

DRAFT SECOND READING SPEECH
HON PETER GUTWEIN MP
Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2021

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Mr Speaker,

Now more than ever it is vital we secure Tasmania's future.

That we secure the health and safety of Tasmanians.

That we secure our economy and the jobs it supports.

And that we secure our future by providing better and more modern services to the Tasmanian community.

Earlier this year we put forward our clear plan to secure Tasmania's future and Tasmanians supported that Plan, re-electing a majority Liberal Government for an historic third term.

To receive the confidence of the Tasmanian community, in such challenging times, is something we are humbled by, that we do not take lightly - and we will not let our community down.

I want to thank all Tasmanians for rising to the challenges we have faced, and working together in these extraordinary times to look after each other and keep our community safe.

Thank you to all who work so hard to keep our community safe - at our borders, in our health system and in the provision of other essential services.

Thank you to those in our business sector for having confidence in our future, and for the jobs you provide for Tasmanians.

And, thank you to all those working in the public, private and not-for profit sectors for the work that you do supporting Tasmanians.

Your contribution is vital to this State, each and every day.

Mr Speaker,

Much has changed in the 10 months since the 2020-21 Budget was delivered.

At that time, there were no vaccines available against COVID-19.

Now we have those vaccines and Tasmania is leading the nation in vaccinating its population.

Mr Speaker,

While this is a Budget speech, I cannot emphasise how important it is that people do get vaccinated.

It is the most important safeguard we can provide for ourselves, our loved-ones and the whole Tasmanian community.

Since the last Budget, we have also been successful in keeping Tasmania free of community transmission.

This has been in the face of ongoing lockdowns in other states, which have had a devastating impact on their economies and the lives of those affected.

Achieving this outcome has required us to take rapid and decisive action.

Tasmania is, as a result, one of the safest places in this country and without doubt one of the safest places on the planet.

Mr Speaker,

Last year we leveraged our strong balance sheet to support our community, and underpin our economy with a package of economic and social support measures in excess of \$1 billion.

This was the largest support package, as a proportion of the economy, of any government in Australia.

Confidence levels have been nation leading and we now have more jobs here than we did before the pandemic began.

Our economic recovery has been remarkable - but there is more to be done.

Mr Speaker,

Notwithstanding the significant steps we have taken, the challenges posed by the pandemic remain an immediate and real threat to our future.

The potential for an outbreak of the virus, which would require us to lockdown, is very real.

There can be no doubt that we must continue to face these challenges with strong and decisive action.

Action that is based on advice from our public health officials and focussed on keeping our community safe.

Action that is reflected in our Plan to Secure Tasmania's Future.

A Budget Built on Strong Foundations

Mr Speaker,

The 2021-22 Budget is based on strong foundations.

It is based on the success of our financial and economic management over the past seven years, and our success in facing the challenges of COVID-19.

Importantly, we can and we will, deliver all of the commitments we made at the recent Election. These commitments will keep us safe, deliver better hospitals and schools, provide more houses for those in need and support better education and training outcomes, while also investing in the necessary road and community infrastructure we need.

Economic Recovery

Mr Speaker,

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the global economy.

Leading up to the pandemic, we were one of the strongest performing economies in the country.

Pleasingly, last year our economy continued to grow - albeit, below expectations.

Since that time, our economy has come roaring back.

Even with the current challenges facing NSW and Victoria, Tasmanians are in the main confident.

There are now more than 263 000 people employed in Tasmania, and our unemployment rate at 4.5 per cent is below the national average.

Mr Speaker,

Confidence is up, jobs are up and importantly the unemployment rate is down.

And, over the course of the Budget and forward estimates period our infrastructure program and other job creating initiatives are expected to support in excess of 28 000 jobs.

Mr Speaker,

At the height of the pandemic last year we laid out a plan to kick-start our economy and build our way out.

That plan by any measure has worked.

In June 2021, dwelling approvals were up 43.7 per cent from the previous year.

The value of retail trade, a good litmus test for the broader economy, increased 10.9 per cent over the year to June 2021.

And, when others were experiencing negative growth in their exports, the value of our goods exports increased by 5.2 per cent over the year to June 2021.

Mr Speaker,

These results don't happen by chance.

We worked hard to keep people safe, we invested record amounts in support and stimulus packages, confidence stayed strong, investment increased and the jobs bounced back.

However, we know we live in very uncertain times and there will be twists and turns as we move forward.

