

24 November 2020

Mr Don Challen AM  
Chair  
Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council

Via email: [secretariat.PESRAC@treasury.tas.gov.au](mailto:secretariat.PESRAC@treasury.tas.gov.au)

Dear Mr Challen,

On behalf of the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, I thank the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) for the opportunity to provide a submission as part of Phase 2 of the Council's consultation process.

The STCA understands that PESRAC is interested in ideas to empower Tasmanians and Tasmanian organisations to build future pathways to recovery. Given this aim, the STCA has identified three key issues which, if addressed, can assist Southern Tasmania's recovery from COVID-19. These issues include:

- An update to the Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy
- Greater support, encouragement and training for employment across Southern Tasmania and the establishment of regional employment hubs
- More reliable, accessible and affordable public transport services

We believe that addressing these matters will contribute to a sustainable, well-connected, healthy and viable Southern Tasmanian region.

I look forward to your favourable response to the enclosed submission.

Yours sincerely



Mayor Bec Enders  
**CHAIR**  
**SOUTHERN TASMANIAN COUNCILS AUTHORITY**

## **Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy**

Regional strategic land use planning is absolutely necessary.

Major land use planning decisions in one part of Greater Hobart have consequences across the whole metropolitan area and often across the entire Southern region.

Planning on a 'whole of region' basis is necessary with significant opportunities at this level of planning to better integrate land use and infrastructure planning. Without coordinated regional planning, we are not going to be able to provide the best outcomes for future generations, including addressing congestion, urban sprawl and the social impacts of living on the urban fringe.

The *Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy* (STRLUS) currently covers each of the twelve Southern Tasmanian Councils.

The *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* provides that:

'The Minister must keep all regional land use strategies under regular and periodic review'

Unfortunately, the Act does not detail how such a regular review is to occur and whilst there has been ongoing discussion with the Tasmanian Planning Commission since the introduction of the STRLUS in regard to formalising a review mechanism for the Regional Land Use Strategies, to date no agreed position on a review process has been able to be reached.

In the absence of a formalised arrangement, the ongoing review and maintenance of the STRLUS tends to be sporadic and ad hoc.

Without regular maintenance and review of the STRLUS, the Strategy will quickly become further out of date and indeed a barrier to good, practical development in Southern Tasmania which is critical as we rebuild the economy post-COVID-19.

**The Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority calls upon the Tasmanian Government to commit to a wholesale review of the *Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy* with appropriate resourcing allocated to undertake the review.**

## **Training and Skill Development**

Training and skill development should be accessible, affordable and relevant to regional populations and industries.

Sorell, Tasman, Clarence and Glamorgan Spring Bay Councils have funded a Workforce Engagement and Development Officer for three years to work with community employers, industry groups, trade training centres and registered training authorities to support, encourage and train for employment across the South East region. The South East Employment Hub has been extremely successful and now Brighton, Central Highlands, Derwent Valley and Southern Midlands Council are co-funding a

similar role for three years with assistance from the Tasmanian Community Fund; this resource will interact with the South East region.

Low education outcomes impede Tasmania's young people and working age population from participating in regular employment. Educational attainment is positively linked to higher levels of employment, increased labour force participation, higher wages and higher levels of productivity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen young people hit hard by job losses with nearly one-in-five Tasmanians aged 15-24 having lost their employment from March to May 2020. Appropriate courses and training pathways will be critical in supporting young people to find jobs in a shrinking and competitive labour market.

Job creation in regions is critical with more opportunities needed to support jobs in local regions as well as structured courses that are relevant, cost effective and able to deliver the required training and compliment the skill level required in current and future job markets. Regional trade training centres have proven to be the most effective means of engaging local communities to deliver the required targeted training matched to local employment needs and opportunities.

The provision of funding to support regional training centres is therefore critical. The Sorell Trade Training Centre is operating beyond capacity reflecting the effectiveness of the model and the growing regional demand. Funding of \$3M has been sought from the Australian and Tasmanian governments to increase operational capacity, however, with current and forecast population growth this will need to be increased to \$5M.

Upskilling and re-skilling Tasmanian workers will be critical in our recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 with a concerted response to the rapid decline in new apprentices and trainees across a range of sectors pointing to a future skills shortage.

In February this year it was pleasing to see the extension of the South East Employment Hub with funding of \$300,000 for a further 12-months and a commitment to work with local government, stakeholders and community partners to ensure the model continues to meet the current and future needs of the community. It is recommended that this funding be further extended and that separate funding for a South Central Employment Hub also be provided. With the South Central region beginning its three year program of workforce engagement and development and with large scale projects such as the Bridgewater Bridge in the pipeline, it is the ideal time to support the establishment of a regional employment hub to maximise the benefits of these other investments.

A commitment from the Tasmanian Government to local training and skill development will be even more critical as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic with strong potential for the South East region model to be expanded to other regions around Tasmania, including the Huon Valley. A recent workforce planning study for the Huon Valley has identified the need for a similar program as the one delivered in Sorell and Brighton to be located at the Huon Valley Trade Training Centre. It was disappointing that the Huon Valley Council was unsuccessful in acquiring funding for a Workforce Engagement and Development Officer operating from the Huon Valley Trade Training Centre.

**The Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority calls upon the Tasmanian Government to provide financial assistance to support, encourage and train for employment across the South East and**

**South Central regions through the establishment of regional employment hubs and increased Trade Training Centre capacity to accommodate forecast population growth.**

### **Increased Government Spending on Public Transport Services**

The Southern region's public transport system is bus-based with Metro Tasmania providing the majority of bus services within metropolitan Hobart, with bus services to urban fringe areas and regional communities provided largely by private operators.

The Tasmanian Government is to be commended for its fare amnesty which it put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic which allowed passengers time to adopt alternative payment options where available.

The Southern region has a small but highly dispersed population which poses a significant challenge to providing a transport system that sustainably meets the travel needs of industry and the community.

In rural areas, connectivity to key regional centres and to metropolitan Hobart continues to be a major issue facing communities. The lack of public transport to rural areas restricts people's ability to access higher education, employment, health services and social and recreational opportunities. The fares associated with using public transport in regional areas is sometimes out of reach for many people including concession card holders. There could also be opportunities for greater outreach of key services to regional and rural areas particularly when public transport is not readily available or bus fees are unaffordable.

Increasing the attractiveness of public transport requires measures such as more frequent and direct services, improved affordability for regional areas, better information and communication of transport options (e.g. real time travel information) and bus priority measures.

Various proposals have recently been made to improve Hobart's public transport system. The types of modes suggested include light rail, bus rapid transit and ferries. It was encouraging to see the State Government announce a trial of zero emissions buses over the coming two years with any additional resources required to be allocated in next year's budget.

Actions in the Hobart City Deal Implementation Plan include encouragement to uptake public transport, advance investigation into landside and port infrastructure requirements for a Derwent River Ferry Service and progress on the activation of the Northern Suburbs Transit Corridor.

Increased government spending on public transport services will encourage greater utilisation of services by commuters and thus contribute to reducing traffic congestion.

**The Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority calls upon the Tasmanian Government to increase its per capita spend on public transport services to assist with the delivery of a more reliable, accessible and affordable service for Southern Tasmania.**