

Fixing Public Service Skill Shortages

The Greens have a plan to attract and retain workers in key areas of skill shortage. Key public service roles are becoming increasingly difficult to fill. There is a 33% child safety staffing shortfall in the north, and 20% in the northwest.¹ Our hospitals are very short of allied health professionals,² nursing staff and midwives,³ and specialist doctors.⁴ Teachers and support staff positions are increasingly hard to fill. This plan, and \$45m investment, will make attracting and retaining staff possible.

HECS and Long Service Leave

The WA Government offers grant payments of \$4,000 per year, up to \$12,000, to pay off HECS debt, to newly qualified registered nurses and midwives who start work in their country health services.⁵

Our plan is for a program to recruit new graduates into areas of skill shortages in public health, education and child safety systems.

We will offer competitive grants of \$5,000 for each year of continuous service, until a new graduate's HECS debts are completely paid.

The program will be available for 200 applicants a year, for four years, and will be extended if needed after that.

We will also count up to four years of a person's time spent studying in university towards their long service leave.

This will incentivise new graduates to apply for these key jobs, and also give them an extra

incentive to remain employed in the Tasmanian State Service.

The Greens will fight to establish a recruitment incentive program to help hire 800 staff in areas of key skill shortages over four years – paying \$5,000 per year towards HECS debt and counting the time spent studying in university towards a person's long service leave.

Cadetships and Apprenticeships

Cadetship programs offer full-time work with paid hours dedicated towards studying a certificate or degree. The person then transitions into a full-time role after study is completed.⁶

The security this offers – an immediate income during study, as well as a guarantee of future work in their skill area – encourages people to study in areas of skill shortages, and makes a contribution towards reducing long-term vacancies in key public service roles.

¹ [Shocking Vacancy Figures across Child Safety System](#), CPSU, n.d.

² AHP Workforce, [Allied Health Insights Vol.3 No.1: Recruitment Concierge: Resolving Workforce Shortfalls For The Tasmanian Health Service?](#), January 2024.

³ ANMF, [Nurses and Midwives at Breaking Point](#), January 2022.

⁴ AMA, [Health Workforce Impact Statements](#), 2022.

⁵ Department of Health, [HECS help to grow WA's regional nursing and midwifery workforce](#), Government of Western Australia, 2023.

⁶ Department of Treasury and Finance, [Cadet Program](#), Tasmanian Government, 2024.

These programs also provide pathways to study for people who would otherwise not be able to afford the reduced income that comes with studying at university.

The Greens will fight to establish annual cadetships, traineeships and apprenticeships in areas of skill shortages, starting with 10 in public administration and specialised roles (IT, legal etc), 5 administrative roles in schools, 10 roles in child safety services, 5 roles in youth justice, and 5 rangers and field officers in parks.

Vicarious Trauma Leave

The Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings found that many workers in the public service experience vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue.⁷

This trauma can be experienced in a wide range of roles in corrections, child safety, in our justice system, and beyond.

Introducing vicarious trauma leave is not only the compassionate, right thing to do, but will also reduce workers burning out and help keep people being able to work in areas of skill shortages.

The Greens will fight for ten days of vicarious trauma leave for workers who regularly deal with trauma.

Regional Housing

The housing crisis is making it increasingly difficult to attract workers to Tasmania, particularly regional Tasmania.⁸

Tasmania offers government-provided housing for police as a means to attract officers to regional communities.

This can be extended to other job areas where Tasmania is struggling to attract workers, particularly in regional and remote areas of the state.

The Greens will fight to have \$5 million a year spent on housing to attract key workers to regional communities, including remote parks workers and regional child safety workers.

Budget (\$m)

	(\$m)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
HECS Scheme		1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	10.00
Cadetships		2.62	2.70	2.78	2.86	10.96
Trauma Leave		1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00
Regional housing		5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	20.00
Total		9.62	10.7	11.78	12.86	44.96

FIND ALL OUR POLICIES

tasgreensmps.org/policy/

⁷ [Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings Report](#), 2023, p. 21.

⁸ McIntyre, D, [Housing shortage creating employment problems in regional Tasmania](#), ABC News, 2022.