



Aboriginal Issues in the Tasmanian Election 2018

TAC asked the known candidates for the forthcoming State election about their policies on Aboriginal issues. Here's a summary of what the major parties said. We'll include answers from other parties and candidates as we receive them.

What we asked

1. Do you agree that Aboriginal heritage protection legislation should recognise that the Aboriginal community are the collective owners of our own heritage?
2. Do you support the return of unalienated Crown land to Aboriginal community ownership?
3. Do you support the continuation of the current Aboriginal and dual naming policy introduced by the Labor/Green government and continued under the Liberal government?
4. Do you agree that special measures are needed to improve education and employment outcome for Aboriginal people in Tasmania?
5. Do you accept that it will be impossible to 'close the gap' in Aboriginal health outcomes in the absence of a dedicated Aboriginal Health Plan for Tasmania accompanied by appropriate data collection and funding as occurs in every other State and Territory?
6. Do you support Aboriginal community management of lands recognised in State and Federal law as important for their Aboriginal values, including the Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape in takayna/Tarkine and land declared Aboriginal land at nungu/West Point, Iaraturanawn/Sundown Point and similar areas?
7. Do you think it's time to recognise Aboriginal dispossession by starting discussions for a Treaty between the people of Tasmania and the Aboriginal community?
8. Do you support changing the date of Australia Day from the date of English invasion on 26 January 1788?
9. Do you agree that Tasmania should revert to the long-established practice of requiring some evidence of Aboriginal ancestry rather than solely self-identification in order for a person to be eligible for government services for Aborigines?

Who responded to our survey

- **Liberal Party:** We received a response from Will Hodgman, Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Tasmanian Liberal Party.
- **Labor Party:** We received a collective response from the Tasmanian Labor Party. Additionally Zelda Sherlock, Labor candidate for Denison and Kylie Wright, Labor candidate for Lyons, contacted to express their support for Aboriginal issues.
- **Greens Party:** We received a collective response from the Tasmanian Green Party candidates and branch members. Additionally, individual candidate responses from Richard Atkinson, Franklin; Holly Ewin, Franklin; Scott Jordan, Braddon; Kay McFarlane, Alderman, Clarence Council; Tammy Milne, Greens, Alderman, Devonport Council; Philip Nicolas, Braddon; Julie Norbury, Braddon; Hannah Rubenach-Quinn, Lyons.
- **Other candidates:** We sent the survey to parties known to be standing in the election on 26 September 2017. We are now seeking the views of parties or candidates who announced their intention to stand after the writs were issued. This includes candidates standing as part of the Jacqui Lambie Network, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers and independent candidates. We will add their views to the briefing as we receive them.



What the parties said

Summary

	Liberals	Labor	Greens
1. Recognising Aboriginal community as collective owners of our heritage	Support Aboriginal Relics Amendment Bill Support Aboriginal Council and Cultural Management Group Support consultation with the Aboriginal and broad communities on next step for reforms.	Support a full review of what is now the Aboriginal Heritage Act	Fully support recognition of Aboriginal community as collective owners of our heritage.
2. Returning unalienated Crown land	Committed to a review of the land return model to investigate opportunities to progress future land handback and joint land management opportunities with Tasmanian Aboriginal people.	Committed to work with the Aboriginal community in Tasmania to identify and progress land returns.	Not policy to return all unallocated Crown Land. But, recognise that restitution will primarily be achieved through the further return of land.
3. Dual naming	Review Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy, to enable further consultation and the inclusion of the broader Aboriginal community.	Support dual naming of Tasmanian geographical features and places.	Support the continuation of the current Aboriginal dual naming policy.
4. Education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal people	Specific initiatives targeting Aboriginal workers in public and community services Commitment to inclusive teaching and learning that values Aboriginal community and culture. Education and employment initiatives open to all Tasmanians.	Supports existing targeted education and employment initiatives. Open to suggestions about how to further improve the educational standards of Aboriginal people.	Support special measures to improve education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal people.
5. Aboriginal Health Plan	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing 2016-202 Framework Agreement Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2016-2026 Number of broader health initiatives that include Aboriginal focus, including an action plan in relation to mental health, social and emotional wellbeing under the Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Framework.	Commit to reviewing and updating the Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan. Will establish the Healthy Communities Commission.	Support an Aboriginal Health Plan and associated data and funding.
6. Recognising importance of Aboriginal community land management to community values	Review of the land return model to investigate opportunities to progress future land handback and joint land management opportunities with Tasmanian Aboriginal people.	Committed to a package to deliver greater protection and management for the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area and to empower local decision making.	Recognise importance of Aboriginal community land management to community values.
7. Treaty	No plans to negotiate a treaty	Committed to Treaty	Committed to Treaty
8. Changing the date	No plans to change the date	Support a change of date	Support a change of date
9. Evidencing Aboriginality for Govt. services	Will remain in line with Australian Government policy	All indigenous Tasmanians deserve recognition	Revert to evidence of Aboriginality



