

# BETTER COUNCILS, BETTER COMMUNITIES



8/12/2016

Submission to the 2017-18 Tasmanian State Budget

# Better councils, better communities

## 2017-2018 STATE BUDGET SUBMISSION

### SUMMARY OF COMMITMENTS SOUGHT BY LGAT

#### Priority

Resourcing the completion and implementation of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme and associated communications, tools, and training. Additionally, investment in the development of Tasmanian Planning Policies and the subsequent reviews of the Regional Land Use Strategies to provide the overarching direction for sustainable land use and development.

Adequate resourcing of the Local Government Division particularly in relation to implementing recommendations from the review of the Local Government Act, the independent review of councillor allowances and the 12-month review of the Code of Conduct legislation and processes.

Joint advocacy for federal funding towards addressing major water and sewerage projects which sit outside TasWater's current forward capital program as well as the review and amendment of legislation to address the disconnect between price setting requirements and long term infrastructure and financial planning requirements for TasWater.

Funding for specialist consultancy services to assist councils in the assessment of critical bridge infrastructure and further development of strategic road networks (\$900,000).

Resourcing for an initial review of the implementation of the new Building Act 2016 in 2017-18, along with allocation of sufficient resources towards enforcement and compliance activities.

#### Significant

Appointment of an authoritative, case manager style role, to support navigation of development through a range of statutory processes within State Government.

Joint advocacy to the federal government for increased investment in disaster mitigation activities and greater State Government investment recurrently to build emergency management capability, particularly in building resilience, mitigation and recovery as well as a review of disaster recovery funding parameters to allow for a more appropriate level of co-funding.

In the event of voluntary council mergers, commitment to fund the transactional and transformational costs.

A partnership approach in resourcing and delivering priority waste initiatives as identified in the updated State Waste Strategy.

Funding of a study to quantify the return on Local Government tourism investment to support appropriate targeting of future funds (\$40,000), investment in and sharing of regional data and modelling, and maintenance of a tourism investment program, such as the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Fund, that supports regionally identified priorities.

Continued transparency regarding the use of the fire services levy and direct reinvestment of that levy to the Tasmanian Fire Service as well as implementation of the recommendations of the Department of Justice Review into Emergency Management Arrangements, particularly as relates to Municipal Emergency Management.

Appropriate resourcing to implement the cat management plan including the provision of regional coordinators.

### **Important beyond Local Government**

Continued investment in improved educational completion and attainment and ongoing communication and collaboration with Local Government on education reform activities at a local and state-wide level.

Increased investment in Preventative Health in Tasmania and establishment of a health in all policies approach.

Establishment of a process to clarify and resolve the uncertainty around funding and responsibility for accessible bus stop infrastructure.

A commitment to work in partnership to address the finding of the environmental scan on agricultural itinerant worker issues.

### **Highly significant regional priorities**

- **New Bridgewater Bridge**
- **Midway Point Roundabout**
- **Hobart City Deal**
- **Improving the water quality in the Tamar River**
- **Hawthorn Football Club Agreement**
- **Development of the Launceston Gateway Precinct Master Plan**
- **Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience**
- **Burnie Port and Shipping Reform**
- **NW Regional Economic Development Plan**

For more detail on these and other regional priorities see p30-34

## INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the Federal Local Government Minister Paul Fletcher noted the importance of Local Government. In formally recognising the vital role of our sector he noted the importance of Local Government to the national economy – employing around 200,000 people nationally and spending over \$30b in services. In 60 regional local government areas in Australia, councils are the single biggest employer. He also noted the critical functions undertaken by Local Government including planning, waste disposal and infrastructure provision. Finally, he noted the need for better integration between all three levels of Government to work collectively to “deliver the best possible outcomes for citizens and residents”.

Tasmanian councils are focused on increasing their capacity to service their ratepayers. Collectively the sector is identifying ways to share resources, deliver savings through more effective purchasing, reduce duplication in relation to operational policies and procedures and deliver innovation which enhances capacity or reduces costs.

Governing our communities, coordinating capital projects and delivering efficient and effective public services requires a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and a joint commitment to outcomes. Tasmanian Local Government is a responsible strategic partner, for the State and Federal Governments, in maximising its public infrastructure and service delivery investments as well as its reform agenda.

The University of Technology Sydney’s major piece of social research, “Why Local Government Matters” investigated the value of Local Government as attributed by a citizens and communities. Professor Roberta Ryan reported that “the majority of Australians value Local Government more highly than they do either the federal government or the states and territories”. People know their council and despite the media focus on perceived grievances and internal grumblings, 75% of those surveyed think Local Government is best able to make decisions about their local area, compared to 26% for state government and 2% for the federal government. Professor Ryan believes that Local Government matters because of their primary role as the ‘place shaper’ and that it is the council that most drives people’s attachment to, and satisfaction with, the area in which they live.

### Activities

In any given day, a council is likely managing roads, streets, pavements, traffic lights, bridges and car parks. It is making sure stormwater and drainage systems don’t fail. It is recycling and managing waste. It works with communities to create a blueprint to guide the use of land to achieve a balance of economic, environmental and community values, and that buildings are of the required standard. It is considering how climate change might impact on the community and how to mitigate the effects for the next generation. It will be undertaking local environmental management initiatives, conserving biodiversity and water. It will be geared up to help communities prepare for and recover from natural disasters. It will be providing cultural and sporting venues, events and opportunities. It is immunizing children, monitoring water quality and ensuring that where people eat is not going to make them sick.

### Outcomes

The roles and responsibilities of councils are wide ranging and the activities undertaken diverse – some activities are driven by statutory or regulatory requirements and others which are more discretionary, have evolved out of the unique relationship councils have with the local communities. Importantly, together the

broad range of activities undertaken contribute to how communities function and how they provide effective, spaces and places for people to visit and live in.

They contribute to a communities' liveability – the quality of life of a place. Broad factors influencing livability include safety from natural and human dangers, environmental quality (physical infrastructure, air and water standards, climate) physical connectedness to services and facilities (transport routes, public transport, internet, phones) social connectedness (places to meet, play or socialize and recreational facilities) affordable housing and cultural identity.

Communities that rate highly in terms of liveability, typically have appealing built and natural environments, good transport infrastructure, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity and cultural, recreation and entertainment possibilities.

Councils are essential partners' in working to create these environments. They are best placed to know what is possible and what is most likely to be effective at the local level to ensure new liveable places are created and existing places are maintained or improved.

