



## **TASSO SUBMISSION**

Independent Education Review into the  
Tasmanian Education System

***We're in this together.  
We speak as a proud voice for families within the  
Tasmanian State School community to  
make sure their needs and ideas are heard.***

## **Acknowledgements**

### *Acknowledgement of Country*

Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations pays respect to the Palawa people as the Traditional Custodians and first educators of the land in beautiful Lutruwita, Tasmania.

We pay respect to elders past, present, and emerging and acknowledge their deep connection to country.

We also express our gratitude that we share this land today, our sorrow for some of the costs of that sharing, and our hope and belief that we move to a place of equity, justice, and partnership together.

### *Acknowledging Parents*

TASSO acknowledges parents and caregivers as the first educators in their child's life. We celebrate and honour the diversity of families and recognise the vital role family and community play in supporting children and young people throughout their learning journeys.

TASSO prepared this submission with the help of Tasmanian parents and caregivers. We extend our appreciation to all who have shared their experiences and engaged with our consultation process for this submission.

## **Background**

Who is TASSO?

The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations (TASSO) is the peak body representing the parents and community who form School Association within Tasmanian public schools.

Our mission is to strengthen every state school association committee in Tasmania so they can achieve the best student outcomes. We work to empower the heart of Tassie State schools – their community – by supporting School Associations.

Our work includes providing essential training, resources, and support to school committees. Most importantly, we help them meet their constitutional requirements, support office-bearers in their roles and facilitate valuable networking opportunities, so together the School Association can do great things.

We represent the School Association Committees from within Tasmania’s 123 Primary Schools (Kindergarten to Grade 6), 54 High Schools (Grade 7 – 12), and 8 Colleges (Grade 11 and 12).

At TASSO, we believe in the value of government education. We are committed to making sure that state school education in Tasmania delivers the best possible education for Tassie kids. We speak as a proud voice for families to make sure their needs and ideas are heard.

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## Introduction

TASSO welcomes the independent review into the Tasmanian Education System. Through our consultations, we have gained insights from parents that we wish to raise to your attention within this review.

We believe there is a real opportunity through this review that ensures Tasmania's education system continues to improve and provide the critical role it can and does play in ensuring Tasmanian children and young people gain the skills they need to lead their best lives and fully contribute to our community and economic future.

To define our meanings behind some of the words included in our submission, we are approaching this paper with the definitions of the following:

*Parent:* When we refer to "parent," we mean the primary caregiver. We acknowledge that for some, this may not be a biological parent. The term "parent" is used for simplicity and is not intended to diminish the significant role of carers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, or others fulfilling the role of primary caregiver.

In our submission, we will represent the parent voice shared to us by our stakeholders, to ensure this is considered as the vital role that we know the parent voice has within their child's educational pathway.

Our submission will touch on four of the five key themes provided by the Governments Independent Review, these being:

- ***Defining educational success***
- ***Strengthening supports and engagement for all learners at all stages of their education***
- ***Support for our teaching workforce***
- ***Accountability for improved outcomes***

In a state that is doing so much to be proactive around child and youth safety through the new legislation supporting this goal, TASSO believes that there is a role to review the way that education is provided to our children.

For some children and families, school days are the consistent form of support and happiness for these children and families.

With Tasmanian Schools being the heart of many communities, TASSO believes it is the State Governments responsibility to provide consistent, safe, accessible, and supportive environments for all children, regardless of the support required in order to thrive.

## Defining educational success

To succeed in education, every child must be given the opportunity to realise and fulfill their potential. This means being known, seen, and heard, not only as individuals but also through the insights of those who know them best - their parents.

TASSO believes that all children have the right to an education that is free, equitable, and provides every opportunity for success. However, in Tasmania today, education is not free for all<sup>1</sup>, it is not equitable<sup>2</sup>, and it does not provide equal opportunity for all learners. To truly offer success to all, we need to address the disparities that exist within the current system.

