

Helping with the cost of living

Funding of \$5 million is provided over two years to help ease cost of living pressures for Tasmanians most in need. Building on funding of \$3 million provided in last year's Budget, this will support:

- a food access and affordability fund to increase food security for low-income Tasmanians;
- a house warming program that will build on existing energy-efficiency initiatives for draught-proofing homes, warm curtains, energy-saving advice and help with the cost of heat pumps and other energy-efficient appliances; and
- an emergency relief fund so Tasmanians on low incomes can receive financial counselling and help to manage rising household costs.

Energy efficiency for Housing Tasmania properties

The Government will invest a further \$1 million in 2012 to support improvements in energy efficiency for Housing Tasmania tenants. This is in addition to the \$2.5 million per annum for 2012-13 and 2013-14 announced last year to fund energy audits and energy-efficiency improvements in public housing.

Limiting electricity price rises

The Government has announced a major package of measures costing \$37 million to limit electricity price rises in 2012-13 in response to a potential 23 per cent increase. These measures will approximately halve the expected increase. The anticipated price rise will be further reduced by compensation from the Australian Government as part of its Clean Energy Future program.

Increasing the Aurora Energy concession

An additional \$46.9 million over four years will be provided to increase the Aurora Pensioner Concession in line with estimated increases in energy prices. This will increase the total level of support to reduce energy costs for eligible Tasmanian pensioners and Health Care Card holders to \$152.5 million over four years.

Endoscopies and elective procedures

An additional \$4 million is provided in 2012-13 to relieve pressure on elective procedures and to increase the number of endoscopies being performed. This funding will enable hospitals to ensure that those patients who have waited the longest for elective surgery receive appropriate treatment. Waiting times for endoscopies will be reduced for patients who have waited longest and for those whose clinical need has been identified as the most urgent.

Support for the Council on the Ageing

Funding of \$125 000 per annum for the next four years will be provided for the Council on the Ageing (COTA) Tasmania to undertake research that will assist in identifying trends, opportunities and challenges faced by the older Tasmanian population. It will also assist COTA to propose and advocate for innovative, appropriate and evidence-informed approaches that benefit the health, wellbeing and quality of life of older Tasmanians.

Child and Family Centres

\$10 million will be spent in 2012-13 to complete four new Child and Family Centres in Chigwell, Derwent Valley, Burnie and George Town.

A further \$454 000 will allow employment of new staff to manage and operate the services of the new centres. The CFCs will continue to work collaboratively with local schools, families, service providers, the local community, and government and non-government organisations to provide quality, accessible and integrated programs and services for children, their families and communities.

This funding represents the final phase of a four-year project totalling \$34.5 million to construct 11 Child and Family Centres. Seven centres at Beaconsfield, Queenstown, East Devonport, Clarence Plains, Ravenswood, Risdon Cove and St Helens have been completed and are operating.

Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan

Funding of \$2.9 million will be spent in 2012-13 to continue the implementation of the Tasmanian Adult Literacy Action Plan. This plan is being jointly implemented by Skills Tasmania and by LINC Tasmania.

Housing infrastructure

In 2012-13, total housing infrastructure expenditure is \$29 million. This expenditure includes:

- the acquisition of land for the development of affordable housing sites (\$1 million);
- construction of 35 units at Brisbane Street, Hobart (\$1.5 million);
- the continuation of support for the National Rental Affordability Scheme (\$8.2 million);
- development of a community centre and two subdivisions at Clarendon Vale (\$500 000); and
- construction and upgrading activity under the Remote Indigenous Housing National Partnership Agreement (\$1.3 million).

Further information

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