Councils are supported in undertaking their diverse roles by the Local Government Association of Tasmania. The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) advocates and negotiates on behalf of the Tasmanian Local Government sector. We represent all Tasmanian councils with 262 elected members, nearly 4000 employees and half a million constituents. One of the key objectives of LGAT is to foster and promote relationships between Tasmanian Local Government with both the Governments of Tasmania and Australia.

LGAT works closely with other key Local Government bodies, such as Local Government Professionals Australia (Tasmania), and the three regional authorities, Think South (STCA), the Cradle Coast Authority and Northern Tasmanian Development. Collectively, we are working to ensure the best possible outcomes for our members and their communities. Each organization has had opportunity to provide input into this submission.

As always, the Local Government sector seeks a range of investments that will serve the State well in increasing productivity and securing the wellbeing and liveability of all communities.

Local Government suggests that the following investments will meet those criteria:

Sector Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the event of voluntary mergers, commitment to fund future transactional and transformational costs. That is, those associated with deciding whether a merger should proceed including consultant reports, feasibility studies, community consultation and referenda, Local Government Board review (transactional) and those costs related to implementation (transformational).</li> <li>• Adequate resourcing of the Local Government Division particularly in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) implementing recommendations from the review of the Local Government Act;</li> <li>b) ensuring the independent review of councillor allowances; and</li> <li>c) reviewing the Code of Conduct processes and statutory provisions.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Planning and Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resourcing the completion and implementation of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme and associated policies, communications, tools, and training. This should include ongoing resourcing for the review and update of the Regional Land Use</li> </ul>

	<p>Strategies and the ability to undertake urgent amendments for the first 2 years of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in the development of State Policies to provide the overarching direction for sustainable land use and development.</li> <li>• Resourcing for an initial review of the implementation of the new Building Act 2016 in 2017-18, along with allocation of sufficient resources towards enforcement and compliance activities.</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A funding allocation in 2017-18 to engage further consultancy services to assist and support councils in the ongoing development of strategic road networks and the assessment of critical bridge infrastructure (\$900,000).</li> <li>• Review and amendment of legislation to address the disconnect between price setting requirements and long term infrastructure and financial planning requirements for TasWater.</li> <li>• Joint advocacy for federal funding towards addressing major water and sewerage projects which sit outside TasWater's current forward capital program.</li> </ul>
Regional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding of a study to quantify the return on Local Government tourism investment to support appropriate targeting of future funds (\$40,000) and investment in and sharing of regional data and modelling.</li> <li>• Maintenance of a program such as the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Fund and reference to regionally identified priorities.</li> <li>• Explore and deliver opportunities for real and relevant project focused on economic development under the auspices of the Premier's Local Government Council.</li> <li>• Appointment of an authoritative, case manager style role, to support navigation of significant development (which is below the threshold for major projects) through the range of statutory processes within State Government.</li> </ul>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint advocacy to the Federal Government for increased investment in mitigation activities and greater recurrent investment by State Government to build emergency management capability particularly in recovery, mitigation and resilience.</li> <li>• Review of disaster recovery funding parameters to allow for a more appropriate level co-funding.</li> <li>• Implementation of the recommendations of the Department of Justice Review into Emergency Management Arrangements particularly as relates to Municipal Emergency Management and appropriate funding of emergency services ongoing.</li> <li>• Continued transparency regarding the use of the fire services levy and</li> </ul>

	<p>direct reinvestment of that levy to the Tasmanian Fire Service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A partnership approach in resourcing and delivering solutions to waste priorities as identified in the updated State Waste Strategy.</li><li>• Appropriate resourcing to implement the cat management plan including the provision of regional coordinators and a central coordinating position.</li></ul>
Better Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continued investment in improved educational completion and attainment as well as communication and collaboration, with Local Government, on education reform activities at a local and state-wide level.</li><li>• Increased investment in Preventative Health in Tasmania and establishment of a health in all policies approach.</li><li>• Establishment of a process to clarify and resolve the uncertainty around funding and responsibility for accessible bus stop infrastructure.</li><li>• A commitment to work in partnership to address the finding of the environmental scan on itinerant worker issues.</li></ul>





# **Sector Improvement**



## STRUCTURAL CHANGE

The complexity of structural change to Local Government is evidenced by the difficulty in scoping, undertaking and understanding feasibility studies. As data emerges for consideration a critical step is robust conversations with informed communities. LGAT commenced discussions with the Local Government Division about what tools might be needed to support the community engagement process, and has itself started a compilation of resources from other jurisdictions who have taken this path. What is clear from experience elsewhere, is that any structural change must be well planned, deliberately executed, appropriately resourced and bring the community on the journey.

Research on Local Government reform suggests that the criteria for successful council mergers are entities which are carefully designed, have a strong level of community support and which are viable. Further, the cost of deciding whether to merge as well as the cost of implementation must be well understood and minimised. There has been a significant history of underestimating these costs and overestimating the potential savings.

LGAT notes that as the closest level of government to the community, councils are in a unique position to identify community needs and make sure those needs are met. Consequently, no two councils are the same and that difference can be what makes a council special to those who live in the municipality. This is not to say there is not opportunity for reform, in Tasmania and nationally. But the argument to simply change geographic boundaries is a simplistic one that fails to strategically consider the community and operational drivers of a complex and diverse business. The experience of amalgamation in other Australian jurisdictions provides evidence of significant up-front costs and outcomes which are not quantifiable in terms of profit or reduced rates. In fact, evidence clearly shows that rates reductions are never an outcome of amalgamation however improved capability, service and infrastructure outcomes and economies of scale generally result. It is incumbent on the State Government to make sure there is not a repetition of the failure to meet the expected outcomes of amalgamation as has been seen in other jurisdictions. Communities need to clearly understand what benefits will and won't be delivered.

The Southern viability studies will likely be completed and tested with communities before the new financial year and therefore the State Government needs to ensure that if appropriate, there will be adequate funding of the Local Government Board to conduct the next, and required stage of analysis. There will be costs to councils in relation to further refining proposals, undertaking related analysis, community consultation and imputing into the Board's process.

Further, if there is agreement to proceed with any amalgamations at the end of the Board process, experience demonstrates that this is where the real costs begin. Local Government does not want to see the Western Australian debt financing model implemented in Tasmania. We consider this is inappropriate, because it unfairly burdens ratepayers of the new Local Governments with the costs of reform. Recent experience suggests that even relatively simple amalgamations have a multi-million dollar implementation cost. If the State is to achieve the successful implementation of its ambitions for Local Government reform, it must provide the necessary budget allocations to resource change.

Further resources should also be allocated in the forward estimates for implementation of the Government's reforms pertaining to strategic resource sharing, particularly in supporting councils with the initial burden of transition in what and how services are provided.

