

Will Hodgman MP
Leader of the State Opposition
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New report shows mediocrity reigns under Labor: it is time to lift the bar

Tasmania languishes at the bottom of the pile in a range of key social indicators, according to a new report released today.

From education to employment and health, the Australian Bureau of Statistics' publication, Australian Social Trends 2008, shows that the government's rhetoric when it comes to Tasmania performing strongly is far removed from the reality.

"What this report shows is that mediocrity reigns under the State Labor Government with its race to the bottom mentality and its inability deliver outcomes," Leader of the State Opposition, Will Hodgman, said.

"Tasmanians deserve much better than this after a period of strong economic prosperity and after ten years of Labor promising to fix problems such as health and education.

"This is also far from the sort of prospectus Tasmania needs to offer to become a magnet for new visitors, residents and investors."

Mr Hodgman has identified lifting the bar in Tasmania in key indicators, such as education, as a cornerstone of the Liberals' policy agenda. He recently committed that within the first four years of a Hodgman Liberal Government, all children would be able to read and write within relevant national benchmarks for their age.

He said Tasmania was uniquely placed to get people to move here, visit here, and do business here if we can offer the attributes and qualities that are important to them.

"It is about providing opportunity, being sustainable, and being a place that people can feel good about living in, and about the government that leads them," Mr Hodgman said.

“It is about being a place where there are well paying jobs in high-end industries such as research and development, agribusiness, information and communications technology.

“And it is about being a place where those who live here have access to a good health system, and where their children receive no less than the highest educational outcomes.

“We know after ten years of Labor that it is utterly incapable of achieving this.”

Some concerning findings of the report include:

- Tasmania has the lowest level of people with adequate or better prose literacy skills of all States and Territories
- Tasmania has the lowest average weekly total cash earnings of all States and Territories and the lowest disposable household income;
- Tasmania has the lowest life expectancy for males and females of all states;
- Tasmania has the highest rate per 100,000 population for cancer as the cause of death
- Tasmania has the worst labour force participation rate of all States and Territories;
- Tasmania has the lowest proportion of the population in employment of all States and Territories;
- Tasmania has the highest long term unemployment rate as a percentage of the total unemployed, and the total labour force, of all States and Territories
- Tasmania has the lowest internet access of all States and Territories
- Tasmania has the lowest apparent Year 7/8-Year 12 retention rate of all states, and the rate has declined since 2003;
- Tasmania has the highest rate for the states of school leavers aged 15-19 who are not fully involved in education and or employment; and
- Tasmania has the lowest proportion of people aged 25-64 with a Bachelor degree or above, of all States and territories.

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