



# Media Release

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## Prioritise social investments and reforms

The Tasmanian Council of Social Service calls on the State Government to bring forward investment in social infrastructure to underpin the local economy, while prioritising spending on services to support vulnerable Tasmanians.

"The Tasmanian Government needs to complement the Australian Government stimulus package by ensuring that it has a coordinated response that supports disadvantaged people and the local economy," said TasCOSS CEO, Tom Muller

TasCOSS believes the State Government must develop a response that:

- provides immediate financial assistance to vulnerable Tasmanians;
- funds programs that support the development of skills;
- quarantines funding already committed for critical reforms in human services; and
- invests in social infrastructure that will provide an immediate boost to the State's economy as well as contribute to long-term improvement in Tasmania's social indicators.

Specifically, TasCOSS is calling on the State Government to:

- Allocate funding to organisations that provide emergency relief assistance – this will prevent debt and further hardship.
- Fast-track the building of four new Learning and Information Network Centres (LINC)s). In the June 2008-2009 Budget the State Government allocated \$11.3 million over four years for this purpose. This will provide community-based education and training opportunities for disadvantaged jobseekers.
- Allocate new funding to community service organisations to provide pre, post and ongoing employment support to people facing barriers to employment.
- Quarantine funding for vital reforms to children and families and disability services. In the June 2008-09 Budget the State Government committed \$29.5 million over the next four years for reforms to Family Support Services and \$50 million for Disability Services (combined State and Commonwealth contributions). We must see these reforms continue.
- Bring forward the \$90 million investment that was committed over four years to the new Child and Family Centres in order to get these centres quickly established in areas of need. This will stimulate the local economy and provide critically needed early-intervention social infrastructure.
- Increase access to affordable public and community transport services to enable Tasmanians to access services, education and employment opportunities.
- Immediately allocate funding to Housing Tasmania to upgrade insulation in its housing stock. This will complement the Australian Government stimulus package funding for home insulation and provide a boost to the local economy.

"The Tasmanian Government can't afford to let the Federal Government take all the initiative. The State Government needs to take proactive steps to support the economy and Tasmanians living on low-incomes," said Tom Muller.

"That is why the State Government must fast-track smart social investment that will give the economy and community a boost," concluded Tom Muller.

**Tom Muller is available for interview on 6231 0755 or 0448 310 043**