## THE ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS

The review of the Local Government Act and related legislative amendments are anticipated to be concluded by May 2017. Many of the recommendations arising related not to statute but to improving guidance and training, particularly in relation to roles and responsibilities of Mayors, Councillors and General Managers. To implement these recommendations will require additional resourcing from both LGAT and the Local Government Division, with the later particularly required to focus on building understanding of the statutory roles, including any changes, and to develop guidance from the Director of Local Government or support the development of Ministerial Orders.

LGAT Members welcomed the Minister's commitment to an independent review of Elected Member allowances following the Board of Inquiry into Glenorchy City Council. This was in recognition that this process has not been undertaken since 2008 and that there is a need to consider a range of emerging issues including the capacity to attract potential future candidates, parity across roles and council types/sizes, the changing role and the perception of what is a reasonable level of engagement and time commitment required, particularly of Mayors and the increasing number of elected members with caring responsibilities. LGAT seeks that the review be fully funded and not be delayed unnecessarily should the Board of Inquiry process be significantly extended.

The *Local Government Amendment (Code of Conduct) Act 2015* which incorporated a number of amendments to the *Local Government Act 1993* commenced on 13 April 2016. These changes to process were significant and a 12-month review is important to ensure the provisions are working as anticipated and the matters are being determined in a timely and appropriate way. LGAT welcomed the Minister's commitment to a review at the October 2016 Premier's Local Government Council Meeting and seeks through this submission to ensure it is resourced.

### COMMITMENTS SOUGHT

- **In the event of voluntary mergers, commitment to fund future transactional and transformational costs. That is, those associated with deciding whether a merger should proceed including consultant reports, feasibility studies, community consultation and referenda, Local Government Board review (transactional) and those costs related to implementation (transformational).**
- **Adequate resourcing of the Local Government Division particularly in relation to:**
  - a) implementing recommendations from the review of the Local Government Act;**
  - b) ensuring the independent review of councillor allowances; and**
  - c) reviewing the Code of Conduct processes and statutory provisions.**



# Planning and Building

## PLANNING

### Progressing Planning Reform

The State Government has invested considerable time and resources in planning reform since elected, with the delivery of draft State Planning Provisions for public consultation in early 2016. While the outcomes of the hearing process and content of the Tasmania Planning Commission's report is not known at the time of writing this submission, what is known is that there is significant work ahead if the Government's reform agenda is to be fully implemented, and much of this work will fall to Local Government.

The Local Government sector welcomed the decision made last year to commit to the full funding of the Planning Schemes Online Project. This was our highest priority project as it provides significant potential to link the single planning scheme with overlaid codes and local provisions and provide a common entry to the planning system, regardless of which municipality the development is taking place.

However, significant resourcing and effort at both the local and State level is still necessary for implementation (e.g. further legislative amendments, policy development, testing guidance and training, consultation and community communication and drafting of LPSs).

The planning reform undertaken to date has been overly focused on regulation. A greater investment is required on supporting the State's strategic direction through land use policy to inform planning. A clear articulation of State level aspirations via the mooted Tasmanian State Planning Policies, with whole of government support, is essential if real improvement to our planning system is to be realized. It will be important that the work on these policies, which has commenced, is progressed in a timely manner, with full sector and community engagement as part of that process.

However, the reform of the strategic foundations of our planning system must not stop at the completion of the Tasmanian Planning Policies. It is imperative that the long overdue review and updating of the Regional Land Use Strategies follows directly on from the implementation of the policies. This review needs to be a collaborative process between the councils of the three regions, State Government and the community.

LGAT also understands that legislation to reform how major projects are assessed in Tasmania is imminent. LGAT supports an appropriate model which allows for a staged assessment with an ability to grant 'in-principle' approval of major projects following a statutory assessment process with public involvement and hearings. It is important that appropriate resourcing and support for the proposed reforms is provided by way of education sessions and a range of policy and procedures.

The *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* has a requirement for a 5-year review of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. The recent experiences of Local Government during the implementation of the Interim Planning Schemes indicates that no matter how detailed the assessment process is, there will be many unforeseen issues that arise with the use of the Scheme. Many of these issues will not be able to wait until the 5-year review period and while mechanisms exist within the Act for urgent amendments, additional resourcing will be required at least during the first 2 years of the Schemes operation to review issues, refine the provisions and support the statutory amendment process.

Finally, the Government's aim of a fairer, faster, cheaper and simpler planning system will be aided by the development of a standardized suite of forms, notices and permit conditions for councils.

LGAT considers that Local Government is a key partner in the land use planning and the development approvals system. Over the years, community expectations about the objectives of the planning system have grown. Planning is being relied upon more and more as the solution to complex urban and regional issues and these will only be possible with a commitment by the State Government to meaningful engagement with councils.

In considering the role of Local Government in planning it is worth remembering that the regulatory system is a State one, implemented at the local level by councils as statutory planning authorities; that assessment timeframes in Tasmania are already significantly less than other States and that there is no evidence to directly link current timeframe performance with the rate of development in Tasmania.

## BUILDING

The new *Building Act 2016* commences on 1 January 2017, replacing the *Building Act 2000* which has been in force since 2004. As part of the transition Local Government permit authorities will need to implement changes to their systems and processes to accommodate the new legislative and regulatory provisions. Whilst guidance and support has been provided by Consumer Building and Occupational Services (CBOS) within the Department of Justice throughout 2016, it is important to ensure that in 2017-18 there is adequate provision made by State Government for monitoring and review of the new framework.

The Local Government sector is keen to see appropriate funding of adequate enforcement and compliance activities by CBOS to accommodate the State's new 'risk based' approach to consumer building. Further, the implementation phase of the new legislation will require an initial review in the 2017-18 financial year to assess the early effects of the shift towards private certification for minor building works and the anticipated reduction in permit authority involvement in these cases.

### COMMITMENTS SOUGHT

- **Resourcing the completion and implementation of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme and associated policies, communications, tools, and training. This should include ongoing resourcing for the review and update of the Regional Land Use Strategies and the ability to undertake urgent amendments for the first 2 years of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.**
- **Investment in the development of State Policies to provide the overarching direction for sustainable land use and development.**
- **Resourcing for an initial review of the implementation of the new *Building Act 2016* in 2017-18, along with allocation of sufficient resources towards enforcement and compliance activities.**





# Roads and other Infrastructure

## INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

Tasmanian councils own and manage more than \$700 million worth of assets (as per the Auditor General's report on Local Government released November 2015); most of which is infrastructure in the form of roads, footpaths, bridges, drains and culverts. Maintaining this infrastructure to support communities and facilitate economic activity is a major financial challenge to councils.

