Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants Inc.

TASS

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SUPER-NEWS

No: 2/25 Winter Edition August 2025

2025 Annual General Meeting Report

This year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants Inc (TASS) was attended by 28 members.

The following office bearers were elected:

President:	John Pauley
Vice President	Murray Harper
Secretary & Public Officer	John Chalmers
Treasurer	* Vacant
Membership Officer	Charles Thomas
Editor Super News	Jeneane Thomas
Executive Members (6)	Ross Brown, ** Christopher Scott, Jean Walker, Stephen Graetzer, Jeff Garsed, David Louez

* At the following TASS Executive Meeting held on 19 May 2025 it was agreed that some of the Treasurer's role be undertaken by the Secretary, and as a result the previous Treasurer, Michael Walker, was duly re-elected.

** At the Executive meeting on 20 May 2025, Christopher Scott tendered his letter of resignation with effect from 21 May 2025 and this was accepted. Under 10.4 of the Constitution the Executive appointed Richard Sulikowski to the Executive on 22 May 2025 until the 2026 Annual General Meeting.

A most interesting presentation was given by Ms Brigid Wilkinson, CEO Council on the Ageing Tasmania (COTA). Brigid's presentation included the programmes and advocacy work of COTA.

2025 AGM – President's Report – Additional Comments

The President spoke to his published report, giving a history of his reports rebutting commentators who attack Defined Benefit (DB) Pensioners. In Tasmania, the liability for DB pensions has peaked and is reducing. Furthermore, the cost of servicing superannuation for existing public servants is likely to exceed the cost of servicing DB pensions within the next few years.

TASS is also important for assisting members in such ways as arguing for lost rights for some people retiring; help with completion of the spouse's form following a bereavement; continuing to prosecute the 10% Cap issue; organising Forums in both the north and south of the State.

John especially thanked Mike Walker for the exceptional work he had carried out as Treasurer. Our financial arrangements are in brilliant shape thanks to the practical knowledge and experience Mike brought to the position.

The President also thanked Jeneane Thomas for her ongoing commitment to Super-News and Charles Thomas for his focus on Membership. In addition, John thanked John Chalmers for his diligent efforts as Secretary.

Ross Brown publicly commended the President for the advocacy work he is leading for us. The meeting voiced its agreement with Ross's vote of thanks.

Ross Butler questioned whether the 10% Cap issue concept is too complicated and asked if we can simplify it, especially with examples. The President responded by voicing his concern at the position the ALP has taken on the issue; but said Andrew Wilkie is still supportive of us, and that Eric Abetz, while still a Senator, had admitted that the legislation was passed without sufficient scrutiny. John is meeting Senator McKim on Friday 28/3/25 and he is also going to follow up with Senator Bilyk on whose letterhead the ALP response was written.

Presidents Report - June 2025

While we are always hearing about misinformation and disinformation, what really concerns me is what I will call missed information. These are the inconvenient facts left out of an argument by those pursuing a course of action. For us as retired public servants this is rife where commentators discuss the horrors of our unfunded Defined Benefit (DB) pensions.

Are they really so attractive and unearned as is frequently stated? Certainly they are unfunded - a deliberate strategy by governments to redirect those funds to public infrastructure and services. On an actuarial basis those funds amounted to around 11% or 12% of our salaries while we were working in the public sector. On top of this we were mandated to contribute at least 5% or 5.5% from our <u>after-tax</u> incomes. Anyone who contributes to super at a rate of around 18% would be able to deliver a similar benefit in retirement to our Defined Benefit pension.

So attractive and unearned? I would argue no. But let's go a bit further. We all have friends drawing a tax-exempt account based pension or who hold a concessionally taxed accumulation fund. Ask them how they would like to pay full income tax, less the 10% tax offset on the earnings of those funds. Ask them how they would feel if only two-thirds of the account balance could be passed onto their spouse and finally ask them how they would feel if there was no balance left to pass onto the next generation.

I doubt any would support such a scheme. But they would come back and say our pensions are indexed. Yes they are, by the CPI. And the growth over the long term in the CPI is far below the 7% or 8% return a well managed super fund should be achieving.

Misinformation, of missed information? I will let you choose.

During the federal election campaign we contacted all Tasmanian members of the Commonwealth parliament seeking support to review or repeal the 10% Cap legislation, either in full or to provide an exemption for RBF members along the lines available to retired members of the armed forces.

We based our case around three pieces of missed information.

First up we were told this legislation was to capture the "fat cats" who had used a loophole to access a part age pension. The missed information in the announcements at the time was the impact would fall excessively on low income defined benefit retirees.

