without Beacon into the future.

### How is Beacon funded?

Beacon is funded through a mix of corporate, philanthropic, consumer direct and State government funding. Beacon brings a significant amount of financial investment into the Tasmanian education system which has significant benefit for students, schools, industry, businesses and communities.

We have been operating for over 35 years and have several long-established major national funding partners who believe and trust in our work. These partnerships allow us to deliver many programs free of charge into schools across Australia. Between 2018-2022 Beacon delivered \$6.2 million in additional program funding into the Tasmanian education system.

We also have several corporate and peak industry funding partners here in Tasmania across all sectors. Industry not only fund us directly, but they offer significant in-kind support through staff volunteering in programs and organisations hosting students.

### What do Beacon deliver?

Beacon delivers:

- ▶ Short Courses (high impact and growth industry preparation programs)
- ▶ Work-Based Learning Services (work placements, work experience and work-based learning activities)
- ▶ Beacon Career Program (our new 12 session career program)
- ▶ Industry Co-labs (customised partnership programs funded by Tasmanian industry partners)

All our programs bring industry into the classroom or take students to industry.



## Letter of Support

Youth Network of Tasmania  
12/39 Murray Street  
Hobart TAS 7000  
E: [CEO@ynot.org.au](mailto:CEO@ynot.org.au)  
M: 0427 466 189  
W: [www.ynot.org.au](http://www.ynot.org.au)



### **Support Letter for Beacon Foundation Submission to the Tasmanian Youth Job Strategy Discussion Paper**

The Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) is pleased to support Beacon Foundations (Beacon) submission to the Tasmanian Youth Job Strategy Discussion Paper.

YNOT is the peak body for young Tasmanians aged 12-25 years and the community youth services sector. YNOT has worked with Beacon in various capacities on projects and initiatives that support young Tasmanians including the Tasmanian Youth Employment Alliance, Youth Navigator pilot program and Beacon Foundation's High Impact Program.

YNOT supports key recommendations outlined in Beacon's submission particularly with respect to the role of intermediaries in connecting industry with schools and students. Challenges for young people transitioning from education to work as outlined in the submission, align strongly with the views and experiences expressed by young Tasmanians during YNOT consultations. This includes a lack of exposure to career possibilities in school to help young people explore and plan employment pathways, limited networks with (and understanding of) relevant industries in the community, limited community connections and for some social capital, and a lack of knowledge of the different support options available post-secondary school to help navigate the employment landscape.

YNOT believe that intermediaries play an important role in bridging the gap between industry and the education system and facilitating access to practical, real world work experience opportunities. Opportunities that are highly sought after by young people and desired by employers. Currently, there is a disconnect between the education system and industry making it difficult for a young person to navigate employment, or further education/training post year 12.

We also believe that teachers are not best placed to provide specialised career support and guidance, due to the specialist nature of this work and the considerable demands placed on them in meeting the education and curriculum requirements of the school and students. The role of career support must be done by specialised career-based professionals either in-house or as third-party intermediaries.

YNOT strongly recommend that the Tasmanian Government consider the recommendations outlined in Beacons submission to inform the development of the Tasmanian Youth Job Strategy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on 0427 466 189 or [ceo@ynot.org.au](mailto:ceo@ynot.org.au) should you wish to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,



Tania Hunt  
Chief Executive Officer  
Youth Network of Tasmania  
19 October 2023

- ▶ Supporting young people to have the aspiration, motivation, and ability to determine their working future.

## Letter of Support



### TASMANIAN HOSPITALITY ASSOCIATION

25/93 Salamanca Place, Hobart TAS 7000 T: 03 6220 7300 F: 03 6220 7317  
PO Box 191, Battery Point TAS 7004  
E: [enquiries@tha.asn.au](mailto:enquiries@tha.asn.au) W: [www.tha.asn.au](http://www.tha.asn.au)

18<sup>th</sup> September 2023

#### Letter of Support for Beacon Foundation

The Tasmanian Hospitality Association (THA) is the peak body industry body for hotels, accommodation, restaurants, cafes & catering, and clubs in Tasmania, and is a proactive body which always seeks to advocate for the hospitality sector, and ensure Tasmania has a viable and profitable hospitality industry both now and into the future.

The tourism and hospitality industry in Tasmania plays a significant role in contributing to the state's economic, social, cultural, and environmental wealth. It is heartening to know that the industry is not only a major employer of young people across the state but is also committed to creating opportunities for these young individuals to connect with employers while they are still in school. This connection is essential in raising their awareness, aspirations, and confidence to work in this sector, whether as a first job or a long-term career.

