



Hearts of the Island Submission to PESRAC

We are a network of Tasmanian interest groups from across a variety of different sectors, who have come together to change the way that decisions are made for lutruwita/Tasmania during the COVID-19 recovery, in the lead up to the next set of elections and into the future.

We have created a set of principles which we all agree must inform the COVID-19 recovery and future decisions made in lutruwita/Tasmania.

Principles for the COVID-19 recovery and a better lutruwita/Tasmania

The truth about First Peoples' history is told and First People's voices are heard and acted upon in all forms of decision-making in lutruwita/Tasmania.

First Peoples are likely to be disproportionately affected by this pandemic. First Peoples' health is still poorer than the national average, meaning that they are more vulnerable to the ill effects of COVID-19 and physical distancing. During this time, First Peoples are at an increased risk of being subjected to the discrimination which still exists in our health care system. The lockdown and border closures have also made it hard for some First Peoples to access country, which is likely to impact on their mental health.

During the pandemic, our government has been given unprecedented license to make decisions for people, with no scrutiny from parliament. Given the history of trauma which has been created by the government when they have made decisions for First Nations people, the government must ensure that First Nations voices are heard and acted upon in decision making.

All people are welcome and equal regardless of culture, financial wealth, where they were born, the colour of their skin, how they got here, ability, gender, or who they love.

We must acknowledge that women, disabled people, the LGBTIQ+ community, older Tasmanians, people with poor health and temporary visa holders will be disproportionately affected by COVID-19, and care for their needs.

We must care for our women, who are bearing the brunt of this pandemic. Women are more likely to be front line health care workers, and in industries which are considered essential, such as retail and cleaning. Women are also the highest proportion of casual workers, who are more at risk of losing their jobs. Women are also more likely to be taking on additional household burdens, such as caring for children being educated from home and ensuring the house is clean. We must also offer additional services to women to help them deal with the higher instances of domestic violence during this time.

We must acknowledge that people living with a disability will be disproportionately affected by COVID-19, both from the increased risk of being harmed by the virus and the mental health effects of isolation. We must ensure that they are not at a greater risk of discrimination when accessing the health care and transport systems.

We must ensure that the needs of LGBTIQ+ people who may suffer the ill effects of isolation from their community and support systems can access the health care that they need.

We must ensure that older Tasmanians and those with poor health have their mental and physical health cared for, and all efforts are made by the community and their carers to ensure that they do not catch COVID-19.

We must ensure that temporary visa holders, many of whom are students who cannot simply fly home to their home countries and their families, have the financial assistance that they need to access housing, food and health care.

We must open our island home to the refugees who will likely be created by the pandemic flaming old hostilities and creating new ones in other parts of the world.

All people have access to supported, empowering and fulfilling work.

The pandemic has created an instability for businesses and workers not seen for decades. We must ensure that people are able to retain jobs in industries which support their passions and ability to access not just the basics, but the things which allow them to have a joyful life. Above all, we must ensure that nobody is left behind.

Opportunities and financial support must be given to women and young people, who are more likely to be casual workers and face the risk of losing their job.

We must give financial support and create opportunities to those in the creative arts - our writers, actors, artists, dancers and musicians.

The payment amount for Job Seeker must be retained, if not by the federal government then by this government, in order to ensure that everybody is able to access the basic necessities like housing, food and education.

All people have equal access to the community-based care that they need, including quality healthcare, education and affordable, appropriate and secure housing.

We must ensure that young people have access to quality education through both technology and face-to-face learning (when it is safe to do so). This takes into account the different learning styles of students, their study environments and the difficulties they might have accessing technology. We must ensure that our schools support and provide skills to students in order to improve the poor literacy and unemployment rates in youth. We must ensure that young people, especially those in regional areas, can access college, TAFE and university, and that they have a breadth of course options once they do so. We must ensure that there are pathways to further education for students. If students struggle as a result of these unprecedented times, we must ensure that there is support for them to undertake future study or to find employment. If we do not do so, we risk losing generations of our young people to the mainland, and of limiting the knowledge and experience of future Tasmanian workers.

We need to empower people to access life-long learning facilities, vocational education and training opportunities in order to combat our poor literacy and anticipated unemployment rates.

We must ensure that our healthcare system is equipped to deal with the ongoing threat of a COVID-19 outbreak. We need enough PPE, beds and health care workers across the state. Beyond that, we must ensure that our health care system can care for our aging population, disabled and mental health issues which arise from, or are exacerbated, by the pandemic. People are already feeling the anxiety of worrying if they or their loved ones will get sick, if they will lose

their job, whether there will be a job for them when they graduate, how they'll pay the mortgage, and if they'll pass their classes.

Despite job losses and an uncertain world, everyone must have access to affordable, safe and comfortable housing. In order to do this, we must build more public housing and renovate the public houses that already exist to fulfill the great need in our community.

The economy is one based on regeneration, not exploitation, and lutruwita/Tasmania leads the world as a decarbonised economy and society.