Councils are key stakeholders in infrastructure planning discussions and need to be appraised of the potential growth areas and investment decisions that will impact on their local areas. LGAT seeks ongoing engagement and collaboration between the levels of government early in the decision-making processes to ensure that optimum outcomes are achieved for local communities, businesses and the State as a whole.

## ROADS

Local Government is responsible for over 14,000 kilometres of road in Tasmania; with over 7,000 kilometres sealed.

Significant components of the Tasmanian road network are bridges and culverts. Many of these assets were not designed to carry the masses presented by today's freight task and heavy vehicle fleet. With the average age of the State's local roads and bridges continuing to increase and the amount of freight vehicle movements also increasing, the risk to infrastructure and the State's economic prosperity has become more acute.

Local Government recognises the interconnectedness of transport networks and freight corridors and the importance of identifying and supporting cross-municipality linkages. The sector supports the development and implementation of a regionally integrated freight and transport strategy that seeks to provide seamless access across Tasmania and engenders certainty in broader planning and investment decision-making. There are obvious local and regional productivity improvements that can be derived through investment that improves access for freight vehicles and connectivity between local roads and preferred state and national freight routes.

It must be acknowledged that the freight and transport task forms just one part of Local Government's responsibility as an infrastructure asset manager. This point has been highlighted in recent times with the establishment of a national regulatory framework for heavy vehicles and increased pressure on councils to provide improved access to the heavy vehicle fleet, whilst continuing to manage local road assets within existing physical and fiscal constraints.

LGAT warmly welcomed the State Government's 2015-16 Budget allocation of \$1.7M to assist and support councils in a Local Bridge Assessment Project and the development of strategic road networks for the State's heavy vehicle industry. This Project represents a vital 'first step' towards delivering a sustainable, heavy vehicle access network within the State. The work being undertaken jointly between Tasmanian Local and State Governments to date has been noted among other State jurisdictions and at the national level as a 'best practice' example of the benefits of collaboration between levels of government to address infrastructure and access challenges. However, the body of assessment work undertaken to date is not exhaustive; further work is required to better understand both local and state road networks to maximise access capacity from the existing road transport system.



Local Government is committed to collaborating with the Department of State Growth to build on this body of work and to assist in developing a successful state-wide integrated freight network which will optimize outcomes for the State's business sector and transport industry. It should be noted however, that strategic regional investment and infrastructure planning to realise this desirable end will require additional resources beyond the capacity of councils.

Assessments of local bridges across the State have highlighted those that are not up to the requisite load-bearing standard to accommodate the modern freight vehicle. There is additional technical assessment work required for some sections of the bridge network which will then assist in better targeting road and bridge expenditure.

Acknowledging the Government's focus on economic growth and the desire to unlock the full potential of the State's business and industry sectors, it is vital that support is given to Local Government to address network 'gaps', and to ensure that upgrades and investments are appropriate and in alignment with regional and state-wide priorities.

LGAT seeks a commitment from the State Government for funding of \$900,000 to the Department of State Growth in 2017-18 to engage further specialist consultancy services to assist and support councils in the ongoing development of strategic road networks and the assessment of critical bridge infrastructure in order to deliver a sustainable heavy vehicle access network for the long term.

## Forestry Roads

As indicated last year, an ongoing issue of concern for Local Government relates to the future management and funding of former Forestry Tasmania roads transferred to the Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE). On behalf of its members LGAT has continually sought greater clarity from the State Government regarding current and future funding arrangements for these roads, as a significant proportion act as major tourist routes and access points to iconic destinations.

LGAT is aware of the audit of the State's road network undertaken by Infrastructure Tasmania in the first half of 2016, which included consideration of future arrangements for existing forestry roads. It was anticipated that this audit would result in an appropriate allocation of ongoing State funding however, it now appears unlikely that such funding will be allocated in the short term. It is critical that those former or current forestry roads that provide access to destinations sought out by the State's expanding tourist market are adequately funded and maintained going forward. These roads are also key to facilitating fire management and responses.

Whilst LGAT was pleased to see \$8M allocated in 2015 for Parks 'high priority' infrastructure (including roads) and is currently in consultation with the Parks and Wildlife Service to determine appropriate investment sites, it must be acknowledged that there is still no 'long term' solution or indication of how these roads should or will be maintained.

## WATER AND SEWERAGE

TasWater is a wholly owned corporation of Local Government. In its capacity as shareholders, but also, and importantly, in its capacity as a primary service provider to ratepayers, Local Government supports the efficient provision of water and sewerage functions to the Tasmanian community and the delivery of sustainable financial returns to its members consistent with the *Water and Sewerage Corporation Act 2012*.

In its provision of water and sewerage services, TasWater must be able to develop and implement long term state-wide infrastructure and financial strategies that will enable the water and sewerage sector to transition to a sustainable position. The current disconnect between the intent and application of the *Water and Sewerage Industry Act 2008* requirements regarding price setting and good long term infrastructure and financial planning is hindering TasWater's ability to achieve this. LGAT continues to support TasWater's review of the regulatory framework and any changes that are required, including to legislation, to correct this disconnect.

TasWater has prepared a 10 year program of works to bring Tasmania's water and sewerage systems up to current day standards. This program, while covering the vast majority of the state's major water and sewerage, does not address relocation of the Macquarie Point Sewage Treatment Plant in Hobart and major upgrades to Launceston's Combined Stormwater and Sewerage System, both of which will require external funding in order to proceed. Nor can it necessarily address emerging needs related to significant new developments. LGAT supports the need for a fully funded long term water and sewerage program and seeks the State Government's support in advocating for federal funding to address remaining major projects that sit outside TasWater's current forward capital program.

Investment in water and sewerage infrastructure not only ensures positive health outcomes for communities, it also stimulates economic growth, which in turn provides financial returns to the State and Federal Government.

### COMMITMENTS SOUGHT

- **A funding allocation in 2017-18 to engage further consultancy services to assist and support councils in the ongoing development of strategic road networks and the assessment of critical bridge infrastructure (\$900,000).**
- **Review and amendment of legislation to address the disconnect between price setting requirements and long term infrastructure and financial planning requirements for TasWater.**
- **Joint advocacy for federal funding towards addressing major water and sewerage projects which sit outside TasWater's current forward capital program.**



# **Regional Development**

## REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In September this year, David Hammond presented to Local Government General Managers about work he has undertaken in New Zealand quantifying the return on investment (ROI) from Local Government tourism expenditure. It is significant. New Zealand councils spent an average of \$2.2M each on tourism activities in 2015/16 with a return on investment of \$379 for every \$1 spent. (Expenditure did not include enforcement and planning costs, carparks and refuse facilities). Tourism is big business there, as it is in Tasmania. LGAT suspects that as with New Zealand, businesses would rank councils' promotion of the local area to tourists as one of their most important functions. A relatively small investment in a project quantifying ROI would be likely to leverage returns through Commonwealth grant processes.

