



# The Link Youth Health Service Strategy

2020-2028



# We support young people to build better lives for themselves



**We collaborate with Tasmanian Youth to create safe, inclusive, judgment-free spaces where young people—the true experts in their lives—build autonomy.**

Centrally located in Nipaluna/Hobart, we respond with agility to emerging needs. We are curious in our endeavours, always asking “what if?” to better serve young people where they are.

**We are the link for Tasmania’s youth** supporting them to use their voice to influence youth-led policies and providing them with services that no one else can. Our innovative approaches become standard practice while our reputation attracts both funding and talent. As trusted experts, we shift perceptions—establishing young people as valuable contributors to society rather than problems to be solved.



*We acknowledge the traditional clan of Nipaluna, the Muwinina people of the South-East Nation, and today’s Palawa peoples as the ongoing custodians of Lutruwita. Their connection to land, skies, seas, and waterways has remained strong for over 60,000 years. We pay respects to Elders past and present, honouring their vital role in the continuation of culture.*

*We recognise past atrocities made against Palawa peoples and that Tasmania was founded on the attempted genocide and dispossession of First Nations people. The Muwinina people of Nipaluna did not survive the harmful impacts of colonisation. We feel the weight of this truth and sit with the discomfort it brings because we know that truth-telling is necessary for change.*

*We commit to decolonising the way we work to align with First Nations knowledge and perspectives. We hold ourselves accountable to listen, unlearn and relearn, and adapt, recognising that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples already know how to thrive. Our role is to follow their leadership, support self-determination, and act in ways that strengthen wellbeing for all.*

# We provide free and confidential health and wellbeing services for young people aged 12-25

**The Link has been supporting young people in Hobart since 1990.** We celebrate the cultures, identities, languages, and beliefs that make us who we are.

Everyone is welcome here. We stand proud with people from all walks of life and honour the different lived experiences everyone brings – whether that's diverse sexualities, genders and intersex variations, faiths, neurodiversities, educational and career paths, disabilities, or all who call this island home, whether born here, through migration, or humanitarian pathways.

We know there's so much more diversity than we could ever list, and we look forward to meeting you just as you are.



COMPASSION



WALKING TOGETHER



RESPECT



TRUST



AUTHENTICITY

## HOW WE EXPRESS OUR VALUES

We understand your world and celebrate who you are

We stand alongside and journey together

Everyone belongs here, exactly as they are

Together we listen, we believe, we act

We embrace our shared humanness

# We're a youth health service covering all of southern Lutruwita

Being on an island with small communities spread out everywhere means we get to do things differently.

Tasmania faces real challenges around mental health, substance use, and accessing services in remote areas. These barriers are genuine and affect many young Tasmanians.

**We created this strategy by talking with our staff, board, and most importantly, the young Tasmanians we work with. They shared what matters most: being easy to connect with, understanding their world, and delivering services that actually work for their lives.**

**This document maps out where we're headed over the next three years while staying flexible enough to adapt as things change, focused on making it easier for young people to access health support and building on the deep partnerships and strengths that already exist across Tasmania.**

What we also see is incredibly resilient young people, close communities that support each other, and strong partnerships between organisations. Being smaller allows us to be responsive, adapt quickly, and stay genuinely connected to the communities we serve.

Young people today are reshaping how health services work. They expect services that are accessible, non-judgmental, and understand their world. Digital connection is creating new possibilities, and there's growing recognition that staying well involves much more than treating problems after they arise.



# Three years of focus

We've been honest about where we need to grow. Our funding comes in short bursts, which makes it hard to plan ahead or feel secure about what we can offer long-term.

Our team is passionate and skilled, but we haven't always had clear paths for people to develop their careers with us. Sometimes our teams work in silos instead of sharing knowledge and celebrating wins together.

We're also still figuring out how to balance giving people freedom to innovate while making sure everyone feels supported and accountable.

These realities led us to focus on four key areas over the next three years, born from asking ourselves how we can better serve young people across Tasmania:

- **Raising our profile** - Becoming the go-to youth health experts while staying connected to our communities
- **Supporting our people** - Creating clear career paths and stronger team connection
- **Improving access** - Making sure young Tasmanians can get the care they need, wherever they live
- **Financial stability** - Building sustainable funding that doesn't get in the way of doing good work

We will increase our visibility by sharing our story, impact and expertise

We will build a sustainable workforce that maximises our capacity to deliver

We will breakdown barriers to access for young Tasmanians

We will strengthen our financial position by expanding our funding opportunities

# We will increase our visibility by sharing our story, impact and expertise

We will boldly elevate our profile in order to amplify youth voices. We will be known by all young Tasmanians who need our services, be the first port-of-call for youth health support, and have an influential voice at key decision-making tables shaping youth health policy and services in Tasmania.