Secondly, we were told how the legislation was introduced to bring fairness into the retirement income system. My discussion above outlines the missed information which is conveniently overlooked by those using this argument. Add to that the fact that a retiree who chooses a lifetime income stream product is able to offset 40% of that total income stream when assessing their eligibility for the age pension.

And the final piece of missed information related to the most recent reasons for this legislation. Apparently when adjusting our pensions following the 2007 Beter Super package some of the unfunded element of our pensions ended up being incorporated into the funded or tax-free component of our pension. Correspondence from RBF confirms this did not happen at RBF.

Our argument is neatly summarised in a letter sent to retiring Senator Catryna Bilyk prior to the election which you should be able to find on the TASS website Senator Catryna Bilyk letter 11 April 2025 . *For those members who receive a hard copy of Super News, go to the TASS website, www.tass.org.au under Recent News and you will find the letter at "Follow-up letter to Senator Bilyk 11 April 2025."*

The outcome is we now have written support from the Greens and Andrew Wilkie that they will seek a review of this legislation and we will be seeking that review consider these three bits of missed information. We have also had a very constructive conversation with Senator Carol Brown which gives me renewed hope that this harsh, unfair and inequitable legislation will be reviewed during this term of current Commonwealth parliament.

In my view all legislation should be reviewed at least every decade to ensure it has met the goals established for it when enacted.

The Australian Council of Public Sector Retiree Organisations (ACPSRO), the national body of public sector superannuants, has been seeking an exemption from the $3 million super tax for those retirees on unfunded Defined Benefit pensions. Again, this field is littered with missed information.

The key aspect of this tax, it's really a reduced concession, but that is a little inconvenient for those opposing it, is that the income from that portion of a super fund in excess of $3 million which is currently taxed at 15% should be taxed at 30%. This is achieved by adding a new 15% Divisional 296 tax to that income. The whole process has been complicated by also seeking to tax unrealised capital gains.

The legislation explicitly recognises that the income targeted for the Division 296 tax is already taxed at 15% and simply adds a further 15% tax to that income. But when it comes to an unfunded Defined Benefit pension the legislation conveniently ignores that those in receipt of such a pension which will be purported to have a value in excess of $3 million are already paying a marginal tax rate of 45 cents in the dollar on that income. This missed information is again an inconvenient fact.

As a result, those in receipt of an unfunded Defined Benefit pension which is subject to Division 296 tax will end up paying a marginal rate of tax equivalent to 60 cents in the dollar. Just last weekend an article was published on news.com.au which, in my mind, highlights how those seeking to have unfunded defined benefit pensions included in the Division 296 tax legislation purposefully miss information in their argument.

Below is a link to that article and also a link to an ASFA fact sheet on the new tax, which includes a couple of defined benefit examples.

Division 296 Proposed Superannuation Tax
(for those receiving a hard copy of Super News - http://www.news.com.au/finance/superannuation/like-winning-lotto-300000ayear-public-servant-pensions-under-fire-in-super-tax-battle/news-story/d65d9b78685818bd90a91bfe0b08ac35)

ASFA Fact Sheet
(for those receiving a hard copy of Super News - https://www.superannuation.asn.au/media-release/asfa-fact-sheet-on-div-296-and-proposed-changes/)

I just want to conclude with a comment relating to the Tasmania election announced last evening. Like all those who experienced working in the Tasmanian public sector during the late 1980s and the early 1990s I am concerned at the extent of debt projected in the 2025/26 budget. I am also concerned that no real alternative way forward has been delivered by either Labor or the Greens, or indeed any on the cross bench.

I know there are ideas being put forward, but do any of these ideas really address the magnitude of the task ahead for our next government? The 2025/26 budget indicates that net debt will increase from around $5 billion to $11 billion over the next four years. To get us back on track requires substantial budget reform well beyond anything on offer from anyone sitting in the current Tasmanian parliament.

Given that the government does not hold a majority the opposition could have amended the budget with the support of the Greens and the cross bench instead of seeking a no confidence motion in the Premier. That would have, perhaps, been a more constructive approach than we have seen over the past week. But it would have also required those who considered the budget presented by the Treasurer to become accountable for the changes they might propose.

The budget is nothing more than a Bill tabled before the House of Assembly. And like any Bill it can be amended. Usually it isn't because the government of the day has a majority and can shepherd it through the parliament. But this budget, which everyone seems to dislike, could have been readily amended to deliver the outcome sought by those in the opposition and on the cross bench.

