
**Report against the Key Initiatives in the 2014-15 Tasmanian Budget**

For more financial information in relation to these initiatives, see chapter 5 in the 2014-15 Tasmanian Budget Paper No.2, Volume 1.

**Restoring the Project U-Turn Program**

A total of $2 million over four years was provided for the U-turn Program for youth at risk. Upon assuming responsibility for the Program, the Department, following discussion with stakeholders, identified a number of concerns with the operation of the U-Turn program.

The Department subsequently approached the Tasmanian Institute of Law Enforcement Studies (TILES) at the University of Tasmania to undertake research to identify the most appropriate interventions to address the criminogenic needs of medium to high risk young adult offenders aged 18-25. Based on the research undertaken by TILES the Department is finalising the requirements for a new program and will then undertake a tender process to engage a provider.

**Planning Reform**

The Department has a central role in the planning reform program, providing policy advice to the Minister and delivering the associated legislative reforms. The first of these reforms commenced in 2014, with the passing of the Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment (Streamlining of Process) Bill 2014 to provide more streamlined processes for finalising the interim planning schemes and for amending planning schemes. The reforms also included a range of other changes to provide for a fairer, faster, cheaper and simpler Tasmanian planning system.

The next major step in these reforms will be the introduction of a Bill to Parliament in late 2015 to provide for a statewide planning scheme. This scheme will deliver a high level of consistency in the planning controls across the State, providing greater certainty to investors and the community about what use and development can occur.

**Suspended Sentences**

A key election commitment of the Government was to progressively phase out suspended sentences and replace them with a range of alternative sentencing options to reflect the gravity of the crime committed, restore confidence in the justice system, enhance community safety and reduce recidivism. This will start with serious
offences that cause death or serious injury, aggravated and armed robbery, sexual
offences, arson and serious drug offences.

The Sentencing Advisory Council (SAC) was tasked with examining Tasmania’s
current use of suspended sentences and investigating alternative sentencing options
that could be introduced with the phasing out of suspended sentences.

SAC’s interim report is expected early in the 2015-16 financial year to be followed
by a final report early in 2016.

Additional Mining Inspector

Funding of $400 000 over four years was provided to fund a new mining inspector to
ensure, that as investment in this industry increases, mining is undertaken in a safe
manner for all persons working in the industry. This funding will allow the Office of
the Chief Inspector of Mines to achieve the recommended number of six inspectors
required to ensure the safety of Tasmanian mine workers.

Poppy Industry Funding

A total of $1.4 million over two years has been provided to meet the operating
costs of the Poppy Advisory and Control Board. During this two-year period, the
Government will work with stakeholders to identify savings in the Board’s operating
costs and to implement a cost-recovery model commencing in 2016-17. In addition,
there will be some legislative reform undertaken to implement some of the
recommendations identified in the Report of the Tasmanian Poppy Industry
Regulation Review.

Reducing Red and Green Tape

The Department of State Growth and the Department have prioritised a wide-
ranging review of the current regulatory and administrative requirements in place for
the building industry. The review presents the opportunity to take a "clean-slate"
approach to the regulatory arrangements applying in the building industry through
industry and other stakeholder input.

As part of the review, an issues paper was released for public comment in late July
2014. Submissions in relation to the issues paper led to the development of a
Position Paper, containing recommendations, in November 2014. Submissions in
relation to the Position Paper are currently being considered as part of the
redrafting of the framework and will lead to the development of draft legislation
expected to be available prior to the end of 2015.
**Tasmanian Prison Service Funding**

Funding of $4.7 million in 2014-15 was provided with reduced amounts across the Forward Estimates to reflect anticipated efficiencies, resulting from the ongoing change process, being achieved. Through the change process, specific actions have been, and continue to be, taken to achieve a reduction in operating costs. In particular, after many years, overtime, the key variable factor in prison costs, is now trending down. This is a result of efforts to tackle the underlying causes of overtime through operational reforms, such as amending staffing structures, and by implementing comprehensive absence management strategies.

Despite this work, other fixed costs such as insurance, food, consumables, utilities, and growth in wages, which are largely beyond the control of the TPS, are increasing.

The TPS has a very clear focus on improving all aspects of TPS operations over the next few years via the change management program, including bringing the budget under control.