

State Budget: Address in Reply

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Ms WOODRUFF (Franklin) –

Madam Speaker, I am proud to present the details of the Greens' fully costed Alternative Budget within my portfolio areas.

The Greens have discussed our energy strategy on numbers of occasions in this House since we tabled it early this year. I am pleased to detail how it will be costed and the role it will play in contributing significant revenue to the Greens' Alternative Budget. It is revenue that we would spend on an ambitious investment in **preventative health** to turn around this state's terribly high rates of chronic diseases and revenue that we would spend on moving to a zero carbon future as quickly as possible.

The Greens have a big vision for Tasmania and we want to retain our position as the top renewable state in Australia. At the moment this state has slipped down the ranks in terms of investment in new renewables and in targets for energy efficiency and generation. We have to act immediately to reduce our carbon dioxide emissions. The changes over this last summer have shown us the direct impact of **global warming** even if, like the Minister for Energy, we did not already listen to the meteorological evidence. Tasmania experienced the longest reported marine heatwave on the east coast, the highest average water temperatures, the most devastating fires ever in the Wilderness World Heritage Area, the hottest summer on record and devastation to our oyster industry. This is the future unfolding before us. We have to pay more than lip service to **renewable energy**.

The Tasmanian Greens' renewable energy target is for us as a state to be producing 100% of our net electricity needs and to be a net exporter of renewable electricity by 2022. That would be regardless of how much it rains. Our Alternative Budget makes sure we will be self sufficient in large scale and distributed **renewables**. The Greens would fund the establishment of *RenewTAS*, an independent statutory authority that would be responsible for managing our progress towards our target. It will be responsible for attracting investment from around the world and conducting reverse auctions for medium to large scale **renewable energy projects**.

The Greens' budget has a plan for renewables that will generate an enormous financial return for the community instead of being yet another ill thought out energy debt that holds the state back. Clean energy reverse auctions are driving a renewables boom from Brazil to Denmark, from South Africa to the ACT. We have a plan to deliver 1305 megawatts of new large scale installed capacity. This would produce enough **clean electricity** to power

more than 770 000 homes. *RenewTAS* would coordinate and deliver two major reverse auctions. The auctions will deliver a total of 1200 megawatts of new renewables. These would each be delivered in two stages with 300 megawatts of new renewable generation coming on line every financial year from 2019-20 to 2022-23. We would commit \$4 million to this over the forward estimates with funding highest in 2018-19 to cover the cost of the two large reverse auctions in that year.

We would provide the financial certainty necessary for Granville Harbour wind farm to get the banking finance that it needs to begin construction. They are ready to have 105 megawatts of renewable capacity on line by 2018-19 if there was a government willing to provide them with a power purchase agreement. By moving now Tasmania stands to earn over \$100 million in revenue from this budget cycle alone. Our conservative estimates, which allow for higher standards of **environmental outcomes**, would see the amount climbing to nearly \$500 million by 2022-23 from the sale of large-scale generation certificates. We have to remember that Tasmania has benefited to the tune of millions of dollars in the past from the sale of large-scale generation certificates, but that was at the expense of running down our assets last year, i.e. Hydro's water storages.

The Greens recognise a renewable future can only be delivered if we have a smarter electricity network. A Green Government would invest in **smart grid technology** to increase renewable generation, reduce the network operating costs and avoid unnecessary capital works. A smart grid will give customers choice and improve network reliability. We need it so we can expand the amount of renewable energy we move through our grid system. Our investment in this area will increase to \$20 million a year by 2020-21 and be \$31 million through the forward Estimates.

Tasmanians deserve a fair price for the solar electricity they generate. Our analysis of electricity generation costs, as well as the benefits to the network. To health and through **reducing carbon emissions**, because we consider all the extra analyses show that solar power is worth between 17 and 22 cents per kilowatt hour.

A Green Government will implement a **fair feed in tariff**. This will boost the solar industry and the number of jobs, especially in rural areas. It will also increase our energy security through diversifying generation sources and making for cleaner and healthier communities. This fair feed-in tariff, in combination with other initiatives I will outline, means Tasmania will be able to reach the target we set to have 50 000 Tasmanian homes and businesses with rooftop solar by 2020.

