ORDINARY COUNCIL - 6 March 2025 Attachments

From: "Ray Norman" <[redacted]>
Sent: Tue, 25 Feb 2025 14:51:38 +1100
To: "Councillor Matthew Garwood"
[redacted]
Subject: QUESTIONS ON NOTICE ADDRESSED TO MAYOR AND ALL COUNCILLORS TO BE ANSWERED ON THE RECORD AT THE ELECTED COUNCILLORS' EARLIEST CONVENIENCE

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE ADDRESSED TO MAYOR AND ALL COUNCILLORS TO BE ANSWERED ON THE RECORD AT THE ELECTED COUNCILLORS' EARLIEST CONVENIENCE

FOREWORD: The questions below are to do with matters of ***'governance'*** – *policy and strategic matters* – and they are not being posed in the context of them being ***'operational matters'*** albeit that the Councillors may seek advice from within the City of Launceston's management team and elsewhere.

QUESTION 1:

CONTEXT NOTE: Albeit that the City of Launceston management team claims that Council's **GREENING LAUNCESTON POLICY** is progressing satisfactory albeit that there is scant evidence that it is on track and that the city's canopy cover is in fact increasing. Also, rather than Council put out media releases promoting that X number of trees have been planted at site Y ratepayers are likely to read about trees being lost from the city's **CULTURAL** *landscape*.

Indeed, if one were to scrutinise DA Approvals one is most likely to find that trees are to be removed without there being an offset requirement that X number of trees be planted to offset the loss of trees consequent to the development.

Elsewhere, such provisions are in place even if the Manager of Development is antithetic to the notion that Council should demand an offset from developers when their development causes the removal of trees. Actually, it wouldn't be drawing too long a bow to suggest that he actually hostile to the concept.

Whereas in South Australia, Adelaide specifically, there is a dollar value deemed to be appropriate and developer are required to make a cash payment with the money going to the planting of trees elsewhere. Council's CEO, in his previous positions in SA, will have domain knowledge relative to SA's tree management.

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QUESTION:

Will the City of Launceston's Councillors take a leadership role and update Launceston's **'Greening Policy'** and request that the CEO:

- Provide Councillors with a report on the possible implementation of an offset dollar charge for the removal of any tree in the municipality; and
- Set out a rate of charges relative to litreage in volume a tree to be removed; and
- Provide advice on when and where Councillors may reduce these charges and under what circumstances.

QUESTION 2:

CONTEXT NOTE: Again,. albeit that the City of Launceston management team claims that Council's **GREENING LAUNCESTON POLICY** is progressing and that trees are being planted, recently trees have been lost to high winds and removed for infrastructural purposes. When this happens typically a 100% of the tree is mulched.

While this strategy enables the retention of carbon in the city's **CULTURAL***landscape* a great deal of timber is wasted on the grounds that it is deemed to be unsuitable for any other purpose. Very often this is not the case, and it comes about to there being a one-size-fits-all strategy when inexperienced people are called upon to manage a situation.

If the city maintained a *kanamuluka*__WOOD__*bank* it would enable **DESIGNER***makers*, architects, builders, community groups, et al to access wood/timber from this resource for an appropriate charge.

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QUESTION:

Will Councillors reconsider requesting the CEO to report to the city's Councillors and ratepayers on the feasibility of:

1. Establishing *kanamuluka*__WOOD__*bank* to serve residents, makers, et al in the region of the valley served as it is by several Councils; and
2. Council's **WASTE MANAGEMENT CENTRE** being the venue for such an enterprise; and
3. Such an operation being cost effective.

QUESTION 3:

CONTEXT NOTE: Against the background of the city's sustainability there are increasing pressures evident to implement new policies and strategies:

1. That enables the city to exploit opportunities internationally to become more able to reduce the city's and the region's carbon footprint; and

2. Possibly diminishes the carbon footprint in places elsewhere; and

3. Offers the possibility of establishing enterprises over time that generate new income possibilities while providing access to new sustainable resources in the region and possibly statewide; and

4. While doing that enhance the amenity the city offers to its residents, ratepayers, and its visitors in medium to long term.

What is being referred to is **BAMBOO FORESTRY** and the planting of bamboo to enhance the amenity of urban, peri-urban and rural landscapes. Bamboo in Tasmania has erroneously earned the reputation of **'IT', AKA all bamboo,** being an **"invasive weed"** and that then the ***"good bamboos will not grow here"*** neither of which is the case. To counter the **IT/ALL***bamboo* assertion there are more than **1,500** species of bamboo many of which are not invasive plants.

Certainly not all of 1500 bamboos will thrive in Tasmania given that a great many are tropical plants but a great many do – *if not why the weed assertion*. In any event, wheat, oats, and barley would be **'invasive'** if their seeds were not harvested. And we know all too well that if you let hard hoofed cattle, sheep, pigs and deer to run free they too are an environmental problem. So, bamboo has been singled out because of Western cum settler cum colonial sensibilities.

Also, Tasmania has been a proud **EXPORTER** of wood and timber but not any longer. Sawmills are closing, and many in the **TIMBER***industry* will tell you that it is difficult to meet demand in Tasmania. Moreover, there is the speculation that Tasmania is net **IMPORTER** of timber. So, what once seemed an endless supply can only be sustainable again IF there is a **MIND***set* shift. In the light of all this the misrepresentation, sometimes deliberate misrepresentation, of bamboo is nothing short of mindless nonsense to say the very least.

The circumstances for change are upon us and to deny that would be more than fool hardy. Currently, the intelligent and well-informed management of **CULTURAL***landscapes* is an imperative and especially so for local governance. By-and-large bamboo has been vilified out of ignorance and in ways that ought not be tolerated in the 21st C where access to information has never been better.

With these things in mind a submission has been prepared with Launceston City Council being a collaborator and possibly a member of a cooperative. That submission takes the form of a WEBSITE … **CLICK HERE**

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QUESTION:

Will Councillors please now consider taking a strategic position that requires management to take on positive positions relative to bamboo and **CULTURAL***landscaping* and for Council as whole to see bamboo as an environmental asset rather than its current default negative status?

Ray Norman
<*zing***HOUSE**unlimited>
The lifestyle design enterprise and research network

PH: [redacted]

"A body of men holding themselves accountable to nobody ought not to be trusted by anybody." Thomas Paine

"The standard you walk past is the standard you accept" David Morrison

RAY NORMAN Local Governance Advocate
Helping you to help yourself

https://raynormanadvocate.blogspot.com/

*zing***CONSULTANCY**

https://raynorman7250.blogspot.com/p/zingconsult.html

*We acknowledge the First Peoples – the Traditional Owners of the lands where we live and work, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water, and community. We pay respect to Elders – past, present, and emerging – and acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within the research zing***HOUSE***unlimited undertakes.*

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DRAFT LAUNCESTON HOUSING PLAN 2025-2040

Project undertaken for City of Launceston

February 2025

Shaping Futures

City of LAUNCESTON

DRAFT LAUNCESTON HOUSING PLAN 2025-2040

This project has been conducted by REMPLAN

February 2025

Disclaimer

This document is provided in good faith with every effort made to provide accurate data and apply comprehensive knowledge. However, REMPLAN does not guarantee the accuracy of data, nor the conclusions drawn from this information. A decision to pursue any suggestions mentioned in the report is wholly the responsibility of the party concerned. REMPLAN advises any party to conduct detailed feasibility studies and seek professional advice before proceeding with any action and accept no responsibility for the consequences of pursuing any of the findings or actions discussed in the document.

Version	Issued
Draft V1	13th January 2025
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Draft V3	18th February 2025
Draft V4	24th February 2025

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge Tasmanian Aboriginal People as traditional custodians of this land. We pay respect to Elders past and present.

We acknowledge and honour the profound histories, knowledge, and lived experiences of the Tasmanian Aboriginal People, who are the First People of this land and uphold the world's oldest continuing land use planning and management system.

We deeply respect their lasting connection to Country and the profound importance they place on shelter, community, and belonging.

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DEFINITIONS

Affordable housing	Housing for purchase and rent, including social housing, that is appropriate for the needs of very low-, low- and moderate-income households. This is generally understood to mean housing that costs no more than 30 per cent of a household's gross income.[1]
Approved plan parcel	Any land parcel that was identified by individual councils as having an approved permit, an approved master plan, or similar.
Detached housing	A free-standing, self-contained dwelling house on a single parcel of land.
DINKS	An acronym for a household in which there are two incomes and no children (i.e. **D**ual **I**ncome, **N**o **K**id**S**).
Empty nester	A household in which one or more parents live after their children have left home.
GLP	An acronym for the *Greater Launceston Plan.*
High density development	Developments that include flats and apartments contained within a building of 3 or more storeys on larger land parcels.
Homelessness	The state of a person who does not have suitable accommodation alternatives and whose current living arrangement: • is in a dwelling that is inadequate (i.e. unfit for human habitation or lacks basic facilities such as kitchen and bathroom facilities) • has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or • does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations (including personal or household living space, ability to maintain privacy and exclusive access to kitchen and bathroom facilities).[2]
Key worker	People who provide essential services to the community and are generally unable to work from home, and include (but are not limited to) teachers, nurses, social workers, police, fire and emergency service personnel, child care and aged care workers, cleaners and hospitality and retail workers
Low-rise apartment	Apartments contained within a building of 3 storeys or less and fit within the medium density housing options.
Medium density development (*also referred to as "Missing middle"*)	Multiple developments on a single site that includes townhouses, villa units and low-rise apartments and are no higher than 3 storeys. These developments bridge the gap between traditional detached dwelling houses and high-rise developments.
NTRLUS	An acronym for the *Northern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy.*
Retail parcel	An existing vacant land parcel that is not of a size that can accommodate further subdivision and is currently available for development.
SINKS	An acronym for a household in which there is one income and no children (i.e. **S**ingle **I**ncome, No **K**id**S).**
Townhouse	A self-contained multiple level development, generally attached, and within a complex of three or more dwellings. Common property is shared between property owners within the complex which include landscaped areas, footpaths and driveways.
TPS	An acronym for the *Tasmanian Planning Scheme.*

[1] Tasmanian Housing Strategy 2023-2043
[2] Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2018

Underutilised parcel	A vacant land parcel that is a sufficient size to accommodate further subdivision, however it is located within areas identified as 'Unserviced' in TasWater's sewer serviced land mapping.
Villa unit	A self-contained single level development within a complex of three or more dwellings, with attached garages, private courtyards and an internal shared driveway access. Common property is shared between property owners within the complex which include internal public landscaped areas and driveways.
Wholesale parcel	A vacant land parcel that is of sufficient size to accommodate further subdivision and is allocated within a 'Full Service' area of TasWater's sewer serviced land mapping.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Housing is a human right and having the right kind of home for your stage of life is critical to feeling safe in your community. Across Australia, housing has become increasingly inaccessible, and this has a negative impact on the people impacted and the places they live.

Councils have a major role to play in housing delivery as the level of government responsible for determining where homes, businesses and services should be located. It is also the role of council to review proposed developments against the planning scheme. These functions influence the local housing market.

Governments around the country are grappling with the lasting impact of the pandemic, increasing house prices, an ageing population and reduced household sizes. These, and many other factors, have made it a lot harder to access affordable and suitable housing for many people. Launceston is not immune from these nation-wide challenges.

Launceston's key challenges

Affordability: **The rise in housing costs since 2019 has intensified. It is now harder to find affordable rental accommodation and homes for purchase.**
Growing inequality: **Launceston is experiencing housing inequality. People on lower incomes are facing escalating disadvantage. Housing insecurity impacts social cohesion and economic participation.**
Shortage of new homes: **A lack of forward planning and new infrastructure have limited development and pushed growth to suburbs that are further from the services of Launceston.**
Lack of diversity: **In terms of housing, one size does not fit all. Most new housing in Launceston continues to be detached houses on single lots. Not all retired and young people necessarily desire this kind of home but have trouble finding other options.**

Recognising these challenges, local governments across Australia are implementing initiatives to increase supply and improve choice.

This Housing Plan outlines how the City of Launceston plans to address our city's challenges. The aim is to ensure every resident has secure, affordable, and well-located homes. By leveraging collaboration and targeted actions, the Plan seeks to promote housing diversity, sustainability, and resilience - shaping a liveable Launceston.

Vision and Principles

Launceston's housing vision is to:

> *"Deliver homes for every stage of life while protecting what we love and enriching every suburb".*

This vision is underpinned by four key principles:

1	**STRONG SUPPLY:** Increase housing variety to better meet the needs of different households and unleash supply.
2	**ENRICH OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS:** Encourage sustainable, well-designed housing that integrates with local character and supports inclusive communities.
3	**COLLABORATE WITH PARTNERS:** Leverage collaborations between government, developers, and community organisations to accelerate housing delivery.
4	**ALIGN INVESTMENT WITH DEVELOPMENT:** Prioritise resources for infrastructure and services that support liveable, well-connected communities.

Priorities, Objectives and Actions

The Plan identifies the City's priorities and objectives for meeting Launceston's housing needs. Each principle is supported by a range of short-, medium-, and long-term actions including:

- Balancing greenfield with infill: Plan for up to 6,450 new dwellings over 15 years, focusing on both infill and greenfield developments to balance growth in the short term, while transitioning to a greater share of infill development over time.
- Incentives and innovation: Promote medium-density housing and leverage state incentives to encourage diverse and affordable housing typologies.
- Neighbourhood plans: Expedite planning for growth areas, including St Leonards and Waverley, Alanvale, and South Prospect, ensuring adequate land supply and infrastructure alignment.
- Urban renewal: Unlock underutilised sites and heritage buildings for housing, demonstrating leadership in sustainable urban development.
- Collaboration frameworks: Establish formal forums and partnerships to align stakeholders, monitor progress, and innovate in housing design and delivery.

Monitoring and accountability

A robust monitoring framework ensures transparency and adaptability, tracking progress against measurable targets. Key performance indicators include:

- Deliver housing which exceeds population growth needs.
- Increased diversity in housing stock, with a focus on affordability and low-maintenance housing.
- Improved engagement with stakeholders to foster collaboration and innovation.

By aligning policy, investment, and partnerships, council can provide a clear response to current housing challenges while positioning the city for a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable housing future.

WHY WE NEED A HOUSING PLAN

Launceston's housing market is at a crossroads. The choices we make today will determine whether our city thrives as a dynamic, inclusive, and liveable place—or whether we continue along a path where undersupply, affordability pressures, and growth constraints hold us back.

Despite being Northern Tasmania's economic centre, Launceston has struggled to provide enough well-located housing. While demand for housing has risen, our supply pipeline has struggled to keep pace. Well-planned new neighbourhoods have stalled, and efforts to unlock infill development have been inadequate.

The result? Increasing housing costs, a widening affordability gap, and missed economic opportunities. Without a clear and proactive housing plan, Launceston risks missing out on more economic opportunities, exacerbating inequality, and failing to provide the right homes in the right places.

This is not just about supply—it's about alignment. Delays in planning and infrastructure have limited development, while a lack of housing diversity has left downsizers, young workers, and families with limited options. Without a coordinated approach, these mismatches will only worsen, limiting our ability to provide housing choice across all life stages.

This Housing Plan is our roadmap to change. By planning ahead, enabling supply, and delivering the right homes in the right places, we can ensure Launceston remains a liveable, prosperous, and inclusive city—one where housing is an enabler, not a barrier.

Our Housing Challenge

Growing population	Existing undersupply	Shrinking households	Lack of land
+500 new residents on average every year since 2014	Approximately 1,500 new homes needed by 2045 just to house **today's** population	**39%**of households have two or more bedrooms spare, however construction of larger homes dominates new homes	**10 year** shortfall in **appropriate land supply** to maintain a steady pipeline to deliver the housing we need

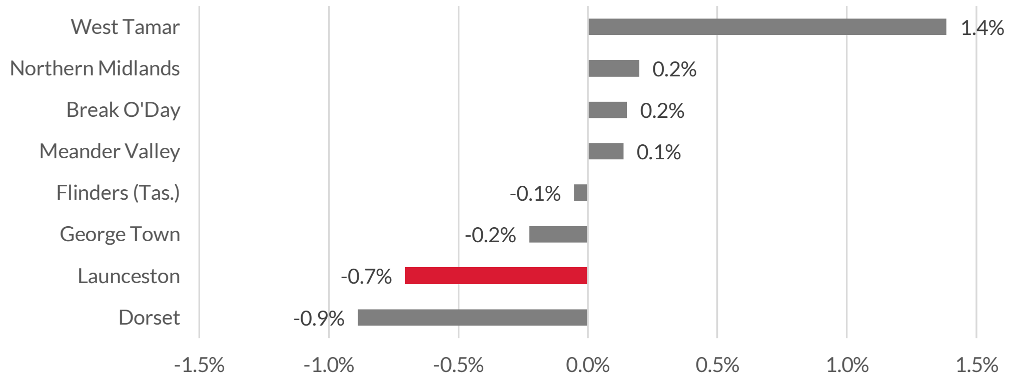
▼▼▼

Rising house prices	Decreasing affordability	Rising homelessness	Existing socioeconomic disadvantage
+$180,000 median house price increase since 2020 (+50%)	**4%** of dwellings sold would be considered 'affordable' in 2023, down from 55% in 2020	**+90%** increasing number of people experiencing homelessness (2016-2021)	Launceston has persistent relative socioeconomic disadvantage

Where we are falling behind

As the economic and service hub of Northern Tasmania, Launceston remains the region's primary centre. However, its share of population growth and dwelling approvals has declined, with more development shifting to neighbouring municipalities like West Tamar and Meander Valley as shown in Figure 1 below. Without action, Launceston risks falling further behind, missing opportunities to strengthen its economy and deliver great outcomes for our community.

Figure 1 LGA share of regional population growth 2003-2023



Source: ABS Regional Population

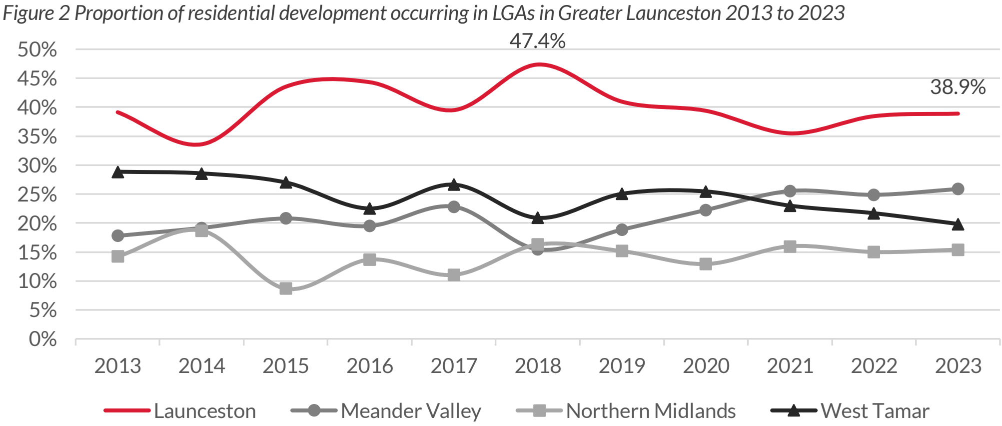
A key issue is the lack of development-ready land. Growth areas like Prospect and Kings Meadows are now largely built out, yet strategic planning to unlock new supply has stalled. Although neighbourhood planning has commenced for St Leonards and Waverley, other key growth areas like South Prospect and Alanvale remain incomplete after years of delays, while infrastructure constraints have slowed the activation of existing zoned land.

At the same time, Launceston has failed to deliver enough medium density housing (commonly referred to as "the missing middle") —such as townhouses, villa units, and low-rise apartments—despite shrinking household sizes and rising demand for more diverse, affordable housing. Most new supply remains detached housing, limiting choice for downsizers, young workers, and smaller households.

The city has also fallen behind in planning for walkable, well-connected neighbourhoods. Without coordinated neighbourhood planning, new developments are often car-dependent and disconnected from services, missing opportunities to create more vibrant, sustainable communities.

Without intervention, Launceston will continue losing growth to surrounding areas as shown in Figure 2. This plan provides a new approach—one that prioritises delivering the housing, infrastructure, and planning needed to secure the city's future.

Figure 2 Proportion of residential development occurring in LGAs in Greater Launceston 2013 to 2023



Source: ABS Building Approvals

Building on past plans

Our last Residential Strategy (2009-2029) set a strong foundation, prioritising infill development to make better use of existing available land and infrastructure. Early on, this approach delivered good outcomes, with many key sites being developed ahead of the proposed time horizons. However, over time, progress has stalled.

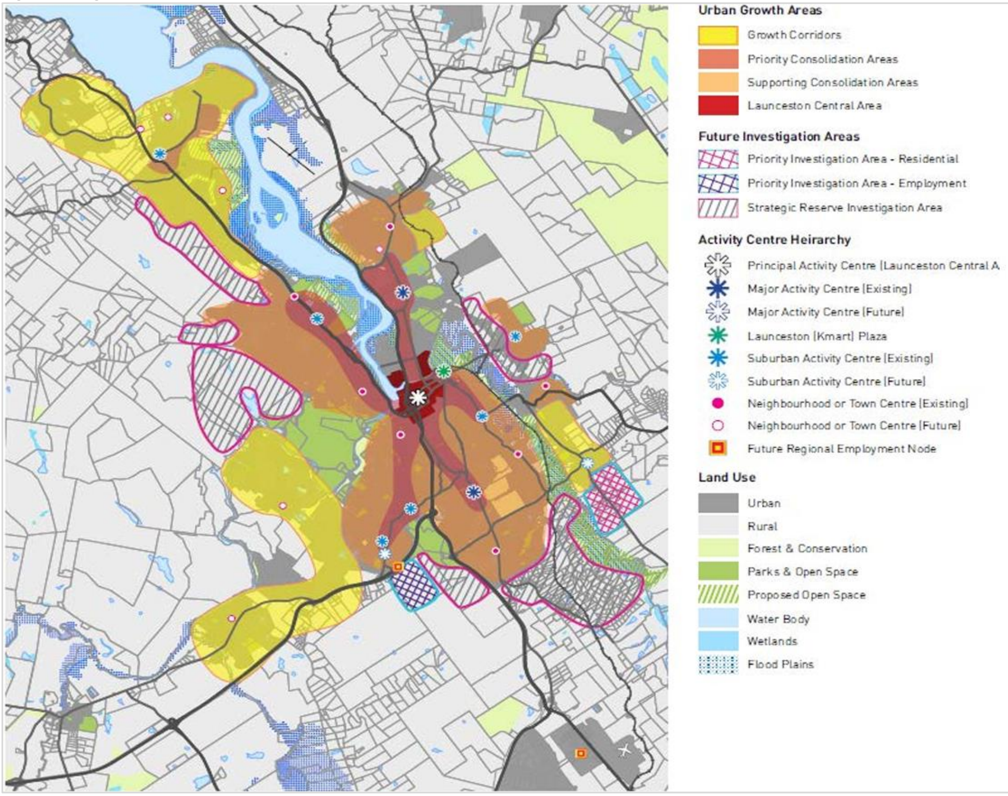
One of the key challenges has been balancing infill development with the strong local preference for detached homes. While the strategy recognised the need for new greenfield developments to accommodate this demand, efforts to unlock infill sites—particularly those requiring more complex planning or infrastructure—haven't received the same level of focus. As a result, many of the opportunities identified in the strategy remain unrealised.

The *Greater Launceston Plan (GLP)* and the *Northern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy (NTRLUS)* reinforced the need for both infill and sustainable greenfield growth to meet the city's housing needs. They mapped out key growth and consolidation areas, including the Eastern Growth Corridor at St Leonards and the South Prospect area as shown in Figure 3 below. The expectation was that these locations would accommodate a significant share of future development. Considerable work has been done inthese areas, along with new areas such as Alanvale, and this work continues to determine the key anticipated growth areas.

The challenge isn't a lack of planning—it's delivery. While Launceston has identified where growth should happen, the city hasn't kept pace with the housing demand. Infrastructure constraints, slow rezoning processes, and a lack of coordinated action have all played a role in limiting progress.

This new Housing Plan builds on past work but takes a more proactive approach. It aims to ensure Launceston doesn't just plan for growth—it delivers it. By addressing barriers to development, aligning investment with infrastructure, and making it easier to unlock both infill and new growth areas, this plan will put Launceston back on track to meet its housing needs.

Figure 3 Regional Framework Plan (Source: NTRLUS)

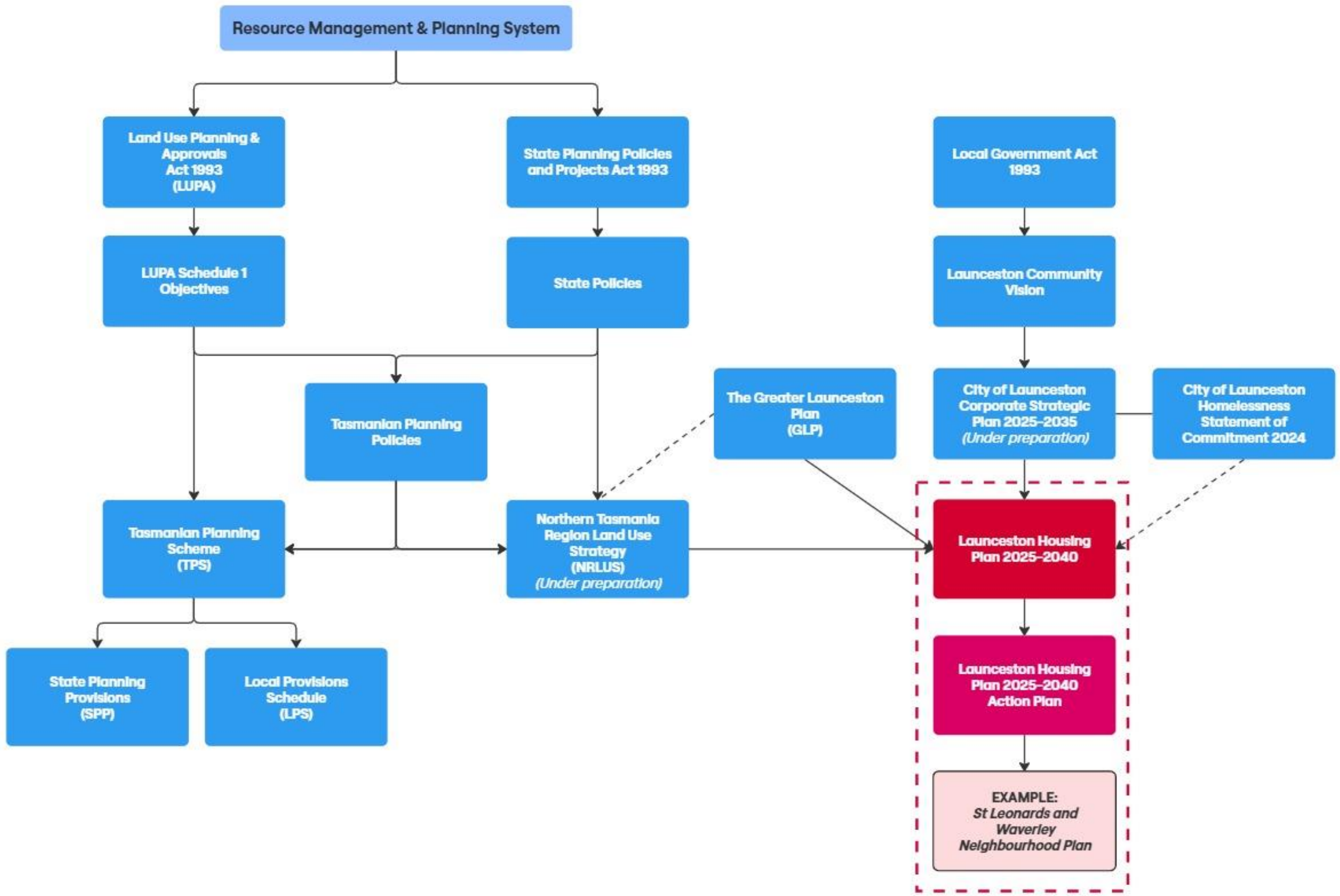


Planning legislation context

The Launceston Housing Plan will act as an overarching document which will drive the City of Launceston's local planning for housing design and delivery. It sets the vision for future housing projects, and how it will meet strategic housing directions over the next 15 years by translating these into quantifiable priorities and actions with transparent mechanisms and timeframes for delivery.

The Launceston Housing Plan will be an important unifying document, which aligns and builds on the relevant State, Regional and Local planning legislation and strategies outlined in legislation framework below:

Figure 4 Tasmanian Planning Legislation Framework



Source: City of Launceston

National housing themes

A review of key Federal and State policies related to housing, including the National Housing Accord, National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and Tasmanian Housing Strategy, identifies several key housing themes that the Launceston Housing Plan will seek to address, including:

- **Homelessness:** Rates of homelessness in Australia, Tasmania and Launceston have become of increasing concern, and governments are implementing a range of policies to address the considerable impacts that homelessness has on the individual and collective wellbeing, health, and economic participation of Australians.
- **Housing Affordability:** The housing crisis has impacted the affordability of housing in a range of regional and urban contexts – including Launceston. Governments are exploring a range of incentives, targets, financing models, reforms and legislative changes to improve housing affordability – particularly for vulnerable demographics and key workers.
- **Sustainability and Climate Resilience:** Construction is increasingly being recognised as a major impact on sustainability, and technological and regulatory changes are encouraging reductions in both embodied and operational carbon. Recent extreme weather events are also challenging traditional approaches to climate resilience for housing.
- **Density and diversity:** Traditional models of housing delivery are being challenged as demographic and economic changes are encouraging more housing density and diversity – providing better accessibility and more sustainable transport outcomes.
- **Alignment with infrastructure:** Coordinating both the delivery and funding of trunk infrastructure and transport connections has become increasingly challenging as infrastructure has become more complex and interest rates have increased.
- **Partnership for delivery:** After decades of low rates of social and affordable housing delivery, governments are increasingly partnering with the private sector to create more sustainable and equitable housing outcomes.

WHAT WE LOOK LIKE NOW

Who lives in our City

Launceston is a city of diverse living experiences, where some residents enjoy high standards of living and strong housing security, while others face significant challenges in accessing stable and affordable housing. Like much of Australia, Launceston has been grappling with a housing crisis that has driven up costs and increased the number of people experiencing housing stress and homelessness. These pressures continue to impact the quality of life for many residents, reinforcing the need for a housing plan that supports a more inclusive and accessible housing market.

CITY OF LAUNCESTON SNAPSHOT

2023 Population = 71,788

(ABS Regional Population)

Service age groups (ABS Regional Population)	%
Babies and pre-schoolers (0-4)	5.3%
School age (5-17)	17.3%
Tertiary education and independence (18-24)	6.6%
Young workers (25-34)	15.7%
Parents and homebuilder (35-49)	18.3%
Older workers and pre-retirees (50-59)	12.1%
Empty nesters and retirees (60-69	11.1%
Seniors (70-85)	11.1%
Elderly (85+)	2.5%

Household size (ABS Regional Population)	%
1 person	31.4%
2 person	34.4%
3 person	14.8%
4 person	12.3%
5 persons	4.8%
6 persons	1.6%
7 persons	0.5%
8 or more persons	0.3%

Housing type (ABS Regional Population)	%
Detached housing	80.2%
Medium density development	10.5%
High-density development	8.6%
Other (i.e. caravans, houseboats, etc.)	1.7%

Tenure (ABS Regional Population)	%
Fully owned	30.6%
Mortgage	29.7%
Renting (Social - 6.5% and Private - 26.1%)	32.8%
Other tenure type	1.7%

Affordability (ABS Regional Population)	$$$
Median house price	$535,000
Median rental price (per week)	$470

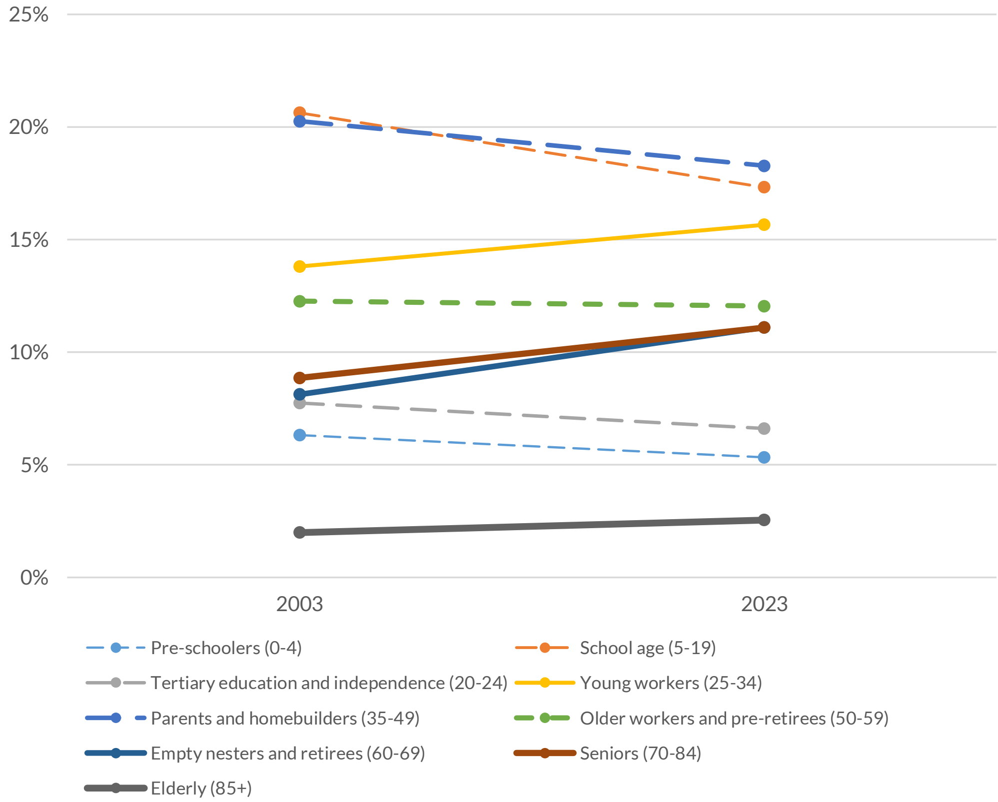
Population and households

Launceston's population is growing. While there have been periods of slower growth or slight decline, the overall trend is upward, reflecting a pattern seen in many regional centres across Australia. Unlike more remote or rural areas that are experiencing stagnation or population loss, regional hubs like Launceston continue to attract new residents. This reinforces Launceston's role as Northern Tasmania's economic and service centre.

Over the past 10 years Launceston has increased its population by over 5,000 people, an annual average growth rate of 0.7%. While growth has been positive, it has not been as strong as other surrounding municipalities[3], or regional Tasmania as a whole which had a growth rate of 0.9%.

Total residents are not the only factor when considering growth—how the population is changing is just as important for addressing housing needs. Launceston's fastest-growing age groups are young workers (25-34), retirees (60-69), and seniors (70+), as shown in Figure 5 below. This shift influences the types of housing required, with increasing demand for lower-maintenance homes, greater accessibility features, and well-located housing close to services that supports ageing in place as well as access to the activities and lifestyle amenities of the city.

Figure 5 Launceston's changing age profile



Source: ABS Regional Population

The evolving age profile directly influences how households are formed and their size. With more young workers and retirees, average household sizes are shrinking due to the increasing number of 1-2 person

[3] See Appendix A

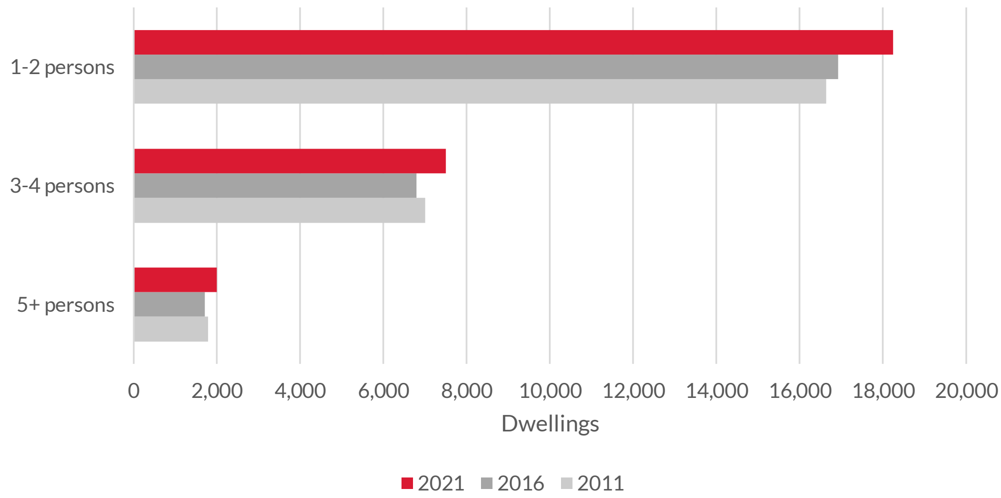
households, as shown in Figure 6 below, driving demand for a greater number of dwellings—even if overall population growth remains steady.

While the share of larger family households is declining, their absolute number is still growing, meaning there is still a need for well-located detached homes. However, this has been the dominant housing form to date, and the challenge now is to diversify supply. A broader mix—such as townhouses, apartments, and other medium-density housing—will be essential to ensuring Launceston can meet the needs of all household types. Addressing these shifts will be critical to maintaining the city's liveability and appeal across all life stages.

Shrinking household sizes and increasing dwelling sizes have created a growing mismatch between household needs and available housing. In 2021, nearly 80% of households had at least one spare bedroom, with the largest growth in homes with three or more spare bedrooms[4]. This suggests a significant portion of Launceston's housing stock is underutilised, with larger homes increasingly occupied by smaller households. At the same time, the number of households needing additional bedrooms is also rising, highlighting a widening disparity between housing supply and demand.

While simple housing suitability measures don't account for individual household needs—such as space for working from home or storage—they indicate a misalignment between available homes and changing demographics. Addressing this requires a better balance in new housing supply, with a greater focus on diverse housing options. There is also an opportunity to make better use of existing homes through downsizing, renovations, or policies that encourage more efficient use of housing stock.

Figure 6 Persons per dwelling, Launceston



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing

[4] See Appendix A

Housing needs evolve over a person's lifetime, reflecting changes in household composition, financial capacity, and lifestyle preferences. Understanding this dynamic is critical to ensuring Launceston's housing market can support diverse living arrangements across all life stages.

As outlined above, Launceston's household composition is changing. This influences housing demand in several ways:

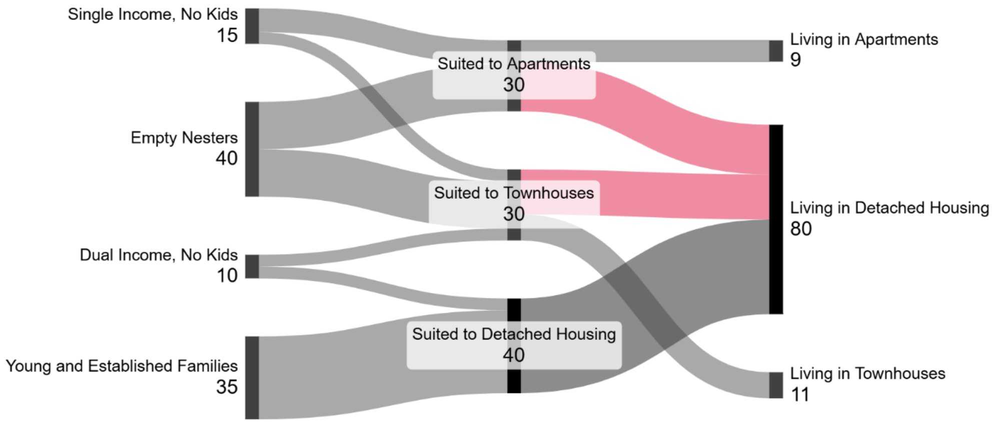
- **Single-income (SINKs) and dual-income no-kids (DINKs)** households increasingly seek well-located, lower-maintenance homes (25% of households in Launceston).
- **Families with children** still require detached houses, but the dominance of this housing form suggests that Launceston has historically over-delivered larger homes while under-supplying alternatives (35% of households in Launceston).
- **Empty nesters and retirees** often prefer to downsize but face limited choices that balance affordability, accessibility, and location (55% of households in Launceston)[5].

The existing housing stock in Launceston does not fully reflect these changing needs. Detached houses make up over 80% of Launceston's dwellings, yet household structures indicate that around 60% of the community could be well suited to smaller housing options like apartments or townhouses. However, only about 19% of dwellings fall into these categories, creating a mismatch between demand and supply.

The diagram below in Figure 7 highlights the gap between the types of housing that best suit different household types and what's available in Launceston. While many households—such as single-income individuals and empty nesters—would be well-suited to apartments or townhouses, most end up in detached houses simply because there aren't enough alternatives. This isn't necessarily about preference but about what's available in the market.

To better align with the city's changing demographics, a more diverse mix of housing is needed—not just in established suburbs, but also in new neighbourhoods. Integrating apartments and townhouses into both infill and greenfield developments will provide greater choice, improve affordability, and create more sustainable, well-balanced communities.

Figure 7 Launceston household structure compared with potential suitability



Labour force and income

Household income and workforce participation are key indicators of economic wellbeing and have a direct impact on housing affordability and demand. In a stable market, strong employment and rising incomes typically support housing affordability by enabling homeownership and rental stability. However, when house prices rise significantly faster than incomes, as has been the case in Launceston,

[5] See Appendix A for more detailed descriptions of household types.

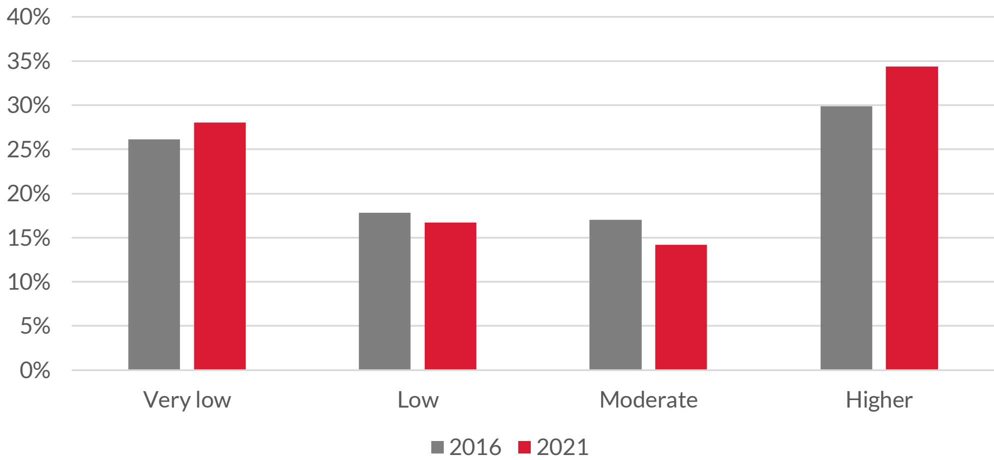
stable employment alone is not enough to prevent affordability challenges. High housing costs can still push lower and moderate-income households into housing stress, increase demand for rental and affordable housing, and limit homeownership opportunities. Understanding these trends helps ensure that housing policy aligns with the economic realities of Launceston's residents.

Recent trends show a mixed picture for Launceston. Unemployment has declined from its peak in 2020-21, however Launceston's unemployment rate is still one of the highest in the region. Labour force participation has remained steady or slightly increased. The combination of declining unemployment and rising participation indicates a strengthening job market[6].

Household income distribution in Launceston has shifted, with growth in both very low-income and higher-income households, while moderate-income households have declined[7] (Figure 8). This suggests a widening economic divide, where some residents are benefiting from economic opportunities while others are increasingly vulnerable to housing stress.

The increase in very low-income households reinforces the need for affordable and social housing, while the growth in higher-income households may drive demand for well-located, high-amenity housing. The declining share of moderate-income households highlights the need for more attainable housing options, such as townhouses and smaller dwellings, to support first-home buyers and key workers.

Figure 8 Household income brackets, Launceston



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing

Homelessness and disadvantage

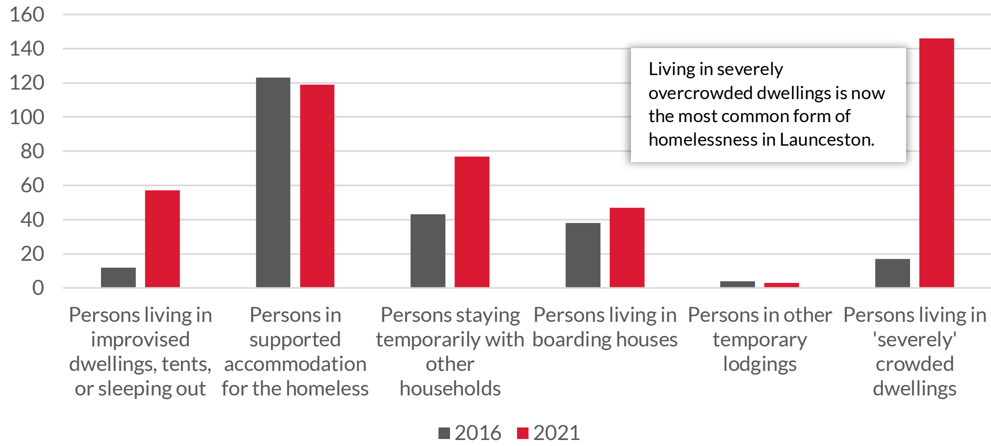
Launceston experiences significant disparities in socioeconomic status and housing stability – threatening public health, wellbeing, and social cohesion. While many Launcestonians enjoy comfortable standards of living and very secure housing, there are a growing number in our community that do not.

One of the most pressing ways Launceston is feeling the impacts of the broader housing crisis is through the rising number of people experiencing homelessness[8]. Between 2016 and 2021, homelessness in the city increased by 89.5%. As shown in Figure 9 below, the most significant rise was among those living in severely crowded dwellings, alongside increases in those staying in improvised dwellings or temporarily with other households. At the same time, the number of people in supported accommodation has

[6] See in Appendix B
[7] Household income brackets are defined based on the median household income for Tasmania in the respective year as per the following: Very low (50% of median), Low (80%), Moderate (120%), Higher (120%+).
[8] The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines homelessness as '… when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement is in a dwelling that is inadequate, has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations'.

declined, suggesting that housing support services are falling behind demand, leaving more people without stable housing options. Without targeted intervention, this gap is expected to widen.

Figure 9 Homelessness, Launceston



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing

The rising cost of housing and living expenses in Launceston has significantly contributed to increasing homelessness and disadvantage. Social Action Research Centre and Anglicare TAS's "More Houses Needed" Report[9] highlights that the private rental market has not been supplying sufficient affordable rentals, with vacancy rates in Launceston approaching 1% in 2024 remaining below the sustainable target of 3%. Persistent rental shortages have led to escalating rents, outpacing wage growth and income support payments, making housing unaffordable for many low-income households – in turn, pushing more people into housing vulnerability.

Tasmania's median rent index grew by 26%, while the wage price index increased by only 12.6% between 2020 and 2024[10]. This disparity makes it nearly impossible for people on JobSeeker or Youth Allowance to find affordable housing, while even full-time key workers struggle to secure rentals. As a result, more households are experiencing rental stress, leading to couch surfing, emergency accommodation, or rough sleeping.

The State's social housing sector has failed to keep pace with demand. As of 2024, the shortfall in social housing in Tasmania has grown to nearly 5,000 dwellings, with projections indicating a gap of 7,000 by 2032[11]. With average wait times for priority applicants increasing, many households remain in a cycle of housing insecurity. The lack of available social housing particularly affects people escaping domestic and family violence, young people leaving care, and older residents on fixed incomes.

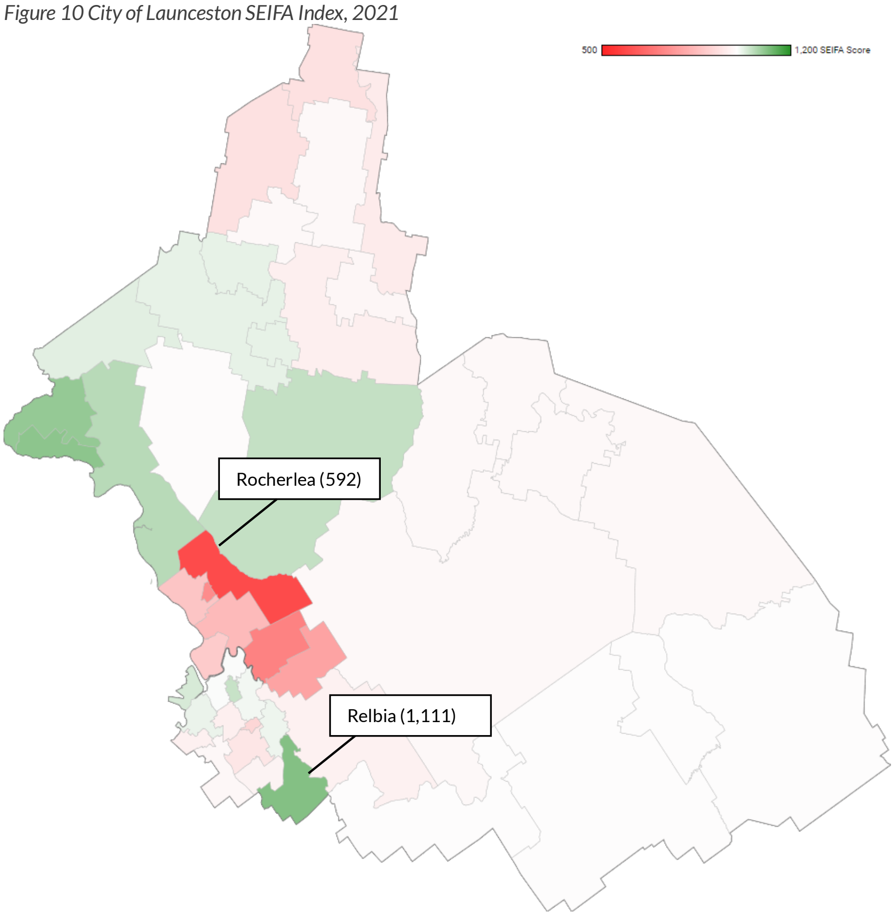
The City of Launceston has taken steps to respond, with its *Homelessness Statement of Commitment*[12] outlining key principles such as community engagement, service coordination, and prevention. The Homelessness Advisory Committee and involvement in the Northern Community Action Group highlight efforts to find collaborative solutions.

Disadvantage is not evenly distributed across the city. SEIFA[13] rankings place Launceston among the more disadvantaged LGAs nationally, though economic conditions vary significantly across suburbs.

[9] https://www.anglicare-tas.org.au/research/sarc-more-houses-needed-report-october-2024/
[10] https://tutas.org.au/publications/tasmanian-rents/
[11] https://www.homestasmania.com.au/about-us/Publications/housing-dashboard
[12] https://www.launceston.tas.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/community/homelessness-support/col_homelessness-statement-of-commitment.pdf
[13] Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the ABS that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage and captures indicators such as economic resources, education and occupation, as well as relative socio-economic advantage/disadvantage.

Areas like Rocherlea (SEIFA 592) experience severe disadvantage, while others, such as Relbia (SEIFA 1,111), rank among the most advantaged (see Figure 10).

Figure 10 City of Launceston SEIFA Index, 2021



Key takeaways

Growing population, shrinking household size –

Launceston's population is increasing, with notable growth in young workers and retirees. Household sizes are shrinking, leading to higher demand for diverse housing types, particularly smaller, lower-maintenance homes.

Increasing mismatch in housing –

While smaller households are growing, detached houses dominate the housing stock (80% of dwellings), creating a mismatch between available housing and evolving needs. Limited options for downsizing and medium-density housing constrain choices for many residents.

Improving labour market but growing income disparities –

While unemployment has declined and workforce participation remains stable, income growth has been uneven. The rise in both very low-income and high-income households suggests increasing economic polarisation, reinforcing the need for a housing plan that addresses affordability across all income levels.

Disparities between advantaged and disadvantaged –

Socioeconomic disparities are evident, with some areas experiencing significant disadvantage. SEIFA rankings highlight stark contrasts between different suburbs, affecting access to secure and affordable housing.

Affordability challenges and rising homelessness –

Housing costs have outpaced income growth, making rentals unaffordable for low-income earners and essential workers. Homelessness has surged by nearly 90% since 2016, with increasing demand for crisis housing and social support services.

The Launceston housing market

Housing and affordability

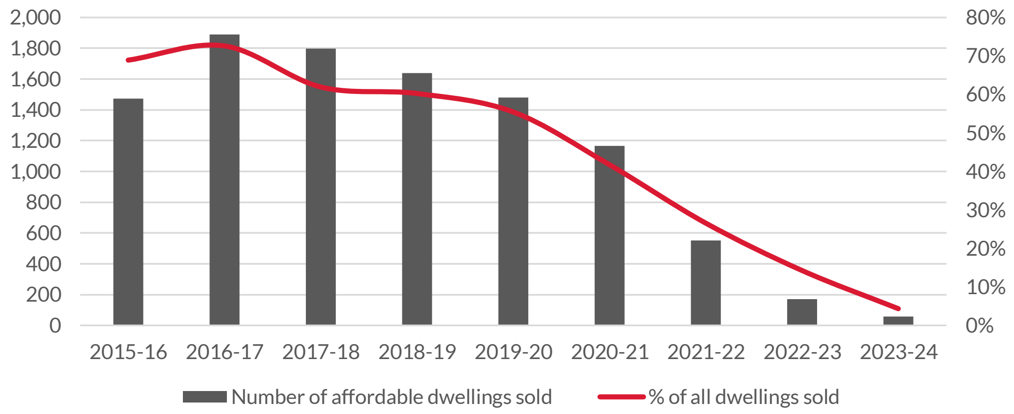
Launceston's housing market has undergone significant change in recent years, with rising prices and tightening supply making it increasingly difficult for many residents to buy or rent a home. House sales have declined sharply, from a peak of 2,276 in 2017-18 to just 1,080 in 2023-24, while the median price has surged from $310,000 to $533,300 over the same period. Although prices have stabilised since 2021-22, the affordability gap remains a key challenge.

Rental prices have followed a similar upward trend. House rental prices increased by 70.9% over the past decade, while unit rents rose by 86%, placing additional pressure on affordability. Although the number of rental listings grew significantly between 2013-14 and 2023-24, vacancy rates remain extremely low, sitting at 1% in August 2024. This suggests that while more rental properties have entered the market, demand continues to outpace supply, particularly for lower-cost housing options. The number of affordable rentals has also declined, with affordable rentals making up 63% of the market in 2015-16, but just 25% in 2023-24[14].

The affordability crisis is most evident in the declining number of affordable dwellings available for purchase. In 2015-16, 69% of all dwellings sold were considered affordable, but by 2023-24, this had dropped to just 4% as shown in Figure 11. With fewer affordable homes and higher barriers to homeownership, Launceston faces increasing housing stress, reinforcing the urgent need to support an increase in the supply of housing. Addressing these issues will be critical to ensuring the city remains accessible to a broad range of residents, from first-home buyers to low-income households.

Launceston experiences a high proportion of renters when compared to regional Tasmania, and a slightly higher rate of people renting social housing[15]. While renting is generally anticipated to be more common in urban centres like Launceston with young, mobile populations than in regional areas, the low rate of social housing delivery and dramatic reduction in housing purchase affordability risks the long-term housing security of vulnerable demographics in Launceston.

Figure 11 Housing sales - affordable dwellings sold, Launceston[16]



Source: REMPLAN Housing

[14] See Appendix D
[15] See Appendix A
[16] Housing affordability refers to the relationship between housing costs (prices, mortgage payments, or rents) and household incomes, with housing considered affordable if it requires less than 30% of household income. This analysis uses REMPLAN housing affordability data, incorporating sales and rental transactions over the past nine years. Affordability is assessed using regional household income medians from the ABS Census (2016, 2021), adjusted annually with the Wage Price Index (WPI). As housing costs increase relative to median income, the proportion of affordable dwellings decreases.

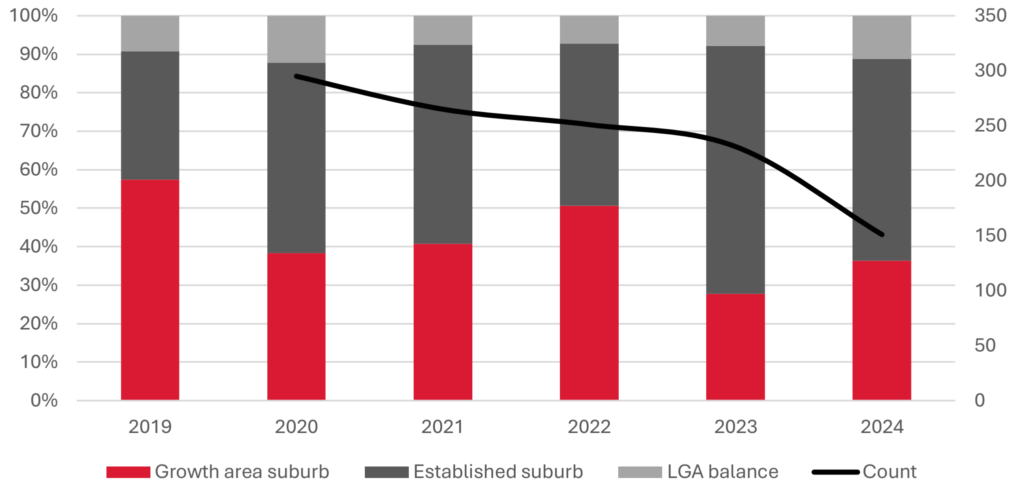
Housing supply and development trends

Recent years have seen a slowdown in housing development across Australia, with Tasmania following a similar trend. Rising construction costs, supply chain disruptions, and higher interest rates have all contributed to declining approvals and a more cautious development environment. This has been evident in Launceston as well as neighbouring municipalities which have all experienced similar annual changes in new dwelling approvals since 2020-21[17].

Official statistics indicate that there are, on average, 275 new dwelling approvals each year across Launceston. This includes both public and private sector approvals for separate (detached) houses and attached dwellings, such as apartments and townhouses. The public sector has accounted for an average of 8% over the 5 years to 2023-24[18].

As overall approvals have been declining, the distribution of approvals across the city has also shifted in recent years. Detailed approvals data from the City indicate a declining share occurring in the growth area suburbs such as Kings Meadows, Prospect, St Leonards, and Youngtown (Figure 12). Development in growth area suburbs has historically accommodated a notable proportion of Launceston's growth, however the decline (both in number and share) is raising concerns about the pipeline of development-ready land that is required to deliver the amount of housing that Launceston needs.

Figure 12 Location of new dwelling approvals



Source: City of Launceston
Note: Growth area, Established area, and Balance are defined by suburb as listed in Appendix C. Counts for 2019 are only available for part of the year, so have been excluded from the chart.

The image in Figure 13 illustrates concentrations of recent development, predominantly in areas identified through the 2009 Residential Strategy, most of which are now fully developed. Kings Meadows, Prospect, St Leonards, and Youngtown have historically played a critical role in accommodating Launceston's housing growth, benefiting from structured land release and predictable delivery timelines. These areas have provided certainty in supply, ensuring a steady flow of new housing when demand exists—as it does in Launceston today. However, as these areas near full occupation, the city is facing a shortfall in new, development-ready land, highlighting the urgency of identifying and facilitating the next generation of new neighbourhoods. Without strategic planning for future subdivisions and infill opportunities, Launceston risks an undersupply of housing, further exacerbating affordability pressures and limiting choice for residents.

[17] See Appendix E
[18] See Appendix E

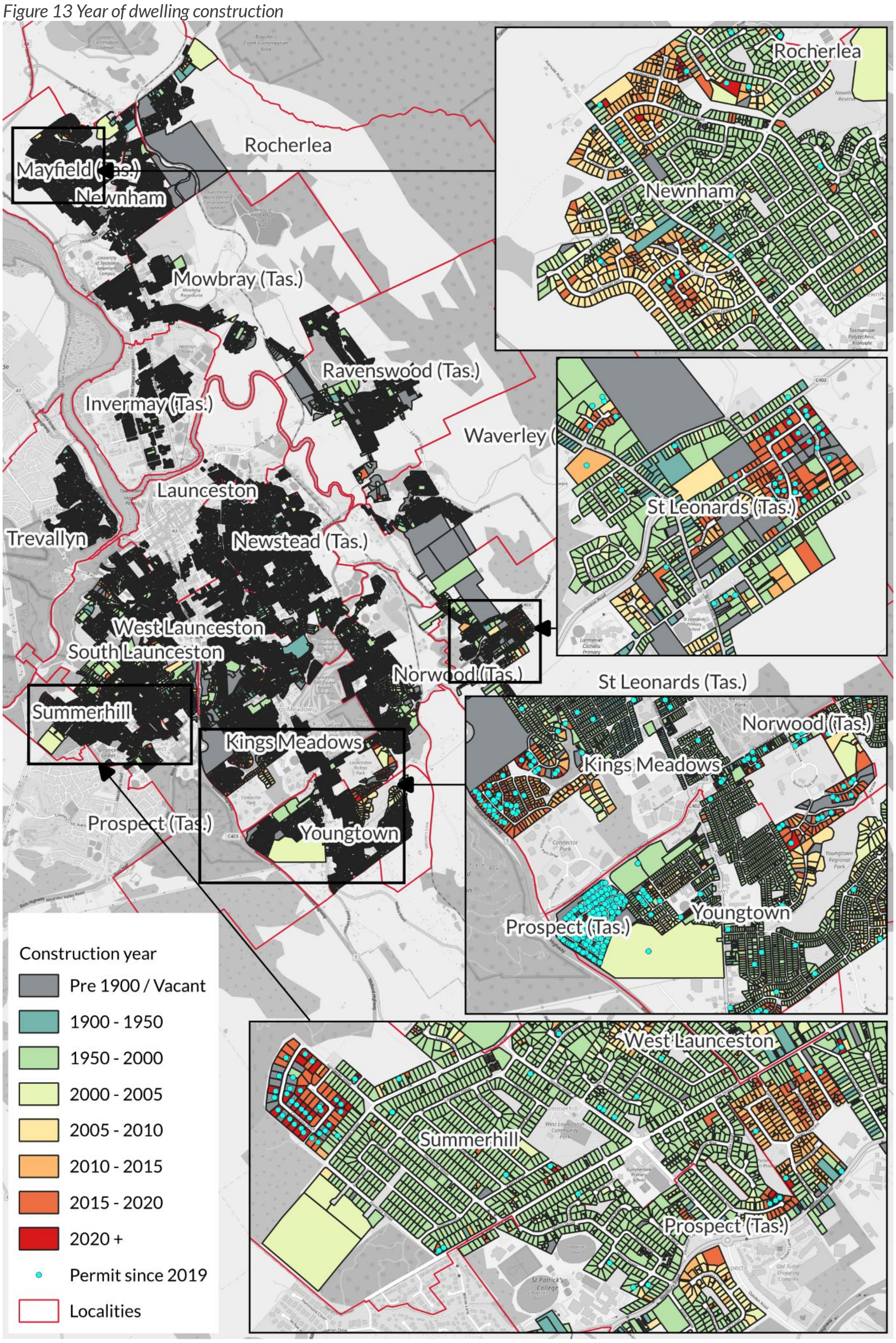
Both greenfield and infill development play critical roles in maintaining housing supply, but they offer different levels of certainty. Large-scale subdivisions in new neighbourhoods provide a more predictable pipeline of new housing, as land is structured for staged development with infrastructure planning aligned. In contrast, infill housing—while essential for housing diversity and urban renewal—tends to be more fragmented and opportunistic, relying on individual landowners, land consolidations and smaller-scale projects.

A 2019 land supply assessment[19] included analysis of the number of multi-unit dwellings approved on 'non-vacant' land over an 18-year period. Findings indicated that an average of 20 dwellings a year were delivered through this type of development. While this level of redevelopment makes an important contribution to new supply through better utilisation of existing land, it is a small share of total dwellings required to support Launceston's housing needs.

Ensuring a reliable pipeline of development-ready land is essential for maintaining a stable and responsive housing market that meets Launceston's future needs. While greenfield development will continue to play a key role in housing supply, targeted initiatives are needed to increase the share of infill and redevelopment in well-located areas. This includes unlocking underutilised land, supporting medium-density development, and addressing infrastructure and planning barriers that may be limiting infill opportunities. A balanced approach that delivers both new neighbourhoods and a greater share of urban renewal with diverse housing options will help Launceston meet housing demand while promoting a more sustainable and connected city.

[19] Renaissance Planning 2019, Residential Land Demand: Supply Assessment

Figure 13 Year of dwelling construction



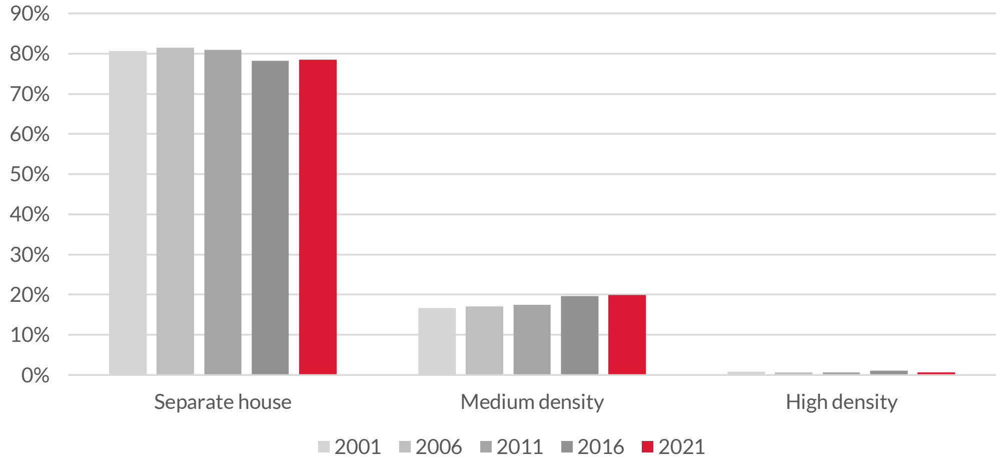
Source: Northern Tasmanian Residential Supply and Demand Study (Growth Monitor and Evaluation Framework)

Detached houses have traditionally dominated the supply of housing in Launceston, accounting for over 80% of all dwellings in Launceston. But shifts in household composition, market trends, and affordability constraints suggest increasing demand for a mix of housing types, including townhouses, villa units, and apartments. Across Launceston there is evidence that this shift is occurring, with villa units and townhouses consistently growing in number and as a share of total housing (representing most of the 'medium density' category in Figure 14).

The *missing middle*—townhouses, villa units, and low-rise apartments—plays a vital role in diversifying Launceston's housing stock. These homes bridge the gap between detached houses and high-density developments, offering more affordable, lower-maintenance options while maintaining a sense of space and community. They are well-suited to downsizers, young workers, and smaller households who seek a balance between character and convenience.

These housing types are not confined to central areas but are emerging across Launceston, both in established neighbourhoods and new growth areas, particularly villa units[20]. Thoughtful planning and design can ensure they integrate well with existing streetscapes while enhancing walkability and local vibrancy. Contemporary neighbourhood planning for new suburbs is also incorporating much more diverse forms of housing than traditionally supported in greenfield subdivisions. Supporting well-located, medium-density housing will help Launceston accommodate growth while maintaining its unique neighbourhood character.

Figure 14 Dwelling structure, Launceston



Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing

Land Supply

The availability of development-ready land plays a critical role in shaping housing outcomes. A well-planned and consistent land supply ensures that housing can be delivered in line with demand, helping to stabilise prices and support population growth. Conversely, when land supply is constrained—whether through zoning, infrastructure limitations, or slow release—housing delivery slows, affordability worsens, and pressure increases on the existing housing stock. Ensuring Launceston has a pipeline of land that is genuinely ready for development is essential for supporting a well-functioning housing market.

A key consideration is the timing of land release and development feasibility. While Launceston has large parcels of land zoned for future growth, not all of it is expected to come online within the timeframe of this plan. For example, *The Green* represents a significant landholding with long-term development potential, but its substantial infrastructure constraints, including construction of a new vehicle bridge over a rail line, has seen long delays in the delivery of further housing opportunities for a number of years.

[20] See Appendix C

For this reason, it is crucial that land supply assessments focus on deliverable supply—land that is realistically able to be developed within the plan period—rather than total theoretical capacity. This ensures a more accurate understanding of how much housing can actually be delivered to meet demand.

A number of land supply assessments have been undertaken for Launceston over the years. The most recent of these include the *Launceston Residential Land Review*[21] and the *Northern Tasmania Residential Demand and Supply Study*[22] (RDSS). While the scope and approaches of each study differed, both assessments concluded there was an inadequate amount of zoned land to meet projected demand in Launceston over the short to medium term. Since the preparation of both studies, dwelling construction has continued to consume available land, yet no substantial new areas of land have been formally released to replenish the supply pipeline. As a result, land availability has tightened, reinforcing the need for a clear plan to manage future housing delivery.

