Taking Agriculture to the next level

A MAJORITY LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WILL:

- Protect the rights of farmers to do what they do best
- Invest more than $150 million to grow a competitive, innovative, sustainable and profitable farming sector
- Support farming families and prosperous rural communities
- Support the next generation of farmers and provide opportunity through agricultural education and skills
- Protect our relative freedom from weeds, pests and disease
Deliver a stronger economy and more jobs

“Grow, Make and Protect” - our comprehensive AgriFood Plan for 2018-2023

A re-elected Hodgman majority Liberal Government will invest more than $150 million on the next phase of our comprehensive AgriFood Plan to take Tasmanian agriculture to the next level.

Only the Hodgman Liberal Government has a vision and target to significantly grow our agriculture and food sector, one of the pillars of our State economy.

A strong agricultural economy delivers jobs and opportunity across every region. Importantly, protecting the right to farm, supporting farming families and promoting caring, prosperous rural communities will remain at the heart of everything we do.

We will work with Tasmanian farmers big and small, agribusiness, processors and food businesses so that they can continue to grow and make more product and we will protect their capacity to do so through upholding our biosecurity, product integrity, reputation and natural environment.

Our focus is on fostering a competitive, innovative and profitable farming sector and selling more of Tasmania’s high-quality and safe products to the world, developing new markets, promoting our valuable brand and facilitating investment in local agribusiness.

We will continue to collaborate with key agricultural sectors to develop new export and trade opportunities and send the clear signal to farmers, agribusiness and the world that Tasmanian agriculture and food is open for business.

Irrigation development is transforming Tasmanian agriculture and driving a farm-led economic revival. We will invest an additional $70 million towards a third tranche of Tasmanian Irrigation schemes continuing our successful partnership with farmers and the Commonwealth Government. We will also work with farmers, irrigators, rural communities and stakeholders on a Tasmanian Rural Water Use Strategy to guide our future water management arrangements.

We will also provide $2.4 million to move 100 positions in DPIWE to Launceston and Devonport, where the Department can be best utilised by those who need and use it the most, our farmers, fishers and rural communities.

Our Targets

Grow the annual farm gate value of the agricultural sector to $10 billion per year by 2050.

#7: Double the amount of water available through Tasmanian Irrigation Schemes by 2025

For the full list of our Targets: www.buildingyourfuture.com.au

Why Tasmania Needs This

Tasmanian farmers are some of the most confident in the nation and we want to keep it that way.

We are on-track to meet our long-term 2050 target.

In 2015/16 the gross value of agricultural production grew by 3.3% to almost $1.5 billion.

Beyond the farm gate, the value of processed and packed food in 2015-16 increased by 4.7% to be worth $4.1 billion.

The value of our overseas food exports increased in value by 12% in 2015-16 to be worth $690 million.

(source: Tasmanian Agri-food ScoreCard 2015/16)

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Deliver a stronger economy and more jobs

Industry development and farmer extension

We will work with farmers, processors and industry groups in key agri-food sectors on practical strategies to improve on-farm productivity and profitability throughout the supply chain. This includes:

- **Red Meat - $1,000,000 over 4 years** to work with farmers and processors to increase trade, marketing, value and sales of Tasmanian red meat. This will complement practical strategies to increase local livestock production and throughput via effective pasture and grazing management, seasonal supply strategies, disease prevention, herd development, and quality assurance.

- **Dairy - $900,000 over 4 years** for a dairy extension "grow more, milk more and make more” initiative working with dairy farmers on productivity, farm business and value-adding strategies to continue to grow production, improve farm profitability and meet processing and market demand for our milk and branded dairy products.

- **Wine - $600,000 over 4 years** for a wine market development and tourism initiative working with Tasmanian wine leading to increased sales in domestic and international markets, investment and associated visitation. This will also help with industry initiatives in vineyard productivity research and winery small-business skills support.

- **Fruit and Vegetables - $550,000 over 4 years** for a horticulture market and trade development initiative working with fruit and vegetable growers and agribusiness to exploit new collaborative market and export opportunities, drive increased trade, product value and farm productivity.

- **Organics - $230,000 over 4 years** to work with organic accrediting bodies and assist farmers, producers, and agri-food businesses interested in transitioning to organic production methods, certification and market development.

- **Honey - $750,000 over 3 years** to work closely with bee keepers and crop pollinators to implement our *Bee Industry Future Report* focusing on resource access, biosecurity, hive productivity, and crop pollination resilience. This includes $500,000 for selected infrastructure upgrades to improve resource access. We will also maintain the ongoing employment of the Apiary Support Officer in DPIPWE.

- **Hemp - $150,000 over 3 years** to support the Hemp Association of Tasmania with grower communications, product development, marketing and branding to support exponential growth in the hemp industry. Tasmania has lead the way in positive regulation to support the growing of industrial hemp and also for advocating for hemp in food nationally.

