

## Online Access Centres - Ongoing Funding

### **Ms BADGER question to MINISTER for EDUCATION**

This is a question from numerous constituent groups on the east coast. Online access centres provide vital services, particularly in our rural communities where there is often unreliable or no internet connection and a digital divide in tech services and abilities. Supported by skilled, dedicated volunteers, online access centres help rural residents manage online tasks such as paying bills, completing digitised paperwork and job-searching. To be clear, this service is distinctively different from that of Libraries Tasmania.

Funding for online access centres ends in the next financial year. Many operators have been trying to get clarity for a long time on what the future will hold so they can plan ahead. Can you finally ease the understandable angst of many online access centres and the communities reliant on them and articulate what the plan is for the future? Will they amalgamate into Libraries Tasmania or will we see a roll-out of hubs customised for the needs of each unique community, as we have seen in Queenstown and Devonport?