



2019-20 BUDGET SPEECH

‘Maintaining the Momentum Investing for Growth’

BY
THE TREASURER
HON PETER GUTWEIN MP

Delivered in the House of Assembly on 23 May 2019 on the Second
Reading of the Appropriation Bill (No 1) 2019

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by the Governor’s Command

Madam Speaker,

It is my privilege today, to deliver the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's sixth Budget.

In the last six years Tasmania has come a long way, and today we are a prouder, a more diverse and a much more confident society.

Our economy is one of the fastest growing in the nation.

Tourism is booming, our construction sector leads the country in first home buyers, approvals, commencements and completions.

Our businesses have the confidence to invest, to employ and to think bigger than they ever have before.

This Budget is the next step in the Government's long-term plan to grow our economy, create jobs, invest in essential services and protect our way of life.

This Budget is about maintaining the momentum and investing for growth.

This Budget unashamedly invests record amounts into infrastructure to drive our economy, to enable us to deliver record investments into health, education and looking after the most vulnerable.

We will deliver more and better services for all Tasmanians.

We will hire more nurses, doctors, teachers, paramedics, and police officers.

We will invest more into the hospitals that provide the health services that we need and we will invest more into the education of our most precious resource, our students and our people.

And while we have faced revenue write-downs in GST and Stamp Duty we have determined not to take a backward step in terms of investing in the infrastructure our growing State needs to underpin our economy to generate the revenues we need to deliver essential services.

This Budget increases our investment into intergenerational infrastructure, in health, education, and housing. In roads, rail, and bridges. In water and sewerage infrastructure, and our parks and tourism assets, to secure our way of life and the future of our economy, right around this State.

Madam Speaker,

Tasmanians are reaping the benefits of the Hodgman majority Liberal Government's long-term Plan.

The Tasmanian economy is strong, diverse and growing.

Nearly 13 000 jobs have been created under this Government.

Last year, Tasmania's economy grew at 3.3 per cent, its highest rate in a decade, and our Gross State Product was over \$30 billion.

On a per capita basis, our economy is growing the fastest in the nation at nearly double the Australian average.

Madam Speaker,

This Budget forecasts this growth to continue, and remain above trend, at 2.75 per cent next year.

Tasmanian businesses view our policies as the most popular in the nation and this has been the case for close to two years.

Retail spending is at near record levels.

Our tourism sector is vibrant and booming, with visitor numbers and spending continuing to grow.

Tasmanian exports are booming and we exported more than \$3.76 billion worth of goods in the year to March 2019, 6.6 per cent higher than the previous year.

Our housing and construction sector leads the nation.

As a result, our population is growing at its fastest annual rate in nearly a decade, and nearly three times faster than just a handful of years ago.

Madam Speaker,

It wasn't always this way.

Before we came to Government, our economic circumstances were dire.

Under Labor and the Greens, the State had been in recession, and the unemployment rate rose to eight per cent.

Confidence was at rock bottom and two thirds of small businesses thought that Labor-Green policies were working against them.

Tasmanians were voting with their feet - they were leaving the State in droves.

We had a difficult job to do when we came to Government.

We made the tough choices to get our economy back on track. We fixed the Budget, rebuilt confidence, attracted investment and created jobs.

Madam Speaker,

Our plan is working, but we know there is always more to do.

The Government has worked hard to get the Budget back in the black.

This is of key importance because it supports confidence, attracts investment and importantly enables record levels of investment into essential services.

I am pleased to confirm that once again our Budget will be balanced and in surplus this year, and right across the Forward Estimates.

Even after significant revenue downgrades, unprecedented demand for health services and the devastating summer wildfires, we will still deliver a \$41 million surplus, our fourth surplus in a row.

As I indicated recently in this place, we have had to write down more than half a billion dollars in GST receipts and Stamp Duties, compared to the estimates in last year's Budget.

The Government has worked through these challenges responsibly and sensibly, and made the difficult calls.

We have determined to underpin continued growth in our economy by increasing our already record level of investment into infrastructure, whilst investing record amounts into health, education and looking after the most vulnerable.