Indeed, the emergency Supply Bill passed on 10 June was amended prior to being finally passed by both houses. Admittedly this was due to a transposition of some numbers, a typo if you like, but the parliament could have just as easily amended the numbers in the schedule to this Bill as the government does not have the numbers.

In my view again missed information. We were told a no confidence motion was the only way forward.

However, as we move into 2025/26 the budget realities will begin to strike home. Richard Ecclestone from the University of Tasmania had an interesting commentary piece in the Mercury on the 7 June. I would encourage you to seek it out and have a read.

Upon reading his piece I replied to Richard with the following:

The parliament, as a whole, need to realise that the only way to get the budget back on track is to:

> *a) spend less which can be achieved by one of three means (efficiency dividends, hiring freezes or as you have pointed out identifying exactly what the government should yet be doing). However, each has pretty much the same impact as the predominant cost for government is salaries and that means reducing the number of public servants by a significant number.*
>
> *b) raise more taxes, and if you look at the taxes the state controls it means increasing cost of living impacts on those least able to afford it. It is fine to highlight taxes on the rich, but there is simply not enough of them to raise the revenue we need.*
>
> *c) sell stuff, but as you have pointed out, the only stuff worth selling delivers good dividend returns to government. But I still think we should have a bit of a targeted fire sale to rid ourselves of some businesses which don't really fit into the role of government and while we own them are a drag the budget.*
>
> *d) build less stuff by cutting back the infrastructure spend which is a bit of a hangover from COVID. But I will let you highlight what road projects to delay, what classroom improvements should not go ahead, where we don't need better hospital facilities, which emergency service facilities don't need improvements, etc, etc. With our parliament, the noise would be deafening as each interest group voiced their opposition.*

Even if yes team no stadium was the simple solution to our budget problems it is totally inadequate as most supporting this solution want the stadium money spent on their favoured projects in health, education and housing.

But most importantly, and as you say, we need to re-evaluate the social compact between government and the people of Tasmania.

There are challenges ahead for Tasmania and our next Parliament. This is not a fact missed by any I suspect. How we address these challenges will be critical.

And how we hold, what is likely to again be, a minority government to account will be critical. We need to go beyond no confidence motions and understand that those on the opposition and cross benches can have a substantial impact. The recent legislation on electoral donations introduced by the Greens shows what can be achieved in a minority parliament.

John Pauley
President
Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants Inc

2025 AGM – Guest Speaker – Brigid Wilkinson, CEO, COTA Tasmania

Brigid spoke about Council On The Ageing (COTA) after giving a short bio of herself.

COTA works with:

Community Organisations

The Education Sector

Government, especially DPAC, Education, Children and Young People, Health Services and Primary Health.

Tasmania has an older demographic than the Australian average, with 40.9% of us over 50. By 2030, 1 in 4 of us will be over 65.

COTA is looking to make equity and accessibility for older people better. COTA Australia has prepared a pre-Budget submission concentrating on, amongst other matters, the cost of living and tackling ageism.

COTA can help people in lots of ways. With the Care Finder Program, there is help to navigate the system. The organisation can assist people with the My Aged Care program. For contact, the number 1800 518 048 can be used along with the address carefinder@cotatas.org.au

The new Aged Care Act is expected to begin on 1/7/25. A basic premise is that if you can afford to pay more, you will pay more.

You can call COTA at any time.

In conclusion, Brigid noted that COTA runs Seniors Week each year (usually around October) and that Tasmania has **no** Minister For the Ageing despite the size of Parliament having recently been increased.

COTA publishes many documents. A popular one is the booklet “Estate and Advanced Care Planning Guide”. But, there are heaps of other publications to assist you.

Contact: COTA TAS Inc

03 6231 3265

admin@cotatas.org.au

www.cotatas.org.au

Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants Inc
Receipts & Payments for the Period 1 January to 30 June 2025

MYSTATE BANK BALANCE AS AT 1/1/25		**$ 3,055.53**
INCOME		
Member Subscriptions	$1,525.00	
Donations	395.00	
Interest (Term Deposit)	6,561.26	
TOTAL INCOME	**$8,481.26**	
LESS EXPENDITURE		
Annual General Meeting	81.00	
Annual Return	74.80	
Email	332.64	
Internet	59.90	
Office	430.25	
Postage	611.30	
Printing & Stationery	29.35	
Super-News	1,406.92	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**$3,026.16**	
SURPLUS FOR PERIOD	**$5,455.10**	
MYSTATE BANK BALANCE AS AT 30/06/25		**$ 8,510.63**
MYSTATE TERM DEPOSIT AS AT 30/06/25		**$60,000.00**
TOTAL FUNDS		**$68,510.63**

COMMITTEE REPORT:

This Financial Statement presents fairly the financial position of TASS and the results of its operations for the period ended 30 June 2025.

