



Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Submission

March 2021

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Colony 47 Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy Submission

Executive Summary

Colony 47 welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Tasmanian Government on the Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy.

In general, Colony 47 believes that the development of a strategic and whole of government approach to making future investments in young people a priority is an important and timely initiative.

In the context of the recovery from the COVID pandemic, we know that there is a need for an intergenerational approach to investments as governments commence the process of budget and balance sheet repair.

It is important to recognise that young people have been one of the most disadvantaged groups in the short term as we have responded to the pandemic through impacts to education, vocational training and employment.

It is also important to recognise that they will also be the group who will be faced with addressing the budgetary and social repair in the years ahead.

On that basis, Colony 47 is supportive of the concept of having a Child and Youth Wellbeing Framework as a way of focussing on our ambition for achieving high standards of wellbeing for young Tasmanians.

We would recommend however that in applying the framework you consider:

- Aligning the framework to the life course of young people;
- Use social impact to establish priorities and monitor progress; and
- Focus on harnessing community effort and value

In terms of specific initiatives to address current identified needs we would propose the following:

- Investment in the creation of a backbone model and approach to the new Jobs Tasmania Local Networks in order to accelerate their work and support directly and indirectly the vocational training and employment opportunities of young people;
- Investment in an innovative co-design approach to the creation of fast track industry boot camps that can align the aspirations of young people with undertaking relevant training and work experience , designed with and for industry, to create job opportunities;
- the creation of a dedicated and flexible youth housing fund model that allows young people who are seeking to progress their vocational education and employment opportunities to access co-living housing options;
- The creation of a dispersed youth foyer model to support young people to access shared housing and be supported to achieve their vocational education and training goals; and
- The co-design and implementation of a community based early intervention program in schools that addresses youth homelessness.

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Aligning the framework to the life course of young people

The key life transition points are within or between each life stage (childhood/adolescence-youth/adulthood). These transition points can pose particular risks and/or opportunities for individuals and households.

Programs and policies need to be developed and designed to ensure that young people sustain their engagement in ed, training and work as they move through these transition points.

These key youth transition points are:

Young people - 12- 15 years

- Primary – Secondary education,

Young people 15-18 years

- Secondary education to training

Young people - 18 – 25 years

- school to further ed and/or training,
- training /higher ed to work (learning to earning),
- home to independent living

Young people’s pathway through school to meaningful work requires a continuum of interconnected program and policy interventions that are age appropriate and address the potential challenges that may occur as a young person moves between these key transitions to ensure they achieve a successful transition to adulthood.

The pathway to employment the intervention continuum – the 5 key focus areas (*European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*)- describes young people’s journey through formal education and their transition into the labour market and employment.

This youth employment pathway identifies the 5 key focus areas of intervention that are critical for programs and policies to respond in a timely way to sustain young people’s participation in education, training and meaningful work.

The 5 key focus areas of intervention are:

- Preventing early school leaving
- Reintegrating early school leavers into education or training
- Facilitating school to work transition
- Enhancing employability
- Supporting those disadvantaged in the labour market to sustain their employment

The investment in and the development and implementation of youth programs and policies should be aligned with and interconnected across the 5 key focus areas of intervention along the youth employment pathway in order to provide a coherent service offer to ensure young people are sustained in mainstream education and employment.

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Using social impact to establish priorities and monitor progress

One of the challenges of a model of this type is that it is broad, complex and qualitative in its description of the ambition to achieve community wide standards of child and youth wellbeing.

It is recognised that the proposed model appears to align with many of the best practice frameworks nationally and internationally but with 6 domains and over 26 sub-domain elements the model can often become too complex to define and ultimately achieve the desired outcomes.

If the purpose of the framework is to assist the community to focus on specific areas of need and to make strategic investments in available solutions then it will need to have a way of defining the problems and priorities using the framework.

Developing an evidence base to effectively understand the child and youth wellbeing need, the current barriers and to prioritise the appropriate solutions is a critical element of a framework of this type.

Colony 47 has been working with a number of social impact models to assist in understanding the nature of the community needs, such as specific child and youth wellbeing challenges, and to value the social return on investment of the options presented to address the challenge.

