



# RACT Election Advocacy

July 2025

## Building Community Preparedness for a Changing Climate

The past three years have seen significant increases in insurance costs, which is impacting Tasmanian households. As an organisation owned by our 220,000 members, we know how much the rising cost of insurance hurts.

Over the past year, RACT has been more actively engaging with experts, businesses and governments to identify solutions to address these underlying cost drivers.

We urgently need to tackle these underlying drivers, including increasing building, construction costs, government fees and charges, and preparedness for more frequent natural disasters. Extreme weather and disaster events are adversely impacting Tasmania.

- The **past 12 years have been the most costly and destructive for Tasmanians since 1967**, with more than \$2 billion of community losses caused by adverse events such as the Dunalley bushfires and floods in Latrobe, Hobart and Launceston.
- The **Northern Tasmania storms** in September last year were Tasmania's most damaging since May 2018, resulting in \$50m of damage.
- The **frequency and severity of extreme weather events are expected to increase** by more than 40% statewide by 2050 and beyond.
- Analysis indicates that **every dollar invested in proactive resilience action saves four dollars in future disaster costs**.
- Tasmania is distinct from other Australian States and Territories, with **bushfire making up 75% of Tasmania's natural hazard risk**. This makes it one of the world's most fire-exposed places.
- Tasmania's smaller size means that natural disasters have a **greater proportional economic impact**. For example, a bushfire that results in a \$2.9 billion of damage to the community, represents 7.6% of Tasmania's Gross State Product. In terms of relative impact, this is 4.7 times more than the next highest state in Australia (Victoria with a likely \$8.8b economic impact).

We urgently need to build community resilience. What's resilience? Think of it as disaster preparedness. Insurance is universally recognised as a **critical part of community and individual resilience**, and provides greater security, and quicker recovery following a major disaster. These are complex challenges that no organisation, government, or community can solve alone. Supporting Tasmanians in this changing environment requires us all to bring expertise to the table and work together.

## Development of coordinated community resilience strategy program

RACT's 2025 survey of 17,000 members showed that the majority want more assistance to be better prepared for natural disasters. Tasmanians are concerned about the preparedness of their community and the security of their homes in the face of increasingly frequent fires, floods and storms.

Tasmania possesses world-leading expertise in climate resilience through our research institutions such as the Fire Centre Bushfire Research Hub, government departments, and practical fire management capabilities.

RACT advocates for:

- Collaborative cross-sector development and delivery of evidence-based community programs that inform, support and empower Tasmanians to prepare for disaster scenarios.
- Support and investment in Tasmanian-specific fire research to inform community and society actions.

## Putting resilience at the heart of planning

It is essential that Tasmania invests in the planning and adaptation measures to improve our state's community disaster preparation.

RACT advocates for:

- A review of land use and planning to better protect at-risk homes and ensure planning incorporates risk and disaster mitigation.
- A halt to construction in high-risk areas, flood and bushfire prone zones.
- Targeted support for community organisations and individuals to reduce risks by preparing for extreme weather hazards.

## Review taxation of insurance

Tasmania, like all States and Territories (excluding the ACT), charges Stamp Duty on insurance products as a percentage. Of the cost of Tasmanians' insurance, 10% constitutes Stamp Duty, on top of 10% for GST. As premiums have risen, these taxes have increased significantly too and constitute revenue that goes to government. In addition, Tasmanian businesses are charged a fire levy on their insurance, homeowners through their council rates and motorists through their annual vehicle registration. These additional fees increase the cost of insurance.

RACT advocates for:

- Engagement in productive, balanced taxation reform to achieve;
  - A reduction of the insurance taxation burden on Tasmanians to improve insurance affordability. This will strengthen community resilience and reduce the reliance on government support after a disaster.
  - Funding resilience, emergency services and recovery measures.

## Road Safety and Infrastructure

Tasmania's road death and serious injury rates are unacceptably high and trending upwards. Tasmania continues to be one of Australia's worst-performing jurisdictions, with young people overrepresented in these statistics. Every life lost and impacted is one too many, and we will continue to advocate for and be involved in the need for road safety improvements.

## RACT Youth Road Safety Project

RACT is leading a five-year partnership with government, experts and community organisations to review and develop a holistic approach to support Tasmania's young people to be safer on our roads.

This \$8m partnership with government is nation-leading and supported by all major parties. Commencing in December 2024, the project takes a holistic, evidence-based approach to develop an inclusive road safety program for Tasmanian students in years 9 to 12. The project also focuses on disadvantaged young people and the role of parents and guardians in their driver training. A highly-credentialled Steering Committee has been established and the project's design is well underway.

## Safer Local Roads

The state's local road network is extensive - 14,000 kilometres, compared with 3,700 kilometres of highways. Sixty percent of road deaths occur in rural areas. Current funding does not represent a long-term strategic or network-wide approach.

RACT Advocates to:

- Support the development of an evidence-based 10-year local road investment program that targets high-risk and high-volume local routes.

## Reinvesting safety speed camera revenue into road safety

RACT was a vocal supporter of introducing road safety cameras. We believe funds raised through automated safety cameras should be reinvested in the camera network. RACT members overwhelmingly support this approach, with 83% supporting automated speed cameras and 95% supporting fine revenue being reinvested in the network.

This approach is evidence-based: speed, distraction, and failure to wear seatbelts account for 62% of death and serious injury—the unsafe driving behaviour detected by automated speed cameras. Tasmania remains the only State where camera revenues are not hypothecated for road safety investment.

RACT advocates to

- Ringfence revenues from road safety cameras (hypothecation) with any excess funds directed to additional road safety initiatives.

## Long-term infrastructure planning

RACT has consistently advocated for a long-term approach to infrastructure planning and delivery. Tasmania's infrastructure challenges require disciplined strategic planning that extends beyond political cycles and across electoral boundaries.

Tasmania needs a holistic approach that incorporates broader planning considerations, supports community disaster preparedness and that improves social and economic outcomes. Fragmented, short-term infrastructure decisions tend not to represent value for money or lasting community benefit.

RACT advocates for:

- Continued upgrading of the Bass Highway to improve safety and efficiency
- Completion of the 10-year plans for all Tasmanian highways - providing certainty for communities and businesses.
- Development and costing of a holistic plan for Greater Hobart, including finalising and implementing the Keeping Hobart Moving Plan, and factoring in active transport (an important issue for RACT members, particularly younger Tasmanians), housing, commercial development and regional planning to create more sustainable, connected and resilient communities.