The Greens believe all Tasmanians should be able to produce renewable energy if they want to. We recognise the upfront installation cost of **rooftop solar** is still too high for most low-income households. That is why a Greens government will fund an interest-free loan scheme to install solar panels on households that have a combined income of less than \$40 000. Administrative costs aside the scheme would be cost neutral with funds being returned to the government through household electricity bill savings.

For some households, rooftop solar can never be an option because people live in rented accommodation or apartments. That is why we would fund community solar farm initiatives. Under this program people can own or lease a number of panels in a solar farm with the generation credited to people's household bills. With a fair feed-in tariff,

community solar farms make financial sense. We would commit \$500 000 a year in grants to councils and community groups to help set up these solar farms.

The Labor-Green Government delivered 9500 free energy efficiency upgrades to low income households, community groups and small businesses in that term of government. The Liberals have abandoned this key cost of living measure. The Government's proposed interest-free loan scheme is a good step in the right direction. However, a Greens government will go further and invest an extra \$3 million a year over the forward Estimates in energy efficiency measures.

The Government's ideological distaste for renewables is costing Tasmania billions of dollars in missed investments, a massive number of jobs in a sustainable industry. It is jeopardising our clean green brand we have worked so hard to establish and it will not give us the energy security Tasmanians now crave from the experiences of this energy crisis. A Green Government will take the opportunity to sensibly use the income renewables will provide to fund other services in the economy.

Tasmania's **doctors, nurses, paramedics** and **social workers** were some of those most severely affected by the Liberals' vicious public sector cuts when they came to office. These cuts have flowed on now to impacting other Tasmanians.

The events unfolding in our **hospitals** in the last few months have been inexcusable. They shame us all. We do not want to hear another traumatic story before it is fixed but, unfortunately, in the last three days I have heard three terrible stories from our hospitals in Tasmania and it seems we are destined to hear more. The Minister has to stop blaming health professionals and the previous government for the problems in his **health** system. He has been in charge for two years now and he has to fix it, but there is nothing in his budget that indicates it is going to happen.

The Government's Budget has \$18.5 million cut from the Tasmanian Health Service in nominal terms. In real terms, with wages, drugs and the cost of basic equipment increasing, when these are accounted for it will be an estimated actual \$50 million cut to health service delivery. Instead, a Greens budget invests \$29.4 million over the forward Estimates to restoring frontline staff to the pre-Ferguson levels. The Greens understand that **allied health** professions make up 25% of the health workforce, including important professions such as dietitians, occupational therapists, social workers, and podiatrists.

The penny-pinching of this Minister is staggering. We have budgeted to fund the tiny amount of money required to ensure the allied health sector has a seat at the table so they can represent the needs of their patients in the Tasmanian Health Service executive.

Tasmania currently lags substantially behind the rest of the country on **health outcomes**. We have to make a substantial investment in prevention or the current trajectory of chronic diseases, smoking, obesity, and cancer rates will continue to go upwards. The Liberals' Health budget shows how short-term their vision for Tasmania is and what they are prepared to sacrifice in order to paint the fake picture of a budget surplus. The Minister has committed only \$400 000 a year to **preventive health**, which means he has decided to jettison the target of Tasmania being the healthiest state in Australia by 2025. Either that or he is planning to be out of office by then. A Greens government will commit an initial 3% of the state's total Health budget to preventative measures, building up to 5 per cent,

with a focus on funding changes to the environment so that people can make active, healthy life choices. The funding will be phased in over five years and continually reviewed.

Our commitment into preventative health is an investment of \$100 million over four years. We will expand the funding of coordinated community-run service delivery and early childhood initiatives. Without a holistic focus on the person instead of the disease we will not make headway in improving health. We know the **health and wellbeing** of everyone is largely affected by factors outside the health sector that impact upon people's lives, affecting the choices they make. Having good health is more than changing your attitude. The physical environment, education system, child development, housing, transportation and employment all contribute towards a person's health status.

