



**Nick McKim MP**  
Greens Leader  
Member for Franklin  
**Tasmanian Greens**

Monday, 8 February 2010

Mr Tom Lynch  
General Secretary  
CPSU (SPSFT) Inc.  
GPO Box 54  
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Mr Lynch,

Thank you for the opportunity to demonstrate the Tasmanian Greens' strong support for the public sector and the public services it provides to Tasmanians.

The Tasmanian Greens have a demonstrated record of commitment to the public sector over a long period of time. We are proud of the support that we have been able to offer public sector workers at State and Federal level, and I am proud to commit the Tasmanian Greens to each of the positions contained in your *Public Services @ Work* document.

Whatever the result of the upcoming election, I look forward to continuing to work with public sector workers and unions to continue to build a vibrant public sector to deliver the services needed by our community.

At the time of writing, the Liberals' response to your request has not been published, but truth demands that I respond briefly to the deliberate inaccuracies regarding the Greens which were contained in the ALP's published response signed by the Premier.

Firstly, the ALP's claim that the Greens have proposed cutting public servant wages by 20% is simply untrue. This has never been our position, and it never will be.

As your members would recall, Labor's response to the global financial crisis was to attempt to slash 800 public sector jobs under the guise of 'vacancy control'. Many of these positions remain unfilled today.

In stark contrast to the ALP, the Greens proposed to respond to the global financial crisis with a small, temporary reduction in working hours (only to be implemented if supported by a plebiscite of public sector workers), which would have saved every job in the public sector while delivering the same budget savings as Labor's job shedding policy.

Our policy would have improved the work/life balance of public servants, allowing them to spend more time doing things like playing with their children, working in the garden and volunteering in their communities. It would also have retained skilled workers in the public sector, and in Tasmania.

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It was a policy suggestion based on consultation and contemporary management practice, and is one of which the Greens remain very proud.

Secondly, I remind your members that last year Labor abolished an entire government department with no consultation with public sector workers or unions. This assault on the public sector confirms that, despite anything the ALP might say, it has a demonstrated record of treating public sector workers and their representatives with contempt.

The Greens did not support the abolition of DEPHA, and will always treat public sector workers and their representatives with respect. I trust the commitments detailed below will confirm this to you and your members.

### **Fairness**

Pay parity is crucial to the State's ability to recruit and retain workers, and the Greens will ensure that the overall salary package paid to Tasmanian public sector workers at least maintains parity with other states. Unlike Labor, the Greens' commitment would include people working for, or subcontracting to, any government business enterprise or state owned company.

The Greens have voted against tax cuts in the Federal Parliament in order to protect and enhance the delivery of services to our community.

To continue this demonstrated commitment we pledge to provide the Tasmanian public sector with sufficient resources to deliver high quality services to all Tasmanians. For example, we will develop regional and community based preventative health centres to improve wellbeing and take the pressure off our clinical care system.

As state revenues continue to improve we commit to increasing agency funding to make up for Labor's significant cuts, which we now know were unnecessary. We will also require Treasury to fully fund all agreed salary increases, and to increase on-costs at least in line with CPI.

We will also work with public sector workers and representative bodies to ensure that workloads are managed to prevent worker burnout, and to maintain services.

Support staff play a crucial role in service delivery. Under Labor, many support staff such as teacher aides have been undervalued and underpaid. The Greens will provide funding to ensure adequate support staff are provided to assist in the delivery of proficient and professional services.

The Greens believe that Governments should negotiate in good faith with public sector workers and unions rather than forcing unions to industrial action as Labor has done on many occasions. The Greens commit to good faith negotiations, and will ensure that negotiations address improved working conditions as well as wage increases.

### **Security**

The Greens regard Labor's recently implemented 'vacancy control' policy as job cutting by another name. It is a blunt, inefficient instrument which removes opportunities for promotion and transfer. We will not utilise vacancy control to disguise slashing public sector jobs, and will end Labor's unfair and unsound policy immediately.

The Greens also commit to no forced redundancies in the next term of government, and no time limit on redeployment.

The Greens are committed to a consultative relationship with public sector workers and their representatives. The Greens share the public sector's outrage at the Bartlett government's secret decision to abolish an entire government Department without consulting the people who worked there. We pledge a genuine consultation with workers before making decisions which significantly impact on those workers or their workplaces.

We have previously articulated concerns around some aspects of the current Departmental structure, and have committed to reform in this area, particularly by establishing a stand-alone Environment Department which would include the Parks and Wildlife Service and some other parts of what is now DPIPWE. We stand by this commitment, which I believe would be supported by a clear majority of your members. Any move in this direction would be based upon a cost-benefit analysis.

