



Media Release

12 June 2009

21st century infrastructure, 20th century education outcomes

In unpacking the State Budget further, the Tasmanian Council of Social Service believes that the long-term social and economic challenge of turning around the State's poor education outcomes, and therefore addressing poverty, has been put off for another day.

'Improving Tasmania's education outcomes is the greatest challenge this state faces,' Tom Muller, CEO of TasCOSS said today.

At the recent COAG meeting the State Government committed to achieving the national target for 90% year 12 or equivalent attainment to 2015. In 2008 Tasmania's retention rate fell to 61.8%.

'With the challenge left unanswered in the Budget, investing in education now becomes the central issue that Tasmanian political parties must address before the next election.'

'We can have as much new infrastructure as we like, but unless we see a massive improvement in school retention rates and post-school qualifications, Tasmania is going to end up with 21st century infrastructure and 20th century education outcomes,' Tom Muller warned.

There is clear and direct correlation between education levels, labour force participation rates, economic growth and innovation, and poverty and disadvantage.

'If Tasmania wants to prosper in the next decade, the Government must firmly put investment in Tasmania's human potential above infrastructure,' Mr Muller said.

'The other issue that becomes clear in examining the Budget further is the disconnect between capital funds and recurrent funds,' Tom Muller said.

'Nobody wants just buildings – facilities, LINCS, and new child and family centres, without the corresponding recurrent investment for services that will make a difference,' Tom Muller concluded.

For further information and interview contact Tom Muller on 0448 310 043