In Detail

1. ***Do you agree that Aboriginal heritage protection legislation should recognise that the Aboriginal community are the collective owners of our own heritage?***

Liberals	<p><i>The Hodgman Liberal Government secured the passage of the Aboriginal Relics Amendment Bill through Parliament earlier this year... While the new laws were an important first step towards contemporary Aboriginal heritage legislation, we acknowledged at the time of their introduction that there is more to do. The new laws significantly strengthen the penalties for vandalism and destruction of Aboriginal heritage and brings those penalties in line with damage to non-Aboriginal heritage, and removes the offensive 1876 date reference.</i></p> <p><i>We will continue our ongoing consultation with the Aboriginal and broad communities on next step for reforms. In the meantime, we have established the Aboriginal Heritage Council, and a Cultural Management Group to work with non-Government Aboriginal organisations on the management of cultural values in the State's Wilderness World Heritage Area.</i></p> <p><i>Will Hodgman, Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Liberal Party</i></p>
Labor	<p><i>Labor recognises that while the amendments passed to the Aboriginal Relics Act did make constructive changes to penalties for damage to Aboriginal heritage, there are still areas that have not been addressed by these amendments. Labor supports a full review of what is now the Aboriginal Heritage Act, with more comprehensive amendments to be introduced within the period of the next Parliament.</i></p> <p><i>Labor Party</i></p>
Greens	<p><i>Yes.</i></p> <p><i>Greens collective response; Richard Atkinson, Franklin; Holly Ewin, Franklin; Scott Jordan, Braddon; Kay McFarlane, Alderman, Clarence Council; Tammy Milne, Greens, Alderman, Devonport Council; Philip Nicolas, Braddon; Julie Norbury, Braddon; Hannah Rubenach-Quinn, Lyons.</i></p>



2. Do you support the return of unalienated Crown land to Aboriginal community ownership?

Liberals	<p><i>The Hodgman Liberal Government has committed to a review of the land return model to investigate opportunities to progress future land handback and joint land management opportunities with Tasmanian Aboriginal people. The aim is to create economic and tourism opportunities for Tasmanian Aboriginal people, as well as maintaining their connection to country.</i></p> <p><i>Will Hodgman, Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Liberal Party</i></p>
Labor	<p><i>Labor has a strong history of facilitating land returns to the Aboriginal community. A Labor Government would work with the Aboriginal community in Tasmania to identify and progress land returns.</i></p> <p><i>Labor Party</i></p>
Greens	<p><i>It is not Green's policy to return all unallocated Crown Lands to Aboriginal ownership. We are however, strong supporters of land returns as our Parliamentary and public advocacy record demonstrates.</i></p> <p><i>Greens collective response;</i> <i>And corresponding responses from Richard Atkinson, Franklin; Holly Ewin, Franklin; Scott Jordan, Braddon;</i> <i>Julie Norbury, Braddon; Hannah Rubenach-Quinn, Lyons</i></p> <p>Yes.</p> <p><i>Kay McFarlane, Alderman, Clarence Council; Tammy Milne, Alderman, Devonport Council; Philip Nicolas, Braddon.</i></p>



3. Do you support the continuation of the current Aboriginal and dual naming policy introduced by the Labor/Green government and continued under the Liberal government?