The Greens will adopt the *Health in All Policies* framework that is being promoted by the Tasmanians Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance and TasCOSS. This recognises that the health of Tasmanians is central to our state's economic, social and environmental future. We will provide \$5.3 million over four years, with \$1.9 million of this to establish and run an independent inter-sectoral board and \$3.4 million for a population and **social health** centre. The Greens understand how the built environment can build health or act against us. That is why we will provide \$200 000 over two years to develop a state policy for health spaces and places with local governments and other stakeholders. We understand the need to improve access to information and treatment so that all Tasmanians, especially people in rural areas who are less well-served, can increase their chance of surviving a heart attack and reducing damage to their heart. We will establish a statewide **cardiac services** plan and provide funding to deliver that heart health information.

The Greens understand that not everyone has the knowledge or the ability to easily purchase cheap, **local fresh food**. It means that people end up with a diet that is stacked with high sugar and low nutritional foods. Over time, this increases their chance of disease. We understand that there are environmental reasons for this relating to more than just an individual's household income level. The Greens will establish a food and nutrition coalition with Government, non-government health and human services bodies, the University of Tasmania, schools, Neighbourhood Houses and agriculture and industry partners. The coalition will have two roles: to fund actions that help households access good food, and to assess and update nutritional advice on healthy food options. We will invest \$1.2 million over three years with matched funding for local government investment.

The relationship between sugar and the soaring rates of obesity and diabetes is now well established. The success of anti-smoking policies demonstrates that we have to move from individual action to changing the regulatory environment. Other countries are taking the lead and **taxing sugar** and banning the sale of high-sugar foods in certain places. A Green Government will invest \$3 million and work across all public venues such as schools, hospitals, health facilities and government offices to restrict the supply of high-sugar drinks and foods, and to ban sponsorship of government-funded events. We will accompany this with a widespread community information campaign to correct the knowledge gap about the mechanisms that lead from eating sugar to obesity and ill health.

The Health Minister has talked big about **preventive health**. The community had very high expectations about the level of funding he would invest in the rollout for the Rethinking Mental Health strategy and the three suicide prevention strategies as well. The community is shocked. This Health Minister has fallen far behind their expectations in his chance to properly show that he is serious about these four major preventative health strategies. Suicide rates among young Australians are at an alarming level and suicide can be prevented through an early intervention and capacity-building approach. A Green Government will deliver an additional \$2 million a year to support the development of individual resilience and community support for people with **mental health** problems and continuity in the workforce.

The Greens care about **vulnerable people** and want to reduce the harmful effects of drug use on individuals, the flow-on effects to their families, the loss of productive members of society, and the massive cost of drug-related disease on the health budget. Australia has a long and proud record of harm reduction for drug users and we mean to uphold this record. We understand that the Government still underfunds needle and syringe programs for intravenous drug users. We would put in a \$2.9 million investment over the forward Estimates because we know from Department of Health figures that **needle and syringe programs** save money on the health budget.

We also know there is nothing we can say to stop young people from experimenting with drugs if they have a mind to do it. Children have always done this and they will always undertake risky behaviour. They are incredibly vulnerable and we want to do everything we can to protect them at a time when they have little awareness or care of the long-term effects of drug use.

The Greens have listened to concerned parents. We will act to reduce the harm and purchase **pill-testing** machines and fund staff to help keep festival-goers safe. We will make safe pill-testing available at major events around Tasmania and between events by certified community sector agencies. We are glad to hear the Police Association also supports our call for responsible harm reduction and are shocked at the Minister's flippant and negative responses. He of all people should understand that the war on drugs has failed.

The Greens understand that tobacco is still the single largest cause of preventable death and disease in Australia. The data shows that Tasmania still has the highest proportion of current smokers of all states. The latest figures show an alarming increase in rates amongst young smokers. This is an enormous cost to the health system and a senseless loss of life. The Greens will provide \$2.4 million over the forward Estimates to ensure tobacco control advertising programs continue. We support the *Tobacco Free Generation Bill* that has been tabled in the Upper House and we will also support any sensible legislative measure that reduces the availability of tobacco products to young people.