The inequitable divisions within education funding begin with the unequal distribution of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS)<sup>3</sup> and support packages at both the Federal and State levels. This creates an ethos that "private" education is superior and more valued by governments, contributing to a perceived hierarchy in education.

It would be naive to think that students in state schools do not recognise these differences. They see the private school buses, the uniforms, the facilities. They know other students who have opportunities for excursions and learning experiences that they themselves are not afforded.

The stigma surrounding public education is further reinforced by school levies and the "capacity to pay" of families. In the state system, schools are divided based on their community's capacity to pay levies. High ICSEA (Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage) schools may charge over \$800 per student annually, while lower ICSEA schools can charge as little as \$200. This division fosters elitism, with some state schools being viewed as "elite" compared to neighbouring schools simply due to their ability to fund "extras" that should arguably be considered basic educational necessities. In the non-government sector schools are charging in excess of \$20,000 per annum and still receiving government funding.

Further disparities arise in access to support for students with learning needs. Families with the means to seek external educational assessments allows a school to access additional funding to support diverse learning requirements of students with a diagnosis. In contrast, schools with less-resourced families face long wait times for psychological assessments - up to 250 days on average statewide, with some North-West schools reporting waits of up to a year. This delay hinders the ability to identify and address a child's educational needs early, ultimately impacting their learning outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.decyp.tas.gov.au/learning/enrolment/fees-levies/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/resources/tasmania-bilateral-agreement>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.education.gov.au/recurrent-funding-schools/resources/tasmania-bilateral-agreement>

A student flagged for psychological assessment should not have to wait over half a year for support<sup>4</sup>. The ability to understand and respond to each student's learning needs is critical for success.

De-privatisation of non-government schools in Tasmania would integrate private schools into the public system, providing more equitable access to resources and reducing socio-economic disparities in education. It could result in a more uniform curriculum and funding redistribution, potentially improving underfunded state schools.

**Equitable access to education is currently lacking in Tasmania, systemic changes are needed to ensure all students, regardless of socioeconomic status or school type, have equal opportunities to succeed.**

What constitutes success in education? Ultimately, parents want their children to be happy and healthy, receiving a well-rounded education that equips them for their future.

Success of education has a young person stably or gainfully employed, with the life, social, and wellbeing skills to allow the contribute meaningfully to society. Success is more than an ATAR or TCE score or a university degree.

Measurements of success comes in many forms; it shouldn't be limited to the end of formalised schooling. Students need to see themselves as successful in the primary and high school years of schooling; to see pathways to many varied jobs or careers, knowledge and visibility of opportunity can foster engagement beyond Year 10.

Success is transitioning to high school with the expected literacy, numeracy and ICT markers being met.

Success is continuing an education pathway after Year 10. Whether in school, or in a traineeship or apprenticeship.

Success is becoming adults who are willing and happy to always be learning, knowing it is ok for this not to stop at the conclusion of Year 10, 11 or 12. To then support the next generation to always be curious, know it is ok to not know, and be open to always learning.

A successful education system provides every possible opportunity for every young person in Tasmania, regardless of background, to gain the education they deserve.

Parents understand that success can be achieved through multiple pathways, even if a student does not complete Year 12. For some, alternative education models or entering the workforce through apprenticeships may be a better fit. Personal circumstances, such as financial constraints, also play a role in this decision, highlighting the need for more flexible education options.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.themercury.com.au/tasmania-education/schools-alarm-bell-long-wait-list-for-student-psychology-assessments/news-story/d46ef76eaa33d42602a3bea64cfe46ff>

When we asked parents why students are leaving prior to completing year 12, we heard the following reasons:

- Gaining employment through traineeship or apprenticeship
- Not engaged with overloaded curriculum
- People learn in a variety of ways; whereas schools are fairly narrow in how they accommodate the different needs of students
- Pressure increases in Year 11 and 12
- Limited resources in schools, and non-Government funding of the Gonski model
- Parents have less control over their children as they get closer to 18 years of age
- Some students are disengaged and have lacking expectation in relation to completion of school beyond year 10
- Tasmanian students believe that school finishes at Year 10, and that College is optional
- Too much pressure to get high grades in Year 11 & 12
- When students fall off the radar, there are minimal to no consequences for this in Year 11 or 12.

