

## Cultivating Prosperity in Agriculture

Building a Tasmania we  
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The Plan to build a modern economy,  
to create jobs

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### \$30 million for vital irrigation

Accessing and storing water is crucial to the success of Tasmania's primary industry sector, and our ability to be able to capitalise on what is our most strategic global advantage in agriculture.

Tasmanian farmers are the backbone of this State, but without reliable access to water, their future is constrained.

The Liberals recognise that, along with the Commonwealth and State Government, private investment from farmers creates the essential partnership for irrigation development.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will build on irrigation achievements to date - not just on what Tasmanian Irrigation has recently built, but on the schemes that our forebears had the foresight to develop over the last 150 years.

**To achieve this, a majority Hodgman Liberal Government will provide \$30 million towards the development of second tranche irrigation schemes in the State, including proposed schemes in the Circular Head, Evandale, Scottsdale, Swan Valley, and the much delayed Southern Highlands regions.**

**In addition, we will provide \$500,000 to Tasmanian Irrigation** to ensure that, within 12 months, Tasmanian Irrigation can provide a majority Liberal Government with comprehensive advice on the potential for inter-connectivity between existing schemes within the State, together with proposals for the enhancement and modernisation of existing schemes.

Only a majority Hodgman Liberal Government will continue to invest in Tasmanian Irrigation's activities to investigate further investment opportunities in Tasmanian agriculture, as well as supporting the work currently being undertaken by the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture and private bodies in investigating new crops, products and markets.

Tasmania led Australia in the establishment of reliable irrigation many years ago.

**Our regional communities were building on the back of it, and only a majority Hodgman Liberal Government, working cooperatively with the Commonwealth, will ensure that this proud history continues, and helps to build our future.**

# Cultivating Prosperity in Agriculture

By 2050, the world's population is expected to reach more than nine billion people, and food production will need to increase by 70 per cent to feed them.

With the growing Asian middle class demand for higher protein diets, and an increasing demand for fresh, quality food, Tasmania has a remarkable opportunity to leverage off our competitive strengths in agriculture – rich soil, favourable climate, abundant water, enterprising farmers and premium brand – to significantly expand our agricultural industries and food manufacturing capacity.

## Agrivision 2050

Agriculture is a key strength in Tasmania's economy.

At the core of the Liberals' Plan for a Brighter Future is a commitment to grow the value of the agricultural sector in Tasmania tenfold to \$10 billion per year by 2050, backed by our long-term Agrivision 2050 Plan.

### Dedicated Agrivision 2050 Unit

A majority Hodgman Liberal government will **establish a high-level specialised division** from within the existing resources within the State Service **to deliver our 2050 Vision for Agriculture**. This whole-of-government approach will deliver our AgriVision 2050 plan, and will ensure a strategic and long term approach is taken to developing Tasmania's food and agriculture sector.

This highly focused division will give Tasmanian primary producers a competitive advantage and will -

- Develop and implement a sustainable agri-food system for Tasmania;
- Proactively identify and seize new opportunities, especially in premium food production;
- Partner with industry to identify, develop and access new markets;
- Target a dramatically increased and better aligned spend in research and development to improve productivity and competitiveness;
- Work with Brand Tasmania on provenance/branding and packaging/pricing;
- Model workforce needs/skills and integrate with vocational education/training;
- Provide streamlined cross-departmental approvals; and
- Develop individual and relevant strategic plans for each sector (for example, horticulture, red meat, dairy, viticulture, aquaculture, protected cropping, fibre and agri-tourism).

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### Skills and Innovation for future growth

A key part of our AgriVision 2050 Plan will be targeted investment to turn great ideas into long term profitable businesses that will generate economic growth and jobs, particularly in regional Tasmania.

