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Department of State Growth

GPO Box 536

Hobart, TAS, 7001 By email: consultation@stategrowth.tas.gov.au

RE: Refreshing Tasmania's Population Strategy

As part of a statewide conversation with other community-based organisations, we submit that in order to formulate a credible Population Strategy for our state, Tasmania should transition its economy from a reliance on continuous population growth towards an optimal stable population to achieve the best possible sustainable social, environmental, cultural, economic and well-being outcomes.

To work towards an achievement of such, we believe that :

1. The Strategy should commit to engaging an independent academic research institution to determine how this could be achieved. The outcomes or well-being indicators ought to be linked to State of the Environment reporting.
2. The Strategy needs to recognise that it is better to determine a long-term sustainable population size rather than by just picking an arbitrary population growth number.
3. The Tasmanian Government cannot simply assume that it automatically has a mandate for promoting continued population growth.
4. There is a fundamental need to firstly establish a dedicated Planning Department.
5. By reinstating the position and role of State Architect as a key strategy, a design policy for high-quality urban design could be properly be introduced.
6. To reinstate the role of local Councils as 'place shapers' the underpinning of our community well-being and the enriching of our cultural and natural heritage, lifestyle and democracy could be achieved.
7. Recognising that with sound strategic planning, Tasmania is well-placed to become a world leader in sustainability.
8. An important need is to clearly define the terminology used in the Strategy.

9. The Strategy must identify the environmental risks and negative impacts associated with unsustainable population growth.

10. The Tasmanian Government should ask the Federal Government to implement a National Population Policy which aims to stabilise Australia's population as soon as possible and should consider /question the notion that reaching population targets early is a sign of success, and until a better strategy is established, there should be a moratorium on Government efforts to actively promote migration to Tasmania pending:

- Provision of clear evidence demonstrating that population growth benefits individuals and communities;
- Definition of an optimal, sustainable stable population size for Tasmania; and
- Evidence that a clear majority of Tasmanians support continuing population growth.

Furthermore, we are concerned that we do not agree with the notion of perpetual growth on a finite island and believe there is no direct relationship between growth and well-being. There is a lack of community support for continuing population growth.

The present proposal fails to address what is Tasmania's optimal population size and fails to outline where the population growth will occur.

We question whether Tasmania has enough land to do what the Government wants?

There is a narrow view on the disadvantages of population growth e.g. diminishing democracy, dismantling strategic planning, impacts on cultural heritage, loss of bushland, scenic landscapes and biodiversity, impacts on urban amenity, quality of life, liveability and well-being; increased traffic congestion and road safety considerations; increased land use conflict; impacts on urban water supplies, freshwater ecosystems and resources including river health; undermines Tasmania's brand, loss of agricultural land, increased pressure on waste management, increased inequality, increased use pressure on recreational and protected areas, increased pressure re fire management, increased pressure on sewerage systems and wastewater and the enormous cost of new infrastructure and its maintenance, and we believe there will be a further stress on the environment as well as public services including health, education, housing and associated infrastructure costs.

Yours faithfully,

Lionel J. Morrell
President

TASMANIAN RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION INC.