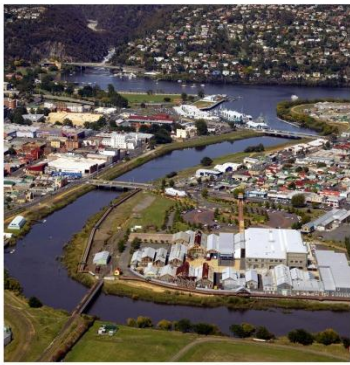
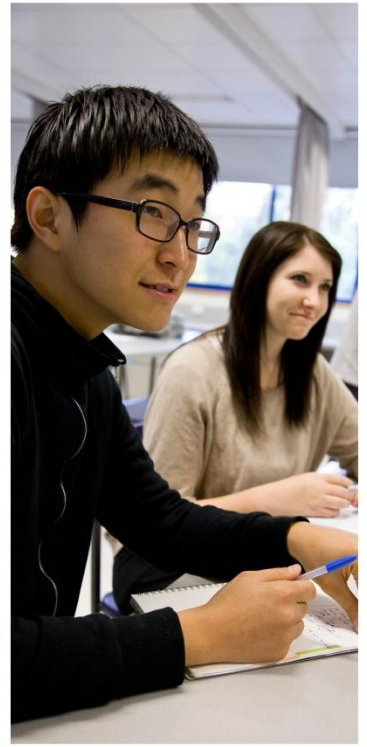


Consultation summary



Executive summary

The Tasmanian Government has set a target of increasing Tasmania's population to 650 000 by 2050. To provide a framework for achieving this target, the Department of State Growth is currently preparing a population strategy, which is due for release in the second half of 2015.

On 30 April 2015, the Department of State Growth commenced a six week public consultation process to seek input into the development of a population strategy for Tasmania.

This report summarises 41 submissions received from organisations, representative bodies and interested individuals and three stakeholder roundtables held in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart with respect to growing Tasmania's population.

The submissions suggest that there is a need for long term, coordinated action by all levels of government, industry and the community if we are to grow Tasmania's population and reach the target.

Consensus from the consultation process was that population growth will rely on Tasmania being able to provide meaningful work opportunities and superior lifestyle advantages. As the population grows, we will need to appropriately plan for and provide services to support our population, while not negatively impacting Tasmania's liveability.

Three key themes emerged as suggested areas of focus for growing the Tasmanian population:

- strong economic performance, including real work opportunities and investment in education and training
- improving and promoting Tasmania's liveability
- planning for growth; including provision of social and economic infrastructure.

Some submissions questioned the need for population growth in Tasmania, particularly in relation to the State's carrying capacity, potential environmental impacts and threats to biosecurity.

A number of submissions also raised the importance of providing opportunities for Tasmanians, as well as migrants, to participate, and prosper, in the Tasmanian economy and community.

Over the coming weeks, the Tasmanian Government will consider the advice provided and the initiatives suggested through the public consultation process and will develop a population strategy for our State.

Introduction

The Tasmanian Government has set a target of increasing Tasmania's population to 650 000 by 2050. To provide a framework for achieving this target, the Department of State Growth is currently preparing a population strategy, which is due for release in the second half of 2015.

On 30 April 2015, the Department of State Growth commenced a six week public consultation process to seek input into the development of the population strategy for Tasmania. Consultation included three stakeholder forums, held in Burnie, Launceston and Hobart, numerous meetings and conversations with stakeholders and a written submission process.

Participants in the public consultation process were invited to consider nine questions:

1. What are you or your organisation already doing to support and grow Tasmania's population?
2. What can the Tasmanian and Australian Governments, local councils, businesses, stakeholders and the community more generally do to grow our population?
3. Where should we each focus our efforts to grow our population?
4. What can we each do to attract interstate and overseas migrants to Tasmania?
5. What can we each do to encourage interstate and overseas migrants and their families to settle permanently in Tasmania?
6. What can we each do to encourage Tasmanian expatriates to return?
7. What can we each do to support Tasmanian youth and reduce the number of young people leaving Tasmania?
8. What can we each do to support working families?
9. How can the Tasmanian and Australian Governments assist businesses to attract and retain a skilled workforce?

