

Growing our Information and Communication Technology Industry

Building a Tasmania we
can all be proud of

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The Plan to make Tasmania attractive for
investment, to create jobs

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ICT as a vital enabler of business and service delivery

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a vital industry and enabler of business and service delivery, capable of playing a transformational role across our economy. We must start thinking not only domestically, but globally.

IBISWorld predicts that 13 out of Australia's 19 industry sectors will be either transformed or derive significant benefit from ICT by 2050.

The Liberals understand an investment in Information and Communication Technology is an investment in Tasmania's economic wealth, improving productivity, increasing future innovation, business competitiveness and efficiency.

National Broadband Network

The Liberals have supported the NBN from day one, and we strongly support fibre to the premises. We have asked the Commonwealth to actively consider the Aurora proposal as the model to achieve this.

Working cooperatively with the Federal Government is the best way to deliver good outcomes for Tasmania, rather than political grandstanding and scaremongering.

Importantly, we will work closely with the Federal Government to see more Tasmanian businesses, schools and hospitals benefit from our NBN first mover advantage, an advantage which has to date been squandered under Labor and the Greens.

In addition, a majority Hodgman Liberal Government will:

Develop a *Data Centre Action Strategy for Tasmania*

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will **task the new Coordinator General with attracting a Tier 3 data centre to Tasmania**. This will involve working with the Australian industry and international firms that require very high volume and secure data storage, to identify their needs, opportunities and develop a formal government data centre prospectus.

Tasmania is ideally located to become of a Date Centre hub. We have the ideal cool climate for it, stable geology, renewable energy and a strong tertiary education sector.

Labor has been all talk, no action on data centres and has wasted the NBN opportunity. Labor hasn't acted to bring a single major player to Tasmania.

While Labor has, at the last minute, come around to our agenda to pursue Basslink 2, only a majority Liberal Government will actually deliver it because

Labor will be captive to the Greens, who oppose it. As part of our Basslink 2 feasibility study, we will investigate an additional optic fibre bundle linking Tasmania. Adding competition to the backhaul market is longstanding Liberal policy.

To play our part, we will set a goal of moving whole-of-government data to the Tasmanian Cloud (secure, on-island data centres) – setting an example for other major organisations such as the University of Tasmania, local government and Tasmanian businesses.

By establishing a four-year goal of moving to on-island data sovereignty arrangements (where all public sector data is stored on data centres within Tasmania) we will be protecting security of data, employing Tasmanians and reducing the cost of data traffic on the Bass Strait links.

Develop an *Employment and Home Business Remote Working Hub Action Strategy for Tasmania*

High speed broadband along with our enviable lifestyle makes Tasmania an ideal location to establish and promote as a remote working hub.

There are already identified industries which do not require their employees and independent contractors to be physically located in large-scale contact centres. **A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will partner with industry to develop a practical strategy which will properly position Tasmania to attract and retain these employment opportunities in Tasmania.** We have already been approached by industry sectors which believe that by working with a majority Liberal Government, Tasmania could become a major, remote back-office working hub for Australia – even allowing Tasmanians to work in small settings and in their homes for major corporations.

We will collaborate with the ICT industry on a deliberate, energetic strategy to encourage more national corporations to consider Tasmania as a remote base for workers and create much-needed economic growth and the creation of real jobs and new businesses in Tasmania.

We will task the Coordinator General to develop the Liberals' *Employment and Home Business Remote Working Hub Action Strategy for Tasmania*.

Encourage commercialisation through a *Go-to-Market Incubator*

While Tasmania has no shortage of inventive capabilities, there is a gap between invention and the commercialisation of new ideas and products.

The *Go-to-Market Incubator* will provide mentoring, education and training on the pathways from ideas to market for potential start-ups. Graduates will be provided with a range of skills and networks to help develop and exploit their innovations, and be more investment-ready.

Similar programs are iLab (Brisbane) and iAccelerate (Illawarra) – both of which obtain in-kind support from local research institutions. The *Go-to-Market Incubator* would sit within the Department of State Growth and be supported by a Program Manager who is an experienced entrepreneur.

