

More support for Tasmanians with a disability

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The Plan to rebuild essential services

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More support for Tasmanians with a disability

For too long, disability services in Tasmania have been characterised by long waiting lists, unmet need and a crisis-driven approach to support.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will:

- Fully participate and partner with the Australian Government in **delivering the full roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Tasmania**;
- Deliver **\$2 million in additional support** for people with a disability until the full roll-out of the NDIS;
- Provide **\$250,000** to ensure we have a job-ready workforce for the NDIS;
- Provide an **additional \$9 million to the community sector for operational funding**, including disability providers;
- Provide an increase of **\$400,000 over four years to Advocacy Tasmania** so it can support people living with a disability and mental illness; and
- Establish an **independent review of students with a disability** in government schools, and provide **\$1 million to start a continuum of care for children with autism** in Tasmania.

Unequivocal commitment to NDIS

The Liberals have been the strongest supporters of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), which will herald a significant change in the way disability support services are provided.

When fully rolled out in Tasmania, the NDIS will not only give people living with a disability more support, but deliver support to more people.

It will provide choice, flexibility and, more importantly, give people living with a disability a say in what they need. It will also give families and carers, who have done the lion's share of care for years, the back-up they deserve.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government is fully committed to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and its full roll-out in Tasmania.

\$2 million investment in transitional disability support funding

The full roll-out of the NDIS in Tasmania is not until 2019. Until then, hundreds of people with a disability remain on waiting lists, which have reached historically high levels under the Labor-Green Government.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will invest an additional \$2 million to assist people living with a disability on waiting lists.

There are approximately 154 people waiting for supported accommodation, 133 people waiting for community access, and 350 people waiting for an individual support package.¹

The Liberals' additional investment in the transitional period until the full roll-out of the NDIS will provide over 12,000 extra hours of support.

Providing an NDIS-ready workforce

The disability industry currently employs around 5000 Tasmanians in full-time, part-time and casual work. It is expected service delivery will need to significantly increase with the full roll-out of the NDIS over the next five to six years.

Modelling shows that for every full-time job created in the disability sector, a multiplier of a further 1.5 FTE jobs will be created in the broader economy.

The NDIS is a job-creator for Tasmania, and we must be ready.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will provide \$250,000 to help ensure we have a job-ready workforce.

Our funding will allow our peak body, National Disability Services (Tasmania) to play a key role in overseeing the implementation of the NDIS in Tasmania, on behalf of disability providers, and to implement its Workforce Development and Skills Plan, which will help ensure a job-ready workforce by the time the NDIS is fully rolled out.

More funding for advocacy

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will provide an additional \$100,000 per annum to Advocacy Tasmania for four years to increase the level of support provided to people living with a disability or a mental illness.

This additional funding will assist Advocacy Tasmania to meet increased demand for its services statewide.

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Supported accommodation

Over the four years of the Labor-Green Government, there has been a 154 per cent increase in those waiting for supported accommodation.

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will work with disability providers to find the best means of increasing supply of supported accommodation into the future.

As part of our \$250,000 *Rethink Mental Health* project, we will investigate the merits of, and interest in, providing zero interest loan schemes to the community sector as a means of building supply of supported accommodation for Tasmanians with a disability and a long-term psychiatric disability.

As part of the development of a \$250,000 *Affordable Housing Policy*, we will examine the unmet need for affordable housing options for people living with a disability, and requirements for disability-accessible housing.

Additional operational funding of \$9 million to the community sector

The Liberals recognise appropriate indexation is vital to enable the sector 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 supplementary funding provided by the Liberals, on top of a commitment to wage increases for Tasmanian community sector workers flowing from the 2012 equal pay case decision, will make a big difference to over 9000 community sector workers all around Tasmania.

Tasmanian carers

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government has committed to continuing the already-funded Tasmanian Carer Policy and Action Plan and working proactively with Carers Tasmania to address key issues for the 73,800 carers in Tasmania.

Reducing red tape

Red tape and compliance reporting requirements have a major impact on disability service providers who, with the introduction of the NDIS, are now required to operate dual administrative systems until the full roll-out.

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, where work has already begun on cutting red tape for Disability Employment Services.

Improved support for students living with disability

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will establish an independent review of education for students with a disability.

The Liberals support the right of the parent to choose the right education for their child, whether that is in a support school or in a mainstream school.

Our independent review will look at the limitations for families in being able to exercise that choice, including the barriers faced to secure in-school support for their child and access to the Severe Disability Register.

It will also assess learning strategies and the provision of educational materials in alternative formats, how best to report on educational

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outcomes for students with a disability, disability awareness training for teachers, and transition planning for post-school options for leaving students.

Unlocking the learning potential of children with autism

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will invest \$1 million to kick-start a longer-term strategy to implement best practice autism care to Tasmania, including introducing the American-based Rethink Autism program to the state.

The prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has increased dramatically, and is growing at a faster rate than any other disability.

The Liberals' investment in bringing an innovative and proven web-based platform Rethink Autism to Tasmania is an investment in our future.

We are also committed to building a statewide continuum of care from birth to adulthood for children with autism, convening an expert team to develop a long-term strategy.

In addition, we will pilot the establishment of an autism-specific satellite unit attached to a local school in the south of the state, so children with autism are given the best opportunity to learn and reach their full potential, while still being included in a mainstream school environment.

Transport Access Strategy

A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will 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).

Costings: \$250,000 (all other initiatives previously announced and costed).

ⁱ *DHHS Progress Report, December 2013 & NDS Budget Priorities, October 2013.