The Greens recognise that permanency of employment is the preferred option of most public sector workers, and will ensure that fixed term employment is only used in accordance with Commissioner's Direction No. 1.

## **Innovation**

Governments can deliver social and economic benefits by recognising the need for a healthy work/life balance. As the imperative of climate change requires real change in the way we live, work and travel, an increasingly networked world will provide the mechanism for many innovative solutions. There is a real role for our public sector to lead the way in transforming the way Tasmanians work, delivering public sector workers the opportunity to make meaningful improvements in other areas of their lives.

### Flexible Work Hours

Continued demands for greater productivity have increased pressure on public sector workers, requiring more time away from families, and taking away recreation time.

The Greens will explore creative solutions to allow more flexibility in employment conditions, and the times in which work is done. We will work closely with unions to increase job sharing and make working hours more flexible, which will deliver more time for public sector workers to do things like spending more time with their families and volunteering in their communities.

### Public Sector Childcare Services

Poor access to affordable and convenient childcare makes life difficult for many public sector workers. The Greens will develop subsidised childcare services in or near public sector buildings, and explore creative payment options such as salary sacrifice, with resultant tax benefits.

### Flexible Transport Options

The Greens will fund a program to retrofit public sector workplaces, enhancing the work environment and encouraging alternative commuting options. We will install bike racks, lockers,

and shower facilities at safe locations in or near government buildings. We will work with Metro to develop creative public transport options, including shuttle-buses to and between workplaces, and flexible ticketing systems with an option to pay by salary sacrifice.

Through creative retrofitting and redevelopment of our workplaces the Greens will improve public sector workers' health, therefore increasing wellbeing, saving on health system costs and increasing productivity.

### NBN

Tasmania's 'first cab off the rank' status in the NBN roll-out provides the state with many great opportunities, and our public sector can lead the way.

The Greens will work collaboratively to increase opportunities for telecommuting and online service delivery, and invest in training in new technologies to produce efficiencies in the workplace and improve service delivery. We will facilitate more work being done outside the office; in the field, while travelling, or from home.

The Greens are the only party committed to introducing a dedicated Minister for ICT as the first step to develop a whole-of-government approach to delivering an ICT revolution across the public sector, making it a world leader in this rapidly emerging area.

### Preparing for an Ageing Community

As our population ages we need to develop programs and pathways to retain older workers' skills and knowledge, and to ensure that the public sector accurately reflects the community it serves. The Greens will provide options for older Tasmanians to work on a casual and/or part-time basis if they need or choose.

### **Governance**

The right to organise in free association, and to collectively bargain, is fundamental for all workers including those in the public sector.

The Greens believe in access to fair and proper processes within the public sector, and we will adequately resource independent systems to provide for the timely review of decisions affecting public sector workers and their work.

We understand that maximising career opportunities increases job satisfaction, and therefore leads to better outcomes for the Tasmanian people. We commit to improving arrangements to allow workers to transfer within the sector, and to supporting workers increasing their skills by seconding to the private sector for professional development without loss of entitlements.

We understand the importance of a strong state-based industrial relations system, and pledge to retain a state system – including the Tasmanian Industrial Commission - that covers all public sector workers.

Increasing numbers of people are arriving in Tasmania from different cultures, benefiting our community in many ways and strengthening our economy. We will work with all stakeholders to ensure that our community's diversity is reflected in the makeup of the public sector workforce.

As the public sector workforce ages, long-term planning is required to ensure that service delivery is maintained. We will work collaboratively with public sector representative bodies to design and implement creative strategies to deliver solutions to this challenge.

### **Implementing Our Commitment**

The Greens have a proud history of supporting the Tasmanian public sector and intend to build on that record at this election.

Should Tasmanian voters choose to elect a power-sharing Parliament, the Greens will abide by that decision by seeking to negotiate with the other political parties to deliver a stable government.

This is in stark contrast to the approach of both Labor and Liberal, who lack the courage and maturity to commit to constructive discussions.

We intend to undertake a genuine negotiation rather than delivering ultimatums and will therefore not be making any policy position a prerequisite to negotiations occurring.

We believe this is a responsible approach that highlights the respect we hold for the verdict of the people.

Implementing our commitments to the Tasmanian public sector remains an absolute priority for the Greens and will be a primary focus in any discussions about forming a stable, power sharing government.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss any aspect of this response to the CPSU's Tasmanian Public Sector policy statement.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick McKim". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Nick McKim MP**  
**Greens Leader**