Funding for this program will be up to \$500,000 over two years.

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Liberal policies to introduce a Local Benefits Test and disaggregate government contracts will ensure that Tasmanian ICT businesses and suppliers get a better share of government business

Build ICT workforce capacity

By 2015 the number of ICT jobs in Australia is expected to reach 350,000, which is double 1999 levels. Yet over that period ICT enrolments in training and education have fallen by 55 per cent according to the Victorian Government's 2012 ICT snapshot.

If our ICT sector is to grow, we need to identify where the ICT jobs of the future will be in Tasmania, and encourage more students to take up ICT training.

Workforce Development Plan

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will work with the ICT industry to create a Workforce Development Plan which will identify ICT demand into the future and the skill sets required.

We will work with the ICT industry and education providers to ensure training opportunities match current or predicted shortfalls in the ICT workforce.

A majority Liberal Government will also encourage more ICT graduates by continuing funding for the *IT's Your Career* project which matches students with relevant ICT businesses and allows them to enter the workplace in a part-time capacity while studying. This will ensure ICT students who graduate are job ready - having had real-world work experience with industry.

We will also look to partner with the University of Tasmania to re-introduce the ICT Teacher Training degree program and create dedicated high school positions for teachers upon graduation. And we will also facilitate a discussion between industry and UTAS to ensure that we arrest the decline in the number of graduates from the School of Computing.

Funding for *IT's Your Career* will be \$175,000.

Establish stronger links with the Technology sector

It is important that there is clear communication between the government and ICT sector. **That is why we will create a single point of contact within the new Department of State Growth to work with industry on growing the economic potential of technology in Tasmania.**

We will negotiate Partnership Agreements with both TASICT and the Australian Computer Society as the industry and professional representative bodies. These agreements will be reported on and re-negotiated on a biannual basis, in order to have a new and ongoing means of receiving industry and professional body proposals that can be turned into positive government action.

Furthermore, we will formally consider and respond to the outstanding work of the Australian Computer Society in its white paper: *The Role of Technology in Tasmania's Future*.

A Hodgman Liberal Government will streamline the government procurement process by introducing a centralised panel arrangement (which will include Technology Services procurement by government). We understand the heavy cost to small business of tendering for government work and we will streamline this process.

Units within government currently responsible for ICT policy, procurement of ICT products, eGovernment initiatives, and the ICT development branch, will be refocused so that they work collaboratively on mutual goals instead of operating in isolation.

Extension of existing Industry Engagement funding of \$50,000 will be provided.

Tassie Towns and Cities free public Wifi

A majority Liberal Government will invest in the tourism and ICT sectors to provide free public wifi services targeted at tourists in towns and cities across Tasmania.

We can do this by taking the lead in providing the capital infrastructure – allowing local industry partners to get the program started and put them in a stronger position to prepare for future upgrades and footprint extension.

We will invest up to \$500,000 for setup costs associated with this initiative, partnering with local government, chambers of commerce and tourism associations on the basis of 60 per cent contribution from the State Government, 40 per cent contribution from industry.

While a Liberal Government would undertake a proper tendering process, using our local benefits test to select an ICT firm capable of delivering this, costings provided by one provider indicate that the cost of a public wifi service to be established in a small town shopping or tourism precinct is well below \$10,000.

Using these figures we will install free public wifi services, on a partnership model with around 50 (and potentially more) local tourism associations and chambers of commerce, in addition to under-served tourism assets which attract high numbers of tourists.

Labor's lazy model would require further subsidies. We will implement our free wifi initiative for both local Tasmanians and tourists using the same partnership model established in Swansea. As a result, we will see economic benefits for participating businesses and the future upgrade and operational costs met, without further impost on the taxpayer.

Summary

A Hodgman Liberal Government will create a connected and empowered Tasmanian economy, and the Technology Services sector is the cornerstone of that objective. By combining the human resources of government, industry and the profession, we can grow Tasmania's prosperity and improve service delivery for Tasmanians.

Costings

\$1.225 million over four years.