And we will do this whilst continuing to balance our books without increasing taxes to Tasmanians.

Government businesses are performing well against the backdrop of the strong economy. Those businesses that have the capacity to provide increased returns to the Tasmanians that own them, such as MAIB and Tascorp, will contribute special dividends, whilst Hydro and Sustainable Timber Tasmania will meet the cost of some non-commercial activities.

The definition of a foreign investor will be enhanced and from 1 January 2020, the rate of the surcharge on residential land will be brought into line with other jurisdictions. The surcharge on primary production land will also increase, and a foreign investor land tax surcharge will be developed and introduced from 1 July 2020.

All other states have introduced a Point of Consumption Tax on wagering and we will likewise introduce one from 1 January 2020 at a rate of up to 15 per cent, after consultation with stakeholders, on the net wagering revenue of betting companies.

Whilst historical agreements limit the revenue from this measure, we will work closely with the local racing industry to ensure that the net benefits are appropriately shared between Government and the industry.

These measures will provide some additional revenue, but the impact of the revenue losses described previously means that we will need to ensure that the public sector is as efficient and effective as possible.

This Government will always live within its means and this Budget introduces a modest efficiency dividend of three quarters of one per cent. In practice this means that next year the Government will work to save 75 cents out of every \$100 that it spends.

This modest measure will not impact on the provision of frontline services. Rather it will come from expenditure such as consultants, travel and advertising, as well as targeted vacancy control and natural employee attrition, without affecting essential services.

These measures ensure that we can deliver the services that Tasmanians expect, while the Budget remains balanced and in surplus each year over the Budget and Forward Estimates.

Madam Speaker,

For the next financial year, a Budget surplus of \$57 million is forecast and increasing surpluses across the Forward Estimates period are also forecast.

While modest - next year's surplus is an important element of our responsible financial management.

The bushfires earlier this year and the ongoing challenge of the unprecedented increasing demand in our health system demonstrate how a surplus provides the capacity to deal with challenges.

This is why we will not do what those opposite continually call on us to do, and that is to spend with no regard for the future.

This Budget delivers a balanced set of books, record investment into health, education and protecting the most disadvantaged, whilst underpinning our economy by investing record amounts today to deliver the infrastructure we need for tomorrow.

Madam Speaker,

Public sector wages make up nearly 50 per cent of our expenditures. Wage increases must be fair, reasonable and affordable. If wage growth is unsustainable so will be our finances.

Today, because we have managed the Budget well, we employ more nurses and doctors, more teachers and support staff, more police and firefighters, more rangers and specialised staff than ever before, to provide the services our growing population needs.

We will provide sensible and affordable wage rises that enable more staff to be employed, rather than pay unsustainable wage rises that will ultimately mean that less can be employed and less services can be delivered.

Our latest wage offer included increases to a range of terms and conditions, and a wage increase of seven per cent over three years, offset by sensible savings.

This policy delivers a fair, reasonable and affordable wage increase that is sustainable.

The AEU has put this offer to its members to be voted on soon, and we will continue to negotiate with other employee groups in good faith to achieve an appropriate outcome.

In accordance with the current policy, wage increases of two per cent are factored into the Budget. In line with our recent offer, increases higher than two per cent per annum are to be funded by identified savings.

This ensures that the wage increases are affordable into the long-term.

Having acted to bring our financial framework into the 21st century, this Government will now take steps to bring our public sector framework into the 21st century as well.

The current *State Service Act 2000* was developed during the late 1990s, and is now nearly two decades old. Since that time, rapid technological, demographic and social change, has occurred and arguably the Act is increasingly irrelevant and outdated.

In our recent wage offers to unions we proposed a review of the State Service Act to deliver a framework for a public service that is effective and efficient, and that can meet the challenges of the next 20 years.

The Review will identify the structural, legislative and cultural improvements that will transform current structures, services and practices to deliver a more effective and efficient public service, fit for the 21st century.

The Review will be led by a steering committee comprising representatives from the unions, the public, private and the not-for-profit sectors and we will provide more details regarding its structure and resources in the first quarter of 2019-20.