The work that the THA is doing with The Beacon Foundation in providing opportunities for students is a valuable contribution to the growth and development of our youth. Beacon's collaborative efforts to create meaningful connections and experiences for students are commendable, and I believe they will have a lasting impact on the lives of these young individuals.

THA, Beacon and TICT will now also develop a tourism and hospitality workforce development strategy for young people across Tasmania as a response to current workforce development challenges.

I firmly believe that the partnership between Beacon and THA, which combines the expertise of both organizations, is a model that government support can leverage effectively.

**Steve Old**  
**CEO Tasmanian Hospitality Association**  
p: (03) 6220 7300 m: 0418 363 566  
a: 25/93 Salamanca Place, Hobart, 7000  
w: [www.tha.asn.au](http://www.tha.asn.au) e: [steve@tha.asn.au](mailto:steve@tha.asn.au)

*"Dedicated to Maintaining and Improving the Professionalism and Prosperity of the Tasmanian Hospitality Industry"*



## Letter of Support



17 October 2023

To whom it may concern

Destination Southern Tasmania (DST) is Southern Tasmania's Regional Tourism Organisation. We represent all visitor economy businesses within southern Tasmania and hold 250 industry members along with the 11 Southern Councils that make up our region.

When discussing the visitor economy, especially post Covid 19, it is clear that there are skills shortages across our state and young people are a key segment to help us support and grow this vital sector of our economy.

As an industry and with collaboration we can and need to do more to ensure that youth are supported to be productive contributors and engage with one of Tasmania's flagship industries,

Young people need to be at the centre of any strategy. Getting business input into the strategy development is key, particularly around their experiences and expectations of young people in entry level roles. The current discussion paper does not bring industry to the table and we believe this is a gap.

We need to support industry to take on young people in a way that is meaningful and achievable for businesses.

Career readiness is lacking in the system currently, this impacts industry's ability to take on young people

More investment needs to be made to lift the career awareness, aspiration and motivation of students so that they are able to take up job opportunities as they arise.

Intermediaries are vital to properly understand and bridge the gap between the education system and the workforce, we can't expect Government to do this work and we cannot expect industry to connect directly into schools without support of organisations like Beacon Foundation.

As an organisation we have worked with Beacon to raise the profile of tourism in schools and reflect to the youth coming through, what a career path looks like and how to be ready to grasp this opportunity.

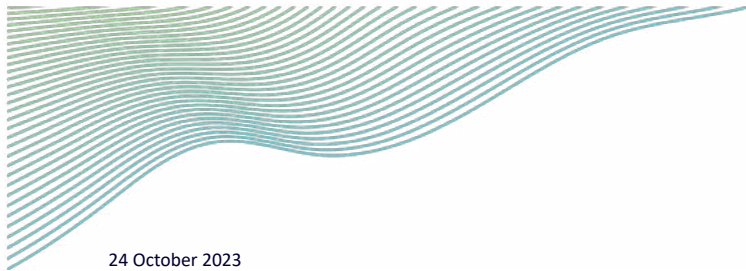
Best regards,



Alex Heroys

CEO, Destination Southern Tasmania

## Letter of Support



24 October 2023

Kathryn McCann  
Chief Operating Officer, Beacon Foundation  
via email: [Kathryn.McCann@beaconfoundation.org.au](mailto:Kathryn.McCann@beaconfoundation.org.au)

Dear Kathryn,

### Letter of support

Hydro Tasmania wishes to acknowledge the partnership we have held with the Beacon Foundation. The three-year partnership began in 2020 and funded workshops and events to give regional students, in particular those at risk of disengaging from school, an understanding of what it means to work in renewable energy. This has been a continuation of the successful work Hydro Tasmania has previously undertaken with the Beacon Foundation.

The Beacon Foundation partnership has been successful for both Hydro Tasmania and students around the state. It has provided communication skills and entry level career training, specifically focussing on CVs and interviews, for Year 9 and Year 10 students. These are critical skills within industry and our business and help ensure success for early career applicants.

We recognise the great work that Beacon Foundation does for career readiness and supporting young people in their transition from education into meaningful employment. We are currently in discussions to enter into another multi-year sponsorship agreement.

Yours sincerely,



Rachel Johnson  
Acting General Manager People, Culture and Engagement

- ▶ Supporting young people to have the aspiration, motivation, and ability to determine their working future.

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