The land supply assessment here has utilised the work completed as part of RDSS which included estimated dwelling yields for all residentially zoned land in the municipality. To provide an updated and more accurate picture of available supply in 2025, this plan refines the previous RDSS estimates by removing heavily constrained land, and excluding sites where dwellings have been constructed since the original assessment was undertaken.

The results of the updated assessment are outlined in Table 1[23]. Most of the supply sits with privately owned land, with Homes Tasmania also holding a considerable portion. However, public land is largely outside the control of the market, meaning its delivery depends on government decisions and funding. Advocating and supporting delivery of high quality public housing is a key part of the housing picture for Launceston.

The most reliable source of short- to medium-term housing supply is vacant land or land with an approved plan, which could deliver around 1,590 dwellings. Beyond this, underutilised lots could contribute significantly to future supply, but their timing and likelihood of development remain uncertain. A key example is the St Leonards and Waverley area, where around 380 potential dwellings fall into this 'underutilised' category. Finalising the Neighbourhood Plan for these areas would increase certainty, ensuring these homes can be delivered sooner.

While Launceston has land zoned for housing, much of it is tied up due to infrastructure constraints, fragmented ownership, or long-term development horizons.

To keep up with demand, the focus must be on unlocking development-ready land while also planning ahead to make more land available over time. A strong housing plan must prioritise supply in the right places, remove development barriers, and maintain a steady pipeline of new housing—not just on paper, but when and where it's actually needed.

Table 1 Dwelling yield estimates, residential land categories

Land category	Dwelling yield (Privately owned land)	Dwelling yield (Public land - Homes Tasmania)
Retail parcel	267	19
Approved plan parcel	730	-
Wholesale parcel	594	137
Vacant/Plan Subtotal	*1,591*	*156*
Underutilised parcel	1,567	-
TOTAL	**3,158**	**156**

[21] Renaissance Planning, 2023 (supply assessment completed March 2023)
[22] REMPLAN, 2024 (supply assessment completed August 2023) Northern Tasmania Residential Demand and Supply Study
[23] See Appendix F for summary of process.

Key takeaways

Housing affordability has sharply declined –

Median house prices have nearly doubled to $533,300, while affordable home sales dropped from 69% in 2015-16 to just 4% in 2023-24. Rental affordability has also worsened, with low-cost rental options shrinking from 63% to 25% over the past decade.

Rental market pressures continue to grow –

Rental costs have surged, with vacancy rates at just 1% as of 2024. The rising cost of living, a shortage of affordable rentals and a shortage of supply in the private market are placing significant strain on low-income households and essential workers, with over 800 households on social housing waitlists.

Diverse housing options are needed –

While detached houses dominate Launceston's housing stock, demand is increasing for townhouses, villas, and low-rise apartments. Supporting well-located, medium-density housing will help address affordability while maintaining neighbourhood character.

Housing supply is falling behind demand –

While Launceston has zoned residential land, only 1,590 dwellings are realistically developable in the short to medium term. Strategic planning and infrastructure investment are needed to unlock new supply, bolster the development pipeline, and ensure housing is actually delivered where and when it is needed.

Infill and redevelopment opportunities must be strengthened –

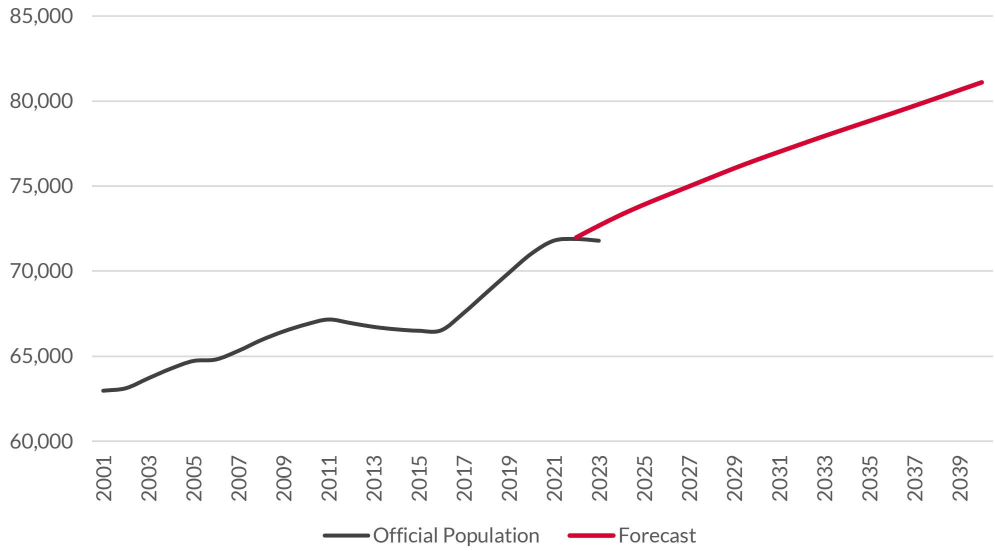
Infill housing is underperforming. Strategic planning and incentives are needed to boost urban renewal and housing diversity in well-located areas.

WHERE WE ARE HEADING

How we will grow

Like many regions in Tasmania, Launceston's population growth has been variable, with periods of expansion, stability, and occasional decline. However, the long-term trend has been positive, and projections indicate continued population growth over the coming decades. The historic and forecast population trajectory is illustrated in Figure 15, reflecting expectations of ongoing growth[24].

Figure 15 Official resident population and forecast population



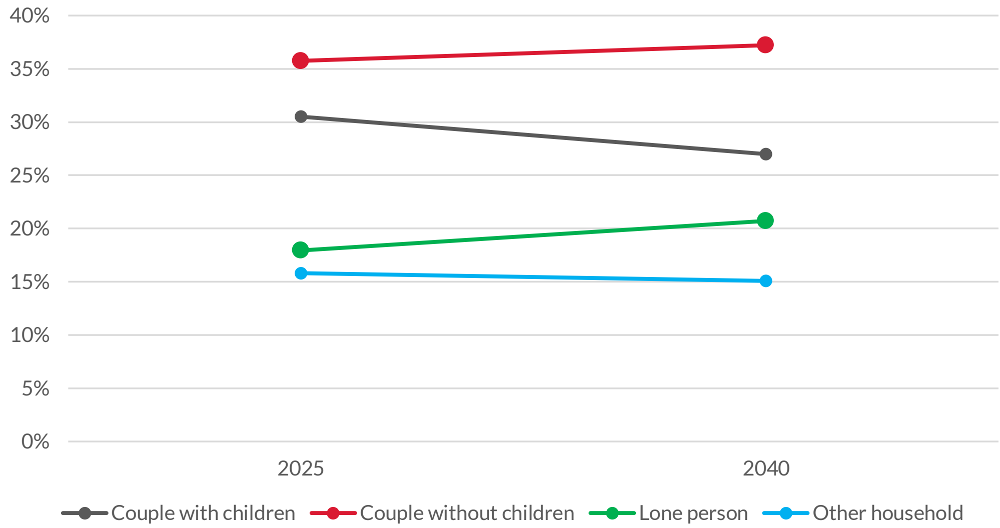
Sources: ABS Regional Population; REMPLAN

As the population grows, the way people live is also changing. Over the next 15 years, smaller households (1-2 people) will grow at the fastest rate, making up nearly 60% of all households. Meanwhile, larger households—though increasing in number—will represent a smaller share of the population (Figure 16). This shift means that future housing supply must not only meet the overall demand for dwellings but also align with the changing composition of households. This will require a substantial shift in the type of housing that has historically been provided[25].

Different household types have distinct housing needs. Smaller households, including couples without children and lone-person households, often seek lower-maintenance housing such as townhouses, apartments, and compact dwellings close to services and amenities. Single income households, such as single parents, may often seek more affordable, smaller, lower maintenance options such as townhouses. Ensuring that Launceston's future housing mix in both new neighbourhoods and existing neighbourhoods supports these evolving needs will be critical in creating a sustainable, inclusive, and well-functioning housing market.

[24] Population forecasts for sub areas of Launceston are provided in Appendix G.
[25] Household forecasts for sub areas of Launceston are provided in Appendix G.

Figure 16 Share of household, Launceston



Source: REMPLAN Forecast
Note: "Other household" includes: single parent households, group households, and multi-family households

How much housing we need

Quantity of housing

The population forecast in Figure 17 represents a best estimate, or central case, for the potential population of the City over the coming years. Notably, the forecasts do not incorporate the peaks and troughs that exist in the real historic population but aim to smooth through these volatile periods. As a result, the forecast population annual growth rate is broadly consistent with the long term annual average growth rate of the LGA.

Dwelling forecasts have been prepared based on population forecasts, translating expected population growth into estimated housing demand (Figure 17). The central forecast reflects the most likely scenario, aligning with the long-term average growth rate of Launceston, while the forecast range (dark and light grey bands) accounts for uncertainty in future trends. These bands represent different potential growth trajectories, recognising that population changes do not always follow a linear path[26].

Given Launceston's history of fluctuating growth rates, it is critical to plan for the upper range of housing needs to ensure the city remains responsive to periods of accelerated growth. If planning is based solely on the central estimate, there is a risk of housing undersupply when demand surges, leading to affordability challenges and pressure on existing housing stock. Using the forecast range as a guide allows for a more flexible and resilient approach to land use planning, ensuring that enough housing is available across different market conditions.

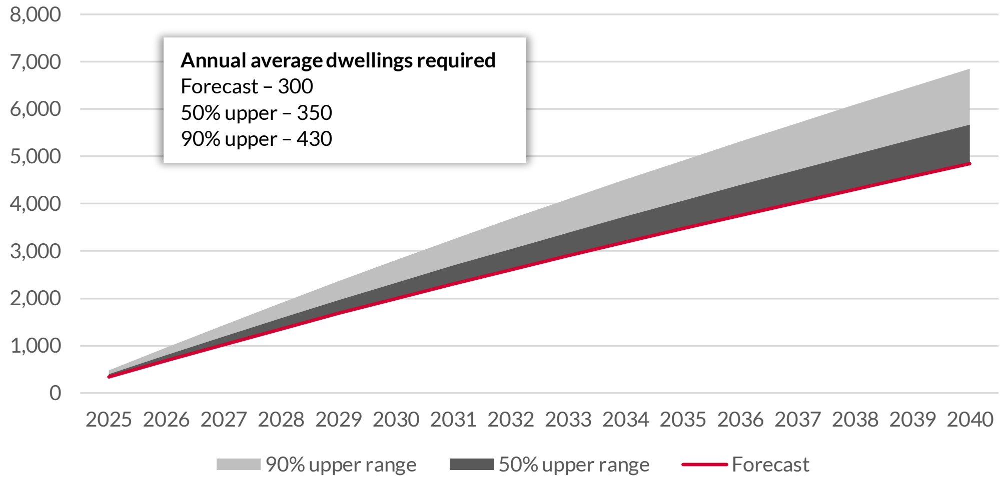
By proactively planning for higher-end demand scenarios, Launceston can reduce the risk of housing shortages and support sustainable urban growth. This means strategic zoning, infrastructure coordination, and ongoing land supply monitoring to ensure that new housing is delivered in a timely manner. Regular review of housing development trends and market conditions will also allow for adjustments to planning frameworks to keep pace with real-world changes.

Over the period to 2040, the City will need to deliver 300 new dwellings per year on average to achieve the required demand under the central forecast and 350 a year to achieve the 50% upper range. To achieve these upper-level targets, housing development in Launceston will need to substantially increase

[26] Dwelling forecast ranges provided in Appendix H.

from historic averages of around 275 dwellings and move closer to consistently delivering recent maximums of around 400 new dwellings each year.

Figure 17 Dwelling forecast upper ranges



Source: REMPLAN Forecast

Location of housing

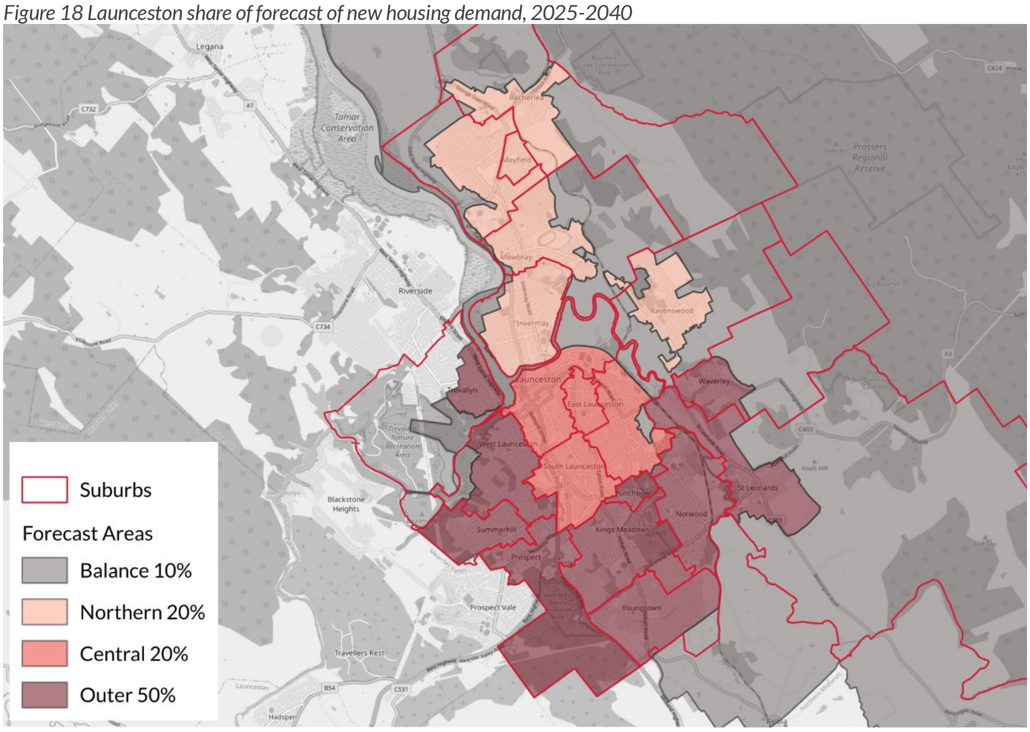
Different areas of Launceston are expected to accommodate varying levels of dwelling growth over the next 15 years. Forecasts prepared as part of the RDSS project indicate that around half of new housing demand between 2025 and 2040 will be concentrated in outer suburbs to the east, south, and west of the city as shown in Figure 18 below. These areas are where much of Launceston's new neighbourhood planning such as St Leonards and Waverley is currently being prepared, requiring coordinated planning and infrastructure delivery to support delivery of the number of houses required.

The central area and northern suburbs are anticipated to each absorb around 20% of total dwelling demand. Given the lack of vacant land in the central area, new dwellings will primarily be delivered through redevelopment of well-located infill sites as both medium and higher density developments, leveraging its existing services and connectivity. The northern suburbs will likely see a mix of urban renewal as well as medium and standard density development, particularly where strategic planning can unlock well-located underutilised land.

It is noted that investigation of medium and high-density development opportunities around the Launceston CBD and activity centres in Mowbray and Kings Meadows will help to diverse these denser typologies across the northern, central and outer areas.

Meanwhile, rural areas and smaller townships are projected to capture around 10% of total housing demand.

Figure 18 Launceston share of forecast of new housing demand, 2025-2040



Source: REMPLAN Forecast

Type of housing

Launceston's housing market is shaped by two key trends:

- *Predominance of detached housing* – More than 80% of dwellings in Launceston are standalone houses (although this varies within neighbourhoods). This trend has continued in new developments, reinforcing an over-reliance on detached housing and limiting diversity and restricts housing choice for smaller or lower income households.
- *Shrinking household size* – Over the last few decades, the average number of people per household has declined, driving up total housing demand and creating more households suited to smaller housing types such as townhouses and apartments.

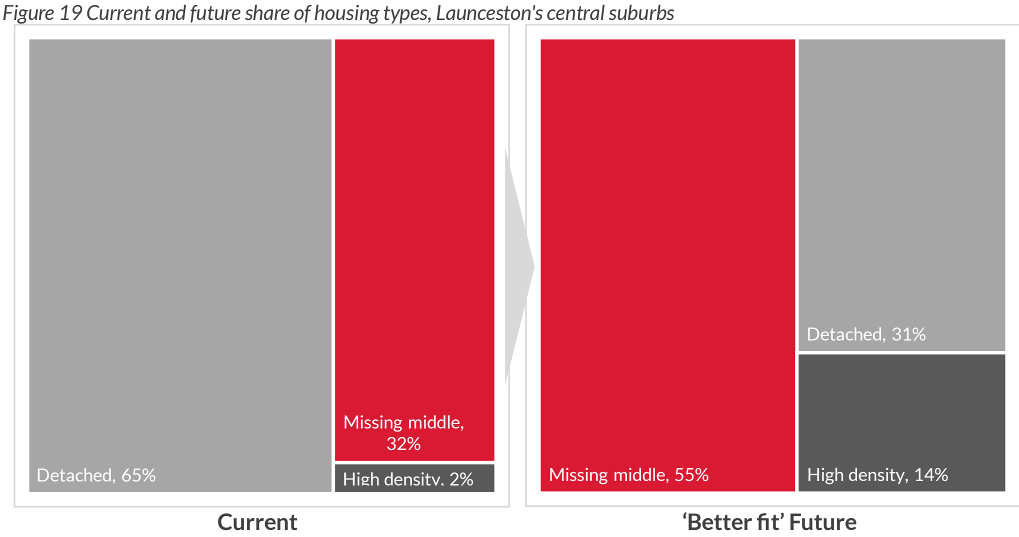
As a result, a significant portion of the population is inappropriately housed, meaning many households are forced into housing that doesn't align with their needs—whether due to size, affordability, or location. Increasing the diversity of Launceston's housing stock will be essential to ensuring that smaller households, downsizers, and younger residents have access to well-located and appropriately sized homes.

Figure 19 highlights the current housing mix in Launceston's central suburbs and a possible future scenario for 2040 that better aligns with changing household structures. The most notable shift is the increase in "missing middle" housing, such as townhouses and low-rise apartments. Across the city, significant change is needed, particularly in the outer suburbs, where the share of missing middle housing would need to increase from around 15-20% today to over 65% in the future. In central areas, both medium- and higher-density housing should play a greater role in accommodating population growth[27]. These figures are not targets but provide useful context to assist with developing dwelling mix targets for respective areas.

[27] Comparative tables for each of the four forecast areas is available in Appendix H.

This transition will not happen overnight. In most areas, the share of missing middle housing will never reach the shares indicated. Detached housing will continue to be the dominant form in the short term, particularly in newer subdivisions. However, through strategic planning for new growth areas and policies that support well-designed infill development, Launceston can gradually rebalance its housing stock, creating a city that better meets the needs of future households while maintaining its liveability and character.

Figure 19 Current and future share of housing types, Launceston's central suburbs



How we are planning for housing

To ensure Launceston meets its future housing needs, a proactive and strategic approach is required to deliver a steady and diverse supply of new homes. This approach involves:

- Maintaining an adequate pipeline of development-ready land.
- Supporting infill and renewal in existing neighbourhoods, and coordinated delivery of new neighbourhoods across multiple locations.
- Setting targets for delivery of housing.

Securing a pipeline of development ready land

As outlined in the section on population growth and housing demand projections, a prudent planning approach is to ensure that the upper range of forecast demand can be met to avoid risks of undersupply. Unlike many other Australian jurisdictions, Tasmania does not have mandated minimum residential land supply requirements. In most states, a 15-year supply of zoned land is typically required to provide adequate residential land for growth while allowing time for planning, zoning, and infrastructure development.

To meet the higher range of projected demand, the City should aim to maintain a rolling supply of developable land capable of delivering between 4,500 and 6,450 dwellings over the next 15 years as shown in Table 2 below. This pipeline must include land in various stages of readiness—from development-ready retail lots to recently zoned but unserviced land—ensuring that supply remains steady and responsive to market conditions.

Launceston has historically delivered an average of 275 new dwellings per year, but projections indicate that 300–450 dwellings per year would be required to stay within the upper ranges of demand. This means substantially increasing housing delivery by at least 10% over historical averages.

While some years have seen delivery exceed these targets (notably during periods of high market demand), maintaining a steady pipeline is critical for long-term housing affordability, market stability, and community well-being. This will be achieved through a structured, ongoing program of neighbourhood planning, ensuring a diversity of dwelling opportunities across both new and existing neighbourhoods.

Table 2 Target land supply range

Scenario	Average annual demand	15 years supply
Forecast	300	4500
50% upper	350	5250
90% upper	430	6450

A key challenge in planning for housing is distinguishing between land that is zoned for residential use and land that is realistically developable. While Launceston has a significant amount of land zoned for housing, various constraints—such as environmental limitations, fragmented ownership, and infrastructure challenges—can affect whether and when new homes can be delivered. The land supply assessment undertaken as part of the RDSS project, and utilised in this plan, applies a robust methodology, factoring in mapped environmental constraints, and infrastructure limitations for larger sites. However, it does not include detailed site feasibility assessments, meaning that some site-specific constraints may not have been fully captured. This highlights the importance of ongoing monitoring and refinement to ensure land supply remains responsive to housing needs.

Key issues relating to current land supply are outlined in Table 3 below along with the response as to how the City plans to address the issue.

Table 3 Supply issues and response

Issue	Response
Zoned but Constrained Land: Some areas remain undeveloped due to infrastructure limitations, fragmented ownership, or market conditions that make large-scale development challenging.	Prioritising neighbourhood planning to unlock development opportunities, aligning infrastructure investment with growth areas, and working with stakeholders to resolve fragmented ownership and market barriers.
Development-Ready Land: Currently, Launceston has capacity for approximately 1,590 dwellings on vacant or planned sites, but this is well below the 15-year rolling target of providing for 4,500–6,450 dwellings.	Expanding the pipeline of development-ready land through structured zoning reviews, proactive land release strategies, and targeted infrastructure investment. This includes ongoing monitoring of land supply and ensuring planning processes support a steady rollout of new housing aligned with demand.
Infill & Redevelopment Potential: While urban renewal is a priority, infill development through redevelopment of underutilised sites has delivered significantly lower numbers of dwellings than its potential.	Strengthening policies and incentives to facilitate well-located, medium and higher-density housing, particularly in activity centres and established suburbs. This includes reviewing planning controls and actively promoting redevelopment opportunities to support more diverse housing choices across Launceston.

No single area can accommodate all of Launceston's future housing needs. To meet demand efficiently, the city must maintain multiple active growth areas, including new neighbourhoods, priority consolidation precincts, and key redevelopment sites. A diverse approach to housing delivery will:

- Balance supply across different locations, as no single area has capacity to support all of the City's growth.
- Improve housing choice, with a mix of locations, housing types, and price points across the city.
- Enhance market competition, reducing land banking and promoting affordability.
- Strengthen resilience, so delays or constraints in one area do not disrupt the overall housing delivery pipeline.

Launceston is actively advancing neighbourhood plans for three key growth areas—St Leonards and Waverley, South Prospect, and Alanvale—as illustrated in Figure 20. These areas are expected to play a major role in housing delivery over the plan period (within the next 15 years), with an additional housing delivery pipeline extending beyond (15-30 years) for some of the identified areas below.

Figure 20 Areas with neighbourhood planning under development

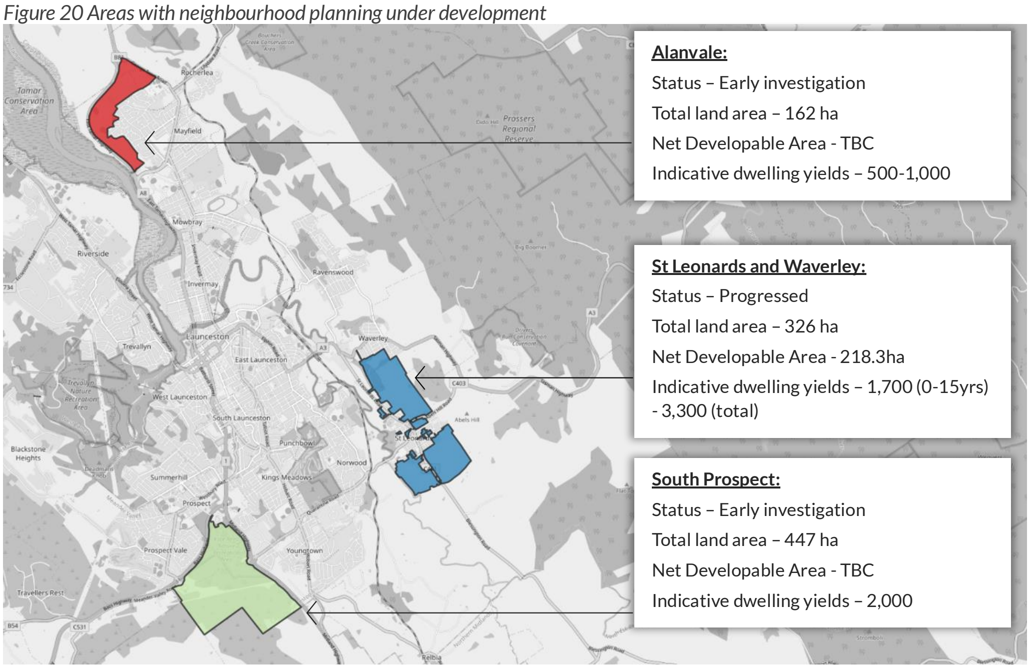
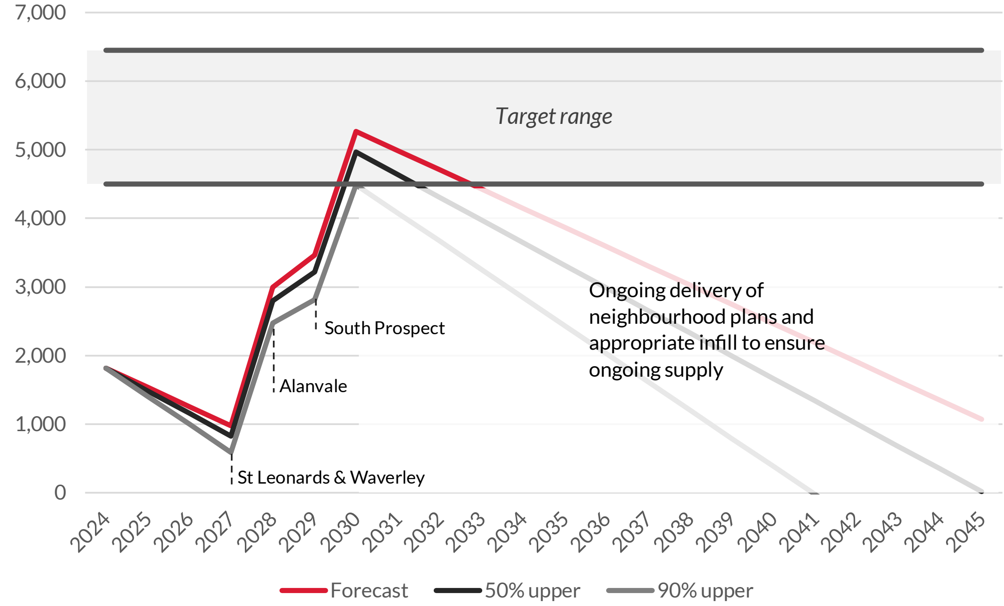


Figure 21 below demonstrates the impact of these neighbourhoods on future housing supply relative to projected demand. The chart shows that current supply in 2025 is well below the target range, consisting primarily of vacant land (both public and private). Additional supply is incorporated as neighbourhood plans progress through planning scheme amendments, along with an ongoing allowance for infill redevelopment of underutilised sites (estimated to be delivered at an approximate rate of 20 dwellings per year based on historical trends).

Notably, the forecast supply only reaches the target range by 2030, coinciding with the planned delivery of South Prospect. Without additional land being brought forward, supply will begin to taper off again. To prevent future shortfalls, the City must continue investigate neighbourhood plans within infill areas such as Mowbray, Kings Meadows and also neighbourhood planning additional growth area opportunities in the Northern Suburbs and Lilydale.

A key emphasis of this plan is ensuring that both new and existing neighbourhoods deliver a more diverse housing mix. This means moving beyond traditional greenfield developments dominated by detached housing and incorporating a wider variety of housing types—including townhouses, low-rise apartments, and other "missing middle" options—in appropriate locations across the city.

Figure 21 Land supply versus dwelling demand scenarios



Outside of these key growth areas, additional development ready sites may be identified to provide additional housing provision within Launceston. However, not all sites are appropriate, align with the intent or achievable within the time horizon for this Plan. When considering the suitability of proponent led rezoning requests, a range of developable land considerations need to be factored in when considering the delivery of realistically developable land. This highlights the importance of actively facilitating land supply—not just zoning for housing, but ensuring the necessary infrastructure, approvals, and market incentives are in place to enable development. Figure 22 identifies the key land considerations that Council must assess when determining suitable sites outside of key growth areas.

Figure 22 Example criteria for developable land

Developable land considerations

1. Infrastructure capacity
   - Existing utility networks: Proximity to water, sewage, and electricity grids reduces development costs.
   - Expansion potential: Capacity for infrastructure upgrades without requiring prohibitive investment.
   - Cost-effectiveness: Service delivery costs ≤30% of project budget.

2. Accessibility and proximity
   - Ensuring new developments are well-located for accessing goods, jobs and services is an important consideration as it improves the overall liveability of new housing and improves the quality of life for new residents. This is a particularly important consideration for apartments and townhouses which are typically preferred by residents either seeking an urban lifestyle facilitated by active and public transport, or less mobile residents who benefit more from ready access to services.
   - One measure of walkability is a WalkScore[28], which considers a number of factors in calculating a location or suburb's overall walkability – providing an overall rank between 0 and 100. Scores between 90 and 100 indicate the area is a 'walkers paradise', while scores between 0-19 indicate the area is car dependent.
   - As of February 2025, the suburbs with the highest walkability in Launceston are:
     - Launceston (84)
     - East Launceston (73)
     - Invermay (64)

[28] https://www.walkscore.com/AU-TAS/Launceston

3. Market dynamics
- Consider if surrounding housing market has been increasing in value and if sales numbers have been healthy. Ideal spots for development would have demonstrated demand without an oversupply of available houses. While a consideration, market preference should not compromise strategic planning and environmental constraints. It is, however, important to understand the commercial viability of new developments as it will ensure that new land releases are promptly realised for housing development.

4. Environmental constraints and topographic suitability
- Consider a range of environmental constraints and ensure that new developments are designed and situated appropriately. These considerations include but are not limited to:
  - Location of floodplains and land subject to inundation.
  - Slope of ≤ 15% for standard construction and no active erosion features.
  - Appropriate distance buffer from sensitive ecological features and protected areas.
  - Bushfire risk.
- Consider general topographic features to ensure a liveable and well-designed final product, including:
  - The proportion of parcels that are usable after accounting for slopes, environmental and geological constraints.
  - If north-facing slopes can be utilised for enhanced passive heating.

5. Community integration
- Consider how to ensure new development can be sympathetic to, but not necessarily exactly the same as, the existing neighbourhood character including identified heritage aspects.

Consider how to smooth density transitions from adjacent areas to ensure new development presents a visually continuous urban form.

6. Strategic setting
- Prioritise new developments that are already guided by a neighbourhood plan and developed in line with broader strategic planning.

Opportunities for Consolidation and Uplift

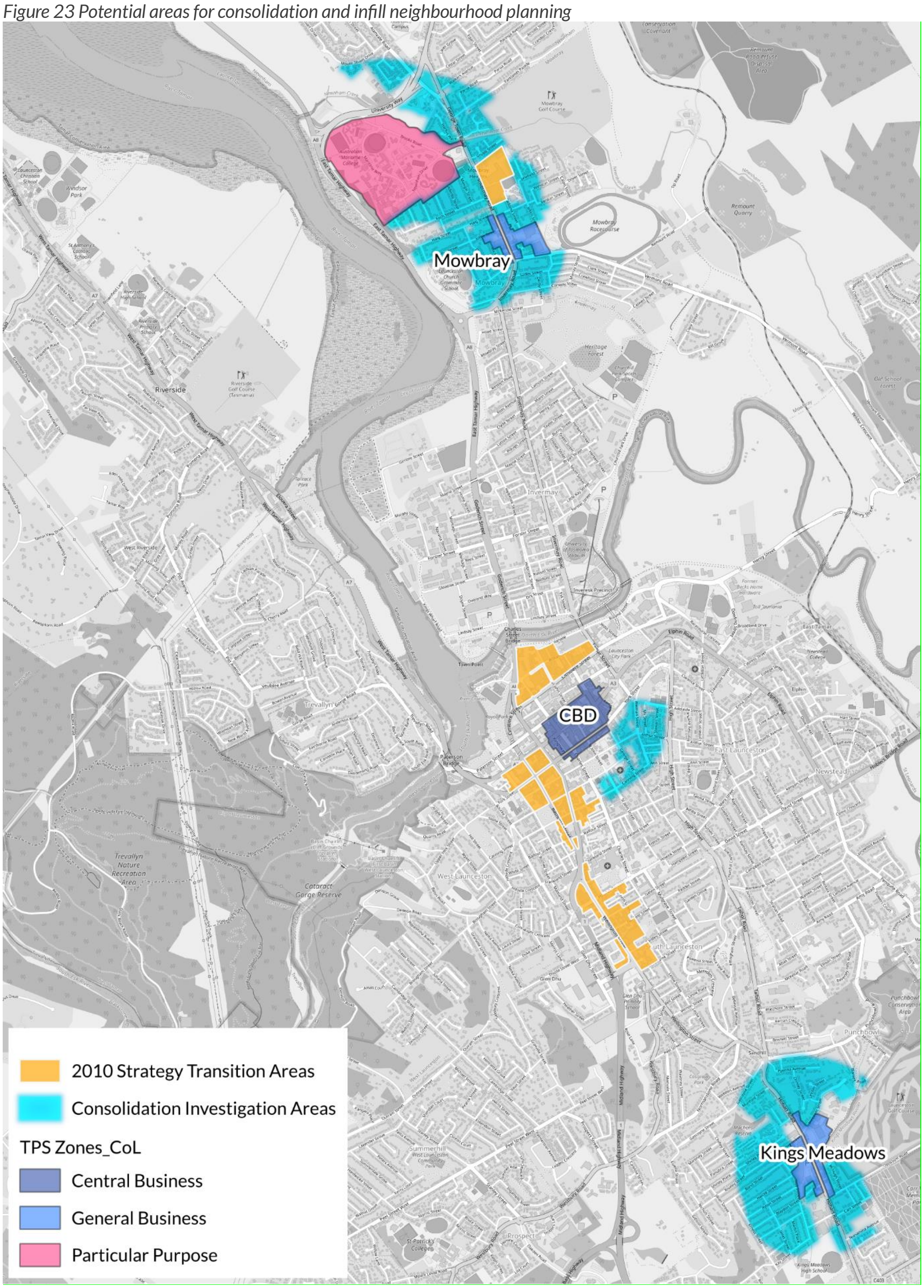
Many areas in Launceston are highly desirable and well-located, offering the potential to accommodate a broader range and diversity of housing options for local residents as they transition through various life stages. Thoughtful redevelopment in established inner areas presents numerous benefits, including fostering economic vitality, promoting sustainable living, and creating vibrant neighbourhoods. There is an opportunity here to balance new development that supports Launceston's goals of residential growth whilst respecting Launceston's unique local heritage and our community's strong connection to the city we know and love.

Opportunities for redevelopment and housing consolidation within Launceston's inner areas have been recognised in key strategic documents, including the Launceston Residential Strategy 2009-2029 and the Greater Launceston Plan 2014. Despite the historical identification of these areas, progress to implement the identified recommendations has been limited due to a number of constraining factors, including existing ownership, feasibility and market appetite. The Launceston Residential Strategy 2009-2029 specifically identified 'transition sites' within well-located but underutilised commercial areas, such as Wellington Street, north of Cimitiere Street near the city centre, and Invermay Road in Mowbray. These areas present as prime opportunities for rezoning to Urban Mixed Use or Inner Residential to support more diverse and compact housing options, yet strategic work to facilitate their transition remains incomplete with viability a potentially limiting factor.

The map in Figure 23 includes the transition areas identified in the previous residential strategy as well as broader investigation areas[29]. The areas indicated on the map are indicative only and require further detailed investigation to determine their suitability for rezoning to Inner Residential or Urban Mixed Use. In some areas, the application of a Specific Area Plan may be appropriate to further guide preferred development outcomes and support the increase in infill opportunities that the city requires.

[29] Identified using the following criteria: Currently designated as General Residential or Inner Residential zones; Located within 400 metres of a larger commercial centre (General Business or Central Business zone) or the Newnham UTAS site; Situated within 400 metres of a bus stop; and outside an identified heritage area or levee protected area.

Figure 23 Potential areas for consolidation and infill neighbourhood planning



Housing targets and framework plan

The Launceston Residential Framework Plan provides a coordinated and strategic approach to housing growth across the city. It consolidates key directions from existing regional and local strategic plans, incorporates new growth areas, and strengthens housing consolidation priorities in well-located areas. The framework ensures that housing supply aligns with demand by setting clear targets for new dwellings, achieving a balanced mix of housing types, and providing a structured approach to infill development.

By integrating both infill and growth area development, the framework aims to deliver a diverse and sustainable housing market, ensuring that Launceston can accommodate future population growth while maintaining affordability and liveability.

Based on projected housing demand and anticipated distribution across different areas, broad dwelling targets have been set (Table 4). These targets ensure that Launceston remains within the upper range of dwelling demand projections, providing flexibility to accommodate periods of accelerated growth. Each area is also allocated a target dwelling mix, specifying the proportion of detached housing, medium density developments, and higher-density housing.

These targets are not simply a continuation of past development trends, as historic housing delivery patterns do not align with future population needs—either in terms of total dwelling numbers or the types of housing required. Some areas are already shifting toward more diverse housing forms, while others will require proactive policy intervention:

- Northern suburbs: Already experiencing a higher share of missing middle housing (76% of all new dwellings in the five years to 2022), making it well-positioned to continue this trend.
- Central area: Requires the most significant transformation, as it has had both low overall development rates and a persistently high share of detached housing (43% of all new dwellings). Strategic intervention will be needed to encourage higher-density and missing middle development in well-located areas.
- Outer suburbs: Highest share of existing and new housing as standard detached, however the missing middle has still made up one third of all new housing. Major growth areas in this region present an opportunity to achieve greater dwelling diversity for new communities than has traditionally been delivered in growth areas in the past.
- Higher-density housing: To date, only the central area has accommodated high-density housing. However, targets now include higher-density housing for both northern and outer suburbs, as smaller-scale multi-storey units should be supported around activity centres.

Across the LGA, these targets reflect a significant shift towards missing middle housing. This is essential to ensure Launceston transitions towards a more balanced housing mix, reducing its heavy reliance on detached housing.

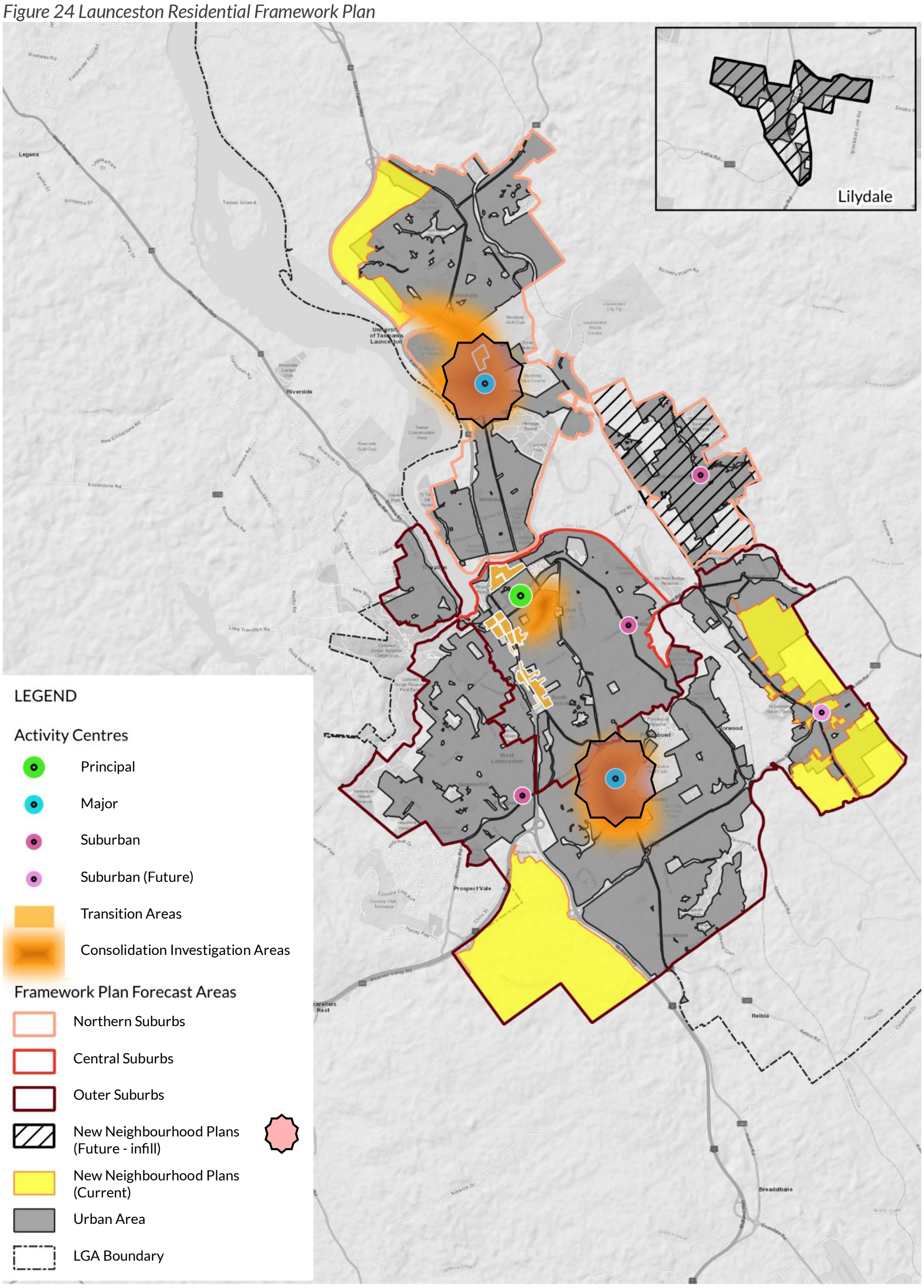
By implementing these targets, the city can ensure that housing delivery better aligns with future household structures and affordability needs, providing homes that accommodate a growing and changing population. A more balanced housing mix will support greater choice across all areas of the municipality, enabling residents to find suitable housing at different life stages. Additionally, the plan encourages well-located and diverse housing options, particularly in areas with strong access to jobs, transport, and essential services, fostering a more sustainable and connected urban environment.

Supporting these targets, a high-level framework plan (Figure 24) outlines key development priorities over the plan period, ensuring a coordinated and staged approach to housing delivery.

Table 4 Dwelling targets

Area	Dwelling target p.a.	Share of new dwellings by type		
		Detached	Medium-density	High-density
Northern suburbs	60-80	25%	70%	5%
Central suburbs	60-80	10%	80%	10%
Southern suburbs	120-170	50%	45%	5%
Non-city area	30-40	100%	-	-
LGA	270-370	41%	53%	6%

Figure 24 Launceston Residential Framework Plan



OUR HOUSING PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

Vision Statement

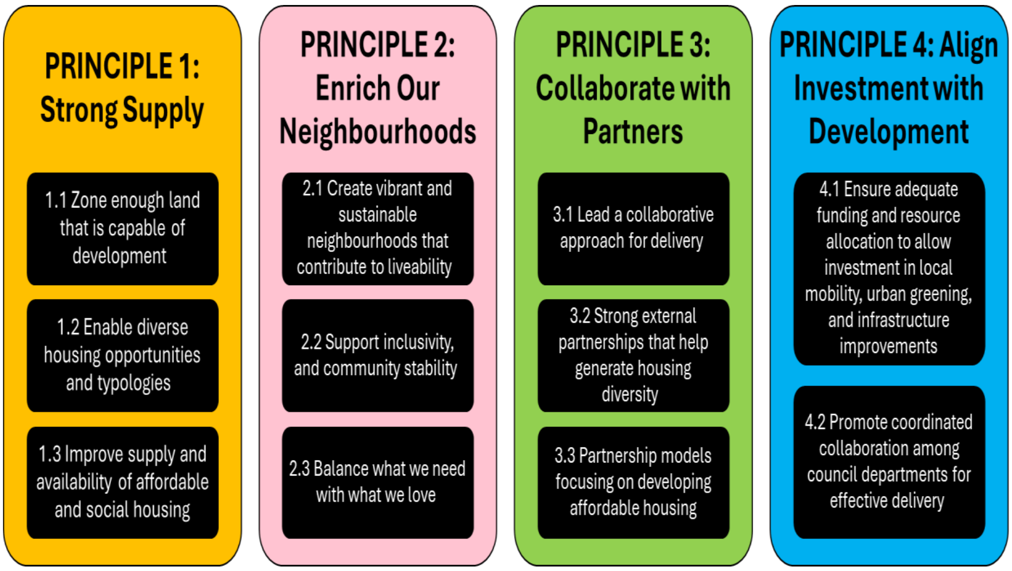
The City of Launceston has embodied a new vision for the delivery of housing in Launceston:

> *"Deliver homes for every stage of life while protecting what we love and enriching every suburb"*

Guiding Principles

The Launceston Housing Plan is built on four guiding principles, developed in collaboration with key stakeholders. These principles aim to address Launceston's housing needs and serve as the foundation for specific actions and measurable targets outlined in the plan.

Aligned with the new vision, the principles are presented below, along with goals designed to help achieve Launceston's vision for housing.



Principle 1: Strong supply

A diverse and adequate supply of housing is essential for meeting the needs of Launceston's growing and changing population. Ensuring a variety of housing typologies—such as smaller dwellings for downsizers, affordable options for first-home buyers, and larger homes for families—helps to support economic growth, inclusivity, and community stability. By improving the supply and availability of affordable and social housing, Launceston can address housing gaps, attract new residents, and retain its vibrant community. This principle underpins the City's ability to respond to current and future housing challenges while fostering sustainable urban growth.

1.1 Zone enough land that is capable of development

Objective: Ensure a predictable supply of developable land that creates confidence for housing development and high-quality community outcomes.

Launceston has experienced a comparatively slow rollout of new housing when we consider the high demand and amount of undeveloped land in the City. We need to make sure that we are providing enough land that has qualities that enable straightforward and expeditious developments.

Land which is highly constrained or poorly located may theoretically add to Launceston's land supply, but in practice these locations may remain undeveloped for a long time as developers opt to develop housing elsewhere. While some of this more constrained land may one day be developed, Launceston's housing development sector requires immediately developable land to keep up with demand.

New housing should be built in sites with good access to services and infrastructure, and it should enable high-quality community outcomes – allowing more people to enjoy what we love about Launceston. Without action and appropriate land provision, we will risk missing our housing targets and failing to address the critical housing concerns of our community.

Actions:

1.1.1	Prepare and implement Neighbourhood Plans for urban growth in: a. St Leonards and Waverley b. Alanvale c. South Prospect
1.1.2	Identify suitable land for future residential opportunities and rezoning based on objective methodology and criteria identified in the Housing Plan
1.1.3	Align the updated Northern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy (NTRLUS) with City of Launceston's Housing Plan 2025-2040, particularly the amended urban growth boundaries

1.2 Enable diverse housing opportunities and typologies

Objective: Increase the variety of new dwellings in Launceston with a strong focus on inner city living and "medium density" typologies such as townhouses, villas, shop top housing and apartment units in accessible areas close to services.

In Launceston, 65.8% of dwellings are occupied by one- or two-person households, yet much of the existing housing stock does not align with these smaller household sizes. A significant portion of homes have three bedrooms or more, with most containing one to two spare bedrooms. With an average household size of 2.24 people, this mismatch indicates that current housing options are not keeping pace with the needs of contemporary residents.

To better accommodate Launceston's evolving population, there is a clear need to expand medium-density housing options. While the city has traditionally focused on detached housing, this approach no longer fully supports its shifting demographics. As the population continues to age and the number of retirement-age residents rises, housing must reflect these changing needs by offering more flexible, appropriately sized, and accessible options.

Encouraging the development of diverse housing types will ensure Launceston remains a place where all residents, regardless of age or household size, can find suitable and affordable homes. This strategic focus will not only address current demand but also position Launceston for a better housing future.

Actions:

1.2.1	Prepare a review of Launceston CBD area and land surrounding activity centres to identify key development sites for consolidation and/or increased density
1.2.2	Prepare and implement precinct plans for Margaret Street Corridor and Hospital/Wellington Street areas
1.2.3	Advocate to the State Government for expediated approval pathways for key strategic infill housing projects
1.2.4	Investigate the implementation of Inner Residential and Urban Mixed-Use zones around activity centres, and new Specific Area Plans (SAPs) for certain residential uses (if required)

1.3 Improve availability of affordable and social housing

Objective: Increase the opportunities for new affordable and social housing in well-located areas with access to key services and reduce the overall homelessness through the City

Launceston has experienced a notable rise in property prices and rental costs in recent years, reflecting broader trends across Tasmania's urban areas. Consequently, many households, particularly those on very low, low, and moderate incomes, are struggling to secure affordable housing within the City. Over the last 10 years, housing that is affordable to low-income households for both rentals and sales has significantly decreased in Launceston.

- In 2023/24, only 56 affordable dwellings sold compared to 1,472 in 2015-16.
- There were 403 affordable rentals in Launceston in 2015-16, but this has decreased to 374 in 2023-24, representing 25% of all rentals.

These trends are reflective of a current housing crisis where housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable to residents in Launceston, reflected in the 89.5% increase in homelessness between 2016 (237 persons) and 2021 (449 persons). The largest increase was witnessed in persons living in overcrowded dwellings and sleeping in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out.

To address this challenge, Launceston is committed to promoting the delivery of affordable housing that caters to the needs of its diverse population. Increasing the availability of affordable housing is essential for maintaining Launceston's social and economic diversity. By supporting a wider range of housing options, key workers can reside closer to their workplaces, reducing commute times and supporting the local economy. The City of Launceston has already commenced a review of Council owned sites within the CBD for opportunities to deliver community housing opportunities, with further work to be undertaken to support this type of initiative.

Actions:

1.3.1	Prepare an Affordable Housing Strategy that outlines Council's direction for accommodating affordable and social housing in City of Launceston
1.3.2	Work with Homes Tasmania to identify appropriate sites within Launceston for affordable and social housing delivery, trying to shift the focus from Launceston's Northern Suburbs and implementing a place-based approach
1.3.3	Investigate all Council owned sites, such as public carparks, for opportunities to provide affordable and social housing in key locations

Principle 2: Enrich our neighbourhoods

Housing that enhances neighbourhoods and enriches suburbs is essential for fostering vibrant, inclusive, and liveable communities. Thoughtful development can deliver positive outcomes by creating high-quality urban design that integrates seamlessly into the local character and enhancing the public realm with improved amenities, green spaces, and walkable streets. Such developments also stimulate local economy through construction and ongoing services. By prioritising well-designed housing, communities can achieve a balanced approach to growth that benefits both current and future residents, fostering a sense of pride and belonging while ensuring sustainable and attractive neighbourhoods.

2.1 Create vibrant and accessible neighbourhoods that contribute to liveability

Objective: Improving existing suburbs to improve housing opportunities and choices and are delivered in a staged approach with appropriate services, community facilities and services

Sustainable, high-quality urban infill, access to community facilities and public space revitalisation are critical elements of fostering a vibrant, liveable, and sustainable Launceston. By optimising the use of existing urban areas and enhancing public spaces through high quality housing and public space development, Launceston can deliver a range of benefits for local residents that already call these places home.

Housing Diversity and Affordability	Urban infill promotes the development of diverse housing types, catering to various demographics, including young workers, families, and older adults. By utilising underused land within established neighbourhoods, infill development can help address housing shortages and improve affordability. It also reduces urban sprawl, minimising the costs associated with extending infrastructure and services.
Strengthening Community Connectivity	Compact and well-planned urban infill fosters closer connections between residents by encouraging mixed-use developments and walkable neighbourhoods. Local amenities such as shops, schools, and health services become more accessible, reducing reliance on private vehicles and enhancing the sense of community.
Environmental Sustainability	Urban infill helps to preserve surrounding natural landscapes by reducing the pressure for outward expansion. It encourages sustainable development practices by prioritising energy-efficient buildings and sustainable transport options, such as walking, cycling, and public transport. Revitalised public spaces also support biodiversity, providing green corridors and habitats for local flora and fauna.
Economic Opportunities	Revitalised public spaces and denser urban environments attract businesses and investment, boosting the local economy. Activated streetscapes and vibrant public areas draw foot traffic, supporting local retailers, cafés, and cultural activities. The improved aesthetics and functionality of public spaces also enhance Launceston's appeal as a destination for visitors and new residents.
Improved Liveability	Quality public spaces, such as parks, plazas, and waterfronts, are essential to the physical and mental well-being of residents. Revitalisation projects create inclusive spaces for recreation, cultural activities, and social interactions, improving the overall quality of life. Well-designed urban infill developments also enhance neighbourhood character, balancing the old with the new and preserving Launceston's unique identity.
Efficient Use of Infrastructure	Urban infill leverages existing infrastructure, such as roads, utilities, and public transport systems, reducing the need for costly new infrastructure projects. This approach maximises the value of past

investments while providing cost-effective solutions to accommodate population growth.

By embracing urban infill and public space revitalisation, Launceston can achieve a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable urban environment. These strategies not only address current challenges but also position the city for a prosperous future that prioritises the well-being of all residents.

While the proportion of housing which is being delivered as urban infill in Launceston is relatively low, we're working hard to improve this and Launceston has a reputation for delivering high-quality urban infill projects – with some exemplars detailed below:

73-75 St John Street, Launceston:

The Saint Lofts development on St John Street highlights a thoughtful approach to urban architecture. With an attractive active façade that engages with the streetscape, varied and interesting street frontage which adds visual appeal, extension of two additional levels to the original mid-century modern building, and light filled apartments designed for maximum comfort. The redevelopment has transformed an underutilised CBD property into a vibrant, multi-use space that contributes positively to the urban fabric.

100 Margaret Street, Launceston:

Located in a traditionally low-density area of Launceston, the development at 100 Margaret Street exemplifies Throguhtful urban design, balancing increased density with respect for local heritage and environmental considerations. Although aimed at a higher cost bracket, this two-townhouse project demonstrates how modern residential deisn can seamlessly integrate into the existing streetscape while meeting contemporary living standards. This approach increases housing density, while retain a sympathetic outcome that provides for both the residents and surrounding streetscape.

34 Elphin Rd, Launceston

34 Elphin Rd is a high-quality, historically significant, sun-filled development of six apartments in Launceston near East Launceston and Newstead. These apartments continue to be highly sought after by locals. These apartments offer a high quality of life for tenants, having much more light than other developments and their central location creates a walkable environment where most goods and services can be easily accessed by walking.

York St Terraces, Launceston

The York St terraces are centrally located, medium density houses in Launceston's CBD built in the 1920s. These terraces are considerably higher density than traditional detached housing, yet they offer similar amenity and space, with rear parking available via a laneway on York St. Where most housing in Launceston is detached housing with three or more bedrooms, these terraces are well-provisioned two-bedroom options for those seeking more affordable, smaller housing.

Actions:

2.1.1	Prepare and implement Neighbourhood Plans for existing suburbs in: a. Kings Meadows b. Mowbray c. Lilydale d. Northern Suburbs
2.1.2	Prepare and adopt a Launceston Public Domain Strategy
2.1.3	Finalise and implement the Launceston Regional Open Space Strategy *(currently under preparation)*

2.2 Support economic vitality and access to opportunities

Objective: Focus diverse residential development around existing activity centres and developing neighbourhoods with access to key services, community facilities and transport options by strategically propagating retail, commercial and industrial uses in identified activity centres.

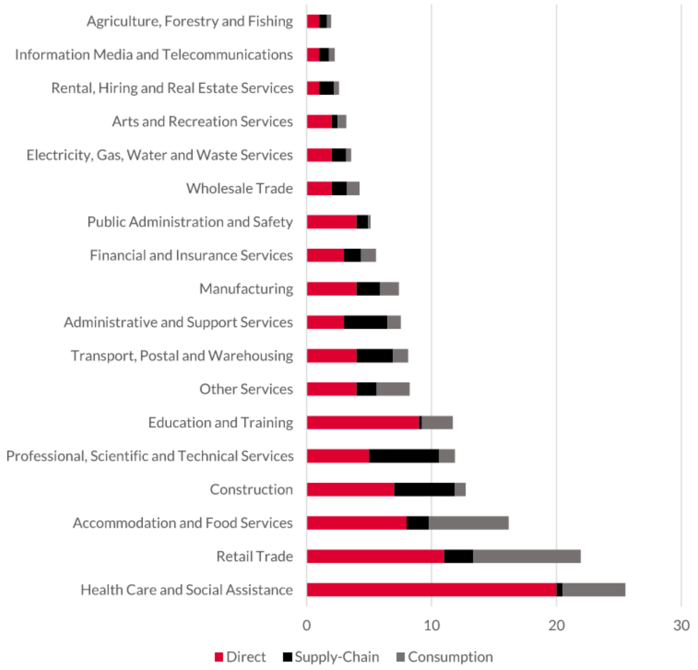
New housing brings with it new population across a range of economic sectors. Local economic conditions in Launceston will be critical in influencing population attraction and housing demands.

For each 100 additional dwellings developed in Launceston, it is estimated that this will bring with it direct jobs for 91 local workers – bringing $47 million in flow-on supply-chain effects and a further gain of 33 jobs and an additional 36 jobs created through consumption effects.

The increase in direct and indirect output and the corresponding creation of jobs in the economy would be expected to result in an increase in the wages and salaries paid to employees. A proportion of these wages and salaries are typically spent on consumption and a proportion of this expenditure is captured in the local economy. The consumption effects under this scenario are estimated to further boost employment by 57 jobs. These additional jobs will primarily be found in the Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade, and Accommodation and Food Services sectors.

This demonstrates the significant impact that an accelerated construction program would have on the broader economy in Launceston.

Figure 23 Estimated employment impact by industry sector for each 100 dwellings added in Launceston



Council will also consider opportunities for emerging housing models that deliver innovative housing outcomes on key sites, such as Build-to-Rent and Rent-to-Buy, could enhance housing affordability and accessibility. These housing models can:

Build-to-Rent:	Encourages the construction of purpose-built rental accommodation, increasing housing supply and affordability. Build-to-Rent accommodation is usually offered with more secure and longer tenure, enabling more stability and security for tenants.
Rent-to-Buy:	Offers a pathway to homeownership for those currently unable to purchase homes outright.

Actions:

2.2.1	Prepare a key site review of the Launceston CBD and existing activity centres for development potential to support diverse housing opportunities
2.2.2	Prepare and implement Launceston Retail and Activity Centres Strategy that aligns retail and residential growth and supports contemporary offerings in activity centres
2.2.3	Prepare and implement an Employment Lands Strategy focused on integrated future employment opportunities that support residential growth

2.3 Balance what we need with what we love

Objective: Ensure that future densification of the Launceston is complimentary to the City's heritage assets and Council's public realm and place making strategies

Revitalising and improving urban areas by actively conserving historic buildings and cultural landmarks and integrating them into new development plans can create both social and environmental benefits for owners, tenants and the local community.

Social benefits include:

- Conservation of valuable heritage
- Encourages communities connection and a strong sense of place
- Creates spaces for social interaction and economic activity
- Stimulates economic activity

Environmental benefits, include:

- Reduces the energy consumption of demolishing and building a structure
- Reduces carbon emissions as a large portion stem from the materials, fabrication, delivery, and assembly
- Diverts construction waste

Some great examples of urban renewal projects for heritage building include:

Old Woolstore Apartment Hotel, Hobart

Originally constructed in 1897, the Old Woolstore Apartment Hotel served as a wool storage and treatment facility until the mid-1990s where it was identified for redevelopment. Completed in 2001, the project aimed to:

- Conserve the historical features of the Woolstore, such as the saw-tooth roofline and façade, whilst converting the interior into modern accommodation.
- Provide a blend of short-term accommodation and long-term living opportunities.
- Provide a mixed-use modern living and accommodation.

Careful investment was required for successful redevelopment, given the historical significance and extensive work required to adapt and conserve the Old Woolstore Apartment Hotel.

Former TAFE Campus, Launceston

Due to open in 2027, the redevelopment of the heritage-listed former TAFE campus proposes a 11-storey five-star hotel, restaurant and cafe, and 14 residential dwellings. The residential dwellings will comprise of one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom apartments with a communal area. The redevelopment commenced in mid-2024 at an estimated cost of $95 million. The project aims to:

- Transform the site into a mixed-use lifestyle facility, seeking to increase visitation to the City.
- Provide and promote housing diversity.
- Enhance the local community.
- Provide additional goods and services.
- Improve the connectivity through bicycle and pedestrian linkages to nearby amenities.

Actions:

2.3.1	Prepare and implement the CBD Building Heights and Massing project and associated Specific Area Plan (SAP)
2.3.2	Prepare and implement heritage precincts, with associated specialised planning controls for heritage listed sites and areas identified for residential intensification
2.3.3	Prepare and implement Levee Protected Areas Specific Area Plan (SAP)

Principle 3: Collaborate with partners

Fostering meaningful partnerships to deliver housing in Launceston is crucial for addressing complex housing challenges effectively and equitably. Collaborative efforts between government, private developers, community organisations, and residents can unlock innovative solutions and leverage diverse resources. Partnerships enable the alignment of priorities, ensuring housing projects meet local needs while also supporting broader economic, social, and environmental goals. By working together, stakeholders can share risks and responsibilities, deliver affordable and sustainable housing, and enhance community outcomes. Such collaboration builds trust and ensures that housing development is not only efficient but also inclusive and responsive to Launceston's unique context.

3.1 Lead a collaborative approach for delivery

Objective: Advocate for improved planning mechanisms that allow the delivery of housing on appropriate sites and areas identified by Council

Launceston's housing development has historically followed conventional planning pathways, delivering a high proportion of detached housing on the city fringes. This has successfully provided housing for many Launcestonians, but new, collaborative approaches are now required for our housing future to ensure that our city remains liveable and that new homes provide for community needs.

A coordinated and strategic approach to planning is essential for ensuring that housing is delivered in suitable locations across Launceston. By advocating for improved planning mechanisms and aligning actions with regional, state and federal policies and actions, the City of Launceston can drive the development of diverse housing options. Proactive engagement in reviewing the Tasmanian Planning Scheme and the Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy will enable the City to influence policies that support a broader range of housing types. Ensuring that planning controls are flexible and responsive and creates an environment where diverse housing solutions are encouraged and can be delivered.

A key challenge in housing delivery is bridging the gap between policy intentions and market feasibility. By identifying and promoting incentives offered by the State and Commonwealth governments, Launceston can support the local development community in delivering affordable housing. Mechanisms such as financial incentives, density bonuses, and streamlined approvals can encourage the construction of homes that meet community needs.

Actions:

3.1.1	Advocate for, and actively participate in, reviews of the Tasmania Planning Scheme and Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy to support diverse housing opportunities, including apartments, "missing middle", and other inclusionary zoning.
3.1.2	Identify and promote incentive mechanisms for the delivery of affordable housing opportunities provided by the State and Commonwealth Government to local development community

3.2 Strong external partnerships that help generate housing diversity

Objective: Establish a working relationship with developers, Community Housing Providers, Homes Tasmania, TasWater and TasNetworks to actively address issues with housing delivery

The housing crisis in Australia has created a need for a more collaborative approach for housing delivery – both to ensure enough and the right type of housing. Delivering effective housing solutions for Launceston requires strong, collaborative partnerships between key stakeholders, including developers, Community Housing Providers, government agencies, and essential service providers. By fostering this spirit of cooperation, the City can address critical infrastructure challenges, encourage innovative housing approaches, and ensure new developments align with the community's long-term vision.

Regular engagement through housing forums will create a platform for developers, landowners, and community groups to share insights, identify barriers, and explore opportunities to create more of the housing that our community needs. This collaboration is essential for aligning infrastructure planning with Launceston's projected population growth, creating efficiencies, and ensuring development-ready sites are unlocked and developed. Launceston hosted the first forum in 2024 which was well-received, and we anticipate that future forums will help foster even more innovation and collaboration.

Strengthening partnerships with academic institutions also presents an opportunity to involve and get the most out of our local researchers and learn from their perspectives. Launceston is the education centre of northern Tasmania and harnessing this will help create even more connectivity and innovation in our city.

Recognising and celebrating progress in housing delivery can further encourage high-quality and sustainable developments. Establishing a "Housing Innovation Awards" programme will showcase exemplary projects, highlight best practices, and inspire ongoing improvements in urban development. Through these initiatives, Launceston can create a collaborative framework that supports housing diversity and ensures the city remains an attractive, well-serviced, and inclusive place to live.

Actions:

3.2.1	Undertake ongoing Housing Forums with developers, key land owners, and Community Housing Providers.
3.2.2	Establish ongoing formal meetings with State agencies including Department of State Growth, TasWater, TasNetworks, and Metro Tasmania, to ensure infrastructure delivery is aligned with Council's planned population growth.
3.2.3	Partner with University of Tasmania to develop a pilot program for student level projects that focus on planning/urban design outcomes for key sites within Launceston
3.2.4	Establish "Housing Innovation Awards" program to highlight and celebrate Launceston's progress in delivering high-quality and sustainable housing solutions.

3.3 Focus on developing affordable housing in suitable locations

Objective: Investigate and actively seek more opportunities, with assistance from Community Housing Providers, for more affordable and social housing in appropriate areas within City of Launceston

Ensuring the delivery of affordable and social housing in suitable locations is essential for creating a more inclusive and equitable Launceston. The worrying increase in homelessness and coinciding decrease in housing affordability in Launceston makes this a particularly urgent action to ensure members of our community aren't left behind. The City of Launceston's *Homelessness Statement of Commitment* outlines a vision where "every individual has access to safe, stable and affordable housing" and this action is a key element in supporting that vision.

By actively partnering with Community Housing Providers (CHPs), the city can facilitate the development of homes that meet the needs of lower-income households while integrating into our neighbourhoods. Encouraging the inclusion of affordable and social housing within higher-density projects will help diversify housing options and improve accessibility for those in need.

Launceston is committed to prioritising affordable and social housing in well-serviced areas, ensuring new developments provide residents with convenient access to services, jobs, public transport, and public space. This approach supports social inclusion and creates vibrant, connected communities. The City will also lead by example, requiring a proportion of affordable and/or social housing in residential developments on Council-owned land to demonstrate the city's commitment to equitable housing outcomes. This would provide the catalyst for further investigation opportunities for the delivery affordable and/or social housing on private land in well serviced areas.

Close collaboration with Homes Tasmania and the range of Community Housing Providers in Launceston will be critical in aligning their needs and resources with opportunities. Proactively engaging these stakeholders will help identify suitable locations, streamline planning processes, and facilitate the delivery of high-quality, affordable homes. By taking a strategic and coordinated approach, Launceston can expand housing choices for diverse households while supporting a well-connected and liveable urban environment that benefits the entire community.

Actions:

3.3.1	Identify opportunities for the inclusion of affordable/social housing incentives in higher density developments
3.3.2	Advocate to Homes Tasmania for affordable and social housing options to be focused on suitable areas that are located with key services, access to public transport and adequate provision to open space
3.3.3	Require residential development on Council-owned land to include a proportion of affordable/social housing
3.3.4	Proactively engage with Homes Tasmania and Community Housing Providers to align their needs with opportunities in suitable locations

Community housing challenges

Throughout the development of this Plan, key challenges for CHPs in Launceston were explored through engagement with the major CHPs operating in Launceston. They include:

Demand and demographic pressures	Rising demand for affordable and social housing is driven by population growth, local and interstate migration, and an ageing population.
	Specific groups in need include low-income families, single-person households, and individuals escaping family violence.
	Increased migration and a high cost of living exacerbate the pressure on the housing system.
Supply constraints and affordability	Limited affordable housing supply, high rental costs, and short-stay accommodation use have reduced availability in the private rental market.
	Housing affordability has declined significantly, with some areas deemed "severely unaffordable. "
	Quality of housing is a concern, with aging stock that often lacks accessibility and thermal efficiency, increasing living costs.
Planning and regulatory barriers	Zoning and planning regulations that are not conducive to the easy delivery ofmedium-density developments, contribute to delays and costs, limiting affordable housing options.
	Streamlined approvals, "fast-track" processes, and mixed-use zoning could improve project feasibility and reduce development timelines.
Funding and investment challenges	Federal and state funding is insufficient and inconsistent, with complex requirements and competitive funding pools.
	Lack of capital grants and high borrowing requirements limit the capacity to build affordable housing.
	Access to flexible and sustained funding models is necessary to support long-term projects and innovative housing solutions.
Role of local government and partnerships	Local government can leverage public land, provide incentives, and encourage partnerships with Community Housing Providers and private developers.
	Public-private partnerships and joint ventures could enhance housing supply, with private sector investment being critical for construction and innovation.
	Collaboration among stakeholders, including local non-profits and housing providers, is essential to align efforts and foster a cohesive approach.

