



**Address to State Council  
by the Leader of the Opposition**

**Hon Will Hodgman, MP**

**Sunday 19 July 2009  
Hobart, Tasmania**



**\*\*\*\* CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY \*\*\*\***

President, State Director, my Parliamentary colleagues, Liberal candidate for Pembroke Vanessa Goodwin, endorsed Liberal Lower House candidates, ladies and gentlemen;

Next March will be one of the most important elections in Tasmania's history, and it presents Tasmanians with a clear choice.

A choice between the leadership and the vision of the Tasmanian Liberals

*Or*

16 years of Labor.

16 years of a tired, stale government; broken promises, scandal, embarrassment, nepotism and a failure to deliver results. 16 years of taking Tasmania in the wrong direction; and Labor putting its short-term political problems ahead of the long-term interests of our State.

Tasmania needs a better way of doing things to achieve our potential.

But, for a better Tasmania, we have to change the government.

It is a challenging task ahead, but we are up for it.

And every one of you here today is fundamental to making a Liberal majority government a reality in March 2010.

Tasmania needs leadership and vision like never before.

After 11 years of Labor:

**Address to State Council by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Will Hodgman MP  
Sunday 19 July 2009**



- The economy is heading into recession; unemployment is rising and costs of living and doing business are soaring;
- Our roads are substandard and other infrastructure is crumbling
- Our health system is ill, and we have the worst hospital waiting lists in the nation
- educations standards are unacceptable; and
- Tasmania is not as safe, strong and united as it should be.

Labor has had a decade of boom times to deliver change for the better and yet in so many areas, things aren't getting better, they are getting worse.

The global financial crisis cannot be blamed for everything.

By the time of the next election, Tasmania would have received nearly \$14 billion from GST.

Yet the Labor Government has shirked the tough decisions and the reforms we needed, and has not planned for our future.

A decade of opportunity frittered away.

Labor assumed that throwing money at problems would make them go away. Well it hasn't.

Nothing has changed in the 14 months since Labor installed a new Premier; because nothing is going to change unless we change the government.

**Address to State Council by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Will Hodgman MP  
Sunday 19 July 2009**



I can't stress enough that winning government is not going to be easy.

Yes, Labor in Tasmania has lost its moral authority to govern, but for a Liberal majority government to be elected next year, we must show the leadership and the vision for the future that Tasmania so sorely needs.

We will give Tasmanians hope for the future. Because we can be so much better than we are – and Tasmanians do not have to settle for second best.

My vision is for a Tasmania where the government is trusted to make the right decisions; for the right reasons.

A place where we back local businesses to create local jobs

A place renowned for its strength and unity – that is the envy of the rest of the nation. And a place where all Tasmanians have the opportunity to achieve their potential.

We won't achieve that vision without strong leadership.

We need to display the courage to tackle the tough issues, to put the long-term interests of Tasmania ahead of short term politics, and to stand up for what is right.

And that is what we are doing.

When David Bartlett became Premier 14 months ago, he admitted that his government was in a mess. He was right.

He said that he would be different. And just a few weeks later he claimed that – magically – trust in the Labor Government had suddenly been restored.



That says so much about the way this Premier and the Labor Government operate. Shallow and deceitful.

Scratch the surface and nothing has changed. In fact they have got worse.

Since David Bartlett declared that trust in his government was restored, his government has lurched from one crisis to another, robbing us of potential and further eroding Tasmanians' shattered trust in government.

To restore that trust requires leadership and a complete change of culture.

That is why, amongst other things, a Hodgman Liberal Government will:

- Set up an Independent Anti Corruption and Ethics Commission;
- Implement a strict new code of conduct for Ministers, advisers and public servants
- Open up the State Budget for greater scrutiny on a more regular basis
- We will create a new culture of transparency and accountability in government by making 'open government' the law
- And we will make the Parliament work better for the Tasmanians it serves

Accountability and transparency is fundamental to reforming government and we must reform government for Tasmania to reach its potential.



Ladies and gentlemen,

This election will be fought in a very different economic climate to the elections of 2002 and 2006.

I will lead a financially responsible and disciplined government that better manages our state's finances and how we spend that money to deliver the services and the infrastructure Tasmanian needs and deserves.

We will not make irresponsible election commitments and try to outspend a Labor government more concerned with its own interests than the than the long term interests of our state.

Last month, I outlined a fiscal strategy to return the State Budget to surplus, keep Tasmania free of net debt and maintain our credit rating.

In our alternative budget, we showed how we will spend less than Labor, but deliver better results for Tasmanians.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am incredibly optimistic about our future.

The economic storm clouds will not be here forever.

These challenging times present opportunities too.

And if we're courageous enough to seize them we can emerge from this downturn stronger than ever before.

So that's why we are prepared to back local business to create local jobs.

**Address to State Council by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Will Hodgman MP  
Sunday 19 July 2009**



We are committed to making Tasmania *the* most competitive place to do business in.

