

30 October 2023

Jobs Tasmania
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Submitted via email: YouthJobsStrategy@jobstasmania.tas.gov.au.

Re: headspace National submission – Youth Jobs Strategy, Tasmania

headspace National welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Tasmanian Government's Youth Jobs Strategy discussion paper.

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation providing early intervention mental health services to 12- to 25-year-olds. headspace has 155 centres across Australia in metropolitan, regional and remote areas, as well as online and phone support services through eheadspace. Our work builds the mental health literacy of young people and families and reduces stigma associated with mental health and the associated barriers to seeking help. headspace can help young people with mental health, physical health (including sexual health) alcohol and other drug services, and work and study support. Our work also involves providing schools and their communities with expert advice and guidance on mental health and wellbeing, responding to loss through suicide and supporting communities following major disaster events. At the heart of all our services are young people, their needs and the needs of those who support them.

headspace has been operating in Tasmania since the opening of headspace Launceston in 2008. Since then, headspace services have been established in Hobart, Burnie and Devonport. 2,763 young people accessed support from these services during 2022/23, with a further 165 young people accessing headspace Work and Study services. New developments over the next two years will include a new headspace centre on Eastern Shore in Hobart, and the state's first headspace Early Psychosis Program.

Attached is headspace National's response to the discussion paper. Our response focuses on the:

- link between mental health and engagement in work and study
- importance of integrated, place-based approaches to support young people to successfully engage in work and study, as reflected in success of the vocational support services offered through headspace
- need to offer support in a range of delivery modes
- importance of employers supporting young people once they are in the workforce.

We look forward to the development of the Youth Jobs Strategy for Tasmania and would welcome the opportunity to discuss any aspects of our submission further.

Yours sincerely



Jason Trethowan
Chief Executive Officer

headspace National submission – Youth Jobs Strategy, Tasmania

Introduction

Young people are at a critical stage of life vocationally, as they move from late adolescence into early adulthood and navigate the challenges of completing school, making career choices, seeking employment and training and beginning employment. Many young people find this stage of life challenging. In particular, those aged 15 to 24 years are at risk of disengagement from education, employment and training, and are also more at risk of mental ill-health¹.

Participation in education or employment is recognised as a strong protective factor for young people's mental health, whilst non-participation is a major risk factor.²

Young people who are disengaged from employment and education are at increased risk of long-lasting negative outcomes including socio-economic exclusion, long-term welfare dependency, and poor mental health.^{3,4} In fact, mental illness holds the highest risk for employment disengagement across all disability types, with 37.6 per cent of all people with a mental illness (or 67.3 per cent with severe mental illness) being unemployed or not in the labour force, compared to 22.3 per cent of people without mental health conditions.⁵

Unemployment can have long term impacts on young people, including extended periods of unemployment, lower wages on re-employment, and increased probability of experiencing unemployment again.⁶ This contributes to lost lifetime earnings, productivity and associated reduction in taxation revenue.

During 2022, young people told headspace that employment and education are key priorities for them. When asked what they are most looking forward to in the future, 54 per cent of the 3,107 young people surveyed said “developing their career” and 21 per cent said “further study”. 14 per cent of respondents indicated that youth unemployment was one of the issues that most urgently needs to be addressed.⁷

Our response below highlights the importance of young people having access to integrated, collaborative and cross-sectoral vocational supports that are offered in a range of ways, to support them through transitions, help them to achieve their work and study goals and support them while they are engaged with work and study.

¹ Gore, F.M., Bloem, P.J., Patton, G.C., Ferguson, J., Joseph, V., Coffey, C., Sawyer, S.M., & Mathers, C.D. (2011). "Global burden of disease in young people aged 10–24 years: a systematic analysis." *The Lancet* 377(9783): 2093-2102.

² Holloway, E., Rickwood, D., Rehm, I., Meyer, D., Griffiths, S., & Telford, N. (2017). "Non-participation in education, employment, and training among young people accessing youth mental health services: demographic and clinical correlates." *Advances in Mental Health* 16(1): 19-32.

³ Powell, A., Salignac, F., Meltzer, A., Muir, K., & Weier, M. (2018). *Background report on young people's economic engagement*. Sydney, Centre for Social Impact, UNSW.