More than 70% of Australians would prefer to die at home, but less than 20% of us are able to do that. A Green Government will boost funding to hospice@HOME to make sure Tasmanians have the best coordinated care possible. The Launceston community is calling out for a stand-alone palliative care facility. With an ageing population and a public hospital stretched to the limit we need to increase capacity to improve palliation for patients in Launceston. The Greens will allocate \$9.8 million over the forward Estimates to fund palliative care units in the north.

With the total Tasmanian Health budget of \$1.37 billion at least, the Greens do not accept the Health Minister cannot find a piffling \$61 000 to keep the doors of Scarlet Alliance open. The **Sex Worker Project** has played a crucial role to keep down rates of HIV and STIs in sex workers and the wider population for more than a decade. They have built up trust with local and fly-in, fly-out sex workers. Only a peer can connect with these marginalised women. We know this Minister has cut the service for ideological reasons and we condemn him for this. We will immediately reinstate their funding.

The community sector provides essential services that contribute to the health and happiness of Tasmanians and that sector employs more than 10 000 people, manages far more volunteers than this and contributes more than \$50 million to the Tasmanian economy each year. Like the construction and forestry sectors, the funding sources and the structural nature of the community sector industry is undergoing a massive change. A Green Government has listened to the sector and will invest \$3 million a year in specialist support for community sector organisations in the areas of accounting, legal, business modelling and marketing to help the sector secure funding and remain viable into the future.

The Greens speak for Tasmanians who believe humans have an **ethical responsibility** to care for one another, for other species and for habitats. A **healthy environment** is the basis of a healthy society and a flourishing economy. Without it, our core brand value of being a pristine state means nothing. The **marine environment** is under tremendous pressure from climate change and the invasive species that have come as a result of it and from overfishing, despite the intensive management that occurs.

The need for a comprehensive system of no take marine protected areas to conserve **marine biodiversity** and protect fish stocks, has never been greater. The Greens are committed to ensuring policies to enable all recognised marine bio regions of Tasmania to have proper protection. We will invest \$500 000 a year to implement the existing marine protected areas strategy. Our Alternative Budget also prioritises \$250 000 to conduct marine research to help better understand how we can respond to the rapidly changing marine environment. We will also fund a sea urchin barren survey and a study into the sustainability of the abalone industry.

The Greens believe proper **waste management** is a matter of social, environmental and economic urgency. The recovery and recycling sectors offer us massive economic and social opportunities in the form of investment in new recycling processes and in regional employment growth. We recognise non-biodegradable plastics and **micro plastics** are now one of the greatest threats to ocean ecology and to bird and marine life. Our view is that those companies and individuals responsible for making the waste should be responsible for the real cost of managing it.

A Green Government will immediately implement a \$10 per tonne waste levy. This will be hypothecated towards programs that improve resource recovery and create employment in this area. It will help local government manage land fill for the future. A conservative \$10 a tonne has wide acceptance across councils already. The benefits of waste recovery can be best achieved by starting with the low levy and gradually increasing it following education and community acceptance. We would use this funding for resource recovery centres, coast care groups to deal with **marine debris**, mattress recycling facilities,

collaboration with industry to recover more construction and demolition waste and for Men's Sheds to up-cycle resources in communities.

The proposed **cat management** plan is a great initiative of the Government and of the community members who have worked so long and hard to get to where we are today. It is widely supported by farmers and conservationists who are alarmed at the horrendous impacts of feral cats on native wildlife and livestock losses. Reducing feral cats will mean more DPIPW staff to oversee changes to the proposed Cat Management Act and to work with councils. Tasmanians will need education about responsible cat ownership. We need a pilot study of the best approaches in high conservation and agricultural areas, as well as support for the anticipated extra burden on the RSPCA and the Cat Centre. A Greens government will immediately invest \$500 000 a year in cat management.

