

Will Hodgman MP
Leader of the State Opposition
Tuesday June 24, 2008

Time up for outcomes on water development

The Leader of the State Opposition, Will Hodgman, has attacked the snail-paced progress of water development under the State Labor Government.

Ten years after it promised to drought-proof Tasmania, the State Government is still just talking about it.

And many of the projects that former Premier, Jim Bacon, was talking about when he launched the government's much-vaunted water development plan about eight years ago have either gathered dust or dropped off the radar altogether.

Even with an \$80 million water development fund in this year's Budget, the State Government has seen fit to allocate just \$5 million over the next financial year, and doesn't propose to fully expend the allocation over the forward estimates.

Leader of the State Opposition, Will Hodgman, said it wasn't good enough.

"Water is critical to our State's future economic prosperity. Massive economic development opportunities have literally gone down the drain under the State Labor Government because it has been unable to deliver outcomes when it comes to water development," Mr Hodgman said.

"A Liberal State Government will deliver outcomes when it comes to water development, in stark contrast to Labor."

In his Budget reply speech last week, Mr Hodgman announced a Hodgman Liberal Government would build a water grid, a strategy to link our water systems across the State.

It would allow the resource to be distributed where it is needed most, on a market-based model and consistent with the principles of the National Water Initiative.

A Hodgman Liberal government would task the Tasmanian Irrigation Development Board with responsibility for investigating a Tasmanian water grid to ensure interoperability between water development projects and to maximise the productive capacity of the State. In order to best achieve this objective and to make every drop count we would facilitate a strategic partnership between the Tasmanian Irrigation Development Board, the Tasmanian Institute of Agricultural Research and the University of Tasmania. Only a Liberal government has the will and the capacity for a whole-of-Tasmania water plan right across this State, including areas such as the parched south-east, the north-east, the Southern Midlands and even the Circular Head region.”

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