Liberals	<p><i>A review of the Aboriginal and Dual Naming Policy is currently underway, to enable further consultation and the inclusion of the broader Aboriginal community. An Issues Paper will be released for consultations shortly.</i> <i>Will Hodgman, Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Liberal Party</i></p>
Labor	<p><i>Labor supports dual naming of Tasmanian geographical features and places.</i> <i>Labor Party</i></p>
Greens	<p><i>Yes.</i> <i>Greens collective response; Holly Ewin, Franklin; Julie Norbury, Braddon; Kay McFarlane, Alderman, Clarence Council; Scott Jordan, Braddon; Hannah Rubenach-Quinn, Lyons.</i> <i>And corresponding response from Richard Atkinson, Franklin</i></p> <p><i>To be honest, the process is very slow. I would like to see the Mersey co named paranapple, but the process is ridiculous. It should just be done with the Aboriginal community ratifying names.</i> <i>Tammy Milne, Greens, Alderman, Devonport Council</i></p> <p><i>No, I think we should just use the Aboriginal name</i> <i>Philip Nicolas, Braddon.</i></p>



4. Do you agree that special measures are needed to improve education and employment outcomes for Aboriginal people in Tasmania?

Liberals	<p><i>Yes. The Hodgman Liberal Government specific budget initiatives over successive years, acknowledge the need to improve educational and employment outcomes for Aboriginal people. Some of the initiatives funded include \$250,000 per annum over four years to support a coordinated approach to employment in the State Service for Aboriginal people;...more than \$1.03mil funding to develop the wukalina cultural walk project as an exciting tourism venture on the East Coast and create jobs for Aboriginal people;...\$666,000 for an additional two trainee rangers to support the role of the Aboriginal community in joint land management;...\$617,000 over four years to employ two Aboriginal Liaison Officers part of Strong Families, Safe Kids, the Government's reform of the child protection system;...\$520,000 over two years to work with the Aboriginal community to focus on Tasmanian Aboriginals in the history and culture component of the Australian curriculum taught in our schools.</i></p> <p><i>The Tasmanian Government supports improved education outcomes for Aboriginal students in Tasmanian Government schools through the Education Department working with community and families to provide students with an inclusive approach to teaching and learning that values their community and culture.</i></p> <p><i>Students have access to specific Aboriginal career pathway programs and opportunities that are supported through targeted programs and Aboriginal workers attached to some schools.</i></p> <p><i>...Our significant investment in schools and teaching, including extending schools to Year 12 and additional school support staff to help disadvantaged students, our targeted support in skills training, as well as our \$425mil jobs plan including more apprentices and youth employment initiatives, are available for <u>all</u> Tasmanians.</i></p> <p><i>Will Hodgman, Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Liberal Party</i></p>
Labor	<p><i>Labor believes that all Tasmanians should be able to access quality public education to enable them to gain secure and rewarding employment. Aboriginal Education services...supports child and family centres, schools and colleges to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. Labor supports a continuation of these services but is open to suggestions about how to further improve the educational standards of Aboriginal people.</i></p> <p><i>Labor Party</i></p>
Greens	<p><i>Yes.</i></p> <p><i>Greens collective response; Holly Ewin, Franklin; Scott Jordan, Braddon; Kay McFarlane, Alderman, Clarence Council; Tammy Milne, Alderman, Devonport Council; Philip Nicolas, Braddon; Julie Norbury, Braddon; Hannah Rubenach-Quinn, Lyons.</i></p> <p><i>And corresponding response from Richard Atkinson, Franklin</i></p>



5. Do you accept that it will be impossible to ‘close the gap’ in Aboriginal health outcomes in the absence of a dedicated Aboriginal Health Plan for Tasmania accompanied by appropriate data collection and funding as occurs in every other State and Territory?

