

# Investment in Ambulance Services



## A MAJORITY LIBERAL GOVERNMENT WILL:

- Invest \$125 million in Ambulance Services over the next six years to:
  - Recruit 62 new paramedics and operations centre staff
  - Supercharge the Aeromedical Helicopter Service – which will save lives
  - Implement secondary triage
  - Recognise and support Ambulance volunteers
  - Build new Glenorchy and Burnie Ambulance Stations
  - Upgrade rural ambulance stations



## Ambulance Service Boost

### Aeromedical Helicopter Service

A re-elected Hodgman Liberal Government will establish and staff Tasmania's first integrated medical and search and rescue helicopter service, with dedicated flight paramedics and specialist retrieval doctors.

This will include dedicated resources based at Hobart airport, allowing quicker response times and ensuring patients start to receive high acuity care from the moment the helicopter lands, rather than having to wait until they arrive in hospital.

Dedicated flight paramedics will mean an ambulance crew is no longer taken off the road when the emergency helicopter goes out, and flight paramedics would be rostered to support road crews during quiet times, bringing down ambulance response times in Southern Tasmania.

This service will dramatically improve response times, with an expected median activation time of 10-minutes for high priority search and rescue, and medical responses - an improvement on 42 minutes compared to the current service.

This will save lives, with literature suggesting that a helicopter staffed with a doctor and paramedic can expect to see an additional five survivors per 100 helicopter trauma responses staffed by a doctor/paramedic team – in Tasmania that could be as many as nine lives every year.

Staffing for the service will include 14 additional full-time paramedics, 5.5 FTE specialist retrieval doctors dedicated to the service, 5.7 FTE nurses and 4.5 FTE paediatric registrar doctors, and other support staff.

Funding will also be provided for additional flight hours enabling the service to undertake additional medical missions and search and rescue missions per annum, expanded base facilities to accommodate crew on-site and additional road vehicles so that helicopter crew can respond by road if required.

### Our Targets

**#24:** 90% of Tasmanians will be treated within clinically recommended timeframes for their elective surgery by the end of the next four year term of Government

**#25:** 90% of emergency presentations will be in and out of the Emergency Department within four hours by 2022

**#26:** Reduce emergency ambulance response times to national average waiting time by 2025

### Why Tasmania Needs This

We are seeing growing demand, and we must act now to boost capacity to ensure ambulance services are available to all Tasmanians when they need them.

Our investment in dedicated resources for the health system will see more ambulances on the road, shorter waiting times in the ED, for Elective Surgery, for Outpatients, and will give Tasmanians the health system they need and deserve.



## Ambulance Service Boost

### More Paramedics in Regional Areas

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will recruit an additional 42 paramedics to improve services and reduce fatigue in regional areas around Tasmania. These paramedics will provide 24 hour on duty coverage in those communities and better support our volunteers.

We will work with paramedics to identify the areas to place these paramedics, based on greatest need, with all 14 upgrades complete by 2022.

This will reduce paramedic fatigue, increase ambulance responsiveness within these communities, and reduce overtime costs.

### State Operations Centre Boost

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will boost staffing in the Ambulance Tasmania State Operations Centre by an additional six full-time staff.

The Ambulance Tasmania State Operations Centre is integral to all aspects of ambulance service delivery with responsibility for coordination of emergency pre-hospital care and transport, medical and health escort services.

These staff will help to meet growing demand, and are in addition to a staffing increase of five last year under the Hodgman Liberal Government.

### Secondary Triage

A re-elected Hodgman Liberal Government will fully roll out secondary triage of Ambulance Tasmania calls.

Secondary triage recognises that not everyone who calls for an ambulance requires emergency care, but many do have a medical need and we need to help them get the right care, and the right place, which in many instances is not at hospital.

Secondary triage will ensure that patients not requiring emergency intervention or transport to an emergency department will be referred to an appropriate health service, keeping paramedic resources available for emergency calls.



## Ambulance Service Boost

### Secondary Triage (continued)

Once fully operational, the secondary triage service will assess almost 22,000 calls per year, and has the potential to divert up to 16,000 patients to alternate service providers.

