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Tasmanian Parties' Child Care Pledges for 2025 State Election

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With the state election just days away, Tasmania's worsening childcare crisis has taken centre stage. According to the Mitchell Institute at Victoria University, 57 per cent of the state is now considered a "childcare desert", defined as areas with more than three children per available childcare place.

In response, the Liberal Party, Australian Labor Party, Greens, and Nationals have outlined competing policies aimed at improving early childhood education and care (ECEC), each with varying timelines and levels of investment.

iff has pledged to build “supersized” Child and Family Learning Centres in Scottsdale, Smithton, Longford, and Huonville, combining long day care, vacation care, and outside-school-hours services.

While the centres aim to boost access in regional areas, the first project is not scheduled to begin until 2026, prompting concern about delays in delivery. Tasmania currently has the lowest childcare availability in the country, with just 0.352 places per child.

The Liberal plan also includes \$15 million to expand out-of-school-hours care and support workforce development.

Opposition Leader Dean Winter has proposed a \$500,000 pilot program on Tasmania’s West Coast to establish a new ECEC service, with plans to expand based on outcomes. Labor also supports federal measures such as fee-free TAFE for early childhood education and recent pay rises for educators under national agreements.

Labor’s strategy focuses on community partnerships and longer-term integration of early learning with public schools. Critics, however, say the pilot model may not address the immediate statewide demand for places.

The Greens are calling for free early education and care for low-income families and increased funding for rural and regional services. Their plan includes training subsidies for childcare workers and aims to improve conditions to retain staff.

While the Greens have outlined clear goals, the implementation costs and funding sources for the universal model have not yet been fully detailed.

The Nationals' policy prioritises making childcare more affordable through increased subsidies and proposes streamlining regulation to enable quicker expansion of services by private providers. However, the party has not released a comprehensive plan outlining how this will be achieved.

With childcare waitlists growing, and workforce shortages persisting across the state, many families remain in limbo. Experts warn that addressing the crisis requires not just investment, but coordinated action across government, community and industry.

Tasmanians head to the polls on Saturday, 19 July, with early childhood policy shaping up as a critical vote-deciding issue.