However, parents also highlighted the benefits of completing Year 12:

- This sets children up further for adult life ahead of them
- Most jobs now require completion of Year 12
- Opens opportunities later in life
- Provides young people a place to learn and mature before entering the workforce
- It can be a better learning environment for those wanting to further their education
- Provides the child the right path to lead a successful career later in life
- Child fulfils potential and achieve grades that keep options and confidence open
- The ability to think critically, academic, and social skills to pursue chosen career options

We appreciate that for government there needs to be a marker, a statistic, a measure that concludes the formal government required education. To do this successfully, we believe there needs to be a consistent marker nationally for what constitutes successful completion of education. If attainment of a TCE or ATAR is the correct marker, then the same metrics should be nationally applied.

To accurately measure attainment all students should have a unique student identifier to ensure and map a true picture of education across the nation not only in Tasmania.

TASSO believe that success in learning, is engagement with learning. Whether that is completion of Year 12 with TCE and/or ATAR or an apprenticeship or traineeship. A better marker of success might be long term markers; where is the student at age 21, 23 and 25 what further education did they obtain beyond Year 12?

We would note again that the marker of completion should be uniformed across the country, that maintaining schooling until completion or diverting into an alternate pathway that continues learning pathway and should not be considered “failure”.

To ensure the best possible potential for completion of Year 12 we must:

- Ensure there is a stronger parent understanding of why it is important to complete Year 12
- Look at the financial supports to families and young people to complete Year 12, it is not a hidden fact that some families simply put, cannot afford to support their child to continue education through to Year 12
  - o Free bus travel
  - o Support access to technology and internet
  - o Part time options
  - o Online study opportunities
- Increase access to alternate courses and teaching methods
  - o what do online classes look like?
  - o the Big Picture program?
  - o remote offerings?
- Ensure that the leadership is stable, trusted, consistent and follows a good governance model in all schools. This will ensure to retain good teaching staff if the leadership is strong and supported.
- Introduction of more hands-on VET electives in Year 11 and 12. Demonstrate pathways to careers and University for students to make informed choices on their education pathway.
- Introduce more camps and social opportunities outside of the classroom for students to experience.
- Pathway support for students that aren't attending school, encouragement of traineeship or apprenticeship opportunities
- Enforcing the Education Act (Tas) 2016

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. Correcting the inequity of education funding.**
- 2. Resourcing and attracting psychologists into the education system.**
- 3. A review of, and enforcement of the Education Act (Tas) 2016;**
  - a. Strengthen the requirements around Year 11 and 12, and young people under the age of 18 years being employed and rostered on during school hours and,**
  - b. Remove the option of finishing school at 18 years.**
- 4. Foster and enhance the value of education with families.**
- 5. Understand why students are leaving school prior to completion of Year 12.**



## Strengthening supports and engagement for all learners at all stages of their education

We know that families are the first and most influential educators in a child's life. However, genuine family engagement with learning remains underutilised in Tasmanian State Schools.

No parent steps into the role of primary caregiver expecting that, in just a few short years, their child will enter the education system where, in some Tasmanian schools, the parent's role in supporting their child's learning is undervalued.

Many parents recognise their role as leaders in their child's education. They set expectations for their children, fostering commitment and responsibility towards learning. For those parents that don't value education, opportunities should be given to model what quality education can achieve, and the community continue to provide mentorship and example to the learner and their family.

It is essential for Tasmanian schools to harness the critical role parents play in their child's educational journey. Schools and parents need to work together, especially when students are falling behind, to set and achieve shared goals for their success.