The child and youth wellbeing framework could benefit from a contemporary design architecture that allows the stakeholders to clarify the specific challenges that they are trying to resolve, to evaluate the options and to track the performance of the selected solution.

The child and wellbeing framework could use the primary domains to assist in categorising the nature of the challenge but it will require population level data to be collected to understand the nature and scope of the challenge and to evaluate the solutions.

This population level data analysis across the domains at state, regional and local level could significantly assist in both understanding the nature of the challenges for children and young people and to scope the priorities for action.

The contemporary approach in the co-design of solutions to meet a social (domain) outcome is to create apply a social impact approach. This approach looks to determine the nature of the challenge and the social and economic value that can be realised from solving the challenge.

If a social impact methodology were applied to understanding and prioritising the challenges by domain it could assist in the prioritisation and the scoping of the investment required.

The contemporary social impact architecture also provides the opportunity for people who are interested in presenting investment options to solve the child and youth wellbeing challenge to apply a common program logic framework.

A logic model that can scope the social and economic benefits and the capability of the proposed solution to meet the address a domain outcome can produce comparative metrics such as:

- Social return on investment;
- Social value created; and
- Service efficiency.

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Focus on harnessing community effort and value

Colony 47 has a wide range of collaborations in which it operates to seek to address a range of social challenges that are aligned with the wellbeing needs of young people. They include:

- As a lead agency in the Housing Connect consortium which provides access to social, affordable and emergency housing options for children and families and young people;
- As a Tasmanian based member of a national Transition to Work Community of Practice that works across the country to develop and share innovative solutions to addressing youth unemployment and under-employment;
- As a member of an alliance partnership with the major community based providers seeking to improve youth health and community services across the state;
- As a member of a National Employer group that is working on engaging employers to train and employ young people;
- As the provider of the South East Regional Employment Hub which works in collaboration with Council, industry training providers, job active agencies, job seekers and community organisations to deliver an integrated vocational training and employment hub;
- As a contributor to a range of government, community and research partnerships such as the Under 16 Homelessness Taskforce which is seeking to minimise the impacts of youth homelessness.

All of these areas have a clear set of alignments to the domains and all are seeking to have an impact at differing levels of scope and scale.

It is Colony 47's experience that by working in this way and targeting initiatives that invest in and work with clearly defined communities who demonstrate an engagement and commitment to addressing challenges, the better and more sustainable result.

For example the national Transition to Work Community of Practice has developed a common framework and way of working and a common evaluation and benchmarking framework, yet each of the services is uniquely designed to meet the needs of their local community.

In this case the Community of Practice strives to harness the resources in the community, particularly the passion and interests of industry, to achieve improved educational and employment outcomes for young people.

In designing and using a framework of this type it would be recommended that in scoping the need and looking at the available solutions a place based approach should always be considered rather than a statewide or regional approach.

What

Development of a **co-designed backbone service system and community of practice approach** for the **Jobs Tasmania Local Networks for \$250,000**.

Why

Colony 47's experience with the **South East Regional Employment Hub** was that without a structure and framework to guide community engagement, service model design and governance it can be difficult to progress from engagement to action in a timely way.

An **initial backbone service system and community of practice framework** that can assist to initiate the work based on contemporary practices would assist in a more effective and timely deployment of the network.

Who

Colony 47 would work with the **Tasmanian Government agencies** and other key stakeholders to develop from its experience with SE@RCH an agreed backbone service model and community of practice service system.

Colony 47 has worked **with consultants** in the design of its own work nationally and locally who could be contracted to complete the design and framework development and the deployment work across the network.

Where

Statewide

When

2021

PESRAC Support

SE@RCH provides a community based governance and design model that aligns with recommendations 21 – 25 of the PESRAC Report.

