

Thank you for the opportunity of providing comment with respect to the above project.

I would like to raise the following issues about continuing population growth and the Consultation Paper:

1. Page 4 of the Consultation Paper deals with improving 'how we plan for and manage future population trends and issues and states population growth is important to support the economy, provide essential services and encourage greater diversity. The Paper focuses on drivers of economic growth without due consideration to concerns related to conflicting challenges. For example: the loss of habitat for native fauna and flora due to population growth.
2. The Paper contains no detail with respect to how population growth will provide enhanced well-being to current residents, nor does it address:
 - a) What detrimental social, environmental, and cultural impacts that significant population growth might inflict on the current Tasmanian population and how will they be ameliorated;
 - b) Where population growth is expected to occur; and
 - c) What level of community support exists for continuing population growth.
3. This small State has some great natural, environmental, social, and cultural attributes: one of which is a relatively small population. It is well documented that consumption driven by increased population growth may be good for business, but concurrent offsets relating to ecological impacts and degradation are concerning and will lead to more conflicts, reduced amenity and wellbeing, and poorer outcomes for current residents.
4. Irrespective of the State's relatively small population, current problematic deficiencies associated with housing, health, education, and transport infrastructure etc, demonstrate an inability of State Government to manage current population levels. Under these circumstances, planning for future population growth would have more credibility if better outcomes associated with the above matters were demonstrated: or at least a sustainably based population target was sought.
5. The merits of a sustainable population size and how it might be achieved warranted discussion in the Paper. The matter of optimal population size is important for the state's current population to debate.
6. Given the lack of detail contained in (1), (2) and (5) above, it is not surprising that the quantum leap of how the state could transition from an economy based on increasing population growth to one which identifies an optimal stable population to enhance environmental, social, and economic outcomes, has also not been addressed. It is a missed opportunity.
7. Matters contained in (1), (2), (5) and (6) above are relevant for community members to make informed submissions regarding the issue of future population growth. Their omission from the Paper should not restrict their inclusion in future strategy development.
8. Over the past decades various State Government strategies have prioritised economic development that demonstrated competitive advantage and prioritised innovation, technological advancement, and upskilling employees to produced smart new market-ready

products and services. Tasmania's sustainable energy generation is nation leading. Agribusiness has benefitted from the State's disease-free status; and tourism from the clean-green image, wild eco-adventures, and historic, funky art and cultural milieus.

9. The rigorous strategic focus of past governments to drive innovation in various industry development sectors should be mirrored in future population growth strategies. A key driver of innovation associated with population growth and how to best manage it, comes in the form of population sustainability.
10. Greater population diversity may be useful in future, but Tasmania's Palawa people and their cultural heritage should be recognised and supported as a priority – prior to any planning on how to assimilate more cultural diversity.

Recommendations:

I recommend the future population growth strategy development for Tasmania incorporates the following:

1. A vision for being internationally recognised as a leader in sustainability with resultant benefits economically, environmentally, and socially, and values to include improved well-being outcomes for residents.
2. Recognition that current housing, health, education, and transport infrastructure etc. issues need to be solved in the short term and improved prior to future population growth.
3. Independent academic research and discussion based on matters raised in (1), (2), (3), (5), (6), (9) and (10) above as well as:
 - a) Definitions of 'sustainable' and 'unsustainable' population growth.
 - b) How population growth benefits current Tasmanians, including Palawa people.
 - c) What an optimal, sustainable, and stable population base may be.
 - d) Why a sustainable population size is preferable to the arbitrary figure of 650,000.

Kind regards,

Tricia Ramsay.