The Department of State Growth received 41 submissions from organisations, representative bodies and interested individuals during and immediately following the consultation period. This report summarises those submissions, as well as feedback received through the stakeholder roundtables.

Summary of consultation

In general, submissions suggested that in order to grow Tasmania's population, government, industry and the community will need to work together over the long term, to implement strategic actions in three key areas:

- strong economic performance, including real work opportunities and investment in education and training
- improving and promoting Tasmania's liveability
- planning for growth; including the investment and provision of social and economic infrastructure.

Also consistent throughout the consultation process was the message that the Tasmanian Government should take the lead in efforts to grow and support the population.

Some submissions questioned the need for population growth in Tasmania, particularly in relation to the State's carrying capacity, potential environmental impacts and threats to biosecurity. These submissions referred to concerns relating to rapid population growth and overpopulation at an Australian and global level, rather than considering the Tasmanian context and associated challenges of a population projected to decline.

A number of submissions raised the importance of providing opportunities for Tasmanians, as well as migrants, to participate, and prosper, in the Tasmanian economy and community. There was some concern that a focus on attracting new residents to Tasmania would reduce the focus on resident Tasmanians.

The following section outlines actions proposed through the public consultation process, for each of the three key areas identified.

Strong economic performance, including real work opportunities and investment in education and training

Submissions generally reflected the importance of strong economic performance and associated job opportunities, to growing our population. Consensus from the consultation process was that a priority focus should be on industries which provide strong, secure, permanent and professional employment opportunities with career pathways. Appropriate education and training and skill development to match emerging employment opportunities was also considered important. Submissions suggested that Tasmania needs to be globally competitive in terms of its business environment and to attract a skilled workforce. In addition, submissions suggested that Tasmania may consider positioning itself as a world leader in niche industries, being an early adopter and specifically targeting high value add industries which may be appropriately scaled up to deliver to market and maintain competitiveness.

Improving and promoting Tasmania's liveability

In addition to meaningful opportunities to work in Tasmania, submissions suggested that Tasmania's liveability will be an important factor in population growth, both in terms of attracting and retaining people.

Liveability encompasses both the social and economic fabric of the community, including quality of life and lifestyle. This includes the quality of education and health services, access to affordable housing, public transport, safety, social inclusion and, increasingly, access to affordable child care. Tasmania has some advantages in terms of liveability, including work/life balance, pleasant urban environments, lack of congestion and pollution, the environment and social and recreational infrastructure. The submissions suggested that by promoting liveability, Tasmania may be able to attract and retain people who share the same values.

Planning for growth; including investment and provision of social and economic infrastructure

The submissions also suggested that as the population grows, we will need to appropriately plan and service that growth, to reduce impacts on liveability. If we do not plan for and service population growth appropriately, we may impact the environment, access to appropriate housing, traffic congestion, supply of child care and education services, work/life balance and access to appropriate public transport.

Responses to questions posed during consultation

Most of the submissions received through the consultation process focused on what the Tasmanian Government could do to grow the population, rather than responding directly to the questions posed. The following section provides a summary of information received for each of the questions posed.

1. What are you or your organisation already doing to support and grow Tasmania's population?

This question sought information about the actions being undertaken to grow Tasmania's population. The submissions identified actions being undertaken by all levels of government, as well as by community organisations and migrant services to grow Tasmania's population. The information provided is briefly described below, although it is clear that many more actions are being taken to grow the population across Tasmania.

At Tasmanian Government level, the Department of State Growth promotes and administers business and skilled migration to the State, including granting state-nominated visas under the Australian Government economic

migration visa program. The Department of Premier and Cabinet develops and supports the implementation of migrant related policy, in particular, through the recently endorsed Tasmanian Multicultural Policy 2014 and associated action items. The Tasmanian Government also provides funding to the migrant peak body, the Multicultural Council of Tasmania.

In addition to the Migration Program, the Australian Government, through the Department of Social Services, is responsible for managing referrals of humanitarian entrants and coordinating settlement assistance through the Humanitarian Settlement Service. The Department of Social Services manages a number of funded settlement services to support humanitarian entrants and other eligible migrants to become self-reliant and participate equitably in Australian society, with a focus on fostering social participation, economic well-being, independence, personal well-being and community connectedness. There are four service providers in Tasmania: Migrant Resource Centre North, Migrant Resource Centre South, Centrecare Tasmania and Save the Children Australia (Tasmania). In addition, the Department of Social Services administers the Strengthening Communities Activity grant program which includes Diversity and Social Cohesion projects and Multicultural Arts and Festival Grant projects.