Teaching staff also need to recognise their role as mentors, particularly in situations where education might not be highly valued within a household. Teachers can play a key role in broadening students' perspectives and fostering curiosity.

One parent shared their experience, reflecting on how their school years were enriched by three dedicated teachers who cared enough to understand them and wanted to see them succeed. These teachers provided support through challenging life events, recognising their potential even when it wasn't nurtured at home. One teacher, understood their career aspirations, guided them towards a new path when their original goal became unfeasible, leading to a successful traineeship. Now, as an adult with children of their own, this person appreciates how the teachers' care and mentorship changed their life trajectory.

Currently, this parent faces challenges with their 16-year-old, a potential school leaver who has slipped through gaps due to high staff turnover. Although their child participates in the ARC program, career planning skills such as resume building, job applications, and interview techniques have been lacking. The parent had to step in, organising work placements and ensuring their child gained these essential skills. This involvement was driven not by the support of the current school, but because of the positive influence of a teacher over 20 years ago.

Multiple parents reflected on being the first person within their family to graduate university, all placing credit with the education system and the belief of teachers that had

them striving academically for careers that they would not have known existed if it was not for their teachers. Career pathway education should never be minimised but for these parents it was the influence of their everyday regular teacher knowing and seeing them that had the greatest impact.

There are components of the education pathway that we are doing well, such as the Child and Family Learning Centres, which engage families in hands-on, supportive ways. However, as a student progresses through the system, the value placed on family engagement diminishes. Barriers to engagement often arise as children enter the formal education system.

For many families, the first experience of school involves navigating levy payments or book day, often accompanied by a daunting amount of paperwork and uniform requirements. This can create a cycle of disengagement, particularly for parents with low literacy skills or financial constraints, adding stress to an already challenging start to their child's education journey.

Ideally, families would engage with "Launch into Learning" programs before children start kindergarten. However, many parents cannot attend these due to work commitments. With the rising cost of living, more parents are returning to work earlier, limiting their ability to participate in these programs.

Standardising a universal approach to enrolment, one that supports diverse literacy needs, would be a significant improvement to creating a welcoming experience of school for everyone.

As children progress through primary school, family engagement often becomes limited to home readers and newsletters. One principal mentioned prioritising teacher professional development over genuine family engagement. Some teachers express concerns that engagement opportunities could create divides between students whose parents participate and those who do not. However, this approach of catering to the lowest standard can hinder all students. Families should be given the opportunity to engage in a shared approach to learning, avoiding harmful stereotypes and assumptions.

By the time students enter high school, communication from schools often reduces to a minimum—occasional newsletters or compliance with basic Reporting and Communicating with Families policy requirements.

We know through the Student Wellbeing data and drops of PAT results in literacy and numeracy that there is a decrease in student engagement with education as a student enters high school. We also know that parent involvement shows a marked decrease beyond primary school, while parent involvement is challenging, students enforce their independence, consideration might be given to increasing the transition experience to build parent connection prior to the start of Year 7.

Over time, a lack of shared responsibility has developed within the education system. Many parents report that their only communication from their child's school is with concerns about behaviour management or illness. Rarely are they contacted about student learning be that concerns or celebration. Parents are often deprived of the chance to celebrate their child's achievements in school assemblies when they are not informed, often through assumptions that parents are too busy, not want to or the notion of "unfairness" where some can and other can't, so all miss out.

Several parents shared the dread of the school's phone number popping up on their phone while at work, it was never a positive phone call, there was always something wrong, they shared the dread of "what have they done now!"

There needs to be a cultural shift in state schools, where we celebrate students more than a tokenistic certificate one a year in assembly. There is power in sharing and celebrating regular education wins, be that through phone calls, emails, or sharing of schoolwork home with teacher comments and celebration.