COVID-19 has fundamentally disrupted our world, including our economic system. In recovering from COVID-19, we cannot ignore the other, just as serious, dangers to our people and planet - namely climate change. We cannot go back to business as usual or have a fossil fuel-led recovery.

We must instead take advantage of our ample sun and proximity to the Roaring Forties and invest in jobs in renewable energy. We can also create jobs by empowering people to live more sustainable lives, by building and renovating homes which are environmentally friendly and powered by renewables.

Tasmanians should be supported to travel sustainably by investing in more public transport, electric vehicles and bike lanes, which will also ease traffic congestion on our aging roads.

In order to have an adequate public housing system and health care system which are not stretched to capacity, we must build new and renovate existing properties, which, in turn, will create the jobs we need to steer our economy away from recession.

We must end logging of our old growth and High Conservation Value forests, which are important culturally to our First Peoples, the ecosystems they support and hold vital stores of carbon for our warming planet. A transition to plantation forestry would ensure that the people in these industries are not left behind, and Tasmania's unique and valuable forests are protected.

It is inconsistent with our image as a natural place, reliant only on renewable energy, to grant any more Category 2 Exploration Licenses. We must leave the coal and gas industry in the past, with the fossils, where it belongs.

We love and protect nature, biodiversity and our ecosystem for current and future generations.

We've seen how important nature has been to Tasmanians during COVID-19, with most of us increasingly retreating into nature for a break from the endless cycle of bad news. Australia is in an extinction crisis, with the worst rate of mammal extinction in the world. We must protect our swift parrots, humpback whales, masked owls, fur seals and wedge-tailed eagles.

In our rush to create jobs, we must not sacrifice good governance which protects our places, people and animals. We need laws that will stop developments from going ahead when they will endanger our threatened species, or significantly damage our precious ecosystems.

We need to employ Tasmanians to protect and restore our wild and green spaces, for the benefit of current and future Tasmanian people and animals. Imagine paths which take groups of walkers through old growth forests where wedge-tailed eagle's nest, instead of bulldozers. Imagine new parks in the suburbs where kids can run and play amongst our native shrubs. Imagine burnt and torn logging sites sprouting green again.

Our democracy is world class in its transparency, accountability and representation of all people.

Decision making about lutruwita/Tasmania's future must be transparent and easily understandable to provide Tasmanians with certainty in this uncertain time. It must allow us to plan our future in work, connecting with family members and friends and travel as much as possible.

We must fund and support community groups which represent the interests of our vulnerable people and places, who we know have been hit financially and personally by the pandemic.

The pandemic has seen our democracy changed radically, and the executive branch of government make decisions without scrutiny. With this, we have also seen the suspension of "party politics" and in its place cooperation and discussion between the different political parties. Given that all politicians represent the people, we need to continue this cooperative, non-adversarial style of politics, where a diversity of views are represented by the legislation passed in parliament. With the re-opening of parliament, politicians need to reconnect with those that they represent, especially the views of vulnerable and minority groups whose voices often cannot be heard.

With the resumption of parliament, we must ensure that laws are not passed which threaten citizens' fundamental human rights. We do not need laws which threaten the ability of people to voice their opinions. Our politicians are elected to represent the people and their diversity of views, not the interests of elites and powerful industries.

If there is a second wave of COVID-19 in Tasmania and in-person parliament must be suspended again, we must ensure that our democracy is not suspended with it. We must make plans now for how technology can be utilised to continue this important democratic process.

We acknowledge that our island is socially, economically and environmentally connected to the bigger world and - through our place in it - foster peace, justice and equality.

Whilst we acknowledge the problems in Australia, particularly those of our vulnerable people, we must not forget that our position in the world is one of relative wealth and safety. Where we can, we should give to those who are in positions worse than us and accept them in our island home should they need to flee their own country.

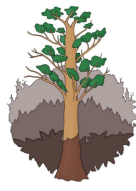
We must do what we can for the millions who have contracted COVID-19 in other countries like the United States of America, India, Russia, South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Colombia and Chile.

We must support countries, such as Lebanon, who's already stretched economy and governance has been exacerbated by recent events. We must assist the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Yemen, and not forget the people in Hong Kong who are fighting for their freedom.

We must support the Black Lives Matter protests both here and abroad, and the continuing fight of people of colour for equality. We must also not forget the ongoing fight that women, the LGBTQI+ community, minorities and Indigenous people are waging across the world for their rights.

We must not forget that climate change and environmental degradation are already affecting communities across our island home and the world, and that the window of opportunity to mitigate these impacts is closing.

Signatory groups to this submission



THE TREE PROJECTS



Climate Action Hobart, Australian Youth Climate Coalition, Student Environment and Animal Law Society, Fossil Free UTAS, Tasmania Ethical Non-monogamy, School Strike 4 Climate nipaluna/Hobart, Doctors for the Environment Australia Tasmania, Citizen Tasmania, Short of a Sheet Inc, the Tree Projects, the Wilderness Society Tasmania, South Hobart Sustainable Community, Tassie Nannas and Tasmanian Refugee Rights Action Group.