

Creating a job ready generation

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The Plan to invest in education

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Creating a job-ready generation

A majority Hodgman Liberal government will invest over \$53 million to create a job ready generation of young Tasmanians.

We owe it to the next generation to equip them with the skills they will need to fully participate in a modern economy, reach their personal potential and be able to determine their own future.

The Liberals believe in education and understand the importance of education to fix Tasmania's economy.

We want Tasmania to become the Intelligent Island and a majority Hodgman Liberal government is prepared to prioritise education and invest in our children.

Our Plan for a creating a job-ready generation includes –

- Extending 21 high schools in rural and regional communities to year 12 in our first four years of office;
- Improving retention rates so an extra 2000 young Tasmanians complete their year 11 and 12 studies;
- Keeping colleges open – and giving students a choice whether to continue their studies in their local high school or go to college;
- Investing an extra \$45 million to extend high schools to year 11 and 12 education in rural and regional communities, including \$6 million for school upgrades;
- Employing up to 105 new teachers to extend high schools to year 11 and 12 in rural and regional communities;
- No city based high school will be extended to year 12 prior to 2020;
- Investing \$8.4 million into providing up to 25 new literacy and numeracy specialists, concentrating on years 7 to 9;
- Sending a strong message to young Tasmanians that their education does not finish in year 10; and
- A target that by the end of six years of a majority Liberal Government, Tasmania will be at, or above, the national average in every single NAPLAN measurement, and meet national benchmarks in reading, writing, maths and science.

Why this is needed

Tasmania's current education standards are simply unacceptable.

Our year 11/12 apparent retention rates are the lowest of any state and are going backwards, from 70 per cent in 2011, to 67.1 per cent in 2012*.

We have the lowest year 12 (or equivalent) completion rate of any state in Australia. Currently, only 43 per cent of young Tasmanians complete year 12** compared to the national average of 72 per cent.

Worse still, only 32 per cent of students attained their Tasmanian Certificate of Education in 2012, down from 37 per cent in the previous year^.

And our year 7 to 9 students are consistently performing below the national average in literacy and numeracy national testing.

Despite Tasmania's unacceptably high unemployment rate, our businesses still need to import skilled labour.

This fact highlights the desperate need to improve education and training levels in Tasmania, in order to give young people a positive future in Tasmania, and to grow our economy.

By ensuring our students are 'job ready' through stronger engagement with education and training, we will be better positioned as a state to fill skill gaps in the work force and we will also be making a positive difference to the next generation's quality of life, earning capacity, and ability to stay in Tasmania.

As prominent economist Saul Eslake has noted, Tasmania's most persistent economic problem is the fact that the State's productivity is around 10 percent below the national average, resulting in lower skills, lower wages and lower living standards^^.

Such a substantial but necessary reform won't happen overnight, and after an endless succession of quick-fix "solutions" by Labor which haven't worked, it is important that we are prudent, and take our time to consult and work with our teaching professionals and local community leaders.

We are determined to get this right, and that is why this will be a decade-long reform.

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Colleges are an integral part of our Plan

All existing colleges will be retained under our Plan

Our Plan is not aimed in any way, shape or form at dismantling or changing the current college structure.

Under our Plan, colleges will continue to operate

For the first time, Tasmanian year 11 and 12 students and their families will have real choices in attending a specialist, city-based college, or continue their education at their local high school

How will extending High Schools to Year 12 help?

We do not believe it is acceptable for Tasmania to have the lowest year 12 (or equivalent) completion rate of any state in Australia.

Tasmania's unacceptable education standards are the very reason why Tasmanian high schools need to go to year 12.

Colleges in the existing, separated system are providing a quality education to those students who can make the transition to that environment, and can successfully focus on their chosen course.

However, the inexcusable fact is that too many of our talented young people are falling through the cracks of a fragmented system and face poorer life outcomes as a result.

By extending high schools to year 12, we will catch many of those students who are currently falling through these cracks.

Year 7-12 high schools will result in higher completion rates by eliminating the disruption between years 10 and 11, and remove the perception which continues to persist in the community that high school education finishes at the end of year 10.

Communities to be fully consulted - Implementation Taskforce

These changes will be well consulted, and they won't be foisted on communities against their will. We have written to all local governments and high school associations in the State outlining our plans and already communities are responding positively, wanting to take part.

A majority Hodgman Liberal government will work with the community, not against it.

In order to ensure that all stakeholders are fully consulted and involved in the implementation of our policy, we will establish an Implementation Taskforce, made up of key stakeholders, to assist and advise the Minister on the implementation process.

The Implementation Taskforce will consist of key stakeholders, experts in the field, and interested parties, including:

- Australian Education Union
- Tasmanian Principals Association
- Tasmanian State Schools Parents and Friends
- Local Government Association of Tasmania
- Regional Councils grouping
- The Minister for Education
- Secretary, Department of Education
- Vocational Education and Training providers

The role of technology

Technology will be an important part of our Plan. The Education Department already offers an extensive range of VET, year 11 and 12 subjects via flexible learning methods (including online learning) and has indicated that there is “no limitation” to subjects that can be delivered this way. However, the current provision can be better coordinated, resourced and used in such a way that sees students even in remote schools gaining access.

Students will be encouraged to use flexible learning methods such as online learning to access specialist courses if they are not offered at their high school. Students will also have the flexibility to attend classes offered at campuses within travelling distance on a regular basis. We believe that this initiative will be a positive tool in strengthening the professional relationships between teachers in colleges and high schools, improving each others’ practice, and supporting the needs of all students.