And a government I lead will

- cut land tax
- introduce a single statewide residential planning code
- provide payroll tax relief
- cut the red-tape that holds business back
- and we will do more to support jobs in growth areas – like our tourism and export industries.

A competitive and vibrant economy is the best way to create jobs, raise our standard of living, and provide proper care for those Tasmanians in need.

As Liberals, *we* are the party of strong economic management.

*We* are the Party that backs local businesses to create local jobs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted today to be announcing three new initiatives that show how a Hodgman Liberal Government will;

- Drive our economy forward;
- Resuscitate our health system;

**Address to State Council by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Will Hodgman MP  
Sunday 19 July 2009**



- And strengthen our community, by making our roads safer.

One way we can do more to drive our economy forward is to explore opportunities to develop a visionary renewable energy policy framework.

Today I announce that under a Hodgman Liberal Government we will build on Tasmania's significant investment in Hydro and wind power by establishing a framework to facilitate new private investment by small and medium enterprises in renewable energy generation.

Tasmania is ideally placed to capitalise on the benefits of renewable energy.

Solar energy initiatives, especially for households, already receive support from the Federal Government, but we also have unmatched prospects for wind power.

The development of wind generation in Tasmania has been largely confined to Hydro's subsidiary company Roaring 40's, however there is a great illustration of what a private company can do to harness wind power in Nichols Poultry, on Tasmania's North-West Coast.

A local success story in innovation, enterprise and sustainable development.

We want more businesses of this type, operating in Tasmania.

So today I announce that a Hodgman Liberal Government will back businesses to develop wind power generation opportunities.



We will offer assistance for interested businesses and local government authorities to research wind patterns and undertake wind mapping on their property to understand what opportunities this natural resource presents.

We will offer assistance through a loans scheme for the capital costs of building wind generation assets.

And we will develop better tariff structures and appropriate planning processes so that businesses can be rewarded for their green energy investment and their place at the forefront of developing a 21<sup>st</sup> century power supply.

In Tasmania, electricity prices for businesses have increased by over 35% in the past 18 months.

This policy will benefit businesses generating their own renewable energy by reducing their energy costs, and will also benefit the environment and reduce the State's carbon footprint.

I believe agribusinesses will be particularly well placed to take advantage of this initiative.

Our plan will decrease demand for Hydro power, boosting our dwindling dam levels and allowing Tasmania to sell more power to the mainland.

And it will enhance the clean, green branding of our State.

As electricity prices are expected to continue increasing as a result of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, any reduction in production cost will also ensure that Tasmanian businesses maintain a competitive advantage in both national and international markets.



We can support small business during an economic downturn, but we cannot have a strong economy without the support of small business.

Each of these policies are proof that even in a difficult economic climate we can – and should – be doing more for Tasmanian business.

I have said before that a government I lead will make Tasmania the sort of place people can't resist to visit, live, work and raise families in.

Tasmania should be a magnet to people from all over the world.

We have the lifestyle, the climate, the natural beauty and natural produce, the resources and the people.

But to be that magnet we must also be;

- a place that provides opportunity for all those who live here to achieve their full potential;
- a place that is developing sustainably;
- a place that is renowned for its strength and unity, and which is the envy of the nation, where people feel good about themselves and about the Government that leads them;
- and a place where people have access to a good health system and a high quality education.

But we are not achieving our full potential.



The tired, Lennon-Bartlett government is letting Tasmanians down.

Ladies and gentlemen,

My second announcement today is about fixing up our health system.

Labor went to the 1998 election with a promise to reduce hospital waiting lists.

After 11 years of Labor, thousands more Tasmanians are on waiting lists and Tasmania has the longest waiting times for elective surgery in the country.

We are on the bottom rung of the ladder in every national health report.

But worse, endless hospital waiting lists are taking a *real* toll on the health of thousands of Tasmanians and their families.

Labor should hang their heads in shame.

They have failed on their promise, and right now there are over 4000 unwell Tasmanians becoming sicker every day because they can't get the medical attention they need within an acceptable clinical time frame.

Our health professionals are doing their very best while the public hospital system buckles.

We need a government with leadership and vision to the courage to intervene.

Today I announce a bold strategy to help public hospitals in that task, and ensure Tasmanians can get their surgery sooner.



Under a Hodgman Liberal Government, if you need an operation and you can't get it done within the timeframe recommended by medical professionals in a public hospital, then you can get it done in a private hospital at no cost to you.

We will enter into a strategic partnership with private hospitals to use their excess capacity to reduce endless hospital waiting lists.

Our public hospitals are often stretched beyond their capacity while private hospitals have the capacity to work with the public sector and get the job done.

We will dedicate \$10 million over 2 years to tackle 2000 procedures and break the back of our endless waiting lists - and the sooner the better.

These funds will be provided from the growth funding to the state under the Health Care Agreement

And we will work from the 'back of the list' to ensure those waiting longest get their operations first in a private hospital.

This partnership with the private hospital system will operate for two years and then be evaluated to monitor the results.

This plan shares the load with public hospitals and acknowledges the sooner people have their surgery, the quicker they can get on with enjoying a better quality of life.

