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Tasmanian Trade Strategy

Consultation Paper for the 2025 – 2030 strategy

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1. Introduction

Tasmania's trade landscape is evolving. As global conditions become more complex, shaped by geopolitical tensions, climate-related pressures, and rapid advances in technology, so too must our strategy for international engagement. The current Tasmanian Trade Strategy 2019–2025 has laid a strong foundation for promoting export growth and deepening global connections. However, new challenges and opportunities demand a refreshed, future-ready approach.

This consultation paper marks the first step in developing a new Tasmanian Trade Strategy 2030 (the Strategy). It sets out the key themes and issues emerging from early government and stakeholder discussions and seeks your views to shape the direction of the strategy. Your input will help us to identify priorities, define focus markets and sectors, and ensure the strategy is inclusive, flexible and responsive to the needs of Tasmanian exporters.

We want to hear from:

- exporting businesses of all sizes and stages
- industry bodies and business associations
- researchers, cultural practitioners and digital entrepreneurs
- government agencies, councils and support providers
- anyone with an interest in Tasmania's future global engagement.

Your insights will inform the development of the new Tasmanian Trade Strategy 2030.

2. Progress since the last Trade Strategy

The *Tasmanian Trade Strategy 2019–2025* set out to strengthen the state's global presence, diversify export markets, and grow the value of goods and services traded internationally. It also emphasised the importance of long-term relationship building, market intelligence, and flexible government support for exporters.

Since its release, this strategy has guided trade mission planning, informed sectoral engagement, and shaped the delivery of annual action plans. These short-term plans have been especially effective in allowing the government to respond quickly to changing global conditions – from the disruption of COVID-19 to shifts in international market access.

Key achievements under the current strategy include:

- the development and delivery of coordinated outbound trade missions and inbound buyer programs
- increased profile for Tasmania in key international markets
- stronger alignment between trade activity and the state's competitive advantages, particularly in premium food and beverage, agribusiness and education
- growth in market diversification, with a reduced reliance on a single market (e.g. China now accounting for 32 per cent of trade, down from a previous peak).

The 2019 strategy also encouraged Tasmania to be more outward-looking and adaptable. This agility proved critical during the pandemic and remains relevant in light of current geopolitical instability, climate pressures and evolving investor expectations.

However, initial feedback from stakeholders has highlighted a number of areas for improvement, including:

- The need for broader sectoral inclusion (e.g. digital, cultural, research and advanced manufacturing exports)
- greater support for first-time and exploratory exporters
- better alignment with infrastructure, investment and climate goals
- enhanced data capture, reporting and success measures.

These insights – and others gathered through this consultation process – will inform the next iteration of Tasmania’s strategy.

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3. A Trade strategy for the future

The new *Tasmanian Trade Strategy 2030* will set a high-level direction for the next five years. It will be underpinned by annual action plans, which will remain agile and responsive to changing global conditions. This consultation paper outlines several key themes that have emerged from early engagement with government and industry stakeholders. Each section includes questions to guide your input and help ensure the strategy is practical, inclusive and forward-looking.

3.1 Market focus and diversification

Tasmania’s trade landscape is small but globally connected. In recent years, the state has made significant progress in diversifying its markets – particularly reducing its reliance on China – and building new trade relationships in regions such as South-East Asia and beyond. However, the great majority of exports remain concentrated in a few destinations. In 2024, the top five markets of China, Republic of Korea, Indonesia, USA and Vietnam accounted for 68.6 per cent of Tasmania’s trade exports.

Meanwhile the international environment remains uncertain. Trade tensions, climate risks and supply chain shocks have shown how quickly access to markets can change. While diversification is a valuable hedge against such shocks, it must be balanced against the cost and complexity of servicing multiple international markets. In the context of both constrained budgets and finite supply capacity, Tasmania must be strategic in focusing on markets that offer long-term value and can be reliably supported over time.

Some stakeholders have suggested categorising trade relationships by function or purpose; for example:

- foundational markets where Tasmania already has a strong presence
- growth markets with expanding demand

- strategic markets that align with long-term priorities such as decarbonisation, education or research collaboration.

Questions

- Which international markets should Tasmania prioritise and why?
- Are there markets that are currently under-serviced or emerging that should be explored?
- How should we balance continuity and exploration in our trade relationships?

3.2 Sector inclusion and innovation

While food and beverage exports remain a cornerstone of Tasmania's global reputation, other sectors are showing strong potential. Stakeholders have highlighted opportunities to better support:

- advanced manufacturing and defence industries
- technology and digital services (including SaaS)
- international education and research partnerships
- creative industries and cultural exports
- renewable energy and future fuels
- critical minerals and advanced technologies
- sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and agriculture
- Antarctic and space science capabilities.

Many of these sectors are already exporting in some form, while others require foundational work to build capability, identify markets, or develop enabling infrastructure. These sectors often face longer lead times, niche markets, or non-traditional export pathways; and may not always fit neatly into conventional trade support models. Some businesses also report that existing support mechanisms are too focused on tangible goods or short-term deals.