⁴ Gore, F.M., Bloem, P.J., Patton, G.C., Ferguson, J., Joseph, V., Coffey, C., Sawyer, S.M., & Mathers, C.D. (2011). "Global burden of disease in young people aged 10–24 years: a systematic analysis." *The Lancet* 377(9783): 2093-2102.

⁵ National Mental Health Commission. (2014). *The National Review of Mental Health Programmes and Services*. Sydney: NMHC.

⁶ Cassidy, N., Chan, I., Gao, A., & Penrose, G. (2020). *Long-term Unemployment in Australia*, Reserve Bank of Australia. Retrieved from: <https://www.rba.gov.au/>.

⁷ headspace National. (2022). *Youth Mental Health Survey*. (publication pending).

The importance of place-based, integrated supports for young people

Discussion paper questions:

What could have the most positive impact on a young person's transition pathway from school to further study, training or employment?

How can the service systems better connect and respond to the complex needs of young people?

What can employers do to help build those work readiness skills?

Tailored, youth-specific supports are needed for young people, with soft entry points to integrated clinical and vocational assistance. Such supports can assist young people with transition pathways from school and provide them with continued support once employed.

Almost one in five young people aged 17-25 accessing headspace centres are not engaged in any form of employment, education or training. This figure rises to one in three young people in many regional and rural areas.⁸ Service data from headspace centres in Tasmania are reflective of this national statistic. 2021-2022 service data indicates that, on average, almost 19 per cent of young people aged 17-25 accessing the centres were not engaged in employment, education or training (17 per cent in Launceston, 27.5 per cent in Devonport and 11.2 per cent in Hobart).⁹

An added challenge for young people in Tasmania, in comparison to other jurisdictions, is the transition from year 10 to 11, whereby young people move to another campus to complete their schooling. There is a need to provide support to young people through this period to ensure they are making informed decisions about whether to continue their education.

A significant percentage of young people who are accessing headspace centres are not receiving a welfare payment and are therefore not accessing federal government employment or career support.

Integrated place-based services can bridge the gap for these young people, providing them with support when they may not be eligible for other mainstream government supports and services, and assisting them to engage with work and/or employment to prevent them from entering the welfare system. In addition, providing a central point of contact for support through offering multiple service streams alleviates the challenges of accessing multiple support services.

headspace services, some of which are highlighted further below in our submission, utilise a holistic approach through which young people can access mental health support as well as other wrap around supports including work and study, physical health and alcohol and other drugs support.

We note that this holistic approach is identified in the discussion paper within Phase 1 of Effective Youth Pathways Practice. We would see this Phase as critical, however, one which should be undertaken concurrently with Phases 2 and 3 – Work Preparation and Workplace Opportunities. A key aim of any vocational service should be to provide young people with workplace opportunities as soon as possible.

Career exploration at school is also critical, particularly during senior secondary years. Supporting young people to develop their digital literacy, resilience and adaptability, and providing opportunities to undertake work experience, volunteering and connect with employers can all contribute to better preparing them for study and work experiences after school.

There is also a critical role for employers to play in supporting young people as they transition into the workforce from school or further study. Employers need to learn to be flexible, adjust expectations and

⁸ headspace National. (2023). Unpublished service data.

⁹ headspace National. (2023). Unpublished service data.

adapt to the needs of young people in the workforce in order to unlock and grow the capability and confidence of these young people.

Our experiences with young people reflect findings from the Productivity Commission and the World Health Organisation which highlight the importance of establishing and maintaining psychologically safe workplaces.^{10 11} Positive workplace culture, work/life balance, mentally healthy leaders, flexible working strategies and strong diversity, equity and inclusion practices are all important to young people. Providing professional development opportunities is another important step towards young people sustaining employment, including peer or mentoring programs.

While there are steps that can be taken to support young people prior to entry into the workforce, on the job experience is required to develop skills in young people. Supporting young people once they are in employment is critical, including high quality induction practices that incorporate training, development opportunities and mentoring.

The importance of providing support through a range of delivery modes

Discussion paper questions:

How can we improve access to services and support for young people in our region?

Young people experiencing mental health challenges are often reluctant to seek help and/or they face other barriers to help seeking. 58 per cent of young people serviced through the headspace Work and Study online service (outlined below) are not accessing headspace centres for reasons such as location, time availability, mental health barriers or a preference for online support.