In the same cultural shift, there need to be value in the parents knowing their child. When parents raise concerns about their child's education, they sometimes feel dismissed or treated as if they are overstepping. This perception was reinforced when TASSO was told by the DECYP's Culture and Growth team that parents are not considered stakeholders in their child's education—a message that contradicts the department's strategic plan, but reenforced when you consider there was little to no parent engagement with the development of the DECYP strategic plan or organisational values.

We have lost the connection and community that school once fostered. Building a strong school community, where families, educators, and students feel connected and involved, has proven benefits for the educational experience. When parents are actively engaged in their child's education and feel welcomed by the school, it creates a more supportive and collaborative environment. Schools that foster a culture of inclusiveness and partnership see increased student motivation, higher attendance rates, and improved academic outcomes. This sense of belonging extends beyond the classroom, helping to develop positive social behaviours and a stronger commitment to learning. When families, educators, and community members work together, they build networks of support that allow for shared resources, knowledge, and problem-solving. This holistic approach not only benefits individual students but also enhances the school culture, making it a place where everyone feels valued and invested in student success. Connectedness within the school community can transform the educational experience, ensuring that students are nurtured, parents are respected, and educators are empowered to make a meaningful difference.

The difference between sectors is evident. It is hard to not compare. Private schools tend to by necessity communicate more with parents, who are paying for the privilege of

engagement. This dynamic further reinforces the perception that quality education is something to be bought.

State schools need strategies to engage with parents regularly and consistently not only when their child requires additional support to thrive, but to enhance all student learning.

TASSO survey responses show that only 18% of respondents felt the education system adequately supports family engagement. Meanwhile, 18% disagreed, and 64% believed it was only sometimes supportive.

The education system's shortcomings in engaging families are further exacerbated by literacy and digital access barriers, with most communication happening via email or online.

To better support families, we recommend:

- Ensuring communication pathways are accessible.
- Increasing funding to support high-risk families.
- Allowing schoolwork to be sent home, as some schools restrict this, implying a mistrust of parents' involvement.
- Developing "reporting" guidelines with the School Association Committee (per policy).
- Building family engagement into curriculum planning, especially in early years. For instance, units could be paired with messages to families explaining how to reinforce the concepts at home. In later schooling years, a family portal with access to student work, along with high-level snapshots of lessons, would be beneficial.

Overall, Tasmanian schools should place greater value on parents' knowledge and insights, involving them more in their child's education and respecting their role in decisions about both current and future learning.

Surveyed parents largely felt that the education system does not adequately support students who are struggling. Nearly half (46%) felt the system was inadequate, 27% believed support was provided only sometimes, and the remaining 27% reported that promises made by schools to support learning were often not fulfilled.

We must acknowledge that every child is an individual with unique learning needs. The current curriculum's one-size-fits-all approach fails to accommodate diverse learning styles and lacks responsiveness to the needs of students and their families.

Successful educational outcomes rely on families valuing and actively engaging with education. How can schools better support this? This issue is often reflected in the correlation between responses to the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Survey and socio-economic factors. Families prioritising education sometimes seek out-of-area

enrolments in state schools with higher perceived educational value or opt for non-government schools.

True educational success depends on intergenerational mobility. We must eliminate barriers that prevent families from engaging in their child's education, creating systems that support and recognise the essential role families play throughout the educational journey, from early childhood to college.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. As part of this review, the role and importance of family engagement with learning be reviewed, understood, and supported through policy.**
- 2. Foster and enhance the value of education with families.**
- 3. TASSO urges the development a consistent curriculum timetable that contains lesson plans, online capabilities, and family engagement strategies.**

## Support for our teaching workforce

TASSO believe quality and passionate teachers are one of the key pillars for students achieving and fulfilling their potential. We acknowledge that there are a shortage of teachers working in education. Although we hear the concerns of the sector, we acknowledge that we are not the organisation best placed to speak for teachers, we will share what we have heard but urge that teachers are consulted broadly and anonymously through this review. Their insight is incredibly valuable.

