

Will Hodgman MP
Leader of the State Opposition

Lack of outcomes says it all

The 2008/09 State Budget typifies much of what is wrong with Tasmania after ten years of a Labor Government: despite unprecedented prosperity, the State Labor Government seems incapable of delivering outcomes.

Labor has also tried to be tricky in squirreling its unexpected additional income of 2007/08 into a variety of new funds. Much of the money would appear to be earmarked for spending after the next financial year, in the lead up to the election.

Leader of the State Opposition, Will Hodgman, said the State Government had unveiled a \$4 billion budget underpinned by record GST and taxation receipts.

Yet, the Budget papers also show that in terms of outcomes:

- state economic activity is expected to remain static this year, and is then projected to fall;
- the participation rate will remain pitiful;
- population growth will increase 0.1% to 0.8% and are then projected to run at about 0.7% over the forward estimates, which is not good enough;
- the elective surgery waiting list is expected to increase to 8950 next financial year, which is up almost 50% since Labor took office ten years ago;
- disability services waiting lists are expected to increase or stay the same next year, despite reform and more funding in this area;
- the number of applicants on the public housing waiting list is expected to remain the same as this year's target of 2700, despite \$60 million promised earlier this year; and
- despite its supposed re-commitment to drought-proofing Tasmania, no improvements are forecast in the amount of time it takes to process dam works permit approvals.

So far as investing in the future is concerned, this Budget is more about making an investment in Labor's political survival after years of neglect.

"There's no question that in a budget this size, there are going to be many positive initiatives, and we warmly welcome those," Mr Hodgman said.

"But I make no apologies for saying it is time that Tasmanians started seeing improved outcomes from the investments this government makes.

"When, every year, this government is spending more and more in health, and outcomes such as waiting lists just get worse, it shows that this government is a poor manager that wastes opportunities, rather than seizes them."

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