Michael Walker CPA
Treasurer

John Pauley
President

TASS Membership – Issuing of Receipts

TASS has traditionally receipted members' payments by mail. There have always been some members who indicate they do not wish to receive a receipt. On the other hand, many members keep the receipt for tax-deduction purposes. We understand that. However, postage is now becoming a matter of significance for us with stamps having risen to $1.70 in July. Bear in mind that our subscriptions are only $15 (Superannuant) and $10 (i.e. widow/widower of a superannuant) and that Super News is mailed four times a year to those who request it as a hard copy. The Membership Renewal Form that will be with the Summer Edition of Super News will contain a Tick Box for those who do not wish to receive a receipt. We are also going to trial the emailing of receipts to those who both wish to receive a receipt and have an email address.

TASS Membership Subscriptions – Changes to Cheque Arrangements

You will be aware that banks are working to phase out the use of cheques for payments. This is being led by the Australian Government The Treasury which has published a "Cheque Transition Plan" (November, 2024; treasury.gov.au). The Plan outlines two Stages:

1. By 30/6/2028, cease the issuing of personal cheques, and cheques dated after this will not be accepted, and

2. On 30/9/2029, cease the acceptance of cheques, effectively closing the cheque system.

In the meantime, the banks claim that the average cost of processing a cheque is over $5 and this will rise as fewer people use them. It is possible that this cost will be passed on to people who write cheques.

TASS recognises the dilemma this will create for some of our members who have traditionally paid their membership renewals by cheque. Now, more than ever, we are encouraging the use of alternative methods of payment. For many years, we have offered the ability to pay by Direct Debit, and we thank those members who use this facility. Each year, the Membership Renewal Form has the TASS bank details to allow you to use this method. We are investigating other payment arrangements both with our bank (MyState) and using an alternative system.

Michael Walker CPA
TASS Treasurer

Vale Scott Calvert

Scott Calvert died suddenly on May 6.

The news of his sudden and untimely death was saddening for T.A.S.S.

Scott was a relatively young active man. He was the owner of Mobility4All, which is a sponsor of Super-News.

We understand the business and our sponsorship will continue and we urge our members to continue to support it.

Mobility4All in Moonah sells a wide range of mobility aids which have relevance for many of our members.

TASS Executive – Resignation of Christopher Scott

Christopher Scott joined the TASS Executive when he was elected at the 2023 Annual General Meeting. He was subsequently re-elected at the 2024 and 2025 AGMs. At the Executive Meeting on 20/5/25, Christopher tendered his letter of resignation and this was accepted.

Christopher was welcomed to the Executive because he brought a fresh perspective and new experience. On behalf of the Association, the Executive thanks him for his contribution and for his preparedness to stand for election.

Meet your new TASS Executive member – Richard Sulikowski

Now retired, Richard Sulikowski was a highly experienced public servant with over 44 years of dedicated service. Richard started as a cadet in the Department of Treasury and Finance, graduating with an Economics degree. He has held various key positions, including Director of the Shareholder Policy and Marketing Branch and Executive Director, Energy Reform.

Key achievements include: the reform of Government Business Enterprises with a contemporary GBE Act as well as the State's entry to the National Electricity Market. Richard was recognised for his ability to drive positive change in complex public policy areas. In his spare time, Richard enjoys gardening on their small acreage, taking care of the numerous pets and traveling. Richard is married to Marlen (Mai) and has one daughter who has followed in his footsteps as a career public servant in both State and Federal spheres.

Appeal for the Family of Constable Keith Smith

Constable Keith Smith lost his life in the line of duty on 16 June 2025. Police Legacy Tasmania has opened an appeal for his family. TASS has donated to the appeal on behalf of its members.

If any members wish to donate individually, the appeal account will remain open until September. Police Legacy Tasmania is a not-for-profit organization and donations over $2 are tax deductible. The account details are:

Account: Police Legacy Tasmania
BSB: 815000
Account: 100517798
Reference: Keith Smith

Police Legacy Tasmania's mission is to not only honour the memory of those who have served, but to ensure that the lives of those they leave behind are not defined by tragedy, but shaped by hope, resilience, and possibility.

Police Legacy Tasmania can be contacted at info@policelegacytas.org.au

Unlock Your Freedom with Folding Mobility Scooters from Mobility4All

Limited mobility shouldn't hold you back from living your best life. At Mobility4All, we believe that everyone deserves to enjoy the freedom to travel, shop, and visit loved ones with ease. Our folding mobility scooters are designed to make independence more accessible and enhance your quality of life.