TASSO have heard through conversation with educators their concerns:

- **Administrative Burden:** Excessive administrative tasks and reporting requirements detract from the core mission of educating students. Teachers feel that these demands are at the cost of quality teaching time.
- **Lack of Consistency:** There is a noticeable lack of uniformity across schools, leading to frustration. Some teachers seek clearer, consistent guidelines, less grey area.
- **Policy Development:** Policies affecting teachers are often developed without their input, leading to a disconnect between classroom realities and administrative expectations.
- **Pressure and Underperformance:** Teachers report feeling pressured to underperform to avoid surpassing the expectations of their peers, which stifles innovation and growth.
- **Feeling Undervalued:** Teachers do not feel sufficiently valued by the education system, parents, or students, leading to a decline in morale and job satisfaction.
- **Struggling to Meet Students' Needs:** Many teachers feel they are failing students due to a lack of time and resources to address individual educational needs.

There appears to be a need for a structured human resource process to ensure professional performance reviews, address underperformance, and provide targeted professional development to support teachers.

In a society where parenting approaches vary widely, it is the government's responsibility to provide consistent, accessible, and reliable education to all children. To achieve this, teachers and educators must be adequately supported and resourced. This means ensuring that teaching staff have the tools, training, and environment necessary to deliver a high standard of education consistently across the state.

To achieve consistency of education across schools, consideration should be given to implementing a statewide curriculum. For example, all Year 3 students could learn the same math lessons at the same time, supported by standardised lesson plans, extension activities, and online tools developed by educators, expansion of the model would

include family engagement tools, linking curriculum to home. This model would ensure uniformity in the delivery of education, allowing teachers to focus more on effective teaching rather than content creation. It would also facilitate the sharing of successful strategies, enabling educators to refine their approaches based on collective feedback and experience. Such collaboration encourages consistency in teaching standards and fosters the exchange of best practices, benefiting both educators and students.

Consistency would benefit learner outcomes particularly with students who transfer schools mid-year, some students moving regularly lacking stability in location and teachers would potentially benefit from stability in curriculum learnings, similarly students who are absent from the classroom through illness can engage with online learnings that mirror the work of the classroom.

The profession of teaching being valued at a higher level will support attracting more great teachers, this will ensure we have the best people teaching the next generation.

Supported training pathways, like apprenticeships, could attract more candidates to the teaching profession. Allowing individuals to earn an income while training to become teachers would reduce the financial burden that often deters potential educators from entering the field. This approach would make teaching a more accessible and attractive career option, helping to build a robust and well-qualified workforce.

It is essential that teachers are adequately compensated and have a clear understanding of their work-life balance. This includes allocating time for administrative tasks, engaging with families, and managing their teaching responsibilities. Additionally, providing mental health and well-being support is crucial, particularly in cases involving complex needs or extra resources to support a child's learning pathway. By addressing these factors, the profession can be elevated, encouraging teachers to remain committed and motivated in their roles.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. Develop a strategy for teacher feedback that is anonymous.**
- 2. Establish human resource professional evaluation processes.**
- 3. Review at the position description and requirements of the role of a teacher.**
- 4. Create a consistent uniformed delivery mode for the curriculum.**
- 5. Improve online education capabilities.**

## Accountability for improved outcomes

When we consider accountability measures it instantly triggers an image of data collection, such measures often come at the expense of time with students for teachers. We want to be clear that measures put in place to capture data should be supported by the department through easy-to-use technology and support staff, it should never come at the expense of time with students. Systems and process should be designed with ease of usability and result in improvements to sharing and communication learning progress with families.

All programs and resources should be evaluated thoroughly and respectfully, taking into account costs, effectiveness, and teacher opinion.

New policy should be implemented in a way that allows training and professional development prior to implementation.

The business of the department should set clear processes with policy, that set clear expectations, putting processes in place that have no ambiguity; grey area and inconsistencies across schools are point of parent (and teacher) frustration. There should be no differences between schools, for example, when it comes to reporting and communicating with families, every school should be providing evidence of learning in the same way.