Future strategy and policy integration	Aligning the Launceston Housing Plan with state and federal initiatives, like the Tasmanian Housing Strategy, is crucial.
	Long-term goals include creating sustainable, mixed-tenure developments that support medium-density housing near transport hubs.
	Efforts to improve public acceptance of new development and promote flexibility in planning schemes are also necessary for effective implementation.

Principle 4: Align investment with development

Aligning the City's resourcing and funding to support the development of liveable communities is important for making sure we get the most out of local investment. By strategically directing resources and prioritising funding for infrastructure, services, and public realm improvements, councils can ensure housing developments are well-supported and integrated into broader community plans. This alignment enables efficient use of public funds, minimises duplication, and attracts complementary private investment. It also ensures that council initiatives are coordinated to deliver high-quality urban design, accessible amenities, and sustainable infrastructure. By focusing on resourcing and funding alignment, councils can create cohesive and liveable communities that meet the needs of residents while supporting long-term growth and resilience.

4.1 Ensure adequate funding and resource allocation to allow investment in local mobility, urban greening, and infrastructure improvements

Objective: Ensure that appropriate funding and resources is provided to deliver catalytic investment throughout City of Launceston that leverages identified housing areas that accommodate different housing typologies, multi-modal infrastructure, urban greening and public realm areas.

Strategic investment in infrastructure, mobility, and urban greening is essential to support Launceston's growing housing needs and enhance liveability across the city. Recent experiences have shown us that some development and infrastructure in Launceston is not being delivered efficiently and is not providing new residents with the level of amenity and housing diversity that we would like to see.

Ensuring adequate funding and resource allocation will enable targeted improvements that align with identified housing areas, creating well-connected, sustainable, and attractive neighbourhoods. By preparing and implementing Infrastructure Funding Frameworks for key growth areas, including St Leonards and Waverley and South Prospect, the Council can provide a clear structure and plan for investment that supports diverse housing typologies and essential services.

Securing external funding is a critical component of delivering these improvements. The Council will actively investigate opportunities for Federal and State government grants, as well as development contributions, to help maximise available resources and ensure infrastructure delivery keeps pace with housing demand. A Housing and Services Alignment Review and Implementation Strategy will further refine this approach by identifying key infrastructure investments that unlock housing potential and establishing a serviceable plan for implementation.

To support long-term strategic planning, establishing a dedicated Property and Asset Manager for the City of Launceston will provide oversight and direction for Council-owned land. This role will ensure that Council assets are leveraged effectively to contribute to housing supply, public space enhancements, and infrastructure development. Through a coordinated and well-funded approach, Launceston can facilitate sustainable growth while maintaining a high quality of life for residents.

The City of Launceston regularly develops new local plans for both developed and undeveloped land, and recent plans have been impacted by significant delays and funding challenges. In order to address this, the City of Launceston should seek ways to stage land releases and rezonings to give more clarity and confidence to developers and also seek new ways of determining and financing the required infrastructure to develop new housing. Several funding and financing mechanisms can be considered to support housing initiatives and infrastructure development as part of the Launceston Housing Plan.

Infrastructure Funding Frameworks	The City of Launceston has already begun leveraging infrastructure funding frameworks, as demonstrated by the St Leonards and Waverley Neighbourhood (Structure) Plan and Infrastructure Funding Framework. This framework is designed to facilitate the delivery of 3,500 new homes and associated community infrastructure over the next 30 years. Key benefits include: ▪ Logical sequencing of development ▪ Enhanced coordination between developments ▪ Preservation of local character ▪ Mitigation of challenges such as traffic congestion and insufficient amenities
Land Value Capture and Developer Contributions	The application of development contributions is limited and varied from Council to Council in Tasmania. As such, there is significant scope for improvement, including: ▪ *Direct Land Contributions:* Requiring landowners to dedicate land or provide monetary contributions for public purposes. ▪ *Indexed Contributions:* Linking contributions to land value increases to prevent funding shortfalls due to rising costs. ▪ *Fixed Development Levies:* Adopting a model similar to New South Wales, where a fixed percentage of the estimated development cost is levied, could provide a scalable funding mechanism for Launceston.
Leveraging State and Federal Grants	Launceston has successfully secured federal funding to progress desirable housing developments, including $327,000 from the Commonwealth Government Housing Support Program (Stream 1) for the St Leonards Neighbourhood (Structure) Plan. Similar grants should be pursued for future projects, prioritising areas of high growth or housing need.

Actions:

4.1.1	Prepare and implement Infrastructure Funding Frameworks for: a. St Leonards and Waverley *(under preparation)* b. South Prospect c. Kings Meadows d. Mowbray e. Lilydale f. Northern Suburbs
4.1.2	Investigate opportunities for infrastructure funding through Federal and State government grants and/or development contributions

4.1.3	Prepare a Housing and Services Alignment Review and Implementation Strategy to identify enabling infrastructure that unlocks housing potential and creates a serviceable plan for implementation
4.1.4	Establish a dedicated Property and Asset Manager for the City of Launceston to establish direction for Council's owned land

4.2 Promote coordinated collaboration among council departments for effective delivery

Objective: To consider the economic impact of Council investment and ensure that maximum value is returned through housing development and community improvements

A coordinated approach across Council departments is essential to maximise the impact of investment in housing and community development. By fostering collaboration, Launceston can ensure that infrastructure planning, service delivery, and policy implementation are aligned to support housing growth and broader economic benefits. Establishing a quarterly Housing Delivery Committee with key Council teams will create a structured forum for addressing challenges, streamlining processes, and identifying opportunities to accelerate housing delivery.

Integrating housing priorities into Council's Capital Works Program will further support development by ensuring that enabling infrastructure is delivered in a timely and strategic manner. By prioritising projects that facilitate housing growth, such as roads, utilities, and public spaces, Council can create a development-ready environment that attracts investment and meets community needs. Through an internally coordinated and outcomes-focused approach, Launceston can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of housing delivery while supporting a well-planned and liveable city.

Actions:

4.2.1	Establish a quarterly Housing Delivery Committee with applicable Council teams to discuss and address issues with the delivery of new dwellings in Launceston
4.2.2	Prioritise enabling infrastructure that facilitates and supports housing development in Council's Capital Works Program

HOW WE ACHIEVE OUR HOUSING PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

Implementation and Delivery

The following strategic initiatives represent targeted activities prioritised for the Launceston Housing Plan 2025-2045. These actions have been carefully curated to focus City of Launceston efforts and accelerate progress towards four critical housing principles:

- Strong Supply
- Enrich our neighbourhoods
- Collaborate with partners
- Align investment with development

These strategic principles have been identified to maximise impact and potential within the City of Launceston's operational capacity and the Plan's defined timeframe. Detailed project-oriented actions will encompass comprehensive initiative descriptions, the City's strategic role, potential collaborative partners, and implementation timelines.

The implementation plan considers four timeframes which act as a guide for prioritisation and anticipated complexity:

- Commenced (initiative already underway)
- Short (within five years)
- Medium (between six and ten years)
- Long (more than ten years)

The implementation plan includes both specific project-oriented actions as well as ongoing responsibilities that follow on from project-oriented actions after initial implementation. This implementation plan is complemented by rigorous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

Principle	Priority	Objectives	Key Actions	Responsibility	Timeframe	Ongoing
Principle 1. Strong Supply	**1.1 Zone enough land that is capable of development** **(Urban growth areas)**	*Objective: Ensure a predicable supply of developable land that creates confidence for housing development and high-quality community outcomes.*	1.1.1 Prepare and implement Neighbourhood Plans for urban growth in:			
			a. St Leonards and Waverley	City Development	Commenced	
			b. Alanvale	City Development	Short	
			c. South Prospect	City Development	Short	
			1.1.2 Identify suitable land for future residential opportunities and rezoning based on objective methodology and criteria identified in the Housing Plan	City Development	Commenced	
			1.1.3 Align the update Northern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy (NRLUS) with City of Launceston's Housing Plan 2025-2040, particularly the amended urban growth boundaries	City Development	Short	
	1.2 Enable diverse housing opportunities and typologies **(Infill and density)**	*Objective: Increase the variety of new dwellings in Launceston with a strong focus on inner city living and "medium density" typologies such as townhouses, villas, shop top housing and apartment units in accessible areas close to services.*	1.2.1 Prepare a review of Launceston CBD area and land surrounding activity centres to identify key development sites for consolidation and/or increased density	City Development	Medium	
			1.2.2 Prepare and implement precinct plans for Margaret Street Corridor and Hospital/Wellington Street areas	City Development	Medium	
			1.2.3 Advocate to the State Government for expediated approval pathways for key strategic infill housing projects	City of Launceston/State Government	Long	
			1.2.4 Investigate the implementation of Inner Residential and Urban Mixed Use zones around activity centres, and new Specific Area Plans (SAPs) for certain residential uses (if required)	City Development	Short	
	1.3 Improve supply and availability of affordable and social housing	*Objective: Increase the opportunities for new affordable and social housing in well-located areas with access to key services and reduce the overall homelessness through the City*	1.3.1 Prepare an Affordable Housing Strategy that outlines Council's direction for accommodating affordable and social housing in City of Launceston	City Development / Liveable Communities	Medium	
			1.3.2 Work with Homes Tasmania to identify appropriate sites within Launceston for affordable and social housing delivery, trying to shift the focus from Launceston's Northern Suburbs and implementing a place based approach.	City Development / Homes Tasmania	Medium	
			1.3.3 Investigate all Council owned sites, such as public carparks, for opportunities to provide affordable and social housing in key locations	City Development / Infrastructure Planning / Strategy and Innovation	Commenced	

Principle 2. Enrich our Neighbourhoods	**2.1 Create vibrant and accessible neighbourhoods that contribute to liveability**	*Objective: Improving existing suburbs to improve housing opportunities and choices and are delivered in a staged approach with appropriate services, community facilities and services*	2.1.1 Prepare and implement Neighbourhood Plans for existing suburbs in:			
			a. Kings Meadows	City Development	Short	
			b. Mowbray	City Development	Short	
			c. Lilydale	City Development	Short	
			d. Northern Suburbs	City Development	Medium	
			2.1.2 Prepare and adopt a Launceston Public Domain Strategy	Place Making / City Development / Open Space and Sustainability	Medium	
			2.1.3 Finalise and implement the Launceston Regional Open Space Strategy (*under preparation)*	Open Spaces and Sustainability	Short	✓
	2.2 Support economic vitality and access to opportunities	*Objective: Focus diverse residential development around existing activity centres and developing neighbourhoods with access to key services, community facilities and transport options by strategically propagating retail, commercial and industrial uses in identified activity centres.*	2.2.1 Prepare a 'key sites' review of the Launceston CBD and existing activity centres for development potential to support diverse housing opportunities	Place Making / City Development / Open Space and Sustainability	Short	
			2.2.2 Prepare and implement Launceston Retail and Activity Centre Strategy that aligns retail and residential growth and supports contemporary offerings in activity centres	City Development	Short	
			2.2.3 Prepare and implement an Employment Lands Strategy focused on integrated future employment opportunities that support residential growth	City Development	Short	
	2.3 Balance what we need with what we love	*Objective: Ensure that future densification of the Launceston is complimentary to the City's heritage assets and Council's public realm and place making strategies*	2.3.1 Prepare and implement the CBD Building Heights and Massing project and associated Specific Area Plan (SAP)	City Development	Commenced	
			2.3.2 Prepare and implement heritage precincts, with associated specialised planning controls for heritage listed sites and areas identified for residential intensification	City Development / Place Making	Short	
			2.3.3 Prepare and implement Levee Protected Areas Specific Area Plan (SAP)	City Development	Commenced	

Principle 3. Collaborate with Partners	**3.1 Lead a collaborative approach for delivery**	*Objective: Advocate for improved planning mechanisms that allow the delivery of housing on appropriate sites and areas identified by Council*	3.1.1 Advocate for and actively participate in reviews of the Tasmania Planning Scheme and Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy to support diverse housing opportunities, including apartments, "missing middle" and other inclusionary zoning.	City Development	Short	
			3.1.2 Identify and promote incentive mechanisms for the delivery of affordable housing opportunities provided by the State and Commonwealth Government to local development community	City Development	Short	
	3.2 Strong external partnerships that help generate housing diversity	*Objective: Establish a working relationship with developers, Community Housing Providers, Homes Tasmania, TasWater and TasNetworks to actively address issues with housing delivery*	3.2.1 Undertake ongoing Housing Forums with developers, key land owners, and Community Housing Providers.	City Development / Communication	Short	✓
			3.2.2 Establish ongoing formal meetings with State agencies including Department of State Growth, TasWater, TasNetworks, and Metro Tasmania, to ensure infrastructure delivery is aligned with Council's planned population growth.	City Development / Infrastructure Planning	Medium	✓
			3.2.3 Partner with University of Tasmania to develop a pilot program for student level projects that focus on planning/urban design outcomes for key sites within Launceston	City Development / UTAS	Short	✓
			3.3.4 Establish "Housing Innovation Awards" program to highlight and celebrate Launceston's progress in delivering high-quality and sustainable housing solutions.	City Development / Community Engagement / Communications	Medium	✓
	3.3 Focusing on developing affordable housing in suitable locations	*Objective: Investigate and actively seek more opportunities, with assistance from Community Housing Providers for more affordable and social housing in appropriate areas within City of Launceston*	3.3.1 Identify opportunities for the inclusion of affordable/social housing incentives in higher density developments	City Development /	Short	
			3.3.2 Advocate to Homes Tasmania for affordable and social housing options to be focused on suitable areas that are located with key services, access to public transport and adequate provision to open space	City Development / Council	Short	
			3.3.3 Require residential development on Council-owned land to include a proportion of affordable/social housing	City Development / CHPs	Short	
			3.3.4 Proactively engage with Homes Tasmania and Community Housing Providers to align their needs with opportunities in suitable locations	City Development	Short	

Principle 4. Align Investment with Development	**4.1 Ensure adequate funding and resource allocation to allow investment in local mobility, urban greening, and infrastructure improvements**	*Objective: Ensure that appropriate funding and resources is provided to deliver catalytic investment throughout City of Launceston that leverages identified housing areas that accommodate different housing typologies, multi-modal infrastructure, urban greening and public realm areas.*	4.1.1 Prepare and implement Infrastructure Funding Frameworks for:			
			a. St Leonards and Waverly	City Development	Commenced	
			b. South Prospect	City Development	Short	
			c. Kings Meadows	City Development	Medium	
			d. Mowbray	City Development	Medium	
			e. Lilydale	City Development	Long	
			f. Northern Suburbs	City Development	Long	
			4.1.2 Investigate opportunities for infrastructure funding through Federal and State government grants and/or development contributions	City Development / Finance	Short	✓
			4.1.3 Prepare a Housing and Services Alignment Review and Implementation Strategy to identify enabling infrastructure that unlocks housing potential and creates a serviceable plan for implementation	City Development / Infrastructure Planning	Short	✓
			4.1.4 Establish a dedicated Property and Asset Manager for the City of Launceston to establish direction for Council's owned land	Strategy and Innovation	Commenced	
	4.2 Promote coordinated collaboration among council departments for effective delivery	*Objective: To consider the economic impact of Council investment and ensure that maximum value is returned through housing development and community improvements*	4.2.1 Establish a quarterly Housing Delivery Committee with applicable Council teams to discuss and address issues with the delivery of new dwellings in Launceston	Internal Council branches (TBC)	Short	✓
			4.2.2 Prioritise enabling infrastructure that facilitates and supports housing development in Council's Capital Works Program	Whole of Council	Short	
			4.2.3 Prepare an internal housing monitor to track development occurring in City of Launceston and identify trends and roadblocks for delivery	City Development/SEDA	Short	✓

Monitoring and Evaluation

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) provide a measurable framework to assess the success of the Launceston Housing Plan in achieving its goals. These indicators are designed to track progress across critical areas such as housing supply, diversity, affordability, and the success of partnerships. The KPIs are related to the Plan's principles, aiming to ensure accountability, enable evidence-based decision-making, and allow for regular evaluation to guide adaptive management. The following items can be used to establish a monitoring and evaluating system framework:

<u>Availability and Supply</u>

- Track the number of new houses developed each year in comparison to population growth based on the net change in total population and average household size. (E.g. 1,000 new residents and average household size of 2.1 would require in excess of 476 new dwellings).
- Supply of land is within 'target range' based on the most current land supply estimates and demand forecasts.

<u>Housing Diversity</u>

- Annual percentage decrease in single detached dwellings as a proportion of total housing stock annually.
- Annual increase in the number of dwellings available for social housing or affordable housing.

<u>Engagement and partnerships</u>

- Number of residents engaged through online platforms, workshops, or surveys related to housing plan initiatives increases annually.
- All established forums and working groups meet at least once per quarter ongoing

Reporting and Accountability Mechanisms

The Reporting and Accountability Mechanisms establish a structured approach to monitor and communicate progress on the implementation of the housing plan. Through regular reporting, stakeholder engagement, and internal reviews, these mechanisms foster transparency and collaboration. By integrating adaptive management practices and clear feedback loops, the City of Launceston can ensure the plan remains responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities while maintaining accountability to the community.

<u>Regular Reporting</u>

- Annual publication of a "Housing Plan Implementation Report" providing a high-level overview of key initiatives or activities, progress against each KPI, challenges faced during the year, and an outline of the following year.

<u>Stakeholder Engagement</u>

- Regular consultations with developers, community groups, infrastructure providers, and housing providers as outlined in this plan.

<u>Internal Reviews</u>

- Establishment of a housing plan steering committee to oversee implementation and review progress, reassess KPIs, and identifying corrective actions if required.

<u>Transparency</u>

- Investigate opportunities for open access to performance data through an online dashboard or regular updates on the council's website.
    - Consider the inclusion of housing plan progress as a regular agenda item in council meetings.

APPENDICIES

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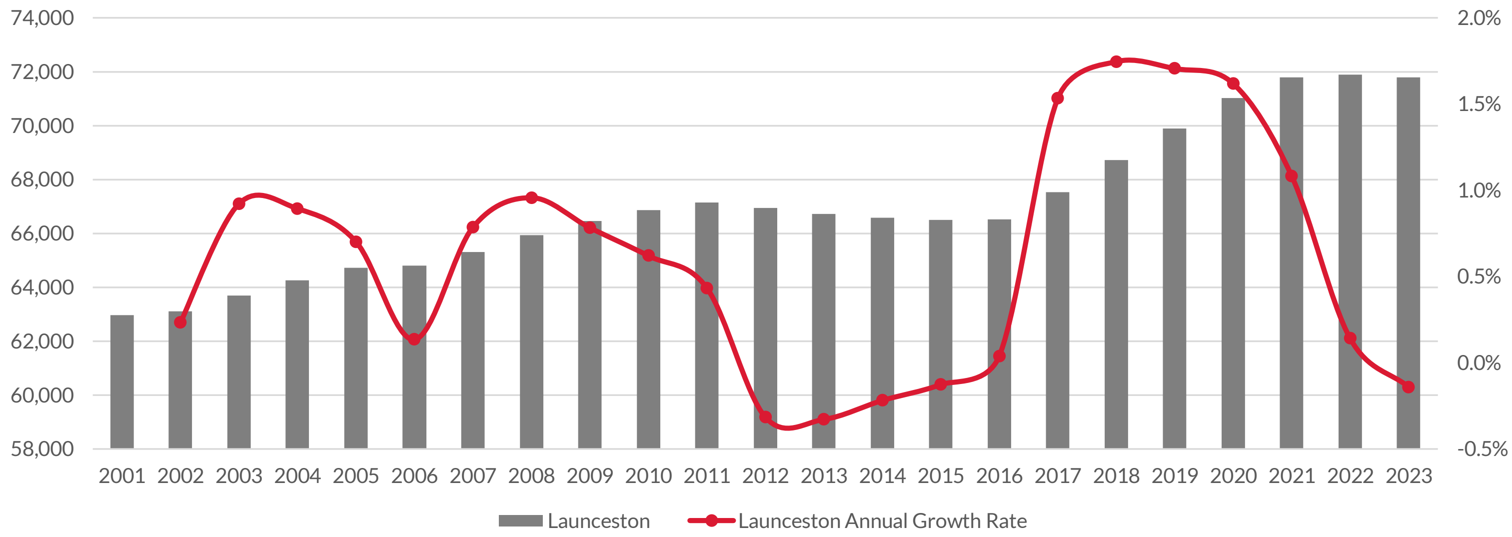
Appendix A – Population and households

Table 1 Greater Launceston Council's Official Estimated Residential Population

Region	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Launceston	63695	64264	64715	64802	65311	65936	66452	66864	67154	66942	66722	66576	66492	66518	67537	68716	69888	71019	71788	71889	71788
George Town	6713	6760	6755	6755	6762	6779	6829	6872	6857	6831	6838	6854	6857	6873	6914	6958	7020	7186	7206	7267	7330
Meander Valley	18558	18803	18889	19052	19190	19342	19477	19588	19622	19581	19540	19519	19502	19553	19802	20037	20286	20603	21139	21354	21449
Northern Midlands	12209	12324	12422	12561	12568	12593	12638	12675	12729	12739	12765	12819	12873	12972	13132	13362	13492	13661	14022	14137	14279
West Tamar	20869	21254	21454	21700	21925	22122	22420	22647	22833	22798	22851	22921	23007	23092	23600	24091	24602	25123	25717	25931	26039

Source: ABS Regional Population

Figure 1 Population and annual growth rate 2001-2023, Launceston



Source: ABS Regional Population

Table 2 Launceston Service Age Profile

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Pre-schoolers	4025	3950	3926	4001	4057	4234	4329	4393	4248	4333	4267	4200	4073	3977	4000	3984	3964	3975	3964	3905	3828
School age	13140	13193	13167	13096	13149	13235	13212	13011	12859	12728	12648	12557	12447	12402	12398	12462	12495	12539	12458	12487	12434
Tertiary education and independence	4933	5079	5249	5313	5219	5140	5190	5287	5444	5285	5178	5186	5211	5326	5499	5504	5456	5211	5009	4852	4748
Young workers	8794	8785	8676	8515	8520	8548	8620	8745	8789	8740	8680	8586	8625	8623	8956	9520	10138	10726	11368	11353	11240
Parents and homebuilders	12905	13016	13136	13126	13258	13276	13257	13173	13112	12884	12756	12600	12493	12432	12503	12611	12710	12897	12890	13006	13125
Older workers and pre-retirees	7815	7945	8062	8210	8164	8241	8293	8428	8506	8561	8547	8599	8514	8409	8463	8524	8580	8652	8738	8673	8653
Empty nesters and retirees	5174	5307	5525	5595	5937	6178	6417	6582	6829	6965	7165	7230	7321	7424	7405	7528	7630	7769	7824	7955	7971
Seniors	5642	5705	5647	5583	5585	5618	5642	5708	5773	5857	5864	5985	6157	6296	6666	6918	7209	7518	7749	7846	7962
Elderly	1267	1284	1327	1363	1422	1466	1492	1537	1594	1589	1617	1633	1651	1629	1647	1665	1706	1732	1788	1812	1827
Total	63695	64264	64715	64802	65311	65936	66452	66864	67154	66942	66722	66576	66492	66518	67537	68716	69888	71019	71788	71889	71788

Source: ABS Regional Population

Table 3 Persons per dwelling, Launceston

	2011	2016	2021
One person	7,852	8,226	8,696
Two persons	8,783	8,694	9,543
Three persons	3,778	3,706	4,090
Four persons	3,228	3,085	3,404
Five persons	1,257	1,178	1,333
Six persons	386	367	441
Seven persons	96	111	139
Eight or more persons	51	51	82
Total	**25,431**	**25,418**	**27,728**

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing

Table 4 Housing suitability, Launceston

	2016	2021	2016	2021
Four or more extra bedrooms needed	0	12	0.0%	0.0%
Three extra bedrooms needed	13	16	0.1%	0.1%
Two extra bedrooms needed	101	153	0.4%	0.6%
One extra bedroom needed	555	762	2.3%	2.9%
No bedrooms needed or spare	4,948	5,204	20.7%	19.8%
One bedroom spare	8,749	9,307	36.5%	35.4%
Two bedrooms spare	7,792	8,595	32.5%	32.7%
Three bedrooms spare	1,538	1,915	6.4%	7.3%
Four or more bedrooms spare	259	292	1.1%	1.1%
TOTAL	23,955	26,256	100.0%	100.0%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing
Note: figures exclude 'Not stated' and 'Unable to determine' categories.

Table 5 Broad household types and common housing preferences

Single income with no children in the home	Dual income with no children in the home	Young and Established Families	Empty Nesters
These households are typically suited to one- and two-bedroom apartments or smaller townhouses. They are more likely to be renters than other household formations and often exercise a high level of mobility. They comprise about 15% of households in Launceston.	These households typically have higher rental and purchasing power and may or may not be looking to upsize from smaller dwellings into larger homes to have space for a growing family. They comprise about 10% of households in Launceston.	These households are characterised by having dependent children and typically require larger homes with good access to schools, community and social services, and employment opportunities. They comprise about 35% of households in Launceston.	These households once had children in them, but those children have since grown up and are now living independently. Empty Nesters typically would like to remain close to their adult children but might prefer a smaller and more accessible dwelling than the one they occupied as a younger family. In many cases, Empty Nesters continue to occupy larger homes more suited to families with dependent children as their options for downsizing into something suitable are limited and in some cases there are financial incentives to remain in their large home. This is recognised as the plurality household formation in Launceston, with approximately 40% of households being empty nesters.
Example households: - Single people - Young professionals	Example households: - Couples with no children - Adults sharing a house	Example households: - Families with a child or children in childcare - Families with school age child/ren - Intergenerational households	Example households: - Older couples - Retirees - Grandparents

Housing preferences: - Flat or apartment - Townhouses	Housing preferences: - Townhouses - Detached houses	Housing preferences: - Separate houses	Housing preferences: - Flat or apartment - Townhouses

Table 6 Dwelling type distribution and suitability

Dwelling Type	Dwelling Total	Dwelling Percentage	Population that is suited to this dwelling type	Total % of population that is suited to this dwelling type
Separate house	22,246	80.2%	DINK (10%) + Families (35%)	45%
Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse, etc	2,922	10.5%	SINK (15%), DINK (10%), Empty Nesters (40%)	65%
Flat or apartment	2,396	8.6%	SINK (15%), Empty Nesters (40%)	55%
Other	108	0.4%	N/A	N/A

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing

Note: dwelling totals exclude 'Other' category which includes dwelling types such as caravans, houseboats, etc.

Table 7 Housing Tenure, 2021

Housing Tenure	City of Launceston	Regional TAS
Fully owned	30.6%	38.0%
Mortgage	29.7%	30.4%
Renting - Total	32.8%	23.9%
Renting - Social housing	6.5%	4.6%
Renting - Private	26.1%	19.1%
Other tenure type	1.7%	2.1%

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing

Appendix B – Labour force and income

Table 8 Quarterly Unemployment Rate

	2019 Q1	2019 Q2	2019 Q3	2019 Q4	2020 Q1	2020 Q2	2020 Q3	2020 Q4	2021 Q1	2021 Q2	2021 Q3	2021 Q4	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3
Launceston	7.4%	7.5%	7.3%	7.4%	6.8%	6.6%	7.1%	8.0%	8.2%	7.8%	6.9%	6.1%	5.3%	5.1%	4.8%	4.0%	4.2%	4.1%	4.4%	4.6%	4.7%	4.6%	4.3%
West Tamar	4.2%	4.3%	4.2%	4.1%	3.7%	3.8%	4.3%	5.0%	5.2%	4.8%	4.1%	3.5%	3.0%	2.9%	2.8%	2.3%	2.4%	2.3%	2.6%	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%	2.6%
Northern Midlands	4.7%	4.8%	4.6%	4.6%	4.2%	4.2%	4.7%	5.4%	5.6%	5.4%	4.7%	4.2%	3.7%	3.6%	3.3%	2.7%	2.8%	2.6%	2.7%	2.8%	2.7%	2.7%	2.7%
Meander Valley	3.8%	4.0%	3.9%	3.9%	3.6%	3.6%	4.1%	4.8%	5.0%	4.8%	4.1%	3.6%	3.1%	3.0%	2.8%	2.4%	2.6%	2.5%	2.7%	2.7%	2.6%	2.5%	2.4%
George Town	10.3%	10.8%	10.7%	10.7%	9.9%	9.4%	10.1%	11.3%	11.6%	11.2%	10.3%	9.3%	8.4%	8.3%	7.8%	6.6%	6.8%	6.6%	6.9%	7.2%	7.2%	7.0%	6.6%

Source: REMPLAN Small Area Labour Force

Table 9 Quarterly Participation Rate

	2019 Q1	2019 Q2	2019 Q3	2019 Q4	2020 Q1	2020 Q2	2020 Q3	2020 Q4	2021 Q1	2021 Q2	2021 Q3	2021 Q4	2022 Q1	2022 Q2	2022 Q3	2022 Q4	2023 Q1	2023 Q2	2023 Q3	2023 Q4	2024 Q1	2024 Q2	2024 Q3
Launceston	62.8%	62.5%	62.2%	62.1%	62.4%	62.3%	62.8%	63.0%	63.4%	64.3%	64.4%	64.5%	64.5%	64.4%	64.6%	65.2%	65.7%	66.2%	66.0%	65.6%	65.0%	64.4%	64.4%
West Tamar	61.2%	60.9%	60.4%	60.3%	60.4%	60.3%	60.7%	60.8%	61.1%	61.9%	61.9%	61.9%	61.9%	61.8%	62.0%	62.5%	62.9%	63.3%	62.9%	62.4%	61.8%	61.3%	61.3%
Northern Midlands	61.6%	61.3%	60.8%	60.6%	60.8%	60.7%	61.2%	61.4%	61.6%	62.4%	62.4%	62.4%	62.4%	62.3%	62.5%	63.0%	63.5%	63.9%	63.6%	63.1%	62.5%	61.8%	61.8%
Meander Valley	61.8%	61.5%	61.1%	61.0%	61.1%	61.0%	61.4%	61.6%	61.9%	62.7%	62.7%	62.6%	62.7%	62.5%	62.8%	63.3%	63.6%	63.9%	63.5%	62.9%	62.4%	61.9%	61.9%
George Town	50.9%	50.6%	50.3%	50.1%	50.2%	50.1%	50.3%	50.2%	50.6%	51.2%	51.2%	51.3%	51.3%	51.2%	51.3%	51.8%	52.2%	52.7%	52.5%	52.1%	51.6%	51.0%	51.0%

Source: REMPLAN Small Area Labour Force

Appendix C – Housing supply and development trends

Table 10 New dwelling approvals by suburb

Suburb	Category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	TOTAL
Dilston	Balance	1	1	0	2	0	1	5
East Launceston	Established area	0	3	1	3	1	3	11
Invermay (Tas.)	Established area	1	1	3	3	10	2	20
Karoola	Balance	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Kings Meadows	Growth area	5	37	23	20	7	10	102
Lalla	Balance	0	2	0	0	1	0	3
Launceston	Established area	0	9	16	2	2	4	33
Lebrina	Balance	0	4	0	1	1	0	6
Lilydale (Tas.)	Balance	0	2	4	5	9	3	23
Mayfield (Tas.)	Established area	0	8	0	3	3	2	16
Mowbray (Tas.)	Established area	0	6	13	6	38	10	73
Newnham	Established area	2	16	9	17	9	5	58
Newstead (Tas.)	Established area	3	10	22	14	9	9	67
Norwood (Tas.)	Established area	1	9	5	4	0	0	19
Nunamara	Balance	0	4	1	2	1	0	8
Patersonia	Balance	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Prospect (Tas.)	Growth area	2	2	3	3	2	2	14
Punchbowl (Tas.)	Established area	6	6	9	3	1	2	27
Ravenswood (Tas.)	Established area	1	37	11	17	7	14	87
Relbia	Balance	3	4	4	1	1	3	16
Rocherlea	Established area	0	0	0	6	44	2	52
South Launceston	Established area	1	8	13	10	11	7	50
St Leonards (Tas.)	Growth area	12	16	17	15	7	16	83
Summerhill	Established area	2	19	19	7	3	7	57
Swan Bay (Tas.)	Balance	1	14	11	5	3	8	42

Tayene	Balance	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Trevallyn	Established area	0	3	2	2	0	1	8
Turners Marsh	Balance	0	1	0	1	0	2	4
Underwood (Tas.)	Balance	0	1	2	1	2	0	6
Waverley (Tas.)	Established area	0	1	4	3	5	5	18
West Launceston	Established area	1	11	12	7	6	6	43
White Hills (Tas.)	Balance	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Windermere (Tas.)	Balance	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
Youngtown	Growth area	13	60	70	93	52	29	317
	TOTAL	55	300	275	257	235	154	1276

Source: City of Launceston (Compiled by REMPLAN)

Table 11 Dwelling structure, Launceston

	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021
Separate house	21,760	22,493	23,534	23,424	24,551
Medium density	4,486	4,731	5,107	5,883	6,243
High density	226	205	207	327	193
Other	213	121	136	126	131
Caravan, cabin, houseboat	67	75	90	60	79
Not stated	249	3	24	104	83
Total	**27,001**	**27,628**	**29,098**	**29,924**	**31,281**

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing

Table 12 Number of bedrooms in private dwellings, Launceston

	2006	2011	2016	2021
None (includes bedsitters)	99	81	100	91
1	1,494	1,621	1,574	1,578
2	5,593	5,848	5,819	6,278
3	12,930	13,112	12,762	13,846
4	3,282	3,718	3,968	4,586
5 or more	743	856	875	1,090
Not stated	1,316	1,164	2,073	1,498
	25,457	**26,400**	**27,171**	**28,968**

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing

Table 13 Year of construction by dwelling type, Launceston

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
DWELLING	106	79	161	79	135	144	134	128	117	62	117	102	113	111	124	93	95	87	182	85	153
FLAT/S	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	0	6	5	5	4	0	0	0	4	6	2	1	0	18
UNIT/S	39	7	12	10	7	19	5	2	15	9	9	2	1	4	4	4	6	14	1	12	46
VILLA UNITS	4	7	31	27	80	63	53	33	39	64	67	38	56	41	83	43	41	78	109	35	51
CONJOINED UNITS	5	2	4	8	19	24	8	7	6	13	12	9	5	16	10	18	16	14	0	2	13
MULTIPLE STOREY UNITS	0	0	0	33	13	26	3	0	8	1	3	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
DWELLING & FLAT/S	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	9	2	6	7	4	2	2	2	2	3	0
RURAL RESIDENTIAL	18	11	42	9	15	8	17	16	17	21	11	29	13	23	10	22	8	11	27	21	5
Total	172	108	250	168	270	286	220	188	208	175	233	187	197	203	235	186	174	208	322	160	286

Source: Northern Tasmania Residential Supply and Demand Study, 2024

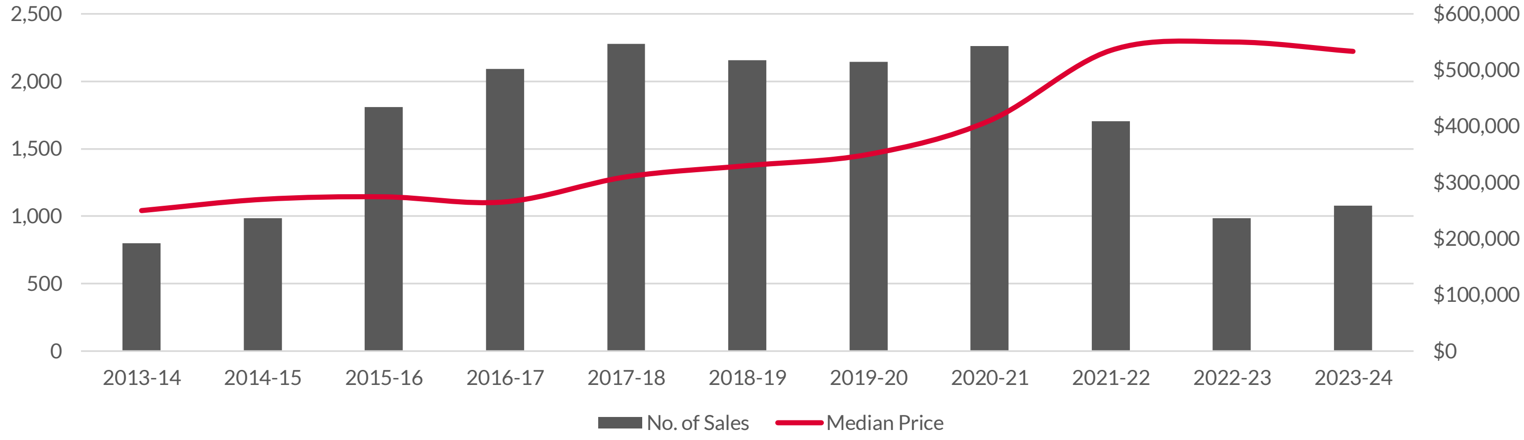
Appendix D – Housing and affordability

House and Unit Sales

Launceston's housing market has experienced changes over recent years, with prices for both purchases and rentals increasing significantly. This has increased housing stress for many Launceston residents, and the new housing being developed is not necessarily suited for the emerging demographic profile.

Over the past 10 years, Launceston's housing market peaked in 2017-18 with 2,276 house sales at a median price of $310,000. Since then, the number of sales has dropped to 1,080 in 2023-24, while the median price has risen to $533,300. The median price has remained relatively stable since 2021-22, when it increased to $535,000, up from $410,000 in 2020-21.

Figure 2 House Sales, 2013-2024, Launceston

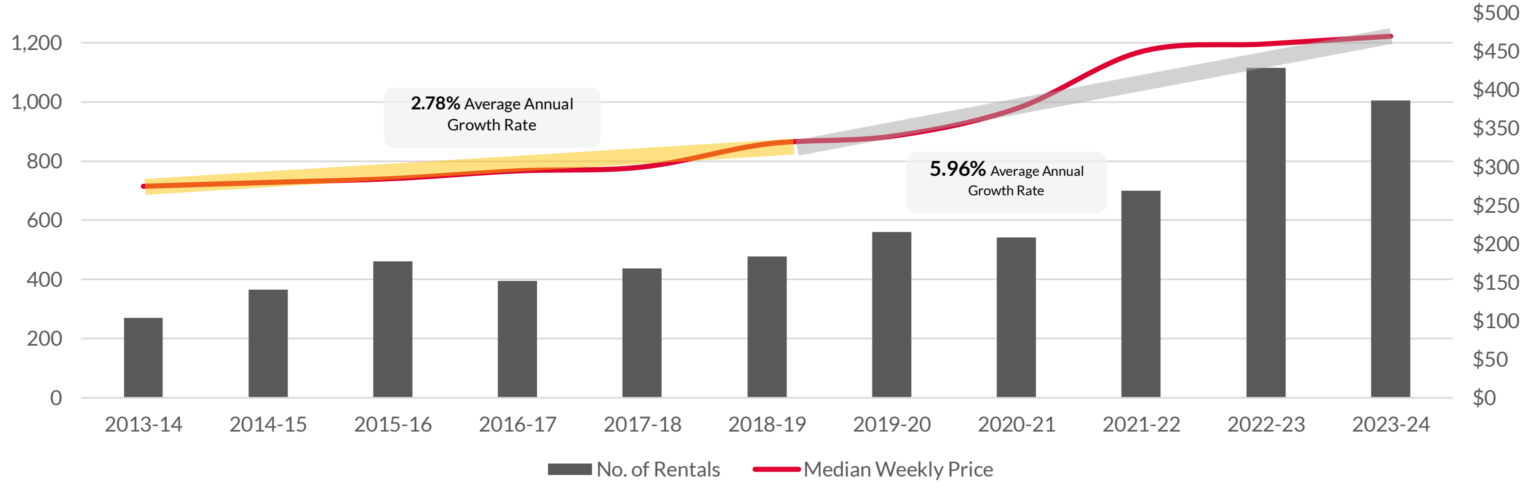


Source: REMPLAN Housing

House Rentals

The number of house rental listings in Launceston steadily rose from 271 in 2013-14 to 700 in 2021-22, followed by a significant 59.3% jump to 1,115 listings in 2022-23. This figure slightly declined to 1,005 in 2023-24, marking a total increase of 270.8% from 2013-14 to 2023-24. Over the same period, the median weekly rent increased gradually from $275 to $470, reflecting a 70.9% rise.

Figure 3 Median weekly rent, houses, 2013-2024, Launceston

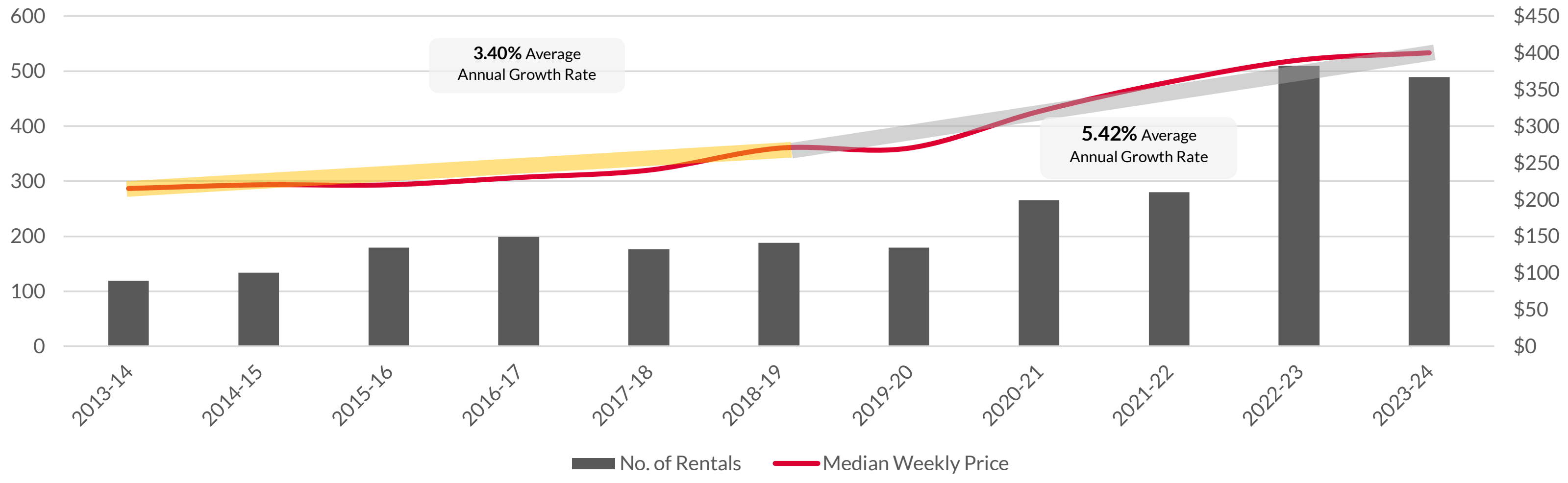


Source: REMPLAN Housing

Unit Rentals

Unit rental listings in Launceston followed a similar trend to houses, with a significant increase from 280 in 2021-22 to 510 in 2022-23, followed by a slight decline to 489 in 2023-24. Like house rentals, the median weekly rent for units gradually rose from $215 in 2013-14 to $400 in 2023-24, reflecting a higher growth rate of 86.0%.

Figure 4 Median weekly rent, units, 2013-2024, Launceston

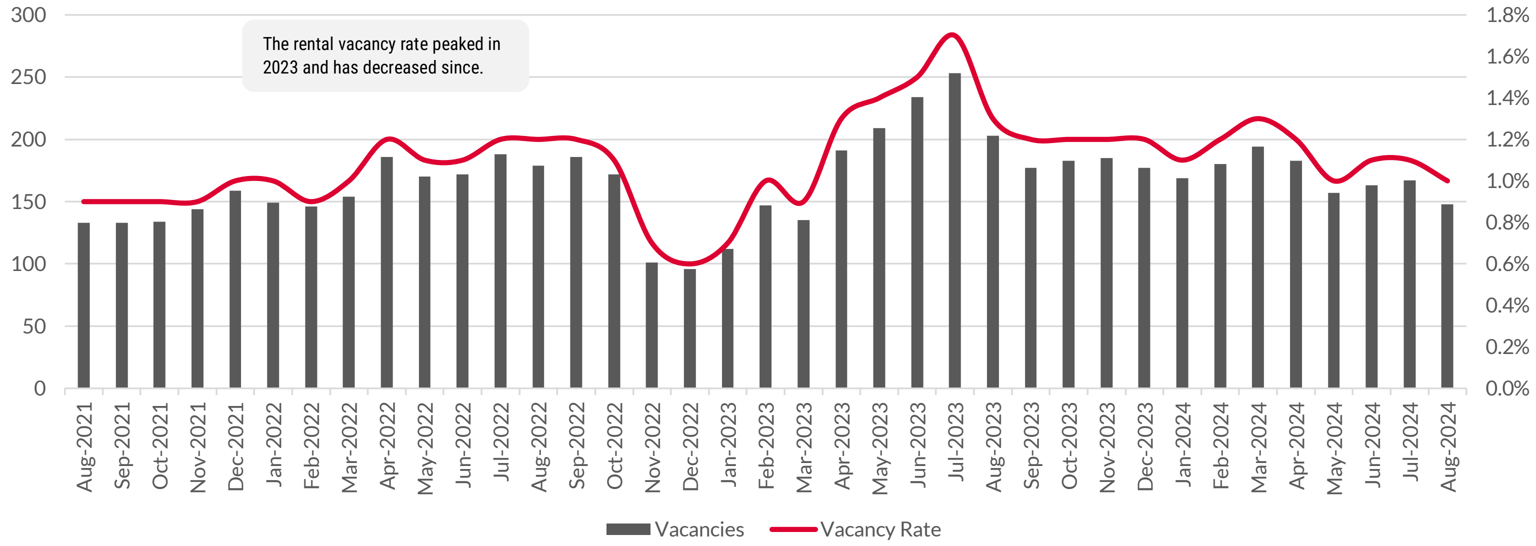


Source: REMPLAN Housing

Rental Vacancies

In August 2024, there were 148 rental vacancies in Launceston, down from 167 in July, marking the lowest number since March 2023. The vacancy rate dropped to 1%, slightly down from 1.1% in July, and from 1.3% in August 2023. Rental vacancies in Launceston peaked in July 2023, with 253 vacancies and a 1.7% vacancy rate. The lowest number of vacancies occurred in December 2022, with 96 vacancies and a rate of 0.6%.

Figure 5 Rental vacancy rates 2021-2024, Launceston



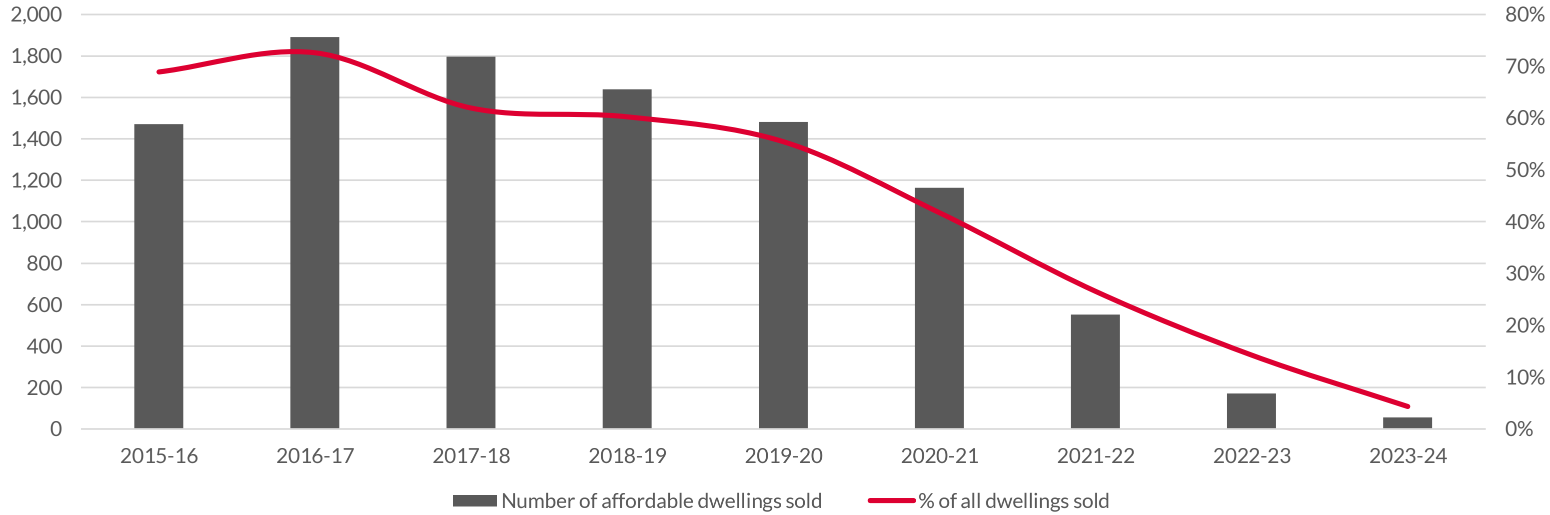
Source: SQM Research

Housing Affordability

The term 'housing affordability' refers to the relationship between the expenditure on housing and household incomes as a way to reflect potential barriers for entry into the housing market. The number of dwellings that are affordable has a strong relationship with income. A dwelling is considered to be unaffordable if the asking price for sale or rent is more than 30% of household income. The lower household incomes are, the fewer homes that are considered to be affordable to rent or buy.

In 2015-16 there were 1,472 affordable dwellings sold in Launceston, representing 69% of all dwellings sold. By 2023-24 this had decreased to 56 affordable dwellings sold, representing 4% of all dwellings sold. These higher prices and lower sale numbers reflect a strained housing market, highlighting the need for more affordable housing options

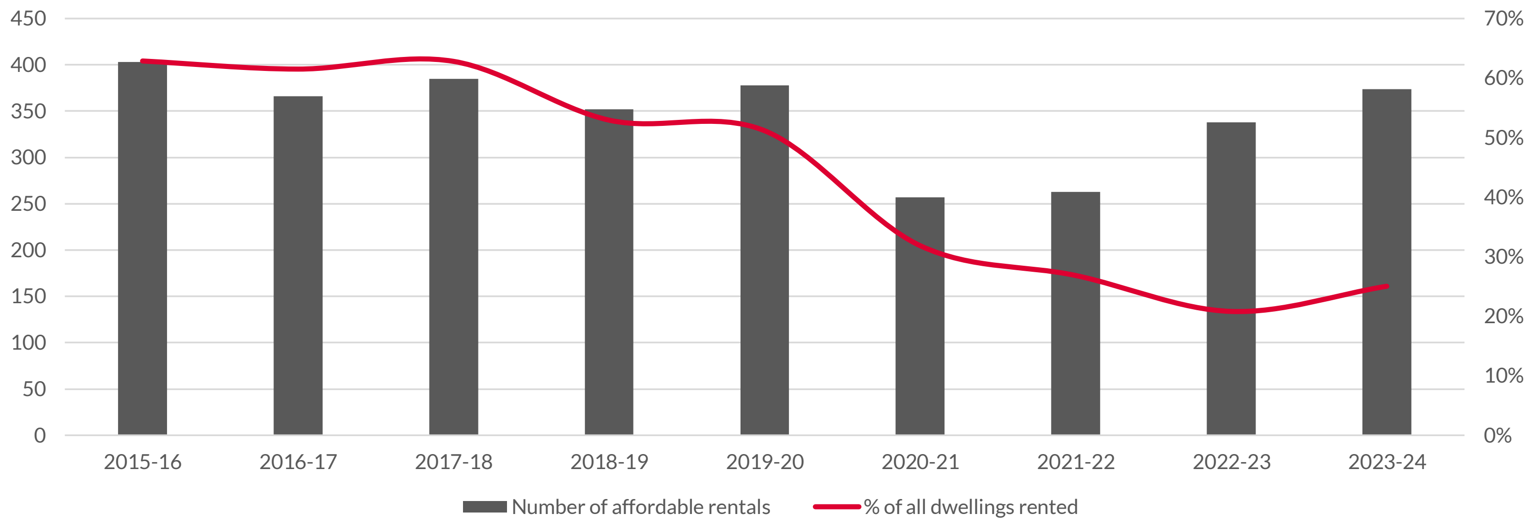
Figure 6 Affordable housing sales 2015-2024, Launceston



Source: REMPLAN Housing

In 2015-16, there were 403 affordable rentals in Launceston, representing 63% of all rentals. This decreased to 374 affordable rentals in 2023-24, representing 25% of all rentals.

Figure 7 Affordable rentals 2015-2024, Launceston



Source: REMPLAN Housing

Appendix E – Housing supply and development trends

Table 14 New dwelling approvals

Launceston	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
New Houses	133	183	157	171	180	264	253	365	210	198	237
New Other Residential	65	31	109	20	38	24	12	28	43	20	8
Total	**198**	**214**	**266**	**191**	**218**	**288**	**265**	**393**	**253**	**218**	**245**
Annual change in total		8%	24%	-28%	14%	32%	-8%	48%	-36%	-14%	12%
West Tamar	**2013-14**	**2014-15**	**2015-16**	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**
New Houses	96	148	150	76	143	122	162	254	164	123	124
New Other Residential	50	34	15	21	4	5	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**146**	**182**	**165**	**97**	**147**	**127**	**162**	**254**	**164**	**123**	**125**
Annual change in total		25%	-9%	-41%	53%	-18%	33%	57%	-35%	-25%	2%
Meander Valley	**2013-14**	**2014-15**	**2015-16**	**2016-17**	**2017-18**	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**2023-24**
New Houses	86	101	97	63	114	88	118	222	116	141	158
New Other Residential	4	21	30	21	12	6	4	0	66	0	5
Total	**90**	**122**	**127**	**84**	**126**	**94**	**122**	**222**	**182**	**141**	**163**
Annual change in total		36%	4%	-34%	50%	-25%	30%	82%	-18%	-23%	16%

Source: ABS Building Approvals, Australia

Table 15 New dwelling approvals, public sector vs private sector, Launceston

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 YTD	Average 2020-2024
Private sector	262	373	229	184	219	72	253
Public sector	3	20	24	34	26	2	21
Total	265	393	253	218	245	74	275
Private share	99%	95%	90%	82%	88%	97%	92%
Public share	1%	5%	9%	16%	11%	3%	8%

Source: ABS, Building Approvals by Local Government Area

Note: 2024-25 includes data from July to October. Total values will differ from those listed in Table 10 as data is from different sources and taken for different geographic areas.

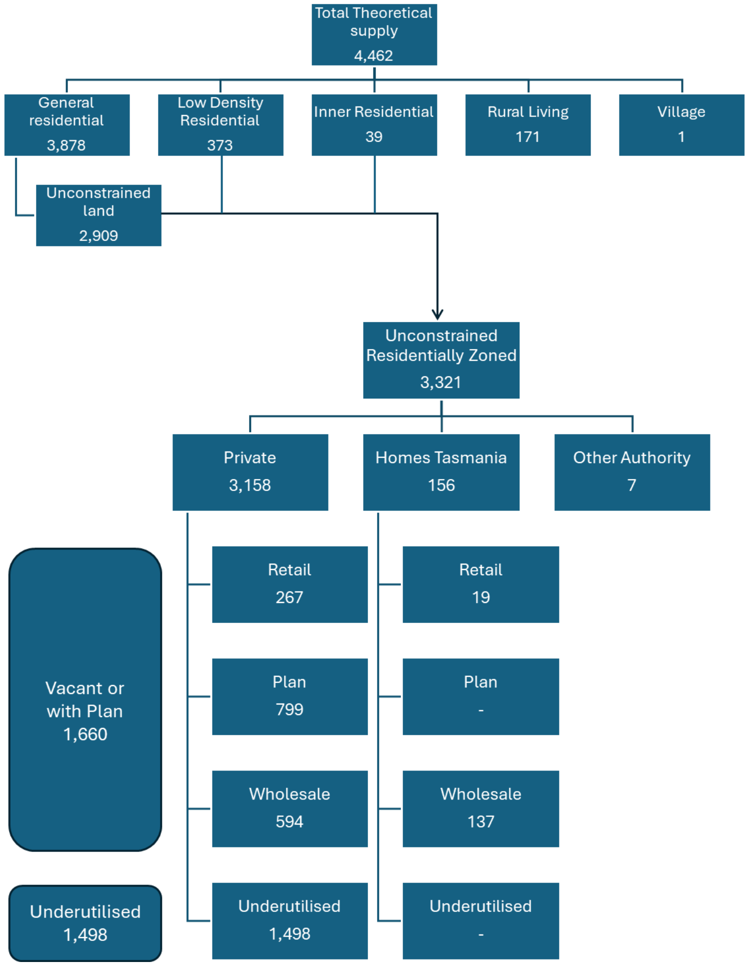
Appendix F – Land supply

The land supply summary approach outlined below ("*RDSS Land Supply Approach Summary*") has been taken directly from the Northern Tasmania Residential Demand and Supply Study 2024 (RDSS). The land supply assessment was completed utilising data from August 2023.

Land supply estimates for this project have utilised the figures from the RDSS but updated by:

- Removing yield for sites with dwelling approvals since 2023.
- Addition of estimated yields for new Neighbourhood Plan areas that are outside existing residentially zoned land.

The resulting yield assessment was then filtered and categorised as per the adjacent flow chart to determine final amount of developable land that used as a basis for this study.



RDSS Land Supply Approach Summary

Land The customised spatial database provided by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment forms the base of the supply analysis. The database is provided at a parcel level, but with key data provided at the property level, consistent with the ratings database (a property can contain one or more parcels).

Where properties are classified as vacant, all parcels are retained as separate features in the analysis. Non-vacant properties with multiple parcels were merged into a single feature for the purpose of later analysis. Manual reviews were undertaken to determine whether vacant parcels could be separated from occupied multi-parcel properties, such as utilising building footprint layers, however the outcomes were not reliable. Ultimately, the merging of occupied multi-parcel properties into single features had negligible impact on overall outcomes as larger properties were calculated as being capable of subdivision (back into similar number of parcels).

The spatial layer was clipped to residential zones of respective planning schemes being, General Residential, Inner Residential, Low Density Residential, Rural Living, and Village. The analysis did not include any Future Urban zoned land. At the time of the final analysis, Break O'Day and George Town had the Interim Planning Scheme in force. However, at the time of writing this report, both councils had transitioned to the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. As zoning changes were mainly translated like for like, the main change was through the application of code overlays in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. The supply analysis was rerun just prior to the issuing of this report using the new Tasmanian Planning Scheme and the difference in yields was 50 less for George Town and 300 more for Break O'Day in the update using the Tasmanian Planning Scheme zones and overlay constraints. Analysis was undertaken on a range of subdivisions to determine an average development takeout rate that accounts for the proportion of land required to provide for services, roads/driveways, and the like. Based on a review of a broad range of subdivisions of various scales across municipalities, takeout rates generally ranged between 15-30% and averaged around 20%. The 20% figure was applied as a standard takeout rate for all calculations of yields from land deemed to have further subdivision potential except for land in the Rural Residential Zone.

Several geography attributes were joined to each feature in the spatial database which are used to calculate average yields and categorise and calculate supply. This included geographies such as official suburbs, RLUS settlement types, as well as the assessment areas from this project. Land that was serviced and unserviced by TasWater was also identified in this step using TasWater's Sewer Serviced Land spatial dataset.

A building to land area ratio was calculated for each parcel. This ratio was used in later steps to identify whether residential land that was already developed with a dwelling met a threshold to be categorised as 'underutilised'.

Minimum land areas were calculated for each zone to identify the minimum size that currently accommodates a dwelling on a freehold title. The minimum land area figure was used in the calculation of average yields and in the classification of land. In the calculation of average yields, any parcels that were below the minimum land area for a respective zone was excluded from the calculation. This approach removed outliers and feature slivers that may reduce average yields in certain areas. In the classification of land, any parcels below the minimum land area in a given zone was allocated as unavailable.

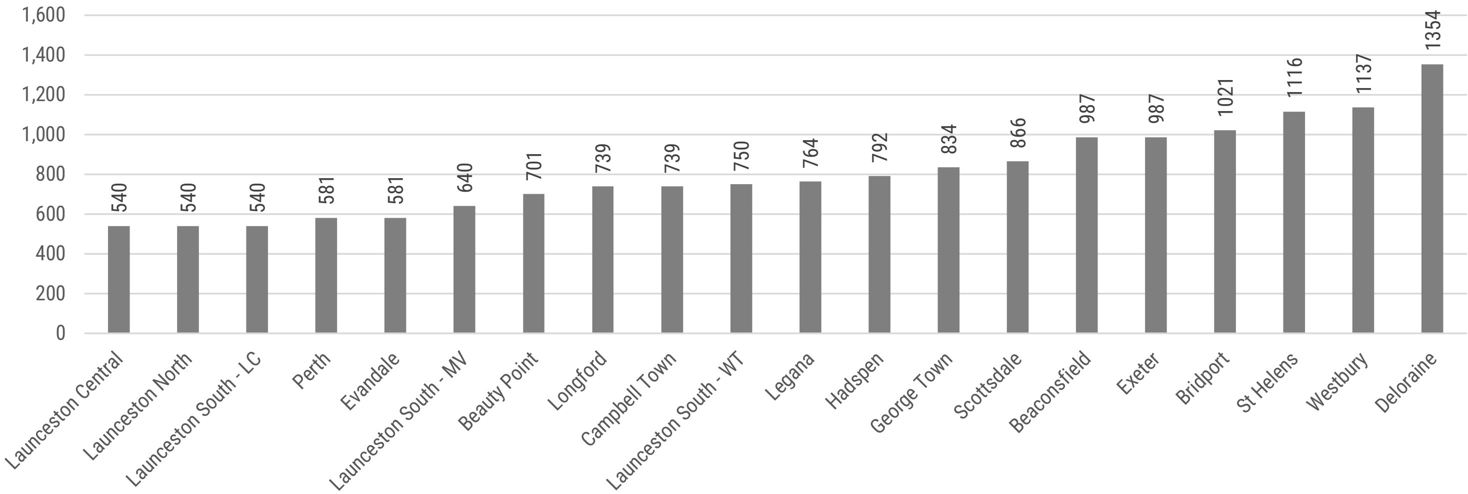
A land classification was applied based on a range of criteria specific to each land use zone. The three classifications were:

- Vacant: any land which had a VISTAS land use classification of 'Vacant' and was above the minimum land area in a given zone.

- Underutilised: underutilised land were properties currently occupied and allocated a residential land use under VISTAS but were of sufficient size and a low building to land area ratio to suggest underutilisation. Building to land area ratios were less than 5% (i.e. the buildings take up less than 5% of the properties land area) and the land was at least 5,000 sqm in area in the village and general residential zones. In the inner residential zone a 20% building to land area ratio and 3,000sqm land area was utilised to capture higher densities desired in this zone. In the Low Density Residential Zone a 2.5% building to land area ratio and a 1ha land area was applied. Parcels and properties with an underutilised classification were considered to have future subdivision potential and included in yield calculations.
- Unavailable: any land which did not meet the criteria above was allocated as unavailable. These included smaller or standard residential parcels which had dwelling improvements, any road casements, as well as any land given a non-residential land use classification in VISTAS, excluding agricultural uses in certain scenarios. This exclusion of non-residential land uses excludes uses such as parks, sports centres, commercial uses, churches, and police stations in all scenarios. In the 'theoretical' supply, all agricultural land uses are included however under the 'practical' supply scenario, higher value agricultural land uses were excluded. Exclusions applied to land uses such as nurseries, aquaculture and vineyards but did not apply to grazing or cropping land.

Average dwelling yields were calculated across the region which were then applied to individual parcels and properties. The process for yield calculation utilises the size of a land parcel which has had a dwelling constructed on it. This is therefore a dwelling yield and not a subdivision yield as it accounts for factors such as strata titling and resubdivision of land that is not typically accounted for when yields are based on average lot size of recent subdivisions. The process to calculate average yields was based on the specific settlement type and land use zone for each municipality. This provides a realistic estimate of dwelling yields based on regional and localised market factors. An example of the outcome of this approach is that different yield figures are applied in the general residential zone in Trevallyn compared to Riverside, which are different again for Legana or Exeter. As the supply analysis will be regularly updated, this approach will also capture changes in dwelling densities over time. The chart below illustrates the variation in average yields in the General Residential zone across the region.

Figure 8 Average yields (sqm / dwelling) in the General Residential Zone by assessment area.



In some instances in the low density and rural living zones, the average yield calculations are lower than the permitted minimum lot sizes. To address this, minimum subdivision sizes as specified in respective planning schemes are utilised instead of average yield calculations.

Development constraints are identified through overlays within respective planning schemes. Code overlays (and their equivalents in Interim Planning Schemes) were workshopped with the Regional Planners Group. Constraints do not limit the potential for a single dwelling to be constructed on an existing vacant parcel. The application of constraints does reduce the area of land available for subdivision in final yield calculations. Constraints include flooding, landslip, coastal erosion and inundation, certain natural assets, and electricity transmission infrastructure. An additional constraint slope constraint was also applied across the region where the slope of land was greater than 15%. This value was chosen upon review of numerous subdivisions as well as a qualitative assessment of construction cost estimates which indicated that 15% slope was a point where costs increased significantly, thereby becoming a constraint on development.

A final step before final yields were calculated is the input from individual councils. These were identified in one-on-one workshops with respective councils as well as detailed written feedback, mostly focussing on larger properties that may significantly impact supply. The process generally included a review of the application of Specific Area Plans, any large subdivisions that should be considered and not yet captured, decisions for refusal, and major impediments to development that are not identified in planning schemes but may have been identified through planning permit processes.

Final yields were calculated at a parcel/property level accounting for constraints, development take outs and average yields.

Appendix G – How we will grow

Table 16 Population forecast scenarios, Launceston

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040
90% upper	75129	75978	76816	77651	78476	79262	80018	80758	81486	82194	82891	83582	84278	84974	85675	86368
50% upper	74409	75076	75733	76390	77040	77654	78244	78822	79392	79946	80493	81037	81589	82143	82705	83261
Central forecast	73909	74449	74980	75513	76041	76537	77011	77476	77937	78384	78826	79268	79720	80176	80641	81102

Source: REMPLAN Forecast
Note: Forecasts were prepared in 2023. Figures have been rebased to zero in 2024, however no other modifications have bene made to assumptions or inputs.

Table 17 Forecast households (Central forecast), Launceston

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040
Couple family with children	6,923	6,967	6,999	7,030	7,054	7,077	7,096	7,114	7,126	7,149	7,170	7,191	7,215	7,230	7,248	7,268
Couple family with no children	7,893	7,993	8,090	8,189	8,284	8,377	8,468	8,549	8,640	8,724	8,806	8,884	8,960	9,045	9,126	9,197
One parent family	3,822	3,849	3,878	3,903	3,927	3,952	3,974	3,995	4,016	4,035	4,054	4,074	4,096	4,113	4,130	4,151
Other family	284	285	290	294	293	296	296	300	302	301	307	307	309	311	314	314
Lone person household	9,327	9,474	9,626	9,771	9,924	10,070	10,221	10,367	10,508	10,647	10,773	10,906	11,033	11,165	11,290	11,419
Group household	1,153	1,146	1,145	1,144	1,147	1,151	1,150	1,156	1,157	1,160	1,170	1,175	1,179	1,185	1,189	1,192
Multiple family	702	706	706	710	713	713	714	718	722	725	724	728	730	730	734	737
TOTAL	**30,104**	**30,420**	**30,734**	**31,041**	**31,342**	**31,636**	**31,919**	**32,199**	**32,471**	**32,741**	**33,004**	**33,265**	**33,522**	**33,779**	**34,031**	**34,278**

Source: REMPLAN Forecast
Note: Forecasts were prepared in 2023. Figures have been rebased to zero in 2024, however no other modifications have bene made to assumptions or inputs.

Appendix H – How much housing we need

Table 18 Forecast dwelling requirement scenarios, Launceston LGA

	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040
Forecast	340	683	1,023	1,356	1,682	1,999	2,304	2,605	2,898	3,189	3,473	3,754	4,031	4,308	4,580	4,847
50% upper	560	960	1,357	1,746	2,127	2,498	2,857	3,210	3,554	3,895	4,228	4,557	4,881	5,204	5,522	5,834
90% upper	877	1,359	1,837	2,307	2,768	3,217	3,652	4,080	4,497	4,910	5,314	5,712	6,104	6,494	6,877	7,254

Source: REMPLAN
Note: Forecasts were prepared in 2023. Figures have been rebased to zero in 2024, however no other modifications have bene made to assumptions or inputs.

Table 19 Current dwelling profile versus potential dwelling profile to better suit household types

Forecast region	Current			2040		
	Detached	Missing middle	High density	Detached	Missing middle	High density
Northern	65%	32%	2%	31%	55%	14%
Central	79%	21%	0%	33%	67%	0%
Outer	85%	15%	0%	34%	66%	0%
Balance	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%

Notes:
'Current' figures are derived from ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing (Dwelling Structure) but excludes 'not stated' and forms of temporary housing.
'2040' figures are based on an assessment of household characteristics and which type of housing they would be suited to. E.g. assumes all lone person households would be best suited to 'missing middle', or 75% of 'group households' would be suited to 'missing middle' while 25% would be suited to a detached dwelling.

