

Calling for a fairer Tasmania

In the lead-up to the 2010 State election, **Our Island Our Voices** is calling for a commitment from all political parties to invest in education, health and services. These are the areas that will make a real difference to the lives of Tasmanians.

The past decade has been one of relative prosperity in Tasmania. A vibrant economy and unprecedented government and private sector investment created opportunities for many and a sense of confidence and optimism about our State. However, our prosperity has not been shared equally.

That is why Tasmania needs a new agenda to ensure that the next decade delivers real benefits to those that are currently missing out. Otherwise, the global financial crisis and climate change are likely to make existing inequalities worse.

The challenge for political parties is to demonstrate that they have a clear vision for both economic and social prosperity and the courage to make long-term investments in Tasmania's number one asset – its people.

Challenge

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Better education and training

Our Island Our Voices calls on all political parties to:

- Improve education outcomes by:
 - Enhancing the funding for schools in disadvantaged and rural areas;
 - Increasing access to affordable and appropriate accommodation and transport for students living in remote, regional and urban fringe areas;
 - Providing support to at-risk and vulnerable students, including a mandatory state-wide program to tackle bullying; and
 - Delivering greater support for students with special needs.
- Ensure training for unemployed Tasmanians is meaningful and linked to industries where there are genuine and sustainable employment prospects.
- Prevent the negative consequences of long-term unemployment by supporting viable participation and skills building initiatives, including enhancing adult literacy programs.
- Support people with a mental illness or acquired brain injury to get into or stay in employment by focusing on early intervention and prevention strategies.

Healthy Tasmania

Our Island Our Voices calls on all political parties to focus on health and wellbeing by:

- Creating a whole of government mechanism to drive and coordinate health promotion activities.
- Increasing access to health services for people in rural and regional areas.
- Funding a strategy to address the emotional, physical, psychological and financial abuse faced by older Tasmanians.
- Ensuring that all Tasmanians have access to affordable and nutritious food.
- Reducing the negative impact of poker machines in Tasmania.

Stronger services, stronger communities

Stronger services and communities should underpin the Tasmanian economy and response to climate change. Tasmania needs:

- An affordable 21st century public and community transport system that improves bus services in rural and urban areas.
- A public and community housing system that increases supply, maintains rents at levels that keep tenants out of hardship, and improves the thermal efficiency of housing.
- Community service organisations with significantly better funding and an evaluation of the impact of wage levels on the recruitment and retention of staff and delivery of services.
- Youth and adult justice systems focused on diversion and rehabilitation.
- A Community Equipment Scheme that is properly funded to enable people living with disabilities to participate to the fullest extent in jobs, education and community.
- Essential services such as electricity and water and sewerage that are affordable for all Tasmanians and do not cause hardship.

