

IT & Innovation Policy



A MAJORITY LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WILL:

- Generate Economic Wealth
- Build Workforce Capability
- Champion Local Innovation
- Improve Outcomes for Government IT
- Improving mobile phone coverage for the Great Eastern Drive



IT & Innovation

Information and Communication technology provides businesses the capacity to raise their profiles, to market products statewide, nationally and globally, and to operate more efficiently, in short to grow their businesses and create more jobs.

For everyday Tasmanians ICT is more and more a part of daily life, whether we are communicating with family and friends or paying bills.

In recognising the impact of the digital world, the Hodgman Liberal Government has worked to

- create opportunities for Tasmanian businesses to compete and prosper in an increasingly digital and online economy;
- encourage innovation and provide support to startups;
- provide better communications infrastructure to regional Tasmania; and
- enhance partnership with industry.

Generate Economic Wealth

Many Tasmanian ITC companies are small businesses, the engine room of our economy employing more than 100,000 Tasmanians.

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will introduce a lower tax rate and higher threshold to lower how much tax small and medium sized businesses pay.

Currently businesses pay 6.1 per cent payroll tax on all wages over the tax-free threshold of \$1.25 million.

Under new arrangements:

- Businesses with total wages of less than \$1.25 million will continue to pay no tax;
- Businesses with total wages of between \$1.25 million and \$2.0 million will pay tax at a rate of 4.0 per cent; and
- Businesses will pay tax at a rate of 6.1 per cent on wages above \$2.0 million.

This can lead to a savings on the wage bill of up to \$15,750.

Why Tasmania Needs This

- To support workforce development in the ICT industry
- To encourage and foster innovation
- To support business and enable their digital transformation
- To facilitate progressive digital infrastructure across Tasmania
- To progress the digital transformation of government business
- To help all Tasmanians access and use digital services
- To position Tasmania to take advantage of the Internet of Things



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The Hodgman Liberal Government has been backing local businesses to create jobs and deliver growth through the Local Benefits Test in place since 2014. The policy is working: over the last 12 months 81 per cent of contracts have been awarded to Tasmanian-based businesses. This represents an increase from 63 per cent under the previous Labor Green Government.

We have set a target that 90 per cent of all Government contracts will be awarded to Tasmanian-based businesses by 2022.

To help reach this target we will help our small businesses win Government business by scheduling workshops, providing business mentoring and personalised business advice as well as one-stop-shop support.

Building Workforce Capability

The Hodgman Liberal government will again work with industry partners, such as TasICT and the Australian Computer Society (ACS), to develop a new Workforce Development Plan for the industry, with particular focus on encouraging women and diversity in IT.

In education we will continue to establish STEM learning pathways from Kindergarten to year 12, provide information about STEM careers, and help learners to make informed choices for their future.

Enhancing the capability of the IT workforce does not end with formal training and schooling.

We have committed \$250 000 each year for the next three years through the Digital Ready program to ensure that small businesses receive innovative, informative and relevant information to help these businesses seize the opportunities presented by the changing digital technology. We will extend this program for an additional year to ensure that it continues for the life of the government.

The Hodgman Liberal Government has provided the digital infrastructure through its free Wi-Fi network, TasGov_Free, to support the growth in tourism visitor numbers and the growth in jobs in Tasmanian businesses that service our tourism boom.

With 154 access points at 60 locations across the Tasmanian free wifi service has been accessed more than a million times. The network's most popular hotspot locations read like a Tasmanian tourist brochure and include Port Arthur, Hobart's waterfront and CBD areas, the Macquarie Wharf cruise ship terminal and Cradle Mountain.

Tasmania's free wifi service provides visitors access to reliable internet connectivity and enables them to make the most their local experience.



Boost the Local Economy

Champion Local Innovation

The Hodgman Liberal Government is committed to encouraging entrepreneurship and assisting start-ups to commercialise their ideas and products, which, in turn, will create higher value jobs and encourage people to stay in or relocate to Tasmania to start businesses.

The technology is emerging rapidly around the world and Tasmania is in a unique position to be an early mover and take advantage of this fact. We have already rolled out an IoT network, LoRaTAS, in Tasmania. We have created our startup innovation hubs in Enterprize. We have the most completed NBN network in Australia with 99% of Tasmania ready for service. We have a strong agriculture industry where IoT is often used. And we're a small and agile State able to move and respond quickly to change.

