

# Bass: An Electoral Snapshot

Better health, education and services are the key issues in the March 20 election for voters in the electorate of Bass.

We are calling on all candidates to help make a difference in these important areas, by urging their party to adopt the following measures as part of their election policies to deliver better health, education and services in Bass.

## Key Points:

- 80.8% of Braddon constituents prefer improving services such as health care and education over state tax cuts.
- Northern Tasmania has a year 10-12 direct retention rate of just 47.6% compared to the state-wide average of 60%.

This snapshot provides you with an outline of:

- the 'Our Island Our Voices' campaign platform for a fairer Tasmania;
- Bass facts and challenges;
- key issues raised by Bass voters; and
- independent Bass polling findings.

As part of a broader platform we call we are calling on candidates to tackle the fairer Tasmania challenge by adopting the following measures:

## Better education and training:

- Doubling funding for '*Raising the Bar, Closing the Gap*' to provide additional resources and recurrent funding for disadvantaged schools along the North-East Coast;
- Develop a state-wide adult literacy strategy, including funding for long-term adult literacy and numeracy programs in local communities;
- Increase access to affordable accommodation and transport for students from regional and remote communities to remain in education and training;
- Invest in supportive school environment programs and initiate a mandatory state-wide approach to tackling bullying;
- Support people with a mental illness to get into or stay in employment with a focus on early intervention and prevention strategies;

## Healthy Tasmania:

- Start addressing the causes of Tasmania's poor health and not just the symptoms by increasing funding for health prevention strategies from 1.5% to 5% of all health spending;
- Tackle problem gambling, through tighter regulation of gaming machines including lower betting limits, shorter opening hours and less advertising of venues;

## Stronger services, stronger communities:

- Prioritise funding for passenger transport services to connect communities with essential services including education, training, health services and jobs;
- Put public and community housing on a sustainable and viable footing by increasing recurrent funding by \$15-30 million;
- Address the cost of living pressures for low income households by guaranteeing concessions for electricity and water and sewerage to keep pace with future price rises.

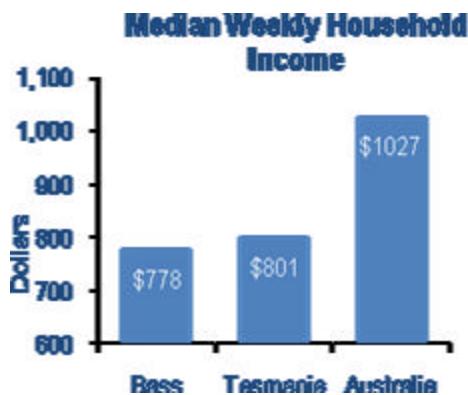
## Getting by

Over one-third of Bass residents are dependant on government pensions for their primary source of income.

This contributes to a median household income in Bass of \$778 compared to the Tasmanian median of \$801 and the Australian median of \$1,027.

“I just think that people who are on the single parent pension, they just need a little bit more, whether it be like \$20 or \$30, just to put a bit more food in the cupboard.”

Launceston



## Health

Northern Tasmania has an obesity rate of 59% compared to the Tasmanian average of 55.8% and Australian rate of 54.9%.

The prevalence of cardiovascular disease in Northern Tasmania at 21.3% is higher than the national average of 16.4%.

Current Health Department spending indicates that only 1.5% of their budget is spent on health prevention activities.

## Housing

The Anglicare March 2009 Rental Affordability Survey indicated that for low income earners only 9.4% of housing was affordable for low income earners in the Northern Tasmania.

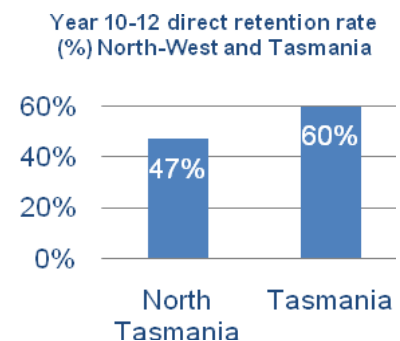


## Education

Department of Education data indicates North Tasmania has a year 10-12 retention rate of only 47.6% compared to the state average of 60%.

The Tasmania Together Benchmarks highlight that 49% of Tasmanians aged 15-74 lack the basic literacy skills to cope with the demands of everyday life and work tasks in a knowledge based economy.