- **Wool - $400,000 over 4 years** to continue the successful Wool Harvesting Program supporting a skilled workforce which is critical to maintaining the standard and quality of the Tasmanian wool clip. Shearing and wool handling training supports employment, training and careers for young people in rural communities.

Why Tasmania Needs This

Only the Hodgman Liberal Government has a comprehensive Agri-Food Plan – “Grow, Make, Protect” empowering farmers and the private sector through:

- Increased and targeted investment by Government and the private sector;
- Improved productivity through the adoption of new technologies and improved practices; and
- Skills and workforce development and increased career pathways across all primary industry sections.

Through our *Agri-Food Plan 2018-2023* and in partnership with farmers and agribusiness, we will continue on the path to Tasmania achieving our growth targets for agriculture – a key pillar of the State economy.
Deliver a stronger economy and more jobs

Agricultural Research, Development and Extension

Our White Paper: Growing Tasmanian Agriculture Research, Development and Extension (R,D&E) for 2050, released in 2017 was developed with farmers and industry as the blueprint for making the farm productivity gains and innovation required to to grow agriculture.

We will invest in our long-term agricultural R,D&E strategy by:

- Increasing the State Government contribution to the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture (TIA) to a total of $28 million over 5 years which includes establishing a new Agricultural Innovation Fund for specific industry-aligned priority research programs.

- Invest an additional $7 million to modernise our Crown and TIA research farm assets to make our research farms the centre of excellence for practical research and demonstration.

Farmer’s rights and competitiveness

We believe in providing farmers with certainty and confidence that Government will get out of their way and let them get on with the business of farming. We will:

- In consultation with farmers and agribusiness, prepare a whole-of-government White Paper on the Competitiveness of Tasmanian Agriculture for 2050. The White Paper will consider policy improvements to address key issues impacting the cost of production, investment and the profitability of farmers and agribusiness. This includes for example, energy and water costs, environmental compliance, the costs of regulation, accessing Government services, and access to new technologies.

- Provide $100,000 over three years to the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association towards a “living next door to a farmer campaign”. Building on the Hodgman Liberal Government’s strengthening of the right to farm in 2016 through improving the Primary Industry Activities Protection Act, the campaign will work with farmers, the real estate industry, and local Government to support good neighbourly relations, especially where farmland adjoins existing or new urban and peri-urban developments.

- Extend for another 5 years a moratorium on fracking for the purposes of hydrocarbon extraction on agricultural land, protecting our valuable farmland, premium agri-food brand and markets.

Our record in Government

The Hodgman Liberal Government’s strong track record on delivering for Tasmania Agriculture is available for all to see.

Copies of Tasmania’s Sustainable Agri-Food Plan and also the Tasmania’s Sustainable Agri-Food Plan Update are available on the DPIPWE website http://dpipwe.tas.gov.au/agriculture/tasmanias-agri-food-plan-2016-2018

Here are 50 things we delivered for farmers in our first term of government:

- Good neighbour charter between farmers and crown land
- Review of the Primary Industry Activities Protection Act – right to farm
- Support to King Island – Transport Assistance Grants and Target 120 beef program
- $20 million Agri Growth concessional loan scheme
- Safe Farming Tasmania – made the program a permanent fixture on Tasmanian farms
- Easier to grow Industrial Hemp and delivered federal approval for hemp in food.
- TFGA AgriSkills Project
- Supported Rural Youth and Tasmanian Women in Agriculture
- Supported Rural Alive and Well outreach services
- Rural support – Rural Financial Counselling Service, Rural Business Tasmania, and Rural Relief Fund

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Deliver a stronger economy and more jobs

- Work with farmers on practical strategies to **contain the costs of energy on farms** in combination with the steps we have already taken to reduce the real price of electricity for all Tasmanians.

- **Review the use of agricultural insurance products** including their potential application and also any impediments to farmers using products like multi peril crop insurance to insure against livestock and crop damage and actively manage risks from natural events such as drought, floods, hail, and fire. The final scope will be determined in consultation with the TFGA, farmers and insurance industry.

- **Extend the successful AgriGrowth Loans Scheme to young farmers with a further $20 million** in low interest (concessional) HECS-style loan facilities, to support farmers and agri-food businesses innovate and expand and turn their inspiration into reality.

- **Continue the Stock Underpass Program with $1.1 million over 4 years** to offset the costs associated with stock underpass infrastructure, improving farm and road safety and increasing farm efficiency.

- Modernise the management of game and browsing animals through a **new independent Tasmanian Game Council** and establish the new **Game Services Tasmania in DPIPWE** with a primary industries focus to support landholders, farmers and hunters to sustainably manage all issues relating to game and browsing animals.

