

A hand-up for vulnerable Tasmanians

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The Plan to rebuild essential services

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A hand-up for vulnerable Tasmanians

Tasmania has entrenched disadvantage, with almost one-third of our population relying on Commonwealth benefits as their main source of income, as compared to just over 22 per cent nationally. In addition, 13.7 per cent of Tasmanians live below the poverty line.

With worsening economic problems and unemployment now the highest in the nation, it has become even tougher for those already doing it hard, and demand for support has skyrocketed.

The Liberals will always support those who are vulnerable and need support.

But we believe it's time for a new way of thinking in Tasmania that works to shift entrenched poverty, helps people to move out of disadvantage by tackling the barriers they face, and prevents people from falling back into poverty by encouraging resilience over reliance.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will:

- Drive a [new 'hand-up' approach](#) to help more Tasmanians move out of disadvantage;
- Provide [\\$250,000 to TasCOSS](#) to develop shared tools to oversee, measure and monitor outcomes under this new approach;
- Invest more than [\\$9 million into our community sector](#) and the people on the ground who do extraordinary work every day to support Tasmanians in need;
- Develop a [\\$250,000 State Policy for Affordable Housing](#) to drive innovation and supply over the next decade;
- Provide a significant investment of [over \\$53 million to create a job-ready generation](#);
- Invest in a [Jobs Creation Plan to deliver up to 5000 jobs](#) to address Tasmania's unacceptably high unemployment rate, and under-employment rate; and
- Provide [millions of dollars in additional support for vulnerable Tasmanians](#) in all ways, in all communities.

A joined-up support system in partnership with the community sector

The Liberals' new approach will be a partnership between the government and the community sector, focused on joined-up, integrated and coordinated support systems, rather than silos.

From day one, a majority Hodgman Liberal Government will begin the long-term plan to a seamless support system that is easier to navigate, reduces frustration and duplication, and is focused on outcomes.

Today, Tasmania's human services support system is fragmented, uncoordinated and difficult to access. Demand for support for vulnerable Tasmanians is increasing, costs are escalating, and for vulnerable individuals and families with complex needs, it can be a full-time job finding and accessing support.

It is not uncommon for an individual person to have ten different case workers across government and the community sector, each working on one part of the puzzle. That means ten different assessments, ten different plans and ten different approaches. Families may have even more case workers to work with.

By moving away from the traditional 'welfare' approach to a person-centred, 'hand-up' approach – that takes a full 360 degree view of all support needs and barriers to change - we can make a positive difference in the lives of disadvantaged Tasmanians, better meet demand, and reduce the high levels of poverty in Tasmania.

The Liberal plan is a long-term one, and over time will deliver:

- A single shared entry point and assessment for both government and community-delivered services, so individuals or families need to tell their story only once;
- A lead worker for complex cases, dedicated to building a network of support around individuals and families so they don't have to navigate a maze of services on their own, or have up to ten different case workers in their lives; and
- An outcomes-based focus, working with individuals or families on *their* strengths and *their* goals and getting results, including supporting them and building resilience until they are able to manage their own supports, or no longer require them.

It will require government and the community sector to work in a totally different way, hand-in-hand, with a common agenda, open communication and a far more collaborative approach than currently exists.

And it will require a major shift in process – looking at outcomes first, and working backwards on how to get there.

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A focus on outcomes

With a new joined-up support system, it is equally important to invest in shared tools.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will partner with, and invest an additional \$250,000 into, Tasmania's peak social body, TasCOSS over four years, to develop new shared tools to oversee, measure and monitor our new approach.

International evidence points to key elements needed to address deep-rooted complex social problems. They include a common agenda and a coordinated approach, open communication, and oversight by a backbone organisation to measure and monitor new approaches.

Our partnership with TasCOSS will assist us to introduce new tools to measure outcomes without burdening the community sector with more reporting. The goal will be to ensure we do not collect more data, but collect the right data.

TasCOSS will also be invited onto a high-level advisory team to put in place our new, joined-up service system, and provide ongoing oversight.

Fair pay for Community Sector Workers

The community sector employs almost 11,000 people, in all regions of the State. The sector is one of the largest employers in Tasmania.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government has committed to the State Government contribution to wage increases for Tasmanian community sector employees, flowing from the 2012 equal pay case decision.

This will make a big difference to thousands of community sector workers all around Tasmania, enabling them to recruit and retain a quality workforce into the future.

\$9 million in extra funding to community sector organisations

The Liberals recognise that appropriate indexation is vital to enable organisations to deliver vital services and support to Tasmanians in need.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will provide additional operational funding of \$9 million to the community sector over four years, to supplement the current levels of indexation.