Tasmania is dragging its heels on **threatened species protection**. We have a statewide strategy that has not been updated for 15 years. We have close to 640 plants and animals that are listed as rare, vulnerable or threatened in the state and an out of date strategy that is supposed to guide their protection. Of the 40 recovery plans for individual animals listed on the Tasmanian Government website more than half are out of date. It is a similar situation for the planned **recovery plans**. We have a responsibility to prevent more extinctions, but we are not putting anywhere near enough funding in. A Greens government will invest \$250 000 a year in updating our statewide strategy and committing to creating new recovery plans with targets and performance measures.

This Government's statewide planning system delivers for developers at the expense of Tasmanian communities, the environment and the clean, green brand that our tourism and export industries have been built on. A Greens government will allocate funding to develop state policies and a Tasmanian planning scheme that places the community first and ensures sustainable development. We would provide \$1.7 million over two years to find a comprehensive and transparent community consultation of the **planning scheme** and the proposed state planning provisions, and to engage properly with local government. We would also fund a review of the compliance of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme with the objectives of the resource management and planning system legislation.

The Senate Inquiry Report into Tasmania's Salmon Farming Industry recommended greater transparency of planning decisions in Tasmania, the public release of data and increased funding to improve the planning, monitoring and compliance of fish farming operations. Never has this need been more apparent than now with the Liberals' lack of regulation of the proposed expansion of fish farming into Tasmania's east coast waters. The weakness of DPIPW regulation is gob smacking. No modelling for nearly 20 years on the impacts of **fish farming** in that marine environment and none has been required of the potential impact on recreational fishing, existing commercial fisheries, on tourism or on the local community. The Greens will invest \$500 000 a year into making aquaculture properly accountable, just like other farming industries, and moving its regulation back within the legislative framework of the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act.

This Government's relentless attack on justice has not gone un-noted. The credibility of the Government's Budget is placed in question again when we look at the policy to abolish suspended sentences. The legal community provides strong evidence to show that suspended sentences are a proven and cost effective option and that they **deter re-offending**. What is more, they do this without significant taxpayer expense. We do not

know where the extra money will come from to implement this tough-on-crime rhetoric because we cannot find any allocations within the Budget. The Sentencing Advisory Council report placed the cost of implementing the Attorney-General's suspended sentencing approach at \$30.6 million a year if all of their recommendations were implemented and up to \$50.9 million every year if they are not.

The Liberals will have to admit that they have misled Tasmanians with the election policy they made to abolish **suspended sentences** on a cost basis. Their populist and tough-on-crime rhetoric is looking to be hugely costly to taxpayers.

The Government restricts funding for drug treatment orders through the court-mandated diversion program to just 80 participants. A review of the program suggests that the real level of demand for drug treatment orders is twice this level. DTOs are far cheaper than imprisonment. They help people move on with their lives and reconnect with their community and responsibility. Our budget funds an expansion of this program. The **reintegration of the ex-offenders** program provides intensive support and guidance to ex-prisoners who want to rebuild their lives and find a secure, affordable home when they leave prison. The Greens will reverse the short-sighted cuts of the Government and restore the \$280 000 a year to help ex-offenders find a place in society and ultimately help reduce the risk of re-offending.

Equal **access to justice** is critical to the rule of law. Community legal centres protect the legal rights of Tasmanians who cannot afford to represent themselves. The Greens welcome the funding the Government provides for the CLCs in their Budget but we would increase this by more than \$2 million over the forward Estimates to address some of the Liberal Federal funding deficits for these service. Legal Aid has also been subjected to continual federal and state government cuts and the Greens will help address these shortfalls with a commitment of \$3.7 million over the forward Estimates.

The Federal Liberal government's decision to scrap funding to the Environmental Defender's Office was a fundamental attack on the ability of ordinary Tasmanians to defend their lifestyle, environment and communities from inappropriate development. It erodes our rights to protect public land, which is held in trust for future generations and we would provide an extra \$200 000 a year for the **Environmental Defender's Office**.