When we look at the Department for Education, Children and Young People's mission being **Bright lives. Positive Futures**. Then when we overlay the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SGDs), which of the 17 goals – many apply to what we are trying to achieve in the educational pathway of all children within Tasmanians schools.

When we look at Tasmania's education system in this review, how do we ensure that every child has the equal opportunity to be supported on their pathway of education, learning and experience.

We know that a person, never stops learning. Yet the current educational system suggests that this pathway of being educated (or learning) ends upon completion of Year 10, 11 or 12.

The Education Act (Tas) 2016 outlines that each child must complete at least 13 years of education or training:

*PART 3 - Compulsory Education and Training*

*Division 1 - Objects of Part*

*10. Object of Part*

*The object of this Part is to ensure that a child completes at least 13 years of education or training as follows (unless exempted under this Part):*



*(a) by remaining at school, or being home educated, until he or she is issued with a transition statement.*

*(b) by then –*

*(i) continuing at school until he or she is issued with a Year 12 completion certificate; or*

*(ii) participating in an approved learning program in another manner, or being home educated, until the child attains the age of 18 years or completes the approved learning program.*

*Division 2 - School-aged children*

*Subdivision 1 - Enrolment at school*

**11. Requirement to enrol school-aged child at school or provide home education**

*(1) Unless exempted under this Division, a child who is at least 5 years of age as at 1 January in any year must be –*

*(a) enrolled at a school until issued with a transition statement (whether or not the child attains the age of 18 years before the commencement of, or during, Year 10); or*

*(b) provided with home education by a registered home educator for that year and subsequent years until the child is issued with a transition statement.*

The only option beyond 18 years of age is adult learning or university.

When we look at our pathways back into education, the current education journey is linear and inflexible. If you deviate from the pathway to Year 12 it is incredibly difficult to return the path to formalised (and supported) education. A student that leaves the institution of school at Year 10 and works for 2 years because they're disengaged with school or due to poverty or for whatever reason, they cannot re-enter (easily) the college system, allowing for flexibility and valuing the education in the college space would be a positive change that signifies that education is valued and valuable regardless of age.

Likewise, the ability to know which students have left the education system as 16 or 17 years old and who are not engaged in an approved training course seem to float, with a reliance on families to support them in their choices, families that are often not able to see or know what the best for long term success is. These students are not enrolled at college, or they are not attending, often they are working, despite the *section 247 of the Education Act (Tas) 2016* prohibiting the employment of a child during school hours, who is supporting them? Is this area of education adequately resourced? Is there an opportunity that an education system supports the employer to put the student through a traineeship or apprenticeship or face a fine for employing a student when they should be at school? Does career counselling ensure that the young person understands their options and supports them to live up to their full potential?

We hear about the need for and importance of young people completing Year 11 and 12, yet we see Year 10 school leavers who have worked for two-years by the time others complete Year 11 and 12, then go on to put a down payment on a house, and have two extra years of superannuation payments to a child who is not employed. Whereas those completing Year 11 and 12, who go onto university often find themselves accruing HECS debt, and only able to work external education delivery hours, in return less likely to afford

the luxury of a first home for many years to come, and later in life; less superannuation for retirement.

Then the added complexity of securing part time work for young people who are still in school or extending their education. It is more affordable to businesses i.e. traineeship/apprenticeships to engage the services of a grade 10 leaver over a Year 11 or 12 school student. Are we allowing industry and corporations to put profit over education?

When we look at Year 11/12 in urban schools, we encourage the reviewer to perform a cost benefit analysis of the inner-city high school that have extended to year 12. In 2023, across 14 urban high schools located within 10 kilometres of the nearest college, only 44 Year 12 students were enrolled at 8 campuses. This prompts the question: could the funds have been better allocated to increasing transition days, or providing additional supports to all students transitioning from high school to college?