Madam Speaker,

As I have explained, central to our plan is strong financial management and a growing economy because this allows us to invest more into services.

Madam Speaker,

Our economy is strong, jobs are being created and our population is growing again.

But we need to maintain this momentum by investing for growth.

Our strong economy is the engine room that generates the revenue that enables us to invest record amounts into the essential services that Tasmanians need.

Whilst growth in our economy continues to outpace the nation's there are headwinds forecast for the national economy and we must insulate ourselves against that.

The 2019-20 Budget includes a record \$3.6 billion investment into job-creating intergenerational infrastructure that will support future growth, attract investment and create jobs.

Our record-breaking infrastructure program includes \$2.8 billion in agency-funded social and economic infrastructure.

As well as nearly \$800 million in investment to support infrastructure undertaken by our government businesses and TasWater.

The choice we have made is to stay the course and increase our investment into the infrastructure the State needs.

That will mean the State will carry a manageable level of net debt.

The level of infrastructure investment over four years is unprecedented in the State's history. But then so is our population growth which today is more than double our long-term trend.

So too is our growth in interstate and international visitors.

And so is the growth in exports and our construction sector.

With that growth will come both opportunity and challenge. This Budget provides the foundation to both grasp the opportunities and to respond to the challenges.

Madam Speaker,

In Tasmania's export facing economy - we need an efficient road and rail network to transport our exports to market.

We also need to ensure that Tasmanians can get to school and work on time and access all parts of this State safely.

The centre-piece of our \$2.8 billion infrastructure package is a massive \$1.6 billion for roads and bridges.

The Budget delivers better roads right around the State including the Tasman Highway from Hobart to Sorell. The Bass Highway, from Wynyard to Marrawah, the Murchison Highway, and completion of the Perth Bypass.

All of these projects will underpin local Tasmanian businesses and the jobs of Tasmanians.

The Budget begins the delivery of the new Bridgewater Bridge, Tasmania's largest ever transport infrastructure project, at \$576 million with expected completion in 2024.

This future focussed Budget also brings forward \$1 million to commence feasibility studies on alternative traffic routes through Hobart including considering whether bypasses, tunnels or a mix of both, form part of the broader cityscape in coming years.

Madam Speaker,

The 2019-20 Budget delivers \$352.6 million in infrastructure investment across our hospitals and health system.

We will complete Stage One of the Royal Hobart Hospital Redevelopment later this year.

Building on Stage One, \$91 million is allocated to fully deliver Stage Two, and will be used to expand the ED to meet growing demand, and comprehensively refurbish A-Block, providing space for additional beds whilst expanding the ICU and J-Block.

The Budget continues our plan for the Launceston General Hospital, with \$76 million over four years, and \$22.4 million for the North West Regional Hospital for an Eight Bed Acute Medical Unit and a purpose built antenatal clinic, as well as \$32 million for a significant capital upgrade for the Mersey.

Madam Speaker,

A world-class education deserves world-class facilities. The Budget also invests in total \$194 million into educational infrastructure.

This includes new schools in Legana and Brighton; significant re-builds at Penguin and Sorell; as well as redevelopments at Devonport High, Cosgrove High, Hobart College, Riverside High School, Tarooma High School, the Southern Support School, and School Farms.

And it includes funding for primary schools in East Launceston, Illawarra, Lansdowne Crescent, Molesworth, Snug, Spreyton and Montagu Bay.

There is also \$6.8 million in infrastructure upgrades, for other schools right around the State, and \$15.5 million towards six new Child and Family Learning Centres as well as \$7 million towards a Centre of Excellence in Clarence and \$5 million for one in Burnie.

Madam Speaker,

The Budget invests \$170.6 million into our law and order infrastructure.

The Budget includes \$64.8 million in funding for the Southern Remand Centre, and \$15 million to upgrade the Burnie Court Complex.

Funding has also been provided for the New Northern Prison, which is expected to cost around \$270 million and we will undertake consultation with communities about identified sites in 2019-20.

We are investing an additional \$125 million for our Affordable Housing Action Plan Two, bringing the Hodgman Liberal Government's investment to almost \$200 million over eight years, the largest investment into affordable housing in Tasmania's history.

