



ANGLICAN DIOCESE  
OF TASMANIA

THE RIGHT REVEREND  
DR RICHARD CONDIE  
BISHOP OF TASMANIA

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22 February 2018

## A Pastoral Letter before our State Election

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

With a State election on 3 March, and some major policy issues at stake, I have been reflecting on the Scriptures and how they can inform and guide our decision-making.

The Bible tells us we should uphold our leaders in prayer. Please join me in upholding all candidates.

*"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—<sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." (1 Timothy 2:1-2)*

### Key issues for followers of Jesus

In seeking to be *a church for Tasmania, making disciples of Jesus*, we need to be wise in our decision-making, especially as we vote for our next Government. We need to be faithful in commending Jesus and his teaching as the basis for human flourishing. We need to be less concerned with what *we* will get, and more about how to serve others, especially the weak and vulnerable.

There are various social issues that we should be concerned and informed about. I will highlight a few which I believe we as Christians should consider carefully.

### Poker Machines

For twenty years, Anglicare has produced evidence-based research on the harm that poker machines are causing in our community. They cost too many Tasmanians their health, relationships, jobs and sometimes even their homes and lives.

Poker machines are designed to addict and always favour the “house”. Last year, poker machines took \$16.7 million from the community, and mostly from disadvantaged areas. It is immoral to base our economy on exploiting vulnerable people through instruments of addiction.

The Labor party policy would rid these insidious machines from our local communities, and provide a healthier future for our state, one that prioritises the wellbeing of local people, communities and businesses.

## **Abortion**

The issue of abortion continues to concern our society. We know that it involves real people facing serious dilemmas, and our response must be one of compassion and gentleness. However, the Bible teaches that life begins at conception and that every life is precious. Our concern must be to protect the life and rights of the unborn.

Labor now has a policy position that supports abortion on demand and has pledged public funds for this procedure to be conducted in our public hospitals. The Liberals continue to allow a conscience vote on the issue in their party and have a policy not to fund abortions (except in some medical cases) in public hospitals.

## **Euthanasia**

Euthanasia continues to be a matter of concern. I acknowledge that the motives of those promoting “legally assisted dying” legislation, are to provide dignity and compassion for terminally ill people. However, the unintended consequences of any euthanasia legislation will put vulnerable elderly and mentally ill people at risk. We must resist any party or politician who supports this dangerous legislation.

## **Affordable Housing**

Tasmania is suffering a lack of affordable housing. This is putting pressure on families and increasing homelessness.

Jesus was very clear about our responsibility to the poor. Caring for the poor must be a high priority for us, and we should support parties and candidates who give them a high priority.

## **Seeking God's wisdom**

As we approach the State Election, I commend to you these words from Proverbs 2.

*“... if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, <sup>2</sup>turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding— <sup>3</sup>indeed, if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, <sup>4</sup>and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, <sup>5</sup>then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup>For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. <sup>7</sup>He holds success in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, <sup>8</sup>for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.” (Proverbs 2:1-8)*

I pray that we may be faithful, informed and prayerful in approaching this State election, asking for God's wisdom as we decide, and for righteousness and integrity to be evident in our State's leaders and their policy decisions.

With warm wishes in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Condie', with a small comma at the end.

The Right Reverend Dr Richard Condie  
Bishop of Tasmania

***A church for Tasmania, making disciples of Jesus.***