

**200 DAYS**

**OF**

**INCOMPETENCE**



# In just 200 days

**In the space of just 200 days** – just over six months – the Hodgman Liberal Government has provided Tasmanians with a master class in the cynical art of the political backflip, how to disguise incompetence by throwing tantrums and a comprehensive guide to breaking promises.

In just 200 days, a clear picture has emerged of a government personified by arrogance.

In just 200 days, that arrogance has presented itself in the indifference and condescension with which the Premier and his ministers are willing to treat the Tasmanian public.

In just 200 days, the entrenched arrogance of the Hodgman Government has revealed itself in the outright refusal to consult with the community on unfair, unworkable and outright dangerous laws.

And, last week, it spectacularly culminated in the Government's training wheels falling off.

When the Government didn't get its own way, the incompetent Treasurer threw a tantrum, broke his promise to protect frontline services and sacked hundreds of hard working public servants.



# The art of the backflip

**backflip** [bak-flip] Noun; a complete reversal in attitude or policy.

## Wage Cut Laws

Treasurer Peter Gutwein did not tell 27,000 Tasmanian public sector workers – police officers, nurses, teachers, paramedics, road workers, cleaners, social workers, child protection officers – that his first act after winning government would be to cut their wages.

The Treasurer neglected to tell nurses, teachers and police officers that his Crown Employees (Salaries) Bill would literally mean thousands ripped out of their pockets.



He did not tell these hard-working frontline men and women that he would refuse to negotiate on what he misleadingly calls a “pay pause”.

Instead, he tried to hold Tasmania’s Upper House to ransom, attempting to force through his wages cut law by threatening to cut an additional 500 jobs, on top of the 700 already identified.

His attempted backflip to water down his wages cut law failed so Mr Gutwein staged a double backflip, threw the legislation out and – in the type of tantrum Tasmanians can expect to see more and more – halted negotiations with his own workers and decided to sack them instead.

## Protest Laws

Resources Minister Paul Harriss did not tell Tasmanians that one of his first orders of business would be to breach basic freedoms and trample over international human rights by forcing draconian anti-protest laws upon them.

The Hodgman Liberal Government was determined to take Tasmania back decades by introducing some of the most conservative roadblocks to the right to protest in the country, if not the world.

Paul Harriss simply made these laws up without seeking advice – specifically from the Solicitor General. He refused to admit these laws amounted to a full-scale assault on the basic right to Freedom of Speech and the fundamental freedom to protest.



He refused to consult, refused to seek advice and blindly charged forward with unworkable, unfair laws.

But, like his colleague the Treasurer, the Resources Minister was finally dragged kicking and screaming toward the light and forced to conduct major surgery on his laws. He backflipped.

# Promises, promises

*broken* [broh-kuh n] Adjective; reduced to fragments; fragmented

## Cuts to frontline services

Premier Will Hodgman and Treasurer Peter Gutwein's first State Budget contains hidden cuts that should strike fear into the heart of every Tasmanian. It orders the departments which provide services to Tasmanian taxpayers to slash hundreds of millions of dollars – but neglects to tell them how to do so.

Tasmanians dutifully pay their taxes rightfully expecting public services in return.

The \$774 million worth of cuts in this Budget will touch every Tasmanian State School. They will impact on every Tasmanian hospital. The cuts will wrap their cold, insidious arms around every facet of the public services we take for granted.

- \$148 million will be cut from Education.
- \$210 million will be cut from Health and Human Services.
- Police and Emergency Management must slash more than \$42 million.
- Primary Industries has been ordered to axe more than \$39 million.
- State Growth starts life with an ordered Budget cut of more than \$68 million.

Not one government minister has been able to explain anywhere near adequately how the cuts will be made. So far the government has identified only a pile of umbrellas – collectively valued at \$1,700 – towards an overall target of \$119 million in “supplies and consumables”.

The impact of these cuts is already being felt.

- 50 Pathway Planners who provide critical employment advice to students have been sacked.
- Sittings of the Magistrates Court in Smithton have been axed for the sake of saving \$22,000.
- Frontline workers have already joined the dole queue because the Government sneakily failed to renew fixed-term contracts – including child protection workers and registered nurses and client service officers.