That's why we have a clear plan to secure Tasmania's future, to keep people safe and to deliver an even stronger, more diverse and resilient economy.

Budget Position

Mr Speaker,

The strength of our Budget position is one of the foundations on which this Budget has been built.

Prior to the pandemic we had a strong financial position, and as at 31 December 2019, just months before COVID-19 hit, we held \$788 million in net cash, deposits and investments - in stark contrast to net debt, like every other government in this country.

Our strong financial position and the strength of our economy has enabled us to deal with the challenges we have faced.

Mr Speaker,

The 2021-22 Budget delivers on our plan to secure Tasmania's future, and fully funds our 2021 election commitments.

It also provides funding for new initiatives, which will help to meet increased demand for essential services, especially in our health system, as well as supporting vulnerable Tasmanians.

Given the uncertainty of the COVID situation, the Budget also provides the flexibility to ensure we can continue to respond to the impacts of the pandemic.

To this end, a total of \$300 million has been included in the Treasurer's Reserve in the 2021-22 Budget across the Forward Estimates.

And, Mr Speaker, in line with my commitment on election night to do even more in terms of health, we have delayed the Budget's return to an operating surplus by one year so that we can invest even more into this critical service area for all Tasmanians.

I will say more in a moment regarding this, however, I am pleased that next year the Budget returns to a cash operating surplus of \$368.8 million and in 2023-24 we return to a modest operating surplus of \$39.4 million, increasing in the 2024-25 year to an operating surplus of \$126.8 million.

Mr Speaker,

Going into this pandemic our financial position was strong and even though we provided more than \$1 billion in economic and social supports, the Budget is now on track to surplus and will be back in the black over the forward estimates period.

Health

Mr Speaker,

Let me be very clear, the health of Tasmanians is the Government's highest priority.

Each and every year, we have provided more funding for health, than any previous government.

We have today more nurses, more doctors and we provide more services than ever before.

When it comes to Health, demand will always increase and there is always more to be done. This is why my Government's expenditure on health over the Budget and Forward Estimates will increase by \$900 million to \$10.7 billion.

This additional funding will make an enormous difference to our health system, and the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians.

Mr Speaker,

I said that we needed to do more and we will.

\$198 million in additional funding has been provided to meet the increasing demand and pressures being faced by our major hospitals, and to support opening beds in these key hospitals.

50 additional permanent hospital beds will be opened to meet increased demand and support our elective surgery commitments.

This additional funding is supported by \$18.3 million to implement a new safe staffing model in our vital District Hospitals and an investment of \$18 million in 2021-22 to enable private hospitals to support our public hospitals to manage increased demand, including elective surgery.

Mr Speaker,

Our hospitals will be supported by additional investment in paramedics and ambulances.

In total, we will recruit an additional 48 paramedics, which will add significantly to the 170 additional full-time equivalent paramedics and dispatch officers that we have recruited since 2014.

Furthermore, \$9 million has been allocated for new ambulances and equipment.

Mr Speaker,

During the 2021 Election, we announced \$120 million in funding to deliver an additional 22,300 elective surgeries and endoscopies, to bring the waiting list down to a sustainable level. That brought our elective surgery commitment to \$156.4 million.

Now, we will deliver even more elective surgeries - another 7,000, on top of the 22,300 already committed, through a \$40 million top up, with a total allocation of \$196.4 million in the 2021-22 Budget.

More than 180 staff state-wide are expected to support this increase in elective surgeries, including more than 112 nurses, 10 doctors and 16 allied health staff, as well as more than 40 hospital support staff.

Mr Speaker,

While acute care in our public hospitals has been a necessary focus to meet demand, we are also committed to simultaneously investing in community, in-home, palliative care services and mental health services.

\$52 million has been allocated to implement a range of vital initiatives, including community palliative care, home and community based palliative care, and better palliative care services in partnership with private hospitals and service providers.

Over \$9 million has also been provided to support the implementation of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Act.

We have allocated \$108 million in additional funding to mental health services across the State.

This includes \$26 million to support mental health services, including \$8.5 million for a Mental Health Hospital in the Home pilot in the North-West of the State and \$50 million has been allocated to fully fund the Government's response to Phases One and Two of the *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Review Report*.

Other important initiatives to support those Tasmanians most in need include:

- \$5 million in 2021-22 to deliver an additional 20 000 dental appointments state-wide across emergency dental, general dental care and denture clinics;
- \$15.7 million to implement the *Health Workforce 2040* strategy;
- \$8 million for the GP after-hours services; and
- \$8 million to support the North West Hospitals second linear accelerator.