The Tasmanian Settlement Network, convened by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, the Tasmanian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet, and the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection provides a forum for government officials to consult and exchange information on a range of settlement related issues.

Local Government is also active in attracting and retaining our population through focussing on building liveable places and strong communities. For example, the Launceston City Council is actively pursuing recognition as a United Nations child friendly city and the Clarence City Council is endorsed as a World Health Organisation age friendly city.

The Migrant Resource Centres (North and South) provide a point of contact for migrants in Tasmania on all visa streams, however they predominantly provide services for new and emerging communities. These services include immigration advice, employment services, language classes, housing support, drivers licence assistance, and education and training. In addition, Migrant Resource Centres provide a range of programs which are funding specific and not recurrent, to assist migrants with engagement, integration and connection with the broader Tasmanian community.

The Multicultural Council of Tasmania is the peak body for 42 different migrant communities and advocates for migrants and refugees as well as encouraging and promoting diversity and community harmony in the wider population. The Council's member organisations are largely volunteer based and provide informal support and services for humanitarian entrants, migrant families, economic migrants and international students who settle in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Department of Education, through Government Education and Training International, proactively promotes international education opportunities in Tasmania, particularly in the school and vocational sectors. The University of Tasmania, TasTAFE and a number of independent schools are also active in attracting international students to Tasmania. While international students are predominately temporary residents in nature, they play an important economic role, and preliminary efforts are currently being developed to encourage longer term settlement in Tasmania through initiatives such as internships and graduate work experience programs.

2. What can the Tasmanian and Australian Governments, local councils, businesses, stakeholders and the community more generally do to grow our population?

Many respondents suggested that improved collaboration and partnerships between all levels of government, community groups, industry and education providers would help to achieve population growth. Respondents pointed to the importance of communication, openness, inclusiveness and targeted approaches that are informed by evidence and appropriately resourced.

3. Where should we each focus our efforts to grow our population?

Submissions identified a number of factors that are important in growing Tasmania's population.

- Attracting and retaining families:
 - access to affordable child care
 - paid parental leave
 - flexible workplaces.
- International migrants:
 - settlement services
 - support services for migrants' family members
 - family reunion
 - family migration.
- Interstate migration:
 - targeted, strategic marketing.
- Encouraging expatriates to return.
- Opportunities for young people.
- Competitive business environment to encourage business investment and growth.
- Opportunities associated with an ageing population.

4. What can we each do to attract interstate and overseas migrants to Tasmania?

Submissions suggested that attracting new residents from interstate or overseas will be dependent upon Tasmania being able to provide opportunities for work and a superior lifestyle, including a welcoming and inclusive society. This includes encouraging the business community to be open and active in engaging with people who want to live and work in Tasmania.

Some submissions suggested that increasing the Tasmanian Government's engagement with employers would help to identify skill and labour shortages and future employment demand. Furthermore, communicating work opportunities to job applicants from interstate and overseas may help to attract people to Tasmania.

Submissions also raised the potential to capitalise on existing interstate and international connections through sister school/city relationships and to build greater networks between those who already have a connection with Tasmania, particularly through international education and tourism.

In addition, submissions highlighted that Tasmania needs to be globally competitive in terms of offering a vibrant and inviting place to live and work as well as being a competitive place to set up business. A targeted marketing campaign to communicate the opportunities, employment and lifestyle Tasmania offers, was suggested.

The following aspects were suggested when communicating with people about the benefits of moving to Tasmania:

- Tasmania's lifestyle advantages
- family friendly state
- success stories of living and working in Tasmania
- comparative work/life balance stories
- housing affordability
- age friendly state
- active participation in interstate and overseas migration expos and seminars.

5. What can we each do to encourage interstate and overseas migrants and their families to settle permanently in Tasmania?

Many respondents pointed out that Tasmania's ability to retain interstate and overseas migrants will depend on their experience in the State. This includes their perceptions and experiences of the opportunities for meaningful

work, connectedness to the community and the experiences of migrants' partners and families (including gaining employment, adjusting to schools, building social networks etc.).