Tourism is recognised by Local Government as a key component of regional economic development. LGAT has sought greater engagement of the sector with the Government strategic tourism agenda, for example through participation on the T21 Steering Committee. As a major tourism funder, particularly in relation to infrastructure and with broad functions to ensure a successful tourism industry, we deserve a major-decision making role around the tourism table.

While there is not a direct statutory role for Local Government related to tourism, increasingly councils are seeing this as a high priority area of business and are becoming more strategic in their considerations of this emerging role. Councils are already working collaboratively with their neighbours, their regions and with other stakeholders in building capability and outcomes in the tourism space. However, we know more can be done. The five key areas which build successful regional tourism, which are delivered by Local Government are planning, both strategic and land use planning; advocacy and leadership in relation to joined up tourism and economic development; funding of tourism infrastructure (with consideration of mechanisms to get more from tourists and take less from ratepayers); destination management (managing impact issues), partnerships and destination marketing.

Some councils and their communities are feeling the impacts of tourism demand and visitation more than others, often smaller councils with fewer ratepayers and resources. Maintenance of a program such as the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Fund is critical to continue to meet the ambitious visitor targets set through T21.

Tourism is just one aspect, albeit an important one, of regional economic development.

The Role of Local Government Project (Final Report August 2014) identified facilitation of economic development as one of eight key roles for Local Government. Councils identified that they want to actively improve their performance in this emerging functional space and that they required more support to build their capability and deliver genuine outcomes in partnership with Industry and the other spheres of Government.

Councils' ability to deliver and/or support economic development at the local level is essential to revitalise local economies and build more resilient and economically diverse regions. Local Government has a key role to play in initiating, facilitating and supporting local/regional economic development.

Councils fulfil multiple roles in this regard: they are key stakeholders for state and federal government initiatives; they pursue local/regional economic development opportunities, and provide infrastructure and services necessary for supporting growth. Councils are well connected to relevant stakeholders and members of their community and are ideally placed to coordinate and promote economic development activities.

For many councils, economic development is a relatively new role and as these councils have less experience and expertise, this is reflected in a lower level of capability. LGAT's members have noted that the State Government has significantly reduced the level of regionally based support in recent years and there is increasing reliance on the local government and other regional bodies to drive the regional development agenda. Increased support for the regional bodies, through funding or in-kind would be of benefit both in building local and regional capacity and expertise as well as in identifying, driving and implementing regional development initiatives.

While councils are very effective at facilitating and supporting community development within their jurisdiction, it is recognised that:

- Their view of regional development is almost inevitably limited to their own boundaries and they may struggle with broader regional issues;
- They may have limited linkages into state and federal government programs and activities, thereby limiting their role as facilitators of economic development;
- The performance of, and commitment to, regional development varies significantly between councils. While some are very effective in promoting growth, others place their priorities elsewhere and their lesser performance may affect the development of the region as a whole; and
- They are not significantly funded to undertake this work

The strategic action plan developed by PLGC identifies some priority projects to support the objective of improved economic development investment and outcomes by Local Government. While this plan is currently in a review phase, economic development remains a key priority and the Association would like to continue to continue to explore and deliver opportunities for real and relevant projects under the auspices of the PLGC. These might still include:

- Developing an agreement between the Department of State Growth and the local government sector (through LGAT) that identifies how we will work together to enhance the delivery of economic development activities and in doing so, better define the respective roles of State and Local Government.
- Building opportunities to share and aggregate data, monitor risk and understand competitive opportunities (with a particular focus on regional data and modelling).
- Piloting models of collaboration and projects that improve competitiveness, productivity and resilience of local and regional economies.
- Identifying skills gaps and providing access to appropriate training.
- Coordinating export and overseas investment attraction activities.
- Identifying ways to share planning and implementation of major infrastructure projects.
- Mapping State and Local Government land holdings suitable for potential development.

Some of these initiatives can be completed within the existing resources of the Local Government Sector and State Government, but they do need appropriate leadership and commitment to move forward, particularly from the Department of State Growth.

## RED TAPE REDUCTION/DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION

Often, quite unfairly, Local Government development approval processes are pointed to as the reason significant developments fail to proceed. The statutory and administrative processes within State Government can be significant barriers to investment and development. Being fully cognizant that many of these statutory processes are often perceived as flawed or unnecessary, the experience of several councils suggest there is room, not only for improvement in other statutory approval areas, but also for an authoritative 'case manager' who can help proponents understand requirements, navigate the multiple agencies and bring them together to negotiate appropriate solutions. The processes around planning scheme amendments, environmental and heritage permits are often lengthy and costly and often an unknown gamble in terms of state inputs. Prior to the appointment of the Coordinator General and the Red Tape Reduction Coordinator the Local Government sector had anticipated that one of those roles might function in that way. This has not turned out to be the case - with more of a focus on investment attraction and legislative reform. However, as the example below illustrates, there is certainly room for a more hands on role, not just for very large investment projects, but also for those with significant regional impact - where there are numerous statutory players.

**George Town Wind Farm.** This project required a planning scheme amendments to allow approval for a wind farm and wind turbines between Bell Buoy Beach and Beechford. The project is anticipated to deliver significant investment, employment and tourism outcomes. The current planning scheme provisions do not provide for wind farms or turbines because the height standards required buildings to be unobtrusive and complement the character of the surrounding landscape. Clearly a 180m tall wind turbine is outside these parameters. To effect the change requires the input of and coordination across several agencies including Council, TasWater, TasNetworks, State Growth, the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) and The Tasmanian Planning Commission. This amendment is outside usual experience, also triggering Commonwealth involvement, and while a combined level 2 assessment and section 43A amendment process is available in the legislation, there appeared to be a lack of confidence in using that process within the EPA. This has resulted in separate and sequential processes, increasing the cost and timeframes for approval.

### COMMITMENTS SOUGHT

- **Funding of a study to quantify the return on Local Government tourism investment to support appropriate targeting of future funds (\$40,000) and investment in and sharing of regional data and modelling.**
- **Maintenance of a program such as the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Fund and reference to regionally identified priorities.**
- **Explore and deliver opportunities for real and relevant project focused on economic development under the auspices of the Premier's Local Government Council.**
- **Appointment of an authoritative, case manager style role, to support navigation of significant development (which is below the threshold for major projects) through the range of statutory processes within State Government**





# Environment



## NATURAL DISASTERS

Tasmanian local councils have been severely financially impacted by natural disasters over the past 5 years. Studies undertaken by councils and learning's from recent events have identified high priority mitigation projects to minimise future financial and social impacts on local communities.