NTCA GROUND LAUNCESTON

01 NOVEMBER 2024

NTCA GROUND
MASTER PLANNING MASSING CONCEPT

TERROIR

City of LAUNCESTON

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DESIGN REPORT

TERROIR

TERROIR acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, build and inhabit.

We extend our respects to their Elders past and present.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Rev	Date	Revision details/status
-	2024-09-06	Report Issue
AMENDMENT	2024-11-01	FMG MP Feedback Incorporated

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NTCA GROUND INTRODUCTION

The City of Launceston (CoL), as the owner of the facility has engaged Terroir to progress the master planning exercise at the NTCA Ground precinct to address the shortcomings of the facility and to ensure any future project can be undertaken in strategic manner that meets the expectations of the CoL, the users of the facility and the broader community. The master plan was to consider a staged approach so disruption to tenants is managed.

In addressing the functional and operational requirements, the master plan is the foundation for achieving high quality outcomes for the buildings and spaces of the NTCA; respecting the heritage whilst providing modern amenity to players and spectators, and provide an appropriate design character.

NTCA GROUND BRIEF OVERVIEW

SCHEDULE OF AREAS

The provided schedule of areas in the brief aims to ensure that the CoL and the users will be satisfied with the upgraded facility, fitting its purpose and allowing for future growth opportunities.

We have reviewed the area schedules to assess the facility's size and its relationship with the grounds, which will inform their placement in the master plan. The details are presented in the following pages.

PAVILIONS

NTCA REDEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE OF AREAS

Description	Preferred size	No. required	Total m2
Player Facilities & Amenities			
Player Amenity			
Player Change rooms (Home)	60	4	240
Player Change room (visitor)	50	4	200
Player amenities (wet areas)	25	8	200
Showers (per wet area)	3		0
number of toilets (per wet area)	3		0
Accessible change Room	10	2	20
Trainers Rooms	10	4	40
First Aid	15	2	30
Doctors	10	2	20
			750 m2
Official Facilities & Amenities			
Umpires Briefing	30	2	60
Umpire Amenities (wet areas)	6	6	36
Time Keeper / Score Box	12	2	24
			120 m2
Social & Community Spaces			
Social, community multipurpose room	150	4	600
Kitchen / Kiosk	35	2	70
Bar	20	4	80
Kitchen / bar storage	10	2	20
Public toilets			0
Male	15	4	60
Female	15	4	60
Accessible	7	4	28
External covered viewing area	50	4	200
			1118 m2
Ancillary Spaces			
NTCA Office	15	1	15
Club Offices	10	5	50
Meeting rooms	20	2	40
Utility / Cleaners Store	5	2	10
Internal Storage	20	5	100
External Storage	20	5	100
			315 m2
Subtotal of Areas			2303 m2
circulation		15%	345.75
Ground Facilities & Amenities (sub total)			2648.75 m2

* OTHER FACILITIES

Cricket Performance Centre			
Indoor Training Nets (3.6x40m per lane)	144	8	1152
net circulation/clearance	20	8	160
Player Change rooms	30	2	60
Player amenities (wet areas)	20	2	40
Bag Storage	35	1	35
Accessible WC	7	1	7
Office	20	2	40
meeting/training room	30	1	30
Staff Room	25	1	25
Physio	24	1	24
Storage	30	1	30
Gym	150	1	150
Circulation			66.15
			1819.15 m2
Other			
Ground maintenances Facilites			
Storage shed	100	1	100
Amenties	8	1	8
Office	12	1	12
			120 m2
Outdoor Training			
Turf Nets	90	12	1080
Syntheic Turf Wickets	90	4	360
Runnup	70	16	1120

* Functional area for High Performance and Outdoor Training Area to be reviewed in conjunction with key stakeholders.

NTCA GROUND BRIEF OVERVIEW

SCHEDULE OF AREAS

PLAYER AMENITY

Player Change Rooms (Home)
4 x 60m^2 = 240m^2

Player Change Room (Visitor)
4 x 50m^2 = 200m^2

Player Amenities (Wet areas)
8 x 25m^2 = 200m^2

Accessible Change Room
2 x 10m^2 = 20m^2

Trainers Rooms
4 x 10m^2 = 40m^2

First Aid
2 x 15m^2 = 30m^2

Doctors
2 x 10m^2 = 20m^2

TOTAL AREA 750 m^2

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SPACES

Social, Community Multipurpose Room
4 x 150m^2 = 600m^2

Kitchen / Kiosk
2 x 35m^2 = 70m^2

Bar
4 x 20m^2 = 80m^2

Kitchen / Bar Storage
2 x 10m^2 = 20m^2

Public Toilets
Male - 4 x 15m^2 = 60m^2
Female - 4 x 15m^2 = 60m^2
Accessible - 4 x 7m^2 = 28m^2

External Covered Viewing Area
4 x 50m^2 = 200m^2

TOTAL AREA 1,118 m^2

OFFICIAL FACILITIES & AMENITIES

Umpires Briefing
2 x 30m^2 = 60m^2

Umpire Amenities (Wet areas)
6 x 6m^2 = 36m^2

Timekeeper / Score Box
2 x 12m^2 = 24m^2

TOTAL AREA 120 m^2

ANCILLARY SPACES

NTCA Office
1 x 15m^2 = 15m^2

Club Offices
5 x 10m^2 = 50m^2

Meeting Rooms
2 x 20m^2 = 40m^2

Utility / Cleaners Store
2 x 5m^2 = 10m^2

Internal Storage
5 x 20m^2 = 100m^2

External Storage
5 x 20m^2 = 100m^2

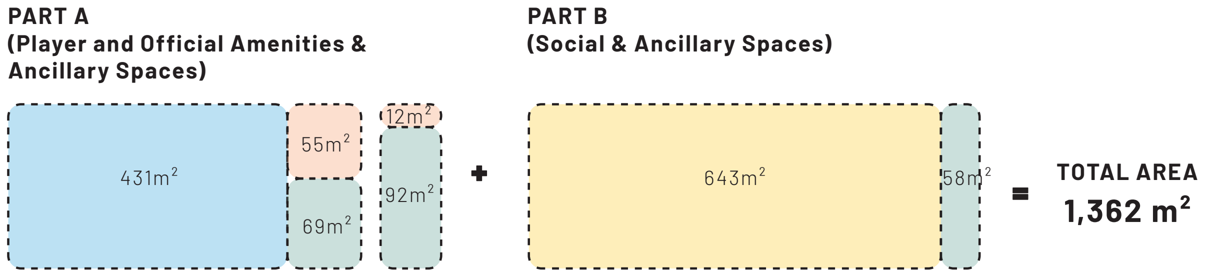
TOTAL AREA 315 m^2

NTCA GROUND FACILITY ARRANGEMENT

NO.1 GROUND PAVILION

The brief identified that the best outcome for user tenants would be to have separate buildings, each servicing their respective ground independently.

These guidelines have guided our facility concept into a two-pavilion arrangement.



PART A (Player and Official Amenities & Ancillary Spaces)

TOTAL AREA = 555 m²

PLAYER AMENITY

TOTAL AREA = 431 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Player Change Rooms (Home)
2 x 60m² = 120m²

Player Change Room (Visitor)
2 x 50m² = 100m²

Player Amenities (Wet areas)
4 x 25m² = 100m²

Accessible Change Room
1 x 10m² = 10m²

Trainers Rooms
2 x 10m² = 20m²

First Aid
1 x 15m² = 15m²

Doctors
1 x 10m² = 10m²

OFFICIAL FACILITIES & AMENITIES

TOTAL AREA = 55 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Umpires Briefing
1 x 30m² = 30m²

Umpire Amenities (Wet areas)
3 x 6m² = 18m²

ANCILLARY SPACES

TOTAL AREA = 69 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Internal Storage
3 x 20m² = 60m²

PART A OR PART B

TOTAL AREA = 106 m²

OFFICIAL FACILITIES & AMENITIES

TOTAL AREA = 14 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Timekeeper / Score Box
1 x 12m² = 12m²

ANCILLARY SPACES

TOTAL AREA = 92 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

NTCA Office
1 x 15m² = 15m²

Utility / Cleaners Store
1 x 5m² = 5m²

External Storage
3 x 20m² = 60m²

PART B (Social & Ancillary Spaces)

TOTAL AREA = 701 m²

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SPACES

TOTAL AREA = 643 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Social, Community Multipurpose Room
2 x 150m² = 300m²

Kitchen / Kiosk
1 x 35m² = 35m²

Bar
2 x 20m² = 40m²

Kitchen / Bar Storage
1 x 10m² = 10m²

Public Toilets
Male - 2 x 15m² = 30m²
Female - 2 x 15m² = 30m²
Accessible - 2 x 7m² = 14m²

External Covered Viewing Area
2 x 50m² = 100m²

ANCILLARY SPACES

TOTAL AREA = 58 m²

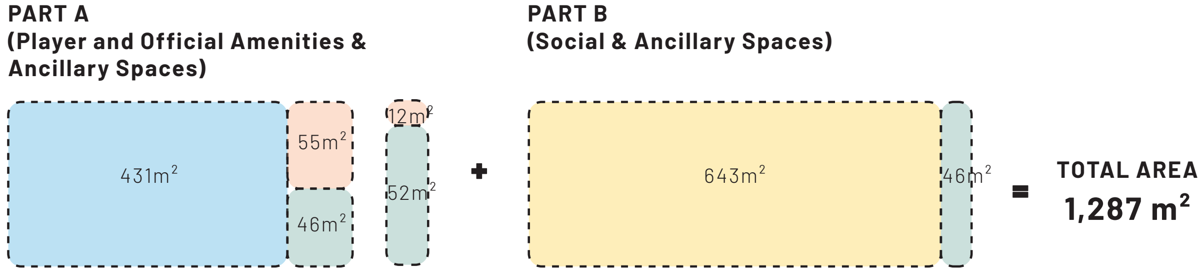
(incl. 15% circulation)

Club Offices
3 x 10m² = 30m²

Meeting Rooms
1 x 20m² = 20m²

NTCA GROUND FACILITY ARRANGEMENT

NO.2 GROUND PAVILION



PART A (Player and Official Amenities & Ancillary Spaces)

TOTAL AREA = 532 m²

PLAYER AMENITY

TOTAL AREA = 431 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Player Change Rooms (Home)
2 x 60m² = 120m²

Player Change Room (Visitor)
2 x 50m² = 100m²

Player Amenities (Wet areas)
4 x 25m² = 100m²

Accessible Change Room
1 x 10m² = 10m²

Trainers Rooms
2 x 10m² = 20m²

First Aid
1 x 15m² = 15m²

Doctors
1 x 10m² = 10m²

OFFICIAL FACILITIES & AMENITIES

TOTAL AREA = 55 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Umpires Briefing
1 x 30m² = 30m²

Umpire Amenities (Wet areas)
3 x 6m² = 18m²

ANCILLARY SPACES

TOTAL AREA = 46 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Internal Storage
2 x 20m² = 40m²

PART A OR PART B

TOTAL AREA = 66 m²

OFFICIAL FACILITIES & AMENITIES

TOTAL AREA = 14 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Timekeeper / Score Box
1 x 12m² = 12m²

ANCILLARY SPACES

TOTAL AREA = 52 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Utility / Cleaners Store
1 x 5m² = 5m²

External Storage
2 x 20m² = 40m²

PART B (Social & Ancillary Spaces)

TOTAL AREA = 689 m²

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SPACES

TOTAL AREA = 643 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Social, Community Multipurpose Room
2 x 150m² = 300m²

Kitchen / Kiosk
1 x 35m² = 35m²

Bar
2 x 20m² = 40m²

Kitchen / Bar Storage
1 x 10m² = 10m²

Public Toilets
Male - 2 x 15m² = 30m²
Female - 2 x 15m² = 30m²
Accessible - 2 x 7m² = 14m²

External Covered Viewing Area
2 x 50m² = 100m²

ANCILLARY SPACES

TOTAL AREA = 46 m²

(incl. 15% circulation)

Club Offices
2 x 10m² = 20m²

Meeting Rooms
1 x 20m² = 20m²

NTCA GROUND COMPARATIVE STUDY

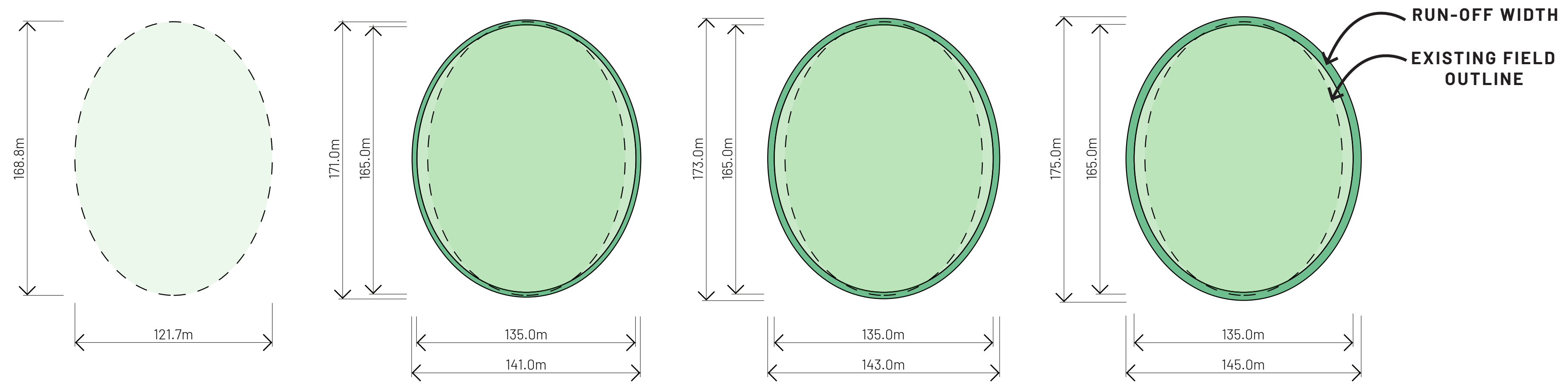
NO.1 GROUND FIELD COMPARISON (AFL & CRICKET)

For a contextual understanding of current and future ground's possibilities, we have compared the field sizes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- The main difference between different scale football fields is the width of the run-off.
- Extending the cricket training space beyond the Community Club status would require a wider field.

AFL FACILITY GUIDELINES



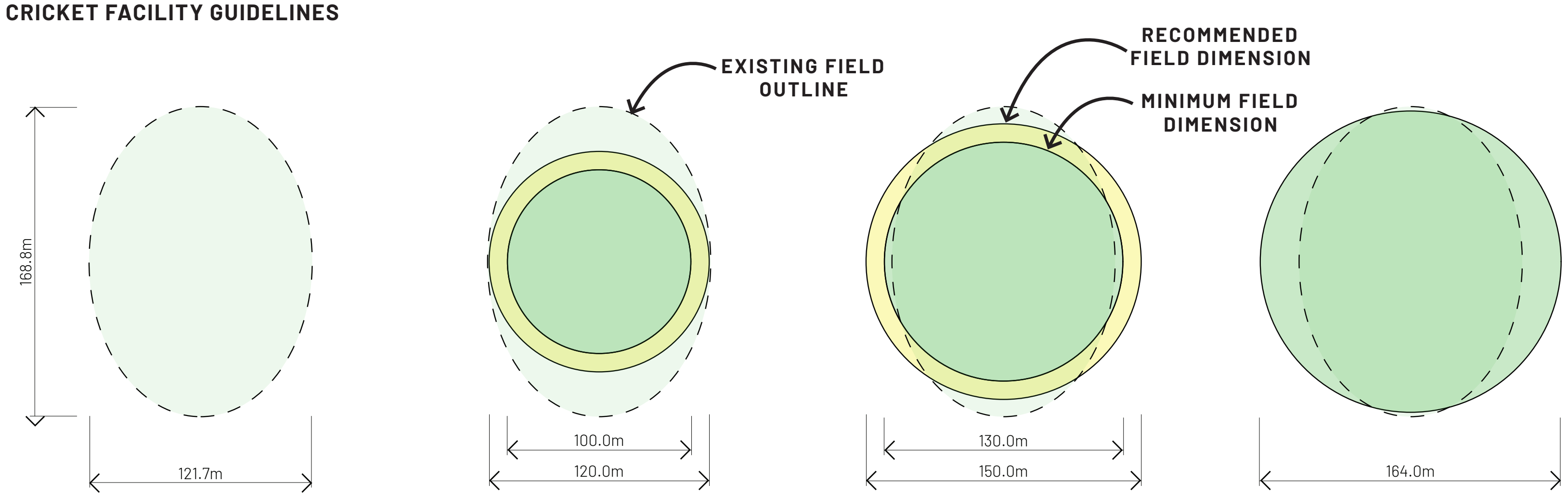
Existing field dimensions
(No. 1 Ground)

Local field dimensions
(Min 3m boundary run-off)

Regional field dimensions
(Min 4m boundary run-off)

State field dimensions
(Min 5m boundary run-off)

CRICKET FACILITY GUIDELINES



Existing field dimensions
(No. 1 Ground)

Open Age (Community Club)
field dimensions

Open Age (Premier Regional)
field dimensions

Domestic Men's & Underage
National Male Events field dimensions

Source:
-AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines (2019).
-Community Cricket Facilities Guidelines (2015).
-Existing Field dimensions are taken from the Google Maps satellite image.

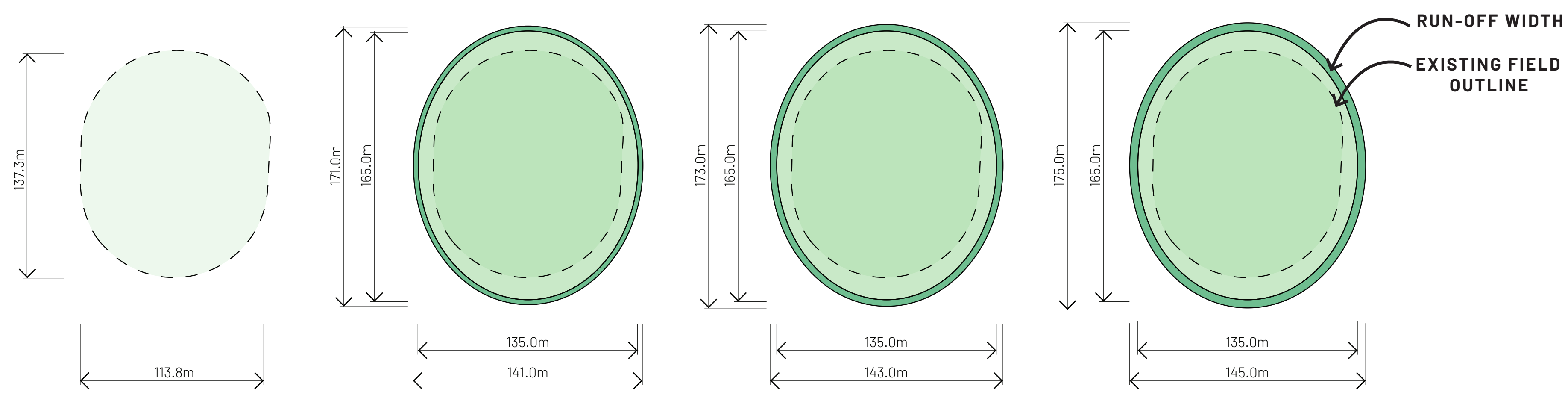
NTCA GROUND COMPARATIVE STUDY

NO.2 GROUND FIELD COMPARISON (AFL & CRICKET)

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

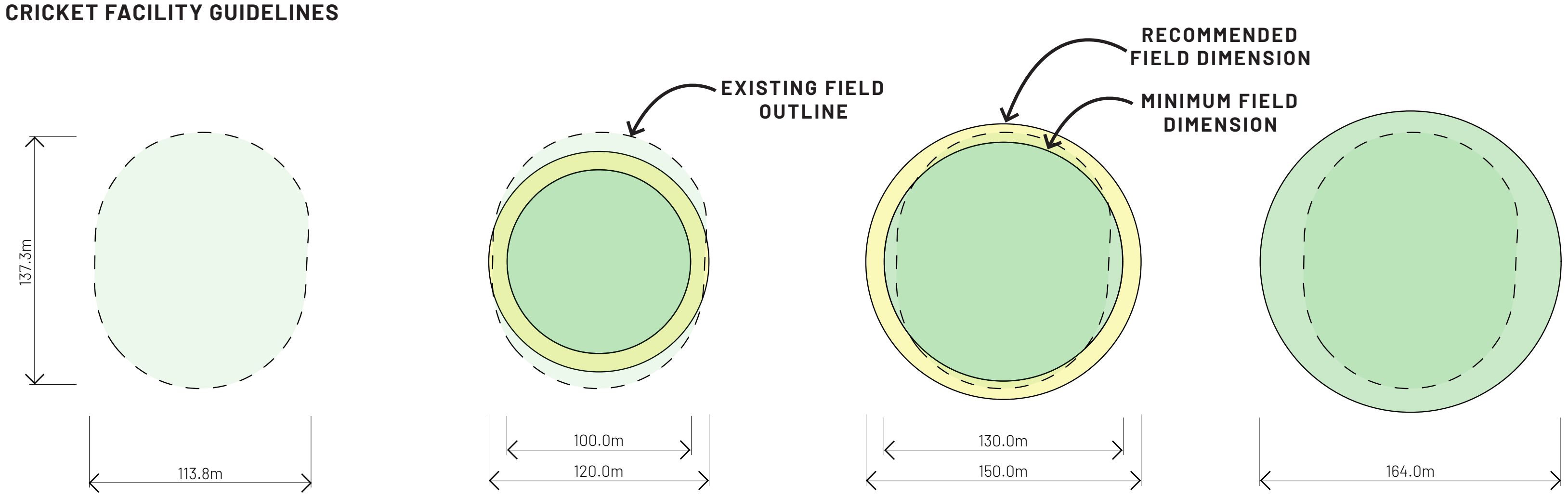
- The existing playing field is constrained by limited space, resulting in an irregular shape.
- The current field can host Community Club games, but an increase in width is needed to accommodate Regional games.

AFL FACILITY GUIDELINES



Existing field dimensions (No. 2 Ground) | **Local field dimensions** (Min 3m boundary run-off) | **Regional field dimensions** (Min 4m boundary run-off) | **State field dimensions** (Min 5m boundary run-off)

CRICKET FACILITY GUIDELINES



Existing field dimensions (No. 2 Ground) | **Open Age (Community Club)** field dimensions | **Open Age (Premier Regional)** field dimensions | **Domestic Men's & Underage** National Male Events field dimensions

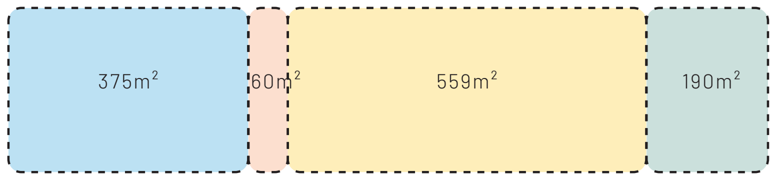
Source:
-AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines (2019).
-Community Cricket Facilities Guidelines (2015).
-Existing Field dimensions are taken from the Google Maps satellite image.

NTCA GROUND COMPARATIVE STUDY

SCHEDULE OF AREAS AFL COMPARISON

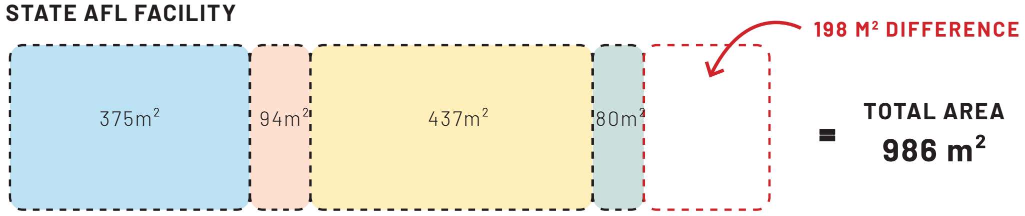
The following comparison shows the preferred **minimum standard guidelines** for the provision of main pavilion facilities **for State level facilities** at single playing field venues.

NO. 1 GROUND PAVILION *(excl. circulation)*



= **TOTAL AREA 1,184 m²**

STATE AFL FACILITY



= **TOTAL AREA 986 m²**

STATE AFL GUIDELINES

PLAYER AMENITY
TOTAL AREA = 335-375 m²

Player Change Rooms
(Home & Visitors
2 x 75-90m² = 150-180m²

Player Amenities
(Wet areas)
2 x 35m² = 70m²

Accessible Change Room
1 x 10m² = 10m²

Trainers Rooms
2 x 20m² = 40m²

First Aid
1 x 15m² = 15m²

Doctors
1 x 10m² = 10m²

*Gym / Fitness Area
1 x 40-50m² = 40-50m²

OFFICIAL FACILITIES & AMMENITIES
TOTAL AREA = 84-94 m²

Umpires Briefing
1 x 30-40m² = 30-40m²

Umpire Amenities
(Wet areas)
4 x 6m² = 24m²

Timekeeper / Score Box
1 x 15m² = 15m²

*Third umpire/ Venue
Management Room
1 x 15m² = 15m²

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SPACES
TOTAL AREA = 437 m²

Social, Community
Multipurpose Room
1 x 200m² = 200m²

Kitchen / Kiosk
1 x 40m² = 40m²

Public Toilets
Male - 1 x 20m² = 20m²
Female - 1 x 20m² = 20m²
Accessible - 1 x 5m² = 5m²

External Covered
Viewing Area
1 x 150m² = 150m²

ANCILLARY SPACES
TOTAL AREA = 80 m²

Meeting Rooms
1 x 25m² = 25m²

Utility / Cleaners Store
1 x 5m² = 5m²

Internal Storage
1 x 25m² = 25m²

External Storage
1 x 25m² = 25m²

** AFL scheduled areas that are not included in the pavilion brief.*

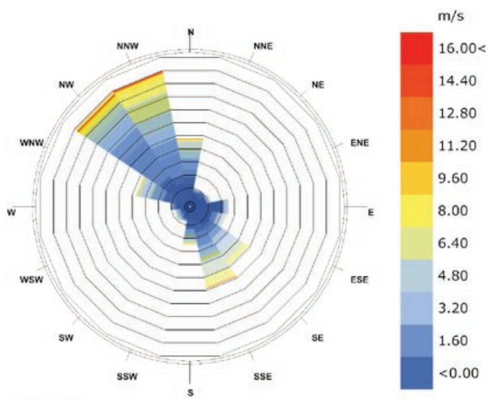
Source:
-AFL Preferred Facility Guidelines (2019)
-AFL Preferred Community Facility Guidelines (2024)

NTCA GROUND SITE ANALYSIS

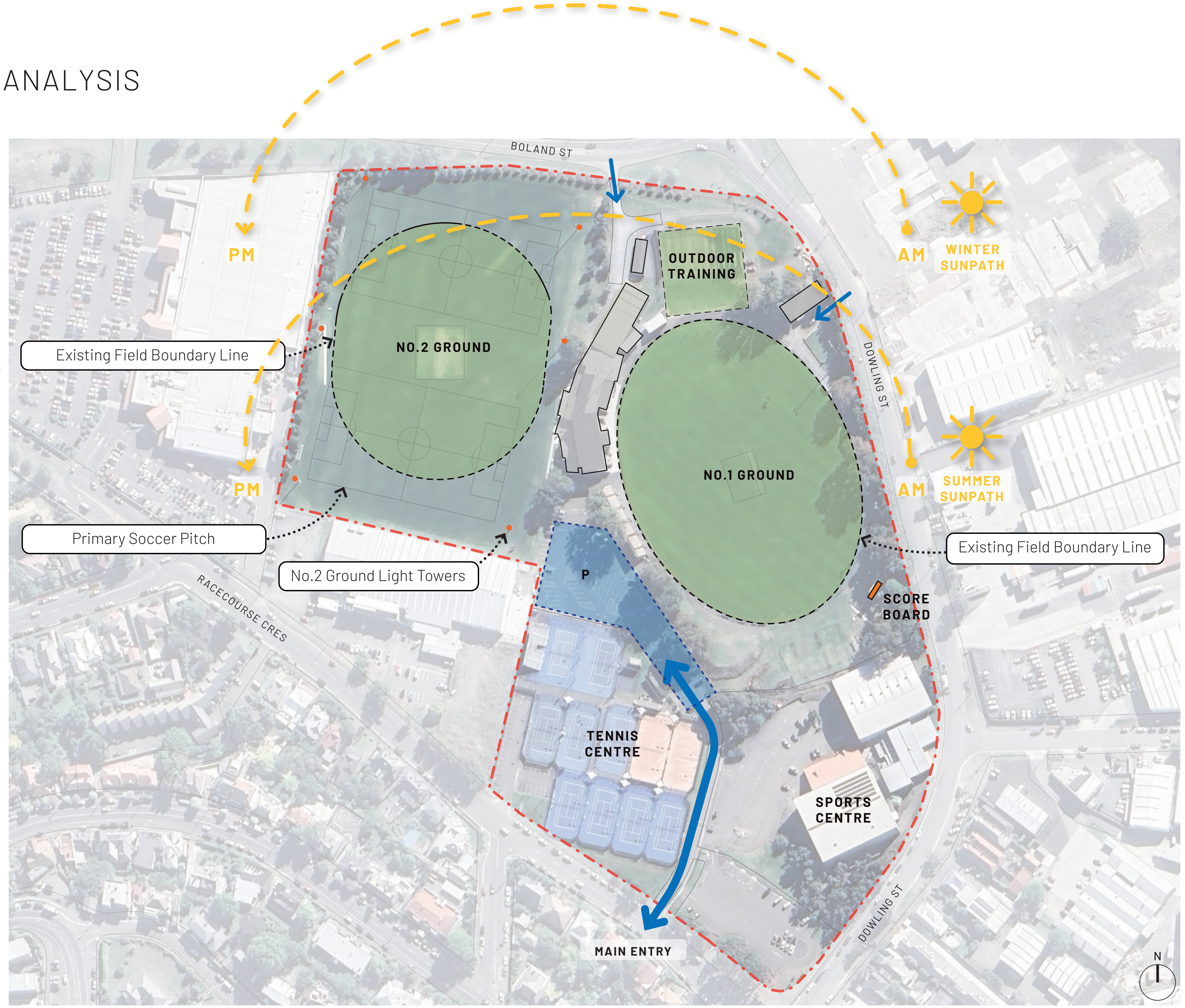
CURRENT SITUATION

The urban context and comfort factors, such as sun position and wind patterns, play a crucial role in the masterplan rearrangement.

WIND ANALYSIS



Wind-Rose
Launceston.Ti.Tree.Bend_TAS_AUS
1 JUN 1:00 - 31 AUG 24:00
Hourly Data: Wind Speed (m/s)
Calm for 11.96% of the time = 264 hours.
Each closed polyline shows frequency of 1.9%. = 40 hours.



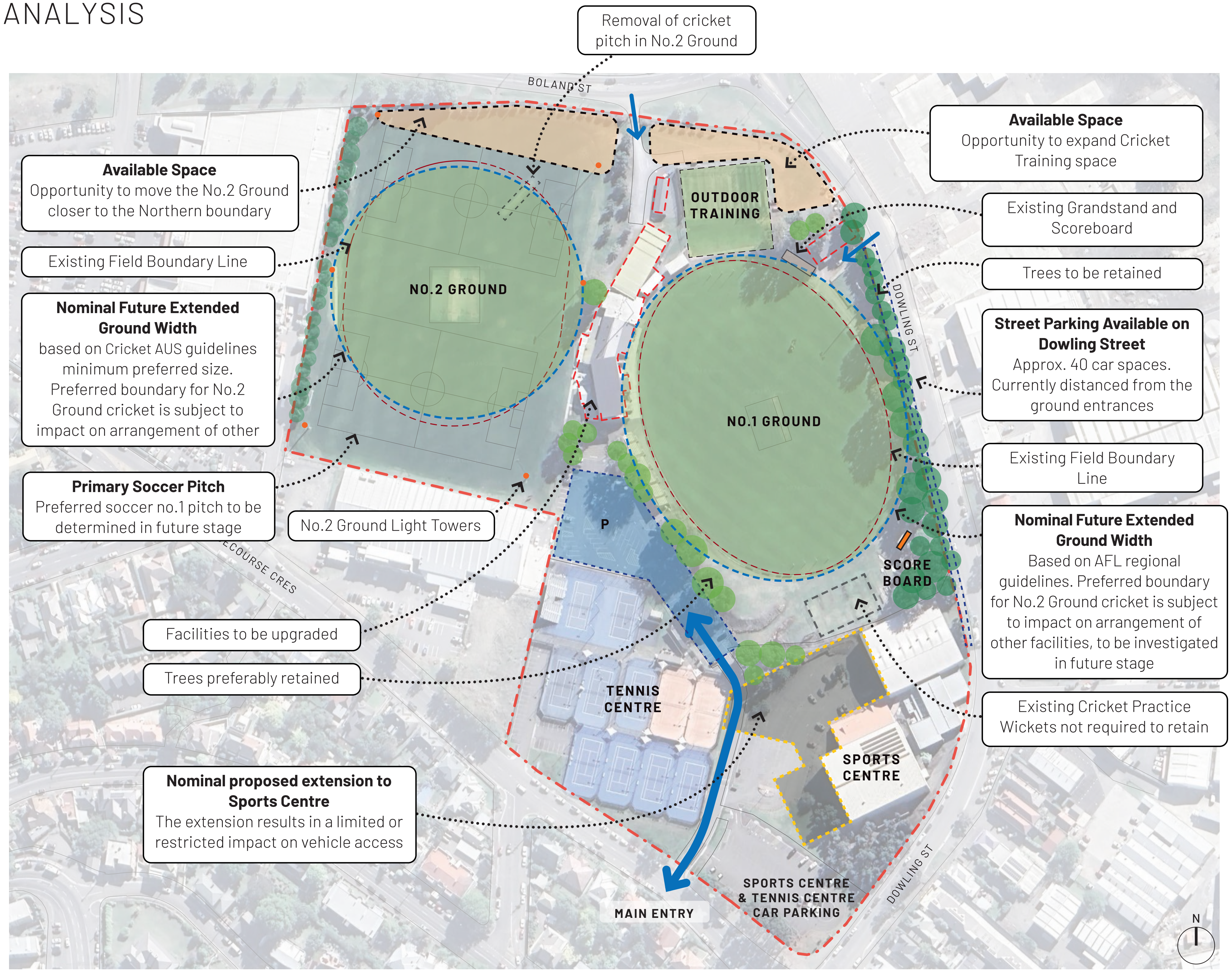
SITE PLAN SCALE 1:2000 @A3

NTCA GROUND SITE ANALYSIS

KEY CONDITIONS

We have identified key conditions that define the main opportunities and challenges for the masterplan rearrangement.

For context, we have overlaid the field boundaries based on AFL and Cricket Australia guidelines. This comparison is for informational purposes only and will not materially impact the masterplan proposal.



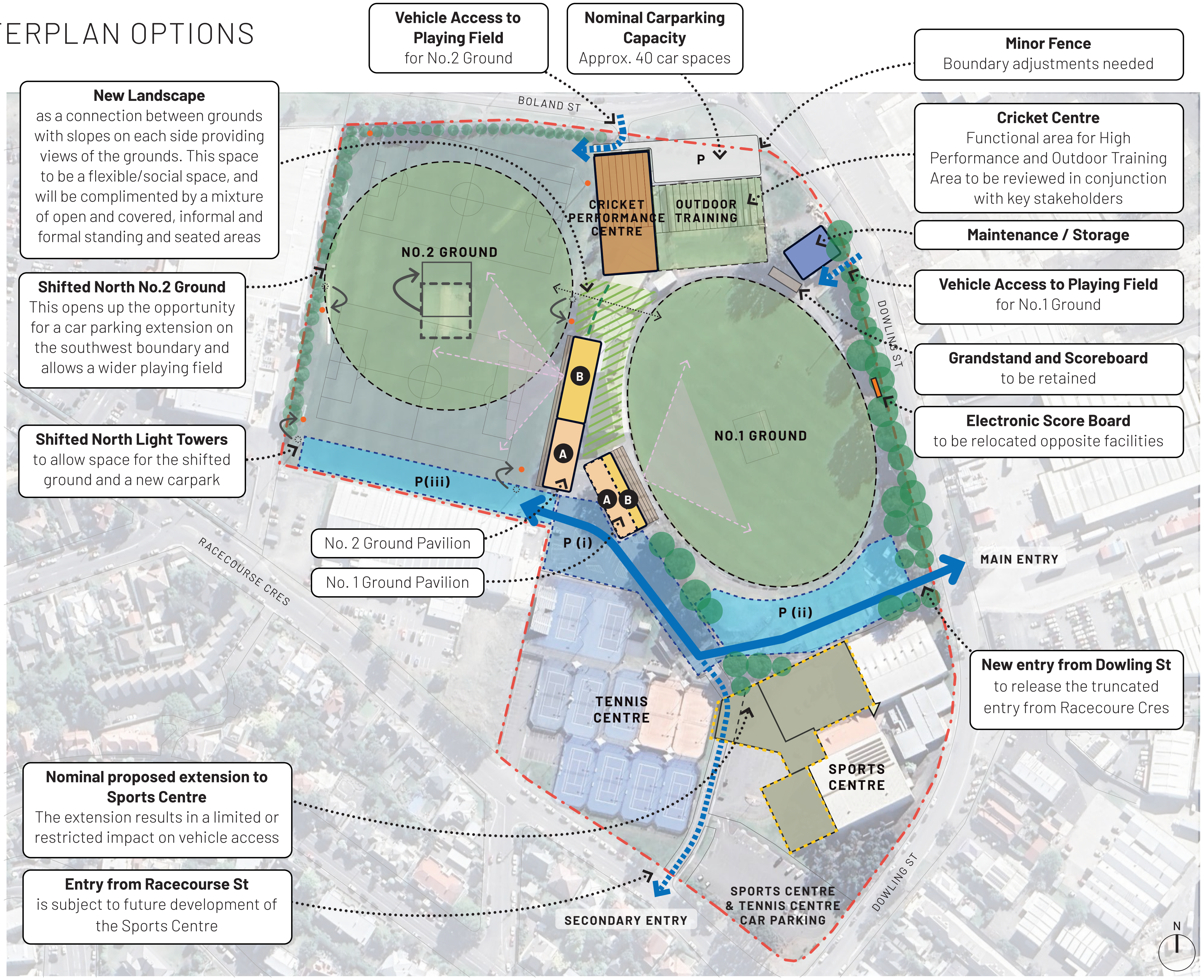
SITE PLAN SCALE 1:2000 @A3

NTCA GROUND MASTERPLAN OPTIONS

OPTION 1A

PROPOSED KEY MOVES ARE:

- Shifting No.2 Ground to the north.
- Proposing a new car access from Dowling Street.
- Consolidating all car parking and extending it to the western boundary.
- Placing No.1 Ground Pavilion centraly to to the playing field.
- Relocating the scoreboard opposite No. 1 Ground Pavilion.
- Placing No.2 Ground Pavilion in proximity to No.1 Ground Pavilion.
- Placing a new Cricket Performance Centre with the extended outdoor training space on the northern site boundary.



SITE PLAN SCALE 1:2000 @A3

APPROX. CARPARK SPACE:

(excludes Dowling Street car parking as overflow)

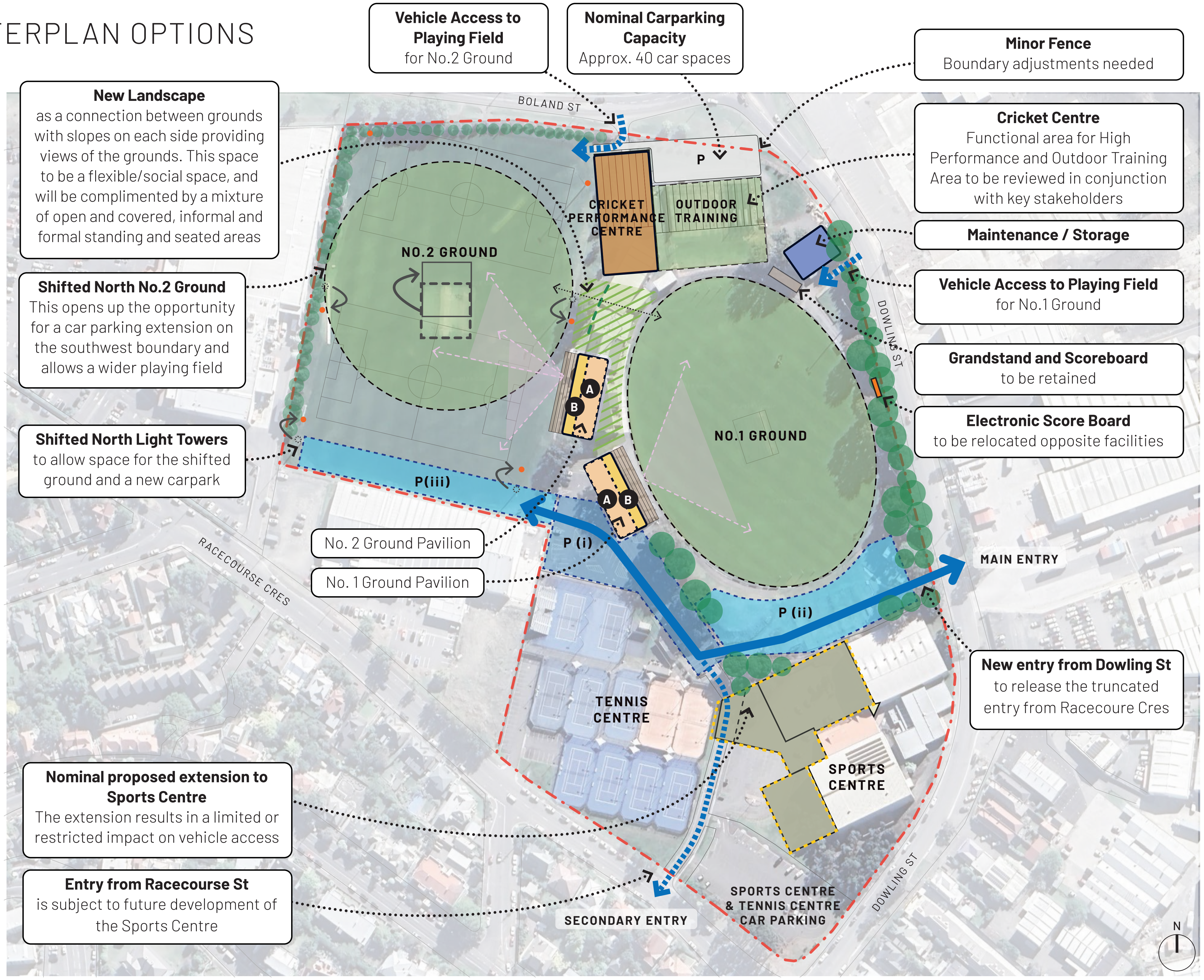
Carpark i	120 spaces
Carpark ii	150 spaces
Carpark iii	100 spaces
Total	**370 spaces**

NOTE: Calculations are indicative. Car spaces are estimated at approximately 26 sqm per space inclusive of vehicle circulation.

NTCA GROUND MASTERPLAN OPTIONS

OPTION 1B

This option is similar to Option 1A, except No.2 Pavilion is stacked (2 levels).



SITE PLAN SCALE 1:2000 @A3

APPROX. CARPARK SPACE:

(excludes Dowling Street car parking as overflow)

Carpark i	120 spaces
Carpark ii	150 spaces
Carpark iii	100 spaces
Total	**370 spaces**

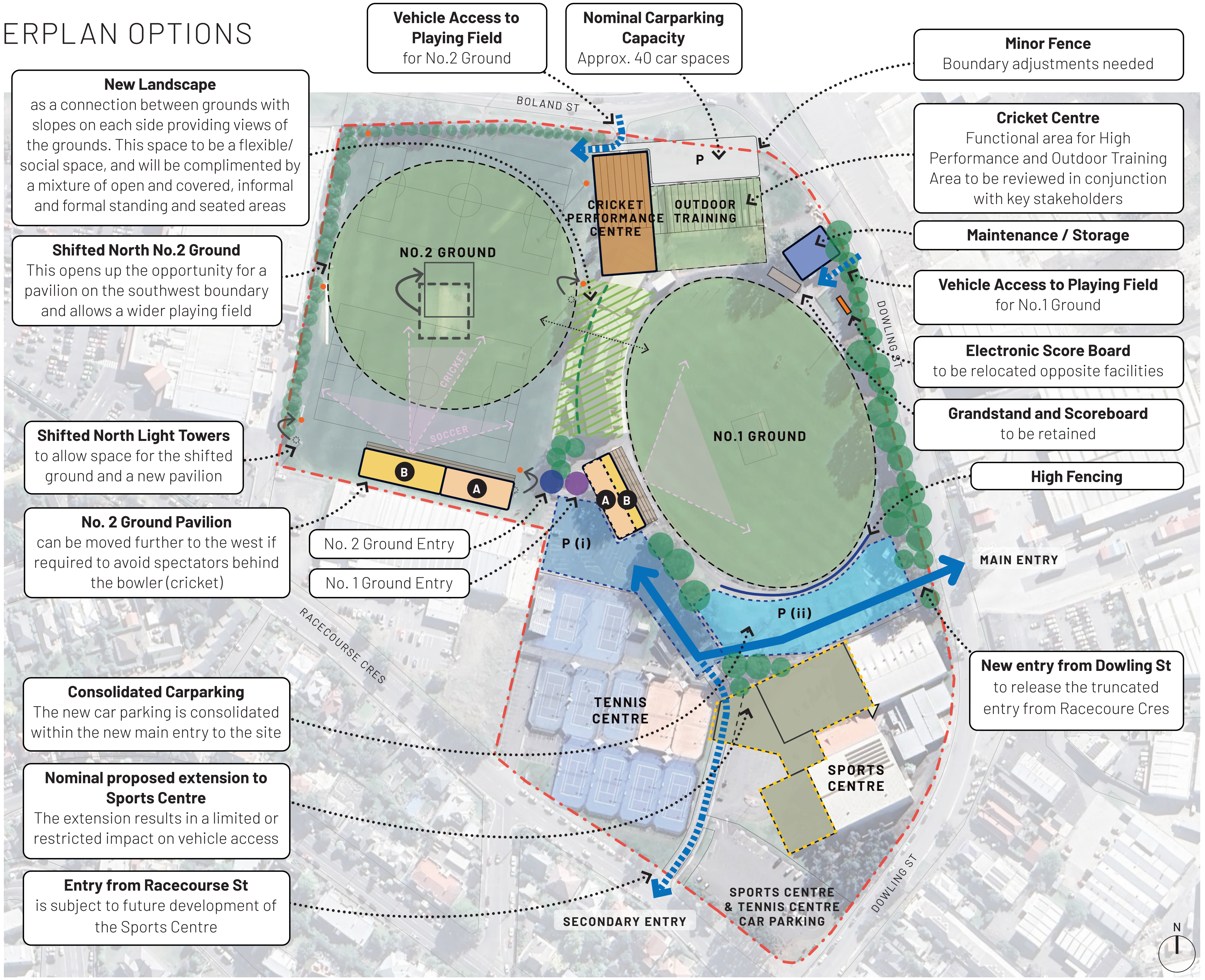
NOTE: Calculations are indicative. Car spaces are estimated at approximately 26 sqm per space inclusive of vehicle circulation.

NTCA GROUND MASTERPLAN OPTIONS

OPTION 2A

PROPOSED KEY MOVES ARE:

- Shifting No.2 Ground to the north.
- Proposing a new car access from Dowling Street.
- Consolidating all car parking between the No.1 Ground and the Sports Centre.
- Placing No.1 Ground Pavilion centraly to to the playing field.
- Relocating the scoreboard to face No. 1 Ground Pavilion.
- Placing No.2 Ground Pavilion on the southern edge overlooking the playing field.
- Placing a new Cricket Performance Centre with the extended outdoor training space on the northern site boundary.



APPROX. CARPARK SPACE:

(excludes Dowling Street car parking as overflow)

Carpark i	120 spaces
Carpark ii	150 spaces
Total	**270 spaces**

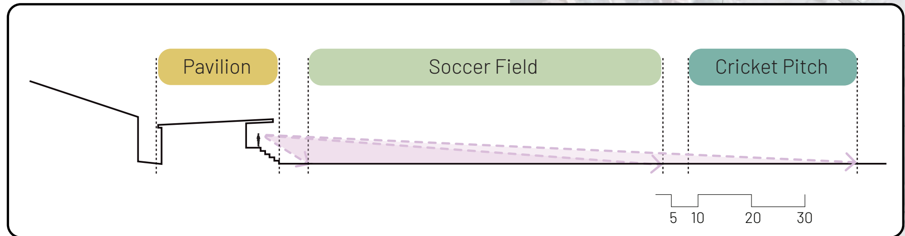
NOTE: Calculations are indicative. Car spaces are estimated at approximately 26 sqm per space inclusive of vehicle circulation.

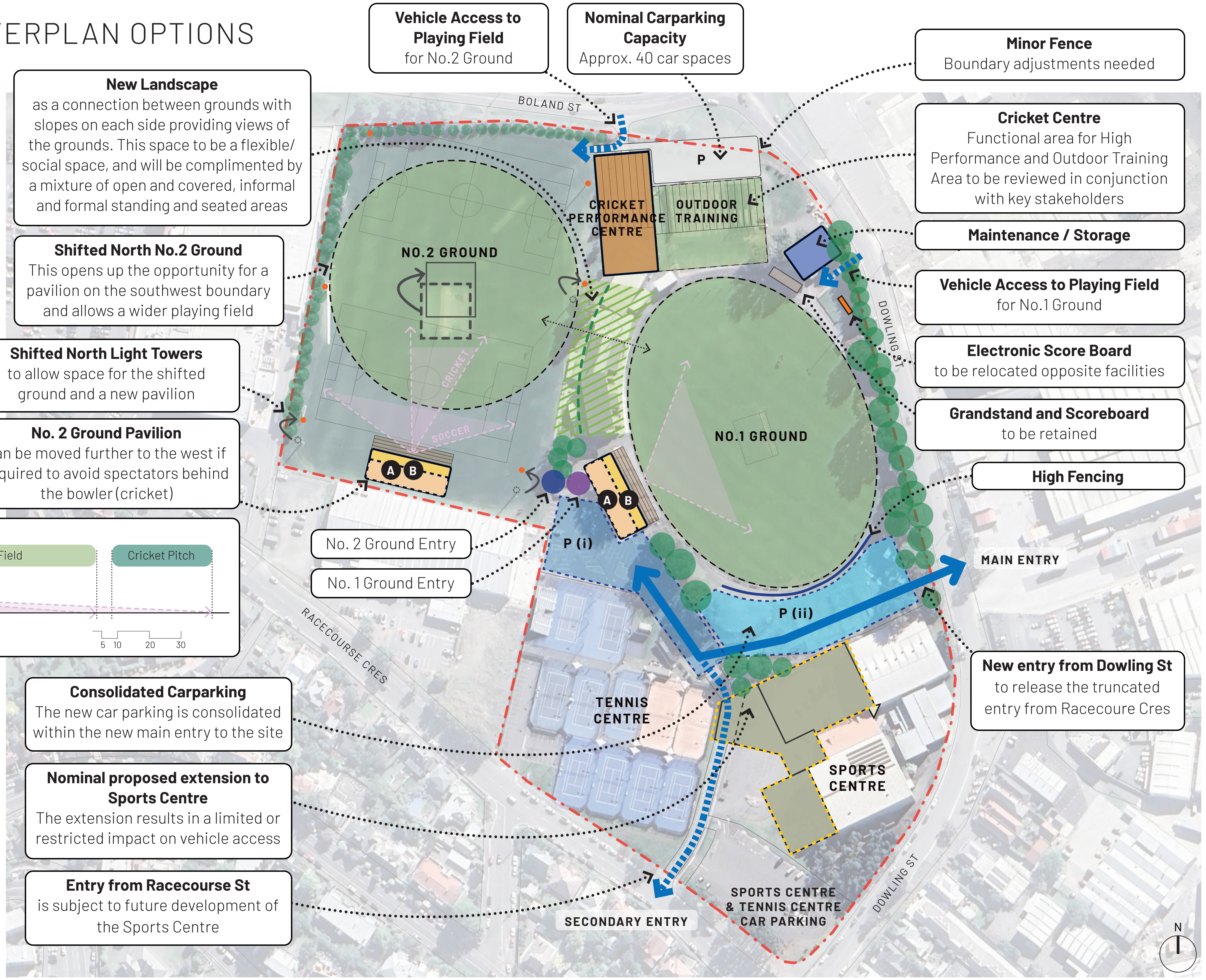
SITE PLAN SCALE 1:2000 @A3

NTCA GROUND MASTERPLAN OPTIONS

OPTION 2B

This option is similar to Option 2A, except No.2 Pavilion is stacked (2 levels). The elevated spectator facilities provides enhanced views over primary soccer field and helps mitigate the distance to view the cricket playing arena.





SITE PLAN SCALE 1:2000 @A3

APPROX. CARPARK SPACE:

(excludes Dowling Street car parking as overflow)

Carpark i	120 spaces
Carpark ii	150 spaces
Total	**270 spaces**

NOTE: Calculations are indicative. Car spaces are estimated at approximately 26 sqm per space inclusive of vehicle circulation.

NTCA GROUND STAGING

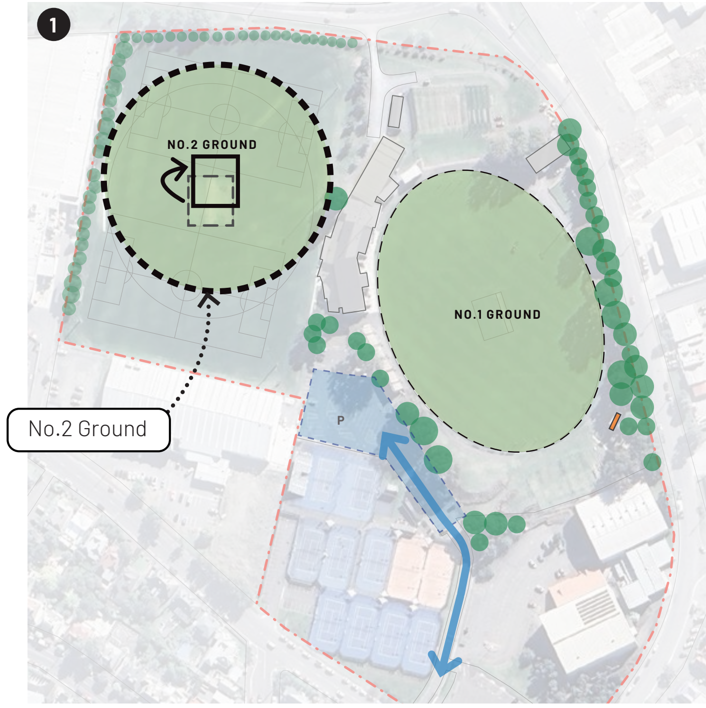
OPTION 2A
(FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY)

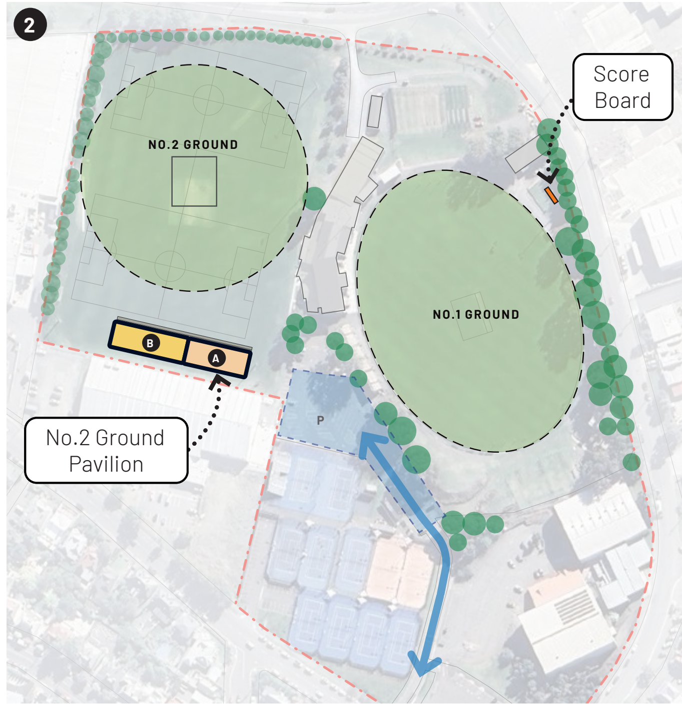
To ensure any future project can be undertaken in strategic manner the master plan considers a flexible staged approach.

The staging example to Option 2A is illustrative of the staging potential for all options.

STEP 1

- Shift No.2 Ground North.



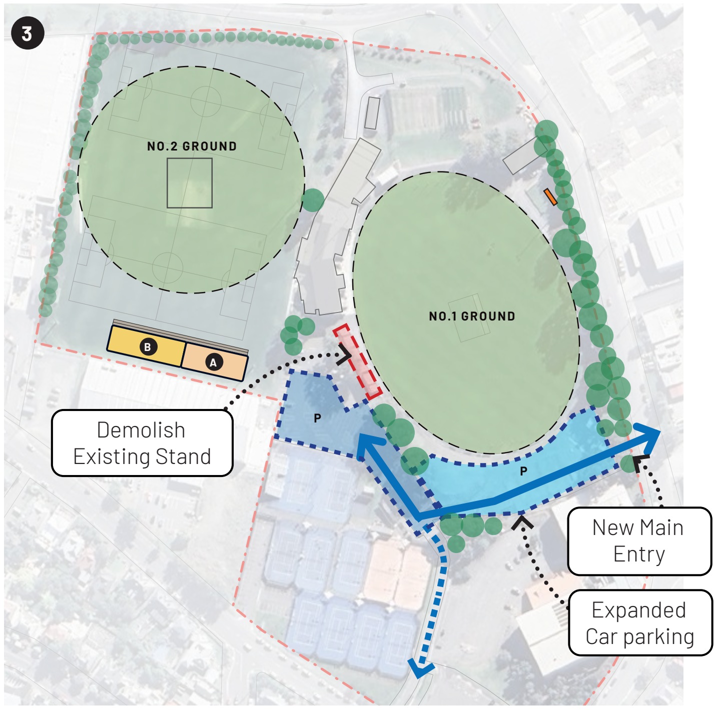


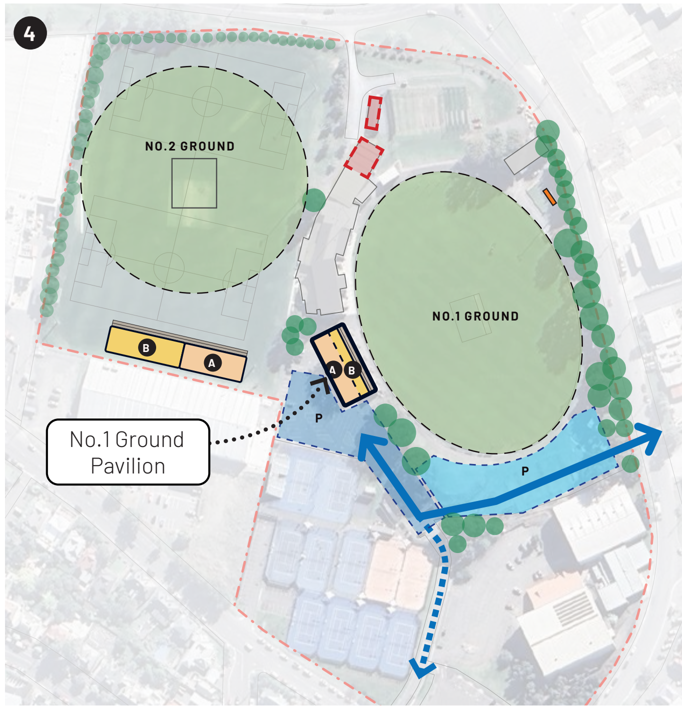
STEP 2

- Build No.2 Ground Pavilion.
- Relocate the No. 2 Ground Electronic Score Board.

STEP 3

- Implement the new entry from Dowling St
- Expand the existing car parking.
- Demolish existing stand for new No.1 Ground Pavilion.





STEP 4

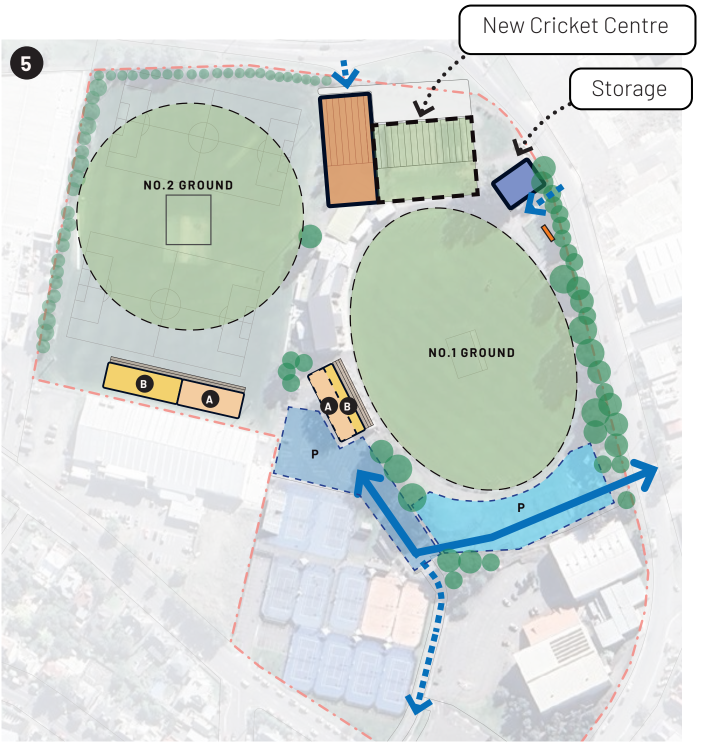
- Build No.1 Ground Pavilion.
- Demolish the northern part of the Existing Pavilion.

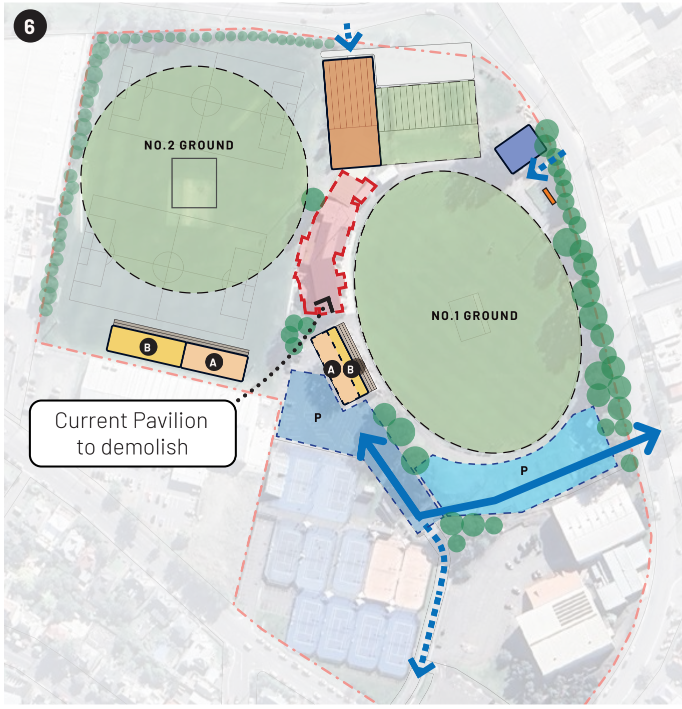
N

NTCA GROUND STAGING

OPTION 2A
(FOR ILLUSTRATION ONLY)

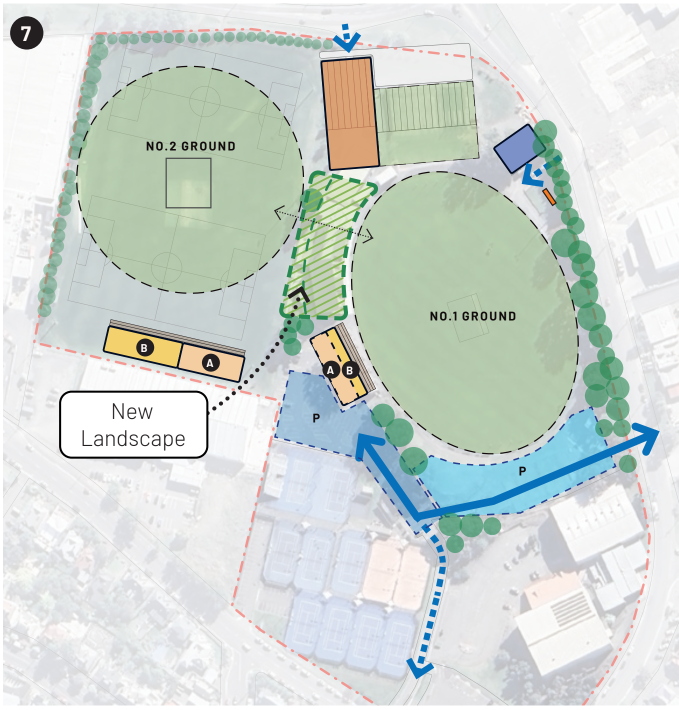
STEP 5
- Build Cricket Training Centre.
- Expand Cricket Outdoor Training facility.
- Reconstruct Storage facility.





STEP 6
- Demolish Current Pavilion.

STEP 7
- Make New Landscape Zone to connect both grounds.



N

NTCA GROUND CHARACTER PRECEDENTS

Dial Sports Complex by ARTAS

Merrion Cricket Pavilion by TAKA Architects

Oundle School Cricket Pavilion by Levitate

Port Melbourne Football Club Pavilion by k20 Architects

Arte Smith Oval Cricket and AFL Sports Pavilion by Local Architect South Coast

Martyrs Pavilion by John Pawson

NZ Cricket Pavilion by Edward White Architects

Cricket and Athletics Pavilion by Arthouse Architects

KingsLangley Cricket Club Pavilion by Eoghan Lewis Architects

Erick Tweedale Stadium Pavilion by DWP

Beaumaris Sports Pavilion by Cohen Leigh

Dendy Park Sporting Pavilion by Cohen Leigh

Erick Tweedale Stadium Pavilion by DWP

Hawthorn Sports Pavilion by Architecture architecture


WITH THANKS
TERROIR
NTCA GROUND MASTER PLANNING MASSING CONCEPT
NOVEMBER 2024
20

Attachment 1

LAUNCESTON POWER OUTAGES AUGUST 2024

ITEM	DETAILS OF IMPACT	WHAT CAN BE IMPROVED/NOTES
Pump Stations	CoL Sewer pump stations • Prolonged network power outages - no reported overflows. A number of sites were 'closed' due no sewer services available • Launceston Waste Centre leachate pump station system has 1ML storage pond CoL Stormwater pump stations • Racecourse crescent SWPS power outage of almost 24 hours(1 Sept 21:40 to 2 Sept 20:04). 10mm rainfall recorded in 24 hrs to 9am 1/9/24 and 24.6mm for 24 hrs to 9am 2/9/24 • Stormwater flooding in the low lying areas of Boland St. Emergency management response pumps were deployed. At least 1 property suffered stormwater flood damage.	• Investigate MOU commercial agreement with hire company or Council owned mobile generator/s. Note prolonged outages are difficult to predict and response times apply. • If high rainfall storm coincided with power outages then system would overflow without back up generator provisions (Taswater/hire/own). • The trailer mounted pumps could not be used at full capacity due issues experienced with the lay flat hosing pickup. Investigate and modify as necessary to maximise efficiency. • Investigate feasibility, size and cost for either permanently installed or mobile generator back up.
Emergency management / evacuation centres	Evacuation Centres • The Lilydale Memorial Hall was set up to offer re-charging of batteries for the community. The power outage in this area was approx. 1-2 weeks and re-charging was possible through use of hire company mobile generator. A connection for mobile generators is configured at this site and Windmill Hill Hall currently.	• Investigate MOU commercial agreement with hire company or Council owned mobile generator/s. Note prolonged outages are difficult to predict and response times apply. • Upgrade an additional 4 evacuation centres sites to be configured for mobile generator connection and manual switchover.

ITEM	DETAILS OF IMPACT	WHAT CAN BE IMPROVED/NOTES
IT systems and backup	• Town Hall outage had a major impact on IT services. The backup generator experienced a breakdown. IT successfully transitioned infrastructure to secondary site at Windmill Hill Hall to mitigate impact.	• Program in timely renewal of this asset. The generator is 25 years old and supports critical operations, including emergency functions during power outage. • Investigate MOU commercial agreement with hire company or Council owned mobile generator/s for Windmill Hill Hall. Note prolonged outages are difficult to predict and response times apply.
Buildings	Remount Rd depot • The power outage impacted access to site facilities and lighting. There is a small generator supply to power emergency function and computers. QVMAG • The Inveresk Museum site was impacted by the power outage and closed for the period 20-23 August 2024. • Systems impacted include security and access, fire management system, air quality and temperature control for collections Town Hall • The permanently installed generator experienced a breakdown 20 August 2024	• Investigate feasibility, size and cost for either permanently installed or mobile generator back up (larger unit). • Investigate feasibility, size and cost for either permanently installed or mobile generator back up. • Review building security and standard procures for power outage • Review battery storage and maintenance checks • Identify critical assets, response times and time to failure • Program in timely renewal of this asset. The generator is 25 years old and supports critical operations, including emergency functions during power outage.