Mr Speaker,

The Government is also working to secure Tasmania's future by investing in essential health infrastructure that will support the delivery of services to the community.

In this Budget we have committed additional funding of:

- \$117 million for the Royal Hobart Hospital for an expansion of stage two of the redevelopment and a new angiography suite and equipment upgrade;
- \$20 million for a Hospital Equipment Fund and \$5 million for a rural hospital equipment fund;
- \$12 million for the Launceston General Hospital Mental Health Precinct;
- \$20 million for the North West Regional Hospital Mental Health Precinct; and
- \$10 million for the Kingston Health Centre Stage 2.

The 2021-22 Budget and Forward Estimates also includes funding of \$66.5 million to continue the Launceston General Hospital Redevelopment and \$30 million to complete Mersey Community Hospital Capital upgrades.

Mr Speaker,

This Budget also provides more support for Tasmanians with a disability, with \$1.2 million to establish the first ever Tasmanian Disability Services Commissioner and continues our strong support of the NDIS with more than \$1 billion over the Forward Estimates.

Housing

Mr Speaker,

The Tasmanian Government is committed to helping more Tasmanians into homes by boosting the supply of new dwellings, supporting home ownership and putting downward pressure on rents.

The Government is rolling out the most comprehensive affordable housing strategy ever undertaken in this State, but we recognise we need to do more.

To meet the increased demand for social and affordable housing we are making an unprecedented investment in housing supply.

We are investing a record \$615 million into social and affordable housing, and homelessness initiatives, including our record election commitment of \$280 million to build new social housing for Tasmanians in need.

In total we will build 3 500 new homes by 2027, adding an additional 2 000 homes to our current plan to deliver 1 500 homes by 2023.

We will also develop the first ever comprehensive Tasmanian Housing Strategy, which will consider demand across both the public and private sectors and formulate strategies to deliver sustainable outcomes for all Tasmanians.

We already have a number of successful initiatives, which are underpinning new building activity and new homes to live in, supported through ancillary dwellings, the First Home Owner Grant, and the HomeBuilder and Headworks holiday programs.

The strategy will consider a range of other initiatives, including extending rental assistance programs, a build to rent program, housing options for workers in critical industries and commercial property conversions.

Securing our Future through Education, Training and Skills

Mr Speaker,

My Government has a clear vision for Tasmania to be a place of opportunity - no matter who you are, where you live, your background or circumstance.

We know we must provide the education, training and skills to enable our people to get the jobs that will support them and drive our economy forward.

Over the past seven years, we have reformed a system that had far too many young Tasmanians exiting education at year 10.

While opposed by others in this place, our plan to roll out years 11 and 12 in our high schools has been a success.

And importantly, we have continued to invest at record levels, and now across the 2021-22 Budget and Forward Estimates expenditure on education, skills and training is estimated to be \$8 billion.

The Budget continues our investment in major existing strategies and programs, including Taking Education to the Next Level, Child and Family Learning Centres, as well as completing the extension of every Tasmanian High School to Year 12 by 2022.

Our record funding enables us to continue investing in 358 more staff, including 250 additional teachers and 80 additional teacher assistants.

Our Election commitments will all be delivered.

This includes \$5.4 million for School Health Nurses, \$6 million to support students impacted by trauma, \$2 million to roll-out additional professional development in trauma for school leaders, teachers and teacher assistants in Government schools, and \$3.8 million to provide free access to speech pathologists, psychologists and social workers in Child and Family Learning Centres.

There is also \$100 million in additional funding to build and improve classrooms and essential facilities.

This includes major projects at Cambridge Primary School, Exeter High School, Hobart City Partner Schools, Lauderdale Primary School, Montello Primary School and at our Support Schools.

Mr Speaker,

This Government has consistently emphasised the priority it places on training and skills development.

The strength of this commitment is reflected in the increased funding, each and every year for TasTAFE over the past seven years.

We are investing in the \$21 million Energy, Trades and Water Centre of Excellence at Clarence and a \$5 million Agricultural Centre of Excellence at Burnie's Freer Farm.

We have delivered on our promise of 600 additional training places for aged care, and funding of \$2 million for new TasTAFE teachers in critical industry areas and \$2 million to enable Drysdale to establish courses in Hobart's northern suburbs.

We are committed to ensuring Tasmanians can get the training, apprenticeships and jobs, to secure their future right here in Tasmania.