Education is vital not only for productivity in the economy it is arguably the most important determinant of a person's life chances.

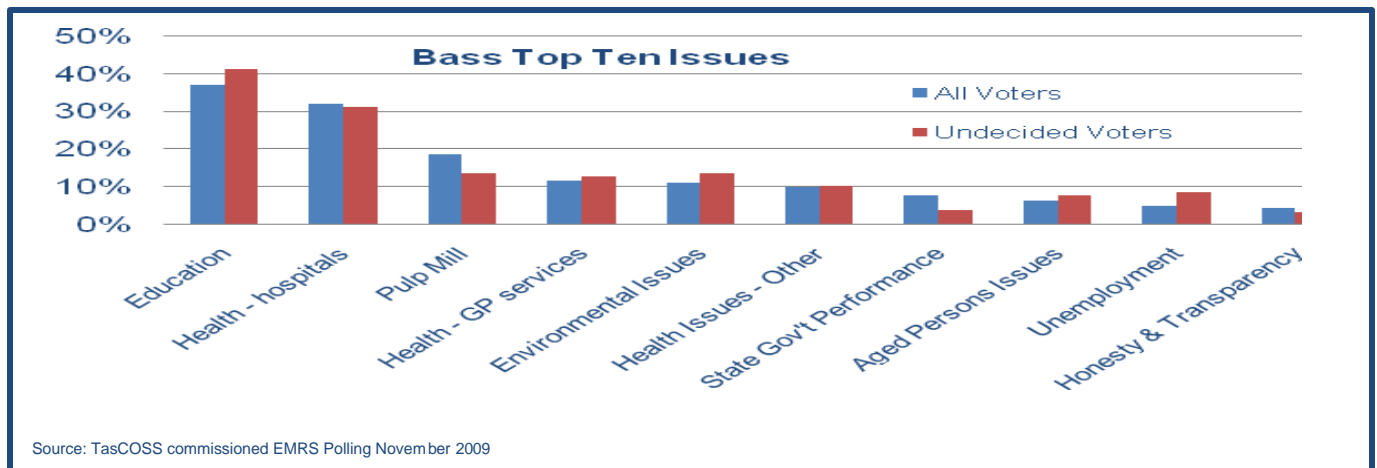


## Transport

The Census data indicates that less than 1.5% of Bass constituents utilise public bus services to travel to work.



Source: TasCOSS (2008) State-wide Consultation



### OUR ISLAND OUR VOICES

Polling sends a clear message to all political parties and candidates in the March 20 election that health and education are the key issues in the minds of Bass voters.

Visit Our Website for full details:

[www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au](http://www.ourisland.tascoss.org.au)

In November 2009 Our Island Our Voices commissioned independent polling by EMRS to find out the most important issues for Tasmanians in deciding who to vote for in the coming State Election.

The top ten issues nominated by voters in Bass are:

#### Bass Top Ten Issues

Rank	Issue	All Voters	Undecided
1	Education	<b>36.90%</b>	41.20%
2	Health - hospitals	<b>32.00%</b>	31.10%
3	Pulp Mill	<b>18.50%</b>	13.60%
4	Health - GP services	<b>11.60%</b>	12.60%
5	Environmental Issues	<b>11%</b>	13.40%
6	Health Issues - Other	<b>9.80%</b>	10.30%
7	State Gov't Performance	<b>7.80%</b>	3.80%
8	Aged Persons Issues	<b>6.30%</b>	7.80%
9	Unemployment	<b>4.90%</b>	8.40%
10	Honesty & Transparency	<b>4.30%</b>	3.20%

### Our Island Our Voices Polling Results:

The following independent polling statistics are the result of specific questions:

#### Community services:

- 80.8% of Bass constituents prefer improving services such as health care and education over state tax cuts.

#### Education and training

- 71.8% of Bass constituents believe improving the skills and qualifications of young Tasmanians is more important to our economy than reducing payroll and land tax.

#### Concessions

- 43.8% of Bass constituents stated they would be more likely to vote for a political party if it announced it would increase the discount given to Tasmanian pensioners and low-income earners to help them pay their electricity, water, and sewerage bills. Only 5.8% said they would be less likely to vote for the political party.

#### Transport

- When given the choice between upgrading the Midlands Highway or upgrading public transport 54.1% Bass constituents supported upgrading the Midlands Highway, whilst 33% supported greater public transport expenditure.