Attachment 2

Combined System Agreement and Service Level Agreement with TasWater

The State Government enacted the Water and Sewerage Corporations Act 2008 and the Water and Sewerage Industry Act 2008 whereby:

- Council no longer owns any public water and sewage infrastructure and work on such infrastructure will no longer be performed by Council
- Council owns, operates and maintains private water and sewer infrastructure.

A portion of the urban area of the City has a combined public stormwater system and sewerage system, meaning that both stormwater and sewage is conveyed through the same pipelines and use the same infrastructure (Combined Drainage System)

Under the Urban Drainage Act 2013 (UDA) the Council is responsible for providing stormwater services through the Combined Drainage System.

As the owner of certain parts of the stormwater and sewerage infrastructure that (together with infrastructure owned by the Council) forms the Combined Drainage System, TasWater is a third party owner of infrastructure for the purposes of the UDA.

There are two applicable agreements in place between City of Launceston and TasWater:

<u>1. Agr-119/2021 - Service Agreement - Provision of Stormwater services - Launceston Combined Drainage System.</u>

In particular:

i. TasWater agrees to perform and provide the stormwater services as defined in the agreement and to allow the Council to utilise the Combined Drainage System under and in accordance with the agreement for the purposes of complying with its responsibilities under the UDA; and

ii) The Council agrees to pay TasWater the service fees and other contributions necessary for the maintenance and upkeep of the Combined Drainage System in accordance with the agreement.

1.1 Key Objectives

TasWater acknowledges the following objectives as set out in the UDA and will use its best endeavours to meet such objectives at all times while providing the Stormwater Services:

(a) provide safe, environmentally responsible, efficient and sustainable stormwater services in accordance with the objectives of the resource management and planning system of Tasmania;

(b) minimise property damage and disruption of commercial activity due to local flooding;

(c) ensure the seamless integration of service requests and processes;

(d) the effective removal of stormwater.

2. Service Level Agreement for City of Launceston Pump Stations

This is a commercial agreement for the TasWater operation and maintenance of Council pump stations, in particular:

i. The parties acknowledge that the Council owns and is responsible for all infrastructure relating to the facilities listed.

ii. TasWater will make every effort to ensure that pump stations are operational and that in particular overflows from any facilities are minimised.

iii. Where the Council has installed an appropriate SCADA RTU or phone-based Dialler, the Corporation will provide a 24 hour monitoring service. This service will prioritise any alarm from Council facilities with other alarms from Corporation facilities and initiate appropriate actions.

iv. Where an alarm is raised due to significant civil, mechanical or electrical failure, or where the Corporation cannot initiate appropriate actions due to conflicting priorities the Council will be contacted and shall assume control of the event.

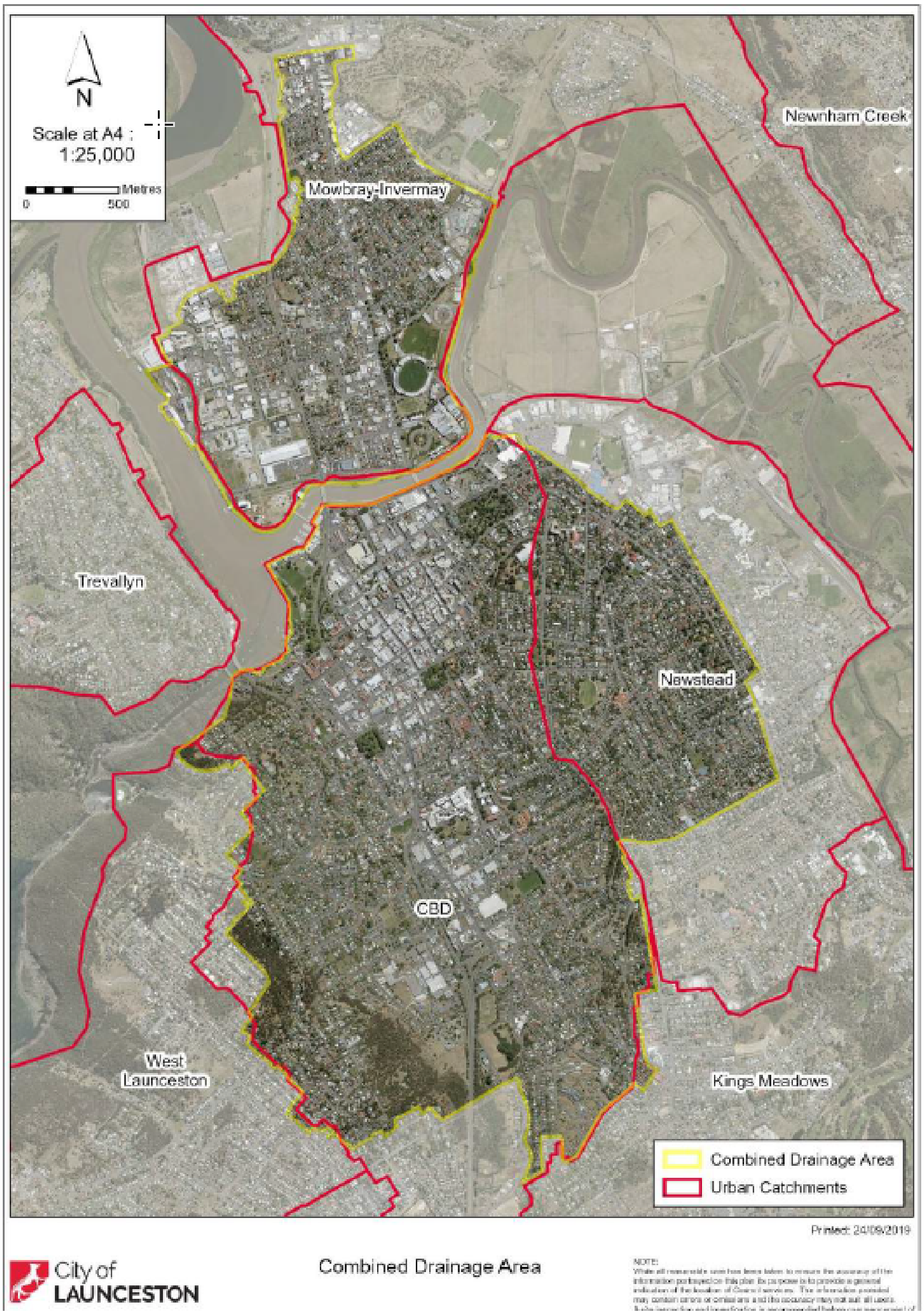
v. The Council acknowledges that where no alarm system is installed, then the Corporation cannot be held accountable for any service failure or environmental spill/overflow.

vi. The Corporation will make available spare pumps suitable for short —term, emergency installation in the facilities detailed in Table 1.1. Such pumps will only be made available when priorities allow the use of such spares without compromising the operation of Corporation facilities.

vii. The Corporation will make available standby power generators for short —term, emergency installation in the facilities detailed in Table 1.1. Such generators will only be made available when priorities allow the use of such equipment without compromising the operation of Corporation facilities.

There are 6 pump stations in the combined drainage system that under the Agr-119/2021 - Service Agreement - Provision of Stormwater services - Launceston Combined Drainage System.are the responsibility of TasWater. The assets are managed in conjunction with the broader TasWater portfolio, including assessment of priority and provision of emergency backup power measures. These pump stations are Shield St SW ejector, Willis St SW ejector, Tamar St SW ejector, Lower Charles St SWPS, Lytton St SWPS and Waltonia St SWPS.

Launceston Combined Drainage Area



Attachment 3

Criticality assessment

The below assessments are made to determine criticality of a site

Overflow impact

Assess impact of overflow

Pump station type (sewer / combined storm water and sewage / separated stormwater)

Overflow location

Description of area surrounding overflow point

Name of watercourse that received the overflow

Hours of storage at pump station (between high level alarm trigger and overflow discharge)

Overflow cause

Analyse pump station records to assess historical reliability. Calculate the mean time between failure MTBF for each failure mode over the recording period to determine overflow risk due to power outage.

Consequences of failure ranking system

Environmental weighting

Social weighting

Economic

Time to overflow

Flow rate weighing

Response options List

Generator size to power each pump station

What is upstream ie Source of inflow - what can be shut down to reduce flow

What other options exist to reduce the flow into each pump station

Estimation of response times to execute the procedures

An electrician is required to set up and connect the genset

Eg

Mains power failure - large pump station

Call out Electrician and install large emergency generator

- Call out Hire Firm/Truck Driver, Electrician 60min

- Collect Truck 30min

- Travel to Pump Station 30min

- Position generator & connect up 30min

- Restart PS + allowance for miscellaneous 30min

Total Response Time 3:00hrs

LAUNCESTON FLOOD AUTHORITY

Quarterly Report - October to December 2024

In accordance with the Rule 26 of the *Launceston Flood Authority Rules, April 2020* the Authority must submit a report to Council for the periods ending March, June, September and December. This report is for the period ending 31 December 2024.

Key priorities for the coming quarter

- Submission of 5-year comprehensive reporting.
- Undertake closure exercise of Taroona Street Flood Gate (KG2) at Riverbend Park.
- Minor flood gate upgrades and earthworks.
- Hart Street Gate road resealing.
- Conducting quarterly levee inspections.
- Conducting levee flood patroller training.
- Officer recruitment to progress the Flood Mitigation Strategy.
- Completion of Track Safety Awareness for staff involved in railways gates (EG2/3).

Operational and Compliance Activities

Defects noted during the comprehensive visual inspections conducted in June have been reviewed, prioritised and actioning commenced. This defect reporting forms a major part of the 5-year comprehensive report, which is currently being collated and is expected to be submitted to the regulator, NRE Tas, in early 2025 due to delays in information from external sources.

The next quarterly physical inspection of the levees is scheduled for January 2025 due to the comprehensive nature of the June inspections, and availability of levee patrollers for training. These levee walks act as monitoring for the condition of the levees and valuable training for levee patrollers who are deployed during flood events.

Current Works

Rectification Works - City Levee (Willis Street / Boland Street)

While rectification works for the damaged section of the City Levee in the vicinity of Willis Street / Boland Street were completed in July, grass re-establishment has been challenging. Fairbrother arranged for a second top dressing and seeding, which has flourished with the assistance of barriers erected by CoL and favourable weather conditions.

With respect to ongoing management of this levee, the presence of patches of unstable clay and the depth of gravel raises questions about the section of levee between this site and Charles Street Bridge. Consideration is being given to the benefits of detailed investigations of this levee section.

Tamar Estuary River Health Action Plan (TERHAP)

Progress continues on the TERHAP projects that are targeted at improving the health of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary.

LAUNCESTON FLOOD AUTHORITY

Quarterly Report - October to December 2024

On the Ti Tree Bend Covered Storage Project, the ground improvement and piling works have been completed, and concrete pours for the base of a 10 mega-litre covered storage tank have commenced.

At the New Margaret Street Pump Station, work continued on finalising the pipeline to pump station connection. These works are within close vicinity to the Paterson Levee crib wall. Management of the flood protection assets and emergency management function has been maintained, including settlement survey monitoring by suitably qualified professionals.

Recent works to connect the end of the pipeline drilled under the Tamar Estuary to the Margaret St pump station

Hart Street Gate (NG1) Road Surface Works

Preliminary work for the Hart Street Gate road surface upgrade is currently underway. The gate, originally constructed in 2017 to align with the road profile, was affected by subsequent resurfacing, which created a poor seal between the gate and the road. This issue likely contributed to leakage during the 2022 floods, as shown in the image below.

The upcoming works will replace the existing asphalt surface with concrete, ensuring a better match to the gate profile. A contractor has been secured, and final level measurements were taken during the gate closure exercise on 11 November 11. The work is scheduled to commence in January 2025.

LAUNCESTON FLOOD AUTHORITY

Quarterly Report - October to December 2024

Hart St Gate (NG1) leaking during October 2022 Flood

Taroona Street Gate (KG2) Closure at Riverbend Park

A closure exercise of the Taroona Street Gate (KG2) at the entrance to Riverbend Park was scheduled for 28 November, however was postponed due to inclement weather. A new date is being arranged in February 2025. Conducted every two years, the closure of this Bauer gate is an opportunity for maintenance, identification of any issues and training.

Emergency Management

Tide flap monitoring

Remote tide flap monitoring has continued, with half of those identified now recorded via high quality drone flight. This has provided positive results and is much safer than physical investigations. Some tide flaps require further physical examination, but the remote monitoring has reduced the number requiring this.

Disaster Ready Fund - Flood Intelligence & Early Warning Detection

City of Launceston staff are progressing the Disaster Ready Fund project, specifically the installation of additional CCTV to monitor flood conditions across the floodplain and upgrades to the river level sensors minimise outages during a flood event.

The cameras at the Silos Hotel were installed on the 13 and 14 November and are now operational. A stationary camera has been scoped and ordered to monitor the lowest points on Henry Street and will be installed during Summer.

LAUNCESTON FLOOD AUTHORITY

Quarterly Report - October to December 2024

Options for flood intelligence systems are being considered, with meetings held to discuss operational systems at Ipswich City Council and Brisbane City Council during site visits on 12 and 13 November, as well as online meetings with other Councils in South Eastern Queensland and Northern New South Wales in the coming months.

Flood Levee Patroller Training

A review of existing flood levee patroller hazard documentation has been completed, indicating a need for enhanced training. Subsequently, an induction session for all levee patrollers, both existing and new, was held on 11 November. This session covered the safety procedures, protocols and expectations of levee patrollers and provided an opportunity to practice using lifejackets and other safety equipment.

Levee inspection walks are scheduled across January and February 2025, building on the induction session to train levee patrollers in specific routes.

Financial Position as at 31 December 2024

- Revenue for the period is $381,260 unfavourable due to a timing difference of state grant funding. This will be reversed when funding is received later in the year.
- Ignoring temporary difference above, revenue remains $7,930 favourable as a result of reimbursements from UTAS for Boland Street rectifications work.

- Expenditure for the period is $75,084 favourable due to;
  - Materials and Services are $152,776 under budget due to Levee Management Project spending below budget.
  - Contribution income from City of Launceston unfavourable variance of $94,084 due to a timing difference, this will correct through the year when contributions are recognised.
  - Other expense are $16,392 under budget.

- Including non operating costs there is an overall unfavourable variance of $307,128, resulting in a deficit of $231,360.

- Ignoring the two timing differences explained above, there would be a favourable budget variance of $176,146.

Greg Preece, Chair
Launceston Flood Authority

CITY OF LAUNCESTON

MEMORANDUM

FILE NO:	SF0108 / SF0106 / SF6729 (update last SF to current Annual Mayoral Correspondence) MG:mm
DATE:	12 February 2025

TO:	Councillors and ELT	
CC:	Luke Scott	Team Leader Communications
	Matt Morgan	Acting Senior Leader Governance
	Liz Lynch	Personal Assistant - Councillor Rooms
FROM:	Matthew Garwood	Mayor

SUBJECT: **Notice of delegation of functions of Mayor**

In accordance with section 27(2A) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act), I delegate the functions described at section 27(1)(e) and (f) of the Act to Councillor Alan Harris, for the period 12 March 2025 to 19 March 2025.

An extract of the relevant provisions is provided below.

27. Functions of mayors and deputy mayors

(1) The functions of a mayor are–
...
(e) to act as the spokesperson of the council; and
(f) to represent the council on regional organisations and at intergovernmental forums at regional, state and federal levels
...
(2A) The mayor, by notice in writing, may delegate for a specified period –
(a) either or both of the functions referred to in subsection (1)(e) and (f) to the deputy mayor, a councillor or the general manager...

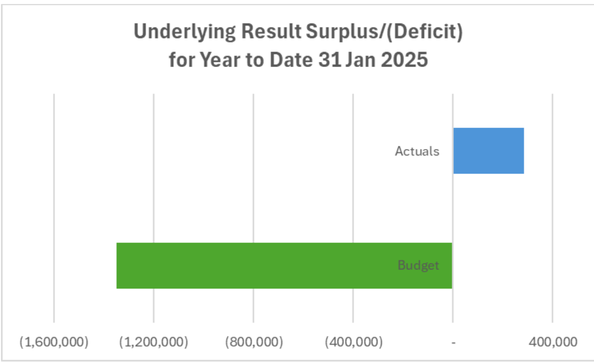
Regards

Matthew Garwood
MAYOR

Page 1 of 1

CITY OF LAUNCESTON
Statement of Comprehensive Income
For Year to Date 31 January 2025

	2024/25 YTD $ Actual	2024/25 YTD $ Budget	Variance YTD $ Fav/(Unfav)
REVENUES FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES			
Rates	51,261,349	51,445,058	(183,710)
User Fees and Charges	16,803,685	16,827,621	(23,936)
Statutory Fees & Charges	4,297,431	3,334,748	962,683
Capital Grants	8,092,746	7,921,836	170,910
Financial Assistance Grants	429,527	214,764	214,763
Other Operational Grants	2,732,829	3,148,907	(416,078)
Contribution	251,485	61,500	189,985
Interest	2,218,836	3,230,077	(1,011,240)
Interest Committed	-	-	-
Investment Revenue	1,461,028	1,884,400	(423,372)
Other Income	1,606,874	1,335,685	271,189
	89,155,790	89,404,596	(248,806)
EXPENSES FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES			
Maintenance of Facilities and Provision of Services			
Employee Benefits	31,137,669	32,779,810	1,642,141
Materials and Services	26,827,521	26,990,237	162,716
Impairment of Debts	-	6,708	6,708
Finance Costs	105,431	115,617	10,186
Depreciation	15,446,523	15,336,569	(109,955)
State Government Fire Service Levy	4,609,318	4,609,318	-
State Government Landfill Levy	2,335,734	2,643,619	307,885
Rate Remissions and Abatements	316,731	349,781	33,049
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	141,238	405,417	264,179
Write Down of Assets Held For Sale	-	-	-
	80,920,166	83,237,075	2,316,909
Comprehensive Result Surplus/(Deficit)	**8,235,624**	**6,167,521**	**2,068,103**
Loss on Disposal of Fixed Assets	(141,238)	(405,417)	264,179
Capital Grants	8,092,746	7,921,836	170,910
TERHAP Contribution	-	-	-
	7,951,508	7,516,419	435,089
Underlying Result Surplus/(Deficit)	**284,116**	**(1,348,898)**	**1,633,014**



Monthly Capital Expenditure Report - January 2025

City of Launceston - Capital Expenditure Report

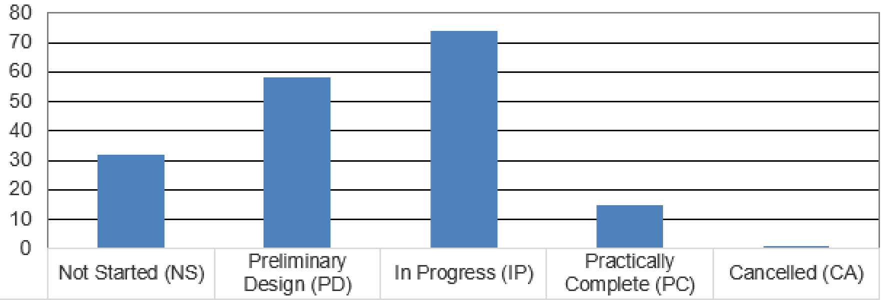
Summary by Network

For the Period to : 31 January 2025

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	Funds: TOTAL ESTIMATE $	Actual Expenditure: W.I.P. JULY 1 $	Actual Expenditure: ACCRUED ORDERS $	Actual Expenditure: YTD EXPEND. $	Actual Expenditure: TOTAL ACTUAL EXPEND. $	Projected Expenditure: COMMITTED COSTS $	Projected Expenditure: ACTUAL PLUS COMMITTED $	Projected Expenditure: PERCENT OF BUDGET %
GRAND SUMMARY								
NETWORK								
Office of the Chief Executive	**1,050,000**	**459,224**	**-**	**48,137**	**507,360**	**146,887**	**654,248**	**-**
Organisational Services	**3,315,790**	568,233	11,658	584,279	**1,164,171**	359,942	**1,524,113**	46%
Creative Arts & Cultural Services	**2,228,012**	95,793	-	257,843	**353,636**	82,760	**436,396**	20%
Community and Place	**28,717,371**	5,380,338	30,216	6,092,558	**11,503,112**	4,560,470	**16,063,582**	56%
Infrastructure and Assets	**50,175,897**	10,205,522	12,267	11,615,416	**21,833,205**	11,283,060	**33,116,265**	66%
Land Sales (see analysis below)	**6,000,000**	123,238	-	10,731	**133,969**	-	**133,969**	2%
GRAND TOTAL	**91,487,070**	**16,832,348**	**54,141**	**18,608,964**	**35,495,453**	**16,433,120**	**51,928,573**	**57%**

Total capital expenditure budget for 2024/2025 is made up of carried forward budget funds of $48,237,904, Current Year Council Funds of $24,070,510 and External Funding of $19,178,656 for a total budget of $91,487,070.

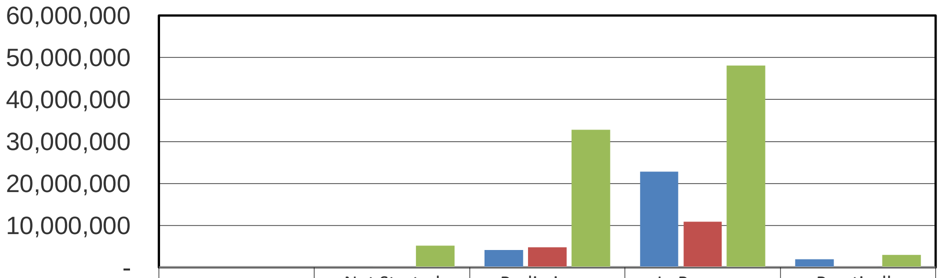
Number Of Projects By Status



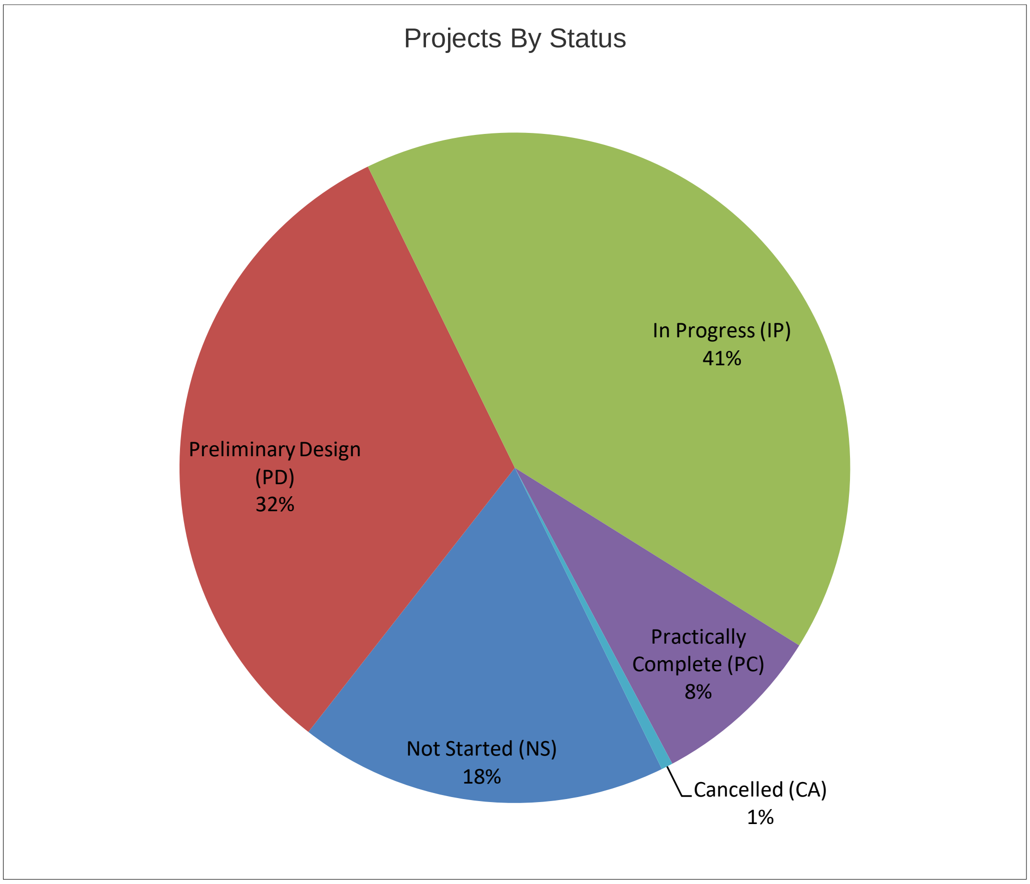
	Not Started (NS)	Preliminary Design (PD)	In Progress (IP)	Practically Complete (PC)	Cancelled (CA)
Count of Status	32	58	74	15	1
% of Status	17.78%	32.22%	41.11%	8.33%	0.56%

The Council currently has a total of 180 capital projects with 32 (17.78%) not started. This is a change from the December period where there was a total of 179 capital projects and 31 (17.32%) not started.

Total Capital Actual, Commitments and Budget By Status



	Cancelled (CA)	Not Started (NS)	Preliminary Design (PD)	In Progress (IP)	Practically Complete (PC)
Total Expenditure	-	-	4,158,122.45	22,762,193.22	1,897,492.37
Total Commitments	-	71,881.00	4,788,666.22	10,855,337.23	305.99
Total Budget	-	5,258,918.00	32,727,775.00	48,141,634.00	2,934,654.00


Projects By Status
In Progress (IP)
41%
Preliminary Design
(PD)
32%
Practically
Complete (PC)
8%
Not Started (NS)
18%
Cancelled (CA)
1%

Minister for Infrastructure
Minister for Local Government

Level 1, 7 Franklin Wharf, HOBART TAS 7000 Australia
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001 Australia
Email: Minister.Vincent@dpac.tas.gov.au

Tasmanian Government

12 FEB 2025

Councillor Matthew Garwood
Mayor
Launceston City Council

mayor@launceston.tas.gov.au

Dear Mayor

I have today released a discussion paper for the Tasmanian Government's Local Government Electoral Bill, that I expect to introduce into the Parliament later this year. The Bill will embed a new and more flexible legislative framework for local government elections, and is intended to deliver:

1. A more flexible and accessible format for elections
2. A better franchise and changes to eligibility to run for office
3. Better quality public information at elections
4. Strengthened donations disclosure and electoral advertising requirements; and
5. Other changes to support the integrity of elections.

I strongly encourage council and elected member engagement with the proposed reforms, that I believe will deliver enduring democratic and governance outcomes for Tasmanian communities.

I wish to briefly address three aspects of the discussion paper I expect will be of particular interest to the sector.

The first aspect is the scenarios outlined in the paper for the future conduct of elections. Two scenarios are presented for consideration, being an attendance first model, or an alternative 'hybrid' proposition that relies on postal distribution of ballots, and their hand return by electors to issuing places (namely, council service centres).

Both models are designed to respond to the decline in postal service standards, increasing costs, and the realistic prospect of the withdrawal in the medium term of letter delivery service at a frequency compatible with running elections by universal postal ballot. Our intention is to put in place forward-looking legislative flexibility, which serves as a 'bridge' to a future state where many electors can vote securely, online—noting that systems are not mature enough for that to happen today.

I expect councils will have questions concerning cost and administrative time, and I welcome input quantifying the impacts of the increased use of issuing places at the 2022 elections. I note the intention of the 'hybrid' approach is <u>not</u> to have a larger proportion of electors seek supplementary ballots from council service centres and then to fill out those ballots on council premises.

The second matter I would like to flag is the paper's proposals regarding the office of deputy mayor. I think it is opportune to consider the functions of this office, and to consider whether asking members of the community to elect the deputy mayor themselves—which is a Tasmanian idiosyncrasy in the national context—clearly justifies its cost and complexity at election time. The paper suggests that councils could be empowered to choose a deputy mayor among themselves (in the manner of a deputy mayor vacancy during the term at present), and to choose between a deputy mayor appointed for a fixed period, or an acting mayor appointed from time to time. This enlivens the potential to reallocate the funds used presently for the deputy mayor's additional allowance. I think these ideas warrant serious consideration, as reform could deliver immediate benefits to governance, simplify elections for the community, and importantly, enable councils to foster governance and leadership capabilities around the table.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the majority of councils who acted when my predecessor, Nic Street MP, encouraged the local government sector to take up a policy-based caretaker framework at the 2022 elections. The Government will follow through on its commitment to delivering a legislated caretaker period for council elections in the new Bill, and I invite those councils that adopted caretaker restrictions voluntarily at the 2022 elections to provide feedback towards the parameters proposed in the discussion paper.

Officers in the Department of Premier and Cabinet will offer an online briefing and Q&A session for elected members during the consultation period.

Public comment on the discussion paper is open until midnight 4 April 2025.

Included with this letter is a copy of the Discussion Paper, and a two-page 'at a glance' summary, that you can also find on the Department of Premier and Cabinet website at www.dpac.tas.gov.au.Please distribute the document and my letter to your colleagues on council. It is preferred that feedback be provided by email to lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

Hon Kerry Vincent MLC
Minister for Local Government

Attachments:

1. Discussion Paper - Tasmanian Government's Local Government Electoral Bill
2. At a Glance two-page summary – Local Government Electoral Bill Discussion Paper

Discussion paper

Local Government Electoral Bill

Office of Local Government
Department of Premier and Cabinet

Tasmanian Government

Contents

Introduction

The Tasmanian Government is committed to developing a new and more flexible statutory framework for local government elections. This new framework will be implemented through a new standalone local government electoral bill and supporting regulations, which will be put in place ahead of the next council elections due in October 2026.

The Government is releasing this discussion paper to test with the community important reforms we are considering, which will:

- create a more flexible format for local government elections
- strengthen donations disclosure and electoral advertising requirements
- improve the quality of public information at elections
- make changes to the franchise for electors and eligibility to run for office, alongside a suite of changes intended to improve the integrity of (and community confidence in) council elections more generally.

Feedback is welcome until **4 April 2025**. Submissions can be provided by email to lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au (preferred) or by post to:

Office of Local Government
GPO Box 123
HOBART TAS 7001

Tasmanian Government Public Submission Policy

All submissions will be treated as public information and published on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's website, unless you clearly specify your submission is being provided on a confidential basis. In accordance with the Tasmanian Government's Public Submission Policy, if you would like your submission to be confidential, you must specify in writing, at the time of providing your submission, the parts of your submission you wish to remain confidential and provide the reasons for this.

Submissions will be published after consideration by Government.

Next steps

The Government will consider consultation feedback in developing draft legislation, which it will release for further consultation and comment in winter 2025. The Government is targeting the spring 2025 session to introduce a Bill into the Parliament.

How we got here

The Tasmanian Government committed to developing and introducing a new standalone Local Government Electoral Bill in response to the recommendations of the Local Government Legislation Review.

That Review was announced in June 2018 and led to the endorsement of 48 approved reforms in April 2020 and a commitment to exposure legislation to follow. Those reforms were the outcome of a consultation process involving over 800 survey responses and 75 submissions.

Disruption associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, and then a commitment of Government to the wider-reaching Future of Local Government Review following the advice of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council, led to legislative efforts to deliver the prior set of reforms being deferred, to ensure the future framework benefitted from the outcomes of that review. The latter review delivered its final report and recommendations in October 2023.

Separately, the Government introduced compulsory voting for local government elections in advance of the 2022 elections, through the *Local Government Amendment (Elections) Act 2022* (the Amendment Act). While compulsory voting had not been a recommendation of the Local Government Legislation Review, this subsequent policy decision saw Tasmania join Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales (where compulsory voting had been in place since 1947). Importantly, Tasmanians achieved landmark turnout of 84.8 per cent at the 2022 local government elections, with 120,695 more votes returned than at the 2018 elections: a historic result in its national context, outperforming other compulsory voting jurisdictions in recent decades.

The Amendment Act also delivered successful reforms to reduce informal voting rates, which had tended to increase in urban councils as the councillor ballot paper became longer due to larger candidate fields. The informal voting rate in the 2022 Hobart City Council councillor elections fell to 3.3 per cent, compared to 8.8 per cent in 2018 (and the statewide rate falling to 4.0 per cent, compared to 5.1 per cent in 2018). These reforms will be preserved in the new Local Government Electoral Bill.

Notwithstanding its success, the introduction of compulsory voting also drew renewed attention to the limitations of the current system under the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act). For instance, electors living with print disabilities and Tasmanians interstate and overseas have not been able to enjoy comparable assistance and means to vote as at Tasmanian parliamentary elections, due to a prescriptive detail as to the method of postal voting in the Act. This is despite the Act making provision for assistance to electors and for voting electronically. The Tasmanian Electoral Commission was able to make available an in-person, confidential, and impartial voting assistance service at the 2022 elections, but with statutory change, more appropriate services can be made available at future elections.

Finally, important reforms to the conduct of Tasmanian parliamentary elections were delivered through the Department of Justice's Electoral Act Review, which delivered its final report in February 2021. These reforms, including a comprehensive donations disclosure regime, are embedded in the *Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023,* the *Electoral Matters (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2023*, and the Electoral Amendment Bill 2024 (which is still before Parliament as at February 2025).

While the implementation of a disclosure regime of the complexity and comprehensiveness of the *Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023* is not considered compatible with local government elections (which are primarily contested by independent candidates with no campaign assistance), these recent reforms to the conduct of Tasmanian parliamentary elections have influenced the direction of several proposed reforms laid out in this discussion paper.

Local Government Priority Reform Program 2024-26

The Electoral Bill is a core component of the Government's Priority Reform Program for 2024-2026, namely pillar three: improving local democracy and representation.

The Priority Reform Program is the implementation phase of the Future of Local Government Review and earlier Local Government Legislation Review. Alongside the Electoral Bill, Government is to introduce a targeted package of legislative reforms to the Local Government Act and new general and meeting procedures regulations in 2025.

Reform proposals and project scope

The Government's objective is to deliver new local government electoral legislation that enables future elections to be conducted in a more flexible format.

The new legislative framework will deliver the headline reforms of the Local Government Legislation Review to deliver principles-based legislation and a Local Government Electoral Act which makes it easier to administer local government elections.

The proposed reforms outlined in the paper are organised around five key outcomes:

1. **a more flexible and accessible format for local government elections**
2. **a better franchise for electors and changes to eligibility to run for office**
3. **better quality of public information at elections**
4. **strengthened donations disclosure and electoral advertising requirements**
5. **other changes to support the integrity of elections.**

One of the main reform areas the Government is seeking feedback on is in relation to how local government elections are conducted in the future, given the emerging challenges with a model that relies on the postal system. We know some change to the current model is inevitable. The goal is to ensure our legislation provides flexibility to adapt the format of elections having regard to evolving technologies and community needs, among other things.

The paper presents two scenarios for the future format of elections:

- The first is an upfront change to an **attendance voting mode**, either with a single polling day or a polling period, which would represent a substantial departure for local government elections in Tasmania.
- The second relies upon **continued distribution by mail of ballot papers**, with electors encouraged and enabled to complete and return ballots by hand to physical issuing places, creating a 'hybrid' electoral system. This responds to challenges, namely decreasing postal services standards and increasing costs, which will continue to challenge the conduct of elections by universal postal ballot.

In either instance, voters with barriers to participation (including electors with a print disability, who live in remote locations or are interstate or overseas) would be better served by legislative amendments to enable telephone voting, along with an option to continue to access conventional postal voting where that is practicable.

New directions: who should vote in local government elections and how should we elect the deputy mayor?

While proposed reforms in the discussion paper seek to support and deliver on initiatives previously agreed and announced by the Government in response to the Local Government Legislation Review, there are two main exceptions to this where we think there is merit in testing current community and sector views about alternative approaches.

These are:

- consideration for the continued eligibility to vote by non-citizens
- the manner of electing deputy mayors.

Matters out of scope

The Government is seeking broad feedback on a range of proposals in this discussion paper, and the input we receive will be vital in shaping our new local government elections legislation.

However, there are two key matters where the Government will not be considering any changes to the current arrangements:

1. **Voting at Tasmanian local government elections will continue to be compulsory.** The historic turnout at the 2022 elections has validated the decision to introduce compulsory voting, which has seen a level of public engagement and participation at elections which strengthens our vital local government sector and its engagement with our community. The Government does not intend to revisit its decision to institute compulsory voting, which enjoyed unanimous Parliamentary support, and highly positive feedback from in

the previous Office of Local Government consultation process commissioned following the 2022 elections.

2. **The local government sector should bear the cost of conducting its own elections.** This principle is provided for explicitly at section 268 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, and it will stand in the new Local Government Electoral Bill. Notwithstanding this, acknowledging the timing and impost associated with the policy change made at the 2022 elections, the Government provided approximately $400,000 in direct funding to support those elections, including costs associated with the increased count and, importantly, a public information campaign about the new requirement to vote. A further $200,000 is provided in the Forward Estimates for the 2026 elections, principally for a second public information campaign. As the community will have had two electoral cycles, and eight years, to come to understand compulsory voting, no further funding is proposed and local councils will meet the full cost of administering their elections, including public information. Non-voter fines will defray the additional costs of administering compulsory voting at the 2026 elections and beyond.

Navigating this document

The discussion paper is structured as follows:

- The first section presents the main issues for the future conduct and format of elections.
- The second section discusses possible options for reform which depart from earlier positions of the Government – namely non-citizen voting and how deputy mayors are elected - and explains why there are arguments for adopting alternative positions on these issues.
- The third section sets out all the other proposed reforms, organised by theme headings. The context and rationale for each reform is briefly explained, including useful precedent examples in other Australian local government systems and in Tasmanian parliamentary elections.

The future format of local government elections in Tasmania

Tasmanian local government elections have been conducted by universal postal vote since 1993. Postal voting has been successful and is associated across Australian jurisdictions with higher participation rates in council elections.[1] However, elections by universal postal voting are becoming increasingly challenged by declining postal service standards and additional costs, including for electors interstate and overseas.[2]

The status quo is not sustainable. At some point (be that at the 2030 council elections or beyond), letter delivery services may simply become unavailable at any cost, or with such limited frequency that the conduct of mass participation elections is impracticable. Postal service costs and service standards already represented challenges for the 2022 and 2018 elections.

Responding to this challenge, this section of the discussion paper presents two alternatives for the future format of elections.

While these scenarios are presented for consultation neither would need to be specified or 'hard wired' in legislation, with the legislation instead developed to enable a wider range of voting methods to better accommodate a range of future states. Irrespective of the future conduct of elections – whether it be a postal/hybrid model, or a move to attendance voting – the Bill will give operational autonomy to the Tasmanian Electoral Commission in the conduct and format of elections, with some capacity to fix parameters in regulation. This is appropriate, and consistent with the *Electoral Act 2004* and *Local Government Act 1993* in respect of existing elections.

For this reason, these alternatives should be regarded as a bridge to a future state. If we cannot vote fully by post anymore, how should we vote at the next election in 2026 and the elections of 2030? At some point, electronic voting systems will be secure and validated, and most people will vote electronically, in much the way that most consumer banking transactions are now completed online. However, those systems are not yet mature, and the decline in postal standards and increase in costs demands short and medium-term alternatives.

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[1] At 84.8 per cent, Tasmania's 2022 election featured likely the highest statewide turnout at Australian local government elections for some decades. Those elections were also the first held in Tasmania with compulsory voting.

[2] The Australian Government reduced letter services standards by amendment to the *Australian Postal Corporation (Performance Standards) Regulations 2019* effective 15 April 2024, succeeding pandemic-era temporary reductions in those same standards (later reversed). Despite these changes, the cost to the Tasmanian Electoral Commission for Australia Post's services for elections has risen substantially.

Scenario A: change to voting in person as the primary means of participation

Move to universal attendance elections with a weeklong polling period, or a polling day, including an extended pre-poll period and postal voting for persons on the supplementary electoral roll.

Telephone voting would be made available for electors with barriers to participation or who are intestate or overseas.

The first scenario presented is to move to an attendance voting model for electors on the House of Assembly roll. This would align local government elections more closely to the model used for Tasmanian and Australian parliamentary elections.

Transitioning to this model presents a significant shift in electoral format requiring the community to immediately adjust to attendance voting at council elections, which is likely to present some additional disruption (especially as voting is now compulsory). However, attendance voting is a feature of most other Australian jurisdictions' local government electoral legislation (besides South Australia), which tend to rely on a mix of voting methods for individual councils or across councils (some council elections are conducted by universal postal ballot and others through a mix of attendance and postal voting).

Attendance voting on a polling day at Tasmanian and Australian parliamentary elections is declining in favour of pre-poll voting. When presented with the option, people increasingly favour voting early and at a time that suits them. The 2022 federal election saw a landmark majority of electors nationally vote early (by pre-poll, predominantly, and postal ballot). At state elections, the proportion of electors voting early tripled between 2002 and 2021, to almost 30 per cent of votes, with the significant majority of this growth being votes cast by pre-poll ballot.

Recognising this emerging preference, there is an opportunity to introduce a polling period of one week, rather than a single polling day. However, there is a direct trade-off between a polling period and a polling day, and the number of polling places which can be made available. It is not affordable, for instance, to staff the density of polling places made available at state elections for an entire week, most of which are not available for that purpose on weekdays (namely schools).

This is relevant as postal voting is, generally, associated with higher turnout at local government elections in other Australia jurisdictions. Despite compulsory voting, it is reasonable to assume the less flexible the manner of voting – for instance, a single day attendance election or a weeklong polling period with limited polling places – the lower turnout will be.

Were attendance voting to be pursued, it is expected a single or small number of polling places for each local government area would be open for a polling week. A pre-poll centre, potentially servicing multiple municipalities, may also be open for a four-week early voting period. These options would be complemented by postal voting (upon registration) and telephone voting for eligible electors, including electors interstate and overseas.

Even with this kind of flexibility, a wholesale shift to attendance voting still presents challenges, particularly for local government elections, where electors are required to choose between sometimes very large fields of candidates[3] who may have less prominent public profiles, and who do so often without political party support.

While larger fields and community candidates are core to the value and differentiation of local government, they can make it difficult for electors to make informed and meaningful choices at a ballot box. Postal voting has provided electors the ability to work through the ballot paper with the candidate information provided privately and in their own time. Care will need to be taken in the preparation of candidate information and elector material distributed to households to address this gap.

Scenario B: flexible additions to the status quo (a 'hybrid' model)

Provide for a 'hybrid' postal model where:

- all electors are mailed a ballot and candidate information pamphlet
- there is a minimum four week polling period, enabling the earlier return of postal votes
- there are more issuing places in each municipality, to enable the hand return of ballots by electors until the close of polls
- ballots may be returned to issuing places until the close of polls.

Telephone voting would be made available for electors with barriers to participation or who are intestate or overseas.

Under this scenario, future elections would be conducted in a flexible manner which attempts to preserve the benefits of universal posting voting (at least while the postal system remains available and affordable), while embracing the efficiencies and advantages of a 'pre-poll like' model.

At the 2022 elections, traditional postal voting was complemented by increased use of an option for electors to return their completed ballot to council offices as 'issuing places'. This scenario seeks to build on and extend this type of model, and would involve:

- all electors continuing to receive candidate information and ballot papers in the mail following the close of nominations
- a likely polling period of a minimum of four weeks, to enable a longer period for the delivery of ballot packs and for the return of votes

[3] In more populous municipal areas, councillor ballots are sometimes very lengthy, and becoming lengthier. For example, 44 candidates contested the 2022 Hobart City Council ballot, compared to 36 in 2018.

- electors wishing to vote by post needing to complete a postal ballot declaration, identifying one among a prescribed set of reasons for voting via post. Otherwise, electors will be required to hand return completed ballots, in the declaration envelope, to issuing and receiving places.

As voting is compulsory, advice will be provided regarding return postal timeframes, and it is foreseeable that electors voting via post will have substantially less time to complete their votes than voters who return their ballots to a polling place. It is intended that, over time, most ballots are to be returned to issuing and receiving places.

Reduced time for persons voting by return mail does raise equity considerations. However – unlike parliamentary elections – counts for the office of councillor feature exclusions at very low margins, and it would not be feasible to commence the count or calculate provisional result prior to the return of all ballots to be included in the count. This means, unlike at state and Australian Government elections, postal votes cannot be received until a later time after the conclusion of the polling period.

What would these scenarios cost?

Tasmania's 2022 local government elections cost $9.32 per elector, an increase of 34 per cent over the 2018 elections ($6.92 per elector). This is largely attributable to the very large increase in participation (driving increased postal and counting costs) and the costs associated with the returning, processing and counting those additional ballots. By comparison, the 2024 Tasmanian state election cost $12.37 per ballot.

Jurisdictional comparisons demonstrate a wide range in potential costs. 2021 local government elections in the Northern Territory and New South Wales (which are primarily run on an attendance model) incurred costs of $15.10 and $29 per elector, respectively (noting that a range of factors may underpin that, including higher participation at the NSW elections).

It is not possible to quantify with confidence the costs of future Tasmanian local government elections under either alternative. It is reasonable to assume that the slower pace at which electors would take to complete their votes, and so move through the polling place, would increase costs of attendance elections relative to state elections; as may the provision of a polling period, rather than polling day (though this would vary with operational decisions regarding the number and distribution of polling places). As at present, local government elections are a more complex counting process than for state elections, though as discussed elsewhere in this document, this could be addressed by adopting an alternative means of selecting the deputy mayor.

It is similarly difficult to quantify costs of the hybrid election model, though this is anticipated to be less than for attendance elections. Postal services are expected to be more costly over time as overall letter volumes decline.

Under either alternative, the costs of local government elections are expected to increase at the next ordinary elections and beyond.

Potential new directions: who should vote in local government elections, and how should we elect the deputy mayor?

This section of the discussion paper seeks feedback on two reform options for consultation, which if adopted, would depart from agreed reforms in response to the Local Government Legislative Review, namely:

- a continuation of non-citizen voting (limited within certain parameters)
- a move away from the popular election of deputy mayors.

We are testing these directions because we think they have merit in the current landscape and having regard to future challenges and opportunities for council elections in Tasmania.

Reforming the franchise: should non-citizens enjoy a continuing entitlement to vote at local government elections?

If this entitlement were to continue, it is proposed a person's ordinary place of residence must have been in Tasmania for the 12 months prior to making an application for enrolment (or otherwise must own property in Tasmania in a personal capacity).

This would be, in effect, a 'non-citizens' electoral category.

The Government previously endorsed as an outcome of the Local Government Legislation Review that a 'person must be an Australian citizen to be eligible to be enrolled to vote in local government elections'.

Tasmania, alongside Victoria and South Australia, has not limited access to supplementary entitlements to vote only to Australian citizens, or to persons eligible to vote in state and Australian government elections.[4]

This proposition proceeded through the legislation review process with relatively narrow public comment. The local government sector provided conditional support, with several councils supporting the maintenance of voting entitlements for non-citizens who own property or for permanent residents and/or refugees.

There is some civic benefit for continuing a broader franchise than at state and Australian Government elections. Maintaining a franchise that is accessible and equitable encourages participation and interest in the local community and builds connection and civic values. Local councils make decisions that shape people's local,

[4] Those being Australian citizens and British subjects enrolled to vote immediately before 26 January 1984.

immediate environments, and those decisions benefit from the input and engagement of all people who use and enjoy local recreational spaces and public infrastructure.

Enabling a wider segment of the community to vote at local councils provides for democratic engagement and is a first experience of Australian democracy for people who may go on to become Australian citizens and lifelong members of our community.

As noted, some councils have supported continued electoral participation for permanent residents and/or refugees. It is not considered desirable for the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to have to review, and verify, the immigration status of electors, and to make determinations on the basis of visa categories which are themselves the subject of change and reform.

As an alternative, it is proposed that persons seeking enrolment on the supplementary roll who are not entitled to be enrolled on the House of Assembly roll, and whose ordinary place of residence is Tasmania, must be able to demonstrate a minimum of 12 continuous months' residence in Tasmania (not necessarily in the municipal area) at the time of seeking enrolment.[5] This is intended to establish a minimum level of community engagement and integration in Tasmania prior to participating in local government elections and indicate some expectation of continuing residence in the community.

Reforming the entitlement to nominate as councillor

If an entitlement for non-citizens to vote is preserved, require that a person must appear on the House of Assembly electoral roll to be eligible to hold the office of councillor, in addition to appearing on that roll or the supplementary electoral roll at an address in the municipal area.

If Government adopts a revised position that long-term non-citizen residents of Tasmania, or non-citizen owners of property in Tasmania, will enjoy a continuing entitlement to vote in local government elections, it is additionally proposed that persons seeking nomination for office will be required to be on Tasmania's House of Assembly electoral roll, and as a result, be Australian citizens or British subjects eligible to vote in parliamentary elections.

This change would bring Tasmania into alignment with Victoria and South Australia, which impose this differential requirement. The proposal, combined with the continuation of the wider franchise, is intended to balance the benefit of wider civic

[5] By way of example, in South Australia, one month's residence in a ward or council area is required prior to an application for enrolment as a resident for persons not entitled to vote on the basis of enrolment on the state's House of Assembly roll. An extension to this period was acknowledged as a potential direction or reform in the state's Local Government Participation and Elections Review discussion paper.

participation with the acknowledged risks of foreign influence and interference at local government elections and in council decision-making.

Remove the direct election of the deputy mayor

Instead, the councillors are to elect the deputy mayor at the first ordinary meeting of the term of the council. Otherwise, the role of deputy mayor could be removed entirely or made optional in favour of provision for acting mayors, including supplementary allowances.

Change to the mode of election of the deputy mayor and mayor was proposed during Local Government Legislation Review but was not ultimately recommended as a final reform. There was not clear or strong support for the change in submissions to the legislation review at that time, from either councils or the community.

However, there are reasons to reconsider a change, particularly with higher participation rates brought about by the recent introduction of compulsory voting and increasing election costs. It is becoming less clear the costs associated with directly electing the deputy mayor result in attendant democratic or governance benefits for councils and communities.

Tasmania is the only Australian jurisdiction where the deputy mayor is popularly elected and there are obvious complications and limitations to the process of electing the deputy mayor as it stands, including that a person may not contest both the roles of mayor and deputy mayor at the same election.

It is already the case that casual vacancies in the role of deputy mayor are filled 'around the table' and not by by-election. Election around the table is consistent with the approach in all other jurisdictions (noting councils in some jurisdictions also appoint their mayor or principal member in the same manner). Election by popular ballot is not clearly consistent with the actual function of the deputy mayor, which is as an alternative, or acting, spokesperson for the council and the chairperson of its meetings in the mayor's absence. Further, election around the table enables all councillors (including those who contested the mayorship) to seek the deputy mayorship. This may lead, in some circumstances, to council's leadership becoming more reflective of the sentiment of the electorate than is permitted under the present system.

As all Tasmanian mayors are appointed by popular election, one alternative would be the second ranked mayoral candidate be appointed deputy mayor. Such a system may increase the likelihood the mayor and deputy mayor represent factional or partisan opposites in the council, and this may be an impediment to the performance of the deputy mayor's functions. Council choosing its own alternative chairperson and spokesperson is considered preferable to that model.

Alternatively, it may be timely to revisit the express necessity of the office of deputy mayor. Instead, new provision could be made in the *Local Government Act 1993* for the mayor to delegate their functions to a councillor during a period of absence; or for the council to appoint an acting mayor around the table during a period of absence. Provision would be made for a councillor so appointed to receive a mayoral allowance in this period. The mayor would be provided a general power to delegate the role of council spokesperson other than for periods the mayor is on leave.

Only Queensland and Western Australia require a council to appoint a deputy mayor, with legislation in other jurisdictions leaving this at the discretion of councils. This could be the legislated outcome in Tasmania, or provision be made only for acting mayors.

Either proposal could play a significant role in defraying the escalating and unavoidable costs of future local government elections. Wider participation at elections increases the cost and time required to conclude the count, which provides an additional reason to streamline the popular electoral process. The Tasmanian Electoral Commission provided preliminary estimates that the direct election of the deputy mayor cost approximately $285,000 in 2022, or seven per cent of the cost of those elections. This cost can be expected to, at least, increase proportionally with any scenario for the format of future elections (if a change to deputy mayor election around the table, or acting mayors, is not adopted). However, the Commission has indicated this assumption may be conservative were attendance elections introduced for local government.

Were the office of deputy mayor to be removed or made optional, additional savings could be realised from the abolition of associated allowances, or otherwise, these be redistributed among the councillors.

Local Government Elections: technical reforms

Thirty-three technical reforms are presented below, under five themes:

1. **a more flexible and accessible format for local government elections**
2. **a better franchise for electors and changes to eligibility to run for office**
3. **better quality public information at elections**
4. **strengthened donations disclosure and electoral advertising requirements**
5. **other changes to support the integrity of elections.**

1. A more flexible and accessible format for local government elections

This set of reforms will provide future flexibility for the conduct of local government elections and, importantly, remove current barriers to using available assistive practices and technologies for electors with print disabilities and electors who are interstate or overseas.

Reform 1: reduce prescription in the statutory framework to enable the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to approve the electoral process.

This principle will guide the preparation of the new statutory scheme. It corresponds directly to the first headline reform endorsed through the Local Government Legislation Review in April 2020, which is to deliver principles-based legislation removing prescription or moves procedural detail into subordinate legislation that can be more readily adapted as circumstances change. Critically, a more flexible format for local government elections will enable greater responsiveness to the developing challenges with the current universal postal ballot system.

It is acknowledged the unique integrity risks associated with election require care in drafting and sufficient detail in statute to enable impartial arbitration of electoral matters. However, recent electoral cycles have made plain the extent of procedural detail in the *Local Government Act 1993* has frustrated the ability of the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to conduct elections in line with community expectations or to respond to changes in technology and the declining availability and suitability of postal services.

This is particularly so in relation to current constraints on the Commission providing assistance to electors with barriers to participation, including print disability, and electors who are interstate or overseas during the polling period.

Technical engagement with the Commission during the preparation and public consultation on the exposure draft of the Electoral Bill will be prioritised.

Reform 2: enable the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to approve procedures for voting, including by telephone and electronic means, for interstate and overseas electors and electors with impediments to ordinary participation, or for other classes of person prescribed by regulation.

Electors with impediments to participation or who are outside Tasmania during the polling period have not been able to enjoy equitable participation in recent elections, due to limitations in the flexibility afforded to the Commission and Electoral Commissioner in the relevant sections of the current *Local Government Act 1993*.

For electors with print disabilities, section 291 does enable the Commissioner to provide a framework to provide assistance but does not provide for that assistance to overcome prescription in the Act as to what ballots may be accepted and counted (namely, ballots not received in an envelope with a signed declaration, pursuant to sections 285 and 287).

These constraints mean assistance provided at elections for the Parliament of Tasmania – such as the VI-Vote terminals which enable persons with sight impairments to complete an electronic ballot paper independently – cannot be provided for Tasmanian council elections. Similarly, the Commissioner cannot currently enable voting by phone, either with an automated secure system or with the assistance of a human operator.

The new Electoral Bill will remove statutory impediments to participation in elections by phone or with an assisted voting system for people who are not able to complete a written ballot paper.

Section 296 of the Act currently empowers the Commission to approve procedures such that electors who are outside Tasmania may vote by receiving a ballot paper electronically and returning it electronically or by mail. However, provision is not made for telephone voting.

Due in part to cybersecurity risk, electoral commissions in Tasmania and interstate have suspended remote internet voting until more secure systems are developed and validated.[6] This reduced access to the 2022 elections for persons outside Tasmania, particularly those overseas, due to the public and private costs and lengthy lead times associated with postal ballots, and the challenges faced by postal systems in maintaining service standards amid declining letter volumes.

The new Electoral Bill will provide for the Commission to approve procedures to enable either telephone or electronic voting, or both, for voters outside Tasmania. While internet voting is not currently contemplated for local government elections for the reasons outlined above, flexibility will be built into the Bill to ensure the most appropriate method or methods can be used for future elections as determined by the Commission.

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[6] For example, the cessation of the New South Wales iVote system following council elections in 2021.

Similar facilitating amendments are proposed for the Electoral Act through the Electoral (Alternative Voting Procedures) Bill 2024. It is anticipated the provisions in the new Bill will mirror these provisions, once finalised.

As systems for telephone and, particularly, electronic voting mature, they may become suitable for more widespread use at elections. A power will be provided for regulations prescribing classes of persons for whom electronic and telephone can be made available.

It is noted that provision will be made for an appropriate balance of accountability between the Commission, Government and Parliament for the conduct of elections, and consideration will be given in the development of exposure legislation for the Commission to transmit its decision as to the manner of elections to the community and Parliament prior to those elections being held.

Reform 3: legislate that the Tasmanian Electoral Commission is required to approve procedures in accordance with universal franchise principles, namely all electors, including electors with additional barriers to participation, are to be afforded an opportunity to vote in an independent, secret and verifiable manner.

While the Electoral Bill will reduce overall statutory prescription and introduce much-needed flexibility, new principles for the conduct of elections will enhance community confidence and guide the Commission and Electoral Commissioner in the making of procedures for electors with impediments to ordinary participation or who are outside Tasmania.

These principles are that all electors are to be afforded an opportunity to vote at those elections in a secret, independent and verifiable manner so far as this is consistent with the Commission conducting efficient and timely elections and the integrity of those elections.

Not all existing and prospective methods of voting, including assistive technologies, perfectly reflect these principles. Postal voting, voting by telephone with a human operator, or voting using internet-based systems each involve trade-offs that may be acceptable or preferable for those who may value factors such as convenience highly, or benefit from direct human assistance.

As above, similar facilitating amendments are contained within the Electoral (Alternative Voting Procedures) Bill 2024, and the draft bill will seek to align to those provisions as made.

It is not possible or appropriate to prescribe in legislation a detailed model for assisted voting which avoids compromise between secret, independent, and verifiable voting and which meets all electors' needs and preferences. However, it may be appropriate to prescribe principles enabling the Commission to continually review and improve its assistive protocols, in consultation with affected electors, to ensure the range of practicable and achievable voting methods and technologies are provided to electors.

Reform 4: require the Electoral Commissioner to publish after each election a statement on the implementation of the accessibility principles, after information, including relevant statistics and initiatives undertaken to promote universal participation in the election.

The Electoral Commission publishes a statistical report following each ordinary local government election. Supporting the above reforms, the Electoral Bill will require the Electoral Commission to publish a statement on the accessibility principles, including relevant statistics and initiatives undertaken to promote universal participation at the election. This proposal is considered to balance appropriately the independence of the Commission, while providing a transparent accounting of participation at the election for electors with additional barriers to participation.

2. A better franchise for electors and changes to eligibility to run for office

This set of reforms will make the administration of the local government electoral franchise more robust and, importantly, embed the core ‘one person, one vote’ principle for future elections. It also provides a higher – but appropriate – bar for nomination without the introduction of a candidate nomination fee.

Reform 5: increase the number of elector signatures required to support a notice of nomination to the lesser of 30 or one per cent of the number of electors in the municipal area.

The Local Government Legislation Review contemplated the introduction of a candidate nomination fee, intended to ‘to attract serious candidates and reduce nominations by those without real intentions to be elected’. Despite being a common feature of local government elections in Australia, the proposal was not ultimately endorsed, in part due to the potential for the fee to deter genuine candidates and the equity impacts of a fee on participation from a wide section of the community.

However, the imperative to ensure ballots comprise genuine and credible candidates remains relevant. Under compulsory voting, it is perhaps even more important than previously to ensure that the field of candidates is well-understood by electors, to ensure all voters, including those less engaged in political processes, are able to make meaningful choices and are not incentivised to vote arbitrarily.

As an alternative to a candidate fee, the number of signatures required to submit a notice of nomination would be increased from two electors at present to the lesser of 30 persons, or one per cent of electors on the electoral roll for the municipal area. This change provides an initial test of credible public support for a candidacy, while not imposing a financial barrier on candidates. The alterative thresholds are intended to accommodate smaller municipalities for which obtaining 30 signatures could represent an unreasonable barrier.

It is noted a range of thresholds apply at Tasmanian elections, from 100 nominators for a non-party candidate for the House of Assembly to 10 for a non-party candidate at a Legislative Council election. While it is acknowledged there is some apparent conflict with the lower threshold applying for Legislative Council elections, it is considered desirable and appropriate that candidates demonstrate a threshold commitment to seeking and then serving in the office of councillor prior to appearing on the ballot paper. The nomination deposit of $400 for all candidates at Tasmanian Parliament electors provides an alternative incentive for serious candidates at those elections, but a higher nominator threshold is considered more suitable and more inclusive for council elections.

Acknowledging the potential impact of this measure on those who could gain the support of 30 (or one per cent) of electors, but who make a relatively late decision to nominate, consideration will be given to a two-stage nomination process in the Electoral Bill. This would see prospective candidates submit a notice of intention to nominate, followed by a period (of two to four weeks) to collate signatures, prepare a candidate statement, and ensure completion of pre-nomination training, prior to the submission of the notice of nomination (Reform 10).

Reform 6: move administration of the 'general managers' roll' from councils to the Tasmanian Electoral Commission, including administration of the process through which land occupier and corporate nominee (supplementary electoral roll) electors are to enrol.

This change was endorsed through the Local Government Legislation Review.

Presently, supplementary rolls of electors – that is, persons with property-based entitlements and non-citizen electors – are maintained by council general managers, in a manner and using forms approved by the Commission.

Shifting this responsibility to the Commission entirely should enable increased consistency in the administration and application of the supplementary electoral roll. Importantly, the administration of this function will be streamlined with complementary changes to clarify the extent of the electoral entitlement and to establish clear evidentiary requirements, as below.

It is anticipated this change would commence following the next ordinary local government elections to enable time to consolidate and validate supplementary rolls from all councils using the land titles dataset.

Reform 7: provide a definition for the purposes of 'occupier' of land that establishes an occupier holds a leasehold interest or licence over land, and/or the person's ordinary place of residence is in the municipal area.

Presently, a person who owns or occupies land in a municipal area (or is the natural person nominee of a corporate owner or occupier) may vote in an election on the basis of enrolment on a supplementary roll. The term 'occupy' is not adequately defined in the relevant part of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

This created ambiguity around the extent of association with land required to generate an entitlement to vote in local government elections in some specific instances (for instance, persons making regular use of a secondary property owned by a family member or associate). A clear definition of occupier will be introduced in the new Bill, with the intent of linking entitlement to be enrolled on the supplementary electoral roll with a clear evidentiary basis.

This will include:

- a natural person, or a corporate body, with a personal lease for land
- a natural person, or a corporate body, with a personal licence for land (potentially limited to a private purposes licence at section 86AA of the Act)
- a natural person, otherwise, whose ordinary place of residence is in the municipal area, and who is a longer-term resident of Tasmania, and who is not enrolled for an electoral roll for the House of Assembly. This third case is intended to capture non-citizen persons resident in Tasmania who are not named personally on a residential lease.

Reform 8: provide that a person seeking enrolment on the supplementary roll must complete a land occupier declaration and provide documentation of the leasehold or licence over land, or evidence of their period of residence in Tasmania to the satisfaction of the Commissioner.

Enhancement will be made to the existing provisions for the electoral enrolment form for the supplementary roll, establishing clear evidentiary requirements for enrolment.

Persons seeking enrolment will be required to supply a copy of their lease or licence document, on which they are named; or provide, to the satisfaction of the returning officer, evidence of residence in Tasmania at least 12 months prior to the date of their application for enrolment (for instance, a utility bill) and, if required by the Commissioner, additional information for the intervening period.

Provision will be made for appeal of the determination.

Reform 9: implement the ‘one person, one vote’ principle and require a nominee of a corporate landowner or occupier of land may nominate one natural person who is an officeholder of the company to be its nominee.

The Local Government Legislation Review endorsed the institution of a ‘one person, one vote’ principle at local government elections in Tasmania. This requires removing the existing and explicit provision for a person to have up to two votes (found at section 254 of the *Local Government Act 1993*) for an election in a municipal area, where one vote may be in that elector’s own right, and another on behalf of a corporate body.

Instead, it is proposed a nominee of a corporation may not also be enrolled on the House of Assembly roll at an address in the municipal area or be enrolled on the supplementary electoral roll for the municipal area.

In addition to providing a person may only have, in any circumstances, one vote in an election for a municipal area, it is proposed natural person nominees of corporate bodies must be officeholders of the corporate body (a director or company secretary of the body). This requirement mirrors arrangements in Victoria and South Australia.[7]

Requiring a nominee of a corporate landowner or occupier is an officeholder provides some additional integrity to the 'one person, one vote' principle as it will no longer be the case a corporate nominee may be arbitrarily selected (and so in some cases, be selected to avoid the prohibition on multiple voting that might otherwise apply). Corporate bodies will continue to have a single nominee for each municipal area, even if it owns or occupies land in several places in that municipality.

A corporate body providing a nomination will have to supply evidence, to the satisfaction of the Commissioner, that the nominated person is an officeholder of the corporate body.

Provision will be made for the appeal of this determination.

Reform 10: provide that all intending candidates (other than incumbent councillors) must complete a prescribed program of pre-nomination training prior to their submission of a notice of nomination.

Councils are obligated to complete pre-nomination training and/or training in office in Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia. The Tasmanian Government endorsed the institution of compulsory pre-nomination training as part of its response to the Future of Local Government Review.

The Tasmanian Government, Local Government Association of Tasmania and sector representatives are working to implement and refine a learning and development framework (Learn to Lead) for Tasmanian councillors. A pre-nomination training module was made available to incumbent councillors and candidates at the 2022 local government elections.

The Bill will provide that people intending to become candidates at elections (other than those who are councillors at the time of the notice of elections) must complete training specified by the Director of Local Government, if any, prior to lodging their notice of nomination. The intention of this provision is that all people contesting local government elections will have a common threshold understanding of the particular role and functions of councillors and the day-to-day functioning of councils as the tier of government closest to the community.

While incumbent councillors seeking re-election will be encouraged to avail themselves of all available training, their experience in office, combined with Learn to

[7] See *Victoria's Local Government Act 2020* and *City of Melbourne Act 2001* and South Australia's *Local Government (Elections) Act 1999.*

Lead materials developed for serving councillors, is considered to obviate the need for mandatory pre-nomination training.

Training will be self-paced, online and in an accessible format.

Candidates will be required to attest to their completion of the pre-nomination training in their notice of nomination. Provision of a false declaration would be managed through offences related to the provision of false information to the Commission.

As outlined in Reform 5, consideration will be given in the drafting of the Electoral Bill to a two-stage process, where candidates submit an initial notice of intention to nominate, followed some weeks by a final notice of nomination. If this is pursued, candidates will be required to complete the training in the intervening period, with direct facilitation of training facilitated by the prior notification.

3. Better quality public information at elections

This set of reforms is intended to improve the understanding by electors of the candidate field, including notation on the ballot where candidate nominations have been lodged by a registered political party and the publication of candidate information statements and relevant regulatory information provided by the Director of Local Government.

Reform 11: require that the TEC provides all people submitting a notice of nomination the opportunity to provide a candidate information statement (in an approved format, providing prescribed information) and the Tasmanian Electoral Commission is to publish candidate information through appropriate means.

The candidate information booklet mailed to electors by the Commissioner is an essential component of local government elections. It is the primary way electors become aware of the range of candidates, their reasons for seeking election, views and propositions.

This candidate information is presently not an element of the statutory scheme, despite being core to the electoral process. It is proposed this become part of the statutory elections framework and candidates be afforded a right to submit an information statement as part of the notice of nomination. While provision of the statement will be encouraged, it will not be mandatory. The returning officer will also be empowered to reject a statement that is offensive or could mislead electors, which is similar to the conditions for the name of a candidate or for registering a party name under the Electoral Act.

A head of power will be provided in the new Bill for making regulations, should it be necessary to prescribe specific information to be included in the request for a candidate information statement.[8]

A power will also be provided for potential regulations specifying the form in which the material is to be made available to electors. The Tasmanian Electoral Commission will be required, in the first instance, to provide the candidate information to electors in printed form and publish it on the Tasmanian Electoral Commission website. Providing the candidate and election information to households by unaddressed mail (letter drop) is more affordable than addressed mail (though the use of unaddressed mail will depend upon the model of future elections, as this is unsuitable for the delivery of ballot papers). In practice, this is consistent with the current delivery method of candidate information (that being mail).

[8] An analogous requirement can be found in the candidate information sheets in the New South Wales *Local Government Act 1993.*

Reform 12: provide that the Director of Local Government may provide a statement to be published by the Tasmanian Electoral Commission alongside the candidate information.

Provision will be made for the Director of Local Government to supply a statement to the Tasmanian Election Commission for publication alongside the candidate information statement. The purpose of that statement, in legislation, will be the provision of relevant public information as to matters of broad council performance.

The Director may use this power to inform electors (at a high level) as to where they may locate relevant council regulatory and performance information, for instance, published Code of Conduct Panel determinations, and the council performance data dashboard to be developed as a result of recommendations of the Future of Local Government Review.