We will:

- Help farmers maximise their investment in irrigation with a **\$1.5 million Water for Profit program** to ensure farmers are equipped with the right skills and information to maximise their investment and be able to capitalise on Tasmania's most strategic global advantage in agriculture;
- Deliver **\$800,000 more for research and development** and translate that research into practical on-the-ground applications to **better align agricultural research with the goals of farmers and industry**;
- Provide **\$600,000 to help farmers improve on-farm productivity**, sustainable farming practices and reduce costs;
- Revitalise Vocational Agricultural Training by providing **\$450,000 towards the implementation of our Agriculture Skills Plan** – an additional investment to implement the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers' Agricultural Skills Plan that will revitalise employment expertise in agriculture by better aligning the skills required in the farming sector with education and training;
- Establish an **Agricultural Industry Training Advisory Board** – An industry representative body charged with providing advice and feedback to the Minister and to Skills Tasmania on key areas such as the quality, effectiveness, relevance and future training priorities;
- Provide **better rural skills and education pathways** – through the development of closer links and clear pathways between TasTAFE, Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture and other rural skills providers;
- Provide **\$1 million to grow private forestry**;

Private forestry has been hit extremely hard by the Labor-Green shutdown of our forest industry. We will invest **\$450,000 in a Private Forest Industry Development Program** to support and help grow this sector by providing practical grower initiatives and extension services. **We will also provide an additional \$550,000**, which will be available to investigate options such as bio-energy and bio-fuel from forest residues; and

- Provide **\$250,000 to develop a low-interest, profit-contingent loan scheme**;

The Liberals recognise the long lead-time for farmers to realise profit from investment in agriculture, and the difficulties this causes when trying to access commercial lending to expand when first cash flow may be many years away.

To give farmers, fruit growers and agri-food businesses the financial support to turn great ideas into long-term profit-making enterprises, **we will provide \$250,000 to develop, in conjunction with industry, a HECs-style loan scheme for farmers**, with loans being paid back as profits are generated.

## Giving our Farmers a Fair Go

Following a very challenging few years, with the added strain of increased energy and shipping costs, the high Australian dollar, and record foreign imports, our farmers and food manufacturers have been coping it from all sides.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government is all about giving our farmers a fair go.

### Regulation Reduction Coordinator

Red and Green tape in Tasmania is out of control, acting like a hand-brake on our economy, destroying businesses and investor confidence. The Liberals understand that the best thing government can do is get out of the way of business, and create the best environment for it to prosper.

One of the many examples of red tape highlighted by the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association is a planning mistake that first cost a farmer \$2 million, before he then had to spend over two years fighting to be compensated for his outlay.

That is why we have already committed to **slashing red and Green tape by 20 per cent in the first term of a majority Hodgman Liberal Government**. To help achieve these goals, **we will establish in the office of the Coordinator General, a Regulation Reduction Coordinator**, with a mandate to deregulate the Tasmanian business environment, boost productivity, and reduce operating costs.

The Regulation Reduction Coordinator will also play an active role in working with industry to develop streamlined approval processes in areas such as quality assurance, environmental management systems and water development.

The Red Tape Reduction Coordinator will report directly to the Coordinator General, and will spearhead a comprehensive program to slash red and Green tape in Tasmania, and make it easier for businesses and individuals to deal with the State's bureaucracy.

### State Energy Strategy to attract investment, retain industry and secure jobs

The Liberals are committed to attracting investment, retaining industry and securing jobs by making Tasmania the most competitive place in Australia to do business.

One of the major concerns for the primary industries sector, other industries, and potential investors in the State has been the alarming increase in power

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Tasmanian farmers deserve a fair go from government. Our hard working farmers and their families are born optimists and we must work together with our primary producers to tackle these challenges head on

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prices with transmission costs soaring by 200 per cent over the past five years.

Left unchecked, this issue represents a serious threat to existing and future business activity in Tasmania and places our State and our economy at a clear disadvantage within Australia. Farmers, processors and cool stores are affected just like any other business.

### **A majority Liberal Government will establish an Energy Working Group to assist the government develop a comprehensive State Energy Strategy.**

This group will comprise leading industry and senior government representatives as well as other key stakeholders such as the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association, and consumer representatives.