I am pleased to announce that we will bring forward \$20 million in expenditure to accelerate the provision of affordable housing sooner for those who need it most.

Our National Parks along with many of our key reserves are one of this State's most precious assets and nearly \$132 million of investment continues into infrastructure to ensure that they can keep up with demand whilst ensuring our outstanding brand is maintained and enhanced.

Madam Speaker,

The Government continues to make strategic investments into its Government businesses and TasWater.

This Budget includes nearly \$800 million in equity investments that will support important and necessary investment in job creating infrastructure undertaken by our businesses and TasWater.

The importance of Tasmanian Irrigation to our agricultural sector, and our economy cannot be overstated.

The Budget includes \$170 million over four years for Pipeline to Prosperity Tranche 3 irrigation projects, delivering additional water security for Tasmanian farmers.

Our partnership through our shareholding with TasWater is of critical importance to the State.

Another \$180 million over four years will be invested to improve our water and sewerage infrastructure which will see a total of \$300 million invested by the State over a 10 year period.

This funding will improve water and sewerage outcomes and support major projects such as the removal of the wastewater treatment plant at Mac Point, the Launceston wastewater and sewerage combined system improvements and the Freycinet Peninsula wastewater system.

The Government knows that rail is an important part of getting freight off roads, and getting our resources to markets.

In partnership with the Australian Government, a total of \$256 million over the next four years will be invested to further build capacity in our rail network.

We are strong supporters of our Forestry Industry and will invest \$575 000 to enable a weighbridge at Parattah to be established so that our southern forest resource can be transported north more efficiently.

Madam Speaker,

Tasmania has what the world wants - and to capitalise on that growth, Tasmania needs to meet that demand.

TT-line is no different, and it is seeing spectacular growth in its freight, passenger and vehicle markets.

To meet this demand, the Government and TT-Line will deliver two purpose-built vessels that are bigger, better and can accommodate more passengers and cars.

As our population and economy continue to grow, our cities are at risk of becoming more congested.

The Government recognises that public transport is a key part of the solution in addressing such demand.

The Budget contains funding to continue to progress the Derwent River Ferry Service, a single ticketing system for buses and ferries, and additional bus infrastructure.

This will support and underpin a new bus transit centre to be constructed in Hobart and the scoping study will report on options shortly.

Madam Speaker,

In recent years there have been significant and unprecedented increases in demand on our services and this Budget responds where it is needed most.

As a result, this Budget will deliver a record investment of \$8.1 billion for Health.

The Government has continued to listen and engage with Tasmanians and the health sector, and we are responding.

Over the Budget and Forward Estimates, \$544 million more will be spent in health than forecast in last year's Budget.

This includes \$240 million in additional funding to the Tasmanian Health Service and Ambulance Tasmania to address increasing health demand.

To demonstrate the level of our response to increasing health demand, compared to the last Budget of the Labor-Green Government there is nearly \$2.3 billion more being spent over four years.

A decade ago, health expenditure comprised around 25 per cent of the Budget and this Government has increased it to where it now represents nearly 32 per cent of total Budget expenditures.

For all the negativity of those opposite, it is this Government that has had the capacity and dedication to invest more into health than ever before.

In our first term of Government, we hired an additional 100 doctors and more than 370 more nurses, more than 50 more paramedics and more than 60 more allied health staff.

We have continued our investment and while we know there is always more to do, the Government is delivering. In total we have now hired more than 550 more nurses, more than 160 more doctors, more than 90 more paramedics and more than 110 allied health professionals.

But the fact is our hospitals are under strain, which is why we have worked hard to get the Royal Hobart Hospital rebuild back on track, saved the Mersey Hospital and significantly invested into the LGH as well as into our regional hospital network.

There is \$2 million to boost access to women's health services, targeting those who have waited the longest on the elective surgery waiting list.

And the Budget provides \$20 million for our Ambulance Service, to continue the roll out of 42 paramedics in regional areas, and a \$4.5 million boost, over six years, for the Ambulance Tasmania State Operations Centre.