And – all at the same time – the Hodgman Government has been tellingly unable or unwilling to identify specifically what “supplies and consumables” will be axed.

The broken promises are piling up:

- The Liberal Government promised Tasmanians it would deliver 15,000 additional elective surgeries during its term. **But the Estimates process has revealed – beyond doubt – that it cannot deliver on this promise because it has incompetently miscalculated the true cost of each procedure.**
- This Liberal Government promised it would reduce fares on the Spirit of Tasmania by 20 per cent. **It has since indicated it cannot possibly deliver on this commitment, so far offering passengers a pitiful \$3 saving.**
- The Liberals promised to deliver a budget surplus in 2015-16. This promise has blown out by at least six years, with no evidence that even that target will be achieved. **In fact, no Liberal Government in Tasmania's history has ever delivered a budget surplus.**

# Failure to launch

*inaction* [in-ak-shuh n] Noun: absence of action; idleness

- The Liberals promised: “A majority Hodgman Liberal Government will take decisive action to ensure the reintroduction of an international shipping service from Tasmania to key Asian ports, by investing up to \$11 million per year over three years”.

**This important promise has produced no result and the Premier appears incapable of overcoming his inaction.**

- The Liberals promised to streamline Tasmania’s infrastructure approvals system by establishing an office of the Coordinator General in Launceston.

**The Government is yet to appoint a Coordinator General and has done little besides renting office space in the northern city – office space where desks remain unoccupied.**

- The Liberals promised to comprehensively overhaul Tasmania’s court system – specifically crafting a pledge to abolish suspended sentences as one of the centrepieces of its election campaign.

**The Attorney-General has washed her hands of her signature policy, placing the work around this promise in the hands of the Sentencing Advisory Council – and allowing a time-line of at least 18 months for the work to be done.**

- The Liberals promised to open Tasmania’s National Parks and World Heritage Area to development to build the tourism industry.

**The Government refuses to reveal what Expressions of Interest it has received from developers, it declines to reveal what**

**discussions it has held and not a single project has been announced.**

- The Liberals promised to re-establish a Cold Case Unit within Tasmania Police.

**The Police Minister has conceded that unit will not be established for years – perhaps not even within this term of government – revealing that false hope was given to the families of victims of crimes which remain unsolved.**

- The Liberals promised to introduce a single statewide planning scheme and appointed a highly paid Taskforce Chair to drive the process.

**It is now clear the Liberals only intend to formalise the regional planning templates that were developed under the previous government.**



**BROKEN PROMISES:** Before the election Peter Gutwein promised all things to all people. Now that’s coming undone.

# Unbridled incompetence

*incompetence* [in-kom-pi-tuhnc] Noun; the quality or condition of being incompetent; lack of ability.

## Unbudgeted expenditure

The Hodgman Liberal Government will heartlessly shed more than 1200 public sector workers over the next four years and has broken its promise to protect the front line.

That means 1200 teachers and nurses and police officers will find themselves without a job and without a pay packet because they are the victims of a government that made \$400 million worth of irresponsible election promises that it knew it couldn't afford.

Despite cutting hundreds of millions of dollars out of Health, Education, Police and Emergency Services and Infrastructure Will Hodgman's Cabinet members are randomly spending millions of dollars each month that is not budgeted for.

- Health Minister Michael Ferguson ordered his Department to re-open the Royal Hobart Hospital's Nell Williams Unit in August - at a cost of \$1 million - at the same time he was masterminding mass sackings and frontline cuts. **This \$1 million was not contained in the Hodgman Government's Budget.**
- Resources Minister Paul Harriss spent another \$1 million on forestry subsidies in August. **This \$1 million was not contained in the Hodgman Government's Budget.**
- When it was discovered the Liberals had not committed funding to Tasmania's critical Working with Children Checks for public servants, volunteers and community groups who work with kids, Attorney-General Vanessa Goodwin suddenly found an estimated \$800,000.