That's why, Mr Speaker, we support the PESRAC recommendation to transform TasTAFE into a Government Business.

A Government Business that is fit for purpose and will enable the organisation to be more nimble, like the businesses and industries it is there to support.

To ensure that Tasmanians will be able to receive the training and skills they need to grasp the opportunities available in our fast growing economy.

And, to support this important reform in this Budget, we are investing additional support of almost \$100 million over the next four years.

\$37.6 million has been allocated to fund 100 extra TasTAFE teachers and \$45 million will be invested in TasTAFE facilities across the State.

This includes new student accommodation in Burnie and Clarence, major upgrades to campuses at Alanvale, Burnie and Devonport, equipment upgrades, as well as the creation of a Regional TAFE Facilities Development and Transition Fund and support to increase access for rural and regional students.

Mr Speaker,

We will also work in partnership with industry and other organisations to support workforce development.

Including \$4 million to partner with each of the Civil Contractors Federation, and Master Builders Tasmania, \$1 million to support the Housing Industry Association, \$2.25 million to work with the Tasmanian Hospitality Association, \$2 million to partner with the racing industry and \$180 000 to support the Migrant Resources Centre.

We will also provide \$930 000 to establish a Workforce Development Fund to deliver support for the community services sector's training capacity and, in partnership with the Australian Government, will provide \$1.5 million to support the expansion of facilities at the Sorell Trade Training Centre.

\$20.5 million is also provided, over the next two years, for the Working Tasmania Program, to support training interventions to address barriers to employment, support employers to employ, and specifically assist young people and recent school leavers.

Mr Speaker this Government believes all Tasmanians should have access to quality training and the skills they need to live better and more fulfilled lives, and this Budget delivers on both the funding and the plan to achieve that.

Renewables, Climate, future industries and our Environment

Mr Speaker,

Tasmania as a result of more than 100 years' investment into primarily hydro generation has achieved the unique position of being able to generate 100 per cent of the energy we need from renewable sources.

We have a target to achieve 200 per cent of our renewable needs, as outlined in our Tasmanian Renewable Energy Action Plan, and in addition to the significant investment in infrastructure this budget delivers, Hydro is also progressing the \$700 million refurbishment of the Tarraleah power station, which will double its generating capacity from 110 MW up to 220 MW.

Mr Speaker,

Our Hydrogen Action plan is also progressing, and we continue to engage with companies from all around the world, who recognise the benefit of investing in Tasmania, where we have the renewable energy and plentiful water supply to make Green Hydrogen production a reality.

Due to our low emissions energy base, as well as our carbon stores, we are also in a unique position when it comes to climate change.

We have achieved our 2050 net zero emissions target for the last five years in a row and in six out of the last seven years.

We must continue to take sensible, informed action to capitalise on the opportunities that Tasmania's unique, advantageous position provides.

The four year independent review of Tasmania's climate change Act is nearing completion.

A key message from Tasmanians during this consultation, is that our existing target of net zero emissions by 2050 - could be much more ambitious, given our emissions performance to date.

My Government has heard this and we are finalising the consultation and we will be releasing the review of the Act, the new target and our new action plan, later this year.

Mr Speaker,

I believe very firmly we are at an important and defining moment.

A moment that we must be prepared to grasp as it will define the State for the next 100 years.

That's why today I am announcing that the Government is creating Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania, which will be established by October this year.

Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania will be supported by Treasury, with a whole of Government view, and a remit to capture the opportunities, jobs and investment that Tasmania's unique renewable energy and emissions position provides.

Its formation will be guided by Treasury, my Department of Premier and Cabinet, and State Growth, and will include the responsibilities, resources and expertise of Renewables Tasmania in State Growth and the Climate Change office in DPAC.

Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania will provide the necessary advice to ensure that investment in renewable energy, hydrogen, Marinus link and Battery of the Nation projects, along with climate change adaptation and mitigation, are strategically considered, and that Tasmania harnesses the opportunity available to underpin the investment and jobs these sectors will deliver.

This Budget includes additional funding of \$15 million to support the work of Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania.

The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible directly to myself as Premier and Minister for Climate Change, and will also report to the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction.

This strategic change will ensure we are better placed to grasp fully these opportunities, which will help secure Tasmania's future.

Mr Speaker,

We are committed to protecting our environment, which is why the 2021-22 Tasmanian Budget also provides funding for a number of initiatives designed to build our circular economy, and support the waste and resource recovery sector by providing a platform to attract investment and create jobs.

