



# Tasmanian Unions

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5 January 2020

## **Media Release: Unions call for real consultation on COVID-19 recovery**

Unions Tasmania are incredibly concerned by the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Committee (PESRAC) approach to recovery planning following the COVID-19 pandemic. The consultation process has failed to consult with those in the Tasmanian community who have been most affected by COVID-19.

To date there has been limited opportunity for all Tasmanians to participate in the PESRAC consultation processes, including the survey, which was opened for all Tasmanians, but during the middle of the pandemic response in May and June when most workers and community members were focused on preparing and containing the virus. Largely, submissions came from the business sector and no effort was made by PESRAC to achieve a balanced view, despite Unions Tasmania calling for one.

It is unacceptable that those workers in our community that led us through the COVID-19 pandemic have not had an opportunity to adequately contribute to the discussions and ideas on the needs for all Tasmanians to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The subsequent consultation sessions have been targeted at specific interests which have not involved workers in them, and the most recent rural and regional workshops only included one worker representative who were asked to discuss pre-determined outcomes.

"From the outset, workers voices have been excluded. No-one representing workers was included in PESRAC's membership, initial consultation processes were changed to limit input and despite nearly 90 groups being consulted in recent PESRAC workshops, worker's representatives were also left out of those forums. We will not get the recovery we need if we don't have worker's voices at the table," **Jessica Munday, Unions Tasmania Secretary**

"There is a real risk that the Premier's Recovery Advisory Committee will miss the fundamental basics of the recovery process like the mental health needs of the Tasmanian community purely because the consultation process has been too narrow and only afforded those in privileged positions the opportunity to have input," **Emily Shepherd, ANMF Tasmanian Branch Secretary**

"It is shameful that the Government is presenting its centerpiece of its COVID recovery plan as somehow representative of the views of all Tasmanians when in reality it represents only the interests of the big end of town. The voices of workers, including health workers, who continue to bear the burden of the effects of COVID must be included for the work of PESRAC to be treated with any seriousness," **Tim Jacobson State Secretary HACSU**



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“The Premier’s Recovery Committee is arrogantly out of touch with everyday Tasmanians. It is disappointing that they have not sought to engage more effectively with the essential workers who have been at the front line of dealing with the COVID crisis, and who will be on the frontline of recovery efforts. Our members may not have the university degrees or business connections most PESRAC members have, but they are still experts in their fields. They have valuable insights to what Tasmanians need to recover effectively, and how to best implement recovery strategies. The Premier is ignoring that expertise to the detriment of all Tasmanians,” **Jannette Armstrong, State Secretary Tasmania United Workers Union**

As we begin a new year, unions are renewing their calls for the Tasmanian Government to listen to the workers who have supported our state during COVID-19 and continue to do so. They deserve the opportunity to fully contribute to the plans for recovery not just based on the economic aspects, but on the social recovery and what is needed for everyday Tasmanians.

Unions call on PESRAC to extend the consultation process. Every Tasmanian should be provided the opportunity to have their say via a variety of avenues, including, surveys, submissions, face to face forums and via social media.

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