What	Why	Who	Where	When	PESRAC Support
<p>Colony 47 is working with a number of large employers in the disability sector to create a co-designed pre-employment pathway program for young people in the Transition to Work program.</p>	<p>Colony 47 currently has 628 young people in its Transition to Work program who are working with its coaching team to access vocational training and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Colony 47, Transition to Work job seekers, employers in growth sectors, University College and relevant industry training providers</p>	<p>Southern Tasmania</p>	<p>Initial pilot project to be completed in August 2021. Scoping for other sectors completed by July 2021. Roll out of other projects to commence in 2021</p>	<p>Training Priorities: three key areas for improving jobs and income: creating jobs through growing economic opportunities, ensuring people have the right skills that connect people to jobs (pg 23)</p>
<p>The boot camp will be an 8 week program of work experience and accredited training provided by the University College and a registered training provider.</p>	<p>Colony 47 conducted a research project in 2020 where it conducted over 30 interviews with employers in growth sectors to understand their current recruitment and training needs.</p>	<p>The outcome was the need for employers to have a set of entry level qualifications and an understanding of the soft skills of young people to assess their suitability for employment.</p>			
<p>The initial boot camp will involve the employers in a pre-screening program that will lead to direct employment should the young people successfully complete the program.</p>					
<p>Colony 47 will fund the initial pre-employment pathway program which it will seek to roll out across 3 other growth industry sectors if successful. Colony 47 is seeking \$160,000 to roll out a full program of two bootcamps per sector per year across 4 growth sectors.</p>	<p>Colony 47 were able to bring together three major employers in the disability sector to co-design and pilot an integrated basic skills and work experience program – "boot camp."</p>				

What	Why	Who	Where	When	PESRAC Support
<p>A flexible youth housing fund to develop innovative access and asset solutions particularly for young people who are seeking access to vocational education, training and employment opportunities. The flexible youth housing fund could be based on an allocation of 20-25% of the housing funds available including capital funds to meet young people's needs. The fund could be used to foster innovative opportunities to design and build or to support access to housing that is safe, affordable and fit for purpose for young people. Opportunities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and development of share housing options using existing housing stock; • Developing pathways to transition from social and affordable housing; • Development of site- based, dispersed and industry specific Foyer models to support young people into education and employment; • Design and use of low cost modular housing 	<p>There are currently 886 young people under 25 on the social housing register (23.8% of the households on the register). Of these young people 658 are deemed to be priority clients of which 429 are looking for a 1 bed room option and 186 a two bedroom option.</p> <p>There is limited stock available in the current configuration of social housing to meet these needs particularly if the housing is required to access vocational training, education and employment.</p> <p>Colony 47 also has around 650 young people in its Transition to Work program in Southern Tasmania who are seeking access to vocational education, training and employment opportunities.</p> <p>If we are going to meet the housing needs of young people who are looking to progress their education and careers then we will need to have a more flexible and agile way to access and provide safe, affordable and fit for purpose housing solutions.</p>	<p>The Youth Housing Fund could be a flexible fund overseen by a governance mechanism that is seeking to enable young people to progress to live a good life</p>	<p>Statewide</p>	<p>2021 onwards</p>	<p>The use of a targeted approach for young people would enable access to opportunities created under recommendations 21 – 25 as well as providing a cohort specific approach to implementing recommendation 32.</p>

What	Why	Who	Where	When	PESRAC Support
<p>Dispersed Foyer pilot project is an innovative project that seeks to identify housing stock in the community that can be converted into share housing for young people and provided with an insourced support service.</p> <p>The pilot project would identify 10 current Housing Tasmania transitional housing properties in Southern Tasmania that could be converted into 3/4 bedroom share housing properties.</p> <p>These housing options would then be made available with suitable assessment and matching to Transition to Work participants who are seeking access to vocational training and employment.</p>	<p>Colony 47 is the lead agency for Housing Connect and is responsible for achieving housing outcomes for eligible clients including young people.</p> <p>In Tasmania there approximately 900 young people under 25 who are eligible to access social housing and around 400 in Southern Tasmania.</p> <p>Colony 47 is also the provider of the Transition to Work program in Southern Tasmania and has 628 current participants of which 89 have identified as being homeless.</p> <p>If these young people are going to be supported to achieve their vocational training and employment goals they will need access to safe, affordable and fit for purpose housing.</p> <p>The option of a dedicated stock of available share housing that promotes co-living and gaining independence whilst learning and working can be a significant support for their transition into the workforce.</p>	<p>Colony 47 currently manages over 50 properties and would add these properties to its property management portfolio.</p>	<p>Southern Tasmania</p>	<p>June – December 2021</p>	<p>The use of a targeted approach for young people would enable access to opportunities created under recommendations 21 – 25 as well as providing a cohort specific approach to implementing recommendation 32.</p>

