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MEDIA RELEASE

Education Investment Better for Tasmanian Living Standards and Productivity

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“A sustained focus on year 12 retention rates and school performance is needed to lift Tasmanian living standards,” The Program Director of Productivity Growth at Grattan Institute, Saul Eslake, said today at a presentation to the Tasmanian Leaders Program held at “Technopark”, Dowsings Point.

“Although Tasmanian’s outcomes have improved over the last 10 years, Tasmania has significantly lagged the mainland for decades on living standards, life expectancy, long-term unemployment, and disadvantaged children,” he said.

“A fundamental cause is that Tasmanian productivity is significantly behind the mainland in most industries.”

“Productivity could be substantially higher if Tasmania lifted year twelve retention rates and school performance to mainland levels, along with curriculum reform. Tasmanian living standards will not be improved by propping up old industries or the ‘cargo cult’ of major industrial projects.”

“Recent studies point to the need to produce and market highly differentiated goods and services that embody high intellectual content for which a premium is willingly paid. Higher skills and education levels for the Tasmanian workforce are pivotal to this. They need improvement.”

“The attitude that the State’s economy is best served by protecting low skill, old industries that do not require year twelve standard education must change.”

The first priority for Tasmanian Governments should be bringing Tasmanian schooling completion and achievement up to mainland standards. And then, Tasmanian Governments should be investing in the State’s infrastructure, with particular focus on transport, communications, water and clean energy.

http://www.grattan.edu.au/publications/021_Tas_Leaders_Program_Saul_Eslake.pdf

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