Unlike Labor, we are not ideologically opposed to building innovative partnerships between our public and private systems - and we are committed to slashing our endless hospital waiting lists - and the sooner the better.

My third announcement today, is about strengthening our community and protecting our lifestyle.



One of the things that make Tasmania so special is that we are seen as a safe place.

But we can not be complacent.

The number of criminals who re-offend is too high.

The incidence of child abuse in our community is appalling.

Too many businesses are vandalised and robbed.

And the numbers of Tasmanians who die or who are injured on our roads is rising, not falling.

This is quite simply not good enough.

To make Tasmania a better place to live, there will be a strong focus on law and order under a Hodgman Liberal Government.

- We will stand up for the victims of crime, not pander to the perpetrators.
- We will seek tougher sentences for people convicted of sex crimes and make rehabilitation programmes for sex offenders compulsory, not a matter of choice
- We will establish a sentencing advisory council to help ensure that sentences for criminals are more in keeping with community expectations
- We will give victims of crime a voice on the parole board;



- We will take strong and decisive action to protect our children, including removing a child permanently from an abusive environment if bad parents refuse to change and make mandatory the screening of all people who work with children.
- And we will toughen laws to prevent crimes involving dangerous weapons and knives.

Recent tragic events have reminded us all of the need to do whatever we can to make our roads safer.

Our road toll has been rising against the national trend.

The Tasmanian Liberals have a strong record in promoting road safety policy, and we have achieved much in this area – even from Opposition

Thanks to our leadership, the government has adopted several of our policies;

- high visibility police patrol cars,
- drug testing of drivers and
- vehicle confiscation, for example.

But we have to go further.

Among our many policies, a Hodgman Liberal Government will;

- divert speed camera revenue into road safety initiatives;
- implement compulsory driver education for drivers who lose their licences;
- provide incentives for learner drivers who undertake professional driver training;

**Address to State Council by the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Will Hodgman MP  
Sunday 19 July 2009**



- install permanent speed cameras at identified traffic black spot sites;
- establish a dedicated Road Safety Authority;
- provide a more visible traffic police presence;
- implement double demerit points on public holidays and long weekends;
- and confiscate the cars of hooners and serious repeat traffic offenders

Our agenda includes a strong commitment to improving our roads

We are committed to doing that and I will talk more about that shortly.

But we must change driver behaviour.

We need to build a culture of responsible driving in Tasmania and we need to start early.

The process should begin in our schools, and we need our young people, the next generation of drivers, to understand that driving is a privilege, not a right.

And today I announce that under a Hodgman Liberal Government, we will introduce two new initiatives to better prepare novice drivers for the responsibility of driving on our roads.

First, for any student wanting a learner permit before he or she turns 18 it will be a condition to complete a driver education course at school.

Learning to drive will be part of their education.

Secondly, students applying for a learner permit will have to show two things;



That they have a satisfactory school attendance record;

And that they have behaved responsibly at school

If they can't do that, they won't be able to get a learner permit until after they turn 18 or unless they have earned back that privilege through better behavior.

We need to link responsibility at school with responsibility behind the wheel of a car.

We will give students an incentive to behave in school, and we will ingrain an understanding of road safety and responsibility on our roads *before* students get behind the wheel of a car.

We will build a culture of responsible driving, with the clear understanding for all Tasmanians that driving is a privilege, not a right, and we will start early with the next generation of road users.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have a strong policy agenda, that is distinct from that of a tired Labor Government.

A government I lead will build a four lane Midland Highway;

We will build a smarter Tasmania with more support for our students and our teachers;

We will link water infrastructure to support our farmers and boost our agricultural capacity;

We will make school bus travel free;



We will establish an anti-corruption authority;

We will establish a Future Fund to meet the challenges of the future;

We will provide more for Tasmanians a disability;

We have a smarter vision for the Tarkine.

And we will protect the things that make Tasmania so special, with a commitment to put sustainable development at the centre of government decision making.

It is all part of our five point action agenda to:

1. Drive our economy forward
2. Deliver accountable government
3. Deliver better health results
4. Raise education standards and
5. Strengthen our community and protect our lifestyle

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are just eight months away from one of the most important State elections in our history.

The Tasmanian Liberals are ready.



We have already assembled an absolutely outstanding team of candidates - out there on the ground, in the community - and there are more to come.

We've endorsed, for the first time in years, a candidate for the Upper House election of Pembroke - Vanessa Goodwin.

And Vanessa, I wish you every success on August 1.

You are exactly the sort of person our Parliament needs, and I want you in my team.

Mr President, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Tasmania is truly at the crossroads.

Labor has wasted 11 years of opportunity and now the economic tide has turned.

Tasmania cannot afford another four years of Labor.

In March 2010 Tasmanians will have a clear choice.

And if people want a better Tasmania, they will have to change the government.

We have so much more to achieve in this Tasmania.

But to get there we need leadership and vision for the future.

And Ladies and Gentlemen - *that's* what I *will* deliver.

(END)