The Commission will be provided a power to reject a statement where that statement would have an undue bearing on the considerations of candidates by electors, in the Commission’s view, which will be final.

Reform 13: establish that nomination by a registered party is to be included in the information published by the Tasmanian Electoral Commission, and printed on the ballot paper, with the candidate’s name to be printed alongside the name of the registered party.

This option is testing whether the Tasmanian Electoral Commission should be required to publish in the candidate information booklet and website information, and on the councillor, mayoral and deputy mayoral ballot papers a candidate has been nominated by a registered party.

This is proposed as a public information measure. Membership of a registered party will not compel prospective candidates to seek nomination by that party, as candidates can nominate individually. Rather, the measure is intended to provide a level of transparency as to when candidates have sought and gained party endorsement, with the party then able to assist in compiling nominator signatures (see Reform 5).

It is noted candidates can, and do, declare party endorsement using the existing non-statutory candidate statements. While a range of considerations are relevant to the general proposition of partisan involvement in local government, this is considered a matter the statutory framework must be fundamentally neutral to, and it is the case parties already involve themselves in the local government electoral process.

Acknowledging the potential for printing party names on the ballot paper, consideration may also be given to candidates to have printed names of affiliated groupings and/or the word ‘Independent’ on the ballot paper, as below.

Reform 14: provide for candidates whose nomination form is not lodged by a registered party to request to be identified with a group name.

It is acknowledged printing the names of registered parties may raise concerns about equity between candidates who are nominated independently and those nominated by a registered party.

Subject to further development and technical consultation, provision may be made for two or more candidates who are not nominated by a registered party to request to be identified next to a common group name in the candidate information booklet and on the councillor, mayoral and deputy mayoral ballot papers through their notice of nomination. For the avoidance of doubt, this will not be a system of local government only registered parties, separate to parties registered under the *Electoral Act 2004.*

The returning officer would be empowered to reject any request for a group name that appears obscene, offensive, frivolous or intended to mislead electors, including by confusion with the name of a registered party. These proposed provisions correspond to grounds for rejecting the proposed name of a registered party under section 47 of the *Electoral Act 2004*.

While local government candidates could seek to establish a registered party in the meaning of the *Electoral Act 2004*, this requires a party membership, an advertising period, and complex ongoing regulatory obligations. The named group as proposed has no continuing status beyond the polling period but does serve to improve transparency. The proposition does not entail the establishment of ranked groups on the ballot paper or ‘above the line’ voting.

As above regarding political parties, it is noted candidates can use the existing non-statutory candidate statements to establish affiliations between candidates. This proposal formalises these practices and is intended to improve the quality of public information and provide appropriate guardrails.

Candidates who are neither identified by reference to a group nor nominated by a registered party will be able to request the word ‘Independent’ be printed on the councillor, mayoral and deputy mayoral ballot papers, in the manner provided for Legislative Council candidates by section 77 of the *Electoral Act 2004*.

4. Strengthened donations disclosure and electoral advertising requirements

This set of reforms will provide integrated approach to the management of political donations and electoral expenditure, including advertising. It seeks to align requirements for Tasmanian local government and Legislative Council elections to the extent considered appropriate and practicable. Importantly, it introduces gifts and donations disclosure requirements for non-incumbent candidates for the first time. Proposed prohibitions on the publication of deceptive and misleading statements are aligned to the *Electoral Act 2004*.

Reform 15: corresponding to the Electoral Act Review Final Report and the amended section 197 of the *Electoral Act 2004*, introduce new prohibitions on the dissemination of misleading and deceptive statements.

The Electoral Act Review Final Report recommended the existing section 197 of the *Electoral Act 2004* be augmented to provide it is an offence to print, publish or distribute electoral matter that:

- contains incorrect or misleading information about whether a person is or is not a candidate or a member of/endorsed by a registered party
- uses the name or derivative of a name of a party in a way intended to or likely to mislead any elector
- could result in an elector casting an informal vote
- contains a statement (express or implied) to the effect that voting is not compulsory
- contains a statement intended or likely to mislead an elector that the material is an official communication from the Electoral Commission or Electoral Commissioner.

It is proposed the scope of the amended section 197 be applied in the new Local Government Electoral Bill. Notably, the *Local Government Act 1993* does not presently regulate the content of electoral matter (be that advertising or other communications) with provisions corresponding to the prior section 197, so the changes will represent substantial additional protections for local government elections. A definition of ‘electoral matter’ corresponding to the *Electoral Act 2004* will be introduced.

The Electoral Act Review derived these standards through a review of interstate and Australian Government electoral provisions, with particular reference to section 180 of the New South Wales *Electoral Act 2017*.

It is acknowledged the Tasmanian local government sector has sought increased regulation of false or defamatory statements during elections, citing an increase in adverse comment on social media. While this issue is real and concerning, it is not considered feasible or desirable for the Electoral Commissioner or similar to adjudicate on the truthfulness of candidates' comments during local government elections beyond the framework above, which should guarantee the proper conduct of elections and regulate electoral disinformation. Beyond the issue of the resource impost placed upon the Tasmanian Electoral Commission, it is not considered appropriate that Tasmanian local government electoral legislation test the limits of what is a complex legal and constitutional matter.

To the extent that defamatory material is published during elections, it is noted candidates have the same recourse to civil litigation as do all members of the community.

Reform 16: remove the general restriction upon a person, without the consent of the candidate or intending candidate, printing, publishing or distributing any electoral advertising that contains the name, photograph or a likeness of a candidate or intending candidate at an election; other than 'how-to-vote' material intended to instruct an elector in the completion of their vote.

This reform was recommended through the Electoral Act Review Final Report in respect of Tasmanian parliamentary elections and has been recently supported by the House of Assembly in the Electoral Amendment Bill 2024. Restrictions that closely correspond to those in the *Electoral Act 2004* occur in the *Local Government Act 1993* in respect of local government elections.

It is acknowledged a range of views on this reform are likely to arise. However, the maintenance of the present restriction, with its wide application, could be viewed as inconsistent with the freedom of political communication. The application in practice of the present restrictions is also uncertain, as these are subject to exemptions at section 278(4)(b) regarding 'a broadcast by radio or television or by a repeat on the internet of any such broadcast'.

While this provision is proposed for repeal, the Local Government Electoral Bill will contain substantial and enhanced protections, including authorisation requirements that attribute electoral advertising to the candidate for whom benefit is intended, alongside continued limits on election expenditure. This is considered to achieve similar objectives to the repealed provision without so directly impinging on speech and expression.

Reform 17: clarify the definition of electoral advertising.

The definition of 'electoral advertising' will be strengthened to ensure it encompasses all paid communications in print, broadcast, internet and social media; but does not include general comment in broadcast, print and social media or otherwise on the internet. Electoral advertising will be defined to include (whether paid or unpaid) unsolicited calls (including automated calls) and direct unsolicited electronic messages and direct mail, including letterboxing.

The definition of electoral matter will include electoral advertising.

Reform 18: provide that only a candidate, intending candidate, or a person so nominated in the notice of nomination by a candidate, may incur electoral expenditure; and provide that expenditure by other persons to promote or procure the election of a candidate or intending candidate is an offence.

In the manner of the *Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023* framework for Legislative Council elections, within provisions to commence 1 July 2025, only candidates, intending candidates and a natural person authorised in a candidate's notice of nomination may incur electoral expenditure.

Regulation 22 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* currently provides presently that 'a person must not purchase electoral advertising time or space in relation to the election of a candidate without the written authority of that candidate', and further: 'a candidate who authorises a person to conduct electoral advertising on his or her behalf relating to an election is taken to have personally undertaken that advertising'.

This means, in effect, only candidates and persons acting as their agents may purchase electoral advertising, and requires that be attributed in full to existing advertising expenditure limits.

However, the indirect nature of this mechanism is less than ideal. A straightforward requirement, made in the new Bill, that only intending candidates, candidates and persons nominated by candidates themselves may incur expenditure is more effective and easier to administer and enforce.

This mechanism also addresses the possibility of broadly unregulated third-party campaigning of a negative character in relation to candidates.

Section 278 of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides presently for a global offence provision regarding electoral advertising to promote or procure the election of a candidate other than in accordance with the regulations, and further provides a successful candidate convicted under that section by a court is to have their election voided in all but special circumstances. This latter provision will be retained.

Reform 19: institute authorisation requirements for electoral advertising and associated material.

Under this reform, electoral advertisements and associated material will require published authorisations, consistent with the requirements in the *Electoral Act 2004*. Authorisation may be by a candidate or intending candidate or a nominated person, identifying the candidate or intending candidate who has provided their endorsement for the advertising or material.

It will be an offence to cause to be published or transmitted electoral advertising without providing the authorisation particulars with the advertising.

These requirements will improve the transparency of elections and improve the integrity of the advertising returns system.

Reform 20: replace advertising expenditure limits with a general expenditure limit, with reference to the expenditure limit for Legislative Council elections under the *Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023*.

Presently, a system providing for an electoral advertising expenditure limit is contained in the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015*.

It is proposed this limit be expanded to cover election expenditure generally, with reference to the forms of expenditure in and out of scope, and the period, of regulation under the *Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023* in respect of Legislative Council elections (noting those provisions are to commence 1 July 2025).

A general expenditure limit more flexibly (and appropriately) captures the range of campaigning activities open to candidates at contemporary elections.

Reform 21: require that a candidate is to report expenditure made on their behalf in their electoral expenditure return, in the same manner as personal expenditure. The present requirement to attribute, in full, to each candidate so featured the value of advertising featuring multiple candidates (for instance, multiple party candidates) will be retained.

These provisions, currently found in the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015*, are to be retained and elevated to primary legislation. The effect of these is to attribute expenditure made on behalf of candidates (who must have authorised that expenditure) to individual candidates, to enable the effective regulation of electoral advertising and other campaign activities using individual candidate expenditure limits.

As present, the full value of advertising (or other activities) promoting multiple candidates (for instance, an advertisement depicting several candidates as members of a political party – including across municipal areas – or an advertisement promoting another group of candidates) is attributed to each individual candidate.

While further analysis will be required, the limits are proposed to be retained as at present, being an indexed amount which commenced at $16,000 for candidates in Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence, Kingborough and Launceston, and $10,000 for remaining councils in 2018.

Reform 22: prohibit any person from incurring any expenditure for or on behalf of a registered party with a view to promoting or procuring the election of a candidate or intending candidate.

This provision occurs in the *Electoral Act 2004*, and in the *Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023*, in respect of Legislative Council elections (with the latter provision commencing 1 July 2025).

This prohibition is meant to complement the above requirement that all electoral expenditure, including advertising, only be made by candidates or intending candidates themselves (or their nominees), which enables regulation and disclosure for individual candidates. It is considered appropriate to apply the same prohibition as stands for Legislative Council elections, given advertising (now to be general) expenditure limits are an existing feature of local government elections.

Reform 23: maintain the $50 threshold for the disclosure of gifts and benefits and extend this requirement from incumbent councillors to all candidates, who will be required to lodge two candidate donation returns with the Tasmanian Electoral Commission. The new Bill will also require the publication of initial donations disclosures on the Commission's website during the polling period and until the certificate of election.

Councillors are required to report gifts and donations of an 'item, service, loan of money, loan of property or any other benefit with a monetary value of $50 or more', or gifts and donations received from the same donor of an aggregate value of $50 or more. As an outcome of the Local Government Legislation Review, Government endorsed all 'electoral candidates will be required to declare gifts and donations received during the electoral period'.

There is no intention to revise the threshold for the disclosure of a gift or benefit in the development of the new Electoral Bill and it is not considered desirable a separate or higher threshold would apply to non-incumbent candidates or sitting councillors.

Councillors are required to provide the general manager notice of the receipt of a gift or benefit over the threshold within 14 days and this forms a register updated on at least a monthly basis and is available for inspection by the public, including on the council's website.

It is proposed that the proposition endorsed through the Local Government Legislation Review be strengthened to apply to gifts and benefits received for the purpose of a supporting an intending candidate's election from 30 days after the certificate of election of the last ordinary election for the council to 30 days after the certificate of election of the current election (the donations period). Victoria's *Local Government Act 2020* establishes an analogous donations period.

Candidates, whether successful or unsuccessful at the election, will be required to provide a donation return, at the same time candidates are required to provide their return in relation to electoral expenditure, being 45 days after the certificate of election. The return will need to be in a form approved by the Tasmanian Electoral Commission and a power will be provided for regulations to be made prescribing information that must be included in the donation return.

To further enhance transparency, it is proposed non-incumbent candidates will be required to lodge an initial donations return at the time they submit their notice of nomination, for the donations period until that date. In lieu of this requirement, councillors who are contesting the election will be able to certify on their return the gifts and benefits disclosed on the register maintained by the general manager are current at the time of their notice of nomination.

The Tasmanian Electoral Commission will be required to publish the initial donations disclosures on its website during the polling period and until the closing day. Subsequently, the final donations returns of successful candidates will be provided to the general manager and form the basis for the new council's gifts and benefits register.

Reform 24: provide that it is an offence for a person other than a candidate or intending candidate to accept a gift or benefit for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate, or for the dominant purpose of influencing the way electors vote in an election; and that it is an offence to make a gift or donation to a person other than a candidate or intending candidate for this purpose.

This provision is intended to prohibit donations made to intermediaries which could otherwise obfuscate the origins and purpose of gifts or benefits intended to promote or procure the election of a candidate, or influence the outcomes of elections. These provisions, while far reaching, are proposed as an alternative to a system of requiring returns from third-party campaigners and agents, the complexity of which is considered to be incompatible with the conduct of local government elections. By restricting the receipt and making of donations to candidates and intending candidates themselves, the regulation of gift and benefits through the disclosures of individual candidates can be preserved.

Reform 25: provide that it is an offence for a councillor, intending candidate or candidate, at any time, to accept a donation for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate or intending candidate at a local government election:

- over $50, including services or goods valued in kind, without recording the basic details of that donor
- over $50 in cash
- over $50 from a foreign donor.

These requirements are again derived from those in the *Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023*, adjusted for the longstanding financial thresholds for disclosure for councillors. The provision of information collection requirements is intended to support the submission of complete donations disclosures by candidates at the time of nomination and following the certificate of elections.

Provision will be made, in the manner of the *Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023*, for a person to return or dispose of a gift accepted improperly within a short period.

5. Other changes to support the integrity of elections

These additional reforms provide for the continued integrity of local government elections and adopt measures common to other jurisdictions and Tasmanian parliamentary elections. Sanctions for elections offences will be enhanced and the Tasmanian Electoral Commission provided with corresponding powers of investigation; and a legislated caretaker framework will embed the voluntary policy approach adopted by most councils at the 2022 elections. Consistent with the Local Government Legislation Review, elector polls are to be retained, but a larger section of the electorate will be required to petition for an elector poll to be held, reflecting their substantial costs.

Reform 26: provide that a local government election or by-election may not be held such that the polling period overlaps the date of a Tasmanian or Australian Government parliamentary election.

The Bill will provide expressly that a local government election may not coincide with a Tasmanian parliamentary election, of either house, or an election for the Parliament of Australia. As the timing of local government elections is fixed in legislation, with their closing on the last Tuesday in October (absent an order of the Governor) these elections coinciding is not likely, other than for a Legislative Council by-election. However, the making of an express provision removes any need for the Minister for Local Government to seek an order to this effect, as the impact on the community and the Tasmanian Electoral Commission of simultaneous elections (the latter in the case of a state election) is foreseeably unmanageable and would discourage participation and engagement at local council elections.

Reform 27: provide the Tasmanian Electoral Commission with powers of investigation.

Consistent with the outcomes of the Electoral Act Review and the amendments to the *Electoral Act 2004* contained within the *Electoral Matters (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2023*, powers of investigation – including powers to compel information and to use that information to prosecute an electoral offence – will be contained in the new Bill. The provisions will mirror those contained in the *Electoral Matters (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2023*.

Reform 28: alignment of electoral offences and sanctions with the Electoral Act.

Consideration will be given to aligning electoral offences between the new Bill and the Electoral Act, including enhancements contained in *Electoral Matters (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2023*. This includes the introduction of fault elements to the offence of electoral bribery and undue influence as presently established in the *Local Government Act 1993*, and consideration to alignment of sanctions, including provision that some offences may be tried on indictment or in a court of summary jurisdiction, unlike the existing provision only for summary offences.

Alignment of offences will leverage the recent work of the Electoral Act Review and ensure the Tasmanian Electoral Commission, combined with its powers of investigation, will be able to better ensure the integrity of local government elections in Tasmania.

Reform 29: provide a statutory caretaker framework, applying from the notice of election to the date of the issue of the certificate of election for all elections other than by-elections and countbacks.

While caretaker conventions are non-statutory at state and Australian Government elections, local governments in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Queensland operate under statutory caretaker rules during their election period, with caretaker provisions legislated in Western Australia for future elections.

Most Tasmanian councils implemented caretaker provisions on a voluntary basis for the 2022 elections, and Government endorsed the introduction of a statutory local government caretaker framework as an outcome of the local government legislation review.

A caretaker period is intended to ensure councils do not make decisions to bind an incoming council inappropriately, and councils cannot use the resources of council to improperly influence the outcome of the elections in favour of incumbent councillors.

Councillors – particularly those not seeking or anticipating re-election – may not be incentivised to make decisions in the interest of the general community, including after the close of polls but prior to the issuance of the certificate of elections. As such, it is appropriate to the limit the matters subject to the decision of elected councils in this time, noting the provisions will only apply for approximately 10 weeks in each four-year local government term.

Reform 30: provide that during the caretaker period, prohibit a council from making any major policy or financial decisions, namely decisions:

- relating to the appointment, reappointment, remuneration or termination of a general manager, other than a decision in respect of the appointment of an acting general manager under section 61B
- committing the council to expenditure greater than one per cent of general and service rating and fees and charges revenue raised in the preceding financial year, or $100,000, whichever is the larger
- directing council resources in a manner intended, or likely to, influence voting at the election
- relating to a matter the council considers it could reasonably defer until after the election period, other than:
    - decisions relating to a matter the council is required to determine in that period under statute
    - decisions of a routine and operational nature.

The specific elements of the proposed caretaker framework correspond generally to interstate caretaker frameworks and are intended to enable effective operations of council through the electoral period.

As the Tasmanian Electoral Commission may not be positioned to investigate the activities of councils, these provisions may be inserted into the *Local Government Act 1993*, or otherwise formulated so the Director of Local Government would hold primary responsibility in respect of compliance.

For instance, in the event of a general manager vacancy during the period the provisions are in effect, council could only make an acting appointment as provided for by section 61B of the *Local Government Act 1993*, but could not substantively appoint a new general manager. A council could not decide to reappoint its general manager or to vary the terms of the appointment or remuneration.

Council decisions committing council to expenditure over one per cent of their own-source revenues from the preceding financial year (with an alternative threshold of $100,000 to provide flexibility to smaller councils) may not be made during the caretaker period. Matters endorsed by elected council previously and which are operationalised within the council organisation, may continue as usual (for instance, the execution of contracts for capital or maintenance works in accordance with councils' previously endorsed annual plans).

Councils will be prevented from directing council resources in a manner likely to influence voting at the election and will be generally required to defer matters which may be reasonably considered after the new council is in place, with the exception of matters of a routine and operational nature (for instance, the execution of works contracts as noted above) or matters councils must consider within the election period under statute, including the determination of planning applications and other regulatory matters.

Reform 31: provide that during the caretaker period, it is an offence for a council to:

- publish any material in any format which promotes any candidate or group of candidates for election, or otherwise seeks to influence voters in the election
- publish material in relation to the election other than information to promote participation in the election and in relation to election process, or other material of a kind published by the Electoral Commissioner
- make resources available to the advantage of any candidate, which are not equally available to all candidates for election.

Broad restrictions are to apply to the publication of material by councils during the electoral period. These will properly ensure councils cannot leverage public resources to favour incumbent councillors. For instance, councils must refrain from publishing material, including through newsletters or social media posts, promoting initiatives or works completed by council which associates those works with incumbent councillors.

Councils will be permitted (and indeed should) publish material generally to encourage and facilitate participation in compulsory local government elections.

Similarly, councils would not be permitted to make resources available to the advantage of any candidate which are not equally available to all candidates. For instance, a council could not hold a candidate forum where an invitation to participate was not extended equally to every candidate.

Reform 32: provide that major policy or financial decisions of a council during the caretaker period are of no effect and provide that persons who incur loss or damage due to an ineffectual decision of a council, who acted in good faith, are entitled to recover compensation from the council.

Council compliance with the caretaker provisions relating to the making of decisions is enforced by providing that such decisions are of no effect at law. As a contractual counterparty who acted in good faith could be disadvantaged, it is to be provided that a party so disadvantaged may recover compensation from the council under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Variations of this provision have been implemented in Victoria, South Australia and Queensland.

While the proposal may lead to public funds being expended on financial penalties in the future, it is considered that strong incentives towards compliance are in the broader public interest.

Consideration will be given to provision for a dispensation from the Minister or Director for a decision to be made in prescribed circumstances. Versions of this are provided for in New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland.

Reform 33: increase the proportion of electors signing a petition required to compel a council to hold an elector poll to 20 per cent; while restricting the matters about which an elector poll may be held to matters with a legitimate connection to the exercise of a council's functions or powers or to the incorporation of the council, as determined by the council.

This proposal is an endorsed outcome of the Local Government Legislation Review.

Presently, an elector poll can be compelled by a petition signed by the lesser of 1000 electors, or five per cent of electors; following from a public meeting which can be compelled by a petition signed by the same number of electors.

Under present provisions, issues which motivate in the order of two per cent of electors in the largest municipalities, or 40 people in the smallest, can lead to a general elector poll at substantial public expense.

Elector polls are advisory and do not bind the subsequent decision making of councils on any issue. For that reason, and despite appearances, they are not a direct democratic mechanism, but rather a means of establishing the sentiment of the community in a local government area on an issue.

Councils may, on their own initiative and without receiving a petition, hold elector polls, and this is not proposed to change.

Elector polls are expensive, especially when held out of cycle with local government elections. For example, the recent Clarence City Council poll, resulting from a public petition, was estimated to cost in the order of $200,000. Raising the threshold to compel an elector poll (or hold a public meeting) to 20 per cent of electors ensures that elector polls are only held (without the initiative of council) for issues which credibly motivate a large proportion of the community, and where the proposition has a clear prospect of gaining popular support. Similarly, placing some limitations around the matters upon which an elector poll may be held will avoid substantial public expenditure to test sentiment on matters remote to councils, noting elector polls are an inefficient and expensive means of testing the views of the public.

At a glance - Local Government Electoral Bill discussion paper

The Government is inviting public comment on forward-looking reforms to how we conduct local government elections in Tasmania.

The discussion paper is organised around five key outcomes:

1. a more flexible and accessible format for local government elections
2. a better voting franchise for electors and changes to eligibility to run for office
3. better quality of public information at elections
4. strengthened donations disclosure and electoral advertising requirements
5. other changes to support the integrity of elections.

Future format of elections

The paper outlines scenarios for how we may conduct local government elections in the future. This responds to challenges, namely decreasing postal services standards and increasing costs, which will continue to challenge the conduct of elections by postal ballot. We know some change to the current model is inevitable. The goal is to ensure our legislation provides flexibility to adapt the format of elections having regard to evolving technologies and community needs, among other things.

The paper presents two scenarios:

- The first scenario is an upfront change to an **attendance voting mode**, either with a single polling day or a polling period, which would represent a substantial departure for local government elections in Tasmania.
- The second scenario relies upon **continued distribution by mail of ballot papers**, with electors encouraged and enabled to complete and return ballots by hand to physical issuing places, creating a 'hybrid' electoral system.

In either instance, voters with barriers to participation (including electors with a print disability, who live in remote locations or are interstate or overseas) would be better served by legislative amendments to enable telephone voting, along with an option to continue to access conventional postal voting where that is practicable.

New directions: who should vote in local government elections and how should we elect the deputy mayor?

While proposed reforms in the discussion paper seek to support and deliver on initiatives agreed through the earlier Local Government Legislation Review, there are two main exceptions to this where we think there is merit in testing recent community and sector views about alternative approaches. These are:

- consideration for the continued eligibility to vote by non-citizens; and

- the manner of electing deputy mayors, proposing that the deputy mayor is instead elected 'around the table' in the manner of deputy mayor vacancies during the term, and also that councils may elect between a deputy mayor appointed for a fixed period, or an acting mayor appointed form time-to-time.

Technical reforms

A more flexible and accessible format for local government elections

This set of reforms will provide future flexibility for the conduct of local government elections and, importantly, remove current barriers to using available assistive practices and technologies for electors with print disabilities and electors who are interstate or overseas.

A better franchise for electors and changes to eligibility to run for office

This set of reforms will make the administration of the local government electoral franchise more robust and, importantly, embed the core 'one person, one vote' principle for future elections. It also provides a higher – but appropriate – bar for nomination without the introduction of a candidate nomination fee.

Better quality public information at elections

This set of reforms is intended to improve the understanding by electors of the candidate field, including notation on the ballot where candidate nominations have been lodged by a registered political party and the publication of candidate information statements and relevant regulatory information provided by the Director of Local Government.

Strengthened donations disclosure and electoral advertising requirements

This set of reforms will provide integrated approach to the management of political donations and electoral expenditure, including advertising. It seeks to align requirements for Tasmanian local government and Legislative Council elections to the extent considered appropriate and practicable. Importantly, it introduces gifts and donations disclosure requirements for non-incumbent candidates for the first time. Proposed prohibitions on the publication of deceptive and misleading statements are aligned to the *Electoral Act 2004*.

Other changes to support the integrity of elections

These additional reforms provide for the continued integrity of local government elections and adopt measures common to other jurisdictions and Tasmanian parliamentary elections. Sanctions for elections offences will be enhanced and the Tasmanian Electoral Commission provided with corresponding powers of investigation; and a legislated caretaker framework will embed the voluntary policy approach adopted by most councils at the 2022 elections. Consistent with the Local Government Legislation Review, elector polls are to be retained, but a larger section of the electorate will be required to petition for an elector poll to be held, reflecting their substantial costs.

PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

Interim report into local government sustainability

House of Representatives

Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport

February 2025

CANBERRA

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Foreword

Local governments, also known as councils, municipalities and shires, play an essential role as the closest tier of governance to communities, and addressing their individual community's needs. Their responsibilities are diverse and complex; comprising a broad range of services and functions that are crucial for community well-being and development.

The Committee is undertaking a thorough review of all the submissions received and evidence gathered at public hearings throughout the inquiry and will subsequently produce a final report. In the meantime, the Committee has agreed to present an interim report to provide an update on the work it has undertaken to date, along with a brief overview on the key themes emerging from the inquiry.

Evidence reviewed to date shows that local government diversity across urban, regional, rural, and remote areas, changing population trends, varied funding bases, and infrastructure networks place increasing demands on financial sustainability. This is evident within the context of increased service delivery obligations and cost shifting.

The role of local governments has evolved and expanded significantly over time beyond their traditional purview of rates, roads, and rubbish. Local governments are increasingly relied upon to provide services and manage complex infrastructure assets, some of which were formally the responsibility of the Commonwealth, State, and Northern Territory governments.

Evidence considered to date, shows that councils' responsibilities can include:

- health, aged care, childcare, and mental health services
- housing supply planning and development and provision of enabling infrastructure
- progressively complex infrastructure and asset management, including maintaining depreciating assets
- environmental regulatory compliance and management obligations
- climate adaptation and emergency management.

Other challenges raised by stakeholders include the financial impact of expanding service delivery obligations and cost shifting; restrictions associated with revenue raising and access and equitable distribution of grants funding; co-contributions inhibiting financially challenged councils access to grants; and workforce recruitment and retention, including skills shortages.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the many local councils, local government organisations, state and territory governments, organisations and individuals who have taken the time to provide submissions to the inquiry and provide evidence at public hearings across Australia.

I also extend my thanks to my parliamentary colleagues on the Committee for their work and ongoing constructive advice and to the Committee Secretariat for their professional approach, diligence and commitment throughout this important inquiry process.

Mr Luke Gosling OAM, MP
Chair

Contents

Appendixes

Terms of reference

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport will inquire into and report on local government matters, with a particular focus on:

- The financial sustainability and funding of local government
- The changing infrastructure and service delivery obligations of local government
- Any structural impediments to security for local government workers and infrastructure and service delivery
- Trends in the attraction and retention of a skilled workforce in the local government sector, including impacts of labour hire practices
- The role of the Australian Government in addressing issues raised in relation to the above
- Other relevant issues.

Members

Chair

Mr Luke Gosling OAM MP	Solomon, NT

Deputy Chair

Mr Tony Pasin MP	Barker, SA

Members

Mr Colin Boyce MP	Flynn, QLD
Hon Scott Buchholz MP	Wright, QLD
Ms Lisa Chesters MP	Bendigo, VIC
Dr Helen Haines MP	Indi, VIC
Mr Rob Mitchell MP	McEwen, VIC
Ms Tracey Roberts MP	Pearce, WA
Ms Joanne Ryan MP	Lalor, VIC
Mr Tony Zappia MP	Makin, SA

This Committee is supported by staff of the Department of the House of Representatives.

Initial reflections

About this inquiry

1.1 On 21 March 2024, the Committee adopted an inquiry into local government sustainability following a referral from the Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, the Hon Catherine King MP.

1.2 The terms of reference for the inquiry are listed on page v of this report.

1.3 The Committee received 287 submissions. These are listed at Appendix A.

1.4 The Committee held 16 public hearings in person and via videoconference, in Canberra, Launceston, Wallan, Adelaide, Cairns, Beaudesert and Perth. These are listed at Appendix B.

1.5 The Committee is undertaking a thorough examination of all the evidence it received and will subsequently produce a final report. The Committee has however decided to use an interim report to provide an update on work undertaken to date and provide a brief overview on emerging themes from the inquiry.

1.6 Local governments (often called councils, municipalities or shires) play a crucial role, acting as the closest tier of governance to the community and addressing various needs and concerns at the grassroots level. Their roles and responsibilities are diverse and multifaceted, encompassing a wide range of services and functions that are essential for the well-being and development of communities.

1.7 Capital city, urban, regional, rural and remote Local Government Areas (LGAs) each face vastly different and unique challenges. The diversity between local governments in each state and the Northern Territory (NT) is substantial and there are significant differences in:

- size and population
- road length and infrastructure
- fiscal position, resources and skills base
- physical, social and cultural environments
- attitudes and aspirations of their communities, and
- legislative frameworks.

1.8 The Centre for Population highlighted the differences in the over 560 LGAs[1] (537 councils)[2] across Australia, noting that their growth rates change year on year:

> LGAs range from being over 300,000 km^2 (e.g. East Pilbara in Western Australia) to close to one square km (e.g. Peppermint Grove in Western Australia). Similarly, population varies greatly between LGAs. The largest LGAs, like Brisbane (Queensland), have populations over 1 million, while the smallest, like Maralinga Tjarutja (South Australia) have populations under 100.[3]

1.9 The Centre also noted that LGAs differ in the speed at which they grow and how they grow:

> There are three components that make up the population growth of an LGA:
>
> - Net overseas migration: The balance between people moving into and out from the LGA from overseas.
> - Net internal migration: The balance between people moving into and out from the LGA from elsewhere in Australia.
> - Natural increase: The difference between the number of births and number of deaths in the LGA.[4]

Local government and the Commonwealth Constitution

1.10 The Commonwealth Constitution establishes Australia's federal system. It is a dualist federal system, in which powers and functions are allocated to two levels of government—at the Commonwealth level (first tier) and at the state and territory level (second tier). Local governments or councils are not mentioned in the Australian Constitution; however, each state and the NT has a local government Act that 'provides the rules for the creation and operation of councils'.[5] In general, these acts 'cover how councils are elected and their power to make and enforce local laws, known as by-laws'.[6]

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1 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Local Government Areas', https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/australian-statistical-geography-standard-asgs-edition-3/jul2021-jun2026/non-abs-structures/local-government-areas, accessed 15 November 2024.

2 Local Government Information Unit, 'Facts and figures: Australia', https://lgiu.org/resources/local-government-facts-and-figures/facts-and-figures-australia/, accessed 15 November 2024.

3 Centre for Population, 'Fastest growing Local Government Areas', https://population.gov.au/population-topics/topic-growth-lga, accessed 7 November 2024.

4 Centre for Population, 'Fastest growing Local Government Areas', https://population.gov.au/population-topics/topic-growth-lga, accessed 7 November 2024.

5 Parliamentary Education Office, 'How does the Commonwealth Constitution create a third level of Government?', https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/your-questions-on-notice/questions/how-does-the-commonwealth-constitution-create-a-third-level-of-government, accessed 20 November 2024.

6 Parliamentary Education Office, 'How does the Commonwealth Constitution create a third level of Government?', https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/your-questions-on-notice/questions/how-does-the-commonwealth-constitution-create-a-third-level-of-government, accessed 20 November 2024.

1.11 The state and NT governments delegate authority to councils to make laws on specific matters, however, council by-laws may be overruled by state and territory legislation as councils derive their powers from their individual state and NT parliaments.[7] Local governments are primarily accountable to the second tier of government and local constituents to discharge their responsibilities under state and territory legislative frameworks.[8]

1.12 A local government's ability to raise revenue is also derived from state and territory legislation. Local governments may raise revenue through rates, duties and charges, user fees, fines and other penalties, developer contributions and charges, the accumulation of interest on financial accounts, and through grants from the Commonwealth, state and NT governments.[9] Local governments' sole source of taxation revenue is from property taxes.[10]

Local Government Financial Assistance Grants

1.13 The Australian Government has been providing Financial Assistance Grants to local governments since 1974–75. Until the territories achieved self-government, these grants did not cover the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) or the NT. Grants for local government bodies in the NT began in 1979–80. And while the ACT does not have a local government system, a grant for municipal purposes was established in 1988–89. Additionally, local roads grants were added to the Financial Assistance Grant program in 1991–92.[11]

1.14 To date, the Australian Government has provided over $70 billion under the Financial Assistance Grant program, under the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* (Cth) (the Act), to local governments.[12]

1.15 Financial Assistance Grants are paid as tied grants through the state and NT governments, and have two components:

- a general purpose component which is distributed between the states and territories according to population (i.e. on a per capita basis), and

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7 Parliamentary Education Office, 'How does the Commonwealth Constitution create a third level of Government?', https://peo.gov.au/understand-our-parliament/your-questions-on-notice/questions/how-does-the-commonwealth-constitution-create-a-third-level-of-government, accessed 20 November 2024.
8 Adjunct Professor Graham Sansom, *Submission 280*, p. 2.
9 Section 96 of the Australian Constitution allows the federal government to grant money to the states and to tell the states how this money is to be spent.
10 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Taxation Revenue, Australia methodology', https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/taxation-revenue-australia-methodology/2022-23, accessed 20 November 2024.
11 Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration, *Rates and Taxes: A Fair Share for Responsible Local Government*, October 2003, Appendix F.
12 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, 'Financial Assistance Grant to Local Government', https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/local-government/financial-assistance-grant-local-government, accessed 20 November 2024.

- an identified local road component which is distributed between the states and territories according to fixed historical shares.[13]

1.16 The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts website (the Department) states that:

> Both components of the grant are untied in the hands of local government, allowing councils to spend the grants according to local priorities.
>
> Local government grants commissions in each state and the Northern Territory recommend the distribution of the funding under the Financial Assistance Grant program to local governing bodies in accordance with the Act and the National Principles for allocating grants.[14]

1.17 The National Principles relating to the allocation of general purpose grants payable under section 9 of the Act among local governing bodies are:

- Horizontal equalisation—general purpose grants will be allocated to local governing bodies, as far as practicable, on a full horizontal equalisation basis
- Effort neutrality—a policy neutral approach will be used in assessing the expenditure requirements and revenue-raising capacity of each local governing body
- Minimum grant—a minimum general purpose grant allocation for a local governing body in a year will be not less than the amount to which the local governing body would be entitled if 30 per cent of the total amount of general purpose grants to which the state or NT is entitled
- Other grant support—relevant grant support provided to local governing bodies to meet any of the expenditure needs assessed should be taken into account using an inclusion approach
- Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples—financial assistance shall be allocated to councils in a way, which recognises the needs of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Council amalgamation—the general purpose grant provided to the new body for each of the four years following amalgamation should be the total of the amounts that would have been provided to the former bodies.[15]

[13] Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, 'Financial Assistance Grant to Local Government', https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/local-government/financial-assistance-grant-local-government, accessed 20 November 2024.

[14] Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, 'Financial Assistance Grant to Local Government', https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/local-government/financial-assistance-grant-local-government, accessed 20 November 2024.

[15] Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, 'National principles for the allocation of grants under the Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995', https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/territories-regions-cities/local-government/financial-assistance-grant-local-government/national-principles-allocation-grants, accessed 20 November 2024.

1.18 Additionally, some of the current grants transferred from Commonwealth to state, NT and local governments are Specific Purpose Payments (SPPs):

> Unlike the GST-related grants, these payments are 'tied' to specific policy areas as agreed between the two levels of government. Similar arrangements exist between state and local government. SPPs for current purposes are included with other current grants in deriving adjusted taxation revenue.[16]

Emerging themes

1.19 Over time, the role of local governments has expanded exponentially beyond the three Rs—rates, roads and rubbish. They have increasingly been relied upon to deliver services and infrastructure which were traditionally under the purview of the Commonwealth, state and territory governments. Stakeholders indicated that many new roles and responsibilities are a consequence of the practice of cost shifting.

1.20 Throughout the inquiry to date, the Committee received substantial evidence through submissions and at public hearings on how local government financial sustainability and funding frameworks were being impacted by evolving infrastructure requirements, service delivery obligations and cost shifting.

1.21 The Committee heard that some LGAs have increasingly taken on responsibility for the management of health, aged care and childcare, and mental health related services. LGAs have also been playing an increasing regulatory role in the areas of development and infrastructure/asset management and planning, housing, environmental biodiversity/conservation requirements, and climate adaptation management.

1.22 The Committee also heard about challenges associated with the application of the Financial Assistance Grants.

1.23 A brief overview of the evidence received to date on these themes is provided below.

Financial Assistance Grants

1.24 Submitters were of the view that the current distribution model was not working. The Grattan Institute stated that the current allocation process had three significant impacts:

> First, the general component of the Financial Assistance Grants favours densely populated states, so similar councils in different states get vastly different funding outcomes. Second, the minimum grant to all councils diverts too large a share of funding away from councils that are least able to raise their own revenue. Third, the outdated distribution of the local roads component creates large variations in

16 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Taxation Revenue, Australia methodology', https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/taxation-revenue-australia-methodology/2022-23, accessed 20 November 2024.

> outcomes for similar councils in different parts of the country, and provides too large a share of the funding to self-sufficient councils.[17]

1.25 Professor Sansom believed that the current model appeared to be favouring metropolitan regions over rural and remote councils noting that:

> …in 2023–24 ten NSW councils received only the minimum $24.85 per capita grant, indicating effectively no need for assistance, and a further eleven received less than 10 [per cent] more than the minimum (less than $27), suggesting at best very little need. All those councils are located in the Sydney metropolitan region, and the great majority comprised mostly well-established affluent suburbs where the community might be expected to have considerable capacity to pay an extra $27 per capita in council rates. Moreover, for no apparent reason two other notoriously affluent suburban councils received well above the minimum grant.
>
> In total, those 23 councils absorbed around $76 million in general-purpose grants. Such an amount could make a very big difference to sustainability and service delivery amongst rural-remote councils, whilst also providing assistance for fast-growing areas experiencing financial stress.[18]

1.26 The Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Byron Shire Council, South Gippsland Shire Council, Shire of Shark Bay, Upper Hunter Shore Council, and Muswellbrook Shire Council questioned the fairness of the state formula for allocation of Federal Financial Assistance Grants between regional and metropolitan councils.[19]

1.27 Murrindindi Shire Council recommended that the Australian Government review and amend the allocation criteria used for Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants to recognise small rural LGAs' financial constraints. The Council submitted that small rural councils have 'limited incoming generating options [and a] higher cost base due to lower population density'. Rates and charges are the Council's main source of income, but this represents only 56 per cent of its revenue. Murrindindi is unable to rase rates to more than the Victorian Government's rate cap mechanism, which it advised is set well below inflation and operating cost increases. To underscore this, the Council advised that analysis undertaken by Municipal Association of Victoria and FinPro in 2022, estimated:

> …that cumulatively over the first 4 years of rate capping (introduced in 2016/17) the gap between the increase in the local government cost base and the rate cap increase was 4% for the sector and 9% for small rural councils, indicating a compounding erosion of the rate base.[20]

1.28 Submitters suggested that the horizontal equalisation principle was also ineffective. The Grattan Institute stated that the 'horizontal equalisation principle—that all

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17 Grattan Institute, *Submission 74*, p. 16.

18 Adjunct Professor Graham Sansom, *Submission 280*, p. 6.

19 Canberra Region Joint Organisation, *Submission 258*, p. 15; Byron Shire Council, *Submission 82*, p. 3; South Gippsland Shire Council, *Submission 49*, p. 1; Shire of Shark Bay, *Submission 76*, p. 2; Upper Hunter Shore Council, *Submission 24*, p. 2; Muswellbrook Shire Council, *Submission 177*, p. 5.

20 Murrindindi Shire Council, *Submission 217*, p. 5.

councils should have the capacity to provide similar services to their communities—is in tension with the principle that dictates minimum grants'.[21]

1.29 Murrindindi Shire Council too highlighted horizontal equalisation as a core principle the of Financial Assistance Grants allocation process. Specifically stating that 'the funding allocation should contribute to each council's ability to function, by reasonable effort, at a standard not lower than the average standard of other councils in the State/Territory'.[22] However, despite operating cost effectively, community satisfaction indicators across the Shire show that it is unable to achieve comparable outcomes to the average performance of all other Victorian councils.[23]

1.30 The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley stated that 'in practice [horizontal equalisation] is not evident in Western Australia as there are extremely large differences in the average standards between the metropolitan local governments and the regional and remote local governments'.[24]

1.31 The West Australian Local Government Grants Commission noted that it was 'unable to distribute on a full horizontal equalization basis due to the size of the General Purpose Grant (GPG) pool being approximately 37 per cent smaller than the Commission's assessment of the relative need for local governments in WA'.[25]

1.32 Mansfield Shire Council recommended that the horizontal equalisation approach be reviewed. The Shire suggested such a review take into account the Victorian Government's 'Fair Go Rates' system to ensure funding is allocated more fairly across 'small shire cohorts who don't have the same scale of rate payer base'.[26]

1.33 The allocation of competitive funding was also considered an ongoing issue by several submitters. The Western Queensland Alliance of Councils stated that there was too much focus on competitive funding programs:

> Both the Australian and State Governments place too heavy a focus on, and allocate too much money to, competitive funding programs that generally target new infrastructure projects ('wants') rather than the renewal, upgrade and maintenance of existing, essential infrastructure projects ('needs') at the expense of smaller Councils in rural and remote areas.[27]

1.34 Several councils and shires called for untied non-competitive funding including the City of Moreton Bay, Shire of Chapman Valley, Shire of Morawa, Yarra Ranges

21 Grattan Institute, *Submission 74*, p. 18.
22 Murrindindi Shire Council, *Submission 217*, p. 4.
23 Murrindindi Shire Council, *Submission 217*, p. 4.
24 Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley, *Submission 67*, p. 2.
25 Western Australian Local Government Grants Commission, *Submission 218*, p. 2.
26 Mansfield Shire Council, *Submission 210*, p. 1.
27 Western Queensland Alliance of Councils, *Submission 176*, p. 3.

Council, Mid Murray Council, the City of Ballarat, and the City of Greater Gelong, to highlight a few.[28]

1.35 A significant number of submitters called for a review of the Financial Assistance Grants program, and in particular the distribution formula, quantum of the funding pool, indexation methodology, and the national principles.[29]

1.36 The Kimberley Regional Group, the Australian Logistics Council, and the Central Desert Regional Council called for a targeted 'review into the distribution formula of the Financial Assistance Grants road component to ensure smaller and remote councils have the capacity to maintain the roads under their responsibility'.[30]

Co-contributions

1.37 The Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts submission listed a number of supplementary funding programs and initiatives; some of which require eligible applicants to make co-contributions including the Bridges Renewal Program, Heavy Vehicle Rest Area Initiative, Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program, Mobile Black Spot Program, Mobile Network Hardening Program, Regional Connectivity Program.[31]

1.38 Councils commented that the requirement was problematic and that many were not necessarily capable of co-contributing to grant schemes. The Local Government Association of Queensland stated that:

> …when grant funding is competitive (requiring significant investment of time and resources to apply for the grant), or requires funding to be matched by a council (for example, through a co-contribution), it creates challenges for councils, in particular those with a higher reliance on grants.[32]

1.39 The Country Mayors Association of NSW noted that 'smaller regional councils are missing out on funding opportunities because they do not have available cash surplus to fund a co-contribution'.[33] The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory believed that the co-contribution requirement was acting as an inhibitor for councils to even apply for funding.[34]

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28 City of Moreton Bay, *Submission 99*, p. 5; Shire of Chapman Valley, *Submission 93*, p. 5; Shire of Morawa, *Submission 88*, p. 5; Yarra Ranges Council, *Submission 73*, p. 3; Mid Murray Council, *Submission 260*, p. 5; City of Ballarat, *Submission 251*, p. 3; City of Greater Gelong, *Submission 207*, p. 9.

29 Western Australian Local Government Association, *Submission 96*, p. 6; Local Government Association of Queensland, *Submission 257*, p. 36, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, *Submission 258*, p. 6, Grattan Institute, *Submission 74*, p. 16; Civil Contractors Federation, *Submission 247*, p. 3; Regional Capitals Alliance of WA, *Submission 124*, p. 6.

30 Kimberly Regional Group, *Submission 123*, p. 2; Australian Logistics Council, *Submission 107*, p. 2; Central Desert Regional Council, *Submission 9*, p. 4.

31 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, *Submission 38*, pages. 19-32.

32 Local Government Association of Queensland, *Submission 257*, p. 3.

33 Country Mayors Association of NSW, *Submission 188*, p. 22.

34 Local Government Association of the Northern Territory, *Submission 86*, p. 3.

1.40 A consistent theme was that the co-contribution requirements, and alignment with grantor priorities often pose barriers to accessing funding and restricting financially challenged councils from sourcing competitive grant funding for major (and essential) infrastructure upgrades or critical maintenance.

Healthcare providers

1.41 LGAs from around Australia commented on how they were increasingly required to provide healthcare services for their communities for a multitude of reasons. Some of the evidence received noted that as health services are reduced or removed from communities across Australia, local governments feel they must step in because there is no-one else.[35] Further noted by submitters was that community expectations have increased, along with government expectations, around each councils' role in supporting preventative healthcare, ageing-in-place, dementia and youth services.[36]

1.42 Councils are also providing infrastructure, such as buildings, to house general practitioner services in rural and regional areas.[37] For example, councils in regional South Australia (SA) are taking on and running medical centres due to gaps in that market.[38]

1.43 Other LGAs in WA and the NT commented that they were also experiencing challenges delivering appropriate healthcare to their communities. Sixty-six per cent of WA LGA members advised that they provide financial or in-kind support towards the provision of healthcare services.[39]

Aged care providers

1.44 LGAs have expressed an increased expectation from their communities to provide aged care services. The Department of Health and Aged Care noted that 'there are 152 councils that are involved in providing aged-care services either residential aged care through a facility or through the Commonwealth Home Support Program'.[40]

1.45 LGAs' submissions also noted that the increased prevalence of providing aged care services is impacting their financial sustainability. Several factors have been

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35 Mayor Dean Johnson, President, Local Government Association of South Australia, *Committee Hansard*, 7 June 2024, p. 3.
36 Mr Dion Lester, Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Association of Tasmania, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 7.
37 Mrs Darriea Turley, President, Local Government NSW, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 11.
38 Mr Simon Millcock, Chief Executive Officer, Northern and Yorke Local Government Association, *Committee Hansard*, 27 September 2024, p. 33.
39 Councillor Karen Chappel, President, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Committee Hansard*, 7 June 2024, p. 6.
40 Ms Trisha Garrett, First Assistant Secretary, Service Delivery Division, Ageing and Aged Care Group, Department of Health and Aged Care, *Committee Hansard*, 4 July 2024, p. 2.

identified for this, including that councils are having to facilitate the provision of aged care due to the absence of state and NT government services,[41] or market failures.[42]

1.46 Communities also identified that independent living and aged care services are not being provided by the market or another provider in their local areas.[43] One council stated that they were reluctant to get out of providing aged care services because there are not many providers wanting to cover markets where there is a high level of demand across large distances.[44] Local Government NSW advised that approximately seven to eight councils, mainly in the states rural and regional areas, provide aged care services due to market gaps.[45]

Childcare providers

1.47 Many LGA's that provided a submission to this inquiry noted that they had also commenced providing childcare services due to the lack of viability in the childcare market for private providers. The Australian Local Government Association highlighted that collectively local governments 'are one of the largest providers of childcare in Australia'.[46]

1.48 Regional Development Australia Tasmania stated that many small, rural councils subsidise or offer these services as they are considered commercially unviable by the private sector.[47]

1.49 The Corangamite Shire Council commented that some councils were considering long-term involvement in the childcare sector as a provider, adding:

> Demand for childcare services is high along with infrastructure costs, workforce is scarce and market failure exists in many communities. Historically, councils have met the cost of market failure, especially in rural communities. For these services to be viable, government funding is required.[48]

1.50 Submitters also noted that a lack of appropriate and affordable childcare was acting as an inhibitor to councils attracting a workforce.[49] The Lockhart Shire Council noted that the closure of private owned childcare had significant 'flow on effects with some parents potentially having to reduce their working hours or, worse still, having to

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41 Mr Peter Tegart, Partner, Always Thinking Advisory, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 25.
42 Mr Dion Lester, Chief Executive Officer, Local Government Association of Tasmania, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 7.
43 Ms Samantha Batchelor, Tasmanian Coordinator, Australian Services Union, *Committee Hansard*, 25 September 2024, p. 28.
44 Mr Ed Small, Director, Corporate and Governance Services, Moyne Shire Council, *Committee Hansard*, 26 September 2024, p. 29.
45 Mrs Darriea Turley, President, Local Government NSW, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 11.
46 Australian Local Government Association, *Submission 181*, p. 1.
47 Regional Development Australia Tasmania, *Submission 155*, p. 2.
48 Corangamite Shire Council, *Submission 77*, p. 4.
49 Local Government Association of Queensland, *Submission 257*, p. 22.

cease working all together at a time when local businesses are having difficulty is attracting staff'.[50]

1.51 Local Government NSW noted that 'a lot of the council funded childcare centres now were set up under prior federal government schemes where grants were available, and the buildings or property were contributed' adding that when Government subsidies were removed, councils came to the conclusion 'that they had to be subsidised by their rate base because their communities needed the care'.[51]

Mental health services

1.52 Submitters to the inquiry raised concerns about a lack of funding support to deliver appropriate mental health services in rural, regional and remote Australia. Underscoring that access to mental health services is a significant challenge for many councils and their communities.

1.53 Local governments are expected by communities and other levels of government to support mental healthcare, social inclusion, and support for vulnerable populations.[52] Lesser access to mental health services can leave people in regional, rural and remote areas particularly vulnerable to mental health problems and suicide.[53] As such, essential mental healthcare programs are being provided, funded or subsidised by councils.[54] But local governments are not adequately equipped to respond to and deal with greater levels of mental health issues, domestic violence and substance misuse.[55]

1.54 Additional challenges include:

- a lag time between population growth and sufficient delivery of mental health services, which is evident in all states and the NT, requiring improvement planning for communities being established in growth areas[56]
- infrastructure gaps and limited private commercial space for mental health services has necessitated councils to investigate and fund additional facilities to house providers.[57]

Infrastructure and asset management

1.55 The Local Government Association of SA submitted that around 10 per cent of the infrastructure owned and managed by councils is in poor condition and requires

50 Lockhart Shire Council, *Submission 19*, p. 3.
51 Mr David Reynolds, Chief Executive, Local Government NSW, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 12
52 Knox City Council, *Submission 105*, p. 9.
53 Suicide Prevention Australia, *Submission 136*, p. 2.
54 Western Queensland Alliance of Councils, *Submission 176*, p. 43.
55 Campaspe Shire Council, *Submission 172*, p. 8.
56 National Growth Areas Alliance, *Submission 228*, p. 7.
57 Redland City Council, *Submission 209*, p. 15.

intervention.[58] In particular, ageing infrastructure was highlighted as a significant contributing factor influencing the financial sustainability of councils.

1.56 Many councils commented on the challenges in meeting the maintenance and rural requirements of their ageing infrastructure.[59] Kiama Municipal Council referenced an Australian Local Government Association report which concluded that $30 billion was required to renew and replace ageing infrastructure in 2018 which was only expected to increase overtime:

> The amount of infrastructure requiring renewal will continue to increase over the next 20 years as structures built during the post-war "Baby boom" and the rapid growth period of the 1960s and '70s age and their condition, capacity and function declines. This infrastructure cliff is fast approaching and requires strategic management and coordination, rather than distribution among political grants / donations.[60]

1.57 Indigo Shire Council stated that ageing infrastructure was increasing financial strain on councils, principally in regional areas.[61]

1.58 Knox City Council commented on the wider impacts of maintaining ageing infrastructure:

> Many councils are facing the challenge of maintaining and upgrading aging infrastructure. This includes roads, bridges, public buildings that require significant investment to ensure safety, inclusion and functionality. Where councils are unable to renew infrastructure in a timely manner this results in increased maintenance costs and may result in a reduction of overall facilities to communities if councils are unable to renew due to funding constraints may result in the loss of facilities within communities.[62]

1.59 Infrastructure Australia's 2019 Infrastructure Audit identified a number of challenges across varied sectors due to ageing infrastructure including:

- much of Australia's school infrastructure is ageing and not fit for purpose for 21st century learning
- competing priorities are reducing the focus on maintaining ageing assets in tertiary education infrastructure

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58 Mayor Dean Johnson, President, Local Government Association of South Australia, *Committee Hansard*, 7 June 2024 p. 1.

59 Rural Councils Victoria, *Submission 138*, p. 6; Western Queensland Alliance of Councils, *Submission 176*, p. 2; Hindmarsh Shire Council, *Submission 169*, p. 3; Always Thinking Advisory, *Submission 80*, p. 4; Glen Eira City Council, *Submission 33*, p. 9; Broken Hill Shore Council, *Submission 261*, p. 2; Local Government Association of QLD, *Submission 257*, p. 4; Regional Capital Alliance of Western Australia, *Submission 124*, p. 8.

60 Kiama Municipal Council, *Submission 75*, p. 13.

61 Indigo Shie Council, *Submission 29*, p. 3.

62 Knox City Council, *Submission 105*, p. 9.

- ageing justice infrastructure assets are not fit-for-purpose for changing user demographics and needs
- many major coal generation assets are ageing and approaching retirement
- urban water sector faces considerable risks, including the impacts of climate change, population growth, ageing assets
- many regional and remote utilities face mounting costs to maintain, renew or upgrade ageing water and wastewater assets, but have limited funding through grants or revenue.[63]

1.60 State and NT LGAs highlighted several challenges they were experiencing including revenue, construction and maintenance costs, ageing infrastructure, project backlog, and management obligations.

1.61 Local Government NSW put forward the view that 'the financial sustainability of councils has been undermined by a relative decline in financial assistance from federal and state governments, councils' rate pegging and other factors for over 40 years, [resulting in the] under provision of community infrastructure and services and the deferral of infrastructure maintenance and renewal expenditure'.[64]

1.62 With population growth, ageing infrastructure and project backlogs for new infrastructure to support that growth is becoming increasingly challenging.[65] Infrastructure is outdated and many building assets are at or near end of life; there is not enough budget to conduct the required annual maintenance or build fit for purpose replacements and divest liabilities.[66]

1.63 These needs are not being met due to an inability for councils to generate sufficient funds themselves.[67] Additionally, subsiding or providing other community services is diverting resources away from the construction and maintenance of public infrastructure.[68]

1.64 Councils have significant asset management obligations, with aged infrastructure and increasing maintenance and renewal costs, and depreciation impacts.[69] It costs over $35 billion to manage assets and infrastructure within some LGA boundaries; while the cost of replacing assets in poor condition exceeds the total annual revenue available to those local governments.[70]

1.65 This shortfall provides a strong incentive for councils to delay the maintenance of long-term infrastructure assets like roads and bridges, since the costs of delaying

63 Infrastructure Australia, *An Assessment of Australia's Future Infrastructure Needs*, *The Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019*, pages. 57-73.
64 Mrs Darriea Turley, President, Local Government NSW, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 9.
65 Mr Stephen, Hughes, Northern Manager, United Services Union, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 28.
66 Australian Services Union, *Submission 140*. p. 11.
67 Mr Stephen, Hughes, Northern Manager, United Services Union, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 28.
68 Mr Peter Tegart, Partner, Always Thinking Advisory, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 23.
69 City of Mount Gambier, *Submission 65*, p. 4.
70 Local Government Association of South Australia, *Submission 95*, p. 20.

maintenance are not felt for some time.[71] In 2006 there was a national local government infrastructure backlog ranging between $12.0 billion and $15.3 billion, with an annual shortfall in expenditure on existing local infrastructure renewal of between $0.9 billion to $1.2 billion.[72]

Maintaining depreciating assets

1.66 Councils manage significant physical assets such as infrastructure (roads, water, sewerage, storm water drains, bridges) and buildings. Many of these assets have long lifespans and are prone to substantial variations in value throughout the duration of council ownership, usually to reflect wear and tear. Initially these assets are measured and presented at their fair value. Over time, 'assets are re-measured periodically to reflect changes in their current value, with the resulting change, generally, being reflected in an asset revaluation reserve'.[73]

1.67 Submitters defined depreciation as:

> Depreciation is a planned, gradual reduction in the recorded value of an asset over its useful life by charging it to expense. The use of depreciation is intended to spread expense recognition over the period of time when a business expects to earn revenue from the use of the asset.[74]

1.68 The Local Government Association of Queensland estimated that 'around 20 per cent of local government expenditure is spent on maintaining depreciating assets, compared with less than [six] per cent for the States and less than [two] per cent for the Federal Government'.[75]

1.69 Local Government Finance Professionals Queensland were of the view that the current depreciation accounting standard compliance resulted 'in an overstatement of the expense and negatively impacts on a councils operating performance and financial sustainability forecasts'.[76]

1.70 The Country Mayors Association of NSW also commented that depreciation was adversely impacting councils' financial sustainability:

> Local Councils are required to set funds aside for infrastructure maintenance / renewal, contributing significantly to the expenses column in their financials, while also being required to include depreciation for road and plant assets as an expense. This means that costs associated with maintaining capital items are

[71] Grattan Institute, *Submission 74*, p. 13.
[72] Emeritus Professor Brian Dollery, *Submission 68*, p. 5.
[73] CPA Australia, *A guide to understanding the financial reports of local governments*.
[74] Central NSW Joint Organisation, *Submission 109*, p. 5; Kiama Municipal Council, *Submission 75*, p. 5; Country Mayors Association of NSW, *Submission 188*, p. 11; Murry River Council, *Submission 14*, p. 6.
[75] Local Government Association of Queensland, *Submission 257*, p. 37.
[76] Local Government Finance Professionals Queensland, *Submission 244*, p. 11.

> being counted twice and this impacts on perceived performance and borrowing capacity of a council.[77]

1.71 Kiama Municipal Council, the Central NSW Joint Organisation, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Tablelands Regional Council, and Yass Valley Council were all of the view that depreciation provided no taxation offset or benefit for councils:

> It is also accepted that in the commercial environment depreciation expenses are integral in determining the profit distribution through dividends, this however is not afforded to councils as there is no taxation offset or benefit.[78]

1.72 Local Government Finance Professionals Queensland recommended that Commonwealth and state governments consider adjustments to depreciation reporting requirements for local government:

> …to allow depreciation expenses currently required to be recognised for grant funded and contributed assets to be excluded, should councils produce appropriate evidence that they do not plan on replacing those assets in the future.
>
> This change would require discussion between the relevant stakeholders (state governments, Australian Accounting Standards Board, Audit Offices and state local government finance professional bodies to work towards an agreed approach).[79]

Housing supplies

1.73 Housing supply is a significant challenge for LGAs nationally. Councils play an essential role in the long-term planning that underpins new housing developments to ensure community liveability and access to basic services.[80] Evidence received has focused on resourcing, planning and approval time frames.

1.74 Housing is in the top three issues faced by every regional LGA in WA; where there is little appetite from the private sector to get involved in the housing market in challenging locations.[81] In the NT, an increasing number of properties owned or managed by community housing providers is increasing pressure on local governments due to rate exemptions.[82] Whilst in SA, the 75 per cent rebate for community housing has become a burden for councils because the State Government has transferred a significant number of its properties to the not-for-profit

77 Country Mayors Association of NSW, *Submission 188*, p. 10.
78 Kiama Municipal Council, *Submission 75*, p. 6; Central NSW Joint Organisation, *Submission 109*, p. 5; Canberra Region Joint Organisation, *Submission 258*, p. 3; Tablelands Regional Council, *Submission 235*, p. 2; Yass Valley Council, *Submission 164*, p. 3
79 Local Government Finance Professionals Queensland, *Submission 244*, p. 11.
80 Australian Local Government Association, *Submission 181*. p. 13.
81 Mr Jamie Criddle, Chief Executive Officer, Shire of Chapman Valley, *Committee Hansard*, 28 August 2024, p. 19.
82 City of Palmerston, *Submission 71*. p. 2.

sector in recent years.[83] Housing for key workers, teachers, healthcare and emergency service workers, in regional areas is also a significant issue.[84]

1.75 The national housing shortage is also exacerbating local government financial sustainability problems.[85] Only seven per cent of Australian Services Union survey respondents believed their council is appropriately resourced to deliver housing initiatives.[86] Housing is also routinely becoming part of a rural LGAs' service mix when market failure or service cuts by other levels of government result in declining local services.[87]

1.76 Councils are increasingly expected to fund the gap between the infrastructure contributions collected from developers and the current higher construction costs, which is directly impacting on their financial viability.[88]

1.77 Backlogs in planning, approval and construction times, is another significant inhibitor to building houses.[89] High levels of community expectations of infrastructure and housing delivery has also arguably led to an increase in poor quality supplies, an inexperienced workforce, which is resulting in unreasonable defects and works requiring remedial measures.[90]

1.78 Essential infrastructure elements also need to be in place before the construction of new homes can begin such as water, drainage, electricity and gas, and transportation. Councils rely on developer contributions to fund 'essential infrastructure, such as water and drainage, so new homes are habitable and connected to existing transport hubs.'[91]

1.79 Councils believed however that developer contributions were acting as an impediment to housing and infrastructure development and growth. Macedon Ranges Shire Council commented that developer contributions were not being distributed equally, adding:

> …development and growth is not evenly distributed across our shires, and developer contributions are related to the area in which the greatest growth is happening—and rightly so, in terms of servicing those neighbourhoods. However, what that means is: an unequal or uneven distribution, in terms of the benefits, across shires, where other areas or wards may not be experiencing similar growth, and so you end up with ageing infrastructure that's rapidly degrading in

83 Grattan Institute, *Submission 74*, p. 12.
84 Shire of Chapman Valley, *Submission 93*. p. 2.
85 Regional Cities Victoria, *Submission 236*. p. 3.
86 Australian Services Union, *Submission 140*. p. 5.
87 Canberra Region Joint Organisation, *Submission 258*. p. 4.
88 National Growth Areas Alliance, *Submission 228*. p. 4.
89 Mr Nicholas Proud, CEO, Civil Contractors Federation, *Committee Hansard*, 15 August 2024, p. 2.
90 City of Cockburn, *Submission 141*. p. 18.
91 Standing Committee on Tax and Revenue, Inquiry into housing affordability and supply in Australia, *Submission 78*, p. 2.

> some parts of our municipalities, where others are rapidly having investment due to developer contributions and rapid growth in housing.[92]

1.80 The Urban Development Institute of Australia reported in 2021 that the majority of lots expected to be delivered in NSW over the next eight years do not have the required infrastructure:

> …76 per cent of expected lots needing sewer infrastructure and 70 per cent needing water. 50 per cent of lots anticipated to be delivered in the next [eight] years still require power, roads, or a combination of these. Non-infrastructure constraints, such as lengthy VPA negotiations and flooding impact 27 per cent of future supply, while 18 per cent of lots face additional issues, including biodiversity offsets and government agency decisions.[93]

1.81 The City of Greater Geelong noted that developer contributions do not cover the full cost of providing the necessary community infrastructure in newly developed areas.[94] Circular Head Council submitted that 'a developer contribution scheme can act to impede or delay new housing supply if not clearly and consistently implemented so that the risk of unanticipated costs for developers (and therefore impact on margins) is minimised'.[95]

1.82 Local Government NSW identified that while 'developer contributions provide some funding for capital costs in new development, they do not provide for recurrent costs, and councils are required to fund the ongoing maintenance, operating and depreciation expense associated with new infrastructure'.[96]

1.83 Other issues identified included economic cycles being out of sync with development cycles, a decrease in foreign investment and the need for essential infrastructure development to support new homes.[97]

Environmental obligations

1.84 The Committee heard that LGAs are often the custodians of programs requiring compliance with a broad array of Commonwealth, state and NT legislation; 'all of which bring with them a range of compliance costs and timing implications [which] are felt more acutely in regional and rural councils due to disparate communities with small populations and priorities for [those] communities'.[98]

1.85 LGAs play an essential role in the conservation and management of biodiversity and biosecurity for threatened species and are increasingly called upon to ensure

92 Ms Adele Drago-Stevens, Director, Corporate, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, *Committee Hansard*, 26 September 2024, pages. 2–3.
93 Urban Development Institute of Australia (NSW), *Greenfield Land Supply pipeline Report*, June 2021, p. 5.
94 City of Greater Geelong, *Submission 207*, p. 8.
95 Circular Head Council, *Submission 12*, p. 3.
96 Local Government NSW, *Submission 186*, p. 32.
97 Mr Nicholas Proud, CEO, Civil Contractors Federation, *Committee Hansard*, 15 August 2024, pages 2–3.
98 East Gippsland Shire Council, *Submission 162*, p. 10.

compliance with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act), weed management and climate change regulations, 'particularly with respect to illegal clearing of federally protected native vegetation and habitat'.[99]

1.86 Brisbane City Council highlighted the additional regulatory compliance burden in complying with the EPBC Act to undertake audits, investigations and enforcement to prevent impacts on the community and the environment.[100]

1.87 Regional, rural and remote councils 'have large areas that are national parks, state forests or public reserves which are not rateable and yet must be serviced in terms of access roads, pest and weeds management, biodiversity protection and visitor experience enhancement'.[101]

1.88 In addition to compliance with environmental protection legislation, LGAs across Australia commented on increased community expectations for greater environmental conservation and sustainability, as well as a lack of resources and technical expertise, noting:

- an increased community demand for proactive responses to environmental conservation, and sustainability[102]
- impacts on biodiversity and natural ecosystems are requiring local governments to develop and implement conservation strategies to protect local flora and fauna[103]
- environmental obligations, such as managing natural resources, conservation, and climate change mitigation, often require significant financial resources and technical expertise[104]
- the financial strain on local governments hinders their ability to effectively manage environmental challenges, particularly when accompanied by evolving rules and regulations[105]
- councils need dedicated funding streams to support their environmental obligations and sustainable practices.[106]

Climate adaptation management

1.89 Australia is experiencing ongoing changes to its weather and climate. The Bureau of Meteorology has observed an increase in the frequency of extreme heat events over land and in the oceans; heavy short-term rainfall events becoming more intense leading to flash flooding; an increase in extreme fire weather, and a longer fire

99 Campaspe Shire Council, *Submission 172,* p. 6.
100 Councilor Fiona Cunningham, Civic Cabinet Chair, Finance and City Governance Committee, Brisbane City Council, *Committee Hansard*, 18 October 2024, pages 6–7.
101 Canberra Region Joint Organisation, *Submission 258*, pages 9–10.
102 City of Cockburn, *Submission 141,* p. 22.
103 Municipal Association of Victoria, *Submission 97*, p. 21.
104 West Wimmera Shire Council, *Submission 28*, p. 3.
105 Western Queensland Alliance of Councils, *Submission 176*, p. 7.
106 Mr David Arnold, Chief Executive Officer, Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board, *Committee Hansard*, 18 October 2024, p. 27.

season; and a continued decrease, on average, in cool season rainfall across southern and eastern Australia, which will likely lead to more drought.[107]

1.90 Across all LGAs, the average annual damages to council assets as a result of coastal flooding, inland flooding, bushfires, heatwaves, and severe storms are in the range of $90–$120 million.[108] The 2022 flood events in NSW, for example, 'affected 98 out of 128 LGAs, damaged 15,000 homes and caused over $5.1 billion of insured damages'.[109] According to a report by Natural Capital Economics, this is expected to increase to between $210–$300 million by 2050, and to between $400–$540 million by 2100.[110]

1.91 There was general agreement across most LGAs that mitigating the effects of climate related natural disasters and climate adaptation management was not only essential but also posed a significant financial cost. Local governments are at the forefront of climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster response, and environmental protection; spending more on environmental protection than other government levels, but lacking resources and expertise to implement all necessary measures.[111]

1.92 Local governments face a widening resource gap, limiting their capacity to undertake essential climate change adaptation and mitigation work, which is critical to the sustainability of their communities.[112] The Committee heard that coastal LGAs do not have the financial capacity to meet adaptation challenges;[113] urban councils incur significant and increasing cost impacts in dealing with climate change adaptation and risk management;[114] and regional communities find themselves at the edge of change for climate change, natural disasters and transition while funding to local governments is limited.[115]

1.93 The costs of disaster management, including preparation, response, and recovery are increasing, and costs are uneven over space and time. Disasters and extreme weather events do not readily conform to budget processes.[116] The cost of post-disaster recovery has also shifted as the intensity of disasters is exacerbated by climate change.[117] Extreme weather events cause extensive damage to physical infrastructure (roads, coastal structures, and public buildings) leading to costly and extensive repairs disrupting services, including emergency response and waste management, which then diverts resources from other critical areas and puts

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107 Bureau of Meteorology, *State of the Climate 2024*.
108 Natural Capital Economics Pty Ltd, *Adaptive Community Assets. A report prepared for the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action*, 22 March 2023, pages iii and 4.
109 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Submission 255*, p. 28.
110 Natural Capital Economics Pty Ltd, *Adaptive Community Assets. A report prepared for the Eastern Alliance for Greenhouse Action*, 22 March 2023, pages iii and 4.
111 Australian Local Government Association, *Submission 181*, pages 4 and 8.
112 Victorian Greenhouse Alliances, *Submission 219*, p. 2.
113 Councillor Sarah Race, *Submission 151*, p. 1.
114 Merri-bek City Council, *Submission 60*, p. 5.
115 Australian Rural Leadership Foundation, *Submission 208*, p. 2.
116 La Trobe Climate Change Adaptation Lab, *Submission 41*, p. 4.
117 Public Skills Australia, *Submission 118*, p. 3.

pressures on planned maintenance schedules.[118] This further impacts councils' ability to deliver projects and services in financially sustainable ways.[119]

1.94 With the scale and timeframes associated with managing climate adaptation measures, town planners and managers are attempting to design for an uncertain future while lacking funding for climate adaptation measures.[120]

1.95 As a result of these challenges, the Committee has been advised additional and continued funding is needed to assist local governments to undertake disaster resilience and risk reduction initiatives to manage the physical and social impacts of disasters caused by climate change and natural disasters.[121]

Skills shortages

1.96 Local Government Workforce Skills and Capability surveys conducted in WA, NSW and SA noted skills shortages across several varied occupations.

