

Celebrating Seniors

Building a Tasmania we
can all be proud of



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The Plan to build a Tasmania that we
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Older Tasmanians are an incredibly valuable asset to the State, contributing to the community - and the economy - in a multitude of ways.

The Liberals recognise the vital contribution that seniors make to both the social and economic wellbeing of Tasmania.

In 2011, 23 per cent of the State's population were aged 60 or older. By 2020, older Tasmanians are projected to represent one in five of the population, and by 2030, one in four*.

The proportion of our population who are older presents both opportunities and challenges for Tasmania, and require whole-of-government policy approaches that are front and centre of any government agenda.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will invest an additional \$450,000 in protecting and supporting older Tasmanians, including:

- **Addressing Elder Abuse** by providing –
 - An additional funding of **\$100,000 per year for three years to incorporate the COTA peer education program** into Tasmania's elder abuse strategy. COTA's award-winning program "*You're worth it*" provides information and support in relation to elder abuse to over 500 older Tasmanians and is invaluable in increasing awareness (86 per cent of those participating said they knew more about what to do to protect themselves from financial elder abuse);
 - An additional \$20,000 per year for three years for the operation of the **Elder Abuse Helpline**; and
 - An additional \$30,000 per year for three years for the ***Elder Abuse Is Not OK* television advertisements** which raise awareness of elder abuse and link older people to assistance, noting 53 per cent of callers to the Helpline found out about support through these advertisements;
- Developing a **comprehensive plan for mental health for older people** as part of a \$250,000 *Rethink Mental Health* project, that will work to provide a road map for the next decade and deliver a statewide integrated mental health system for the decade ahead. This project recognises that many older people suffer from depression and mental illness, often misdiagnosed as old age or dementia;

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- Honouring the existing increased level of funding to the **Council of the Ageing (COTA)** to continue its key role in data mapping and in representing the interests of Tasmanian Seniors;
- Investing **\$555,000 into Tasmanian Men's Sheds**, to provide older men with a safe, supportive environment, to improve their physical health, mental health and wellbeing, reduce social isolation, and work on projects to benefit the local community. A 2013 Beyond Blue evaluation found clear health benefits for men associated with Men's Sheds;
- Providing **\$76 million to help thousands of Tasmanians access elective surgery sooner**. Many of those waiting are elderly Tasmanians, who have been waiting in pain for years, with reduced quality of life. This funding will also reopen up to 40 public hospital beds, and employ an up to an additional 110 frontline health professionals and hospital workers;
- Continuing 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 pensioners who have had electricity disconnections through large debt accumulation;
- Developing a **Transport Access Strategy** to provide better integrated and coordinated transport services for Tasmanians disadvantaged through frailty or age, 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);
- An **additional \$180,000 for Mobile Food Vans**, including Loui's Van in Hobart, Gran's Van in Devonport and Missionbeat – Launceston City Mission's Outreach Van – that provide an essential safety net for many vulnerable Tasmanians of all ages, from elderly people, to children, and those who are homeless;
- Restoring Tasmania Police numbers with **a \$33 million investment into 108 additional police** by the end of our first term in office. This funding will restore police numbers in every region of the State, as well as re-establish the Public Order Response Team, marine policing and establish a Serious Crimes Unit;
- A commitment 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;

The Plan to build a Tasmania that we can all be proud of

- A **\$250,000 Affordable Housing Strategy** to provide a clear framework to address the entire housing spectrum, from home ownership to affordable rental, public, community housing and crisis accommodation, including addressing the housing needs of elderly Tasmanians. This study will inform capital infrastructure and review the impacts of Tasmania's demographic transition on housing, recognising that for older Tasmanians, housing is the key to positive ageing;
- Providing **\$100,000 to resource 15-20 start-up Food Cooperatives** to help Tasmanians access low cost, healthy fresh and nutritious food, in a partnership between local communities, local food producers, Neighbourhood and Community Houses and food relief organisations;
- An **additional \$3 million into targeted and proactive suicide prevention strategies** in a community-wide response to Tasmania's tragically high suicide rates;
- A \$100,000 independent feasibility study into a **purpose built ten-bed Hospice facility and palliative care centre in Launceston**, to provide the highest quality end of life care for those with advanced, life-threatening illnesses who are not able to, or choose not to, die at home. We will also update the 2004 Palliative Care Report to look at current unmet and future demand; and
- Investigating the option of **further bill smoothing for car registration costs**, in recognition that it is often difficult for those on low incomes 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:

\$450,000 over three years (all other initiatives previously announced and costed)

*Facing the Future, a Baseline Profile on Older Tasmanians, COTA, 2013.