

## Tasmanian Election - 2024 - TASSO Priorities

*The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations Inc (TASSO) is the peak body representing all Tasmanian State School Associations.*

TASSO is a not-for-profit organisation that:

- Provides guidance to strengthen and support all School Associations Committees in Tasmanian State Schools, empowering committees to support their School Associations.
- Advocates for the issues that our members value.

TASSO calls on all Tasmanian political parties to commit to the following:

### 1. Make a financial commitment to fully fund Tasmanian state schools

TASSO is insisting that education should be fair and equitable in Tasmania. We firmly urge the incoming Tasmanian State government to commit to fully funding government education in our state.

We are asking that you commit to:

- Make up the funding shortfall to ensure Tasmanian State schools are funded to the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) regardless of the proportion of the Federal Government contributes, and,
- Ensure equality between government and non-government schools by removing accounting tricks from the bilateral agreement.

The Federal Government has acknowledged that the government schools have been underfunded for decades. Their expert panel's *Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System* has told us that the underfunding of government schools is "critical" and requires "urgent action".

It's time to act and correct the underfunding of our schools.

*Will you and your party commit to fully funding education as recommended in the expert reviews?*

### 2. Address allied health and assessment shortfalls in state schools

TASSO believes waitlists and position vacancies in allied health and assessment services are unacceptable and further add to the inequality of education in the state. TASSO is urging a strategic approach to attracting and retaining staff, and meaningful reduction to the wait times for services.

The vacancies for School Psychologists and Speech Pathologists, particularly in the North and North-West of the state, is concerning. Currently families are being forced into the private sector for assessments instead of being added to the school waitlist; a personal cost to families that is often not an option.

We are asking that you commit to:

- Incentivising allied health professionals to move to or stay in Tasmania by offering:
  - A competitive salary,
  - Increasing annual leave, and,
  - Creating HECS relief opportunities and linked study incentives.



- Reviewing the triage system currently in place and assessing better ways of ensuring all school have the opportunity for students to see health professionals and collaboration between the Health and Education sectors.
- A re-evaluation the regional split of services to take pressure off Northern services, and the consider pathways that limit the time waste of distance travel.
- Increase university pathways into the allied health professions in Tasmania.

*Will you and your party pledge to increasing allied health services in government schools?*

### 3. Create an independent external maintenance and capital expenditure oversight board

Transparent oversight is needed for essential maintenance and capital expenditure in schools, to avoid politicisation and “picking winners”.

The federal government *Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System* calls for an education system that is transparent; TASSO would like to see that transparency extended to school infrastructure and maintenance.

We call on you to commit to the creation of an independent external maintenance and capital expenditure oversight board to ensure:

- All school sites have a publicly available, independent, and comprehensive safety and building audit completed by the end of 2025,
- That all maintenance work is project based with all projects ranked by priority,
- Recommendations for capital works are made based on the priority list, and
- Only when the cost benefit is considerable are project grouped at one school, allowing projects to climb the list.

School infrastructure should not be a part of a political campaign. The creation of an oversight board will allow the schools most in need of upgrades to be prioritised over the political “wins” of the voting public.

*Will you and your party reform school capital works allocations for Tasmanian state schools?*

### 4. Urgently review Year 11 and 12 education

Our member School Associations have expressed concerns over the expenditure of, and demand for, a Year 11 and 12 program where there is a dedicated College within proximity to the high school.

TASSO are requesting:

- That a national method of determining retention/successful education be developed to effectively capture transitions to apprenticeships and vocational training,
- A comprehensive and transparent review into the efficacy and financial cost of delivering year 11 and 12 in city high schools who have traditionally transitioned to an established college nearby,
- A complex survey and review of the models most effective in supporting students in rural and regional communities, without access to a college, to stay engaged with and participating in place-based year 11 and 12 courses in their community.

*Will you and your party commit to evaluating Year 11 and 12 education?*



## 5. Provide reliable free bus travel to all state school students

TASSO strongly insists free bus travel be implemented immediately for all state school students. With the rising cost of living and a focus on attendance by DECYP, TASSO advocates that this initiative meets both objectives.

Associated with student transport, staggering school start and end times and extending supervision/duty of care hours to meet with available student transport needs or as a congestion-busting measure should be considered.

To ensure efficacy of such measures, TASSO seek implementation of a free service with an evaluation of:

- Attendance of students before and after implementation,
- Wellbeing of students before and after implementation, and
- The impact on traffic congestion around schools.

*Will you and your party reform school bus services?*

## 6. Provide before and after school care for all primary and district state schools that require it

TASSO believes that parents of primary school aged students should be able to access before-school and after-school care for their children at or near their school.

There is a growing demand for such services, with many school communities reporting services at-capacity or only available offsite with insufficient transport options available.

TASSO believe that available positions need to be increased under the current user-pays model, and that solutions need to:

- Evaluate schools based on their ability to offer/integrate with before/after school care,
- Consider on or off-site options, with integrated transport available for those off-site,
- Consider school location and the opportunity for shared services between schools,
- Streamline restrictions for space-sharing for outside providers in school facilities, and
- Consider the creation of Department-staffed services operating on school sites where commercial services are not already established.

*What is your commitment to ensure that working parents have access to before and after school care?*

For comment please contact:

Jessica Bennett

Operations Manager

[info@tasso.org.au](mailto:info@tasso.org.au)

(03)6243 7718 | 0408 170 355