In 2016 the Government provided seed funding to launch and develop Enterprize Hubs in Launceston and Hobart, which are already bringing people together, providing a location, training and hands-on mentoring to develop, evaluate and implement, pre-start-up and early stage business opportunities.

Since opening in September 2016, the two hubs have held over 200 events attracting well over 6000 participants.

If re-elected the Government will extend its current three-year commitment of \$278,000 per year for another year to the end of the next term of Government.

To foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, funding of \$900,000 over two years was allocated in this year's budget to help attract and form a leading Start-Up Accelerator Program in Tasmania.

The program will fund a part-time Project Director to advise on the strategic direction of the Start-up Community in Tasmania including developing, implementing and maintaining leading-edge programs as well as support the activities of the Hubs and potentially attract investors and sponsors from around the world to accelerate the development of the existing start-up community, especially in the agricultural and food technology space.

The program will both leverage and build on Tasmania's digital infrastructure advantage and start-up ecosystem to attract and support cutting edge start-ups in Tasmania.

There will be an evaluation of the progress towards the program's objectives in its second year.

LoRaTas, a collaboration of state, federal and local government private enterprise and research organisations, is enhancing the capacity of Tasmania to attract further investment.



Innovation

Launceston is the first city in Australia to achieve city-wide coverage of this long range and low power network technology, effectively making the Tamar Valley the best Internet of Thing (IoT) development ecosystem in the nation.

The Launceston City deal, and the smart city agenda together with the move of UTas into the city put together a powerful basket of enablers for the innovation economy.

This combination of talent, technology and infrastructure establishes Launceston's credentials for supporting and developing digital innovation.

Building the infrastructure and ecosystem necessary for innovation will encourage further growth in the IT sector and boost job prospects for skilled Tasmanians, as well as help foster our workforce of the future in digital literacy and innovation by highlighting to students digital career options.

A Hodgman Liberal Government will continue to support and facilitate the journey towards a world leading IoT technological ecosystem with a view to attracting global financial investment, high-end technical talent and meaningful employment opportunities for Tasmanians. A Hodgman Liberal Government will work with industry to create a top-level vision and plan that will provide a focus for the State that will set us apart from other similar technology initiatives.

Establishing Opportunities in Innovation

The Hodgman Liberal Government will also look for opportunities to attract world class research to Tasmania.

For example, after decommissioning the ageing hyperbaric treatment chamber at RHH in March, the opportunity was taken to design and build facility that will create a world-class treatment and research centre.

As a result, in addition to hyperbaric treatment capability, the chamber will be configured to also allow depressurisation to simulate altitude (hypobaric) conditions.

Tasmania will be home to the only combined hyperbaric/hypobaric facility in the southern hemisphere, and one of the few in the world.

This piece of high tech infrastructure will allow extensive medical, research and commercial applications, including supporting innovation in Tasmanian industry.



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The altitude capability of the centre has potential to service Australian aircrew (civilian and defence) training and the work of the recently announced Australian Space Agency, capitalising on opportunities in the growing global space industry sector.

Funding for the \$11 million facility is part of the \$689 million RHH redevelopment with the additional costs for hypobaric capability shared between the Tasmanian Government, the Tasmanian Salmonid Growers Association, the Tasmanian Abalone Council, the Diver Alert Network Asia Pacific, the UTas School of Medicine and the Tasmanian Polar Network.

Improve Outcomes for Government IT

Stable, reliable communication is a key component for the effective and efficient delivery of Government services. Over the course of its first term, the Hodgman Liberal Government negotiated a contract to provide a single platform for telephony services.

This new platform will enhance capability to support new features and functionality including video conferencing; facilitate easier to manage software upgrades with lower outage impact; and enable the contracted provider to deliver product innovation for Government.

IT Infrastructure and information system management are essential for the ongoing efficient delivery of services to all Tasmanians. The Hodgman Liberal Government has allocated more than \$60 million to upgrade the government's infrastructure and system management programs including:

- The upgrade ageing Police ICT systems and the replacement of information data management systems;
- detailed design work to replace legacy criminal information management systems;
- initial design work and implementation of programs to improve efficiency and minimise the administrative burden on frontline child protection staff; and
- implementation of program to upgrade and improve Health infrastructure throughout Tasmania.

These projects will be subject to a tender process and the Local Benefits Test. We have set a target that 90 per cent of all Government contracts will be awarded to Tasmanian-based businesses by 2022



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Improving Mobile Coverage for the Great Eastern Drive

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal government will deliver near 100% mobile phone coverage along the Great Eastern Drive between Binnalong Bay and Buckland.