The option of anonymous support through online services may encourage some to seek help when they otherwise wouldn't. This can be particularly important in regional communities where young people often want to maintain privacy from friends, family and local community members.

Online services enable people in regional locations to access services where in-person services are not available and can be useful in providing 'bridging' support where high demand is driving long wait times for in-person services. They also provide a soft entry point to in-person support.

However, headspace considers it important to offer both online and in-person options for young people to access support, because:

- unemployed people and those with low incomes are amongst the groups of people who are less likely to have internet access, as well as those living in rural and regional communities, First Nations young people, and those living with disability.¹²
- a young person who has higher needs may respond better to in-person services, or a combination of both online and in-person services.¹³

¹⁰ Productivity Commission. (2020), *Mental Health, Report no. 95*, Canberra.

¹¹ World Health Organisation. (2022). *Reshaping work environments to promote and protect mental health*. Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/promoting-and-protecting-mental-health-at-work--addressing-toxic-work-environments>.

¹² State of Victoria. (2021). *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, Final Report, Volume 5: Transforming the system – innovation and implementation*.

¹³ State of Victoria. (2021). *Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, Final Report, Volume 5: Transforming the system – innovation and implementation*.

Examples of best practice vocational programs delivered by headspace

headspace offers a range of in person and digital mental health services and vocational support. including headspace Work and Study Online, headspace Career Mentoring, and the Individual Placement and Support Program. These are outlined briefly below and further detail is provided in **Attachment 1**.

headspace Work and Study Online (hWS) supports young people whose mental health might otherwise prevent them from participating fully in work and study. It uniquely integrates vocational and clinical mental health and psychosocial support, and is accessible to all young Australians via phone, webchat, web video and email.

External reviews and evaluations have found hWS to be an effective, efficient, appropriate and scalable service for supporting at risk young people to engage in work and study.^{14 15}

The model is evidence-based and aligned to the National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards.

headspace Career Mentoring is an online mentoring service that connects young people who are living with mental health challenges with industry professionals both locally and nationally through leveraging their workforce to be career mentors to young people. Mentoring is provided through video conferencing and/or phone. As well as supporting young people and building industry connections, the program builds understanding and reduces stigma about mental health amongst employers.

headspace also delivers the **Individual Placement and Support Program** (IPS), which is an in-person service currently available within 50 headspace centres. IPS supports young people to find, maintain and enjoy work in an area that interests them, by overcoming barriers to employment and building their security and dignity.

The IPS model has been shown nationally and internationally to be an effective approach to achieving vocational outcomes for individuals experiencing mental ill-health, with average employment outcomes around three times higher than other prevailing employment service models.¹⁶ The Productivity Commission assessed the evidence and substantial cost savings generated by IPS and recommended that, as a priority reform, IPS programs be rolled out for all job seekers with mental illness.¹⁷

Through these services, headspace plays a critical role in equipping young people with skills to help them access the job market and opportunities in their locality, establishing connections with employers and navigating pathways into employment and training.

¹⁴ KPMG. (2020). *Digital Work and Study Services Evaluation for the Department of Social Services*. Perth.

¹⁵ Rickwood, D., Kennedy, V., Miyazaki, K., Telford, N., Carbone, S., Watts, C., Hewitt, E. (2021). "An Online Platform to Provide Work and Study Support for Young People With Mental Health Challenges: Observational and Survey Study." *Journal for Medical Internet Research, Mental Health*. 8(2):e21872

¹⁶ Orygen Youth Mental Health Research Centre. (2014). *Tell them they're dreaming: Work, Education and Young People with Mental Illness in Australia*. Orygen Youth Health Research Centre.

¹⁷ Productivity Commission. (2020). *Mental Health*. Report no. 95. Canberra

Attachment One – headspace vocational supports

headspace Work and Study Online (hWS) is a national digital program that integrates employment and education support with clinical mental health and psychosocial support for young people whose mental health would otherwise prevent them from participating fully in work and study. Young people’s challenges are often interlinked. hWS offers a broad and integrated response that is consistent with best practice for this vulnerable cohort.^{18,19}

Work and study assistance is provided by hWS Specialists with diverse backgrounds (e.g. community workers, disability employment workers, career advisors) and clinical staff provide support to young people as well as working closely with the non-clinical staff.

