

Dear Department of State Growth,

I would like to submit the following comments on your proposed Strategy document:

1. I attach for your reference this extract from the document:

Why is growth important?

Economies with larger populations sustain a broader range of industries, provide a wider range of employment opportunities, and tend to be more diverse, innovative, and resilient. A larger population improves the viability of services for community members and lowers costs through economies of scale.

It is recognised that population growth comes with challenges such as congestion, social cohesion, timely supply of government services to match demand and environmental impacts including maintaining Tasmania's low emissions profile. Your suggestions for policies and initiatives that could help address these challenges are invited through this consultation process.

Your first paragraph above provides the panacea for the Tasmanian government strategy. "Growth is Good!" Not one word is included of the requirement that Population growth should be consistent with "Tasmania's land, its resources, and its environment". I strongly recommend that my latter words are included in your revised strategy. I also would urge the Tasmanian Government to change the name of your department from "State Growth" as this overtly unfortunately suggests that 'any growth is good'.

2. I further attach for your reference the following extract from your document:

TABLE 1 - BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF POPULATION GROWTH

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger economic growth • Vibrant cities and regions • Stimulates employment • Sparks innovation and productivity • Increases in skilled, prime working age people • Increased labour force participation • Likely improved productivity • Sustains a broader range of industries • Improves the viability of services for community members • Social contribution of migrants, bringing new ideas, perspectives and relationships • Increase in GST funding from the Australian Government due to calculation being based on population size • Increased tax base to invest in government services such as health, education, social housing • Improved living standards • Increased investment leading to job creation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion • Increasing pressures on government services • Uneven growth and decline in different areas causing some services to be unsustainable • Housing supply and diversity • Maintaining Tasmania's low emissions profile with a growing population • Social cohesion

Unfortunately Table 1 presents a particularly biased set of points specifically designed to support the strategy of Continuing Growth (unlimited). The Benefits are not identified as 'Potential Benefits' and automatically 'stronger economic growth' is top of the list as 'overtly guaranteed'. Rather than a list of 'Potential Costs' Table 1 lists simply 'Challenges', obviously to the overcome in implementing the pre-determined Population Strategy. Clearly omitted are any words is the list relating to Environmental impact, and Heritage impact. Yet all the struggles facing citizens and Non-Government Organisations' (NGOs') in the last 30 years in Tasmania challenging Tas govt decisions relate to protecting heritage, the environment, social impact. The Tasmanian Government, led in this area by the department of State Growth, has not commissioned a comprehensive Cost-Benefit Study of the proposed Population Strategy.

I strongly recommend that you commission such a cost -Benefit Strategy before finalizing the Refresh Strategy.

I strongly recommend revising Table 1 to identify a list of Potential Benefits and an comprehensive list of Potential Cost – remove the heading reference to Challenges. I recommend that State Growth consult with the Department of natural Resources and the Environment and the Department of Human Services in identifying additional items for the 'Potential Costs' column.

I have read the comprehensive submission by the Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania. I commend this NGO for courageously striving to improve planning for a sustainable economic, environmental, and social Tasmania in a global context. I fully endorse the arguments and recommendations of the PMAT submission, and I urge your Department and the Tasmanian Government to give it active consideration and to adopt their recommendations.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Marcus Higgs