Currently in Tasmania there are limited funds available for mitigation projects, these funds include the natural disaster resilience grants program (\$2.34m) and the bushfire mitigation grants program (\$404K). These grants, supplied by the federal government and managed by the state are relied upon by all stakeholders, including the State Government, to fund projects focused on mitigating against the risks posed to Tasmanian communities.

This amount of funding is small given that it is well recognized that for every \$1 invested in mitigation saves at least \$50 in post disaster recovery.

It is essential that additional funds be made available from the Federal and State Government to mitigate the risk of natural disasters given the likely financial impact of an increasing number of and severity of disasters over time.

As such LGAT is seeking:

- to work with the State Government to lobby the federal government to invest more funding in mitigation;
- the State Government to invest more recurrent funding in building emergency management capability particularly in the areas of recovery, mitigation and resilience and that the State Government should not rely on Federal Government grant funding for such activities.
- That budget saving initiatives of Government do not require emergency services to deliver more for less and that there continues to be transparency around the use of the fire services levy for the Tasmanian Fire Service.
- the State Government reconsider its program parameters for the existing grant programs to allow smaller capacity organisations, such as councils, to have a more realistic split in contributions to be eligible for grant funding.

In addition to support for mitigation activities LGAT also urges the State to provide funding to implement the recommendations to come out of the Department of Justice Review into Emergency Management Arrangements. In particular, recurrent funding is required for support at the Municipal Emergency Management level, through the provision of resources to assist with municipal emergency management planning and the delivery of training to build capability at the municipal level.

## WASTE

The State Government has indicated they do not support the introduction of a waste levy as a mechanism for investment in waste management, including appropriate infrastructure, in Tasmania. Regardless, there has been acknowledgement that achieving waste outcomes does require a level of investment. Through the Premier's Local Government Council there has been a commitment to work collaboratively with the Local Government sector to consider key waste issues such as:

- tyres,
- controlled waste,
- container deposit schemes and
- rolling out product stewardship schemes.

Over the remainder of 2016-17 the Environmental Protection Agency has been tasked with updating the State Waste Strategy and developing options for the future, including resourcing options. To support this process LGAT has re-established the statewide Local Government Waste Reference Group to collectively map, assess and develop priorities in collaboration with the EPA Division.

It is likely that initiatives will be identified which require a partnership approach to resource and deliver and LGAT reaffirms its position that a waste levy is required to deliver on identified priorities. Importantly, some of the initiatives will have the potential to be significant regional infrastructure (such as treatment facilities for organics) and as such will have positive economic impacts. It is imperative that the updating of the State Waste Strategy has active engagement and follow up from the Department of State Growth on the regional economic development opportunities that could ensue.

## CAT MANAGEMENT

Local Government supports the initiative to develop a state-wide approach to cat management however the effective management and control of cats is beyond the capacity of most councils in Tasmania. There is a history of cat legislation falling over in this State because of a lack of investment by the Government of the day to support implementation including community education, compliance and management costs.

In order to achieve the State Government's desired cat management outcomes, it is vital that the issue of funding be fully considered. A financial and risk assessment is required to inform the implementation and development of a sustainable approach. The objectives and actions in the plan need to be prioritised given the likelihood of limited resources to implement the plan. The cost impact of the plan is likely to be greater in relation to the management of domestic cats than for the management of feral cats. This seems at odds with the intent of the plan to reduce the impact of cats on the environment, agricultural assets and human health.

LGAT seeks a clear resolution of the various roles and responsibilities for implementation of the plan, and it should not come at an additional cost to local ratepayers. We are seeking State Government investment in the implementation of the plan to include the appointment of a statewide coordinator located centrally to drive the development of the Business case and Communication Plan and other policy instruments within DIPWE. In addition, each region should have a local coordinator to work across several councils; run education and awareness programs in communities, partner with and inform council staff (including frontline staff); and deal with compliance matters.

### **COMMITMENTS SOUGHT**

- **Joint advocacy to the Federal Government for increased investment in mitigation activities and greater recurrent**
- **investment by State Government to build emergency management capability particularly in recovery, mitigation and resilience.**
- **Review of disaster recovery funding parameters to allow for a more appropriate level co-funding.**
- **Implementation of the recommendations of the Department of Justice Review into Emergency Management Arrangements particularly as relates to Municipal Emergency Management and appropriate funding of emergency services ongoing.**
- **Continued transparency regarding the use of the fire services levy and direct reinvestment of that levy to the Tasmanian Fire Service.**
- **A partnership approach in resourcing and delivering solutions to waste priorities as identified in the updated State Waste Strategy.**
- **Appropriate resourcing to implement the cat management plan including the provision of regional coordinators and a central coordinating position.**



# Better Communities

## BETTER COMMUNITIES

Local Government is the closest level of government to the community and as such it is the best placed to work cooperatively with many of the State Government and non-governmental bodies, whose mission is to work with communities to promote and encourage improved community outcomes across areas such as education, health and well being, ageing and social inclusion.

### Education

Local Government realizes that education is a key determinant of people's health and life satisfaction and is critical in ensuring vibrant, resilient communities.

The debate around education in recent years demonstrates the value placed on it by local communities.

Tasmanian councils encourage the Government to continue to focus improving education attainment.

It is important for Local Government, and local communities more widely, to be actively involved in decision making and planning for senior secondary schooling and we ask that the Government continue to engage the sector fully in discussions about change at both a local and state-wide level.

### Preventative Health

Tasmania faces significant challenges in this area, with the States high levels of chronic disease and smoking, physical inactivity, poor nutrition and obesity. To address these challenges and achieve the Government's goal of making Tasmania the healthiest population in Australia by 2025, a strategic, targeted and integrated health prevention program is critical. Health and wellbeing is a fundamental right for all Tasmanians.

A strong preventive health system is demonstrated to significantly improve health outcomes. Currently in Tasmania we are focussing our resources on the acute hospital sector, and therefore not enough attention is being paid to factors that promote and facilitate wellness and consequently reduce the burden on the acute system. The investment in the health system is lop-sided. Tasmanian Local Government supports increased expenditure in preventative health initiatives and the establishment of a health in all policies approach.

Over the last decade there has been increasing focus on Local Government as enablers of better health - through appropriate land use planning and development of active transport options and infrastructure, along with direct service delivery targeting aspects of primary and preventative health care. Funding for preventative health care, particularly at the Local Government level, tends to be ad-hoc or one off and we have historically seen good programs falling to the wayside and the reinvention of the wheel because of the absence of a secure, recurrent funding stream. Local Government is ideally suited to partnering on preventative health projects with the best outcomes derived from place based approaches. We would welcome being part of strategic conversations on how best to deliver desired health outcomes for Tasmanians in the future.