Support is provided via phone, webchat, web video conferencing and email, typically for a period of around three months.

hWS works closely with young people across their work/study journey. It supports them with things such as identifying work/study goals, maintaining a work/study placement, overcoming barriers to employment, building their confidence and dignity, and improving their life chances at a time when they face huge challenges.

Expanding access to services

hWS is able to provide clinically integrated work and study support to young people who:

- live in areas with limited in-person support options (such as rural and remote areas)
- want support but also want to maintain anonymity
- may not engage or be eligible for mainstream employment service providers
- prefer communication via technology rather than in-person e.g. due to mental ill health.

In FY 2022-2023, headspace Work and Study online delivered

12,198

work and study sessions to

2,197

young people

 **90%**

of young people reported being satisfied with headspace Work and Study Online support.

“I love that mental health was an integral part of this service. It was so freeing to talk openly about my mental health and anxiety and receive advice on my mental health that ended up contributing to my success in my job hunt”

¹⁸ Holloway, E., Rickwood, D., Rehm, I., Meyer, D., Griffiths, S., & Telford, N. (2017). Non-participation in education, employment, and training among young people accessing youth mental health services: demographic and clinical correlates. *Advances in Mental Health*, 16(1): 19-32.

¹⁹ Gmitroski, T., Bradley, C., Heinemann, L., Liu, G., Blanchard, P., Beck, C., Mathias, S., Leon, A., & Barbic, S.P. (2018). Barriers and facilitators to employment for young adults with a mental illness: A scoping review. *BMJ Open*, 8(12).

hWS has had positive outcomes, including being an effective, efficient, appropriate, and scalable service for supporting at risk young people to engage in work and study.^{20 21}

- 72 per cent of young people completing 10 support sessions achieving a work or study outcome in the program.²²
- 82 per cent felt that the service helped them to understand how mental health and wellbeing issues were impacting on their work and study situation.



Based on the 276 responses to the 2022-2023 FY headspace Work and Study Young Person Survey.

“The headspace worker that helped me was amazing. She helped me figure out what to study and helped me with my resume. I’ve been stuck in a rut for years after leaving school and she finally helped me out of it.”

Program participant



“The Digital Work and Study Service [is] an amazing program that I strongly believe should be expanded to the rest of the country - anyone should be able to access services like these given the current state of youth unemployment in Australia.”

Program participant

²⁰ KPMG (2020). *Digital Work and Study Services Evaluation For the Department of Social Services*. Perth.

²¹ Rickwood, D., Kennedy, V., Miyazaki, K., Telford, N., Carbone, S., Watts, C., Hewitt, E. (2021). An Online Platform to Provide Work and Study Support for Young People With Mental Health Challenges: Observational and Survey Study. *Journal for Medical Internet Research, Mental Health*. 8(2):e21872

²² Kennedy V, Miyazaki K, Carbone S, Telford N, Rickwood D. (2018). *The Digital Work and Study Service: Final Evaluation Report*. Melbourne: headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation.

headspace Career Mentoring connects young people aged 18-25 years, who are living with mental health challenges, with industry professionals. Industry partners leverage and train their experienced staff to become volunteer mentors. Career mentoring enhances employment opportunities by supporting young people to navigate career and employment pathways, including developing networks, receiving recruitment advice and strategies to gain employment in their desired sector and occupations of interest.

headspace Career Mentoring supports up to **125 young people** each year to work with a trained career mentor.

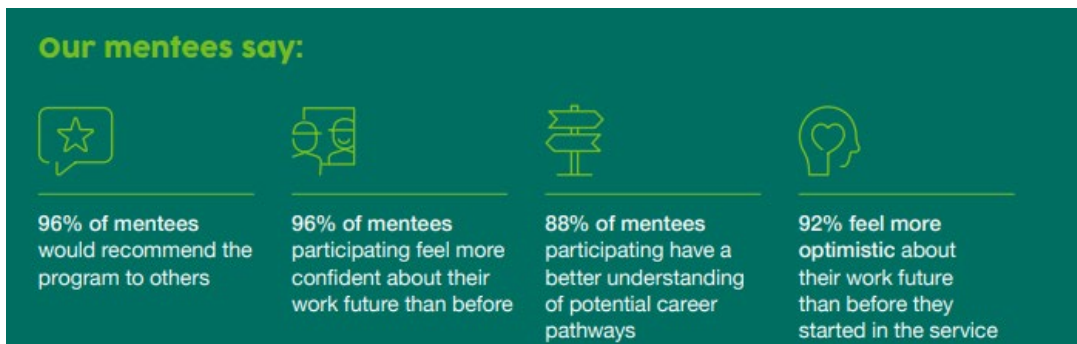
Career Mentoring is ideal for young people who are geographically or socially isolated as they connect with mentors online via video conferencing and/or phone. Mentors and mentees typically meet fortnightly over a six-month period.