Each year, since 2011-12, the Labor-Green Government has slashed indexation to the community sector by around 30 per cent. This has meant organisations have had to meet an increase in demand for their services, at the same time as meeting significant increases in their operational expenses, including electricity, rent, rates and wages.

The Liberals' supplementary funding will make a big difference to community sector organisations who are struggling to meet increasing demand for their services.

Reducing red tape and compliance reporting

Red tape and compliance reporting is strangling the community sector and is placing an onerous burden on their staff. An ACOSS report in 2011 revealed compliance was costing the sector \$100 million a year nationally, for multiple assessments and reports.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will significantly reduce red tape and compliance reporting, while retaining the important checks and balances of accountability.

We will work proactively with the Tasmanian community sector to deliver a plan, which includes:

- Eliminating duplication for organisations that have external nationally accredited quality management systems in place;
- Ensuring any new regulation imposed on the sector is relevant and necessary and does not duplicate existing compliance reporting; and
- Investigating the simplification and standardisation of contracts, pre-qualifications for existing community sector providers and contract roll-overs, and the consolidation of multiple stream program funding.

We will also work with our Federal colleagues to reduce the day-to-day administrative burden on providers at the Commonwealth level and multiple-reporting requirements.

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“The \$9 million extra over four years pledged by Liberals Leader Will Hodgman and Shadow Minister for Human Services Jacqui Petrusma represents nearly 1 per cent extra in indexation”.

- CEO of TasCOSS, Tony Reidy, 28 May 2013.

Creating a job-ready generation

We owe it to the next generation to equip them with the skills that they will need to fully participate in a modern economy, to reach their personal potential and to be able to determine their own future.

Tasmania's education standards are unacceptable. Our year 11/12 apparent retention rates are the lowest of any State and are going backwards, from 70 per cent in 2011, to 67.1 per cent in 2012.

We have the lowest year 12 (or equivalent) completion rate of any State in Australia. Currently, only 43 per cent of young Tasmanians complete year 12 compared to the national average.

The Liberals believe in education and understand the importance of education to fix the Tasmania's economy. We want Tasmania to become the Intelligent Island and understand the need to promote a fundamental culture shift towards valuing education and learning.

Our Plan for a creating a job-ready generation includes:

- **Investing an extra \$45 million to extend 21 high schools** in rural and regional communities to year 12 in our first term;
- **Improving retention rates** so that an extra 2000 young Tasmanians complete their year 11 and 12 studies;
- **Keeping colleges open** – giving students a choice to continue their studies in their local high school or go to college;
- **Employing up to 105 new teachers** to extend high schools to years 11 and 12 in rural and regional communities;
- Investing \$8.4 million into providing up to **25 new literacy and numeracy specialists**, concentrating on years 7 to 9;
- Sending a strong message to young Tasmanians that their **education does not finish in year 10**; and
- A target that by the end of 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.

A Long-term Jobs Plan for Tasmania

The Liberals have a target to reduce Tasmania's unemployment rate to at least the national average, within our first term of Government.

19,000 Tasmanians are now languishing on the unemployment queue, and the State has the highest unemployment rate in the country. Tasmania's employment participation rate is at its lowest level since 2005.

The Liberals' Job Creation Plan includes:

- Investing \$360,000 into a three year **Youth Employment Partnership** with Whitelion to tackle Tasmania's 20.5 per cent youth unemployment rate. This will help up to 200 at-risk young people become job-ready, find long-term employment or re-engage in vocational education and training;
- Investing an additional \$4 million in payroll tax rebates for medium to large businesses to employ more Tasmanians and to create **up to 600 new jobs**;
- A \$2 million Small Business Jobs Bonus to **create up to 2000 new jobs in Tasmanian small businesses** to complement and be in addition to, the Australian Government's Tasmanian Jobs Program for full-time jobs for long-term unemployed;
- A \$5 million a year, two-year Headworks "holiday" to bring forward \$100 million in development to help create **up to 500 new jobs**;
- Funding for critical infrastructure to deliver major job-creating projects, including \$5.525 million road access for the \$185 million eco-tourism resort at Musselroe Bay, and \$3.4 million for public access roads and re-routing transmission lines to enable the \$103 million Craggy Ridge eco-adventure park, **to create up to 2000 combined jobs**;
- \$16 million for extra marketing to help grow our tourism industry to 1.5 million visitors a year by 2020, **creating 8000 new jobs**;
- \$1.5 million for **hospitality workforce** development to grow jobs and also meet demand from increased tourists; and
- Rebuilding essential services with new jobs for up to 130 new **teachers**, 108 new **police**, and up to 110 new frontline health workers, including up to 85 **nurses**.

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“Shelter supports the drafting of a State Policy on Affordable Housing”.

[Shelter Tasmania, 2013]

Helping vulnerable Tasmanians, in all communities, in all ways

The Liberals recognise we can't begin to address the level of entrenched disadvantage in Tasmania without being able to offer the right services and support throughout our communities for people who are vulnerable.