This includes the introduction of a Container Refund Scheme, a consistent state-wide waste levy, support for commercial composting and phasing out single use and problem plastics from Government and council facilities and events on public land by 2023.

Mr Speaker,

We are also investing \$3 million to partner with industry to invest in a crumb rubber plant to turn end-of-life tyres into product, which can be used in the Government's Road Resurfacing Program from 1 July 2022.

These initiatives will enhance innovation, boost economic growth, create jobs and secure the future of Tasmania's unique environment.

Strengthening our Economy

Mr Speaker,

To secure Tasmania's future we must have a strong economy.

There is no doubt, particularly during these challenging times, Government can play an important role in supporting the sustainability of our businesses.

We recently announced the new \$20 million business support package, in partnership with the Australian Government, to support businesses affected by the lockdowns interstate and we will, if need be, do more as the situation progresses.

This year's Budget, also includes an extensive package to support Tasmania businesses, support jobs, support our regions and help cushion the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With 97 per cent of the 38 000 businesses in the State small businesses, we are committed to securing their future.

The 2021-22 State Budget includes a suite of initiatives for our small business sector, including:

- \$2 million for a new Small Business Incubator and Accelerator pilot program;
- \$800 000 over four years to Business Tasmania to help better support businesses by resolving problems and reducing barriers;
- \$300 000 over three years for Regional Chambers of Commerce, to support their small business members;

- \$150 000 for the Tasmanian Small Business Council to advocate and support its members; and
- \$120 000 to the TCCI for an expanded Tasmanian Survey of Business Expectations, providing data to help inform decision making as we continue our economic recovery.

Mr Speaker

We know COVID-19 has presented significant challenges for businesses across the world and we have not been immune in Tasmania.

The 2021-22 Budget also includes \$1.2 million for access to specialist financial counselling, because we know there are businesses facing challenging circumstances as a result of the pandemic.

We are also continuing to support Tasmania's microbusiness sector with up to \$50,000 per annum over four years for the NILS no interest Micro Business Loan Program, and an additional \$25,000 per annum for four years to support additional staffing for this valuable service.

Mr Speaker,

It is equally important we support our large industries.

Our resources sector provides an economic foundation for many of our regional communities, contributing billions of dollars in exports, and supporting thousands of jobs and small businesses across the State.

It's why we are extending our Exploration Drilling Grants Initiative until 2025 with \$1.5 million, in addition to funding a refreshed Geoscience Initiative of \$2 million over four years, supported by up to \$3 million through the Federal Government's Exploring for the Future program led by Geoscience Australia.

The Budget also recognises the need for more on-island processing and value adding of forestry products, to support and deliver more jobs, with a new \$10 million fund over five years to support this important industry and regional communities.

We are also investing \$1.15 million over three years to the Tasmanian Timber Promotions Board to value-add and promote Tasmanian timber products across the world, and we are investing \$150,000 over three years to address skills shortages and train the forestry industry leaders of tomorrow.

Mr Speaker,

You would be particularly aware of how important the primary industry sector is to Tasmanians and to our State's future.

Our Election commitments build on our plan to accelerate our agricultural sector by investing almost \$50 million to drive the sector towards our bold annual farm-gate value target of \$10 billion by 2050.

This includes an additional \$30.2 million for water resources and irrigation, and an additional \$23.7 million over four years to tranche three of the Pipeline to Prosperity program to meet

increased demand for the Don, Tamar, Sassafras, Northern Midlands and Fingal Irrigation Schemes.

It also includes \$5 million for Tasmanian Irrigation to develop a business case to deliver the South East Irrigation Extension Scheme.

\$10.2 million will be provided for a new Ag-Protection Package to future-proof the industry and assist manage risks to primary industries.

We are also investing \$5.6 million in a new Community Farming Partnerships Program, including \$450 000 to extend the Safe Farming Tasmania Program.

In addition, we have committed \$15 million towards a new Tasmanian Agricultural Precinct based at Newnham, which will bring together agricultural science, water management, industry development and biosecurity, with an aim to boost growth in the sector.

In addition, \$2.6 million has been provided for a Rural Business Resilience Package and \$537 000 has been allocated to support seafood industry recovery.

Mr Speaker,

We are committed to supporting industries that generate broad ranging economic activity and sustain jobs.

That's why we are providing a \$100 million loan to support jobs at INCAT, through underwriting a new INCAT vessel.