- Provide $860,000 over 4 years for **two additional AgriGrowth Liaison Officers** based in the north, combined with a new primary producer’s hotline, to provide easier access and a single contact point for those primary producers who need to conduct business face-to-face with DPIPWE.

- **Modernise the FarmPoint website** with $50,000 and connect it with contemporary social media platforms to become the e-contact point for those primary producers who prefer smart-phone and easy access to DPIPWE’s extensive information services.

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**Our record in Government**

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<td>✓ Research and Development – Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture</td>
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<td>✓ Industry R&amp;D – poppy downy mildew, vineyard productivity, vegetable productivity (biofumigation), precision agriculture, livestock and pasture productivity</td>
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<td>✓ Tasmanian horticulture market growth project</td>
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<td>✓ Tasmanian Agricultural Jobs Website</td>
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<td>✓ Stock Underpass Pilot Program</td>
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<td>✓ Strategic Industry partnerships – supporting the industry groups that support primary industries</td>
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<td>✓ Browsing animal management – 5 year crop protection permits and maintained access to 1080 (including a simpler process)</td>
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<td>✓ Released a modern approach to Quality Deer Management – for landholders, hunters and farmers including a new Tasmanian Game Council and Game Services Tasmania (in progress)</td>
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<td>✓ Wool industry shearer-hand training</td>
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<td>✓ Moratorium on fracking</td>
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<td>✓ Modernised poppy industry regulation</td>
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<td>✓ Supported natural resource management and landcare</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Organic industry development support</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ Flood support – relief, Agricultural Landscape Rehabilitation Program, Mersey-Dasher Riparian recovery Program</td>
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Deliver a stronger economy and more jobs

Farming families and rural communities

Farming families and thriving rural communities are the fabric and strength of Tasmanian agriculture. Investing in our community infrastructure – our people, future leaders, future workforce, rural support organisations and community events – is just as important as investing in infrastructure like irrigators. We will:

- Provide **$120,000 over 4 years to Tasmanian Women in Agriculture** to build capacity for more rural women to take leadership roles in Tasmanian primary industries.

- Provide **$70,000 over 4 years to Rural Youth Tasmania** to further develop young people in rural industries leadership programs.

- Invest **$800,000 over 4 years for Rural Financial Counselling Services and Farm Business Mentoring** delivered by Rural Business Tasmania supporting Tasmanian farmers with business skills, financial literacy, planning and debt mediation.

- Provide **Rural Alive and Well (RAW) with $1.46 million over 2 years and continue to work with RAW to deliver a lasting model for improving mental health and well being across rural Tasmania. The Hodgman Government has consistently supported promoting mental health and resilience across rural communities through RAW’s outreach service.**

- Continue to work closely with industry groups, farmers and agribusiness so they have the skilled workforce to take advantage of emerging growth opportunities. This includes the delivery of an **Agricultural Leadership Program** with the TFGA and continuing our targeted investment through SkillsTasmania into agriskills and training; providing the essential business and farm skills to grow productivity and future careers.

The Hodgman Government returned agriculture to the school curriculum from primary school to year 12 and beyond. Through the existing Primary Schools to Primary Industries initiative we will continue to deliver on the **Agricultural Education Framework** and other practical strategies to promote further education and careers in agriculture.

Our record in Government

continued

- Streamlined dam works approvals (quicker and simpler system to build a farm dam)
- Invested $50 million towards tranche 2 irrigation: Southern Highlands, Swan, Duck, North Esk and Scottsdale Irrigation schemes
- Feasibility studies underway for a Tranche 3 irrigation program – Tasmanian Future Irrigation Project
- Ministerial policy for Water Resource Management During Extreme Dry Conditions
- Reviewed Clyde River Water management Plan
- Ended the fox eradication program and developed more integrated approach to invasive species
- Permanent King Island Wallaby Officer
- King Island Multi Species Abattoir business case
- Strengthened the Animal Welfare Act
- Invested more into the RSPCA animal welfare inspectorate
- Draft Agritourism strategy released
- Enhancing the Tasmania Brand – new Brand Project
- Primary Schools to Primary Industries initiative
- Agricultural Education Framework – and new agricultural education teacher resources
- Tasmanian Agricultural Education Network and Hagley Centre of Excellence

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Deliver a stronger economy and more jobs

Our farms are work places as well as our homes. Since 2015 the **Safe Farming Tasmania Program** has been changing the culture on the farm, to one where the safety of workers is always the number one priority by providing farmers with practical safety assistance. In 2017/18 we made farm safety a permanent fixture extending the program on an ongoing basis.

We will also provide **$1,000,000 over five years for a Agricultural Show Development Grants Program** to enable rural and regional show societies across Tasmania to upgrade vital community infrastructure ensuring these iconic community events remain relevant into the future.