The key objective of the State Energy Strategy will be to identify ways in which energy can once again be utilised as an economic driver including by **securing a stable and sustainable price path for power that can provide relief to consumers and help grow the economy and attract new investment.**

The State Energy Strategy will be completed by the end of 2014, in recognition of the importance of this issue to achieving our objective of growing the Tasmanian economy.

### **A Simpler Planning System**

The Liberals will put in place **one single statewide planning scheme** for all developments in Tasmania, replacing the more than 30 schemes that currently exist. Immediately after the election, the Liberals will establish, within the Department of State Growth, a Planning Reform Taskforce which will commence work on creating the single statewide planning scheme.

The TFGA will be fully consulted and involved in this process.

### **An International Shipping Service**

A majority Liberal Government will take decisive action to ensure the reintroduction of an international shipping service from Tasmania to key Asian ports, by investing up to \$11 million per year over three years (\$33 million total). The re-introduction of this service will be a critical step to getting our economy growing again, and to creating jobs.

### **Review the *Primary Industry Activities Protection Act 1995***

To further help strengthen the family farm and rural communities, a majority Hodgman Liberal government will review the *Primary Industry Activities Protection Act 1995* with a view to strengthening right-to-farm provisions, which will strengthen the legal position of farmers, allow them to respond to the food security challenge and get on with what they do best.

### **Good Neighbour Charter**

A majority Hodgman Liberal government will work with the Tasmanian Farmer and Graziers Association to develop a Good Neighbour Charter that details the rights and responsibilities of landowners when it comes to the

management and spread of fire, wildlife and weeds across property boundaries.

## Border Protection - Strengthening the Biosecurity Frontline

The Liberals will invest an additional **\$900,000** to strengthen Tasmania's Biosecurity. Tasmania relies heavily on exports from our agriculture, marine and aquaculture sectors, including fruit, vegetables, fish and livestock. Our sound reputation is based on our pest and disease free status and our clean natural image. There is no doubt that a significant pest and disease incursion has the potential to severely damage our export trade, our economy, and our reputation.

### Biosecurity Tasmania

We believe that there needs to be a greater focus on biosecurity and quarantine in the State, including investment in infrastructure and resources, a clear whole-of-government approach, and an increase in community awareness.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will align all the core biosecurity responsibilities across government through the establishment of **Biosecurity Tasmania**, a specialised division to protect Tasmania's primary production, economy, natural environment, community health economy and our Tasmanian Island Brand from exotic weeds, pests and disease introductions.

## Supporting our Rural Communities and the Family Farm

Family farms and rural communities are critical to the success of our commitment to grow the agricultural sector in Tasmania tenfold to \$10 billion per year by 2050.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will support and encourage the family farm to strengthen our rural economy and sustain our regional community services, by:

- **Providing Rural Alive & Well Inc (RAW) with an additional \$1 million over two years to enable them to extend the reach of their current service to provide timely support to rural families through a range of integrated services;**
- **Providing an additional \$80,000 over four years to Tasmanian Women in Agriculture to enable it to continue to deliver the vital link between rural women and government, ensuring issues affecting rural women, their families and communities are responded to through effective policy and program delivery;**

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- **Providing the Rural Youth Organisation of Tasmania with \$40,000 over four years to support their key initiatives** such as the Young Farmer of the Year, International and National Study programs and AgFest; and
- **Providing \$435,000 over three years to establish a Farm Safe Tasmania Program** to raise awareness of farm safety issues across the State.

The farm is a unique work environment, where family homes are often placed alongside workplaces that use heavy machinery and other potential hazards. Although this home and work connection is a critical part of the Tasmanian rural lifestyle, it does bring with it significant dangers.

The cost of farm injuries in Tasmania (both personal and economic) is unacceptably high. Improving awareness of risks and encouraging safer practices through on-farm safety programs has the potential to significantly decrease the number of accidents reported in Tasmania each year.

The FarmSafe Tasmania program will focus on the provision of information and resources for those working on farms to manage health and safety, and the delivery of on-farm safety training.

### Costings

\$25,055,000 over four years - this includes funding for irrigation infrastructure of \$6 million per year, between 2014-15, and 2018-19.