

This is a brief submission in rejection of the conclusions reached in the consultation paper.

I believe that if we were measuring the right things, we would determine that population growth is costly to Tasmanians. Currently, we talk as though GDP and economic growth are the only metrics on which we can judge our wellbeing. However, far more important are issues such as whether every Tasmanian has a secure affordable home, an income that enables them to access healthy food, plus fast and easy access to good healthcare and an excellent standard of free education. Not one of these measures is reflected in GDP or other financial measures.

It is clear that even while we achieve growth in our economy, the levels of inequality in Tasmanian society are growing. We celebrate the rise of house prices, whereas this has driven many people into poverty or levels of financial stress. It is a false premise that we need to grow the population to achieve a sustainable level of wellbeing. I believe we need to take in our fair share of migrants who are fleeing persecution, war or other instability, but see no reason why we should fling open our doors to economic migrants, unless they are facing poverty in their own countries. We need to stop all incentives for people to have larger families, in the same way we must stop providing inflationary grants and assistance towards purchasing a house.

There are costs associated with population growth that are not touched upon in your consultation paper, including the continued loss of biodiversity and the ecological services offered by our environment. Climate change is a huge existential crisis which is making itself felt continually, and an increased population would further exacerbate this issue. At last year's forestry symposium, multiple presenters talked of how our native trees can tip over into carbon emitters under heatwave and drought conditions and how bushfires will become more frequent, unpredictable and uncontrollable.

Already land clearing and forestry is an enormous emitter of greenhouse gases, and we've done almost nothing to reduce the carbon footprint of industry, agriculture and transport. We are only a small state on a global scale but if climate change is to be tackled, every region has to play its part. Similarly, climate change adaptation and mitigation are largely overlooked in Tasmania - there are massive challenges facing local councils for instance in making infrastructure capable of withstanding extreme weather events, and we need to build resilience within communities, to cope with emergency events.

For all the above reasons, I believe Tasmania should be seeking to stabilise its population; better educate its populace to fill the roles we need such as more GPs, teachers, carers and tradesmen; provide for greater flexibility in the workforce to enable more women and older people to be productive players; improve healthcare and preventative health initiatives such that peoples' healthy lifespan is improved; provide good energy efficient social housing for all in need and act decisively and effectively on climate change.

Regards, Jenny Cambers-Smith