The Budget also sees the continuation of \$51.8 million over five years in funding for a new dedicated Aeromedical Helicopter Service.

Madam Speaker,

Mental health is a key priority of this Government.

The Budget continues our Plan to deliver 27 more mental health beds with a new purpose-built facility for St Johns Park and an additional \$1.7 million for an equivalent mental health Hospital in the Home service.

We are rolling-out 30 more Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Beds, with \$4 million over two years and we are investing \$2.4 million over three years for community-based Drug and Alcohol rehabilitation beds in Ulverstone, to better support the North West.

Madam Speaker,

We know that Education is a major contributor to improving social and economic outcomes, including health, happiness, life expectancy and productivity.

That's why this year's Budget delivers record education expenditure of over \$7.1 billion over four years, an increase of \$349 million compared to last year's Budget.

Across the Budget and Forward Estimates, the Government is continuing its six-year plan for education with an additional \$145 million to hire more teachers and support staff.

Since coming to Government we have already hired 222 more teachers and our six year plan supports an additional 250 teachers and 80 teacher assistants.

Included in the Government's most recent wages offer, are an additional 95 more specialist teachers in our primary schools which will result in our primary school teachers having the lowest contract hours in the country.

This would be a nation-leading outcome for our children.

We understand that education occurs throughout a person's life and the 2019-20 Budget includes \$8 million for Free Pre-School for three year olds, from disadvantaged or vulnerable families.

Furthermore this Budget maintains the momentum and continues our plan to extend all high schools to year 12 by 2022.

Madam Speaker,

TasTAFE will continue to build the skills for our changing workforce. The Budget includes \$2.9 million over two years to ensure our skilled workforce is able to meet Industry Demand. This funding will provide for increased pre-vocational training to support the construction industry, address workforce shortages and to train more nurses.

Through targeted initiatives such as the Small Business Grants Program and the Payroll Tax Rebate Scheme, we are continuing to invest in key areas and programs that ensure more Tasmanians are able to gain the necessary skills to enable them to find employment.

These schemes encourage businesses to take on more apprentices and trainees in key industries such as building and construction, tourism and hospitality, and advanced manufacturing.

Local job opportunities provide young apprentices and trainees the skills they need to succeed for the rest of their life while allowing them to stay where they want to be, right here in Tasmania.

Madam Speaker,

We want every Tasmanian to have the opportunity to participate in and benefit in our strong economy no matter where they live.

This is why we are investing \$6 million to develop and implement the Government's Strategic Growth framework, which will take a whole-of-government approach to policy, planning and investment for sustainable, long-term growth.

It allows for new initiatives that will help bridge the gap between those who are fully engaged with our growing economy and those individuals and areas of the State that need a little more support.

It will enable our record infrastructure investments to be coordinated with education, skills and training programs to unlock the potential of our regions and create even more jobs, so local people have the best chance to live and work in the place they call home.

This will ensure we have strong, vibrant and resilient regional communities, with strategic growth creating opportunity for generations to come.

Madam Speaker,

The Budget also contains more than \$300 million to provide concessions for electricity, water and sewerage and rates.

We will also work hard to keep cost of living low with caps on water and sewerage, and electricity prices.

It is now one year since we established the Department of Communities Tasmania to provide a more joined-up approach for our children, young people, families, our elderly, and our aboriginal communities.

To maintain this momentum, an additional \$2.3 million has been provided in the 2019-20 Budget to support the Child Safety Service Redesign.

We have allocated an additional \$16.9 million for Out of Home Care to support our most needy children and additional funding is also being provided for the Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People.

Madam Speaker,

The Budget also includes an additional \$6.6 million over three years for the Government's nation leading, Safe Homes Safe Families Action Plan.

Funding of \$542 000 is provided over four years to continue Supporting the Reset with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is a hugely significant reform, and this Budget invests an additional \$27.5 million across the Budget and the Forward Estimates meaning that just over \$1 billion dollars will be provided in funding to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and to support people with a disability who are not eligible for the NDIS.

And the Budget also allocates \$850 000 to develop and implement a new Strategy for the Prevention of Elder Abuse.

