

TASSO calls on all candidates and parties to make a genuine commitment to:

◆ **Senior Secondary College Funding** TASSO affirms its absolute support for the continuing operation of Senior Secondary Colleges in Tasmania, including offering at least the current levels of curriculum choice, student support services and activities. An increase in funding for infrastructure, provision of student accommodation, transport and staffing. TASSO does not support the introduction of Years 11 and 12 into urban schools.

The Greens support the model of providing year 11- 12 courses in rural and regional schools. We are, however, concerned that the program as it currently stands does not have the capacity to deliver the best results and is undermining the State's outstanding College system. We will conduct a comprehensive review of the current model in order to both improve the outcomes for students in regional year 11-12 high schools, and to ensure Colleges continue to be able to provide the high quality education they currently do.

◆ **Qualified Support Staff** state schools need more Psychologists, Speech Pathologists and Therapists, Social Workers, Student Support Workers and School Nurses at all school types. As well as an increase to the number of Teacher Aids, with better employment conditions and formal training, especially to meet the needs of students with disabilities and additional needs.

The Greens will recruit an extra 30 social workers, 30 speech pathologists and 73 school psychologists, bringing the ratio of school psychologists to students to 1:500.

We recognise that teachers often have to spend an unreasonable amount of time on administrative tasks, an average of 10 hours a week over their paid time. We will recruit an additional 200 teacher assistants, to reduce the administrative burden and stresses for classroom teachers, ensuring they have more face to face time with students.

We will also recruit 30 laboratory technicians to improve the quality of education resources in schools.

The current model for disability funding allocates resources based on IQ rather than needs. This is a particular problem for students with physical disabilities, who may need resources but are ineligible. The Greens recognise that each and every student deserves the same opportunity regardless of their ability or their circumstances. This is the principle of our public education system – equity and quality. We will work towards extending the current needs-based funding trial for students with disability across the entire state, utilising the additional teachers and support staff to provide a better, more inclusive learning environment for all students. Employing additional teachers and support staff will ensure the individual education plans, which must have the input of teachers, parents and students, can be truly student centred.

High levels of social disadvantage and developmental vulnerability also make a strong case for trauma informed care practices in our schools. Trauma informed care involves awareness of the signs of trauma, how trauma affects the lives and behaviour of children, and how to respond to negative behaviour in a constructive and therapeutic manner. Several schools are already successfully employing trauma informed methods. We will recruit three Trauma Informed Care specialists to extend this practice. These specialists will develop materials, as well as provide advice, support and training to schools.

Student Assistant Scheme (STAS) TASSO policy is that state schools should be free of fees and levies. Within the current system a review of STAS and school fees is called for.

The Greens recognise every Tasmanian child has the right to a quality education, no matter where they live, what their ability or their family's circumstance.

We support a review of STAS and school fees.

◆ **School transport** TASSO policy calls for free transport for all students attending the nearest or designated Government school of appropriate level and that the safety of students in transit is of the utmost importance. Where Year 11 and 12 is being provided at the local school, free bus transport must be provided to that local school and the designated Year 11 and 12 State College.

The Greens have announced that we will provide free transport for Department of Education recognised providers of post-compulsory education.

We believe this will reduce cost of living pressure for students and ease traffic congestion.
We would support a review following this introduction to explore the feasibility of extending free transport to all students.

◆ **School Buildings, Grounds & Facilities** For many years schools have questioned the process for allocating infrastructure and maintenance spending by government. TASSO supports greater transparency and accountability, in the allocation of resourcing to state schools requiring upgrades for aging infrastructure or additional facilities, to cope with expansion in school populations or additional requirements for students with additional needs. A process which is publicly available that is used to formulate upgrades and maintenance is required. The Government should also conduct an annual survey and publish a register of the physical resources of every State School. School communities must not be left for years to shoulder the responsibility for extensive upgrades. There needs to be a fairer system to ensure that urgent corrective action is taken, regarding any essential works, not presently being met or adequately planned for.

The Greens recognise the importance of prioritising maintenance and replacement of ageing infrastructure to ensure our students have modern, fit-for-purpose learning environments.
We support an open and transparent process for planning and managing such upgrades.

◆ **Parent Engagement** The increasing role and function of TASSO is consistent with the state government's increasing acknowledgement and engagement of parents and community as an essential element of children's learning. Recognising the value of parent and community engagement in education through programs such as Launching into Learning (LiL) and Learning in Families Together (LIFT) reflects this acknowledgement.

- **Recommendation 1** Recognise and acknowledge parents as the first and primary educators of their children and empower and allow them to exercise their rights as educators.
- **Recommendation 2** To recognise the importance of parental engagement in a child's education.
- **Recommendation 3** To recognise and understand the barriers that can inhibit parental engagement in our schools.
- **Recommendation 4** The ability to change and educate the system as to the importance of parental engagement in a child's lifelong learning.
- **Recommendation 5** Recognise that educators need to have parental engagement implemented into their training.

All the evidence worldwide tells us that the early school starting age proposed by the Hodgman government will be detrimental for our children, particularly those who are developmentally vulnerable. Earlier engagement in play-based learning leads to better outcomes. However, the Prep curriculum is not play-based learning in the education policy sense.

The Greens will focus on early development through proven programs that engage families, children and communities.

- The Greens will roll out four Child and Family Centres in 2018/19, three in 2019/20, two in 2020/21 and two in 2019/20.
- The Greens will work with smaller regions to deliver similar programs through existing infrastructure.

Child and Family Centres provide a range of services to families with children from birth to age five. Centres work towards improving health and educational outcomes, build on family and community strengths, and provide pathways to successful complimentary programs like Launch into Learning.

Funding for Parents. Parents are required to be part of special committees, Reference Groups, Policy Committees and Steering Committees as well as Principal Selection Panels. It is unsatisfactory not to fund parents who take on these tasks without compensation, whilst DoE staff and others with whom they work receive salaries and reimbursement of expenses. It is an inequitable position and may limit the cohort of parents or carers available to be to carry out such roles on behalf of the state school parents of Tasmania.

TASSO is seeking an equitable provision to ensure parents are not prevented from representing the wider community in these groups.

The Greens recognise the important role parents and guardians play in our children's education and we would welcome the opportunity to work with TASSO to explore how this might be achieved.