Liberals	<p><i>The significant gap in life expectancy and health outcomes which exists between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people means that Aboriginal health and access to services remains an important issue for the Hodgman Liberal Government...</i></p> <p><i>The ...Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Wellbeing 2016-202 Framework Agreement...between the Australian and Tasmanian Governments and the TAC as the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) affiliate in Tasmania...aims to facilitate the three parties working in collaboration to improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people in Tasmania.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Reference Group (TAHRG) has been established to provide a formal mechanism for consulting Aboriginal organisations outside the TAC.</i></p> <p><i>The ...Cultural Respect Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health 2016-2026...It will guide...the delivery of quality, culturally safe, responsible health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.</i></p> <p><i>The Tasmanian Government believes that every Tasmanian deserves to have access to the best health services available...There are a number of specific Aboriginal Health initiatives;...Aboriginal Liaison Officers at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Launceston General Hospital and through the Strong Families, Safe Kids initiative; Integrated Family Support Services, which targets Aboriginal families at risk; the karadi Neighbourhood House, to support the delivery of services / programs to respond to community needs, represent community views and build community capacity; the Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative (IDDI) and the Tasmanian Early Intervention Program;...the provision of oral health services in Tasmania where in 2016, a total of 3,111 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander patients were seen with almost half being children under 1; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Tasmania have access to the Australian Government funded vaccines; the Tasmanian Rethink Mental Health Strategic Plan has an activity to ‘Work with key stakeholders to develop an Action Plan in relation to mental health, social and emotional wellbeing under the Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Framework;...A Tasmanian Aboriginal Health Forum Mental Health Working Group has been convened...Finally, the Tasmania Health Service provides funding for the Ida West Aboriginal Health Scholarship scheme to provide up to \$15,000 each year for three scholarships...</i></p> <p><i>Will Hodgman, Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Liberal Party</i></p>
Labor	<p><i>Labor recognises that Aboriginal people experience a higher incidence of chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and kidney disease than the rest of the Australian population and have an unacceptably high life expectancy gap of 15-20 years at birth compared to the rest of the Australian population.</i></p> <p><i>Labor also recognises that there is significant work to be done to improve the delivery of health programs for Aboriginal Tasmanians. This requires collaboration with the Australian Government, State Government, Aboriginal community and service organisations.</i></p> <p><i>Tasmanian previously had an Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Strategic Plan between 2006 and 2010. Labor will commit to reviewing and updating this plan in government.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, Labor will establish the healthy Communities Commission, which will be charged with designing and implementing programs to reduce preventable disease, increase physical activity and keep Tasmanians healthier for longer.</i></p> <p><i>Labor Party</i></p>



5. ***Do you accept that it will be impossible to ‘close the gap’ in Aboriginal health outcomes in the absence of a dedicated Aboriginal Health Plan for Tasmania accompanied by appropriate data collection and funding as occurs in every other State and Territory?***

Greens

Yes.

Greens collective response; Holly Ewin, Franklin; Philip Nicolas, Braddon; Scott Jordan, Braddon; Kay McFarlane, Alderman, Clarence Council; Julie Norbury, Braddon; Hannah Rubenach-Quinn, Lyons.

And corresponding response from Richard Atkinson, Franklin

Yes! Health in the general population is very poor in Tasmania and a certainty Aboriginal people are a proportion of that group who require greater medical services. Health is a mess and we need to get it right now!

Tammy Milne, Greens, Alderman, Devonport Council



6. ***Do you support Aboriginal community management of lands recognised in State and Federal law as important for their Aboriginal values, including the Western Tasmania Aboriginal Cultural Landscape in takayna/Tarkine and land declared Aboriginal land at nungu/West Point, laraturanawn/Sundown Point and similar areas?***

Liberals	<p><i>The Hodgman Liberal Government has committed to a review of the land return model to investigate opportunities to progress future land handback and joint land management opportunities with Tasmanian Aboriginal people. The aim is to create economic and tourism opportunities for Tasmanian Aboriginal people, as well as maintaining their connection to country.</i></p> <p><i>Will Hodgman, Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Liberal Party</i></p>
Labor	<p><i>The State and Federal Labor parties have committed to a package to deliver greater protection and management for the Arthur Pieman Conservation Area and to empower local decision making. The package includes shared funding over four years to deliver a new local management committee, a cultural management plan, tourism infrastructure and additional indigenous rangers.</i></p> <p><i>Labor recognises it is important the Aboriginal community is involved in the management and protection of the area.</i></p> <p><i>A Federal Labor Government would provide \$2.29million for the development and implementation of the plan as well as tourism infrastructure including signage on indigenous sites and funding for up to four new indigenous rangers.</i></p> <p><i>State Labor will commit an additional \$600,000 as its share of the costs, including costs to reinstate a local management committee that will include all key stakeholders.</i></p> <p><i>Labor Party</i></p>
Greens	<p><i>Yes.</i></p> <p><i>Greens collective response; Holly Ewin, Franklin; Philip Nicolas, Braddon; Scott Jordan, Braddon; Kay McFarlane, Alderman, Clarence Council; Julie Norbury, Braddon; Hannah Rubenach-Quinn, Lyons.</i></p> <p><i>And corresponding response from Richard Atkinson, Franklin</i></p> <p><i>Yes! The absolute ignorance that allows 4x4 to desecrate Aboriginal sites is just appalling! This needs to change!</i></p> <p><i>Tammy Milne, Greens, Alderman, Devonport Council</i></p>



7. Do you think it's time to recognise Aboriginal dispossession by starting discussions for a Treaty between the people of Tasmania and the Aboriginal community?