Success means young people become our ambassadors, stakeholders actively seek our input, and the community understands and values our role in creating better health outcomes for Tasmanian youth.

**Our strengths:** Our ability to pivot quickly, adapting our approach and messaging based on what works, supported by our authentic reputation and established relationships.

## Key Opportunities:

- Amplify our youth health expertise
- Build strong strategic stakeholder relationships
- Empower young people as ambassadors

## Measures:

- Recognition and awareness metrics by young people and community
- Media presence and community reach
- Stakeholder engagement and invitation to key forums

## How we will get there:

- **Being active**, courageous and present in important conversations
- **Accessing** a seat at the table
- **Being confident** in our expertise and impact in the community
- **Connecting** our profile-raising and our service delivery – they enhance each other



# We will build a workforce that enables sustainability and maximises our capacity to deliver

We will transform our organisational design to create role clarity, strengthen leadership and management capability, and foster a workplace where staff feel supported and equipped to deliver effectively.

We will do this by establishing a sustainable workforce model that addresses typical not-for-profit constraints, creates robust systems and processes with less dependency on individuals and ensures all team members have the capacity and capability to fulfil the Link's purpose.

Success means our staff can prioritise and deliver effectively within clear boundaries, leaders have time for strategic thinking and our service quality is maintained through well-designed systems, rather than staff working beyond their sustainable limits.

**Our strengths:** Our collaborative culture that enables our people to find solutions together and adapt to changing needs

## Key Opportunities:

- Optimise organisational structure
- Foster wellbeing
- Build sustainable capacity

## How we will get there:

- **Developing** sustainable systems
- **Addressing root causes** of challenges staff face to help ease their burdens
- **Ensuring staff wellbeing** while continuing to meet service delivery targets

## Measures:

- Staff retention rates by department
- Employee engagement



# We will break down barriers to access for young Tasmanians

We will turn access barriers into bridges by meeting young people where they are — physically, digitally and socially.

We will do this by striving to reach every young Tasmanian in the south regardless of their circumstances or location. We'll extend our service reach through strategic partnerships and enhanced service capabilities while leveraging our existing strengths in multi-modal delivery and regional outreach.

Success means that all young people have access, despite geography, social disadvantage, digital exclusion, or health literacy barriers.

**Our strengths:** Creating adaptable service models that respond to diverse needs and circumstances

## Key Opportunities:

- Extend our footprint through partnerships
- Enhance service delivery
- Ensure continuity of care

## How we will get there:

- **Expanding** while maintaining quality
- **Creating new solutions** that consider underlying social barriers

## Measures:

- # Self-reported access barriers
- Quality service delivery metrics by mode and by location
- Service utilisation by mode and location/postcode



# We will strengthen our financial position by expanding our funding opportunities

We will shift funding constraints into strategic opportunities through diversification and advocacy – building collaborative relationships that align with our mission.

We will do this by diversifying our funding streams and collaborating with partners to advocate for more flexible government funding models that support our mission. We'll position The Link as an organisation where supporting our work is seen as an honour and an opportunity to create positive change for young Tasmanians.

Success means funding becomes a platform for our impact and innovation, providing the stability and flexibility we need to deliver exceptional youth health services.

**Our strengths:** Our ability to leverage our strong reputation and relationships to create meaningful partnerships that extend beyond financial transactions.



## **Key Opportunities:**

- Diversify revenue streams
- Strengthen advocacy
- Enhance financial capabilities

## **How we will do it:**

- **Maintaining our quality reputation** in the pursuit of funding
- **Ensuring funding continues to enable** our ability to meet young people's needs effectively

## **Measures:**

- % Funding by source
- # Funding partners
- # Opportunities to advocate or contribute to advocacy



## Acknowledgement

We are a service enriched by listening, employing, and valuing people with lived experience of mental ill-health, substance use, and recovery and the experience of people who have been carers, families, or supporters.

Each person's journey is unique and a valued contribution to Lutruwita's commitment to mental health, alcohol and other drug support, and suicide prevention responses.

**For more information about The Link, its strategy and services, please get in touch.**



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# Strategy on a page

PURPOSE AND MISSION

## We support young people to build better lives for themselves

We do this by providing free and confidential health and wellbeing services for young people aged 12-25

STRATEGIC PILLARS

## Three years of focus



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