

Please accept my submission on this strategy as outlined below.

The concept of continual population growth is unsustainable from an environmental and human well-being point of view. On a broader scale, we are seeing the impacts of global population increase in terms of serious environmental decline which will impact human survival not to mention the extinction of other species we should be living in harmony with. On the local level, Tasmania's environmental and human health is degrading as habitats are cleared, property development runs rampant, overcrowding and traffic congestion are normalised, the housing crisis worsens and other outcomes as a result of uncontrolled and unplanned population growth continue.

A sustainable and stable population is critical to maintaining the quality of life that can be experienced in Tasmania allowing residents the opportunity to enjoy the natural attributes we have and the well-being that comes without overcrowding and continual development based on the flawed economic growth model dependent on ever-increasing population growth. History will show how shortsighted such policies are. Meanwhile, strategies such as this are trotted out in an attempt to appear to be consulting while in reality bureaucrats and Governments lack the vision and depth of consideration to move to a sustainable model.

I have recently finished a period working on Lord Howe Island. The management of this island provides a beacon of hope as population and tourism numbers are controlled to a sustainable level. While on a small scale, such forward-thinking results in a healthy environment, a high-value tourism product and a sound economic base. The Tasmanian Government would do well to look at LHI and consider the sustainability parallels that could be applied to Tasmania.

Key Issues of the Strategy

1. The notion of perpetual growth on a finite island.
2. No direct relationship between growth and well-being.
3. Lack of community support for continuing population growth.
4. Fails to address what is Tasmania's optimal population size.
5. Fails to outline where the population growth will occur.
6. Conservative population projections.
7. Does Tasmania have enough land to do what the Government wants?
8. 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
9. Further stress on the environment as well as public services including health, education, housing and associated infrastructure cost

Recommendations:

1. 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. The Strategy should commit to engaging an independent academic research institution to determine how this could be achieved. The outcomes or well-being indicators could be linked to State of the Environment reporting.
2. The Strategy should recognise that it is better to determine a long-term sustainable population size rather than by picking an arbitrary population growth number.
3. The Tasmanian Government should ensure it has a mandate for promoting continued population growth.
4. Establish a dedicated Planning Department.
5. Reinstate the State Architect and introduce a design policy for high-quality urban design.
6. Reinstate the role of local Councils as 'place shapers' underpinning community well-being and enriching our cultural and natural heritage, lifestyle and democracy.
7. Recognise that with sound strategic planning, Tasmania is well-placed to become a world leader in sustainability.
8. 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.

Please note I also support the NEBN and PMAT submissions on the population strategy.

Graeme Beech