And \$20 million to the Building Projects Support Program, to bring forward community and commercial projects to help stimulate the sector and support local jobs.

We will also provide significant funding to support sector strategies that will drive future growth.

This includes \$5 million to implement the Advanced Manufacturing Action Plan, \$3.75 million to implement the Tasmanian Trade Strategy, \$2.25 million to support International Business Development Managers and \$2.4 million for the Great Customer Experience Program.

I am pleased to say that since we came to Government in 2014 merchandise exports have increased by close to 40 per cent.

Supporting growth in business will continue to underpin our economy and generate jobs.

Mr Speaker,

It is essential that when people can start to travel further afield again Tasmania is front and centre as a travel destination.

Our ongoing strong support for the Tasmanian tourism sector and our regional economies is reflected in the allocation of an additional \$18 million in funding to support tourism marketing.

We have also provided significant additional funding to support events that attract people to all parts of Tasmania.

We are providing a \$50 million Tourism Industry Interest Free Loan Program and \$1 million will support travel agents affected by the extensive constraints on travel.

Mr Speaker,

This Budget includes a \$145 million investment into parks and reserves over four years, to future proof our natural assets.

This includes:

- \$4 million towards the development of the Freycinet National Park and Visitor Gateway;
- \$1.2 million to turn Ben Lomond into a year-round destination;
- \$3 million to re-imagine the Hastings Thermal Pool;
- \$2.8 million towards the Maria Island Re-discovered Project - Stage 3; and
- \$10 million to provide new and improved recreational driving opportunities across the West Coast.

Mr Speaker,

Our strong events sector also plays an important role in our economy by drawing visitors into regional Tasmanian communities.

To ensure we secure the future of our major iconic events, which generate economic activity of more than \$170 million, we have committed \$18 million, along with a further \$1.2 million, to support our business events market.

We want to attract and support more major events and the Budget contains \$8 million to establish an events support attraction fund and \$1.5 million has been earmarked to establish a regional events recovery fund.

Mr Speaker,

This Government strongly supports our cultural and creative industries.

We recognise the challenges the past 18 months has had on the sector, which is why we have committed over \$12 million to support artists and arts organisations.

This Budget includes an additional commitment of \$6.3 million to support our cultural and creative industries, including a range of initiatives to support our vibrant artists to engage and inspire audiences, and add value to our cultural landscape and local regions.

Mr Speaker,

The hospitality sector was one of the hardest hit during COVID, and to ensure our world class industry continues to provide outstanding visitor experiences, we will deliver \$8 million for a range of initiatives to support them as they recover.

As we deliver our plan to secure Tasmania's future, we must ensure we cater for increasing visitor numbers and deliver outstanding visitor experiences, which will be driven by the skills of our workforce.

Infrastructure Investment

Mr Speaker,

Infrastructure provides vital support to the delivery of services in our hospitals, schools and communities.

It connects communities, supports jobs and enables us to deliver our goods and services to the market.

It helps keep us safe and provides homes for those who need them.

And, through sporting, cultural and recreational infrastructure, it supports the Tasmanian way of life.

The implementation of a strong infrastructure program over the term of this Budget and Forward Estimates and beyond, is essential to creating confidence and certainty.

Mr Speaker,

The 2021-22 Budget includes a \$4.6 billion infrastructure program, including a \$3.8 billion investment in infrastructure projects and around \$800 million in equity injections, to support infrastructure investment by Government businesses and related entities.

In addition during the election we also announced in excess of \$1 billion in further investment by our Government Businesses in hydro generation and ports infrastructure.

We're investing \$2 billion in our roads and bridges, including major intergenerational projects such as the Bridgewater Bridge, the Greater Hobart Traffic Solution, the Altona Interchange and Kingston Bypass and the Midland Highway.

We have also allocated substantial funding for infrastructure maintenance, Roads of Strategic Importance and road upgrade programs in the North, North West and on the West Coast.

Our total investment in hospitals and other health infrastructure is \$503.7 million dollars and our total investment in schools, education and skills infrastructure will be \$336 million.

And, over the next four years we will invest more than \$384 million in housing infrastructure for those Tasmanians most in need.

We are supporting our essential justice system through expenditure of \$57.2 million on the new \$270 million new Northern Prison, \$55.5 million on the \$85 million new Southern Remand Centre and \$39 million on the new Burnie Court Complex.

Our infrastructure plan also provides significant support for infrastructure investment outside of the General Government Sector.

