

The Secretary  
Department of State Growth  
GPO Box 536  
Hobart TAS 7001  
5 March 2023

Re: **TASMANIA'S POPULATION STRATEGY**

Comment

Introduction:

I grew up in Tasmania, travelled overseas for a few years in my 20's, lived and work interstate for a number of years and consider myself very fortunate to now live here again. I know no other place on earth that offers the quality of life that I and many others enjoy. Among my friends are many people who started life elsewhere, visited Tasmania and chose to live here.

I know a young family who have moved here from interstate, primarily because the parents consider Tasmania the best place to raise their children.

Why working age people might decide **against** choosing Tasmania as their home

- I have a friend who moved to Tasmania, got a job here (there wasn't any doubt that she would), bought a house and proceeded to get some major renovations done on the house. This, however, turned out to be a nightmare – and it is ongoing. It seems that in Tasmania consumers have no protection against poor workmanship. Once the house is finished (it's been two years already) she will put it on the market and leave Tasmania. One of the problems she has come up against is illiterate building workers who can't read instructions or plans!
- Pay and conditions for essential workers  
Many essential workers, and professionals, such as medical specialists, earn less in Tasmania than their Mainland counterparts. There is a dire shortage of nurses, teachers and school support staff. This creates 'vicious circles' where workers who've had enough and left, cannot be replaced and this puts more pressure on existing staff e.g. a news item, today, about a child who needs support staff but frequently being sent home because the school does not have enough support staff.  
Locally, in Hobart, bus drivers have been leaving the job, resulting in bus services being cancelled, and the main reason for drivers leaving is that they do not feel safe at work. In other Australian States public bus operators employ security officers. Not in Tasmania.

- Lack of GP's. Working age people with families who are considering moving to Tasmania want to be sure that when they need to see a doctor they can see one straight away. At present it is almost impossible to see a GP at short notice – and the only alternative is to front up to the Emergency Dept of the public hospital, where you would be lucky to be wait only a few hours before being seen. A very stressful scenario.
- Tasmania has very low rates of bulk-billing doctors.
- To see a specialist e.g. a neurologist, you can be waiting almost twelve months.
- Tasmania's elective surgery waitlist is longer than those of other Australian capital cities.

- Education:

Tasmania has a 50% illiteracy rate, which is shocking. Education is the best pathway out of disadvantage – this is well known. A smart government invests in its people and this is a win-win for the whole community. My friend who has had such problems with incompetent building workers notes that illiteracy is a major factor.

Tasmania performs badly in Naplan results. In some parts of the State few people finish Year 12.

- Housing:

Tasmania has a dire shortage of affordable rental properties – Hobart is the worst Australian capital city for renters, or would-be renters. This also would be a turn-off for working age people planning to move to the State.

Many essential workers e.g. age care workers, do not earn good wages and cannot afford to pay high rents – if they can even find a place to rent.

And in many rural and regional parts of Tasmania there is no available suitable housing for professionals and essential workers.

Housing is a major issue and there needs to be strategic planning linking housing with planned population increases. This needs to be planned at Government level, not just left to the property development sector – there must be overarching strategic planning. Hobart has almost no remaining land that is suitable for housing. To continue filling up what land is available with single dwellings shows a lack of strategic planning.

- Roads and traffic congestion:

Again, there is a lack of serious strategic planning for population increase.

Adding another lane to one section of the Southern Outlet is not going to solve Hobart's traffic congestion woes, especially as there are more dwellings being built in Kingston and further south.

### Conclusion:

Tasmania's Population Strategy is not a strategy, it is more of a wish-list. A strategy involves experts, **independent** experts, who research, looking carefully at what has worked and not worked in other places. With expertise it is possible to work out what population Tasmania can support without sacrificing liveability, quality of life and social harmony – and without negatively impacting the natural environment (which is one of the key reasons why people choose Tasmania as a place to live). Without an informed and intelligent approach we'll all be worse off.

Catharine Errey