### Ageing Population

It is anticipated that one third of Tasmania's councils will have one third of their population over the age of 65 years by 2030. There is a need to consider both the impacts and the opportunities from demographic change. LGAT supports continued collaboration across the spheres of Government and the not for profit sector, in the development of Age Friendly communities which foster health, well-being and the participation of people as they age.

## Access and Inclusion

Key to ensuring sustainable, healthy communities is investment in and provision of accessible and inclusive public transport and infrastructure. Governments must take account of the needs of the State's ageing population, people living with disability and the community's increasing reliance on public transport as a means of linking people to employment and reducing congestion in urban centres. Public places and amenities, buildings and transport infrastructure will all need to be readily accessible for people with a disability or frailty.

Local and State Government must work together across land use and infrastructure planning spheres to optimize access and inclusion for the State's population. In particular, LGAT seeks support from State Government to resolve long standing ambiguity regarding funding and provision of accessible bus stop infrastructure that complies with the requirements of the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002*.

## Itinerant Workers

Many sectors within the agricultural and horticultural sectors in Tasmania rely heavily on itinerant or seasonal workers to undertake key tasks during maintenance and peak production periods.

LGAT members have identified that this surge in itinerant or seasonal workers has the potential to place considerable pressure on local services and infrastructure as workplaces are not always near major services centres or areas with appropriate accommodation. Available data shows that the requirement for additional itinerant workers in the State will continue to grow annually for the foreseeable future. While pressure may be placed on local services there is also seen to be significant tourism benefit in supporting these workers in the State.

The Local Government Association has been working with DPIPWE to bring together key stakeholders to discuss the range of issues that currently relate to itinerant workers and associated future needs in regional areas in Tasmania. Stakeholders include representatives from State Growth, AgriGrowth, industry employment bodies and fruit growers.

Key factors that to date have been identified as having impact on the capacity for farmers to access sufficient seasonal workers include:

- Access to Wi-Fi;
- Transport to and from workplaces;
- Affordable housing;
- Impact on infrastructure, such as water, sewerage and waste, in regional areas;
- Social Services, including visas/interpreters; and
- The impact of the backpacker Tax on the seasonal workforce (which has since been reviewed).

Work is now being conducted jointly to define the specific nature and scale of the issues by location. This material will be consolidated into an Environmental Scan document – the basis for broad consideration about possible future action.

An additional policy issue relates to the need to encourage local unemployed Tasmanian residents to participate in the workforce and how promoting this agenda works in parallel with other itinerant workers.

The findings that result from consideration of the Environmental Scan are likely to require responses developed in partnership across government, community and private sectors and are likely to require an allocation of funding in order to address matters reliably.

#### **COMMITMENT SOUGHT**

- **Continued investment in improved educational completion and attainment as well as communication and collaboration, with Local Government, on education reform activities at a local and state-wide level.**
- **Increased investment in Preventative Health in Tasmania and establishment of a health in all policies approach.**
- **Establishment of a process to clarify and resolve the uncertainty around funding and responsibility for accessible bus stop infrastructure.**
- **A commitment to work in partnership to address the finding of the environmental scan on itinerant worker issues.**



## STATEMENT FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROFESSIONALS AUSTRALIA (TASMANIA)

Local Government Professionals Australia (Tasmania) (formerly Local Government Managers Australia (TAS)) provides professional development, training, facilitates collaboration and advocacy for the professionals working in Local Government in Tasmania. LG Professionals Tasmania is dedicated to ensuring that its members have access to contemporary and best practice professional development programs and prides itself on representing the interests of the individuals employed within the sector.

LG Professionals Tasmania and LGAT have a strong history of collaboration and in October 2015 formalised that through the signing of a MOU to ensure better outcomes for the sector through stronger collaboration. As such, LG Professionals Tasmania support LGAT's identified priorities for the 2016-2017 State Budget.

As the states leading professional association for employees within the Local Government sector, we would like to stress the importance of the state's investment in the Local Government workforce both in recruiting and retaining skill staff and in developing and shaping the skills needed to address emerging roles and functions.

Working with LGAT, we will continue to seek to ensure quality data for workforce planning, appropriate benchmarking of performance, assistance in addressing capability gaps and appropriate advocacy and advice regarding the role of officers in Local Government.

We have welcomed the regular dialogue with the Minister and engagement with the Local Government division on improvement projects and seek that that continues going forward.

## REGIONAL PRIORITIES – SOUTH, STATEMENT FROM RDA TASMANIA

The Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority (STCA) is going through a period of adjustment with the board to consider the organisation's role and structure in 2017. In lieu of the STCA having the current capacity, RDA Tasmania is able to assist in what we believe to be the key regional focus points for southern Tasmania in 2017.

### CITY DEALS

The announcement of the federal government City Deals policy presents a unique opportunity to develop a cooperative solution to improve our region's transport, education and infrastructure. Minister Hidding's Greater Hobart Congestion Summit was established in 2016 to consider responses to peak hour congestion in Hobart and outcomes from this consultation can become part of the plan for Greater Hobart. Transport infrastructure in Southern Tasmania is vital for population and economic growth.

Priorities for funding and/or advocacy:

- **Hobart City Deal** – to provide State Government resource and support to develop a collaborative Federal, State and Local Government agreement in conjunction with RDA Tasmania and other stakeholders such as the University of Tasmania that includes appropriate data, evidence and measureable outcomes.
- **Greater Hobart Congestion Summit** – to implement actions identified to improve traffic flow in the Hobart CBD and surrounds. To establish quarterly meetings between the four Councils and the Government to progress congestion-alleviation measures. To develop a longer-term, effective road network plan for Southern Tasmania.
- **New Bridgewater Bridge** – This is a longstanding key project for the region and represents a key transit route for passengers and freight on the national highway.
- **Key Precinct Development** – Support and integration of Kingston Park and Kangaroo Bay projects that can provide significant economic and social outcomes for Greater Hobart.

### REGIONAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

By investing in regional development projects we help build vibrant and strong local communities. Projects that support this goal also help drive economic development which delivers growth and employment opportunities, benefitting the whole community. Some crucial regional and economic development priorities include:

Priorities for funding and/or advocacy:

- **Antarctic and Southern Oceans research and services** – Advocate for the continued existence of the Antarctic Climate & Ecosystems Cooperative Research Centre for (ACE CRC) or a similar body to coordinate research across institutions such as the University of Tasmania and CSIRO. Resources to work with the levels of government, research and industry sectors to promote Hobart as an Antarctic service hub.