The Liberals are investing millions of dollars extra into helping low income and vulnerable Tasmanians.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will:

- Invest **\$1.7 million into Neighbourhood Houses**, to provide each House with an additional one-off funding injection of \$50,000 over the next two years in recognition of their place as the lifeblood of many communities, their ongoing demand and to ensure successful responses to local community needs;
- Provide **\$100,000 to resource 15-20 start-up Food cooperatives** to help families and individuals access low cost, healthy, fresh and nutritious food, by establishing partnerships between communities, local food producers, Neighbourhood Houses and food relief organisations;
- Provide an additional **\$2 million to deliver vital support to people living with a disability** – or 12,000 extra hours of support – to address unacceptably high waiting lists until the full roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The Liberals have also provided an **unqualified commitment to the NDIS**;
- Invest **\$250,000 to develop a State Affordable Housing Policy** to provide a clear framework for the next decade. It will address the entire housing spectrum, from home ownership, to affordable rental, public, community housing and crisis accommodation. It will also consider innovative partnerships between government, community and private sectors to increase the supply of affordable housing into the future, including examining the benefits of the transfer of title to community housing providers as a lever for growth, as happens in other States.
- The Policy development will include a review and **overhaul of the Homeshare scheme** to make it easier for more Tasmanians to purchase their own homes. The scheme (where the Government takes a share in the equity of a home to reduce mortgage repayments) will be updated into a more contemporary product to help more low to middle income earners into home ownership;

- Provide an additional **\$3 million into targeted and proactive suicide prevention strategies** in a community-wide response to Tasmania's tragically high suicide rates, including helping to action Community Suicide Prevention Plans and developing a targeted Youth Suicide Strategy;
- Invest **\$555,000 into Tasmanian Men's Sheds**, to provide men with a safe, supportive environment, improve their physical health, mental health and wellbeing, and work on projects to benefit the local community. A 2013 *Beyondblue* evaluation found clear health benefits associated with Men's Sheds;
- Commit to working with the Australian Government on a **longer repayment term for the housing debt** owed by the Tasmanian Government. The debt currently stands at over \$200 million with annual repayments at around \$17 million. Slowing the debt repayment could free up to \$8 million a year in capital funding for new affordable housing and crisis accommodation;
- Continue the valuable and already-funded **No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)** including the Energy Efficient Appliances Program, and seek advice as to the costs of extending the loan scheme to customers who have had electricity disconnections through large debt accumulation;
- Invest **\$76 million to help thousands of Tasmanians get quicker access to hospital**. Thousands of low income and mainly elderly Tasmanians are waiting in pain for years with reduced quality of life, for elective surgery. Tasmanians deserve at least the same level of care as the rest of Australia. The Liberal funding will re-open hospital beds and employ additional frontline hospital staff;
- Provide **\$2 million over four years to Project U-Turn, and \$170,000 per year to the TOOL program** – both are important rehabilitative and restorative justice programs to get young people at risk back into education, job ready as well as to prevent reoffending;
- Invest **\$1 million to unlock the learning potential of children with autism** as well as to introduce best practice autism care into Tasmania, including bringing the award-winning and innovative web-based platform *Rethink Autism* to Tasmania.

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"We work at the grassroots and provide assistance to some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, and it's great news that the Liberal Party has today confirmed their commitment to this work".

[Kate Beer, TACH President and Manager of Devonport Community House, 17.2.14]

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- Establish an **independent review of education for students with a disability** to look at the difficulties faced by families in securing in-school support or in exercising choice in education for their child, learning strategies, the provision of educational materials in alternative formats, how best to report on educational outcomes, disability awareness training and transition planning;
- Commit to continuing the already-funded **Tasmanian Carer Policy and Action Plan** and working proactively with Carers Tasmania to address key issues, including improved mental health support to the 73,800 carers in Tasmania;
- Develop a **Transport Access Strategy** to provide better integrated and coordinated transport services for Tasmanians disadvantaged through poverty, frailty, age or disability, to reduce social isolation. Our Strategy will investigate centralised one-stop published information and a website that shows the full range of commercial, public and not-for-profit transport options, how to access them, fees, route maps and timetables (if applicable);
- Provide an additional **\$400,000 to Surf Life Saving Tasmania** to conduct new programs including programs for Tasmanians with disabilities and children in low socio-economic areas to participate and learn vital water safety skills; and
- Investigate the option of further **bill smoothing for car registration costs**, in recognition that it is very difficult for low income people to meet the full year, or half-yearly, costs of motor vehicle registration bills.

Other policies will be announced before 15 March – see them at www.tas.liberal.org.au

Costings

\$500,000 (all other initiatives previously announced and costed).