**This \$800,000 was not contained in the Hodgman Government's Budget.**

**If the Hodgman Liberal Government continues to spend at this rate every time one of its ministers is caught out, its Budget documents are meaningless and - more importantly - it will cut harder and deeper to find additional people and services to axe to pay for necessary services it has forgotten or failed to fund.**

The Liberal Government sacked the Royal Hobart Hospital chief using the cover of parliamentary privilege to launch an unprecedented personal attack on her integrity. The result? A major lawsuit which will result in significant costs to Tasmanian taxpayers.

The Liberal Government has actively sought to politicise the important and importantly independent Tasmanian Community Fund which has given out more than \$70 million to more than 2,200 community groups over the past 15 years. The Hodgman Government is undermining the independence of the board so they can dictate where the money is spent.

# Out-of-control waste

**waste** [weyst] Verb; to consume, spend or employ uselessly or without adequate return; use to no avail or profit; squander.

While Tasmanian workers are being sacked and frontline services are under attack Will Hodgman and his ministers have held no qualm about feathering their own nests.

Within weeks of assuming government, Will Hodgman's Cabinet members spent \$90,000 in renovation costs for offices that did not require renovation and to ensure they were housed in plush surroundings.

Ministers Rockliff, Groom and Harriss spent more than \$43,500 re-decorating their offices in the Murray Street Executive Building.

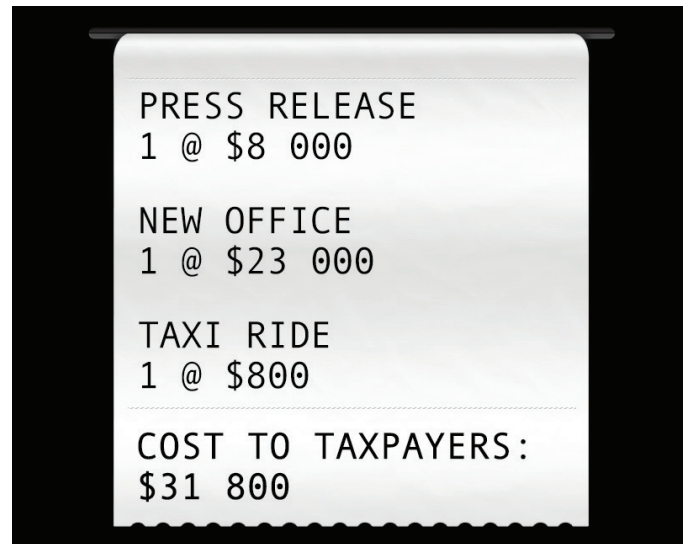
The Premier spent more than \$20,200 rebuilding his Media Unit office so he could surround himself with spin doctors.

The Health Minister spent almost \$23,000 on his new office in Hobart's Reserve Bank Building.

And that's just the spending we know about - the Government has admitted those costs will climb as the true expense of further renovations and redecorations are released in the coming weeks.

While Tasmanians continue to struggle with the rising cost of living, Premier Will Hodgman is paying fly-in, fly-out spin doctors more than the average wage for a single day's work.

Two part-time staff members in the Premier's office are being paid \$1,000 a day each. One of these advisors has been paid approximately \$60,000 for 60 days' work. At the same time, the Premier is paying both his Chief of Staff and his Deputy Chief of Staff at the top of the public service pay scale - some \$260,000 each a year.



**ONLY THE BEGINNING: Who knows what will be spent over the next three years.**

And government ministers proved they had no shame in transporting themselves around the state while Tasmanian families struggled to put petrol in the family car. Michael Ferguson, the Minister for Health, spent close to \$800 on a round-trip in a luxury taxi from Launceston to Hobart so he could appear at a press conference.

# To the next three years

Over the past 200 days, the Labor Party has determinedly held the Hodgman Government to account.

Labor has consistently exposed the Liberal Government's waste and extravagance, its incompetence and its failures, its failure to consult, its arrogance and the deep flaws in its hastily produced legislation.

Labor has exposed the Hodgman/Gutwein Budget for the sham that it is. It has exposed the litany of broken promises and nasty surprises that rear their head with every passing day. The Labor Party will continue to hold this government to account.

Labor will continue to take up the fight to the Government to restore a fair and strong and inclusive Tasmania for all Tasmanians.



COMMITMENT: The Parliamentary Labor Party is committed to holding the Government to account.