Liberals	<p>A re-elected Hodgman Liberal majority Government has no plans to begin negotiating a treaty. In 2016, the Liberal Government introduced the Constitution Amendment (constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal People 2016) into Parliament, and receives unanimous support for the legislation that recognises, for the first time in the State's history, the Aboriginal people as Tasmania's First People, and the traditional and original owners of Tasmanian lands and waters. It also recognises the enduring spiritual, social, cultural and economic importance of those lands and waters to Tasmania Aboriginal people and the unique and lasting contributions that Tasmania Aboriginal people have made and continue to make to Tasmania. This recognition honours the remarkable story of over 40,000 years of continuous Aboriginal heritage and occupation in Tasmania. For my Government, it was another important step towards reconciliation.</p> <p><i>Will Hodgman, Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Liberal Party</i></p>
Labor	<p>Yes, Labor has committed to establishing a pathway to treaty with the Aboriginal community and wider Tasmanian community if we are elected to Government. A motion supporting a pathway to Treaty was passed at the most recent State Labor Conference and now forms part of our platform.</p> <p><i>Labor Party</i></p>
Greens	<p>Yes.</p> <p><i>Greens collective response; Philip Nicolas, Braddon; Scott Jordan, Braddon; Kay McFarlane, Alderman, Clarence Council; Tammy Milne, Alderman, Devonport Council; Julie Norbury, Braddon; Hannah Rubenach-Quinn, Lyons.</i></p> <p><i>And corresponding responses from Richard Atkinson, Franklin; Holly Ewin, Franklin</i></p>



8. Do you support changing the date of Australia Day from the date of English invasion on 26 January 1788?

Liberals	<i>We have no plans to change the date of Australia Day. Our priorities are to advance the interests of Aboriginal people through a range of strategies to close the gap including in employment, education, health and specific initiatives of significance to Aboriginal people, like joint land management. Will Hodgman, Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Liberal Party</i>
Labor	<i>Yes. Labor has spoken publicly about the need to find an alternative day for Australia Day that is respectful of Australians from all cultures. Labor Party</i>
Greens	<i>Yes. Greens collective response; Holly Ewin, Franklin; Philip Nicolas, Braddon; Scott Jordan, Braddon; Kay McFarlane, Alderman, Clarence Council; Tammy Milne, Alderman, Devonport Council; Julie Norbury, Braddon; Hannah Rubenach-Quinn, Lyons. And corresponding response from Richard Atkinson, Franklin</i>



9. ***Do you agree that Tasmania should revert to the long-established practice of requiring some evidence of Aboriginal ancestry rather than solely self-identification in order for a person to be eligible for government services for Aborigines?***

Liberals	<p><i>As you are aware, the Hodgman Liberal Government has adopted a new approach to Aboriginal identity. The approach ensures that Aboriginal people who can access Australian Government Aboriginal services can also access Tasmanian Government Aboriginal services, where previously they could not do so. This inclusive approach to eligibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services is consistent with that of the Australian Government.</i></p> <p><i>Will Hodgman, Premier and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on behalf of the Liberal Party</i></p>
Labor	<p><i>Labor believes that all indigenous Tasmanians deserve recognition.</i></p> <p><i>Labor Party</i></p>
Greens	<p><i>Yes.</i></p> <p><i>Greens collective response; Holly Ewin, Franklin; Julie Norbury, Braddon; Scott Jordan, Braddon; Hannah Rubenach-Quinn, Lyons.</i></p> <p><i>And corresponding response from Richard Atkinson, Franklin</i></p> <p><i>No</i></p> <p><i>Kay McFarlane, Alderman, Clarence Council.</i></p> <p><i>Yes. Needs more discussion. I'm concerned about the fractured nature of families and the difficulties around adoption and paternity. There needs to be some mechanism that can help there people find their people.</i></p> <p><i>Tammy Milne, Greens, Alderman, Devonport Council</i></p> <p><i>Only for new entrants including descendants, so self-identification has a sunset end.</i></p> <p><i>Philip Nicolas, Braddon</i></p>

*Authorised by Heather Sculthorpe, CEO, Tasmanian Aboriginal Corporation
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