Madam Speaker,

We have rebuilt police numbers, adding 113 Police Officers and will hire another 125 supported by an additional \$20.1 million to deliver this commitment, right around the State.

We will also take the first step towards establishing a full-time Special Operations Group, by investing \$1 million into a fit for purpose facility and allocating \$400 000 for the procurement of specialist equipment.

We will also allocate an additional \$14.4 million to support our courts and related legal services.

This includes nearly \$5 million for a new Magistrate for Southern Tasmania and a replacement Magistrate in the North West, and \$2.2 million to support an additional Supreme Court Judge.

The Government will also continue to fund Community Legal Centres, and the Legal Aid Commission of Tasmania, and we will provide \$3.3 million over four years in additional funding to offset the reduction in funding from the Australian Government.

A further \$16.8 million will also be allocated to the Tasmanian Prison Service to address rising demand.

Madam Speaker,

Supported by the actions of the Government to build new housing and incentivise the private sector to do the same, the Tasmanian housing sector is the strongest in the country.

Over the year to March, Tasmania led the nation in finance for the construction of new homes, which increased by 19.2 per cent. And last year Tasmania was the strongest State for new dwelling commencements and completions, up 14.4 per cent and 28.3 per cent respectively.

Despite this significant building activity, the Government understands that more still needs to be done.

To help improve rental availability, we will also extend to 30 June 2023 land tax concessions for properties made available for long-term rental from the short-stay accommodation market and for new builds.

To further assist with housing affordability, the Government will extend the \$20 000 First Home Owner Grant and the duty concession for first home buyers of established homes and for eligible pensioners that downsize their home out to 30 June 2020.

We are also working closely with local government to finalise their components of the Statewide Planning Scheme and this Budget contains \$2 million to complete this task that will help deliver more housing, sooner.

Madam Speaker,

Tasmania's agricultural sector delivers premium produce.

Our plan to Take Agriculture to the Next Level, includes \$16 million in funding over four years for industry development initiatives across the dairy, red meat, horticulture, wine, hemp, apiary and organic agriculture sectors.

These initiatives will support the Government's target for the agriculture sector to reach \$10 billion per year by 2050.

We must work to continually strengthen Tasmania's biosecurity system against those risks that could threaten Tasmania's agricultural production, environment, market access and brand.

We will invest \$10.5 million over four years to strengthen Tasmania's biosecurity border, and nearly \$4 million will also be spent from the Biosecurity Emergency Response and Research Fund.

Tasmania's biosecurity border initiative will build on our past investments, and include additional front-line officers, improved preparedness and emergency response capacity and better engagement with our tourism industry.

The Biosecurity border package will be funded from fees for the services provided, in line with other jurisdictions across the country.

Madam Speaker,

Tasmania leads the nation when it comes to renewable energy and we are on track to be 100 per cent renewable by 2022. In terms of cost of living, we will deliver the lowest regulated electricity prices in the nation by 2022.

Tasmania is now on the cusp of a period of investment into energy projects that will be as important to the State as Hydro industrialisation was last century.

Significant investment into Tasmanian renewable energy is already occurring. Recently, the first of 48 new wind turbines were installed at the Cattle Hill Wind Farm in the Central Highlands.

The Battery of the Nation and Project Marinus proposals are the largest projects ever considered in the State's history with an estimated \$7 billion in total investment.

TasNetworks is currently completing the business case and the Budget includes an additional \$56 million in funding towards the delivery of the first stage of approvals for Project Marinus.

Australia's future energy market needs a massive 17 000 megawatts of new energy storage - and the pumped hydro that Tasmania can offer is recognised as the best option for clean, reliable and low cost power to meet that demand.

By pumping water from our hydro dams back uphill using excess electricity in the system, we can store our precious water for when it is needed and re-use it again and again, providing increased energy security and enabling us to sell our excess energy to the mainland when it's needed.

Battery of the Nation, underpinned by increased interconnection, will give Tasmanians the lowest possible power prices and make the most of our competitive strengths to deliver billions of dollars of investment, thousands of jobs and a long-term revenue stream to re-invest back into our state.