### New Training Equipment and Stretchers

A re-elected Hodgman Liberal Government will invest \$1.1 million into new equipment for Ambulance Tasmania to support patient safety.

The equipment will include new training dummies to ensure our paramedics have access to the best resources for skills development, and new Smart Stretchers that will help improve patient safety and reduce secondary injuries.

### Volunteer Support Package

A re-elected Hodgman Liberal Government will provide \$800,000 per annum for enhanced support for volunteers, including:

- Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses.
- Enhanced training coordination with formal recognition within Ambulance Tasmania's corporate structure through the employment of a Superintendent of Volunteer Support and Coordination and 3 regional volunteer training coordinators.
- Enhanced equipment for training of volunteers.
- Formal recognition of skills developed, including Advanced First Aid certificates.
- Reviewing operational responsibilities to ensure that all volunteer stations have support from a Branch Station Officer.
- Increased volunteer recruitment and retention will significantly improve the efficiency of Ambulance Tasmania and the response to patients, particularly in rural communities.



## Infrastructure Investment

### **New Glenorchy Ambulance Super Station**

A re-elected Hodgman Liberal Government will invest \$6 million to build a new greenfield Ambulance Station at Glenorchy.

Glenorchy is the base for the new 24/7 ambulance crew that commenced last year and is a busy station, with around 5,700 dispatched in the last financial year.

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will work with staff and stakeholders to develop plans for the station, which will include contemporary administration, operations and staff amenities, with better garaging of vehicles and parking spaces.

The super station will have a specific focus on state-of-the-art training facilities, and we will work with staff to see if activities currently undertaken at the Hobart CBD station can be delivered in Glenorchy, freeing-up space for other functions on that site.

It is expected the new station will be completed in 2021.

### **New Burnie Ambulance Station**

A re-elected Hodgman Liberal Government will invest \$6 million to build a new greenfield Ambulance Station at Burnie.

The new station will provide greatly improved facilities, dedicated staff meeting facilities, a bigger garage so service vehicles no longer need to park outside and better parking and disability access.

Importantly, a site will be selected with better access to the highway, which will reduce ambulance response times in the region.

It is expected the new station will be completed in 2021.

### **Smithton Ambulance Training Facility**

A re-elected Hodgman Liberal Government will invest \$1.1 million to provide a dedicated training room and new two-bedroom unit to support the Smithton Ambulance station.

This will provide a better support environment for volunteers and paramedics, with dedicated quarters for relief staff.



## Infrastructure Investment

### Rural Hospital and Ambulance Station Upgrade Fund

A re-elected majority Hodgman Liberal Government will provide \$15 million for capital improvements at Tasmania's rural and regional hospitals.

This is the same funding that the Labor Party would spend on Medihotels, where sick Tasmanians would be put into hotel rooms in Tasmania's cities.

Rather than undermine the viability of our rural and regional hospitals, we will invest that funding in better facilities for staff and patients in our rural hospital and paramedics and volunteers at rural ambulance stations.

It is estimated that \$5 million will be spent on ambulance stations, but the final allocations of funding will be based on greatest need.

These works will be planned in consultation with local councils, to ensure we provide the community with the facilities they need and deserve.

### Community Defibrillator Fund

A re-elected Hodgman Liberal Government will fund an additional 180 community defibrillators over the next two years.

This is an important investment in community safety as the cost of defibrillators is often out of reach for many not-for-profit volunteer and community-led organisations.



## Labor-Green Record

Under the former Labor and Labor-Green Governments, Tasmania's health system was badly damaged, with:

- Savage budget cuts to health of more than \$500 million;
- 287 nurses cut from Tasmanian hospitals;
- Slashing hospital bed numbers and closure of entire hospital wards;
- Closure of elective surgery theatres, and waiting list blow outs
- A cumbersome health bureaucracy with 4 health agencies, and disjointed leadership structures;
- The downgrading and closure of smaller local hospitals including at Ouse and Rosebery.

Labor now plan to put sick Tasmanians into hotel rooms, not hospital beds - this is not a plan to improve our health system.