



Tasmanian Greens Party Policy 2014

Democracy and Participation

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The Tasmanian Greens believe that democracy depends upon the effective participation of all citizens in the political life of the community and that, in a rapidly changing world, our public institutions and civic life need nurturing and constant renewal in order to function well.

Many Tasmanians feel marginalised, detached and isolated from public life and increasingly mistrustful of the formal institutions of democratic governance. A growing culture of intimidation against those who dissent has induced a climate of fear where corporate entities are seen to hold disproportionate influence over government. Convolved and valueless consultation and appeal processes have exasperated and alienated many members of the community.

This can be overcome by revaluing the involvement of citizens in the affairs of their communities, especially in the face of the globalisation of the economy, decision-making and communications, and the increasing centralisation of political power. We aim to make governance more transparent and government more accountable.

Domination of decision making by executive government rather than by elected representatives can be redressed by a return to a clear division in government, and simple procedures through which citizens can influence the decisions that affect their lives and communities.

The effectiveness of the Tasmanian Parliament has been severely undermined by the reduction in the number of House of Assembly seats, diminishing the representation of community views. The smaller Parliament has become functionally deficient as a result. The Greens support a return to a thirty five member House of Assembly.

Measures

Parliamentary Reform

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

1. increasing the representativeness of the Tasmanian Parliament;
2. restoring the House of Assembly numbers of MPs to 35: seven members in each of the current five electorates;
3. convening an open Constitutional Convention to explore further parliamentary reform, including reviewing the powers of the Legislative Council and its capacity to block state budgets without having to go to an election itself;
4. legislating for fixed four-year terms for the House of Assembly.

Human and Civil Rights

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

5. legislating a state Charter of Rights and Responsibilities;
6. countering ongoing erosion of civil and human rights;
7. creating the role of state Human Rights Commissioner.

Participatory Democracy

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

8. ensuring that access to Parliament House Gardens for peaceful political gatherings is not curtailed;
9. allowing optional enrolment to vote in elections for those aged 16 and 17 years, with the stipulation that once that option has been exercised, voting then becomes compulsory.

Government Accountability

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

10. ensuring that, where they are at variance, public interest prevails over corporate interest;
11. extending or enacting legislation relating to misleading and deceptive conduct to apply to political advertising;
12. enacting state-based political donations disclosure laws and expenditure reforms that require real-time disclosure, establishment of an expenditure cap for parties, candidates, and third party entities, and ban political donations from tobacco companies and gaming entities;
13. investigating the introduction of public funding for election campaigns, with corresponding restraints on private donations, to ensure an equal playing field for those contesting elections and avoid only the wealthy being able to contest elections successfully;
14. supporting the right of citizens to be given reasons for administrative decisions affecting them;
15. upgrading disclosure requirements especially in regard to politicians' pecuniary interests, including those in local government;
16. increasing citizens' right of access to government-held information.

Public Scrutiny

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

17. improving public access to the services of the Ombudsman and the Health Complaints Commissioner;
18. upgrading legislation protecting the rights of those who publicly disclose information on the illegal activities of politicians, officials, government departments and private corporations;
19. supporting the independent investigation of complaints against public officials.

Public Participation

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

20. developing wider democratic participatory processes;
21. ensuring community input into decision-making that reflects public priorities, values and needs;
22. fostering political involvement across socio-economic barriers;
23. honouring difference and diversity in the community;
24. fostering cooperative partnership agreements between the community and the government;
25. promoting equitable access to information;
26. providing training in facilitation of broad-based participation.

Technological Democracy

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

27. exploring and implementing effective innovations in information technology to facilitate democratic interactions;
28. trialing electronic voting subject to the electoral commission ensuring security of results;
29. promoting the availability of electronic petitions.

Education

The Tasmanian Greens will work towards:

30. maintaining Civics and Citizenship education for all school students;
31. fostering and promoting understanding of the political processes for all citizens.