1.97 A 2022 survey in WA found that 90 per cent of respondent reported that they were experiencing skills shortages in 2021–22, compared to the 47 per cent in 2018.[122] The top professional occupations experiencing skill shortages in 2020–21, according to the survey, were building surveyors, risk managers, engineers and town planners affecting 21–24 per cent of councils, while trade occupations, customer service workers, labourers and truck drivers experienced the greatest shortages affecting 29–33 per cent of local governments.[123]

1.98 A survey conducted in NSW in 2022 found that 'over 91 [per cent] of surveyed council respondents reported skills shortages, with 66 [per cent] of respondents saying that project delivery had been impacted or delayed by vacancies, skills shortages, skills gaps or training needs'.[124] The top occupations experiencing skill shortages included engineers, urban and town planners, building surveyors, project managers, labourers, information and communication technologies, engineers, urban and town planners, building surveyors and mechanical tradespersons.[125]

1.99 The 2022 SA survey found similarly that:

> …nine out of every 10 Australian councils are facing jobs and skills shortages, with engineers, planners, building surveyors and environmental health officers all in high demand. Due to these skills shortages, councils resort to recruiting less skilled applicants for engineering, urban and town planning, building surveying and supervisor and team leader roles. Unavoidably, this has had negative

118 District Council of Streaky Bay, *Submission 231*, p. 2.
119 City of Onkaparinga, *Submission 69*, p. 2.
120 Australian Coastal Councils Association, *Submission 58*, p. 9.
121 Local Government Association of Queensland, *Submission 257*, p. 30.
122 Western Australian Local Government Association, *Submission 96*, p. 12.
123 Western Australian Local Government Association, *Submission 96*, p. 12.
124 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Submission 255*, p. 31.
125 NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, *Submission 255*, p. 31.

> repercussions for local government productivity. Often councils can't afford to pay remuneration that's comparable to the private sector or other levels of government.[126]

1.100 As noted above, state and NT LGAs reported that they were experiencing skills shortages across a wide range of occupations. The majority commented that they were experiencing skills shortages for urban and town planners, engineers, building surveyors and inspectors, engineers, emergency planners, environmental health officers, asset managers, and human resource, healthcare, and childcare professionals. For councils experiencing extreme skills and labour shortages, a lack of skilled labour is becoming more evident when delivering complex infrastructure projects.[127]

1.101 The Committee received evidence on how the financial sustainability of LGAs are impacting the recruitment and retention of its workforce. Identified as a key driver was wage and benefits competition between LGAs, state and NT governments, and the private sector, making attracting and retaining suitably qualified workers challenging. For example, local governments are very good incubators in regional WA for developing skills, but they are unable to compete with the resource sector.[128]

1.102 Other drivers include:

- the inflationary environment on workforce/skilled labour particularly in the construction industry
- an ageing workforce
- job security
- rate capping making it challenging to offer competitive wages and invest in staff development
- trends towards contracting out essential local government services resulting in less job security for workers and lower wages, and
- a lack of infrastructure, such as housing, schools, retail, and social and medical services, in regional, rural and remote areas.[129]

1.103 For regional and rural and remote LGAs, skills shortages are exacerbated by an unwillingness of people to move there, and with salaries being less than those offered in metropolitan centres, there are no incentives available for people to take up employment.[130] Traditionally councils could offset a wage differential through higher job security and conditions, however in the current employment market staff

126 Local Government Association of South Australia, *Submission 95*, p. 21.
127 Town of Port Hedland, *Submission 48*, p. 3; Mr Robert Potter, National Secretary, Australian Services Union, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2024, p. 15; Mr Michael Boyle, President, Civil Contractors Federation, *Committee Hansard*, 15 August 2024, p. 6.
128 Mr Nick Sloan, Chief Executive Officer, Western Australian Local Government Association, *Committee Hansard*, 7 June 2024, p. 5.
129 For example, see Mayor Kylie Boston, District Council of Grant, *Committee Hansard*, 27 September 2024, p. 21.
130 Central Desert Regional Council, *Submission 9*, p. 1.

are prepared to sacrifice security for higher earning potential in either the private sector or with larger and better resourced councils in metropolitan and larger regional centres.[131]

1.104 Retaining skilled workers is increasingly challenging, and there is a lack of adequate workforce planning across the sector around what is needed to ensure new staff are brought on, whether it be through apprenticeship and traineeship programs or broader recruitment processes, which can be linking wider issues related to housing, community services, and access to TAFE/VET and higher education.[132]

1.105 To address workforce shortages, submitters put forward several possible solutions including:

- enhancing local training and education opportunities[133]
- support skilled migration into regional capitals to match skill-based needs[134]
- offering non-cash incentives to attract and retain staff[135]
- provide additional training opportunities and funding to address skill gaps,[136] and
- engaging local education and training providers (secondary schools and TAFE/VET providers)[137]
- establishing a trainee and apprenticeship scheme and apprenticeship hub to improve jobs and skills, particularly in regional areas, and
- establish a Fair Jobs Code for local government aimed at securing employment through placing limits on council's use of agency and labour hire employment.[138]

Rate pegging

1.106 Rate pegging, a NSW and Victorian government policy, restricts the annual amount by which councils can raise rates without applying for a Special Rates Variation. Submitters noted how 'the financial sustainability of councils has been undermined by rate pegging'.[139]

1.107 The Warren Shire Council stated that 'rate pegging, is increasingly eroding any possibility of financially sustainable local government in NSW and risks the capacity of Council to deliver tailored, grassroots services to our community and properly deliver and maintain vital local infrastructure'.[140] Yass Valley Council stated that the

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131 Canberra Region Joint Organisation, *Submission 258*, p. 4.
132 Ms Samantha Batchelor, Tasmanian Coordinator, Australian Services Union, *Committee Hansard*, 25 September 2024, p. 29.
133 Australian Services Union, *Submission 140*, p. 3.
134 Regional Capitals Alliance of WA, *Submission 124*, p. 10.
135 Western Queensland Alliance of Councils, *Submission 176*, p. 37.
136 Western Queensland Alliance of Councils, *Submission 176*, p. 38.
137 Torrens University Australia, *Submission 35*, p. 3.
138 Australian Services Union, *Submission 140*, pages. 3-4.
139 Local Government NSW, *Submission 186*, p. 7.
140 Warren Shire Council, *Submission 81*, p. 5.

practice 'constrains Council's own source revenues from property rates and user chargers would need to be significantly increased to fill the gap'.[141] The Country Mayors Association of NSW suggested that rate pegging had resulted in much lower council rates; 41 per cent lower than the national average.[142]

1.108 However, Adjunct Professor Brian Dollery believed that abolishing rate pegging would not make many local councils financially sustainable as 'many local councils in regional, rural or remote areas have neither the population nor rate base to generate sufficient funding for essential local services, new infrastructure and adequate staffing'.[143]

Airport infrastructure

1.109 Over time, the ownership of many Australian Government airports has been steadily transferred to local governments. Between 1989 and 1993 local governments were given full management and financial responsibility for these airports. The Australian Airports Association noted that 'under their transfer deeds, local governments are obliged to continue owning and operating these aerodrome facilities unless they receive permission from the Australian Government to either close or privatise these airports'.[144] There are 200 regional and rural airports owned and operated by councils across Australia with more than half of all local governments in rural areas responsible for an airport or aerodrome in some form.[145]

1.110 The Australian Local Government Association and Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia's 2024 State of the Assets report stated that Australia's airports and aerodromes were either in poor condition or have poor function or capacity.[146] Key challenges included regional airports 'operating runways and infrastructure that is 70+ years old, with substantial upgrades needed to meet modern aviation safety standards' and regional airports have negative operating margins, and rely 'on local government or other financial assistance to cover their operating, maintenance and upgrading costs'.[147]

1.111 Complying with aviation regulatory reforms are changing infrastructure and service delivery obligations for local governments that own or operate airports.[148] The Australian Airports Association highlighted a number of challenges including:

141 Yass Valley Council, *Submission 164*, p. 2.
142 Country Mayors Association of NSW, *Submission 188*, p. 6.
143 Adjunct Professor Brian Dollery, *Submission 68*, p. 5.
144 Australian Airports Association, *Submission 259*, p. 2.
145 Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia and Australian Local Government Association, *2024 National State of the Assets Report*, July 2024, p. 6; Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts, *Submission 38*, p. 10.
146 Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia and Australian Local Government Association, *2024 National State of the Assets Report*, July 2024, p. 4.
147 Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia and Australian Local Government Association, *2024 National State of the Assets Report*, July 2024, p. 40.
148 Australian Airports Association, *Submission 259*, p. 4.

- new regulatory requirements for all 'certified' aerodromes to review their practices, facilities, and manuals to ensure they reflect the new standards required significant effort by local governments to ensure compliance, often coming at a major cost in time and money to councils and airports
- aviation security reforms for some local governments increased costs of airport operations and added an additional compliance burden
- heavier newer aircraft, decarbonisation of domestic aviation and climate adaptation management are placing intensive demands on airport infrastructure.[149]

1.112 Kimberley Regional Council identified a number of key issues that they believed airports faced including: 'low annual passenger movements; limited opportunities for diversified revenue streams; limited capacity to borrow funds; limited ability to attract and retain highly qualified staff; ageing airport infrastructure; high operational costs for aviation security screening; high cost of doing business due to remoteness.'[150] They added that competitive funding was making it difficult to manage and implement critical upgrades and that regional and remote airports had a higher expenditure compared to major airports and major regional airports (12 per cent of total expenditure, compared to about four per cent).[151]

1.113 The Rural City of Wangaratta stated that there was no Australian Government support for the essential service of their aerodrome which was required to ensure ongoing maintenance and development.[152] The Australian Local Government Association stated that 'most councils do not have the capability or capacity to raise the necessary funding for airports through their operational revenue'.[153]

Additional concerns

1.114 Submitters also raised varied concerns that they believed were placing additional financial pressure on councils including: the indexation freeze on Financial Assistance Grants; the Commonwealth distribution formula; unwanted infrastructure added to councils' portfolios though election commitments; transitioning and hosting grid-scale renewable energy projects.

1.115 The Grattan Institute noted that the 'combined impact of the indexation freeze and [consumer price] indexation has led to a funding gap in 2023 of close to $600 million'.[154] The Victorian Grants Commission estimated that 'rural and regional councils have foregone $125 million in revenue in the five years since the indexation was paused'.[155]

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149 Australian Airports Association, *Submission 259*, p. 4.
150 Kimberley Regional Council, *Submission 123*, p. 18.
151 Kimberley Regional Council, *Submission 123*, p. 19.
152 Rural City of Wangaratta, *Submission 125*, p. 7.
153 Australian Local Government Association, *Submission 181*, p. 36.
154 Grattan Institute, *Submission 74*, p. 5.
155 Baw Baw Shire Council, *Submission 183*, p. 17.

1.116 The Northern Beaches Council stated that the 'indexation method ([consumer price index] and population growth) does not recognise the cost pressures on councils, and this gap was further widened by the [three]-year indexation freeze on the Financial Assistance Grant from 2014–15 to 2016–17'.[156]

1.117 Local Government Professionals Australia suggested that the Commonwealth Government should address grant funding lost during the 2014–15 indexation freeze.[157]

1.118 Kiama Municipal Council's submission stated that 'assets are added to councils' portfolios, due to growth driven by communities, and election commitments, but no grants provided by State and Federal government for maintaining the asset/depreciation'.[158]

1.119 The Shire of Cuballing believed that discretionary funds and grants programs were being 'allocated to election commitments rather than deserving projects with an identified need, business case and matching funding in a safe opposition electorate'.[159]

1.120 The Canberra Region Joint Organisation noted an additional financial burden placed on councils from election commitments:

> These commitments are made following requests from the community with little consultation with council, particularly where the government changes. Generally, these assets (or liabilities) are not income-generating however the depreciation expense continues to hit the bottom lines of councils.[160]

Other inquiries and reviews

1.121 Over the past two years, the state governments of Victoria, NSW and Tasmania have undertaken inquiries into their respective local governments:

- Parliament of NSW: Inquiry into the ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services[161]
- Parliament of Victoria: Inquiry Local Government funding and services[162]
- Tasmanian Government: Future of Local Government Review.[163]

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156 Northern Beaches Council, *Submission 117*, p. 2.
157 Local Government Professionals Australia, *Submission 168*, p. 3.
158 Kiama Municipal Council, *Submission 75*, p. 6.
159 Shire of Cuballing, *Submission 46*, p. 5.
160 Canberra Region Joint Organisation, *Submission 258*, p. 3.
161 Parliament of NSW, 'Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services', https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=3040, accessed 9 December 2024.
162 Parliament of Victoria, 'Inquiry into Local Government funding and services', https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/localgovernmentfunding, accessed 9 December 2024.
163 Tamanian Department of Premier and Cabinet, *The Future of local government review*, *Final Report*, October 2023.

1.122 Evidence gathered from the state inquiries serves to enhance and corroborate the evidence received for this inquiry to date, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand as the Committee works towards presenting its final report.

Committee comment

1.123 The role of local governments in Australia has changed significantly over time. Councils must navigate complex regulatory environments, manage limited financial resources, and address diverse and sometimes competing community needs and expectations.

1.124 Ensuring financial sustainability is a key challenge for LGAs in this evolving environment. Funding for local governments comes from various sources, including taxes in the form of rates, charges for the sale of goods and services, and grants from Commonwealth, state and NT governments. Councils must balance their budgets while maintaining service delivery and investing in infrastructure.

1.125 Submitters put forward wide ranging recommendations aimed at improving the sustainability of local governments. Given the significant number of recommendations put forward to this inquiry by participants, it is challenging to list them all here. A brief overview of some of the key recommendations made by LGAs includes:

- review the Financial Assistance Grants program including:
  - minimum Financial Assistance Grants restored to one percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue
  - remove fixed co-contribution and short delivery timeline requirements of grants
  - set the duration of funded programs a minimum of three to five years to enable for delivery stability and quality
  - Commonwealth Government establish a new allocative, permanent funding program for local governments
  - increase Financial Assistance Grant funding for smaller regional, rural and remote councils based on relative need
- review the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations
- ensure the allocation of grants are consistent with horizontal equalisation between councils in all jurisdictions, reflecting the different expenditure needs and revenue capacities of councils in different states
- the Commonwealth Government consider the role local governments play, and the appropriateness of funding made available to First Nations councils in achieving the objectives of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap
- address skills shortages through:

  - increase programs that will improve labour availability such as upskilling, retraining, skilled migration and re-evaluate migration policy to enable access to select highly skilled experts
  - develop mechanisms for public/private partnerships to address service gaps
  - incentivise workers to relocate to local government regional, rural and remote areas
  - develop education pathways to promote local government specific skills for regional areas
  - review international best practice of workforce incentive programs and potential application in the Australian context
- consider local governments' role in National Cabinet and ministerial forums
- consider developing a new tripartite agreement between all three levels of government, that ends the cost shifting onto local governments
- consider making councils eligible for Fringe Benefit Tax exemptions and concessions
- the Commonwealth Government to amend the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) to regulate the provision of labour hire services by national system employers to state system local governments
- the Department of Defence and other Commonwealth agencies to contribute to infrastructure required to service their operations
- develop a national working group to proactively prepare and mitigate natural disasters and climate change impacts, with funding for local programs.

1.126 The Committee is thoroughly reviewing the substantial evidence it has received to date and will announce its final recommendations in due course.

1.127 The Committee wishes to express is appreciation to all the LGAs, councils, shires, Commonwealth, state and NT governments and their respective departments, peak bodies, the Australian Services Union, the United Services Union, academics, organisations and individuals who have not only taken the time to provide a submission to this inquiry but also provided their valuable insights and expertise at public hearings.

Mr Luke Gosling OAM MP
Chair
13 February 2025

A. Submissions

1	Mr Kevin Brooks
2	Kim Riley
3	Ms Susanne Martain
4	Mr John O'Donnell
5	Northern and Yorke LGA
6	*Name Withheld*
7	Queensland Water Directorate
8	Mr Jacob Heremaia
9	Central Desert Regional Council
10	Mosman Municipal Council
11	Dr Mark Chou
12	Circular Head Council
13	Berrigan Shire Council
14	Murray River Council
15	Hay Shire Council
16	City of Holdfast Bay
17	Albury City Council
18	Wakefield Regional Council
19	Lockhart Shire Council
20	Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
21	Livingstone Shire Council
22	Coorong District Council

23 Mr James Beale

24 Upper Hunter Shire Council

25 Shire of Boyup Brook

26 City of Darwin

27 Central Goldfields Shire Council

28 West Wimmera Shire Council

29 Indigo Shire Council

30 Narromine Shire Council

31 Coolamon Shire Council

32 City of Tea Tree Gully

33 Glen Eira City Council

34 Maroondah City Council

35 Torrens University Australia

36 Murrumbidgee Council

37 MidCoast Council

38 Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

- 38.1 Supplementary to submission 38
- 38.2 Supplementary to submission 38
- 38.3 Supplementary to submission 38
- 38.4 Supplementary to submission 38

39 Shire of Upper Gascoyne

40 City of Victor Harbor

41 La Trobe Climate Change Adaptation Lab

42 Mr Laurie Taylor

43 City of Greater Geraldton

- 43.1 Supplementary to submission 43

44 Torres Shire Council

45 Nova Ratio

46 Shire of Cuballing

47 Warrnambool City Council

48 Town of Port Hedland

49 South Gippsland Shire Council

50 City of Charles Sturt

51 Queensland Audit Office

52 Gunnedah Shire Council

53 Griffith City Council

54 Shire of Narrogin

55 *Name Withheld*

56 Confidential

57 North Sydney Council

58 Australian Coastal Councils Association Inc

59 Shire of Dumbleyung

60 Merri-bek City Council

61 City of Stonnington

- 61.1 Supplementary to submission 61

62 Logan City Council

63 *Name Withheld*

64 Jobs and Skills Australia

- 64.1 Supplementary to submission 64

65 City of Mount Gambier

66 City of Wanneroo

67 Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley

68 Prof. Brian Dollery

69 City of Onkaparinga

70 City of Whyalla

71 City of Palmerston

72 City of Newcastle

73 Yarra Ranges Council

74 Grattan Institute

75 Kiama Municipal Council

76 Shire of Shark Bay

77 Corangamite Shire Council

78 Brisbane City Council

79 Break O'Day Council

80 Always Thinking Advisory

81 Warren Shire Council

82 Byron Shire Council

83 Narrandera Shire Council

84 Shire of Wagin

85 Murchison Shire

86 Local Government Association of the Northern Territory

87 Shire of Esperance

88 Shire of Morawa

89 Port Macquarie Hastings Council

90 A New Approach

91 Australian Flexible Pavement Association

92 Local and Independent News Association

93 Shire of Chapman Valley

94 Shire of Kellerberrin

95 LGASA

96 WA Local Government Association

- 96.1 Supplementary to submission 96

97 Municipal Association of Victoria

- 97.1 Supplementary to submission 97

98 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

99 City of Moreton Bay

100 City of Palmerston

101 City of Kwinana

102 LG Consulting Group

103 Mr Martin Duke

104 Regional Development Australia Yorke and Mid North

105 Knox City Council

106 Yarriambiack Shire Council

107 Australian Logistics Council

108 Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council

109 Central NSW Joint Organisation

110 Shire of Augusta Margaret River

111 Wheatbelt East Regional Organisation of Councils Inc.

112 Campbelltown City Council

113 Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils

114 Shire of Victoria Plains

115 Wodonga City Council

116 Kempsey Shire Council

117 Northern Beaches Council

118 Public Skills Australia

119 City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder

120 Hunter's Hill Council

121 Government of South Australia

122 Kingston District Council

- 122.1 Supplementary to submission 122

123 Kimberley Regional Group

124 Regional Capital Alliance of Western Australia

125 Rural City of Wangaratta

126 District Council of Kimba

127 Scenic Rim Regional Council

128 Mitchell Shire Council

- 128.1 Supplementary to submission 128

129 Lake Macquarie City Council

130 District Council of Elliston

131 Sutherland Shire Council

132 Shoalhaven City Council

133 Rockhampton Regional Council

134 Bellingen Shire Council

135 Tweed Shire Council

136 Suicide Prevention Australia

137 Loddon Shire Council

138 Rural Councils Victoria

139 Snowy Valley Council

140 Australian Services Union

- 140.1 Supplementary to submission 140

141	City of Cockburn
142	District Council of Yankalilla
143	Greater Ballarat Alliance of Councils
144	Victorian Local Governance Association
145	Mildura Rural City Council
146	Federation Council
147	Melbourne 9
148	Hawkesbury City Council
149	Inverell Shire Council
150	Chamber of Minerals & Energy of Western Australia
151	Mrs Sarah Catherine Race
152	Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia
153	Ms Leila Kasprzak
154	FinPro
155	Regional Development Australia Tasmania
156	Weddin Shire Council
157	Moonee Valley City Council
158	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
159	Dr Ed Wensing
160	Shire of Gnowangerup
161	Queensland Local Government Grants Commission
162	East Gippsland Shire Council
163	Woollahra Council
164	Yass Valley Council
165	Yarra City Council
166	JLT Public Sector

167 Shire of Yilgarn

168 Local Government Professionals Australia, NSW

169 Hindmarsh Shire Council

170 Local Government Professionals WA

171 Toowoomba Regional Council

172 Campaspe Shire Council

173 Alice Springs Town Council

174 Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils

- 174.1 Supplementary to submission 174

175 Banana Shire Council

176 Western Queensland Alliance of Councils

177 Muswellbrook Shire Council

178 Wyndham City Council

179 Bass Coast Shire Council

180 Leeton Shire Council

181 Australian Local Government Association

- 181.1 Supplementary to submission 181

182 Southern Mallee District Council

183 Baw Baw Shire Council

184 Wingecarribee Shire Council

185 Blacktown City Council

186 Local Government NSW

- 186.1 Supplementary to submission 186

187 Shire of Cunderdin

188 Country Mayors Association of NSW

189 Mr Darren Williams

190 Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils

191 Regional Development Australia Sydney

192 North Burnett Regional Council

193 Australia Post

194 Loxton Waikerie District Council

195 GrainGrowers Limited

196 District Council of Robe

197 Penrith Council

198 National Rural Health Alliance

199 Surf Coast Shire Council

200 Junee Shire Council

201 Isaac Regional Council

202 Macedon Ranges Shire Council

203 Cradle Coast Natural Resource Management Cradle Coast Authority

204 Greater Good Co

205 Torres Strait Island Regional Council

206 Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

207 City of Greater Geelong

208 Australian Rural Leadership Foundation

209 Redland City Council

210 Mansfield Shire Council

211 Copper Coast Council

212 Australian Library and Information Association

213 Shire of Yalgoo

214 Tatiara District Council

215 Latrobe City Council

216 The District Council of Coober Pedy

217 Murrindindi Shire Council

218 Western Australian Local Government Grants Commission

219 Central Victorian Greenhouse Alliance

220 Buloke Shire council

221 City of Greater Bendigo

222 Goulburn Mulwaree Council

223 Shellharbour City Council

224 Dungog Shire Council

225 Parkes Shire Council

226 Bega Valley Shire Council

227 City of Gold Coast

228 National Growth Areas Alliance

229 Swan Hill Rural City Council

230 Moyne Shire Council

231 District Council of Streaky Bay

232 Bland Shire Council

233 Wollongong City Council

234 Hepburn Shire Council

235 Tablelands Regional Council

236 Regional Cities Victoria

237 Shire of Narembeen

238 Narrabri Shire Council

239 Wollondilly Shire Council

240 Shire of Carnarvon

241 Australian Medical Association

242 Insurance Council of Australia

243 Central Highlands Regional Council

244 Local Government Finance Professionals Qld

245 The Real Republic Australia

246 Stephen Bali MP

247 Civil Contractors Federation Australia Ltd

248 ACT Government

249 Amazon Web Services

250 Local Government Association of Tasmania

- 250.1 Supplementary to submission 250

251 City of Ballarat

252 City of Adelaide

253 Bathurst Regional Council

254 District Council of Grant

255 NSW Government Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

256 Mount Barker District Council

257 Local Government Association of Queensland

258 Canberra Region Joint Organisation

259 Australian Airports Association

260 Mid Murray Council

261 Broken Hill City Council

262 Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman

263 Cardinia Shire Council

264 JFA Purple Orange

265 Tasmanian Government

266 Northern Tasmanian Alliance for Resilient Councils

267 Northern Territory Government

268 Regional Capitals Australia

269 Murraylands and Riverland Local Government Association

270 Destination Riverina Murray

271 Queensland Farmers' Federation

272 Shire of Pingelly

273 Syngensis and Polypave

274 Queensland Government Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works

275 District Council of Tumby Bay

276 One Gippsland

277 Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

278 Department of Finance

279 Shire of Derby / West Kimberley

280 Graham Sansom

- 280.1 Supplementary to submission 280

281 Local Government Elected Members Association Inc

282 Department of Health and Aged Care

- 282.1 Supplementary to submission 282

283 Indigenous Business Australia

284 Essential Services Commission of South Australia

285 Regional Australia Institute

286 Flinders Council

287 Sea Swift Pty Ltd

B. Public hearings

Thursday 30 May 2024

Canberra

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

- Mr John Bowdery, Acting Director, Strategy and Policy (Local Government), Regional Intelligence and Local Government Branch
- Ms Clare Chapple, First Assistant Secretary, Regional Development and Local Government Branch
- Mr Michael Gregory, Acting Assistant Secretary, Local Government, Regional Intelligence and Data Branch
- Mr David Mackay, Deputy Secretary

Friday 7 June 2024

Canberra

Local Government Association of South Australia

- Mayor Dean Johnson, President

Western Australia Local Government Association

- Councillor Karen Chappel, President
- Mr Nick Sloan, Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Daniel Thomson, Manager, Economics

Municipal Association of Victoria

- Mr Domenic Isola, Director, Corporate Services

Local Government Association of the Northern Territory

- Mr Peter Morris, Advocacy and Policy Adviser

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

- Ms Renae Houston, First Assistant Secretary
- Ms Kirsty Leslie, Acting Assistant Secretary, Jobs and Skills Australia
- Mr David Turvey, First Assistant Secretary, Jobs and Skills Australia

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water

- Ms Cathryn Geiger, Acting Head of Division, Climate Change Policy, Adaptation and Risk Division
- Mr Chris Johnston, Branch Head, Climate Active, Risks and Disclosures Branch
- Ms Kathryn Smith, Branch Head, National Adaptation Policy Office

Department of Finance

- Ms Tracey Carroll, First Assistant Secretary, Governance and Grants Division, Governance and Resource Management
- Mr Cameron Jose, Assistant Secretary, Commercial Policy and Advice Branch, Commercial Investments Division, Commercial Group
- Ms Louise Sasaki, Assistant Secretary, Infrastructure, Communications, and Agriculture Branch, Industry, Education and Infrastructure Division, Budget Group

Thursday 27 June 2024

Canberra

Australian Local Government Association

- Ms Amy Crawford, Chief Executive Officer
- Councillor Linda Scott, President

Thursday 4 July 2024

Canberra

Department of Health and Aged Care

- Ms Trisha Garrett, First Assistant Secretary, Service Delivery Division, Ageing and Aged Care Group

Thursday 25 July 2024

Canberra

Local Government Association of Queensland

- Councillor Matt Burnett, Acting President
- Ms Lucy Greene, Lead, Intergovernmental Relations
- Mr Nathan Ruhle, Manager, Intergovernmental Relations
- Ms Alison Smith, Chief Executive Officer

Local Government Association of Tasmania

- Mr Dion Lester, Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Michael Tucker, President

Local Government New South Wales

- Mr David Reynolds, Chief Executive
- Mrs Darriea Turley, President

Australian Services Union

- Mr Robert Potter, National Secretary

Northern and Yorke Local Government Association

- Mr Simon Millcock, Chief Executive Officer

Torrens University Australia

- Dr Roslyn Cameron, Professor and Director, Centre for Organisational Change and Agility

Always Thinking Advisory

- Mr Peter Tegart, Partner

United Services Union

- Mr Stephen Hughes, Northern Manager
- Mr Graeme Kelly, OAM, General Secretary
- Mr Daniel Papps, Manager, Industrial, Rules, Governance and Compliance

Private Capacity

- Professor Brian Dollery

Thursday 15 August 2024

Canberra

Civil Contractors Federation Australia Ltd

- Mr Michael Boyle, President
- Mr Nicholas Proud, Chief Executive Officer

Thursday 22 August 2024

Canberra

UTS Institute for Public Policy and Governance

- Adjunct Professor Graham Sansom

Friday 23 August 2024

Canberra

City of Darwin

- Mr Peter Pangquee, Deputy Lord Mayor
- Ms Simone Saunders, Chief Executive Officer

City of Palmerston

- Mr Luccio Cercarelli, Chief Executive Officer
- Mrs Athina Pascoe-Bell, Mayor

Central Desert Regional Council

- Mr Leslie Manda, Chief Executive Officer

Alice Springs Town Council

- Mr Matthew Paterson, Mayor
- Mr Andrew Wilsmore, Chief Executive Officer

Wednesday 28 August 2024

West Perth

City of Kwinana

- Mr Wayne Jack, Chief Executive Officer

City of Cockburn

- Mr Daniel Arndt, Acting Chief Executive Officer

City of Wanneroo

- Mrs Linda Aitken, Mayor
- Mr Bill Parker, Chief Executive Officer

Shire of Augusta Margaret River

- Ms Melanie May Stevens, Director of Corporate and Customer Services

Shire of Gnowangerup

- Mrs Kate O'Keeffe, Shire President
- Mr David Nicholson, Chief Executive Officer

City of Greater Geraldton

- Mr Ross McKim, Chief Executive Officer

Shire of Yalgoo

- Mr Ian Holland, Chief Executive Officer

Shire of Chapman Valley

- Mr Jamie Criddle, Chief Executive Officer

City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder

- Mr Andrew Brien, Chief Executive Officer

Shire of Kellerberrin

- Mr Raymond Griffiths, Chief Executive Officer

Shire of Yilgarn

- Mr Nic Warren, Chief Executive Officer

Town of Port Hedland

- Ms Shanna Crispin, Manager of Public Affairs
- Mr Stephen Leeson, Director of Corporate Services

Shire of Shark Bay

- Mrs Cheryl Cowell, Shire President

Shire of Exmouth

- Mr Matthew Nikkula, Shire President

Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley

- Mr David Menzel, Shire President
- Mr Vernon Lawrence, Chief Executive Officer

Shire of Derby / West Kimberley

- Mr Neil Hartley, Director of Strategic Business
- Mr Peter McCumstie, Shire President

Kimberley Regional Group and Regional Capital Alliance of Western Australia

- Mr Paul Rosair, Executive Officer

City of Bunbury

- Mr Jaysen Miguel, Mayor

Wednesday 25 September 2024

Launceston

City of Launceston Council

- Mr Michael Newby, Chief Infrastructure Officer
- Mr Nathan Williams, Chief Financial Officer

George Town Council

- Mr Shane Power, General Manager

Flinders Council

- Mr Warren Groves, General Manager

- Ms Rachel Summers, Mayor

Break O'Day Council

- Mr John Brown, General Manager

Circular Head Regional Council

- Mrs Vanessa Adams, General Manager
- Mr Gerard Blizzard, Mayor

Australian Services Union

- Ms Corinne Ball, Delegate
- Ms Samantha Batchelor, Tasmanian Coordinator
- Mr Mischa Pringle, Delegate
- Ms Jo Swan, Delegate

Thursday 26 September 2024

Wallan

Mitchell Shire Council

- Ms Mary Agostino, Director, Advocacy and Communities
- Mr Brett Luxford, Chief Executive Officer

Macedon Ranges Shire Council

- Ms Adele Drago-Stevens, Director, Corporate
- Mr Bernie O’Sullivan, Chief Executive Officer

Wyndham City Council

- Mr Stephen Wall, Chief Executive Officer

Melbourne 9

- Mr Dale Dickson, Chief Executive Officer, City of Stonnington
- Ms Helen Sui, Chief Executive Officer, City of Moonee Valley

Yarra City Council

- Ms Sue Wilkinson, Chief Executive Officer

City of Greater Bendigo

- Mr Andrew Cooney, Chief Executive Officer

Mildura Rural City Council

- Mr Martin Hawson, Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Mark McMillan, Manager Financial Services

Moyne Shire Council

- Mr Ed Small, Director, Corporate and Governance Services

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

- Mr John Baker, Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Bulent Oz, Chief Financial Officer

Rural City of Wangaratta

- Ms Sarah Brindley, Director, Corporate and Leisure
- Mrs Anthea Sloan, Service Development Manager

Murrindindi Shire Council

- Ms Livia Bonazzi, Chief Executive Officer

East Gippsland Shire Council

- Ms Sarah Johnston, General Manager, Business Excellence
- Ms Fiona Weigall, Chief Executive Officer

Friday 27 September 2024

Adelaide

City of Tea Tree Gully

- Mr Ryan McMahon, Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Justin Robbins, General Manager, Strategy and Finance

Mount Barker District Council

- Mr Alex Oulianoff, General Manager, Corporate Services

Mid Murray Council

- Mrs Simone Bailey, Mayor
- Mr Ben Scales, Chief Executive Officer

Southern Mallee District Council

- Mr Lachlan Miller, Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Ron Valentine, Mayor

District Council of Robe

- Ms Natalie Traeger, Chief Executive Officer

City of Mount Gambier

- Mayor Lynette Martin
- Mrs Sarah Philpott, Chief Executive Officer

District Council of Grant

- Mayor Kylie Boston
- Mr Darryl Whicker, Chief Executive Officer

Kingston District Council

- Mr Ian Hart, Chief Executive Officer

Whyalla City Council

- Mr Justin Commons, Chief Executive Officer
- Ms Kathy Jarrett, Director, Corporate Services
- Mr Phill Stone, Mayor

Northern and Yorke Local Government Association

- Mr Simon Millcock, Chief Executive Officer

Essential Services Commission of South Australia

- Mr George Kamencak, Executive Director, Monitoring and Evaluation
- Mr Adam Wilson, Chief Executive Officer

Thursday 10 October 2024

Canberra

Department of Premier and Cabinet, Tasmania

- Mr Isaac Dalla-Fontana, Senior Policy Analyst, Office of Local Government
- Mr Matthew Healey, Acting Deputy Secretary, Strategy and Delivery
- Mr Michael Mogridge, Acting Executive Director, Local Government, Office of Local Government
- Mr Luke Murphy-Gregory, Acting Director, Local Government Reform, Office of Local Government

Thursday 17 October 2024

Cairns

Tablelands Regional Council

- Ms Erica Bowden, Manager, Finance
- Mr Angelo Finocchiaro, Executive Manager, Economic Development
- Mayor Rod Marti

Cairns Regional Council

- Ms Lisa Whitton, Chief Financial Officer

Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council

- Mr Peter O'May, Chief Executive Officer

Torres Shire Council

- Ms Elsie Seriat, Mayor
- Mrs Dalassa Yorkston, Chief Executive Officer

Weipa Town Authority

- Mrs Jaime Gane, Chair

Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils

- Ms Darlene Irvine, Chief Executive Officer

The Services Union

- Mrs Kathy Cochran, Union Delegate
- Mr Glenn Desmond, Regional Organiser
- Mrs Jenny Elphinstone, Local Delegate

Friday 18 October 2024

Beaudesert

Logan City Council

- Mr Jon Raven, Mayor

Brisbane City Council

- Councillor Fiona Cunningham, Civic Cabinet Chair, Finance and City Governance Committee
- Mr Mark Russell, Chief Finance Officer

Scenic Rim Regional Council

- Mr David Keenan, Chief Executive Officer
- Mr Oliver Pring, General Manager, Council Sustainability, and Chief Financial Officer
- Councillor Tom Sharp, Mayor

Toowoomba Regional Council

- Mr Mike Brady, General Manager
- Mr Geoff McDonald, Mayor

Banana Shire Council

- Mr Thomas Upton, Chief Executive Officer

North Burnett Regional Council

- Mr Craig Matheson, Chief Executive Officer

Western Queensland Alliance of Councils

- Mr David Arnold, Chief Executive Officer, Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board
- Councillor Janene Fegan, Deputy Chair, North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils

- Mr Greg Hoffman, Executive Director, North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
- Councillor Barry Hughes, Chair, North West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
- Councillor Samantha O'Toole, Chair, South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
- Ms Simone Talbot, Executive Officer, South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils

Friday 8 November 2024

Canberra

Kiama Municipal Council

- Ms Jane Stroud, Chief Executive Officer
- Ms Olena Tulubinska, Chief Financial and Technology Officer

Tweed Shire Council

- Mr Michael Chorlton, Director, Corporate Services
- Mr Troy Green, General Manager

Canberra Region Joint Organisation

- Councillor Russell Fitzpatrick, Chairperson
- Ms Sharon Houlihan, Executive Officer

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council

- Mr David Graham, Councillor
- Mr Steve McGrath, Interim General Manager

Broken Hill City Council

- Mayor Tom Kennedy

Hay Shire Council

- Ms Kirstyn Thronder, Executive Manager, People and Governance

Country Mayors Association of New South Wales

- Mr Russell Fitzpatrick, Member

Central New South Wales Joint Organisation

- Ms Jennifer Bennett, Executive Officer
- Mr Kent Boyd, General Manager, Parkes Shire Council; and Member, General Managers Advisory Committee; and General Manager, Hornsby Shire Council

Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils

- Mr Richard Sheridan, Member, Finance Group; and Director, City Performance, Bayside Council
- Mr Craig Swift-McNair, Chair; and General Manager, Woollahra Council

Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils

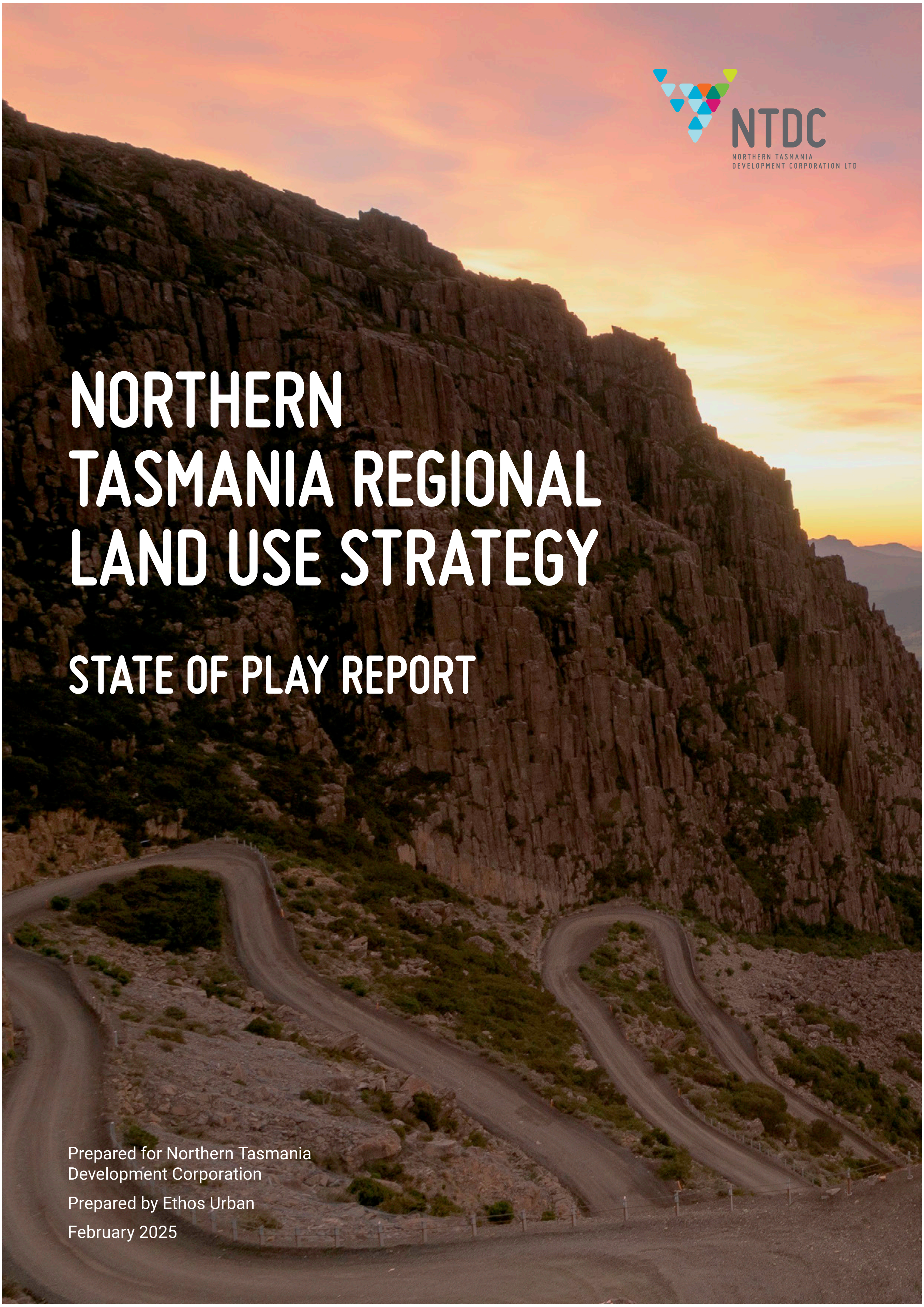
- Mr Steven Head, Chair, General Managers Advisory Committee
- Dr Meg Montgomery, Executive Director

Northern Beaches Council

- Ms Caroline Foley, Chief Financial Officer

Australian Services Union

- Mr John Chisholm, Workplace Delegate, South Australian and Northern Territory Branch
- Ms Karen Colli, Branch Executive Councillor, Local Government Division, Western Australian Branch
- Ms Kristen Gilbertson, President, South Australian and Northern Territory Branch
- Ms Tanya Goddard, Workplace Delegate, Victorian and Tasmanian Authorities and Services Branch
- Mrs Jill Hugo, Assistant Branch Secretary, Western Australian Branch
- Mr Savvas (Sam) Ktisti, Workplace Delegate, South Australian and Northern Territory Branch
- Ms Margaret L'Estrange, Vice-President, South Australian and Northern Territory Branch
- Ms Chloe Schlemitz, Workplace Delegate, Victorian and Tasmanian Authorities and Services Branch
- Ms Abbie Spencer, Secretary, South Australian and Northern Territory Branch
- Ms Tash Wark, Branch Secretary, Victorian and Tasmanian Authorities and Services Branch
- Mr Tom Wenbourne, Branch Executive Member, Local Government, Western Australian Branch



NTDC
NORTHERN TASMANIA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD

NORTHERN TASMANIA REGIONAL LAND USE STRATEGY

STATE OF PLAY REPORT

Prepared for Northern Tasmania Development Corporation

Prepared by Ethos Urban

February 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the palawa community of Northern lutriwita/Tasmania, the custodians of our country, and their elders, past, present, and emerging. The first nations of the Northern Tasmania Region are the Kunnarra Kuna, Leenerrerter, Leterremairrener, Palawa, Pallittorre, Pangerninghe, Panninher, Pinterrairer, Pyemmairrenerpairrener, Trawlwoolway and Tyerrernotepanner Aboriginal people.

Cover: Jacob's Ladder
Simon Sturzaker

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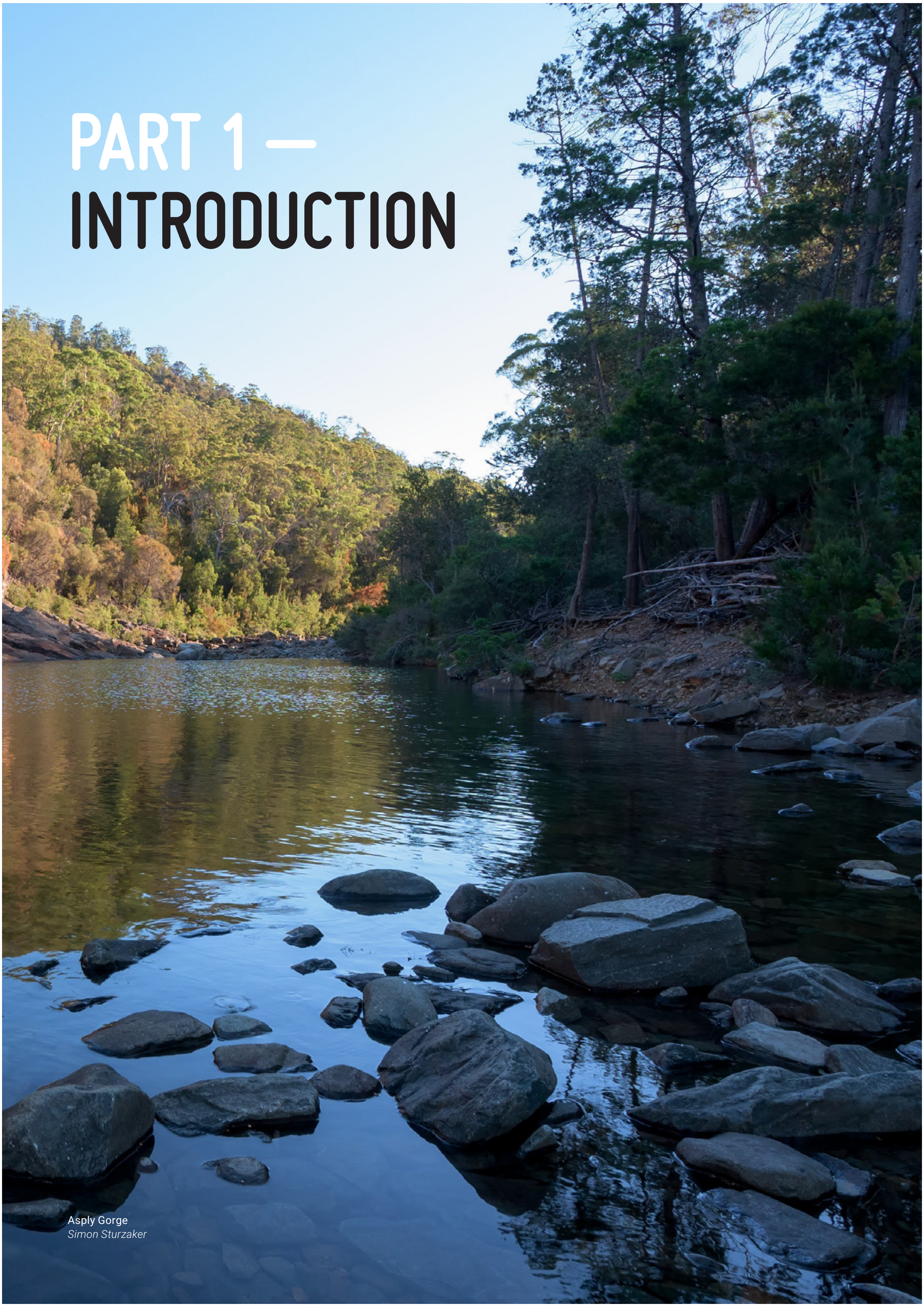
Overview from Dorset Lookout

PART 1 — INTRODUCTION



Asply Gorge
Simon Sturzaker

1.1 A new Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy

Regional Land Use Strategies are an important part of the Tasmanian Planning System. They plan up to 30 years ahead and set the direction for how land use change, growth and development in Tasmania's Regions will be managed. The main purposes of the Regional Land Use Strategies are to:

- Implement the objectives of the Tasmanian Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS), and Tasmanian Planning Policies at a regional scale, and in ways that are appropriate to each of Tasmania's regions.
- Guide local strategic planning and the preparation of Local Provision Schedules in the councils that make up each region. Local Provision Schedules must be consistent with the relevant Regional Land Use Strategy.

The Tasmanian Minister for Planning can declare Regional Land Use Strategies under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 (LUPAA)*. The LUPAA also sets out how Regional Land Use Strategies should be prepared and amended, and requires periodic reviews and updates.

The Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (NTRLUS) is one of three Regional Land Use Strategies in Tasmania. The existing NTRLUS, which has a planning horizon to 2032, was first declared in October 2011, with revised editions declared in October 2013, January 2016, June 2018 and more recently in June 2021. Since the preparation of the existing NTRLUS, the Northern Tasmania Region has experienced a surge in migration-based population growth and changes in economic, social and environmental conditions. There have also been reforms and change to planning policy and legislation, including the introduction of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme and the draft Tasmanian Planning Policies.

The intention of preparing a new NTRLUS is to better align it with the current and intended land use outcomes over the next 30 years, to implement State policies, projects and initiatives within the Region and to guide local land use planning. The new NTRLUS is intended to be prepared through a collaborative process that brings together the eight local governments of Northern Tasmania, the Tasmanian Government State Planning Office, other State Departments and utilities companies. This collaborative and coordinated approach to preparation and governance of the NTRLUS offers opportunities to better coordinate implementation. The NTRLUS is intended to be a living document that is periodically reviewed and amended to respond to changes that are likely to occur over the next 30 years.

1.2 The NTRLUS and the Planning System

The Schedule 1 Objectives of the RMPS provide the overarching policy direction that must be furthered through land use planning across Tasmania, particularly through the Tasmanian Planning Policies (TPPs) (currently in draft) and the Tasmanian Planning Scheme (TPS).

The TPPs provide the detailed statewide aims and principles that the NTRLUS is to apply to land use planning for the Region. The TPPs contribute to:

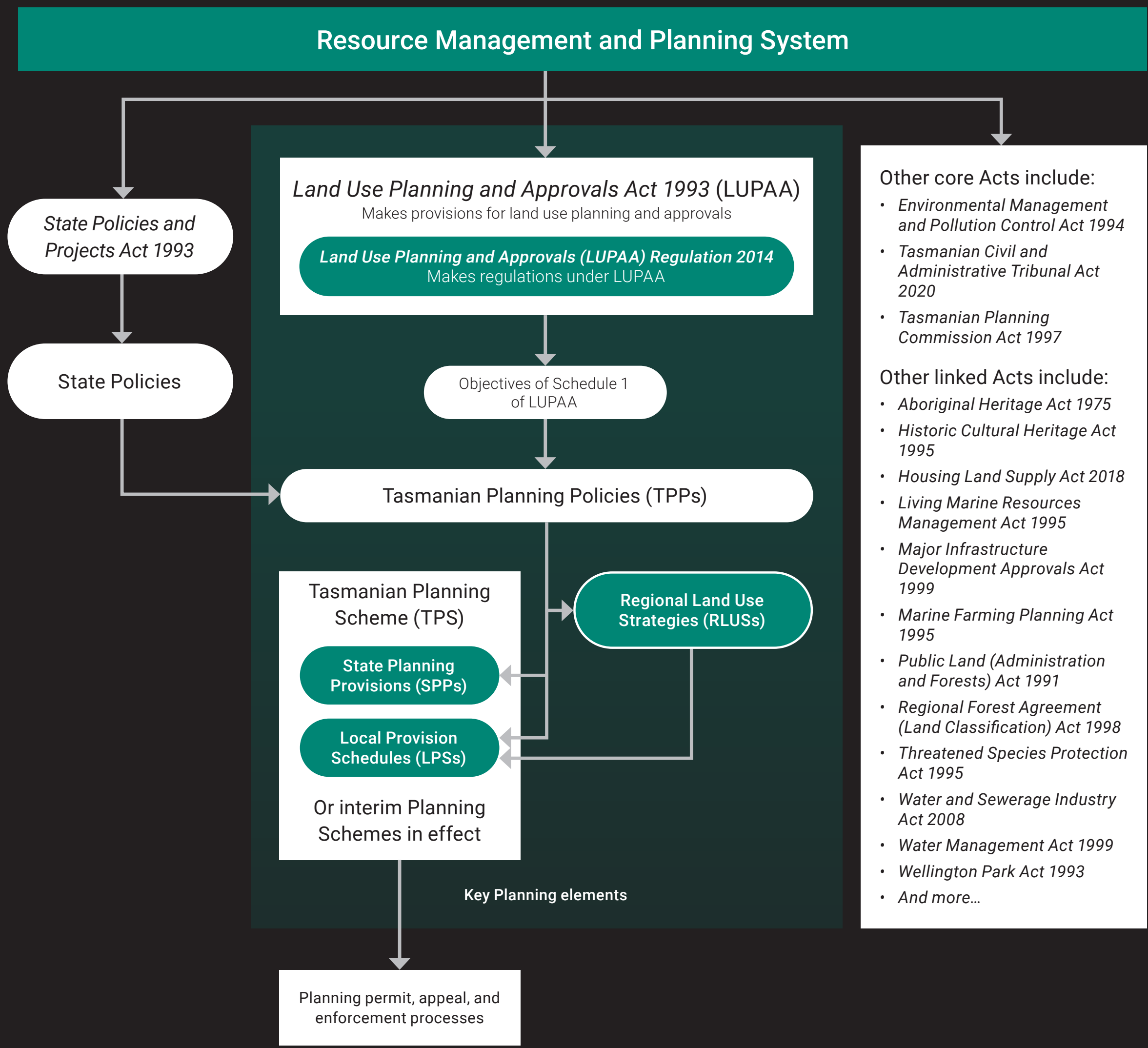
- Providing for the sustainable growth of our cities, towns, and villages so that we can enjoy a good quality of life;
- Protecting our natural environment so that we, and future generations, can continue to benefit from it;
- Planning for increased environmental hazard events and natural disasters, including those arising from climate change, so that our communities are more resilient to those events and disasters;
- Fostering sustainable economic development so that our communities can prosper;
- Delivering the physical infrastructure and services we need cost-effectively and efficiently so our built environments remain healthy and liveable;
- Protecting our heritage so that we can better appreciate the lessons of the past and create a stronger identity for our future; and
- Empowering our communities so that they can develop sustainably in line with their goals and needs.

The TPS has two parts:

- State Planning Provisions (SPPs) that include state-wide provisions including administrative clauses, general provisions, use and development standards for zones and codes.
- Local Provisions Schedule (LPS) that principally apply the SPPs spatially, responding to local context in each council including zone maps, overlay maps, local area objectives, particular purpose zones, specific area plans, site-specific qualifications and code lists for each municipal area in Tasmania.

The TPPs direct the form and contents of the entire TPS. Regional Land Use Strategies guide and inform amendments to, or the preparation of new, LPSs.

The Planning Hierarchy



1.3 The State of Play Report

This State of Play Report is the first step in preparing the new NTRLUS. It summarises available data and information on a range of topics to understand the key influences, challenges, and opportunities in the Region, and the key drivers of growth and change. It addresses what has been learnt from past experience in the Region, what is currently happening, and (for some issues) projections of what may occur over the next 30 years.

Northern Tasmania is a diverse, distinct and complex region. The State of Play Report identifies:

- What makes different parts of the Region unique and the Region different from the other Regions in Tasmania
- Land use issues, opportunities and challenges that are common across the Region
- Things the community values
- Land use planning issues that are important to address for the benefit of people, the economy, and the climate and landscape that make and shape the Region.

While the State of Play recognises differences across the Region, it is focused on issues, opportunities and challenges that are most effectively addressed at a Regional scale, or where local land use planning needs to understand and respond to a Regional context.

The findings of the State of Play Report will inform the preparation of regional strategic directions and a land use planning vision for the Northern Tasmania Region. The findings from the State of Play will underpin the Vision and Regional Strategic Directions by identifying key land use planning opportunities, challenges, gaps and needs for the Region. Consultation with stakeholders across the Region has been integral to the State of Play and will inform the Vision and Regional Strategic Directions.

The State of Play Report is structured using key themes that cover related topics:

THEME 1
People, Communities & Growth

- Cultural Heritage & Values
- Population Growth & Change
- Housing, Placemaking & Growth
- Social Infrastructure

THEME 2
Climate, Landscape, Environmental Values, Natural Hazards & Environmental Risks

- Natural Environment, Landscape Character & Climate
- Natural Hazards & Environmental Risks

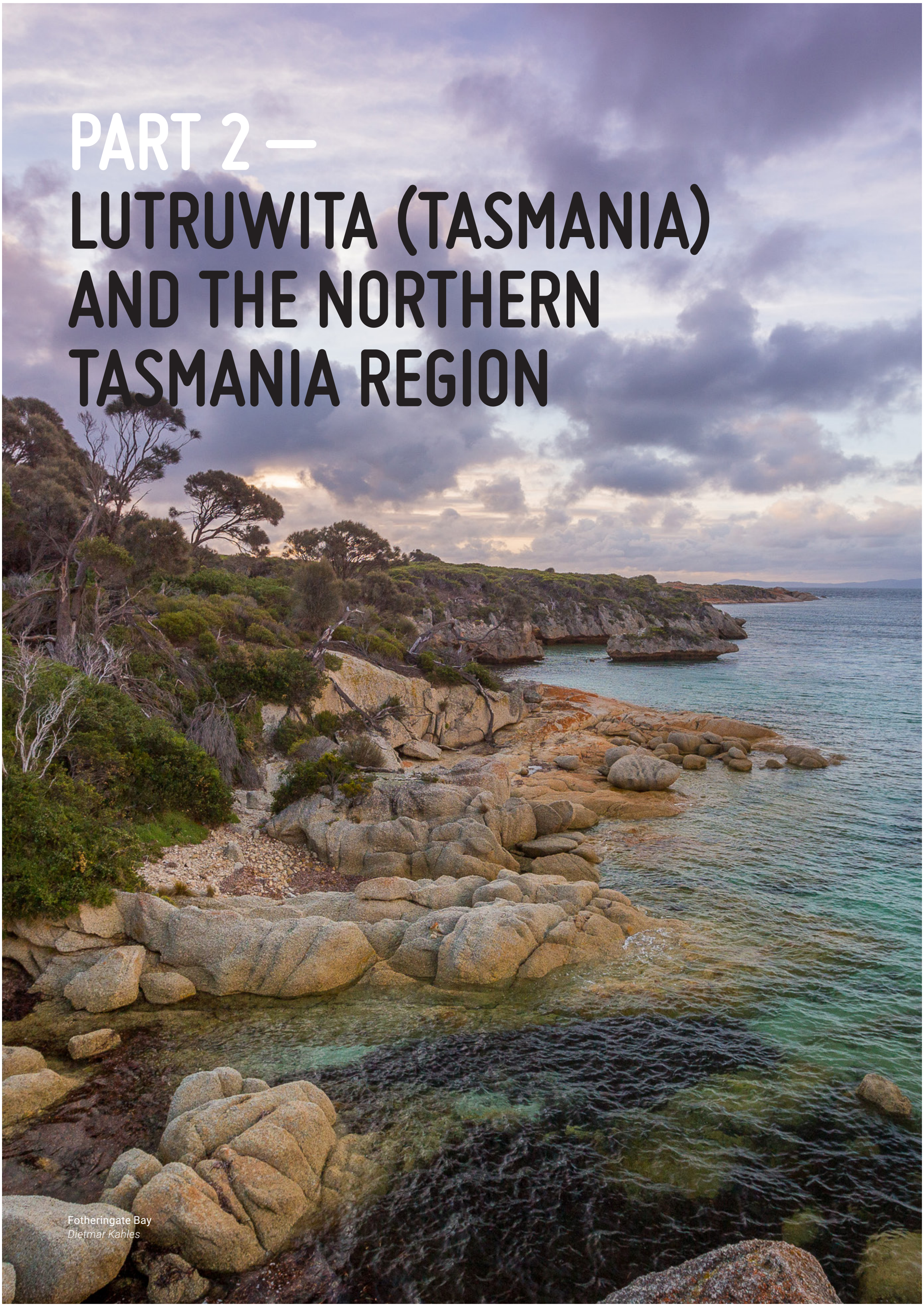
THEME 3
Economic Activity & Infrastructure

- Economic Activity & Productivity
- Movement & Connectivity
- Utilities

For each theme, the opportunities and challenges are summarised to show how the issues are linked and highlight the importance of integrated planning for the Region. Climate change is a topic that intersects with all the themes and topics. Where relevant, the influence of climate change is discussed within each topic, in addition to an overview within Theme 2.

Cataract Gorge Pool
Nick Hanson Visuals

PART 2 —
LUTRUWITA (TASMANIA) AND THE NORTHERN TASMANIA REGION



Fotheringate Bay
Dietmar Kahles

For the local Aboriginal nations, Tasmania has been and continues to be known as *"lutruwita."* This State of Play report acknowledges the values, context, and aspirations of the palawa, Tasmania's Aboriginal people, as the traditional custodians of the land. This understanding and acknowledgement will inform the Vision and Regional Strategic Directions that follow the State of Play Report, and in turn the new Regional Land Use Strategy for Northern Tasmania.

2.1 Northern Tasmania

2.1.1 Overview of the Region

Northern Tasmania is geographically, socially and economically diverse. The Region:

- Includes 8 of Tasmania's 29 local councils
- Covers almost one third of Tasmania's land mass (20,116 square km)
- Is home to 27% of all Tasmanians (151,373 people)
- Contributes substantially to Tasmania's economic growth (10.13 billion GRP in June 2023 growing 0.4% since the previous year and more than a quarter of Tasmania's total GRP)[1]

Quick Stats[2]

157,373
Total resident population

5,641
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents
Northern Tasmania has a higher concentration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents (3.9%) compared to Australia overall (3.2%)

71,563
Dwellings

43 years
Median age

66,969
Workforce (in the Region)
Key industries of employment:
- Health Care and Social Assistance (12,170 jobs)
- Education and Training (6,180 jobs)
- Retail Trade (6,980 jobs)

Northern Tasmania is affected by cycles of change. The Region has sustained average annualised population growth of 1.2% over last 5 years[3]. However, the Region has experienced cycles of rapid and slower population growth rates. Sustained economic growth in North Tasmania is contrasted by downturns as some industries change, grow or shrink, resulting in access to skilled labour not always keeping pace with these changes. In response, residents may pursue economic opportunities elsewhere and training is required to fill skill and labour gaps.

Northern Tasmania has a diversity of places and communities, reflecting different patterns of development, spanning the civic, compact, urban centre of Launceston, surrounding suburban growth areas and townships, through to more remote rural areas and smaller coastal settlements. Flinders is unique in the Region, and there are clear differences between communities on the east coast that are more remote from Launceston. These communities are by necessity self-reliant and resilient, but also have less access to some essential services, facilities and opportunities because they are distant from Tasmania's larger towns and cities. While some areas are seeing population growth and demographic shifts, other areas are facing the impacts of an ageing population, seasonal economic cycles, inequitable infrastructure investment, shortages in appropriate housing typologies, changing demand patterns and emerging industries.

Planning for such a diverse Region requires region-wide priorities and strategic directions that facilitate certainty and coordination at a regional scale, whilst recognising and respecting local variations. Regional land use planning for Northern Tasmania needs to provide direction and a framework for application at the local level.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on Northern Tasmania's population and economic trends has reinforced that planning for the long-term future requires clear direction and land use planning frameworks that acknowledge change will be variable and can adapt. While the Region's population is projected to grow over the next 20-25 years, the rate of growth and the distribution of growth across the Region is likely to differ from current projections. This will affect land use planning responses like how many new homes are needed, what types of housing is best suited, where those homes should be built and the infrastructure and services needed to support communities, the economy and climate resilience.

Northern Tasmania is also moulded by a diverse natural landscape of mountains, waterways, rural landscapes and coastline. Water and mountainous terrain provide settings and define different geographic areas within the Region; they are also barriers to movement and connectivity. They influence patterns of settlement, transportation routes, and contribute to the unique identities of communities and places across the Region. Additionally, nature plays a role in facilitating key economic activities and industries, such as tourism, energy and primary production. From the community's perspective, the Region's appeal is largely lifestyle driven, supported by the unique offerings of the natural landscape and diverse environment. Effective land use planning must recognise the importance of the natural landscape to the Region and ensure the natural elements and values that sustain it are both preserved and enhanced.

Whilst benefitting from a unique natural landscape, natural hazards pose significant challenges to Northern Tasmania, especially the impact of flood risk, drought, extreme storm events, coastal hazards and bushfire on communities. Extreme weather events influence people's perceptions of the Region and lifestyle factors. Climate change is also altering natural patterns and will continue to transform the area over time in some cases worsening the threat from natural hazards through changes like sea level rise, changing rainfall patterns and bushfire frequency and intensity. This dynamic environment, shaped by internal and external changes, presents both opportunities and challenges for land use planning.

A girl with a yellow umbrella stands in a wet and foggy forest. Tasmania, Australia.
Beau. Source: Adobe Stock

2.1.2 Regional climate snapshot and trends

The University of Tasmania's Climate Futures Tasmania initiative provides the highest resolution climate modelling in Australia. This initiative provides a detailed evidence base of the current regional climate and observed trends. The NTRLUS has an opportunity to build on work already undertaken within the Region, around natural hazards, climate change and resilience[4], to identify climate related risks and potential impacts relevant to a regional planning context, and inform regional planning directions and strategies that amend to manage these impacts and risks.

The below provides a snapshot of Northern Tasmania's current climate and predicted changes which may impact Northern Tasmania's environment, people and economy and have implications for land use planning.

Table 1. Northeast Tasmania Regional Climate Change Snapshot 2024[5]

Current climate snapshot – Northern Tasmania	Potential changes and associated impacts to climate
Temperature	
• Moderate temperature range in coastal areas. • Average daily maximum temperature is around 21°C in summer and 13°C in winter. • Inland areas experience wider temperature variations, including very cold temperatures in winter. • Long-term average temperatures have risen in the decades since the 1950s, at a rate of up to 0.15°C per decade.	• Temperature of very hot days to increase by up to 5°C. • Extended heat waves are likely to enhance the occurrence and intensity of bushfires.
Rainfall	
• Average annual rainfall varies significantly across the region with: – 800-1000 mm - north coast – more than 1000 mm - places on the east coast – generally less than 600 mm – inland areas of the midlands and Fingal Valley. • Top daily rainfall in Tasmania all occurred in the region (352 mm at Cullenswood in 1974). • There has been a decline in average annual rainfall across the region since the mid-1970s, with the decline strongest in autumn.	• Increased intensity of short duration rain events are projected. • Rainfall trending to heavier events interspersed by longer dry periods, Increasing high daily runoff events and erosion or flooding. • Rainfall volume in a 200-year average recurrence interval (ARI) event will increase about 16%. • Inundation along the coastline will increase. with the current 100-year coastal inundation event increasing in frequency (50-yearly event by 2030, 5-yearly event by 2090).

Figure 1. The Northern Tasmanian Region

Source Data: Land Information System Tasmania (LIST) and Open Street Map

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2.2 Zooming in: A Diverse Region

The Northern Tasmania Region comprises 8 Local Government Areas. There are distinctions which define the different LGAs of the Region in terms of population, social make-up, economic factors, cultural identity, geography, other environmental conditions etc. The following section provides a summary of these different council areas in terms of their unique social and economic characteristics.