Folding mobility scooters offer the perfect balance of convenience and performance. These lightweight models fold down effortlessly for easy storage and transport. Whether you're heading out for a quick errand, traveling by car, or planning a vacation, a folding scooter is the ideal companion for your adventures.

Compared to traditional mobility scooters, folding models are more compact and can be stored in tight spaces—like your car boot or at home. Plus, with a speed adjustment feature, you can customise your ride to suit your preferences.

At Mobility4All, we offer a selection of folding scooters to meet your specific needs. Let us help you unlock the freedom to go wherever life takes you! Visit us in store at 23 Derwent Park Road, Derwent Park today to explore our range of mobility solutions.

Elevate your comfort with a lift recline chair from Mobility4All

Sitting back in your favourite comfy chair for a cuppa whilst reading a book or watching television sounds enjoyable. But for some who struggle with the transition from sitting to standing and being comfortable might not be as easy as it used to be. Lift recline chairs whilst they look like a normal recline chair give you extra assistance transitioning from sitting to standing. At the touch of a button the chair will easily rise and tilts forward for ease of getting you up into standing. Lift recline chairs also have a range of benefits such as reducing strain on individuals and enhancing mobility, promote circulation due to the leg elevation feature, provide postural support and reduce manual assistance required from caregivers and giving individuals more independence.

Lift recline chair come with several options with regards to size, shape, colour, fabric and single or dual motor options. To trial a lift recline chair, head into Mobility4All and their friendly staff can assist in finding the chair that suits you and your needs.

Motor Yacht Club of Tasmania, Lindisfarne (MYCT)

In recognition of the Club's support for the Tasmanian Association of State Superannuants Inc (TASS) over many years, we encourage members to visit the club and enjoy the convivial atmosphere over drinks or a meal in Reflections Restaurant. The MYCT allows TASS to use their Boardroom for Executive meetings, and their function room is an ideal space for Annual General meetings and Forums. A special thanks goes to Ashlee for her friendly assistance shown at all times.

Welcome to Reflections Restaurant

Experience the perfect blend of culinary excellence and stunning waterfront views at Reflections Restaurant, located along the picturesque Lindisfarne Bay.

Our menu, crafted by our talented chefs, showcases the finest locally sourced ingredients, offering a diverse selection of dishes that celebrate Tasmania's rich flavours. Whether having a meal or enjoying a glass from our carefully curated wine list, every bite is designed to delight your senses.

Join us at Reflections Restaurant for a dining experience that combines exceptional cuisine with the beauty of Tasmania's waterfront.

Lunch Wednesday - Friday, 12.00 - 2.00pm   Dinner Tuesday – Friday, 5.30 – 8.00pm

Please call 6243 9021 to make a reservation

Members & Non-Members welcome

Photos from the March Annual General Meeting

Useful contacts for TASS Members:

Retirement Benefits Fund (RBF)

All enquiries	1800-622-631
Website	www.rbf.com.au

Australian Taxation Office (ATO)

Personal taxation information	13 28 61
Website	www.ato.gov.au

Services Australia

(Access Centrelink and Medicare services)

Older Australians and Financial Information Services	132 300
Disability, Sickness and Carers	132 717
Website	www.servicesaustralia.gov.au

TASS Executive – Administration:

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Vice President:	Murray Harper	Ph: 0408 487 527
Secretary & Public Officer:	John Chalmers	Ph: 0409 491 245
Treasurer:	Mike Walker	Ph: 0428 376 741
Membership Officer:	Charles Thomas	Ph: 0422 414 861
Super-News Editor:	Jeneane Thomas	Ph: 0408 485 902

Other Committee Members:
Jean Walker, Stephen Graetzer, Ross Brown, Jeff Garsed, David Louez, Richard Sulikowski

Northern Tasmania Representative:	Vacant	
North-West Tasmania Representative:	Donald Wells	Ph: 0428 415 852

Change of Address/or Email address:

Should you change your address and/or email details please advise the **Membership Officer, Charles Thomas,** so that he can update our records. Phone: 0422 414 861 or info@tass.org.au

DISCLAIMER

Super-News is published by the TASMANIAN ASSOCIATION of STATE SUPERANNUANTS Inc. ("the ASSOCIATION"). This publication is provided by the Association in good faith to collect and provide information which may be of interest to Retirement Benefits Fund (RBF) pensioners and members of the RBF defined benefits scheme.

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