

The Tasmania Project

Share your experience during COVID-19.

Photo: Tourism Tasmania and Chris Crerar.

Stay or leave: Long-term plans of young adults in Tasmania

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In a series of in-depth interviews with The Tasmania Project team, Tasmanians aged 30 and under have cited employment as a reason to leave Tasmania, and security during the pandemic as a reason to stay. Many are unsure if they will remain in Tasmania in the long-term.

From October to December 2020, the Tasmania Project conducted 23 interviews with young adults (aged 18-30) across Tasmania. During these interviews, participants were asked if they intended on remaining in Tasmania for the long-term future.

This report highlights common concerns raised by participants such as job opportunities and the COVID-19 pandemic. Interesting findings are also highlighted for participants' housing situation (homeowner or renter) and visa status.

Key findings

- Many young adults were unsure if they wanted to remain in Tasmania for the long-term future.
- Job opportunities were an incentive to leave Tasmania. This concern did not seem to correlate with participants' home ownership or rental status.
- Participants who identified a lack of job opportunities as an incentive to leave Tasmania were less likely to already have decided they would leave.
- Some participants independently raised interest in leaving Tasmania and returning later in life or in retirement.
- The pandemic impacted participants' thoughts about remaining in Tasmania, with many expressing a stronger desire to remain and greater uncertainty about leaving.
- Of the participants that were visa holders, most discussed the pandemic when asked if they would remain in Tasmania. Visa holders generally viewed Tasmania's response to the pandemic favourably.

Further findings on the attitudes and experiences of younger Tasmanians are available in the "What wellbeing means for young Tasmanians" report available [here](#).



Photo: Ivan Samkov from Pexels

Staying or going?

Of the 23 participants, slightly over half intended to remain in Tasmania. A quarter were uncertain or conflicted about remaining. A sixth stated they would not remain in Tasmania for the long-term future.

Many participants raised job opportunities as an incentive to leave Tasmania. As one participant said, "I know that there's more job opportunities up there [on the mainland]." These participants were split fairly evenly across intending to stay, intending to leave, and being unsure, though slightly favouring the latter.

Over a third of participants mentioned the pandemic when asked if they would stay in Tasmania long-term. These participants mostly saw the pandemic as a reason to remain in Tasmania. One participant returned to Tasmania because of the pandemic, saying "I really wanted to be in a place where, I guess, there was still scope for adventures." The pandemic also spread doubt for long-term plans. As another participant stated:

"Look, no one can plan... I don't know what's gonna happen."

Housing

Of the participants 14 were renting, 4 lived with parents, 3 owned their own home, and 2 did not specify. A marginally higher proportion of participants who wanted to stay in Tasmania were living with their parents, and a marginally higher proportion who were unsure owned their own homes. Of the participants who did not want to remain in Tasmania, none owned their own homes. Concerns about job opportunities in Tasmania being an incentive to leave did not seem to correlate with participants' home ownership or rental status.

Visa holders

Of the 23 interviews conducted, 6 were with visa holders. These were mostly international students. Visa holders' responses were spread evenly amongst intending to remain, intending to leave, and being unsure about Tasmania in the long-term.

Most visa holders mentioned the pandemic when discussing whether they will remain in Tasmania. The pandemic was mostly

a reason to remain in Tasmania. One visa holder stated, "I'm pretty happy with what they're doing here. In fact, I think that kind of strengthened [my] resolve to stay here." This said, another visa holder said she was rethinking if it was "a good thing if I stay here, because I'm the only child of the family. If something happened to my parents it's hard for me to reach them in time".

'Small pond' Tasmania

Some participants viewed Tasmania as a place to leave and return to later in life. As one participant said, "Tasmania is like a retiring town for me to go back [to] in the future." Several participants explained that while they will likely move for work, they remained invested in the state. As one participant said:

"[Tasmania's] future is still important to me."

Several participants explained they had already moved and returned from Sydney after several years' work. Moving to the mainland was akin to an unofficial rite of passage. In contrast, one participant said staying in Tasmania was like being a "big fish in a small pond", as in her view stronger job opportunities on mainland Australia resulted in more stressful competition there.

Where next?

The responses of interview participants highlight how young adults are invested in Tasmania yet leave for jobs and personal growth. The pandemic provided a reason to remain in Tasmania. This is an opportunity to reflect on how young adults engage with the state and is not a long-term solution to the loss of the young adult cohort. A question for future research is: How does personal investment influence when and for how long young adults stay, leave, and return to Tasmania?

It is important to consider the impact of job opportunities for young adults. When interstate travel stabilises and international travel normalises, young adults will need jobs to remain in the state. In this moment of national and global job market recovery, it is important to understand how the development of job opportunities for young adults may slow or reverse the loss of this cohort from Tasmania. This includes appealing to young adults from overseas.

Further findings from our surveys and interviews on the views of young Tasmanians are available in the "What wellbeing means for young Tasmanians" report available [here](#).