headspace has **trained over 290 mentors** to work with young people to build confidence and skills as they enter the world of work, acting as a sounding board and source of support at an important transition point.

Since the service began in 2017, **548 young people** have been supported by a career mentor, **over 3,500 mentoring sessions** have been delivered.

59 per cent of young people who weren't working gained a job during their time with the service.

The majority of funding for hWS and headspace Career Mentoring ceases in June 2023 and headspace is seeking additional funding from the Australian Government to enable it to maintain the number of young people it can support through these vocational programs.



“I definitely feel more confident in my ability to apply for jobs and also my techniques for job searching are stronger. I also realised further study was something that would really benefit me in my future and I have commenced some.”
 – young person

“Mentoring through the headspace program continues to be one of the most fulfilling things I do, and I have loved developing a strong relationship with my mentee. I am so proud and happy to provide support to young people.”
 – headspace mentor

The **Individual Placement and Support Program** (IPS) supports young people to find, maintain and enjoy work in an area that interests them, by overcoming barriers to employment and building their security and dignity. This improves the life chances of a cohort facing long-term welfare dependency and socio-economic disadvantage.

The program provides integrated clinical support and career mentoring to young people whose mental health is a barrier to finding or participating fully in work. Support can include help preparing resumes and job applications, support in managing work/study stress, and career planning support.

IPS is funded by the Australian Government to operate in 50 headspace centres and headspace is seeking additional funding from the Australian Government to expand the IPS program to all current headspace centres.

The IPS employment services model is an effective and cost-effective way to increase workforce participation among young people experiencing mental ill-health, and divert them from the Disability Support Pension.²³ The Productivity Commission stated that the IPS model has been found to outperform conventional approaches to employment support for people with mental ill-health and recommended that IPS programs should continue to be rolled out nationally and integrated with mental health services.²⁴

Young people who access IPS are more likely to gain employment and maintain employment for at least 26 weeks, than young people who utilise Disability Employment Services (DES) and jobactive. In 2018, Orygen published the findings from a randomised control trial of IPS delivered to young people experiencing first episode psychosis, finding that those who had received IPS had a significantly higher rate of being employed (71.2 per cent) than those who did not receive IPS (48 per cent).²⁵ Additionally, IPS clients achieve strong mental health outcomes with an estimated 80 per cent achieving a significant decrease in psychological distress and/or a significant increase in social and occupational functioning and/or quality of life.^{26 27}

Work and Study in headspace centres

Using the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model, Work and Study is also available at select headspace centres, integrating in-person vocational and clinical support.

22,779 occasions of service delivered to

2,835 young people

94% of young people satisfied with Work and Study services received in centres

²³ Orygen Youth Health Research Centre. (2014). *Tell them they're dreaming: work, education and young people with mental illness in Australia*. Parkville Victoria.

²⁴ Productivity Commission. (2020). *Mental Health*. Canberra. Report Number 95.

²⁵ Killackey, E., Allott, K., Jackson, H., Scutella, R., Tseng, Y., Borland, J., Cotton, S. (2019). Individual placement and support for vocational recovery in first-episode psychosis: Randomised controlled trial. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 214(2), 76-82. doi:10.1192/bjp.2018.191

²⁶ KPMG (2020). Digital Work and Study Services Evaluation For the Department of Social Services. Perth.

²⁷ Rickwood, D., Kennedy, V., Miyazaki, K., Telford, N., Carbone, S., Watts, C., Hewitt, E. (2021). An Online Platform to Provide Work and Study Support for Young People With Mental Health Challenges: Observational and Survey Study. *Journal for Medical Internet Research, Mental Health*, 8(2):e21872.