- **Fresh air-freight export** – support the establishment of direct fresh produce export from Hobart to China by working with key stakeholders to overcome obstacles and develop any shared public infrastructure or service requirements.
- **Promoting regional dispersal of tourists** – With record tourist numbers arriving at Hobart Airport, on cruise ships and driving from northern ports, it is important that strategies and programs are in place to encourage dispersal of these visitors across regional Tasmania. It is also vital that appropriate investment is made in public infrastructure in the regions to support visitor growth.
- **Support for the SE Mountain Bike Trail** – In line with the State Government’s Cycle Tourism Strategic Action Plan develop mountain bike and cycling experiences across the south east in coordination with the South East Regional Development Association (SERDA) that link with trails across the state and encourage tourism expenditure in regional Tasmania.
- **Continued upgrade and restoration of Willow Court** – It is important that key heritage restoration works continue. A redeveloped Willow Court presents strong regional and economic development opportunities to take place on site through retail space, food and beverage offerings, special events and functions.

## REGIONAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Priorities include:

- **Sealing of the Marlborough Road** - from the Lyell Highway to Bronte Village as they key tourist road has deteriorated significantly and is in need of attention.
- **Midway Point Roundabout** – With the large increase in vehicles expected on the roundabout in the coming years improvements are required. Further commitment to an implementation timeframe for the Sorell Eastern Bypass is required.
- **Fortescue Bay Road upgrade (sealing) and 3 Capes Track finalization** (at least from Stormlea (Cape Raoul) through to Safety Cove).
- **Upgrade of the Channel Highway** to accommodate increasing traffic flow related to population and housing growth.
- **Channel Highway re-direction at Huonville** – A re-routing of the Channel Highway at Huonville would create better traffic flows in the main street and also open up the foreshore for economic development and recreation opportunities. It would also improve road safety for motorists and pedestrians.

## STATEMENT FROM THE NORTHERN TASMANIAN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NTDC)

The Northern Tasmania Development Corporation (NTDC) is the regional development organisation for North and North East Tasmania. Its purpose is to advance the interests and development of the region by facilitating and coordinating worthy regional economic initiatives. NTDC is a company limited by guarantee, funded by its seven Shareholder Councils of North/North East Tasmania.

NTDC provides pro-active regional leadership, that is engaged with business and its Shareholders to consolidate an agreed vision and implement a strategic economic action plan based on the Northern Regional Futures (NRF) framework.

The NRF framework aims to improve the prosperity and living-standards of North/North East Tasmanians. Coordinating industry groups based on contemporary models of collaboration around our industry sectors (i.e. known as pillars) will encourage the sharing of experiences and knowledge, and better define impediments (to remove barriers) with the purpose of increasing productivity, resource sharing, and increasing resilience and sustainability within the pillars.

The NRF's initial focus is on the following three pillars:

- Food and agribusiness
- Competitive manufacturing
- Tourism industries

With new opportunities for economic growth through emerging pillars such as:

- Health and Community Services
- Education

Feedback from NTDC shareholders has identified the following as top priorities for funding and/or joint advocacy:

1. **Improving the water quality in the Tamar River** by addressing the raw sewerage inflows. The solution will require tripartite funding between Local, State and Federal Governments.
2. Resources to support **regional data and modelling** are viewed as vital in underpinning future regional project planning and development.
3. **Funding support for regional economic bodies like NTDC.** It is imperative that State Government support, both in principle and financially, regions that are trying to build sustainable and resilient economies in partnership/initiatives with government.
4. **Hawthorn Football Club Agreement** – A commitment needs to be made by the State Government by renewing the Agreement for a further period of five years. However, if the Hawthorn Agreement doesn't go ahead, what assistance with major events funding will the State Government provide to fill the financial void in the local economy?

5. **Replacement of the current Flinders Airport runway infrastructure.** This Airport is an important asset for the Flinders Island community which must be carefully managed to ensure that the Island's residents and businesses continue to benefit from its existence well into the future.
6. **Development of the Launceston Gateway Precinct Master Plan** is a multi-stakeholder, collaborative initiative, identified as a priority in the Greater Launceston Plan. The long-term goal is for a fully integrated, intermodal transport and logistics hub, and warehousing and allied businesses in the Translink precinct. Complementing the Precinct Master Plan is the Translink Precinct Renewal program that will upgrade and expand the precinct's stormwater infrastructure.

## STATEMENT FROM THE CRADLE COAST AUTHORITY

The Cradle Coast Authority was established by the nine North West Tasmanian Councils to:

1. provide leadership for the Cradle Coast Region and Councils
2. promote and achieve economic development (including tourism development) for the Cradle Coast Region
3. act as advocate and lobbyist for the Cradle Coast Region
4. provide for means of cooperation between the councils

Based on work with councils and stakeholders including the tourism industry, and feedback from elected members the following have been identified as priorities for funding or joint advocacy.

1. **Cradle Mountain Visitor Experience**— the re-imagining of the Cradle Mountain visitor experience has the potential to increase tourism by up to 100,000 per annum. The redevelopment of Cradle Mountain, including new infrastructure at the park entrance and Dove Lake, along with new transportation services is of state significance. The redevelopment is supported by both the local and state tourism industry as Tasmania's priority tourism project. The project will have benefits for the entire region including the West Coast and Circular Head that will be able to capitalise on world heritage tourism opportunities within their area.
2. **Coastal Pathways** – The Coastal Pathways Plan (2010) was accepted by the Cradle Coast councils as a vision for an interconnected path network between Latrobe and Wynyard. The project has the potential to create significant health, community and tourism benefits for the region that will have an enduring value for current and future generations. Whilst there have been varying degrees of planning, pathways have only been delivered in parts of Central Coast and Burnie. Significant investment is required to realise the vision. Recent work has indicated that the cost to complete the vision is in the order of \$27M.
3. **King Island Hospitality Services** – the recent opening of new golf courses on King Island is generating international exposure however the range and quality of hospitality services is a potential risk to the visitor experience. State and Federal Government assistance in working with the market is a high priority.
4. **Burnie Port and Shipping Reform** – the reform of shipping regulation and investment in Burnie Port is significantly important to the North-West economy and support from the State Government in securing legislative reform and investment would be welcomed.
5. **Regional Economic Development Plan** – the Regional Economic Development Plan and associated governance framework will be integral to building a sustainable and resilient regional economy. State Government support, both in principle and financial, would provide an important symbol that that the region is taking ownership and responsibility for developing solutions to local problems in partnership with government.