\$184.8 million in equity contributions to TasRail from the State and Australian Governments will support ongoing work on Tasmania's Freight Rail Network and the upgrade of the bulk minerals ship loader at the Port of Burnie.

\$199 million in equity contributions to TasIrrigation from the State and Australian Governments will progress Tranche 3 irrigation projects, a business case for the South East Extension Scheme and the Energy on Farms initiative.

\$64.6 million for the Macquarie Point Development Corporation, to help bring this precinct to life, and \$140 million to TasWater to support its accelerated infrastructure program, and \$40 million to assist with the Macquarie Point wastewater treatment plant relocation.

The Budget also provides an equity contribution of \$65 million, over three years from 2021-22, to the new Stadiums Tasmania, to oversee the development and management of Tasmania's stadium assets to support Tasmania's place on the national sporting stage.

Our commitment to improving our infrastructure is un-paralleled and we are getting on with the job of building Tasmania.

A Competitive Tax System

Mr Speaker,

A key element of our long-standing Fiscal Strategy is that a competitive tax system will be maintained.

Taxes will always be lower under a Liberal Government.

Over the past seven years the Government has implemented a number of important tax reforms, including payroll tax relief for apprentices and trainees and stamp duty relief for first home purchasers and retirees downsizing.

We are also implementing important changes to land tax, including a Foreign Investor Land Tax Surcharge on residential properties, which will come into effect next year.

In the 2021-22 Budget we are delivering a number of new tax changes, including a reset of Land Tax thresholds, which will mean that more than 4000 taxpayers will now pay no land tax and more than 70,000 will receive reduced bills of up to \$613 per year.

This amounts to a nearly \$60 million reprieve for property owners over the next four years.

The Commissioner of State Revenue will also accept the payment of Land Tax in three instalments, for bills over \$500 and there will a 50% reduction in the premium component of the interest rate charged on unpaid tax.

We are also increasing from \$400 000 to \$500 000 the value threshold for the First Home Buyer Duty Concession and Pensioner Duty Concession, which means savings of up to \$9 000.

Vehicle registration fees will now be able to be paid quarterly, taking pressure off household budgets.

There will also be a two-year waiver of duty on the purchase of new and second hand electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, to incentivise the uptake of these vehicles by reducing up-front costs, expected to be around \$2 000 on average.

In addition, Treasury has begun the process to deliver on the Government's Election commitment to consider options for capping land tax from 2022-23 onward due to the growth in prices of our property market.

A safe and secure Tasmania

Mr Speaker

Tasmania is one of the safest places in the world.

Now, in these difficult times, people are looking to Tasmania to raise a family, work and live and they want to have confidence that they and their family will be protected from the impacts of crime, the pandemic and natural disasters.

The Government stands with the Tasmanian community in taking action to keep our State safe and our people secure.

Over the past seven years we have funded 258 additional police officers and we have also commenced major investments in police IT and communications, to provide police with better information to support their vital work.

This includes investment towards the \$567 million Tasmanian Government Radio Network and the \$46 million for the upgrade of critical police ICT systems.

To build on this important work, \$9.4 million has been allocated across the Budget and Forward Estimates to deliver an additional 50 police officers to bolster frontline services and deliver a greater focus on criminal investigation capability.

\$10.6 million has been allocated to provide permanent funding to ensure that whenever police officers from rural and remote police stations are on leave, communities will continue to receive the same level of policing.

A further \$2.5 million has been provided to enable frontline police to be freed up by employing State Service employees in specialised roles, such as prosecution, cybercrime and digital evidence analysis.

\$13.1 million has been allocated to deliver a prisoner transport and court security model to also remove Tasmania Police from court security duties in the Burnie Supreme Court.

Mr Speaker,

The Tasmanian Liberal Government is committed to improving the State's corrections system.

Through our work to reduce re-offending and increase rehabilitative opportunities in Tasmania, we are establishing new partnerships with organisations to provide increased therapeutic support and programs in our prisons, maximising the chances of successful reintegration for people back into the community.

We are addressing demand pressures on the Tasmanian Prison Service, with \$4 million per year, over the next four years.

This will allow for the effective operation of our prison service and will support the major recruitment campaign underway to boost the number of Correctional Officers even further.

Mr Speaker,

We are committed to keeping our communities safe from the impact of fire and other natural disasters.

In this Budget we will invest a further \$18 million to ensure our communities are bushfire safe, and support our career firefighters and the 5 600 volunteers in our fire brigades and State Emergency Service units around Tasmania.

