

DRAFT SECOND READING SPEECH

HON. JEREMY ROCKLIFF MP

Tasmanian Early Years Foundation (Winding-up) Bill 2016

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I move – That the Bill now be read for the second time.

The purpose of The Tasmanian Early Years Foundation (Winding-up) Bill 2016 is to repeal the *Tasmanian Early Years Foundation Act 2005*, thus enabling the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation to be dissolved.

Madam Speaker, the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation was established in 2006 as a not-for-profit organisation to support the wellbeing, learning and development of Tasmania's young children aged zero to six.

This was at a time when, although there was a growing understanding of the importance of supporting children in the early years and their families, there were limited services or programs to support them.

Since that time there has been a range of initiatives that support early learning and development.

For example, programs such as 'Launching into Learning', which supports parents as their child's first and most influential teacher, and Child and Family Centres, which bring together a range of services to support both children and their families, have been rolled out across Tasmania and the Government is proud to support these initiatives.

The Government has introduced a range of measures to protect and nurture our young children, including:

- \$26 million to implement the *Safe Homes, Safe Families: Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan 2015-2020*, a coordinated, whole-of-government five-year action plan to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of those affected by family violence, particularly women and children;

- the *Strong Families – Strong Kids Implementation Plan* to guide the redesign of the child protection system so that it can respond innovatively and effectively to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and their families;
- reforms to sex offender sentencing in accordance with our commitment to introduce minimum mandatory sentencing for serious child sexual offences;
- reintroducing nurses to State schools; and
- consultation on the draft Commissioner for Children and Young People Bill to strengthen the powers of the Commissioner.

Madam Speaker, on 4 August 2016 I launched the B4 Early Years Coalition, another important initiative in the Government's strong support for the early years.

The name 'B4' relates to birth to four years old, the years before formal schooling and the period before birth.

Based on the very successful 26TEN Coalition, the B4 Early Years Coalition will build on the strong work of the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation to assist the Government to deliver improved early years outcomes.

The B4 Early Years Coalition will help raise awareness of the importance of the early years, build community commitment to the early years, work in partnership across government and with different sectors to develop an early years action plan, and provide grants for evidence-based early childhood projects and initiatives.

I am pleased that the Chair of the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation, Mrs Elizabeth Daly, and the Tasmanian Commissioner for Children, Mr Mark Morrissey, have agreed to co-chair the B4 Early Years Coalition. Members of the Foundation Board have also been invited to continue as Coalition members.

Madam Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by the members, past and present, of the Tasmanian Early Years Foundation Board in promoting the wellbeing, development and learning of Tasmanian children up to the age of 6 years. In particular, the founding Chair, Dr Sue Jenkins, and the current Chair Mrs Daly, have been tireless advocates for the early years.

Madam Speaker, this Bill provides the necessary provisions to wind-up the Foundation by repealing the *Tasmanian Early Years Foundation Act 2005*. In addition the Bill contains a number of transitional provisions that:

- transfer the assets and liabilities of the Foundation to the Crown;
- establish the Premier as the Minister responsible for winding up the Foundation, in recognition of the fact that the Department of Premier and Cabinet currently supports the Foundation;
- transfer the administration of assets and outstanding liabilities from the Foundation to the Department of Premier and Cabinet; and
- set out the requirements for reporting on the Foundation's financial and other commitments, following the Foundation being wound-up.

The Government has decided that, following the Foundation's winding-up, remaining funds will be transferred to the B4 Early Years Coalition to support its activities.

Madam Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.