Tourism was also highlighted as a vital export service, especially for markets such as China and India where trade and tourism promotion are often perceived as a unified effort. Tourism's role in hosting inbound missions and building international reputation was noted as an asset to be leveraged.

The next strategy will need to continue to align closely with the breadth of current and emerging government policy. This includes current and evolving sector-based frameworks like:

- Advanced Manufacturing Action Plan 2024
- Tasmanian Critical Minerals Strategy
- Global Education Strategy
- Tasmanian Antarctic Gateway Strategy
- Renewable Hydrogen Export Strategy
- 2030 Visitor Economy Strategy Tasmania
- AgriVision 2050, among others.

Some businesses contribute significantly to global value chains even if only part of their operations are based in Tasmania. These businesses – including those in contract manufacturing, software development and R&D – may require tailored support and clearer recognition in trade programs.

Questions

- Are there sectors that should be given more focus or support in the next strategy?
- How can the strategy better enable emerging or non-traditional exporters?
- What kinds of support (beyond trade missions) would help your sector succeed internationally?
- What role should Tasmania's tourism sector play in the broader trade and investment ecosystem?

3.3 Supporting exporters at all stages

Tasmania's exporting community is diverse. It includes highly experienced businesses trading at scale, as well as startups and sole traders just beginning to explore international opportunities. Many businesses, particularly in regional and remote areas, face unique challenges such as high freight costs, limited time and capacity or low digital literacy.

There is strong support for the idea that trade strategy should not focus solely on immediate commercial outcomes. For some businesses, attending a trade mission or researching a market might reveal that the timing or fit isn't right – and that can still be a valuable result.

Stakeholders have highlighted the importance of detailed export readiness assessments, including understanding of shipping logistics, regulatory compliance, and internal capacity before pursuing markets. Businesses often need early advice, not just encouragement.

Stakeholders have called for:

- tiered support for businesses at different stages of export readiness
- better support for first-time and exploratory exporters
- continued efforts to make trade support accessible to small businesses, regional areas and underserved sectors.

Questions

- What barriers do new or smaller businesses face when considering export?
- How can government better support businesses to test or enter international markets?
- What kinds of programs or information would have helped you on your export journey?

3.4 Telling Tasmania's story

Tasmania is globally recognised for its clean environment and premium products, but in a competitive global market, that message alone is no longer enough. Many other regions also claim to be clean and green. Stakeholders have highlighted the need to evolve and sharpen Tasmania's narrative.

Suggestions include promoting:

- Tasmania's net zero status and 100 per cent renewable energy profile
- its remoteness as a driver of innovation and resilience
- exceptional biosecurity and geographical advantages
- a thriving cultural sector, strong research community, and Antarctic and space science capabilities.

There is also a growing appetite to tell stories through people, whether it's a craftsperson, a researcher, a chef or a cultural ambassador. Personal stories help bring the Tasmanian trade narrative to life. Stakeholders emphasised the importance of aligning trade messaging with Tasmania's official place brand. Brand Tasmania's pillars can support exporters in presenting a cohesive, values-driven identity to the world. A whole-of-government approach to branding can also boost international recognition and market trust.

Questions

- What makes Tasmania's offering unique in international markets?
- How should we evolve beyond 'clean and green'?
- What kinds of stories or messages do you think resonate best with customers, investors or partners overseas?
- How can Tasmania's place brand be better integrated into international trade and investment efforts?

3.5 Trade missions and return on investment

Trade missions remain a key part of Tasmania's trade promotion effort. They provide opportunities for exporters to build relationships, explore new markets, and promote the state's capabilities on the world stage. However, stakeholders have identified opportunities to refine the approach and improve the return on investment.

Future trade missions may benefit from a more focused approach prioritising depth over breadth, with flexibility to adapt in-market activities. Missions that include investment, cultural and diplomatic elements are seen as more impactful.

Suggestions include:

- reducing the number of outbound missions, while increasing quality, focus and follow-up
- hosting more inbound missions so that buyers and investors can experience Tasmania firsthand
- aligning missions with in-market events (e.g. expos, conferences) while managing competing demand for attention during these periods
- expanding access for under-represented sectors and regional businesses
- co-funding researchers, digital exporters or cultural practitioners to join missions.

There is also strong support for a clearer definition of success beyond short-term commercial deals to include long-term partnerships, capability uplift and market development.

Questions

- What has made a trade mission successful or unsuccessful for you?
- How can government better support meaningful engagement and follow-up after missions?
- How should the value or impact of trade missions be measured?

3.6 Infrastructure and freight

Export success relies not just on market access, but on the ability to move goods, data and people efficiently. For many Tasmanian businesses, especially in agriculture, manufacturing and e-commerce, freight costs and logistics remain a major barrier to growth. High shipping costs, limited air freight options and dependence on mainland ports all affect competitiveness.

Tourism and research stakeholders noted that infrastructure priorities extend beyond freight and logistics. Visitor infrastructure, digital connectivity and Antarctic research station access were also cited as trade enablers in the broader sense.

Some stakeholders have called for a stronger government role in freight system coordination, while others caution against creating unrealistic expectations where government lacks direct control.

