

25 new literacy and numeracy specialists

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The Plan to rebuild essential services

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The Liberals will employ up to 25 specialist literacy and numeracy teachers

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A majority Liberal Government will have at its heart a commitment to invest in education, to improve educational outcomes, increase productivity, and create more job opportunities for young Tasmanians.

As part of that plan, a majority Liberal Government will employ up to 25 new specialist literacy and numeracy teachers.

These new specialists will focus on working with our year 7 to 9 students, who are consistently performing below the national average, and where, according to NAPLAN figures, our students are falling behind the most.

This additional investment means that by the end of our first term in government, every student in years 7 to 9 and their classroom teachers who require the support of these specialist teachers, will have access to it.

The latest standardised national testing, NAPLAN, shows a desperate need for more investment in Tasmanian students.

In every year tested, years 3, 5, 7 and 9, a smaller percentage of Tasmanian students reached the minimum standard than the national average in every one of the 20 measurements.

It is most concerning that in half of the 20 measurements, Tasmanian students went backwards when compared to last year.

The worst result was in Persuasive Writing, which showed that 20% of Tasmanian year 9 students were below the National Minimum Standard.

Our goal is that by the end of the first six years of a majority Liberal Government, Tasmania will be at or above the national average in every single NAPLAN measurement, and meet national benchmarks in reading, writing, maths and science.

The employment of specialist literacy and numeracy teachers will provide one-to-one and small group special assistance for children who are falling behind. These specialists will work in conjunction with other educators to identify students who are experiencing difficulties, and provide the targeted support, personal attention and coaching that is needed to bring them up to the same standard as their peers.

They will also assist other teachers in the school to identify, develop and implement strategies and research-backed teaching practices to help students with learning difficulties. They will also provide educational materials that can be used in improving the literacy skills of all students in the classroom on a daily basis.

A Liberal Government will employ coordinated, whole-of-school approaches to achieving improved outcomes with the key focus being on the years most in need, as demonstrated by NAPLAN testing, years 7 to 9.

This is an evidence-based response to tackling our literacy and numeracy problem. A problem ignored by Labor and the Greens.

Education experts regard specialist literacy and numeracy teachers as the best way to address this problem. The Grattan Institute's Ben Jensen stated:

"Putting one specialist literacy teacher and one specialist numeracy teacher in every Australian primary school would...have a profound effect on struggling students..."

After 16 years of Labor and the Greens, Tasmania has the worst education outcomes in the country, and in a shocking statistic, 50 percent of working-age Tasmanians are functionally illiterate.ⁱⁱ

In the 2011/12 budget, Labor and the Greens ripped \$190 million out of our education system, sacked 149 teachers and 137 Teacher Assistantsⁱⁱⁱ, and tried to forcibly close 20 schools.

In contrast, the Liberals have committed \$45 million to extend our High Schools to year 11 and 12, and \$4.4 million to provide up to an additional week of paid hours to Teacher Assistants and school support staff.

Only the Liberals have a determined commitment to prioritise education, invest in our children, and improve student outcomes.

Costings

\$8.4m over four years

ⁱ The Australian, 22/2/13

ⁱⁱ ABS Statistics – 2006 Adult Literacy and Life Skill Survey State and Territory Tables, Cat. No. 4228.0.55.004

ⁱⁱⁱ Legislative Council Education Estimates, 3/6/13

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– Ben Jensen, Director of the Grattan Institute's school education program, *The Australian*, 23/2/13