Putting the land back into Landcare

The landcare movement involves farmers and the community in practical works that sustain our productive soils and farm land, rivers, biodiversity and other natural resources. Investing in landcare is smart as it helps maintain Tasmania’s valuable reputation for clean and green food and agricultural products. We will:

- Establish a new **$2 million Landcare Action Grants Program** over 4 years to coinvest with farmers, landcare, and other community organisations on practical on-ground works for sustainable agriculture and rivercare. This includes **$200,000 for the DairyTas “Cows out of Creeks” project**.

- **Double the funding to the Tasmanian Landcare Association to $960,000** over 4 years to support grass roots landcare groups.

- Increase funding for **Natural Resource Management (NRM) to $4.2 million over 4 years** to enable NRM North, NRM South and Cradle Coast NRM to coordinate community involvement in landcare programs.

Tackling Weeds

Weeds are a scourge on our landscape, impacting farm profitability and degrading our natural environment. In addition to putting the land back into landcare, we will invest **$5 million over 5 years into a new Weed Action Fund** which will invest with farmers, landcare and other community organisations to tackle weeds that are impacting on valuable agricultural or environmental assets.

A new **Tasmanian Weed Advocate** – a recognised community landcare leader – will work in partnership with existing DPIPWE weeds and invasive species experts and stakeholders to identify the strategic on-ground priorities across land tenures and coordinate the Weed Action Fund.
Maintaining Tasmania’s relative pest and disease free status

Biosecurity is vitally important for protecting Tasmania’s reputation for quality primary produce and our natural environment. Our relative pest and disease free status is a competitive advantage for our farmers in the market-place.

The Hodgman Government is committed to ensuring Tasmania’s biosecurity system continues to respond to the modern risks and challenges of increased trade, Tasmania’s place in a global market-place and with more visitors coming to our island home. We will:

- **Invest $2 million over 4 years for truck and machinery wash down stations** partnering with farmers, agribusiness and local government to build a network of washdown stations to improve biosecurity and farm hygiene, by disposing of waste, reduce potential spread of disease and weeds, and improve road safety. Proposed sites include near Smithton, Devonport, Oatlands, Scottsdale and Huonville to complement the new Powranna truck wash which is under construction.

- **Provide $510,000 over four years to expand** Biosecurity Tasmania’s collaboration with industry groups and farmers to plan for and manage post-border biosecurity risks and to support on-farm biosecurity hygiene strategies.

- **Provide $480,000 over 4 years to boost biosecurity on the Bass Strait Islands.** King and Flinders islands are gateways to Tasmania and biosecurity plans are currently being developed for each island. An additional biosecurity officer on each Island will support landholders to tackle weeds, pests and other issues affecting agricultural production and other local biosecurity priorities.

- **Modernise Tasmania’s biosecurity legislation** by consulting with industry to finalise and table in Parliament our *Biosecurity Bill*, currently in draft, to streamline seven existing Acts into one piece of framework legislation - cutting red tape, reducing duplication and enabling us to better manage the future risks of pests, weeds and diseases.
Deliver a stronger economy and more jobs

Innovative agri-food enterprises

Through the Office of the Coordinator General and AgriGrowth Tasmania we are providing practical support to Tasmanian farmers, agri-food businesses, and restaurateurs who are developing innovative ways to add value to our wonderful agricultural produce using new technologies and processing techniques:

- **FermenTasmania** - The Coordinator General will progress a business case for a proposed fermentation centre in Launceston in conjunction with industry and other levels of Government which would foster new businesses and fermentation-based products. Why ferment? There is considerable potential in Tasmania to expand on traditional forms of food fermenting for example bread, beer, cider, wine, ginger beer, mead, cheese, yoghurt, sauerkraut, vinegar and pickles.

- **MATS** - We will continue to work with the Defence Science and Technology Organisation facility at Scottsdale and local businesses to exploit opportunities from the new **Microwave Assisted Thermal Sterilisation (MATS)** technology being trialled at the DSTO. Foods processed using MATS are heated with a short time and temperature profile, ensuring food safety, but retaining fresh-like appeal and long shelf life. Beyond opportunities for Tasmanian farmers to potentially supply defence force needs it may present new value-adding opportunities for example, ready meals and food service portions.

Cost

The cost of our **AgriFood Plan 2018-23** is $133 million over 5 years. $20 million will also be added to the AgriGrowth Loans Scheme facility.

Labor Green Record

A vote for Labor is a vote for a Labor-Green minority government.

When in Government, Labor and the Greens tied up farmers in red tape, locked up productive farm land under green tape preventing farmers developing their land, and they were paralysed by inaction through advisory committees. They cannot be trusted. The Greens are no friends of farmers or agribusiness and any minority Government Labor-Green deals will mean less freedoms for farmers, more restrictions on land use, less rights to get on with the business of farming and a drop in agribusiness investment, and a loss of rural confidence.