What	Why	Who	Where	When	PESRAC Support
<p>The Geelong Project is a \$250,000 annual investment for a period of three years in a community based model of early intervention and prevention that is designed to prevent youth homelessness.</p>	<p>In the Under 16 Youth Homelessness Taskforce it was identified that at that time there were up to 200 young people under 16 who were presenting to youth shelters for support.</p>	<p>Colony 47 to work with schools in the northern suburbs of Hobart and the network of youth community services to establish a Geelong Project pilot.</p>	<p>Northern Suburbs of Hobart.</p>	<p>2021-2023</p>	<p>Skills, schools and youth: recommendation (pg 30)</p>
<p>The project provides school based social workers with a network of community based services that can respond to young people who are presenting as homeless or are at risk of homelessness.</p>	<p>Colony 47 has also experienced a high level of demand across its youth shelters during the COVID period.</p>	<p>In its experience, schools are often the first places to identify early signs of risks of homelessness but they lack the resources and networks to respond in a timely and integrated way.</p>			
<p>The project involves the identification and development of a supported network of community services who can support young people and families in a local/regional area.</p>	<p>This model provides an opportunity to develop a community and collective impact approach to supporting the young people and the school personnel to respond and to prevent homelessness.</p>				
<p>Colony 47 is seeking to enhance its existing work in the Reconnect and Step Up services, and partner with headspace and employment services by developing a network of schools and community services in Southern Tasmania as a pilot project.</p>	<p>The evidence of the Geelong Project evaluations has demonstrated that homelessness can be reduced by up to 40 per cent through this approach.</p>				

Why Colony 47?

Colony 47 is a specialist provider of community driven solutions that support young people and people who are seeking access to social and affordable housing.

Colony 47 is Tasmanian owned and operated large and agile social enterprise that has worked in the Tasmanian community for nearly 50 years.

It has over 120 employees and 200 volunteers who work with Colony 47 and it provides over 40,000 episodes of services each year.

It has an annual turnover of \$14 million and is governed by a **skills based community sector board**.

Colony 47 has a well developed and targeted **Agenda for Change** that it has widely communicated to its key stakeholders based on addressing key issues for young people and people seeking access to social and affordable housing.

In 2020 Colony 47 has been able to attract investments in the development of the following solutions as part of its 2020 Agenda for Change including:

- Securing a Tasmanian Community Fund Grant to trial an integrated **mental health clinical solution for young people** model in collaboration with Headspace across Colony 47's youth services;
- Securing ongoing funding for an **innovative, co-designed and high impact adolescent violence in the home early intervention solution**.
- Self funding the co-design and delivery of an **innovative 'boot camp' that provides a fast track vocational training and employment pathway** with the disability sector, vocational training providers and Colony 47's transition to work program;

What is our approach?

Colony 47 delivers the majority of its services in **collaborative models** that are designed to increase their social and community impact. To support this work, Colony 47 has invested in developing innovative services that are:

- **Social impact** and outcomes aligned;
- Apply a common set of person centred design principles based on **Advantaged Thinking**;
- Apply a strategic project management methodology to design and deliver **innovative solutions**; and
- Apply a data and practice aligned evidence base to support the **action based learning** that informs innovation and improvement.

Colony 47 is also involved nationally, regionally and at a local level in a number of collective impact style collaborations that inform this practice and improvement philosophy including:

- The national **Transition to Work community of practice**;
- The statewide **Housing Connect** community of practice;
- The statewide **Foyer Inter-Agency Working Group**;
- The statewide **Under 16 Youth Homelessness Working Group** ;
- The statewide **youth alliance** of community youth organisations
- The regional **South East Employment Hub**.

