

# MP calls for emergency cash for services

**Stephanie Dalton**

As disability advocacy organisations Autism Tasmania and Disability Voices Tasmania faced the abrupt cessation of federal funding last week, Independent MP Meg Webb is calling on the state government to use emergency reserves to keep the organisations open while a long-term solution is developed.

Ms Webb said the 2023-24 State Budget allocated \$50m to the Treasurer's Reserve, which is intended to meet unexpected costs that could not be reasonably foreseen at the time of developing the budget.

She said this funding could be used immediately to intervene and provide emergency

bridging funding until the issue is resolved with the federal government.

"Inclusion means keeping the doors open and providing professional services reliably," Ms Webb said.

"I am calling on the state government to immediately seek discussions with their federal counterparts as a matter of urgency and in the interim to provide immediate emergency bridging funding to keep Autism Tasmania, Disability Voices Tasmania, and other essential representative and advocacy organisations secure, open and functional.

"This is what the State Treasurer's Reserve could be used for. A caring, compassionate,



**MLC Meg Webb**

and genuinely inclusive community would do no less.

"We don't need hand-wringing from the government now pointing to either a meeting next week or some new system expected in July 2025.

"It will be too late by then."

Disability Services Minister Jo Palmer said the state and federal governments were working together to resolve the funding issue.

"We were very disappointed to hear that some of our or-

ganisations, which have received funding for a number of years now through the federal government, were not successful with their grant applications this year," Mrs Palmer said.

"I have made personal and direct communications with Minister Rishworth and Minister Shorten on this, including meeting face-to-face with them in Canberra on Friday to advocate that our disability advocacy organisations continue their federal government funding.

"It was a really great response that I got from Minister Shorten, and we are working together to see what we can do."