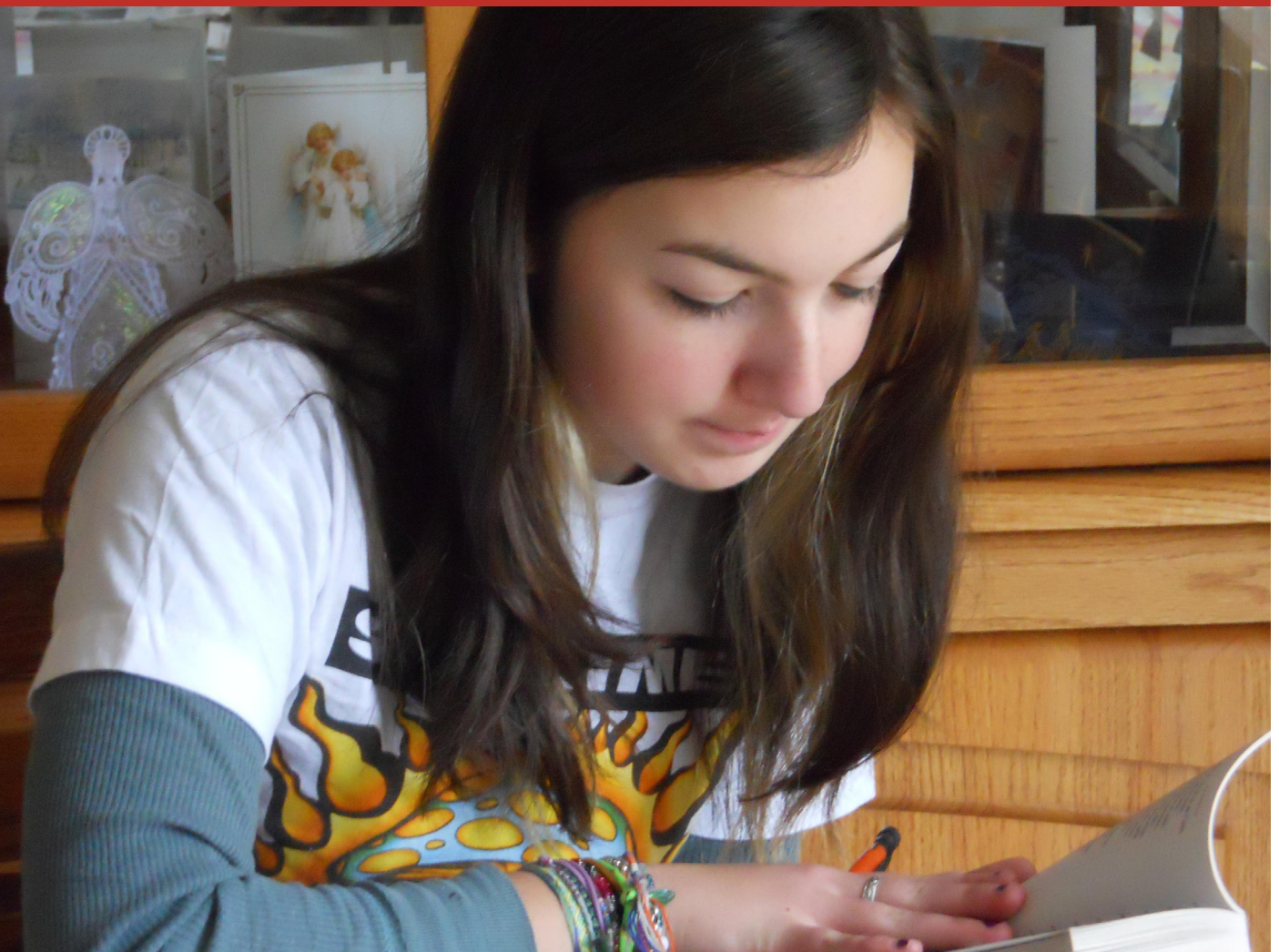




ENHANCING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUNG PEOPLE

LABOR WILL PROVIDE AGE APPROPRIATE
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING
PROGRAMS STARTING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Putting **PEOPLE FIRST**

SUPPORTING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

There is growing understanding that young people need support to manage their health and wellbeing, especially their mental health.

Recent data shows that young people aged 16-24 have the highest occurrence of mental illness compared to any other age bracket.

Approximately 14% of young people in Australia have a mental health problem at any point in time. This is equivalent to 16,850 young Tasmanians.

LABOR'S COMMITMENT

It is widely acknowledged that early intervention and prevention during childhood and adolescence is the most effective way to address mental health issues.

That is why Tasmanian Labor is committed to introducing compulsory age appropriate social and emotional learning (SEL) programs in schools, starting in primary school.

This will build on the good work that is already occurring in our schools to provide evidence based social and emotional learning programs.

Labor will adopt the recommendation of the Youth Network of Tasmania's Mental Health Matters consultation with young Tasmanians to introduce regular classes on health and wellbeing, with a specific focus on mental health. Participants recommended making classes like this compulsory to ensure everyone has the same learning opportunity and to reduce stigma.



Labor will work with educators to support them to deliver SEL programs and provide the appropriate professional learning and resourcing required for their success.

Labor will work with educators, the AEU, school social workers and psychologists in determining how SEL programs can help provide a holistic, pedagogical approach to improved mental health and emotional wellbeing for Tasmania's young people.

THE BENEFITS

Labor knows how important it is for students to develop social and emotional skills and the importance of providing opportunities for students to participate in discussions around how to manage their own mental health. The introduction of SEL will also assist young people improve their help-seeking behaviours and learn where they can go for support.

Labor understands that all young people deserve the chance to succeed and reach their full potential. Introducing compulsory SEL programs into the classroom of every Tasmanian public primary and high school will help give all child the opportunity to develop

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personal and social competence, manage their emotions and behaviours, perceive and understand other peoples' emotions and viewpoints and form positive relationships. These skills will help all young people to live, learn and work effectively.

The financial burden on education, health, social services, the justice system and families will continue to rise if we don't address, as a community, the mental health of young people. Leadership in this space will provide outstanding value for money as well as improved health outcomes for young Tasmanians.

THE EVIDENCE

There is growing understanding that young people need support to manage their health and wellbeing, especially their mental health. Data from the Australian National Mental Health Survey in 2011, shows that young people have the highest incidence and prevalence of mental illness compared to any other age bracket. According to the World Health Organisation, 50% of all mental illness presents before 12 years of age and 75% by age 24.



In the United States of America an impact analysis has been undertaken by the Society Research in Child Development on schools where the SEL program was introduced it was found that participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour and academic performance.

Another important finding of the analysis is that classroom teachers and other school staff effectively conduct SEL programs. It found that these programs do not require outside personnel for their effective delivery. The analysis also found that SEL programs are successful at all educational levels and in urban, suburban and rural schools.

THE CURRICULUM

The General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum specifically outline the need for students to develop social and emotional skills. However, there is currently no compulsory social and emotional learning occurring in Tasmania's public schools. Labor will introduce compulsory SEL to provide opportunities for students to participate in discussions about things such as mental health or to learn how to manage their mental health.

BUDGET IMPACT

The introduction of compulsory SEL will be undertaken by classroom teachers. Its rollout will be tailored to provide appropriate professional learning for teachers and support to schools to facilitate the successful implementation of SEL. It's anticipated the cost will be absorbed by the existing operating budget.

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