We will provide an additional \$1.5 million per annum to the Emergency Services Personnel and Volunteers Health and Wellbeing Program, and double the investment in the Red Hot Tips Program through the provision of an additional \$2.5 million.

We will boost our nation-leading Fuel Reduction Program with an additional \$2.5 million to support mechanical clearing, and we will fund a dedicated team of staff in the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management to bolster volunteer recruitment and administration in remote and regional communities, with new funding of \$2.4 million.

Mr Speaker,

Above all, Tasmanians should feel safe and supported in their home and community.

A trial of electronic monitoring of high-risk family violence perpetrators demonstrated increased safety for victims, an 82 per cent reduction in high risk incidents and increased accountability from perpetrators.

The 2021-22 Budget provides \$2.4 million over two years to continue this electronic monitoring.

We will also provide almost \$2.5 million to reduce reoffending and increase rehabilitation through new partnerships to deliver increased therapeutic support and programs in prison.

And to help those in need of legal advice and support, we have allocated an additional \$8.8 million to the Legal Assistance Sector to support its delivery of free or low-cost legal services to Tasmanians, on top of the funding already committed under the National Legal Assistance Partnership.

Supporting Tasmanian Communities

Mr Speaker,

During the course of the COVID-19 pandemic we strongly supported our communities.

This strong focus continues in the 2021-22 Budget with the provision of significant additional funding for Neighbourhood Houses, the extension of our school lunch program, and an additional \$10.1 million to support youth housing initiatives.

We have also supported an additional \$12 million for energy concessions to those most in need of support as we continue to recover from COVID-19.

This Government understands the importance of community.

That is why this Budget completes the \$15 million Local Community Facilities fund program, which delivers on our commitments to strengthen the fabric of our communities, especially those in rural and regional areas by supporting community associations and sporting clubs to improve their facilities and infrastructure.

Mr Speaker,

My Government also believes very strongly that we must continue on our pathway to achieving reconciliation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

This commitment is reflected in the allocation of an additional \$200 000 to support the work of Professor Kate Warner AC, in conjunction with Professor Tim McCormack, to facilitate processes to understand directly from Tasmanian Aboriginal people themselves how best to take the next steps towards reconciliation.

It complements the work being undertaken by the National Agreement on Closing the Gap and the Tasmanian plan.

To support this work, we will provide up to an additional \$4 million towards building capacity in Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations to better meet the needs of Tasmanian Aboriginal people, on top of the existing \$1.3 million committed in last year's Budget.

Mr Speaker,

This Government strongly believes that all women and girls should feel safe in our community and that they should have access to all of the opportunities our State provides.

We are committed to removing barriers to participation whether they exist in education, business, sport or elsewhere.

The 2021-22 Budget includes a broad range of initiatives that deliver support and opportunities to women and girls, including:

- over \$1 million to support women's workforce participation to build on our already \$2.5 million investment;
- \$900 000 to promote women in leadership;
- \$5 million to double the funding for the Improving the Playing Field grants program;
- \$1 million to support the Karinya Young Mums'n'Bubs Program; and
- the allocation of \$80 000 every year to provide free sanitary items in all Government schools to ensure that a lack of access to sanitary products at home is not a barrier to learning.

We strongly believe these initiatives, among others, will help make a difference to the future of women in Tasmania.

Mr Speaker,

The wellbeing of children and young Tasmanians is critical to our community.

To support our children and young people, \$100 million has been allocated to implement Tasmania's first long-term, whole-of-government *Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy*.

This Strategy has been informed by a comprehensive consultation process, which included over 3 500 contributions from children and young people, parents, carers, advocates and service providers.

I would like to thank each and every person for their contribution to this process.

We have listened to your views and we are taking action.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker,

The time to secure Tasmania's future is here and now.

We are facing one of the biggest challenges that Tasmania and the world has ever seen.

While it is a time of uncertainty for Tasmania, it is also a time of opportunity.

Our economy is strong, we live in one of the safest and most beautiful places in the world and our businesses and our people are confident.

The awareness of what Tasmania has to offer the world of the future is growing day by day.

We are the state of the extraordinary, where our unique is our advantage.

We cannot let that opportunity pass us by.

This is a Budget that builds on the strong foundations this Government has established over the past seven years.

It is based on listening to what the Tasmanian community wants and providing support where it is needed most.

This State will achieve great things if we all work together to secure Tasmania's future.

The time is now. The moment is here.

Mr Speaker,

I commend the Bill to the House.