International migrants

For international migrants, the submissions suggested that the decision to stay in Tasmania is impacted by employment opportunities, social cohesion and cultural infrastructure. However, it appears from the submissions that very little is understood about the experience of migrants in Tasmania and what factors influence their decision to leave or to remain in the State.

Through the consultation process, migrants reported challenges in gaining employment in Tasmania. Migrants' skills, qualifications and experience may not be recognised in Tasmania, making it difficult to gain employment in their field of expertise. This may be further exacerbated by a difficulty accessing local networks, given the low rates of advertising of positions in Tasmania. In addition, some migrants reported that job service providers and agencies do not always have experience or skills to assist people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Social cohesion and access to appropriate cultural infrastructure was also raised as important for attracting and retaining migrants (for example strong community, meeting places, places of workshop, burial sites etc.). Many migrants place great value on cultural traditions and practices and access to cultural infrastructure enables these traditions to be upheld and passed down through the generations, creating strong cultural communities, and encouraging migrants to settle permanently.

Migrant youth

Youth from multicultural backgrounds reported additional challenges which impact their experience in Tasmania and the subsequent decision to stay in Tasmania. A report by the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network Tasmania released in March 2015 contains a range of recommendations to better support migrant youths in Tasmania, particularly those from humanitarian entrant backgrounds.

The report highlights the key issues for migrant youth including; education, health, employment, housing, racism, bullying and safety, relationships and obtaining a drivers licence. The report suggests that migrant youth would benefit from better access to English language training and training about workplace requirements, better pathways to employment including work placement programs, access to networks, access to entrepreneurial programs and mentoring. The report recommends that efforts be made to communicate more positive stories about the contribution of migrants to society and the economy through the media and other communication channels.

International students

A number of submissions highlighted Tasmania's attractiveness to international students due to safety, quality educational offerings, affordability, niche specialisations, as well as the environment. For many international students there appears to be a desire to remain in Tasmania post-education, however, this relies upon employment and meeting visa requirements for permanent residency.

There may be opportunities to increase the length of time international students stay in Tasmania, by working with the Commonwealth on visa pathways, and by encouraging and facilitating business investment and job creation in the State. This may also entice international student graduates from interstate to Tasmania.

Initiatives for consideration

Numerous initiatives were suggested in the submissions to encourage migrants to settle permanently in Tasmania.

Social cohesion:

- communicating positive stories about migrants and their contribution to society and the economy
- cultural diversity and awareness training for the business sector and wider community
- initiatives to specifically address racism and bullying in schools, the workplace and the wider community
- cross cultural festivals and events

- a state-wide multicultural celebration week similar to Youth Week and Seniors Week
- community development activities for migrants
- multilingual signage in public places.

Employment:

- settlement services for non-humanitarian entrants, including secondary visa holders
- migrant communities providing support services in mentoring and networking
- identifying appropriate career pathways for migrants and providing appropriate education and training
- skills assessment and job matching services for migrants
- matching migrants with identified employment demand
- improved processes for recognition of existing (non-Australian) qualifications
- supporting networks for migrants and opportunities for ongoing sustainable employment
- work experience opportunities for migrants
- supporting entrepreneurship in migrant communities – micro-credit, start-up assistance, enterprise centres
- recognising and rewarding organisations who are leaders in employing migrants.

Cultural infrastructure:

- creating a single entry point to provide information about multicultural services in Tasmania
- undertaking an audit of underutilised government and community assets that may be suitable for use by migrant communities as a meeting place or cultural hub
- building the capacity of migrant community leaders
- supporting social enterprise initiatives in migrant communities
- providing culturally appropriate infrastructure in public buildings (for example prayer rooms).

6. What can we each do to encourage Tasmanian expatriates to return?

It is thought that many expatriate Tasmanians have a strong desire to return 'home' but the ability to return is limited by opportunities to work. It was suggested that communicating employment vacancies to a wider audience may assist expatriates identify potential opportunities to return, whilst enabling employers to access a skilled and experienced workforce that is committed to living and working in Tasmania.