The Great Eastern Drive is a major tourism and transport route, the used by more than 33,000 vehicles every day.

If re-elected will seek to collaborate with a telecommunications provider to increase mobile coverage to at least 95% of the highway, providing better opportunities for communities, access for tourists and safety in general. Currently about 25% of the highway has little or negligible mobile coverage.

Such a project would eliminate the notorious blackspot between Buckland and Orford. It is anticipated that it would involve the use of around nine base stations.

For local residents, it would improve coverage in several small towns along the Drive, including Four Mile Creek and Falmouth, which have little to no mobile coverage at the moment.

Expanded mobile coverage would allow the expansion of the Government's Free WiFi network along one of Tasmania's most popular tourist routes.

Currently, this limited coverage impacts both tourists and locals. Some residents would be unable to pay a bill, book an airline ticket, or download information needed for a school project, things other Tasmanians take for granted. While tourists would be unable to look up information or share their experiences on social media.

This initiative will help reduce areas of digital exclusion in Tasmania and improve people's quality of life while removing the frustration of isolation. It will also increase business confidence by increasing communications and allowing transactions to occur everywhere.



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Enhancing Tasmania's Digital Capability

When Tasmanians are connected to digital services, they are healthier, safer, more productive and able to connect with local, national and international communities.

With almost all State and Federal Government services now delivered digitally, Tasmanians will benefit from increased access to and enhanced capabilities to use these services.

Increased digital inclusion will improve life for Tasmanians and the Hodgman Liberal Government has a plan to get there. Now is the time for action to ensure our fellow Tasmanians are not left behind because they can't access this important tool.

The Solution

Essential to enhancing Tasmanians digital capacity is access to the internet and communications infrastructure, affordability and capability.

The Hodgman Liberal Government has worked through partnerships with the Federal Government, industry and local government to provide better communications infrastructure and improve digital access to regional Tasmania including infrastructure upgrades to the Furneaux Islands and Tasmania's West Coast as well as the deployment of base stations in 37 regional locations to eliminate mobile black spots.

The Hodgman Liberal Government's focus is on supporting individuals, families, communities, growing jobs and the economy, which will enhance the affordability of digital access for Tasmanians. We are extending high schools to include years 11 & 12. This is increasing retention rates and overall literacy. We have already completed a Job Creation Package to reduce unemployment. We have also supported digital inclusion in the community via Libraries Tasmania.

Libraries Tasmania provides welcoming spaces across the state where people can access free high-speed internet via mobile devices and over 600 public computers. The available technology infrastructure ensures people's demands are catered for in a digital world. Libraries Tasmania is a forward- focused organisation that provides public access to information and online services as well as helping people gain the skills they need to engage in an increasingly digital society.



Partnership with Industry

Following on from this, the primary focus to increase digital inclusion would be the creation of a strategy that would aim to increase the capability and affordability for Tasmanians who are currently experiencing high levels of digital exclusion. Specifically this will include:

- low income households,
- older Tasmanians, and
- people not in paid employment.

The Liberal Hodgman Government would enhance digital pathways for Tasmanian communities, so they are able increasingly to participate online and expand their social and economic options and opportunities by working with government agencies, the private sector and not-for-profit organisations.

We will explore the use the Digital Ready Program for Business as a model to expand the number of workshops and training activities available to general activities on the Internet, cybersecurity awareness and related digital activities. These workshops, content and activities will be rolled out across Tasmania.

Access for low income households will continue to be provided via Libraries Tasmania locations which will also serve as a focal point for training workshops and individual coaching.

Enhancing Tasmania's Digital Partnership with Industry

To progress the opportunities that information Technology and Communications offer to Tasmania and its economy, a re-elected Hodgman Liberal Government will convene an ITC summit twice a year inviting representatives of the IT industry like TasICT and the ACS, and the private sector to meet with the Minister and senior officials responsible for ITC across Government.



Labor Green Record

- During their time in Opposition we have heard nothing but silence from Labor and the Greens on IT and innovation issues
- Labor have recently launched new Digital Economy policy to take to the election. It rehashes an advisory committee, which failed last time they were in power. While talking about support for startups, about bridging the digital divide and providing digital infrastructure to attract investment in Tasmania, it provides no detail as to how these so-called policies might achieve their goals or how they might be funded.