These are game-changing, visionary projects for Tasmania and we will continue to work to bring them to fruition.

Madam Speaker,

While Tasmania's economy continues to grow, and contribute to the nation, so too does our sporting prowess.

The Budget provides \$400 000 over four years to Hockey Tasmania to assist it to participate in the Hockey One National league.

Funding of \$960 000 over four years is also allocated to support women's cricket and \$200 000 in 2019-20 to support hosting Big Bash League and Women's Big Bash League matches in the North and North West of the State.

Work is underway to consider the case for other national teams being based in the State and in this Budget, \$150 000 will be invested to develop the Business Case and pathway for a Tasmanian AFL and AFLW License.

The funding will support a Project Team which will be announced in coming weeks.

Furthermore, we want more of our children engaged in all sports. We are establishing Regional Sports Coordinators in schools who will be sports-neutral and will be the primary point of contact for Clubs and Leagues, of all sporting codes, to assist more children to become involved in sport.

This policy builds on the Government's Ticket to Play and Levelling the Playing Field policies that encourage as many Tasmanians as possible to get out there, increase participation, and play sport.

Madam Speaker,

Our strong economy enables us to invest record amounts into essential services and unprecedented levels of investment in infrastructure.

However, there is always more to do and this Budget also contains a range of initiatives to further support our economy and create jobs.

Tasmania is a must-see destination for global travellers.

More visitors, spending more, are coming here than ever before.

However, the visitor economy is constantly evolving, and it is important to stay ahead of the curve.

Our Brand is everything - and to ensure that we are well positioned in a changing global tourism market, the Government is investing \$4 million over four years to establish Brand Tasmania to ensure our Brand continues to grow.

The Government will also invest \$5.7 million to accelerate and underpin quality tourism, hospitality and business event outcomes.

To maintain the momentum and position the visitor economy for growth, the Government is investing \$151.7 million to support tourism, recreation and cultural infrastructure with much of this investment occurring throughout our regions.

An additional \$16 million of new investment will support and enhance the regionally important West Coast Wilderness Railway.

New product development on the supply side is critical and this Budget provides a new \$20 million Regional Tourism Attraction Concessional Loan Scheme to support the development of attractions in regional Tasmania such as vineyards, distilleries and breweries, developing accommodation and cellar doors, or adventure tourism businesses.

Furthermore, we will also provide support to the Hobart City Council of \$500 000 to support their restructuring and revitalisation of Taste of Tasmania, one of Tasmania's iconic events.

Madam Speaker,

Tasmania has what the world wants, and to ensure that Tasmania's remarkable export growth story continues, the Government will invest \$4.4 million for the Tasmanian Trade Strategy, and \$2.8 million over four years to support a new Defence Strategy.

The Trade Strategy sets out a whole-of-government approach to working with businesses to grow trade, both in Australia and internationally.

The Defence Strategy will assist businesses in our advanced manufacturing, food, health, Antarctic and ICT industries and will complement the Trade Strategy.

Tasmania's small businesses make up around 90 per cent of our businesses and employ nearly half our work force. They are one of the State's key drivers of jobs and investment growth.

To maintain this momentum the Government has developed a new five year Tasmanian Business Growth Strategy in collaboration with the TCCI and the Tasmanian Small Business Council. This strategy will be underpinned by an additional \$1 million in support to help grow our businesses and support the establishment of new ones.

The Strategy will complement the Trade and Defence Strategies, as well as the work of the Red Tape Reduction Coordinator and Small Business Advocate. It will assist our small businesses to leverage off our record investment into infrastructure.

Madam Speaker,

The 2019-20 Budget outlines our Plan for the next four years.

Whether it be record investments into health and education, providing support for young people or for those who need a hand-up, our plan supports all Tasmanians.

It unashamedly invests record amounts to build the infrastructure our growing State needs and to deliver our vision for Tasmania's future.

It will underpin a strong economy, support businesses large and small, attract investment and it will create more jobs.

It maintains the momentum and invests for growth.

Madam Speaker,

I commend the Bill to the House.