In addition, it was also suggested that developing a network and portal for expatriates to upload their details (including education, skills and work experience), which is accessible by prospective Tasmanian employers, may lead to greater employment of expatriates. This portal could also offer support services and advice on returning to Tasmania.

7. What can we each do to support Tasmanian youth and reduce the number of young people leaving Tasmania?

Submissions suggested that young people leave Tasmania to pursue employment, education or lifestyle opportunities elsewhere, which may not be available in Tasmania. Youth are often seeking opportunities for long term, secure, permanent employment with career pathways.

To assist youth to stay in Tasmania, it was suggested that young people need the opportunity to gain relevant work experience, either through their education and training endeavours, or through other programs such as internships, work placement programs, graduate programs or secondments.

Additionally, it was suggested that programs be supported that enable young people to gain worldwide experience and global connections without permanently leaving Tasmania, such as to study abroad, study tours, exchange programs and secondments.

Other suggested initiatives included:

- better matching education and training provision to employment demand
- identifying and articulating employment pathways for youth
- improving education pathways and transition to employment opportunities
- communicating career opportunities to young people
- graduate employment programs
- internships and work experience programs
- establishing links between industry and education providers with interstate cities/regions for youth to experience opportunities elsewhere while maintaining a pathway to return to Tasmania
- youth entrepreneurial programs
- work-readiness training
- utilising older workers as mentors for youth for skill and knowledge transfer
- encouraging employers to offer greater job security
- supporting apprenticeships or traineeships
- entry level positions for tertiary or vocational graduates
- interstate secondments and work placements, with a pathway to return to Tasmania
- a program where apprentices/trainees can complete their training and achieve their qualification in the circumstances where an employer is unable to support training to completion
- promoting Tasmania interstate as a destination to pursue higher education opportunities.

8. What can we each do to support working families?

Encouraging flexible workplaces (including flexibility to care for older and younger generations), access to quality and affordable child care and education, efficient and effective public transport and enabling a quality of life with an acceptable cost of living were suggested as important to supporting working families.

9. How can the Tasmanian and Australian Governments assist businesses to attract and retain a skilled workforce?

The overwhelming majority of submissions highlighted the importance of a strong economy and job opportunities to growing Tasmania's population. Attractive environments in which to work were thought to be those which offer opportunities to balance work and life needs, ongoing skill development and formal education and training, career pathway progression, mentoring opportunities and those that support inclusiveness regardless of age, gender, race, religion, disability or sexuality.

Initiatives suggested to attract and retain a skilled workforce included:

- removing barriers to participation, for example age discrimination, compulsory retirement, workers compensation age limitations
- return to work initiatives for carers
- education and training initiatives, improved job security and innovation
- older workers as mentors for youth for skill and knowledge transfer
- identifying migrants' skill sets and marketing to employers.

Organisations and individuals involved in public consultation

The following organisations or individuals were involved in the public consultation process. Organisations or individuals have not been listed where they have not provided explicit consent.

Organisations:

- Attain Migration
- Break O'Day Council
- Burnie Chamber of Commerce
- Burnie City Council
- Central Coast Council
- Circular Head Council
- City of Hobart
- Clemenger Tasmania
- Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Border Protection
- Commonwealth Department of Social Services
- Council on the Ageing Tasmania
- Cradle Coast Authority
- Derwent Valley Council
- Devonport Chamber of Commerce
- Flinders Council
- George Town Council
- Glenorchy City Council
- INBIB Marketing
- Kentish Council
- Kingborough Council
- Mackie Crompton Barristers and Solicitors
- Migrant Resource Centre (Northern Tasmania)
- Migrant Resource Centre (Southern Tasmania)
- Multicultural Council of Tasmania
- North East Bioregional Network Inc
- Northern Tasmanian Development
- O-Group
- Planning Institute Australia, Tasmanian Division
- Property Council (Tasmania)
- Sorell Council
- Sustainable Population Party
- Tasmanian Women's Council
- The Tasmania Opportunity
- Uniting Care Tasmania
- University of Tasmania
- West Tamar Council
- Youth Network of Tasmania

Individuals:

- Colin Kent
- Doug Chipman
- Leonie Hiscutt MLC
- Mark Glazbrook
- Nathahn and Monika Walter
- Philip Stigant
- Robin Firth
- Roger Jaensch MP

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