Of our consultation respondents, 55% completed year 12, 36% completed Year 11, and 9% completed Year 10.

91% of respondents indicated that their child would complete Year 12 education.

The use of the Universal Student Identifier (USI) from the beginning of the child's educational pathway, continuing through as they learn for the lifetime ahead. Knowing a student's pathway through education and the benefits of that knowledge. Understanding any potential correlation to equally successful completion of Year 10, 11 and 12. What are the markers that help lead to completion of Year 12? Does engagement with services prior to primary school lead to an increase in attainment of Year 12? Does launch into learning that make an impact? Does holding a library card make a difference? Does attendance make a difference? Or attending more than 3 schools mark a decrease in attainment?

55% of parents believe that completion of year 12 benefits their child. Noting that 45% feel it may be of benefit to their child but isn't sure.

When considering accountability in education, the responsibility for a child's learning is shared among the department, school, and home. It truly takes a community, a School Association, to support and raise a child. We have a duty to ensure that parents are informed about what their child is learning and when, with opportunities to enhance and support that learning at home. Achieving this requires transparency and a commitment to enriching a child's educational experience.

Accountability also means recognising when mistakes are made. If the outcomes of a decision do not align with the intended effects, there must be reflection, evaluation,

ownership, and correction to ensure growth. It is our duty to the community to continually assess policy decisions.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. Look to extend the Universal Student Identifier (USI) from adult learning, to be assigned to the child as part of the birth certification and Centrelink reference number process. This then belongs to the individual for all of life's learning experiences.**
- 2. Change the messaging that a child's education stops in Year 10, 11 or 12. A person never stops learning, regardless of age. The school system needs to review ways of ensuring that young people can re-enter the educational pathways if they feel they would like to improve what they completed during their mainstream schooling years.**
- 3. Share individual and school data with families**
- 4. Evaluate the effectiveness of Year 11 and 12 delivered in urban high schools (in close proximity to established colleges)**

## Conclusion

Everyone has a critical role to play in ensuring a child is supported and encouraged to reach their full potential, and never stop learning.

TASSO will continue to advocate for the importance and need of a safe school environment for children to be safe, well, thriving and learning throughout their education journey.

TASSO calls for a full review of Tasmanian Education System. The current provision is for a world and lifestyle that no longer exists. We know family dynamics have shifted, family sizes are smaller, cost of living is higher than ever, and most families have both parents, and sometimes grandparents and supports working fulltime to provide for their families and lifestyles – this will only continue in a Government that continues to increase the aged-pension commencement age, where financial supports mostly do not cover the necessitates and are based on the aged pensioners owning their own home/s to provide a future wealth into families, which is now also at times, not in reach or possible.

The current education system is not preparing today's generation for tomorrows future.

We support the Tasmanian Government through this review to create new and innovative ways to better engage families in their child's education, to enrich educational outcomes for the betterment of our future generations.

Schools with teachers who inspire children to aspire to achieve. Including families and understanding their place in community, often being the hub and connection of a community.

What does an ideal education look like for a family with two working parents, a family living separately with four parent roles, a single parent family, or a family where a grandparent is the parent?

We should be approaching education in the same regard; what does education look like for someone confident to learn? Ok to learn? Not interested in learning? Or just simply cannot learn in particular settings or pace or delivery?

Does 8:55am – 3:05pm, five days per week work for everyone? Do four school terms work better than the former three? How can we apply the same principles of vocational education into education of children and young people?

What does a school look like with well supported and adequately resourced, where stability and leadership exist as staff are happy to stay in the roles they hold, and confident to mentor and engage with families and opportunities to best support the student in striving to achieve?

What does it look like for Year 8 and 9 to look at future employment and career pathway seriously, and well in advance of Year 10, 11 and 12?

***We're in this together. We speak as a proud voice for families within the Tasmanian State School community to make sure their needs and ideas are heard.***