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3 February 2023

Brett Stewart
Deputy Secretary
Resources, Strategy and Policy
Department of State growth
consultation@stategrowth.tas.gov.au

Dear Mr Stewart,

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE SUBMISSION TO THE REFRESHING TASMANIA'S POULATION STRATEGY CONSULTATION PAPER – JANUARY 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the *Refreshing Tasmania's Population Strategy – consultation Paper January 2023*.

This submission raises matters related to:

- strategic alignment;
- population demographics and emergency management volunteering;
- growth, landuse planning, climate change and natural hazard risk; and
- emergency management, city traffic congestion and transport options.

Strategic alignment

The goal of the refreshed Population Strategy is to facilitate long-term sustainable population growth where future population trends, issues, and opportunities are prepared for, planned for, and managed.

In pursuing this goal, the Population Strategy aims to align with and progress the *Tasmania Statement: Working Together for the Health and Wellbeing of Tasmanians*.

The Population Strategy should help strengthen the roles, functions and benefits that emergency services provide to the Tasmanian population. To this end the Population Strategy should align with the vision and goals of the *Tasmanian Disaster Resilience Strategy*¹.

Population demographics and emergency management volunteering

Emergency management volunteering includes volunteering that supports communities before, during and after a disaster or emergency. Emergency management volunteering is critical to the well-being of the population.

¹ [Tasmanian Disaster Resilience Strategy 2020-2025](#)

Volunteering Australia reported in 2022², that emergency management volunteering in government emergency management organisations (such as SES) in Australia, has been declining gradually since 2015/16. They also reported that research into declining rates of emergency management volunteering, included an aging volunteer base as a driver of change.

The Population Strategy should aims to address population demographics to bring about a more balanced population of all ages to all parts of the State including in rural and remote communities. Achieving this demographic change may contribute to a shift in declining volunteer numbers and achieve a more even spread of emergency management volunteer ages.

Growth, landuse planning, climate change and natural hazard risk

The Population Strategy should strengthen strategic landuse planning to ensure population growth occurs in locations that do not expose future populations to natural hazards with a potential to impact on life, property and infrastructure. In doing so, the Population Strategy would work to maximise community disaster resilience and support well-being.

The Population Strategy support population growth in alignment with the *Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategies* now, and the *Tasmanian Planning Policies* when they are finalised and have taken effect.

Emergency management, city traffic congestion and transport options

The *Refreshing Tasmania's Population Strategy – consultation paper 2023*, identifies traffic congestion as a challenge for population growth. The strong rate of population growth occurring in Tasmania is placing increased pressure on the transport network. Transport Tasmania provide the following figures with respect to the growing traffic congestion problem in Hobart:

- *The majority of people who work in the Hobart local government area live outside the city.*
- *According to 2016 Census data, 46 875 people work in the city of Hobart, which is more than the number of people who work in the other greater Hobart local government areas (Brighton, Clarence, Glenorchy, Kingborough, Sorell) combined (43 644).*
- *Data collected by the Department of State Growth in 2016 shows that during the morning peak, more than three quarters of journeys start outside central Hobart and end in the city. This is reversed in the afternoon. This shows that commuters from all regions in greater Hobart are travelling to and from the inner city, rather than through it.*
- *Road users are most likely to experience heavy traffic on weekdays during school term times, when major events are on, during peak trading periods (such as Christmas and Easter) and when there is poor weather or car crashes.*

² [Volunteering and Australia's crisis resilience report, May 2022](#)

- *During peak travel times, there are typically 10 per cent more vehicles on the road during school terms compared to school holidays, with more traffic on the road at the start of the school year.*

Any increase in population growth without priority investment in augmenting the transport network to ease congestion will exacerbate the existing problems which includes limiting emergency response vehicles to respond in as short time-frames as possible to emergency situations and events. It will also impact on the ability of the population to respond appropriately to emergency warnings that may be issued.

With the impacts of climate change occurring alongside a growing population, the need for strong investment in transport network solutions to address congestion problems becomes more urgent from an emergency management point of view.

Using rail and water transport corridors and a realignment of bus timetables to support getting cars off the road during peak traffic times are alternate options to the expensive augmentation of the Hobart inner-city road transport network.

The successful introduction of the ferry service between Hobart City and Bellerive is a model that could be replicated along the Derwent estuary from Bridgewater to Margate and Opossum Bay. This would ease traffic congestion on the Brooker Highway, Tasman Bridge, the Southern Outlet, and the inner-city roads that connect to the bridge and the outlet.

Modifying bus timetables could provide an immediate solution by maximising existing public transport resources. Existing bus timetables on the eastern shore as far out as Opossum Bay could be modified to connect-up with the existing Bellerive/Hobart ferry timetable potentially removing a large percentage of commuter cars off the roads now with minimal disruption and minimal cost.

Transport and traffic technology could also provide services and solutions to traffic congestion problems that could in-turn support effective emergency response for emergency service vehicles. Infrastructure Australia's review of traffic congestion in the City of Sydney might provide some useful technological strategies or insights for Tasmanian cities suffering from congestion issues³.

Please contact me on 6173 2700, or by email ses@ses.tas.gov.au , if you wish to discuss any of the matters raised in this submission.

Sincerely



Chris Irvine
Manager Flood Policy Unit

³ [A Review of Current Traffic Congestion Management in the City of Sydney, 2013](#)