

Tasmanian Election - 2025 - TASSO Priorities

The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations Inc (TASSO) is the peak body representing all Tasmanian State School Associations.

Our Purpose: Parents and School Communities, through School Associations, work together to achieve the best outcomes for children in Tasmanian State Schools.

TASSO calls on all Tasmanian political parties to commit to the following:

1. Reinstate the Committee for inquiry into discrimination and bullying in Tasmanian schools

In 2023, the Tasmanian Parliament established a Committee of Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Schools. For many students and families, this was the first time their experiences were acknowledged in a formal process. Parents and carers shared deeply personal accounts of harm, often at great emotional cost, in the hope that their voices would contribute to meaningful change and safer school environments.

The committee ceased before a final report was completed potentially retraumatised those who had participated in good faith, leaving their stories without recognition, and the broader community without answers.

TASSO calls for the immediate reinstatement of this inquiry post-election to ensure that:

- The voices of those who contributed are respected through the delivery of a final report
- The full extent of discrimination and bullying in schools is understood
- Practical, system-wide reforms are informed by lived experience
- Future students are protected through accountability and action

Will you and your party ensure that the Inquiry into Discrimination and Bullying in Tasmanian schools is reinstated and concluded with a final report?

2. Family engagement with student learning

Families are a child's first and most influential educators. When schools and families work in genuine partnership, student outcomes improve, not only academically, but socially and emotionally. Children thrive when the adults in their lives are connected, informed, and working together.

Despite widespread recognition of the benefits of family engagement, Tasmanian families continue to report feeling disconnected from the learning process. Information about their student's progress is often limited to written reports and parent teacher meetings, with patchy access to modern methods of information sharing. Often information is shared too late to make a difference.

TASSO believes that strong family-school partnerships must be embedded as a priority within the Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP). We are calling for a system-wide shift that recognises families as equal partners in learning and equips schools to support this partnership with clarity and consistency.

We call on all political parties to commit to:

- Embedding family engagement with learning as a core strategy for student outcomes
- Providing families with access to regular data on their child's learning, like Progressive Achievement Tests (PAT) and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

- Showcasing best-practice examples from Tasmanian schools that are already fostering deep partnerships with families

We believe every family, regardless of background or circumstance, deserves to be empowered to support their child's learning.

Will you and your party commit to embedding family engagement with learning as a foundation of Tasmanian education?

3. Address allied health and assessment shortfalls in state schools

TASSO believes waitlists and position vacancies in allied health and assessment services are unacceptable and further add to the inequality of education in the state. TASSO is urging a strategic approach to attracting and retaining staff, and meaningful reduction to the wait times for services.

The vacancies for School Psychologists and Speech Pathologists, particularly in the North and North-West of the state, is concerning. Currently families are being forced into the private sector for assessments instead of being added to the school waitlist; a personal cost to families that is often not an option.

We are asking that you commit to:

- Incentivising allied health professionals to move to or stay in Tasmania by offering:
 - A competitive salary
 - Increasing annual leave
 - Creating HECS relief opportunities and linked study incentives
- Reviewing the triage system currently in place and assessing better ways of ensuring all school have the opportunity for students to see health professionals and collaboration between the Health and Education sectors
- A re-evaluation the regional split of services to take pressure off Northern services, and the consider pathways that limit the time waste of distance travel
- Increase university pathways into the allied health professions in Tasmania

Will you and your party pledge to increasing allied health services in government schools?

4. Create an independent external maintenance and capital expenditure oversight board for school capital works

Transparent oversight is needed for essential maintenance and capital expenditure in schools, to avoid politicisation, "picking winners" and the perception of "pork-barrelling".

The federal government *Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System* calls for an education system that is transparent; TASSO would like to see that transparency extended to school infrastructure and maintenance.

We call on you to commit to the creation of an independent external maintenance and capital expenditure oversight board to ensure:

- All school sites have a publicly available, independent, and comprehensive safety and building audit completed by the end of 2026
- That all maintenance work is project based with all projects ranked by priority
- Recommendations for capital works are made based on the priority list
- Only when the cost benefit is considerable are project grouped at one school, allowing projects to climb the list



School infrastructure should not be a part of a political campaign. The creation of an oversight board will allow the schools most in need of upgrades to be prioritised over the political “wins” of the voting public.

Will you and your party reform school capital works allocations for Tasmanian state schools?

5. Urgently review Year 11 and 12 education

Our member School Associations have expressed concerns over the expenditure of, and demand for, a Year 11 and 12 program where there is a dedicated College within proximity to a high school.

TASSO are requesting:

- A comprehensive and transparent review into the efficacy and financial cost of delivering year 11 and 12 in city high schools who have traditionally transitioned to an established college nearby
- A complex survey and review of the models most effective in supporting students in rural and regional communities, without access to a college, to stay engaged with and participating in place-based year 11 and 12 courses in their community
- That a national method of determining retention/successful education be developed to effectively capture transitions to apprenticeships and vocational training

Will you and your party commit to evaluating Year 11 and 12 education?

6. Provide reliable free bus travel to all state school students

Reliable transport is fundamental to regular school attendance, which is directly linked to better learning outcomes, stronger wellbeing, and deeper connection to school. Yet for too many Tasmanian families, transport remains a barrier, particularly where cost, reliability, or availability create daily challenges.

TASSO believes that access to school should not depend on a family’s ability to pay or on where they live. A truly equitable education system must include free, reliable bus travel for all students attending Tasmanian state schools.

We are calling for:

- The introduction of a fully subsidised and dependable school bus service available to all Tasmanian state school students, regardless of location
- An evaluation of the impact of free transport on student attendance, wellbeing, and family engagement
- Consideration of complementary reforms such as staggered school start and finish times extended supervision hours, to better align with transport availability and reduce traffic congestion around school sites

This is not just a transport issue, it is an educational equity issue.

Will you and your party commit to delivering free, reliable school bus transport for all Tasmanian state school students?

For comment please contact:

Jessica Bennett, Operations Manager

info@tasso.org.au

(03)6243 7718 | 0408 170 355