How our Plan will work

- Currently, only 67 per cent of young Tasmanians continue to year 11 and 12;
- The Liberal aim is to increase our 7-12 retention rate to the Tasmanian target of 81.6 percent by 2015, and the national target of 90% by the completion of the roll-out of our Plan;
- Under the Liberals, based on 2012 enrolment figures, there will be a maximum of an additional 2,000 students (on average) completing year 11 and 12 in the first four years of our Plan.

These are the young Tasmanians who have been abandoned by the Labor-Green Government. It is these students, currently falling through the cracks, that the Liberals’ 7-12 policy aims to engage – providing them with a much more meaningful preparation for employment and training;

- **These Colleges and TasTAFE will remain in place, and under our policy will continue to educate year 11-12 students as they do now;** and
- We will provide for **up to five new full-time teachers in each High School extended to year 12 (up to 105 new teachers total in the first four years)**. In addition to teaching the new years 11 and 12 students, these teachers will also be able to share their teaching time with grade 9 and 10 classes in the high school. In the same manner, existing teachers at the high school will be able to extend their teaching expertise to the new years 11 and 12, ensuring the most efficient use of resources.

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In order to undertake some of the more specialist subjects unable to be taught at their local high school, students will be able to access learning through a variety of models such as virtual “e-classrooms”, using other technologies, or by physically travelling to a College for occasional on-campus tuition to augment their existing in-High School studies

Students who do not wish to continue year 11 and 12 at their local high school will retain the choice to attend one of our existing colleges

Implementation Timeline

Year 1: 2014

Within 6 weeks:

The Minister will write to all rural and regional school communities inviting formal expressions of interest in extending their school to year 12.

The Minister will establish the Implementation Taskforce.

Within 3 months:

In depth consultation process with short-listed rural and regional high schools, parents, teachers and whole communities to identify the four schools to be extended to year 12 in stage one in 2015.

Criteria to include: current level of difficulty for senior secondary access to that community; proportion of students not completing year 12 (or equivalent) from that community; industry and employer need for skilled labour in that community; and the opportunity for TasTAFE provision in that community.

Additionally, as part of that consultation process, any additional infrastructure requirements (e.g. classrooms, specialist learning areas) and preferred provision models (such as traditional classroom, Big Picture model, collaborations with other schools, mentored flexible learning) will be identified.

This stage will also identify and commence the consultation work for at least some of the five schools to be extended to year 12 in stage two in 2016. It is envisaged that these schools would have addressed the same criteria as above, however, they have been categorised as those which would benefit from the additional 12 months of planning time, capital improvement and community engagement.

Within 6 months:

Announce first four schools for extension to year 12.

Initiate discussions with the respective colleges which have traditionally serviced those identified communities to ensure they are informed and part of process.

Seek final community agreement on the best delivery model for each of the four schools.

Additional teacher resources are qualified and, where necessary, advertised for.

Commence design work and tender process for any required capital works.

Details on the model and delivery of year 11 and 12 to be promoted to relevant communities via high schools themselves, feeder primary schools, as well as the departmental website.

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Within 9 months:

Ensure all four first-round schools are ready to implement years 11 and 12 in 2015 with support for staffing, professional learning, curriculum preparation and the preparation of teachers to mentor students who opt for units through online learning.

Hold Open Days and orientation opportunities for students moving into year 11 as well as eligible local students looking to return to study to years 11 and 12.

Conduct a local community engagement campaign explaining education options available to students.

Develop stronger professional partnerships between teachers in the high school and those in colleges and TasTAFE in order to sustain local implementation of academic education and trade pathways.

Continuous review process undertaken, involving all stakeholders (including identified Stage 2 schools) in order to monitor progress, identify process and communication improvements for future extension rounds. Report to the Minister in time to incorporate these learnings in Stage 2, and future stages.

Years 2-10: 2015-2024

In each of the years 2-10, the essential process elements of year 1 will be retained and will be responsive to what has been learned in earlier stages. To the greatest extent possible, the process of extension of different schools will occur with schools in different regions but in the same implementation stage working through their issues in close collaboration with each other; earlier stage schools; and senior secondary colleges. In broad terms, the rolling calendar will feature the following milestones:

December to March: Expression of interest and consultation period to select schools which will be extended in the following year.

Late March: Announcement of schools and project parameters.

April/ May: Further consultation with needs analysis. Finalise models of education and training provision as well as infrastructure and teacher requirements.

June: Advertise and award tenders.

October: Complete any capital works.

November: Promote change to parents and broader community. Hold Open day.

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Planned extension time table

Year	Stage	Number of schools
2015	1	4
2016	2	5
2017	3	6
2018	4	6
2019	5	5
2020	6	6
2021	7	5
2022	8	5
2023	9	5
2024	10	5
Total		52

Costings

We will provide a total of \$45.5 million over four years towards implementing this Plan, allowing us to employ up to 105 new teachers, implement additional resource packages, and provide \$6 million for capital upgrades.

We will provide a total of \$8.4 million over four years to provide up to 25 new specialist literacy and numeracy teachers.

All assumptions and costings are based upon Treasury and Government figures, including a Department of Education Right to Information document, obtained in May 2012, purporting to cost our policy.

* Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013.

** Report on Government Services 2014.

^ Tasmanian Qualifications Authority Annual Report 2012.

^^ Saul Eslake, "Tasmania – Quo Vadis?", presentation to University of Third Age 20th Anniversary, 7 April 2010.