Suggestions include:

- exploring alternative freight models (e.g. backloading opportunities, smarter logistics partnerships)
- enhancing access to trade-enabling infrastructure such as ports, subsea data cables and hydrogen production facilities
- clearer communication with exporters about programs like the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (TFES)
- closer alignment between trade and infrastructure strategies to ensure priorities are shared and achievable.

Questions

- What are your biggest infrastructure or freight challenges as an exporter?
- What role should government play in addressing those challenges?
- How can freight and infrastructure strategies better support trade growth?

3.7 Investment, net zero, and climate-driven trade

Tasmania's position as a net zero jurisdiction and its 100 per cent renewable energy profile present powerful trade and investment advantages. Global demand is rising for low-emissions products, sustainable sourcing, and compliance with international climate standards, from Scope 3 emissions reporting to EU import restrictions. Many Tasmanian businesses are already responding to this shift but others will need support to meet new standards and expectations.

Tasmania's gateway status to the Antarctic and its reputation for environmental stewardship offer unique opportunities for international partnerships in science, sustainability and climate innovation. These relationships should be integrated into strategic trade efforts.

Several stakeholders have emphasised the importance of:

- promoting Tasmania's net zero and renewable credentials with credible, consistent messaging
- supporting exporters to meet growing climate compliance obligations (e.g. carbon footprint tracking, product origin guarantees)
- aligning trade and investment strategies to attract capital into decarbonisation, green manufacturing, and circular economy sectors
- capturing first-mover advantage before other states catch up on green credentials.

There is also recognition that climate policy creates both opportunity and risk. For example, some high-emission industries may face increasing pressure, while others could thrive in a low-carbon economy. Closer alignment with federal diversification and investment strategies can help secure funding, partnerships and momentum for large-scale trade initiatives.

At the same time, these climate-related opportunities will not be realised by Trade Tasmania alone. A whole-of-government approach will be critical. Responsibility for infrastructure planning, energy regulation, skills development, investment facilitation and environmental standards sits across multiple agencies and business units. The new strategy must therefore play a coordinating role: supporting and aligning with sector-specific strategies such as the Renewable Hydrogen Action Plan, the Advanced Technology Industries Strategy and the Investment Strategy led by the Office of the Coordinator-General. There is a need to balance ambition with focus and to ensure delivery functions are shared and supported across government.

Questions

- How can Tasmania better leverage its net zero and renewable energy status in trade and investment?
- What support do businesses need to comply with new climate and emissions standards?
- Which emerging sectors or projects could benefit from increased international promotion?
- What role should government (including agencies and divisions beyond Trade Tasmania) play in enabling climate-driven export growth?

3.8 Targets and measures

Measuring the effectiveness of trade strategy is challenging. Export success often depends on long lead times, global market forces and outcomes that are difficult to quantify, such as relationship building, reputation enhancement or uplift in capacity. Government plays an enabling rather than controlling role, which makes direct attribution complex.

Stakeholders stressed the importance of KPIs that are specific, measurable and tied to clear outcomes, including investment attraction, partnership formation and pipeline development. There is strong interest in disaggregating long-term targets into actionable mid-term milestones.

Previous strategies have focused on broad indicators such as the total value of exports or the number of markets accessed. However, stakeholders have called for more nuanced and sector-specific measures, including:

- the diversity of businesses supported (e.g. size, stage, region, sector)
- the quality and follow-up of trade missions or international engagements

- tangible outcomes such as new contracts signed or partnerships formed
- capacity-building, capability uplift, and improvements in export-readiness
- value alignment with Tasmania's brand and long-term goals (e.g. net zero, innovation, regional prosperity).

There is also growing interest in layered KPIs that track impact at different levels, such as policy settings (upstream), business engagement (midstream) and market outcomes (downstream).

Questions

- What does success look like for the Tasmanian Trade Strategy 2030 in your view?
- How should the government measure the effectiveness of its trade support?
- Are there specific indicators that would be meaningful for your sector or region?
- Should the strategy include a target for export growth or diversification?

4. Have your say

This consultation paper marks the beginning of a broader conversation with Tasmanians about the future of our international trade. We want to hear from businesses, industries, researchers, community members and other stakeholders across the state and beyond to ensure the Strategy reflects the full diversity of voices and opportunities.

There are several ways to get involved:

Make a written submission

You can provide a written submission in response to the themes and questions outlined in this paper. Submissions can be as brief or detailed as you like.

Please send them to: erin.buttermore@strategyandculture.com.au

Deadline for submissions: **30 September 2025**

Attend a consultation event

We will be holding a series of stakeholder roundtables, regional meetings and industry forums across Tasmania during **September 2025**. These sessions will provide opportunities to discuss the issues in more detail and share your views in person.

Visit <https://events.humanitix.com/trade-strategy-2030-consultation-roundtables> for details on dates, locations and how to register.

Complete the online survey

If you are short on time or prefer to respond digitally, you can complete our short online survey. It covers the main themes in this paper and allows for open comments.

Visit <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8430475/Tasmanian-Trade-Strategy-2030-Consultation-Survey> to participate.

Your feedback will inform the development of the *Tasmanian Trade Strategy 2030*.



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