Jansz Tasmania
Adam Gibson

Break O'Day

Break O'Day is situated on the east coast of the Region, approximately 150 kilometres east of Launceston. It covers 3,800 square kilometres and has a growing population, particularly with older people retiring to the area for the coastal lifestyle on offer. Key townships include St Helens, St Marys, Fingal, and Scamander.

Characteristics that are highly valued by residents include the area's strong sense of community and lifestyle-driven feel supported by a prominence of coastal, bushland, and undulating rural landscapes. Like many of the coastal parts of the Region, Break O'Day features a lack of housing diversity and a concentration of shack-style developments and holiday townships with limited amenities and local services. Break O'Day is renowned for its array of beaches, including the Bay of Fires, and nature-based tourism offerings including surfing, snorkelling, fishing, and mountain biking trails.

Climate Statistics[6]

- Average daily maximum temperature – 17.1°C
- Average daily minimum temperature – 7.7°C
- Average annual hot days (>30°C) – 3.2 days
- Average annual rainfall – 789.2mm

Key Break O'Day Statistics[14]

7,084
Total population

4.3%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents

4,850
Dwellings

56 years
Median age

32.2%
Population aged 65+

$25,240
Median Individual Income

68.27%
Dwelling Occupancy

19.1%
Rented Dwellings
(% of total occupied private dwellings)

1,989
Workforce

Maurouard Beach
Ethos Urban

Top 5 industries by employment[15]

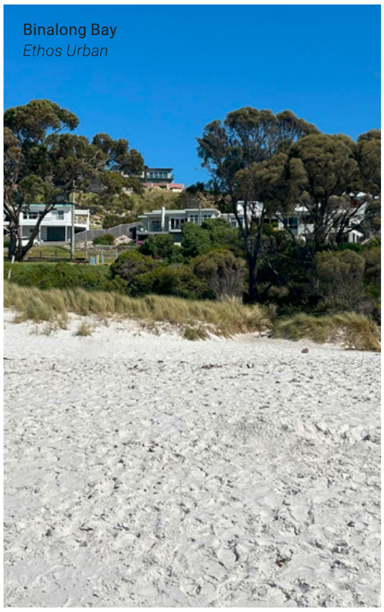
1. Health Care and Social Assistance (284 jobs)
2. Accommodation and Food Services (262 jobs)
3. Retail Trade (249 jobs)
4. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (237 jobs)
5. Construction (175 jobs)

Top 5 industries by output[16]

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing ($99.6 million)
2. Construction ($95.5 million)
3. Manufacturing ($92.7 million)
4. Mining ($72.5 million)
5. Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services ($69.5 million)

Tasmania Pyengana Dairy Company
Nick Osbourne


Binalong Bay
Ethos Urban


Binalong Bay
Ethos Urban


Pyengana Dairy Company
Poon Wai Nang


Fingal
Ethos Urban


St Helen's Mountain Bike Trails
J. Da Seymour Photomedia

What we heard so far from Break O'Day Council

People, communities and growth

Break O'Day is a lifestyle destination that attracts people seeking coastal amenity, climate and recreation, along with smaller, close-knit communities.

There is strong demand for rural and coastal lifestyle lots in places like Scamander.

The population is ageing through retirees moving to Break O'Day and existing residents getting older, but some older people are also moving to areas like Launceston for better healthcare and services.

There has been recent increases in younger families moving to the area, likely driven by housing construction growth, but also leading to emergence of new industries and businesses.

Recognition of the need for more diverse housing particularly for older people and single people to live in larger towns like St Helens with better access to shops and services.

There is a significant mismatch between house size and the number of people living in them. Houses and blocks are too large for older people and there is a lack of choice for single people, couples and older people.

The high proportion of shacks and sheds on residential land mis-represents the availability of land for more housing and makes it challenging to justify rezoning or upzoning land to increase capacity.

Natural Environment, natural hazards, environmental risks

Natural beauty and scenic amenity are key attractions, particularly on the coast.

Pressure for growth in housing along the coastal strip risks undermining the natural values that attract residents and visitors to Break O'Day.

Climate change is likely to increase risks to communities and the natural environment, particularly the predicted increase of coastal erosion.

There are no scenic protection overlays in the Break O'Day Local Planning Scheme, which is a particular risk to preservation of the scenic values of the coast.

Economic activity and infrastructure

Viticulture, horticulture and agriculture industries are expanding due to favourable climate conditions.

Remote working drove some growth in the local population particularly during COVID lockdowns, with some retention of remote workers in recent years.

Rural industries and emerging activities need better support, such as agricultural land for non-fertile uses.

The seasonal nature of some economic activity (including tourism, agriculture and aquaculture) places pressure on housing and makes it challenging to find and retain staff, particularly because Break O'Day is relatively isolated.

Tourism is diversifying and becoming slightly less seasonal with more off-season visitation particularly for activities like mountain biking.

Infrastructure needs to support population growth and seasonal tourism (e.g., higher summer population).

Accommodation proposals in some coastal areas are not serviced by water and wastewater.

Local Planning Strategies

- Break O'Day Future Thinking 2022
- St Helens Municipal Management Plan 2016
- Break O'Day Land Use Studies Review 2015
- St Helens and Surrounds Structure Plan 2013
- St Helens Structure Plan Background Report 2013

Dorset

Positioned in the most northeastern part of the mainland, Dorset has a total land area of 3,231 square kilometres. It is regarded as a highly scenic council area with expansive natural surroundings conveniently positioned within 100km north east of Launceston.

It is well connected by the Tasman Highway, Golconda and Bridport Roads and is bordered by George Town to the west, Launceston to the south, and Break O'Day to the east.

Dorset comprises an array of settlements, including more established towns. Scottsdale, for instance, represents the traditional civic and administrative centre of Dorset and surrounds, while providing essential services to coastal and rural residential areas, including Bridport.

Notwithstanding its overall small population, Dorset contains a range of nationally and globally recognised destinations. These include Bridestowe Lavender Estate, Barnbougle Dunes Golf Links and the town of Derby, which is renowned for the Blue Derby mountain bike trails and other associated recreation amenities.

Agriculture employs 30% of the local workforce, with key industries being dairy farming, forestry and aquaculture.

Climate Statistics[7]

- Average daily maximum temperature – 18°C
- Average daily minimum temperature – 9.3°C
- Average annual hot days (>30°C) – 2.7 days
- Average annual rainfall – 790mm

Key Dorset Statistics[17]

7,068
Total population

4.1%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents

3,948
Dwellings

48 years
Median age

25.5%
Population aged 65+

$30,361
Median Individual Income

75.71%
Dwelling Occupancy

19.2%
Rented Dwellings
(% of total occupied private dwellings)

2,650
Workforce

Bridport Old Pier at Croquet Lawn Beach
Ethos Urban

Top 5 industries by employment[18]

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (734 jobs)
2. Construction (239 jobs)
3. Accommodation and Food Services (226 jobs)
4. Health Care and Social Assistance (214 jobs)
5. Retail Trade (204 jobs)

Top 5 industries by output[19]

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing ($308.8 million)
2. Manufacturing ($140.7 million)
3. Construction ($129.4 million)
4. Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services ($70.7 million)
5. Transport, Postal and Warehousing ($45.3 million)

Little Blue Lake on Gladstone Road
Ethos Urban

Bridstowe Lavender Estate
Ethos Urban

Bridport
Ethos Urban

Scottsdale
Ethos Urban

Dorset
Ethos Urban

Bridport
Ethos Urban

What we heard so far from Dorset Council

People, communities and growth

Council are working to strengthen ties with the Aboriginal community and participation in Aboriginal cultural heritage management, particularly near Little Musselroe and Musselroe Bay.

Lack of funding and support, and low prioritisation, for protection of Historic Cultural Heritage.

Perception that heritage protection controls are a constraint to economic growth and renewal on Dorset's towns and villages.

Opportunities for growth in Bridport and Scottsdale through infill and subdivision, particularly to attract younger people and families and slow the ageing of the population.

Tiny house initiatives in Scottsdale to address housing pressures.

Demand for seasonal accommodation driven by tourism in locations like Derby and Bridport and agricultural workers impacts on the availability of housing.

Natural Environment, natural hazards, environmental risks

Protecting scenic landscapes in Bridport and Derby and mitigating natural sand movement can support sustainable growth while preserving the natural environment.

Risks from bushfires, flooding, and landslides in various areas, with sand movement exacerbated by stormwater runoff.

Economic activity and infrastructure

Tourism driven by golf, mountain biking, and lavender farming, along with key industries like agriculture, offers continued economic opportunities.

Infrastructure investments like highway upgrades and the North East Wind Farm project support long-term employment and regional output for the near future.

Scottsdale has capacity in water and wastewater systems to accommodate growth.

Renewable energy supply from wind farms and transmission lines supports sustainable growth potential in Dorset.

There are workforce gaps in aged care, health, and agriculture.

Improving transport connectivity offers opportunities for better infrastructure and enhanced regional access. This includes leveraging the recent upgrades of the Tasman Highway to improve commute access to Launceston.

Local Planning Strategies

- Scottsdale Structure Plan 2024-2044 (2024)
- Derby Structure Plan (2024)
- Dorset Strategic Plan 2023-2032 (2023)

Flinders

Flinders is situated to the northeast of Tasmania. Flinders has the smallest resident population of the 8 councils in the Region, but has a strong sense of community driven by isolation and the permanent occupation of only two of the Islands that make up the Furneaux Group. Flinders is remote and wild, with the landscape, communities and economic activity strongly defined by nature and the climate. Flinders is an attractive visitor destination with a strong agricultural sector (primarily beef cattle exports. The landscape is rugged with extensive coastlines and mountainous areas across the islands that make up the Furneaux Group which is defined by rugged landscapes of high ecological value and coastal environments.

Accessible via passenger transport services from Bridport, Essendon and Launceston, changing sea and weather patterns affect and can constrain movement of people and freight via water and air.

Climate Statistics[8]

- Average daily maximum temperature – 18.4°C
- Average daily minimum temperature – 11.1°C
- Average annual hot days (>30°C) – 5.1 days
- Average annual rainfall – 657mm

Key Flinders Statistics[20]

939
Total population

15.7%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents

683
Dwellings

58 years
Median age

37.8%
Population aged 65+

$33,262
Median Individual Income

67.20%
Dwelling Occupancy

25.8%
Rented Dwellings
(% of total occupied private dwellings)

424
Workforce

Killiecrankie Beach
Studio Herbert

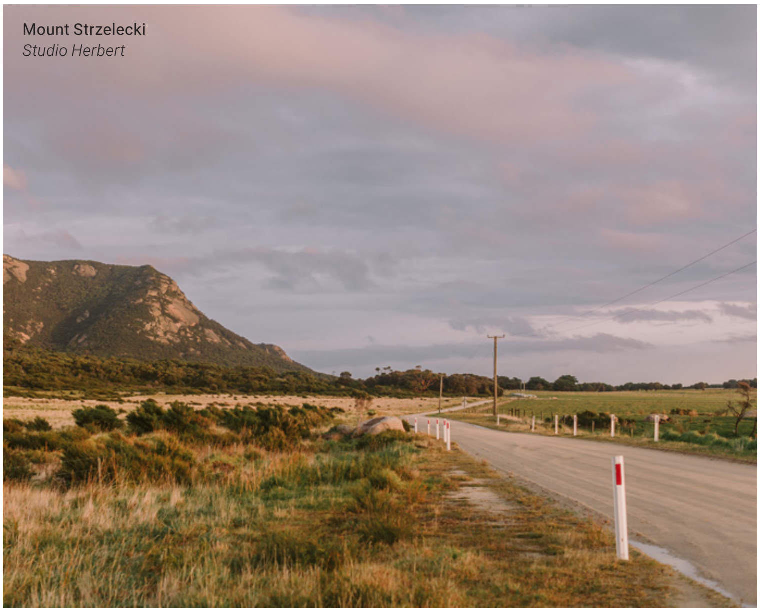
Top 5 industries by employment[21]

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (117 jobs)
2. Health Care and Social Assistance (54 jobs)
3. Construction (50 jobs)
4. Public Administration and Safety (37 jobs)
5. Education and Training (32 jobs)

Top 5 industries by output[22]

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing ($51.8 million)
2. Construction ($29.6 million)
3. Electricity, Gas, Waste and Water Services ($16.4 million)
4. Transport, Postal and Warehousing ($11.9 million)
5. Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services ($11.3 million)

Mount Strzelecki
Studio Herbert



Mount Strzelecki
Studio Herbert

Castle Rock
Studio Herbert

Wybalenna Chapel
Studio Herbert

Flinders Island Airport
Studio Herbert

Island Aerial
Studio Herbert

What we heard so far from Flinders Council

People, communities and growth

Aboriginal people's cultural connections to Flinders are complex and shaped by past trauma. Flinders is directly associated with the palawa's continuous connection to Country for all of lutruwita.

Cape Barren Island is one of the few large areas of land in Tasmania that is owned and managed by Aboriginal people, and this has particular implications that need to be recognised in land use planning.

High demand for education and healthcare services, but limited local options, meaning many young people leave Flinders for school, university or to find work.

A very high median age of the population can result in challenges in attracting and retaining younger people.

High demand for economic development, but limited supply of suitable land for housing. Planning assumptions that underpin decisions about rezoning of land to increase capacity are flawed because much of the vacant land has limited real development potential.

Growth in Aboriginal-led housing development could improve affordability.

Natural Environment, natural hazards, environmental risks

Weather disruptions impact transport, especially boats and planes.

The unique, rugged and remote natural character of Flinders is a big attractor for visitors.

The natural environment and sense of isolation are significant contributors to the identity of local communities.

Clean air and water are major assets that can underpin the growth of nature-based industries.

Concerns over fauna and flora conservation, waste management challenges, and the need for investment to meet environmental standards.

The island's strong renewable energy infrastructure (solar and wind) offers opportunities for growth in sustainable industries.

Economic activity and infrastructure

Council consideration of subsidies and prefabricated housing methods could make construction more affordable, as costs of labour travel and materials supply make construction 40% higher than the rest of Tasmania.

Developing accommodation for seasonal workers and skilled trades could help address workforce shortages. Support for the local workforce through targeted initiatives like workforce housing and vocational training.

High freight and transport costs due to limited services and lack of reliability due to weather.

Potential to attract younger families by addressing housing and workforce needs. Demand for education presents an opportunity for specialised training programs, particularly in agriculture, aquaculture, and aviation.

Challenges with financing for young people and mismatch between empty high-end homes and local housing needs.

Seasonal demands and shortage of skilled workers, particularly in hospitality, trades, and construction results in accommodation challenges for workers.

Opportunity to diversify the economy beyond agriculture, leveraging tourism, eco-tourism, and local produce.

Opportunities to upgrade infrastructure to meet growing demands, such as improving wastewater systems, waste management, and water supply.

Local Planning Strategies

- 2021- 2031 Strategic Plan (2023)
- Flinders LPS Rural Enterprise Concept Report (2022)
- Review of Identified Areas Proposed for Tasmanian Planning Scheme Zoning (2021)
- Flinders Island Structure Plan (2021)

George Town

George Town is situated in the north of the Region, approximately 50 kilometres from Launceston CBD. It covers a total land area of around 60 square kilometres, with George Town as the main township. It primarily comprises rural and rural-residential areas, dominated by low density housing and ageing housing stock.

Agglomeration of historic sites and retirement living hubs exist in areas along the Coast, including Low Head. A significant proportion of land is occupied by dense native vegetation and tree canopy.

Bell Bay is a heavy industry precinct and port that is significant for the whole of Tasmania as one of the key freight connections to mainland Australia and internationally, particularly for heavy manufacturing and renewable energy projects.

Climate Statistics[9]

- Average daily maximum temperature – 18°C
- Average daily minimum temperature – 9.2°C
- Average annual hot days (>30°C) – 1.2 days
- Average annual rainfall – 724.1mm

Key George Town Statistics[23]

7,391
Total population

5.2%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents

3,685
Dwellings

48 years
Median age

25.7%
Population aged 65+

$29,975
Median Individual Income

83.8%
Dwelling Occupancy

26.1%
Rented Dwellings
(% of total occupied private dwellings)

2,848
Workforce

Lighthouse

Top 5 industries by employment[24]

1. Manufacturing (1,165 jobs)
2. Construction (229 jobs)
3. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (223 jobs)
4. Education and Training (214 jobs)
5. Health Care and Social Assistance (166 jobs)

Top 5 industries by output[25]

1. Manufacturing ($1,847.7 million)
2. Mining ($143.7 million)
3. Construction ($114.8 million)
4. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing ($81.1 million)
5. Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services ($79.6 million)

Sinapius Vineyard
Adam Gibson

Bell Bay industrial area
Ethos Urban

Port of Bell Bay
Ethos Urban

Low Head
Ethos Urban

Industry - Bell Bay
Ethos Urban

East Beach
Ethos Urban

What we heard so far from George Town Council

People, communities and growth

Opportunities to integrate heritage preservation with thoughtful development plans that respect local history while accommodating growth.

Potential to attract more residents by addressing aging population trends and underutilised housing stock.

Strong workforce demand particularly in industries and ports, but many workers prefer to live outside George Town because of perceptions of amenity and lack of suitable housing options.

Opportunity for growth that is specifically targeted to retirees, particularly in coastal towns.

Opposition between communities over land use, especially around residential growth and industrial development. Tensions between preserving heritage sites (e.g., Low Head, Pilot Station) and managing urban expansion.

George Town's town centre and established areas have significant potential for urban renewal due to ageing housing stock but coordinated masterplanning is required to ensure local character is maintained.

Natural Environment, natural hazards, environmental risks

Opportunity to improve environmental outcomes by addressing stormwater management and threatened vegetation in development plans.

Insufficient infrastructure for stormwater management, particularly in growing areas like Low Head.

Environmental challenges from threatened vegetation and climate-related impacts not fully addressed in planning.

Economic activity and infrastructure

Opportunities to better align community growth with infrastructure development, ensuring sustainability in residential and economic expansion.

Greenfield residential development is not well planned and sequenced, and this makes infrastructure delivery difficult or inefficient.

Opportunity for infrastructure improvements (roads, utilities, sewer systems) to support regional growth. Strategic investments in transport networks, including bridges and bypasses, could improve connectivity, particularly for freight.

Growing opportunities in renewable energy sectors (solar, wind) could be supported by improved infrastructure and planning. Developing clear frameworks for these industries can drive economic growth while ensuring infrastructure is not overwhelmed.

Misalignment between council goals and service delivery capacity, especially in low-density areas with high infrastructure costs. Tensions around spot rezoning and infill development, with inadequate planning for long-term sustainability.

Local Planning Strategies

- George Town Strategic Plan 2020-2030 (2020)
- George Town Township Plans (2024)
- George Town Structure Plan (2021)
- Hillwood Structure Plan Review (2021)

Launceston

Launceston is situated where the North Esk River and South Esk River meet the River Tamar. It is the largest city in the Region and the second largest in Tasmania. It covers a diverse area comprising a distinct urban centre, surrounding suburbs and residential growth areas including the South East Corridor (St Leonards) and land south of Prospect. Launceston City Council area also includes some small towns and rural localities such as Lilydale and Targa to the east and Swan Bay on the eastern side of the Tamar Estuary.

Launceston central business district (CBD) functions as the primary regional Activity Centre in Northern Tasmania. Launceston contains regional-scale, higher order community facilities and critical infrastructure for the Region, including Launceston General Hospital, UTAS Inveresk campus, Queen Victoria Museum/Art Gallery, Australian Maritime College, TasTAFE.

Launceston contains the most compact and dense built form and development patterns in the Region, with higher density buildings in the CBD, interspersed with a strong legacy of historic buildings. The CBD has a diverse mix of administrative, retail and other and commercial uses.

While Launceston city centre offers rich cultural heritage and major amenities, emerging pockets of new subdivisions and existing suburban residential areas (i.e. Ravenswood) are distant from the city centre, services and infrastructure.

The natural environment shapes Launceston. It has direct access nature with Cataract Gorge and the Tamar Estuary on the doorstep of the CBD, and the surrounding hills and wilderness areas form a natural backdrop for the city. Because of Launceston's location at the confluence of rivers and a tidal estuary, flooding is a historic, current and future increasing risk particularly to parts of the CBD and Invermay.

Climate Statistics[10]

- Average daily maximum temperature – 17.1°C
- Average daily minimum temperature – 7.1°C
- Average annual hot days (>30°C) – 2.9 days
- Average annual rainfall – 876mm

Key Launceston Statistics[26]

72,672
Total population

4.10%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents

31,369
Dwellings

39 years
Median age

19%
Population aged 65+

$36,097
Median Individual Income

92.34%
Dwelling Occupancy

32.8%
Rented Dwellings
(% of total occupied private dwellings)

42,806
Workforce


Launceston homes reflected in the Tamar River
Dominic Zeng

Top 5 industries by employment[27]

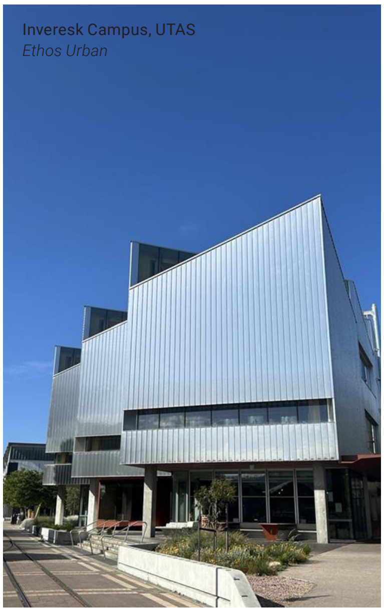
1. Health Care and Social Assistance (9,655 jobs)
2. Retail Trade (4,972 jobs)
3. Education and Training (4,216 jobs)
4. Construction (3,460 jobs)
5. Accommodation and Food Services (3,448 jobs)

Top 5 industries by output[28]

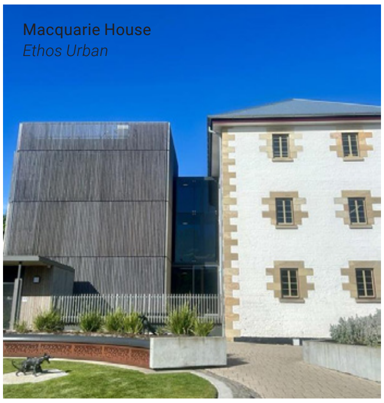
1. Construction ($1,720.5 million)
2. Manufacturing ($1,524.1 million)
3. Health Care and Social Assistance ($1, 414.4 million)
4. Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services ($1,076.2 million)
5. Financial and Insurance Services ($842.9 million)

Esk Brewery
Nick Hanson Visuals

Harvest Launceston Farmers' Market
Rob Burnett



Inveresk Campus, UTAS
Ethos Urban



Macquarie House
Ethos Urban

QVMAG at Inveresk
Rob Burnett

Victorian-style terraces
Ethos Urban

What we heard so far from Launceston City Council

People, communities and growth

Strengthen collaboration between councils to address regional growth and infrastructure needs.

Risk of population decline in the inner city as new housing growth is directed to the urban fringes and household sizes are reducing.

Mismatch between housing demand and availability, especially for social housing; insufficient infrastructure in new developments.

Strategic planning for high-density, affordable housing in growth areas, and addressing the infrastructure gap in development projects.

Develop structure plans for growth areas, with coordination across councils and agencies to ensure long-term sustainability.

Ensure local character is maintained in the face of urban expansion, integrating unique features into planning.

Expand equitable service delivery, particularly in rural and isolated areas, to improve community health and education.

Address social issues through urban consolidation and targeted strategies to reduce inequalities and homelessness.

Increasing migration to central areas due to inadequate health and education services in rural regions.

Natural Environment, natural hazards, environmental risks

Integrate the preservation of native vegetation into residential planning, maintaining Tasmania's visual and ecological identity.

Use flood modelling and coordinated planning to address climate change risks and mitigation, ensuring safe and sustainable development.

Challenges in addressing flood risks and settlement patterns due to climate change.

Preservation of native vegetation and maintaining Tasmania's ecological identity in urban environments.

Economic activity and infrastructure

Focus on closing infrastructure gaps and improving transport networks, particularly in growing suburbs.

Growth on the fringes of Greater Hobart is 'hollowing out' the inner city, creating more demands on transport infrastructure as jobs and services are centralised.

Maximise infrastructure potential in areas like Western Junction and Bell Bay to leverage economic growth.

Gaps in infrastructure, particularly road networks and public transport, with major projects facing delivery challenges.

Need for strategic land use planning to balance industrial, commercial, and residential growth.

Misalignment between tourism marketing and the experiences of some residents, particularly in more disadvantaged outer suburbs where the realities of living do not match the ***"brand"*** that is promoted for the region or that is experienced in the inner city.

Local Planning Strategies

- Greater Launceston Plan 2014 (under revision)
- Launceston Corporate Strategic Plan 2014
- Launceston Residential Strategy 2009–2029 (2010)

Meander Valley

Meander Valley is at the western edge of the Region, covering approximately 3,821 sq km. It extends from Prospect Vale in the east to Cradle Mountain in the west, and from Birralee in the north to the Western Tiers in the south.

Meander Valley is growing at a faster rate relative to other council areas in the Region, largely driven by Meander Valley's accessibility to the high-order centres of Launceston to the east and Devonport to the north-west. The majority of the population is located in the townships of Deloraine, Hadspen, Carrick and Westbury, and Prospect Vale, which is essentially a suburb of greater Launceston. The population is distributed across a mix of rural, village and more urban lifestyle settings, townships are known for their strong village character and large lots nestled within rural landscapes.

Key natural assets include the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, Mole Creek National Park, Walls of Jerusalem National Park, Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park, and the Great Western Tiers.

Climate Statistics[11]

- Average daily maximum temperature – 15.1°C
- Average daily minimum temperature – 5.4°C
- Average annual hot days (>30°C) –1.6 days
- Average annual rainfall – 1234.9mm

Key Meander Valley Statistics[29]

21,517
Total population

3.7%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents

9,276
Dwellings

46 years
Median age

23.9%
Population aged 65+

$34,864
Median Individual Income

92.93%
Dwelling Occupancy

20%
Rented Dwellings
(% of total occupied private dwellings)

5,672
Workforce

Top 5 industries by employment[30]

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (1,056 jobs)
2. Construction (741 jobs)
3. Health Care and Social Assistance (530 jobs)
4. Accommodation and Food Services (501 jobs)
5. Retail Trade (488 jobs)

Top 5 industries by output[31]

1. Manufacturing ($520.0 million)
2. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing ($428.6 million)
3. Construction ($374.1 million)
4. Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services ($192.0 million)
5. Arts and Recreation Services ($91.9 million)

Paddock in the Meander Valley
Source: Adobe Stock

Fly fishing on the Meander River
Samuel Shelley

Caption required
Ethos Urban

CAPTIONS REQUIRED

Oddfellows Hall, Deloraine
Chris Crerar

A farm near Deloraine
Graham Freeman

Caption required
Ethos Urban

What we heard so far from Meander Valley Council

People, communities and growth

Tension with Aboriginal cultural heritage and issues with council-Elder relations.

Opportunity to preserve the unique character and heritage of Meander Valley by integrating environmental and cultural values into development plans.

Rapid population growth but an ageing population partly due to out-flow of younger people from Meander Valley, particularly in the west of Meander Valley (eg. Deloraine).

Population growth presents opportunities for regional development and attracting lifestyle migrants. Strategies to accommodate an ageing population with smaller housing options and better services could boost liveability.

Housing affordability is a growing concern, especially for smaller families and ageing populations.

Increasing demand for smaller, affordable homes creates opportunities for development focused on accommodating ageing residents. Potential to balance density with preservation of town character, especially in Westbury.

Some social disparities within Meander Valley with the eastern areas more advantaged than the west, largely due to proximity to Launceston.

Natural Environment, natural hazards, environmental risks

The shift toward urban-style development in places like Westbury offers the chance to thoughtfully integrate higher-density development with community values and environmental sustainability.

Loss of local environmental values due to development. Urban wildlife destruction and insufficient planning consideration for ecological impacts.

The region's natural beauty, including the Great Western Tiers and the appeal of Meander Valley's lifestyle could attract new residents and visitors, contributing to economic growth.

Economic activity and infrastructure

Addressing infrastructure needs, especially wastewater and transport, could unlock significant development potential, particularly in rural areas like Westbury.

The region's agricultural and tourism industries, including poppies, offer economic growth potential. Renewable energy projects, like solar farms, could be further explored to diversify the economy.

Strengthening the relationship between local and state governments could improve planning outcomes, especially in terms of critical infrastructure investments.

Limited infrastructure capacity, especially around wastewater, stormwater, and transport. Issues with sewerage in towns like Westbury and Prospect Vale, as well as inadequate road networks.

Development costs and infrastructure limitations, particularly in the Valley Central Industrial Area, and reliance on Devonport for port and rail infrastructure.

Tensions around lack of investment in critical infrastructure, such as improved transport connections to Launceston

Local Planning Strategies

- 2024 – 2034 Strategic Plan (2024)
- Deloraine Outline Development Plan 2016
- Prospect Vale – Blackstone Heights Structure Plan 2015 (under review)
- Westbury Outline Development Plan 2013
- Hadspen Outline Development Plan and Master Plan 2011

Northern Midlands

The Northern Midlands is a large and diverse council covering an area of approximately 5,133 sq km. Approximately 95% of land in the Northern Midlands is occupied by agricultural uses.

Many residents are attracted to the northern towns of Longford, Evandale, Perth and Cressy, and the residential estate of Devon Hills. In the southern part of the Region's population is concentrated in Campbell Town, Longford, Perth, Ross and Avoca. Whilst seasonal workers contribute to temporary population increases, there has been a shift with seasonal workers opting towards more semi-permanent living.

Alongside the area's scenic landscapes, expansive grazing lands and river corridors, the presence of Colonial Georgian architecture is a key feature of the area and is highly valued by residents/visitors. Most heritage sites are state listed and include historic buildings, trees and hedges. With the exception of the World Heritage Listed convict-built Brickendon and Woolmers Estates. Launceston Airport, the Region's major airport, is located in the Northern Midlands. The adjacent Translink industrial estate supports a range of industrial uses, with potential for further expansion.

Climate Statistics[12]

- Average daily maximum temperature – 16.7°C
- Average daily minimum temperature – 6.1°C
- Average annual hot days (>30°C) – 4.6 days
- Average annual rainfall – 616.3mm

Key Northern Midlands Statistics[32]

14,344
Total population

3.1%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents

6,444
Dwellings

46 years
Median age

24.1%
Population aged 65+

$35,516
Median Individual Income

89.34%
Dwelling Occupancy

20%
Rented Dwellings
(% of total occupied private dwellings)

5,991
Workforce

Caption required
Ethos Urban

Top 5 industries by employment[33]

1. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (1,134 jobs)
2. Manufacturing (782 jobs)
3. Construction (630 jobs)
4. Health Care and Social Assistance (536 jobs)
5. Transport, Postal and Warehousing (526 jobs)

Top 5 industries by output[34]

1. Manufacturing ($499.0 million)
2. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing ($450.9 million)
3. Construction ($342.0 million)
4. Transport, Postal and Warehousing ($234.1 million)
5. Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services ($183.7 million)

Historic Evandale
stock.adobe.com

Josef Chromy Tasmania
Jewels Lynch

Caption required
Ethos Urban

CAPTIONS REQUIRED

Example of a new build home in Evandale
Ethos Urban

Caption required
Ethos Urban

Ben Lomond
Simon Sturzaker

What we heard so far from Northern Midlands Council

People, communities and growth

Heritage management struggles with conflicting regulations between preserving old structures and adapting to new ones.

Opportunities to engage with Aboriginal people and embed knowledge and practices in planning are constrained by lack of structures, policies and practices to incorporate Aboriginal heritage and achieving consensus among Indigenous groups.

Perth's rapid population growth presents opportunities for infrastructure development and attracting young families. Seasonal workers can contribute to the workforce in agriculture, aged care, and other sectors.

Smaller towns are experiencing rapidly aging populations, while larger towns closer to Launceston are accommodating younger families, resulting in inequities between Northern Midlands communities.

Subdivisions and new developments provide opportunities for community growth, with positive community engagement in improvements like accessible playgrounds. Upgrading regional centres and addressing residential growth in areas like Perth and Longford.

Natural Environment, natural hazards, environmental risks

Opportunities to strengthen flood management and preparedness, as well as addressing climate change through community initiatives and policies.

Major flood risks, especially in Longford and Ross, with shifting regulations creating frustration. Bushfire risks and challenges in flood management complicate preparedness and response efforts.

Economic activity and infrastructure

The region's agricultural base, including hemp production and other sustainable businesses, offers economic growth. Home-based businesses and local employment opportunities, such as in Campbell Town's health sector, contribute to local development.

Aging population leading to business closures, and concerns over the region becoming a dormitory community with a lack of commercial zoning. Limited retail opportunities and insufficient commercial land in new developments.

There are needs to upgrade infrastructure to match demand from population growth in some parts of Northern Midlands, including expanding power supply and improving stormwater management and upgrading ageing infrastructure that was not designed to accommodate the growth that has occurred.

An imbalance between the availability of land for residential development relative to increasing the supply of land for commercial, industrial and services and infrastructure uses risks inequitable access to amenities and infrastructure.

Local Planning Strategies

- Northern Midlands Council Strategic Plan 2021-2027 (2021)
- Northern Midlands Council Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024
- Northern Midlands Council Communications and Engagement Strategy 2024
- Northern Midlands Council Economic Development Strategy 2024
- Northern Midlands Council Priority Projects 2024

West Tamar

West Tamar encompasses the western bank of the River Tamar from the suburban area of Riverside, extending north to Bass Strait and west to Frankford. It comprises the townships of Beaconsfield, Beauty Point, Exeter and Legana, which offer a mix of suburban and rural residential living.

The suburban areas of West Tamar, including Trevallyn, Riverside and increasingly Legana form part of the Greater Launceston metropolitan area.

Tamar Valley, bounded by the River Tamar to the east and mountain ranges to the west, is a key natural asset of the area. It comprises several highly valued natural attractions including the Narawntapu National Park, Notley Fern Gorge, Tamar Wetlands, and the River Tamar. The Tamar Valley supports specialist sparkling wine producers, fruit orchards, and other high value agriculture.

West Tamar also features state-listed heritage sites including the York Town settlement and the Beaconsfield Mine and Heritage Centre.

Climate Statistics[13]

- Average daily maximum temperature – 17.7°C
- Average daily minimum temperature – 8.2°C
- Average annual hot days (>30°C) – 1.7 days
- Average annual rainfall – 784.9mm

Key West Tamar Statistics[35]

26,358
Total population

2.8%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents

11,308
Dwellings

45 years
Median age

23.2%
Population aged 65+

$36,414
Median Individual Income

89.95%
Dwelling Occupancy

18%
Rented Dwellings
(% of total occupied private dwellings)

4,589
Workforce

CAPTION REQUIRED

Caption required

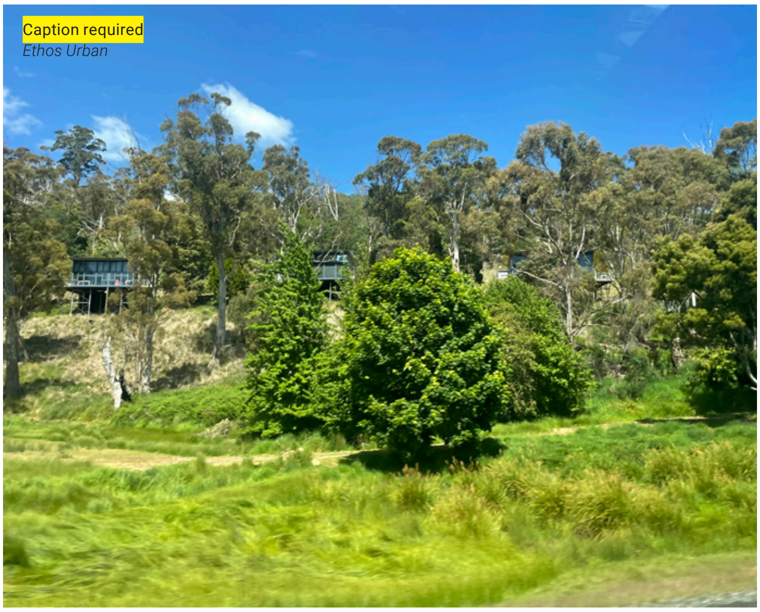
Top 5 industries by employment[36]

1. Health Care and Social Assistance (731 jobs)
2. Education and Training (668 jobs)
3. Construction (508 jobs)
4. Retail Trade (462 jobs)
5. Accommodation and Food Services (405 jobs)

Top 5 industries by output[37]

1. Construction ($257.1 million)
2. Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services ($209.1 million)
3. Manufacturing ($156.8 million)
4. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing ($131.2 million)
5. Health Care and Social Assistance ($111.7 million)

Greens Beach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Recent landslips in Beauty Point
Ethos Urban


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What we heard so far from West Tamar Council

People, communities and growth

There is potential for improved engagement with the Aboriginal community and greater recognition of Aboriginal cultural heritage sites to enhance cultural awareness.

There is limited recognition of Historic Cultural Heritage in West Tamar which limits opportunities to preserve heritage while accommodating population and economic growth.

There is resistance to higher-density developments, but also to the encroachment of residential areas on agricultural land.

Willingness to support diverse housing types offers an opportunity to facilitate sustainable growth while maintaining community values.

The movement of younger families to areas like Legana presents opportunities for expanding housing and services to meet growing demand.

New community services, including health clinics and schools, provide an opportunity to service a growing and ageing population.

The increasing demand for health services and lack of youth spaces highlight the challenge of providing adequate community infrastructure.

Natural Environment, natural hazards, environmental risks

Over-capacity wastewater infrastructure is a threat to water quality.

Landslips are becoming more frequent in some areas, particularly where there is heavy reliance on on-site reticulated sewer systems.

Economic activity and infrastructure

The ageing population, along with the traffic congestion caused by commuting, presents challenges in addressing local service needs and improving infrastructure.

Coordinated investment in sewerage and water infrastructure is needed to support future development and address capacity issues.

Limited developer contributions and lack of planning for higher-density developments create challenges in balancing community needs with development pressures.

Traffic congestion and limited transport options hinder mobility and regional development, requiring significant infrastructure improvements, particularly on key routes like the West Tamar Highway.

There is untapped potential in areas like Grindlewald and concerns over sustaining the tourism industry in the face of growing residential developments.

Expanding tourism around vineyards, wineries, and distilleries can drive local economic growth.

Local Planning Strategies

- West Tamar Growth Strategy 2025
- Draft Exeter and District Structure Plan 2023
- Legana Structure Plan 2025
- West Tamar Trail Strategy 2022
- West Tamar Community, Health and Wellbeing Plan – What's Best for the West 2024

PART 3 — THE STATE OF THE REGION

Part 3 includes three themes covering nine topics that are relevant to the preparation of a Regional Land Use Strategy for Northern Tasmania. The themes have been developed through research, analysis and the outcomes of engagement with stakeholders including the eight councils, State agencies and utilities companies.

Each theme documents understanding of the regional dynamics, priorities, and issues in Northern Tasmania. There is a summary of opportunities and challenges for each theme, which brings together the often overlapping and inter-related findings from analysis of each topic.

THEME 1 People, Communities & Growth	• Cultural Heritage & Values • Population Growth & Change • Housing, Placemaking & Growth • Social Infrastructure
THEME 2 Climate, Landscape, Environmental Values, Natural Hazards & Environmental Risks	• Natural Environment, Landscape Character & Climate • Natural Hazards & Environmental Risks
THEME 3 Economic Activity & Infrastructure	• Economic Activity & Productivity • Movement & Connectivity • Utilities

THE STATE OF THE REGION

THEME 1

People, Communities & Growth

3.1 Theme 1: People, Communities & Growth

3.1.1 Cultural Heritage & Values

Aboriginal cultural heritage

The palawa represent one of the oldest continuous cultures in the world. They are the traditional and original owners of lutruwita (Tasmania) and have cared for the land for more than 40,000 years.

Northern Tasmania is a rich Aboriginal cultural landscape. A number of natural landscapes across the Northern Region provide evidence of generations of sovereign ownership and land management. The various waterways and natural reserves which define the Region and eastern coastline between Break O'Day, Dorset and Flinders are vital to help us understand Aboriginal occupation, including resource gathering and traditional cultural land practices.

Northern Tasmania encompasses some rich, culturally significant land, waterways and stories, many of which are still being rediscovered. Places such as Wybalenna on the west coast of Flinders Island hold great historical importance to Aboriginal people. Hundreds of people died while exiled at Wybalenna in the 1830s, waiting to return to the mainland of Tasmania.

Other significant places include but are not limited to:

- truwana, also known as Cape Barren Island, south of Flinders Island
- lungtalanana, situated south of truwana
- wukalina, located within the Mt William National Park
- larapuna, also known as Eddystone Point, located adjacent to the Mt William National Park (larapuna is also the Aboriginal name for the Bay of Fires)

Aboriginal heritage, places and landscapes serve as invaluable reminders of the ancient and enduring culture of the Aboriginal people in Northern Tasmania. Aboriginal cultural connections to land, water and sky are one of the reasons a significant proportion of the western Region is listed within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area.

Planning for Country

Planning for Country refers to how Northern Tasmania might start to integrate Aboriginal knowledge of Country into land use planning practice. Embracing a Country-First approach to planning aims to actively engage palawa by sharing their knowledge and cultural connections to the land, water, and sky, while also supporting Aboriginal people and organisations in achieving their land aspirations and strengthening self-determination.

The draft Tasmanian Planning Policies at the State level emphasise the significance of recognising and involving Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the planning system. The new NTRLUS is an opportunity to recognise the importance and valuable contributions of Aboriginal culture, knowledge and land management at a regional scale and in guiding planning and development at the local level.

Through ongoing engagement with palawa groups and individuals, the NTRLUS can support the interests and aspirations of the palawa community, and apply palawa knowledge to land use planning.

Historic Cultural Heritage

European exploration of the Northern Tasmania Region of Tasmania was a gradual process interwoven with colonial settlement. The first European settlers in the Northern Region arrived in the early 1800's. Launceston is one of Australia's oldest cities, settled in March 1806. The Region boasts a rich cultural and architectural heritage, with a multitude of well-preserved historic places and heritage items, including Colonial and Victorian buildings clustered throughout, particularly in George Town, Launceston and the towns, villages and rural areas in the southern parts of the Region.

Natural and cultural heritage are inter-twined in the Region. The west of Northern Tasmania is framed by the Cradle Mountain / Lake St Clair National Park and Central Plateau Conservation Area, which are part of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The rugged landscape is of high ecological, historic and cultural value and provides a natural backdrop and boundary for parts of the Region.

The Region's heritage places and historic landscapes help to tell important cultural stories, record growth and change across the different local government areas and demonstrate how communities have grown and changed since colonisation. These structures are preserved and protected under a framework of heritage legislation at different levels, including World, National, Commonwealth, State, and Local regulations.

The most common type of heritage acknowledgement in the Region is through the State register. The limited local recognition leaves characterful, but perhaps less significant buildings without protection. There are 1,815 individual listings in the Region on the Tasmanian Heritage Register, with most items concentrated in Launceston, Break O'Day, Northern Midlands and Meander Valley. The heritage places include parklands, colonial villages, national trust mansions, working historic farms, Victorian and Georgian houses, mining and maritime landmarks, churches and other institutional buildings.

Climate change increasingly poses risks to some heritage areas, sites and historic structures. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and changes in water tables can accelerate deterioration and structural damage. Building materials such as timber and masonry require effective protection and reinforcement to adapt to destabilising climate conditions.

Land use planning in the Region should aim to achieve a balance between facilitating growth and the re-use and revitalisation of heritage places and their surrounds, while preserving features of cultural significance that are important reminders of the area's history. Historical and architectural heritage is not fixed, and future land use strategies can create frameworks that enable historic sites to be enhanced and adapted to contribute to contemporary life while also being preserved. Appropriately recognising heritage values is an integral aspect of planning for the growth and development of established core areas, as well as the remote outer towns and villages in the Region.

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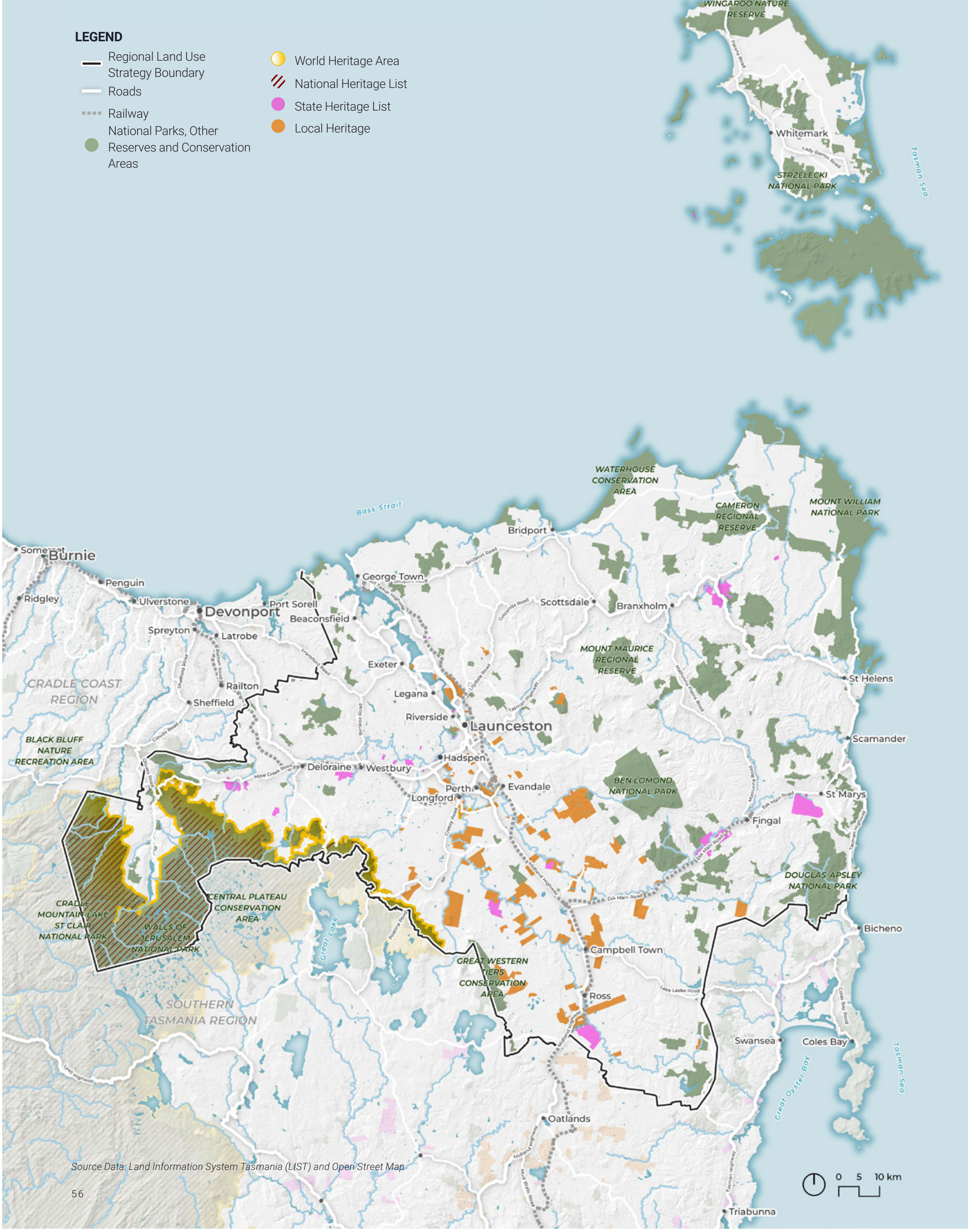
Figure 2. Cultural & Historic Heritage Values



Source Data: Land Information System Tasmania (LIST) and Open Street Map

3.1.2 Population Growth and Change

Region's population now

An estimated 157,373 people were living in Northern Tasmania in 2023. The Region has sustained annualised average population growth of 1.2% over the last 5 years, growing by more than +13,700 people between 2011 and 2023, with much of this growth occurring in the past 5 years (+9,364 persons).

In summary, Northern Tasmania has[38]:

157,373
People
Supporting 27.4% of Tasmania's population

43 years
Median age
Higher than the nations median of 38 years

3.9%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents
Compared to Australia overall 3.2%

2.39
Persons per dwelling
Higher average household sizes in Meander Valley and West Tamar

Households comprise of:

- 29.4% of households are people living alone.
- 29.8% of households are couples with no children.
- 23.6% of households are couples with children.

Forecasted Population Growth and Change

Population forecasts for Northern Tasmania estimate a total increase of 28,060 people in the 23 years from 2023 to 2046. This is a growth rate of just under 0.7% per year, slightly lower than the past 12 years (+0.8pa).

The forecasts also estimate the population will get significantly older, with around a third of all population growth (33.0%) forecast to be people aged 65 years and over by 2046. The Region's ageing population is driven largely by low and decreasing birth rates and migration of young adults to other Australian states[39].

An older population creates challenges for the Region:

- Shifting and specialised requirements for the types and locations of housing
- Increased demand for social services such as health care
- Lower economic productivity (per person) due to lower workforce participation rates and less productive industry sectors.

Northern Tasmania also contains many remote and small rural townships, and those parts of the Region that are further from services like health care in Launceston, typically have much older populations. Continued ageing of the population in these areas will make it harder for residents to access services they need for health and wellbeing, or increase costs due to the need to deliver more services locally.

Reasons for younger people leaving the Region include a lack of secure, high-value and well-paid jobs, a real and perceived lack of education opportunities, competition for housing and declining affordability and choice, access to services, and lifestyle choices. There is also movement of younger people within the Region from rural and more remote parts of Northern Tasmania to pursue education and employment opportunities in Launceston[40]. This trend also accentuates ageing in these outer parts of the Region, illustrated by the stark differences in average age between remote council areas like Flinders and Break O'Day compared to Launceston City.

The Region is also seeing younger families relocating from urban to peri-urban areas due to housing affordability and availability, and older residents migrating to coastal towns for lifestyle preferences. These trends create pressures on infrastructure needed to support and the affordability of existing housing stock.

Northern Tasmania's changing population and demographic shifts have implications for housing supply, the type of housing and where it is located, and how best to improve accessibility. In recent decades there has been a predominance of low-density housing which has led to underutilised land and a lack of housing choice. Urban renewal of existing residential areas, higher levels of infill development in accessible locations, and greater housing diversity are ways to facilitate more affordable and suitable housing, ageing in place and downsizing.

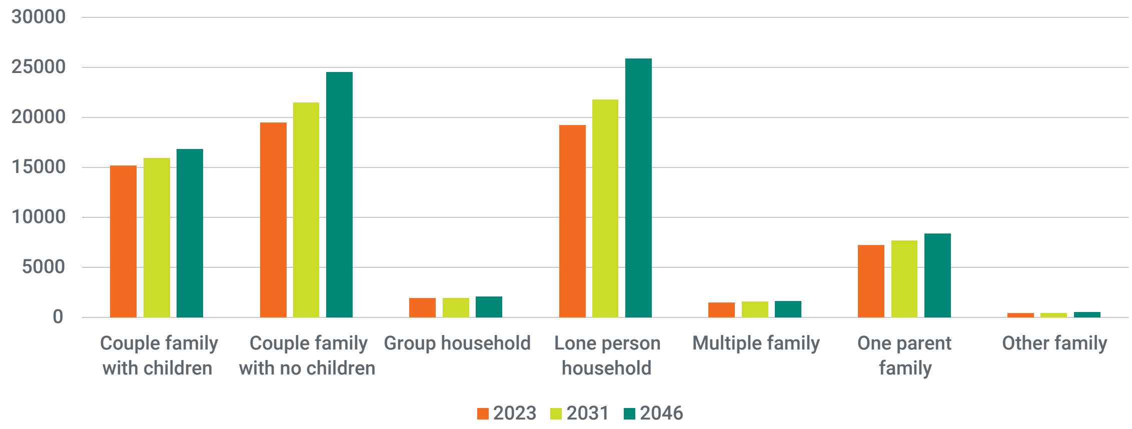


Figure 3. Northern Tasmania Forecast Household Composition
Source: Remplan Forecast (2021)

Key Statistics[41]

2.29 ↓
Persons per dwelling by 2041
Average household size of 2.39 in 2023, decreasing to 2.29 persons per dwelling by 2041

+16,725
More dwellings needed
between 2023 and 2046 with Launceston LGA anticipating demand for almost 40.0% of this growth requirement.

32.4% ↑
Of all households will be occupied by lone persons
By 2046, 25,858 in total will be occupied by lone persons. Which equates to an additional 6,648 lone-person households, requiring more smaller and diverse dwellings.

The Department of Treasury and Finance released new population projections for Tasmania in May 2024. Anticipated birth rates, life expectancy and migration to and from Tasmania inform a range of projection scenarios, with differences in the total population and the rate of population growth between them. The variance is due to different assumptions about how many people will move to or from Tasmania from overseas or interstate.

Population projections are a key input to the Regional Land Use Strategies. The different forecast scenarios illustrate the uncertainty around how much the population will grow, particularly over the longer-term planning timeframe for the NTRLUS. The influence of both interstate and overseas migration has been significant for the Northern Tasmania Region particularly over the last 10 years.

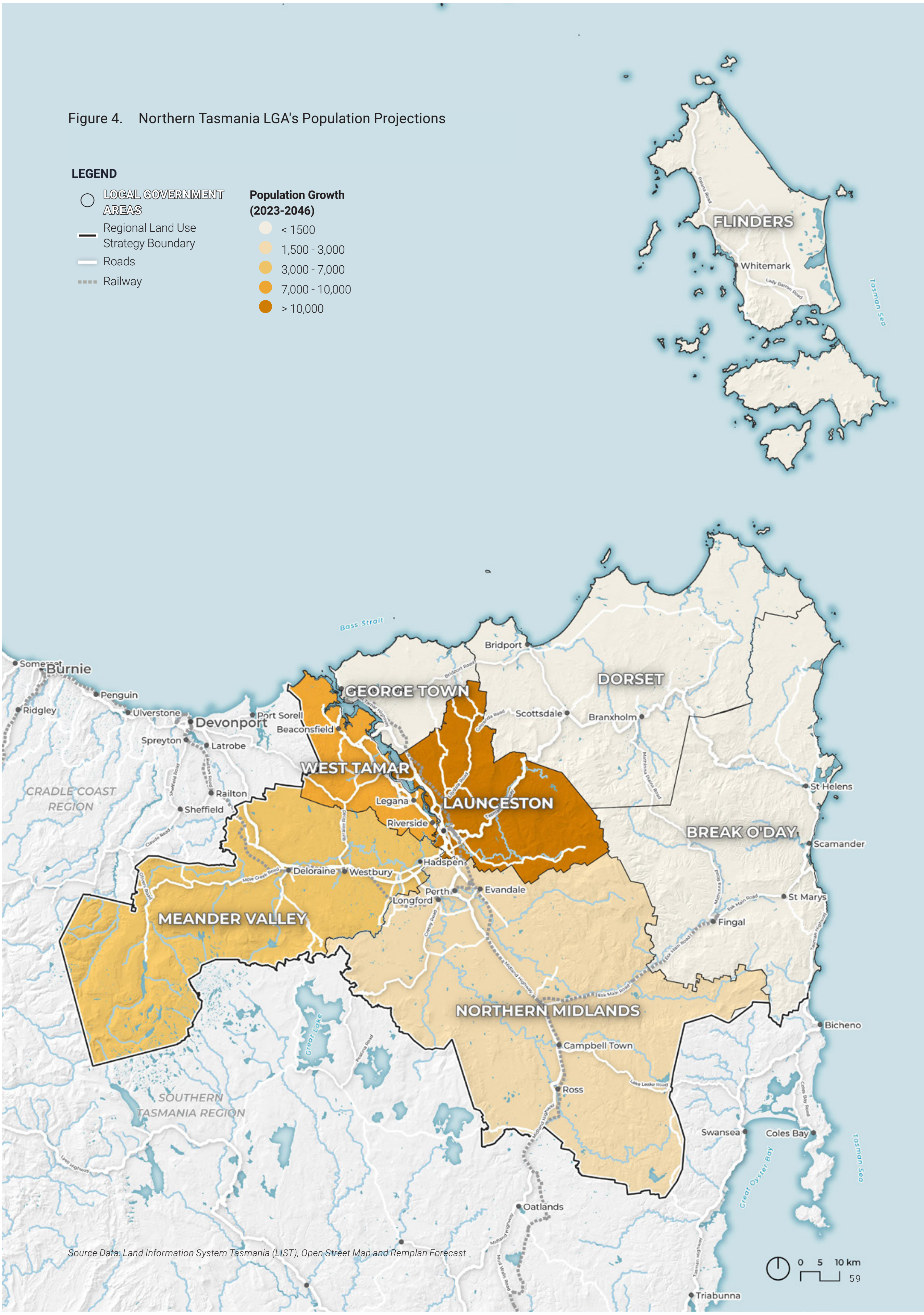
Changes to migration patterns will probably occur over the next 25 years. The high variability and unpredictability of population growth highlights the challenges of planning for growth in the Region, and the need for the NTRLUS to be adaptable to changing circumstances. The population projections are a starting point for considering how much growth needs to be accommodated, and where population growth and change will occur across the Region.

Forecast Population Growth and Distribution

The largest forecast growth in Northern Tasmania is expected to occur in the Greater Launceston metropolitan region, which includes parts of Launceston, West Tamar, Meander Valley and Northern Midlands. Historically, Launceston, West Tamar and Meander Valley have also been the fastest growing councils. This has driven the expansion of commuter suburbs in areas such as Legana and Perth, which provide affordability and land availability, whilst maintaining proximity and access to employment and regional services which are largely focused on Launceston.

Climate change will have a strong influence on forecast population growth and distribution patterns in the next 25 years, including potential growth driven by climate migration and refugees and the impact of natural hazards, including flooding and coastal hazards on at-risk communities.

Figure 4. Northern Tasmania LGA's Population Projections



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Forecast Population	2023	2026	2031	2036	2041	2046	Change	LGA Share of Region Growth
Break O'Day	7,084	7,287	7,621	7,926	8,205	8,461	1,377	4.9%
Dorset	7,068	7,229	7,491	7,728	7,957	8,179	1,111	4.0%
Flinders (Tas.)	939	946	974	988	1,011	1,023	84	0.3%
George Town	7,391	7,649	8,058	8,378	8,639	8,872	1,481	5.3%
Launceston	72,672	74,449	77,011	79,268	81,559	83,838	11,166	39.8%
Meander Valley	21,517	21,977	22,688	23,335	23,985	24,599	3,082	11.0%
Northern Midlands	14,344	14,855	15,503	16,022	16,444	16,769	2,425	8.6%
West Tamar	26,358	27,518	29,233	30,834	32,275	33,692	7,334	26.1%
Northern Tasmania	157,373	161,910	168,579	174,479	180,075	185,433	28,060	100.0%

Table 2. Northern Tasmania Forecast Population Growth across LGA's
Source: Remplan forecast 2021

The population is anticipated to change in size and composition. This means housing needs will also change over the next 30 years. Implementation of housing policies and strategies through the new NTRLUS has the potential to change how population growth is distributed across the Region compared to the current forecasts shown on Figure 5.

Social Wellbeing

Wellbeing, income, and access to opportunities vary across Northern Tasmania. Figure 5 shows the SEIFA index for the Northern Tasmania Region based on the 2021 census. Rates of disadvantage generally increases with distance from Launceston, with particular areas of disadvantage in remote areas in the eastern and western extents of the Region. Disadvantage in these areas is often a result of lower incomes, access to fewer services and facilities, lower educational attainment, lower skills base or isolation to the mainland of Tasmania.

Launceston LGA has pockets of disadvantage interspersed with relatively advantaged areas. The pockets of disadvantage within urban areas are closely linked to high unemployment rates and lower education and health outcomes. Launceston is also facing rising levels of homelessness in certain areas which have been left poorly serviced and significant disparities between different suburbs. Conversely, suburbs to the south of Launceston and areas within and surrounding the townships of Riverside, Legana and Exeter, exhibit the greatest advantage within the Region.

Northern Tasmania has low rates of education attainment. Whilst an increasing share of residents are completing post graduate studies, many residents in Northern Tasmania leave the island to seek education opportunities and more skilled and higher paying jobs elsewhere. Whilst, Launceston is seeing an increasing proportion of international students attending university and staying on post-completion of study, the community's perception of the Region's education system and job offerings has a direct influence on population retention, growth and wellbeing.

The relationship between education standards, employment and quality of life is intricate and carries implications for industry growth. Populations with low levels of educational attainment contribute to social factors such as low income, unemployment, health issues, and a lack of necessary qualifications for high-value industries and jobs that drive real wage growth and economic activity. Consequently, the shortage of suitably qualified employees poses a challenge for growing businesses and limits opportunities for emerging industries which further constrains the capacity to attract and retain workers in the Region.

Some of the indicators of wellbeing in Northern Tasmania include[42]:

Income

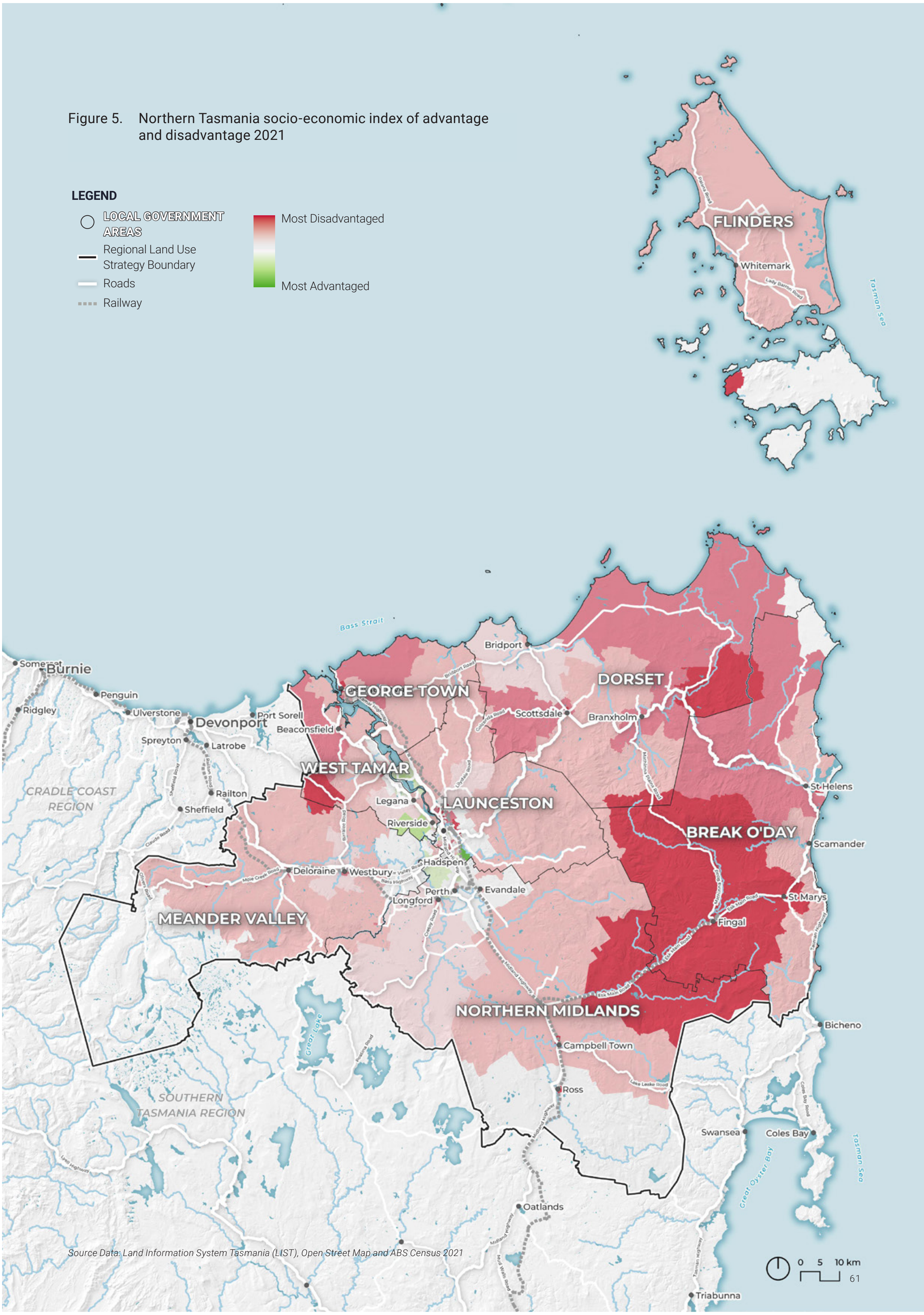
$34,529
per annum
The median individual income for Northern Tasmania compared with $42,940 per annum for Australia.

Higher incomes ↑
West Tamar and Launceston

Lower incomes ↓
Break O'Day and George Town

Indicators continue overleaf

Figure 5. Northern Tasmania socio-economic index of advantage and disadvantage 2021



Source Data: Land Information System Tasmania (LIST), Open Street Map and ABS Census 2021

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Unemployment

3.80%
Unemployment rate
In Northern Tasmania compared with 3.11% across Australia

Over 6.5%
High unemployment
In Break O'Day & George Town

Education

41.4%
Completed Year 12
Northern Tasmanian residents, compared to 57% in Australia

47.9%
Post-school qualifications
Northern Tasmanians residents aged 15 years, compared to 52% in Australia. This includes vocational training and higher education.

3.1.3 Housing, Placemaking & Growth

The delivery of new dwellings is intrinsically linked to 'placemaking', sustainable growth, and the creation of liveable commercial, civic, and cultural hubs. Neighbourhoods without access to necessary services, jobs and entertainment, are less economically viable and socially sustainable. This viability is often what translates to activation and 'placemaking' or a sense of vibrancy in our towns and villages and therefore impacts where growth is likely to continue to occur.

When housing is located to facilitate access to jobs, entertainment, recreation and social services, the quality of life of that community is directly improved, businesses are more viable and government services and infrastructure are more cost effective. The costs to households are also often lower as people spend less time travelling, transport costs are lower, and the costs of delivering new development and housing is reduced by being closer to infrastructure and services delivery. Decisions about how many houses, what types of houses and where new housing is located are an important part of managing growth in metropolitan areas like greater Launceston, but are also key when considering settlement patterns and housing typologies in smaller coastal and rural towns.

Housing

Housing is a basic requirement and access to housing is a fundamental right for all people[43]. There needs to be enough housing to meet demand, and housing should be suitable, affordable and delivered in appropriate locations. Both the Tasmanian Housing Strategy and the draft Tasmanian Planning Policies emphasise the need to deliver homes that are close to social and physical infrastructure, local services and employment opportunities.

The Tasmanian Housing Strategy 2023 – 2043 prioritises:

- Delivering more quality homes, faster
- Supporting people in need
- Improving the affordability and stability of private/market housing
- Enabling local prosperity

In Northern Tasmania, these priorities mean that there should be an adequate supply of homes to meet demand, homes should be constructed in the right locations, and diversity of housing types should be delivered to accommodate evolving needs, and to ensure housing supports the growth of sustainable communities with access to employment, education, and services.

Housing location

Whilst there has been a shift in focus towards opportunities for infill and consolidation in core areas, the majority of new housing across the Region has historically been delivered in greenfield areas. There has been growing interest and expansion of peri-urban fringe, particularly in key townships of West Tamar, Meander Valley and Northern Midlands Councils. Alongside this pattern but to a lesser extent, Councils with coastal settlements are also emerging as attractive lifestyle locations that are still seen as commutable, especially in comparison by those who may have moved to Tasmania from the mainland. The creation of new residential areas on the interface of hazardous bushfire-prone areas is an issue requiring careful consideration.

Whilst it is important to acknowledge that Launceston has land available at Waverly, Ravenswood and St Leonards that could provide affordable housing options, generally infrastructure and services are more limited in these areas, and costs to bring services and infrastructure into these areas are relatively high. This reflects the lower economies of scale and the need to avoid duplicating investment across multiple locations. These areas might offer affordable housing options for homeowners however, distance from employment, education and key services often leads to significant transport costs, lower quality of life outcomes and other, less quantifiable costs.

Supply and demand for residential land is inconsistent across the Northern Region. Some areas are considered highly constrained with current supply too low to meet forecast housing demand, whilst there is sufficient residential zoned land in certain areas.[44]

As shown by Table 2, since the 2016/17 financial year:

- Over a third of new dwelling approvals in the Region were in the Launceston LGA.
- The Councils of West Tamar, Meander Valley and Northern Midlands, which all immediately surround Launceston, have displayed high growth accounting for a total of 48.3% of the Region's dwelling approvals.
- The remaining mainland Council areas of Break O'Day, George Town and Dorset combined account for 17.2%, of dwelling approvals.

Younger couples and families are often drawn to newer suburbs in the greater Launceston area due to there being ample supply and therefore more affordable housing options. However, some younger families are increasingly drawn to rural or coastal settlements due to lifestyle and environmental factors, as well as lower land prices and availability. The Region's older population are also attracted to the more lifestyle-focused and community-orientated coastal areas.

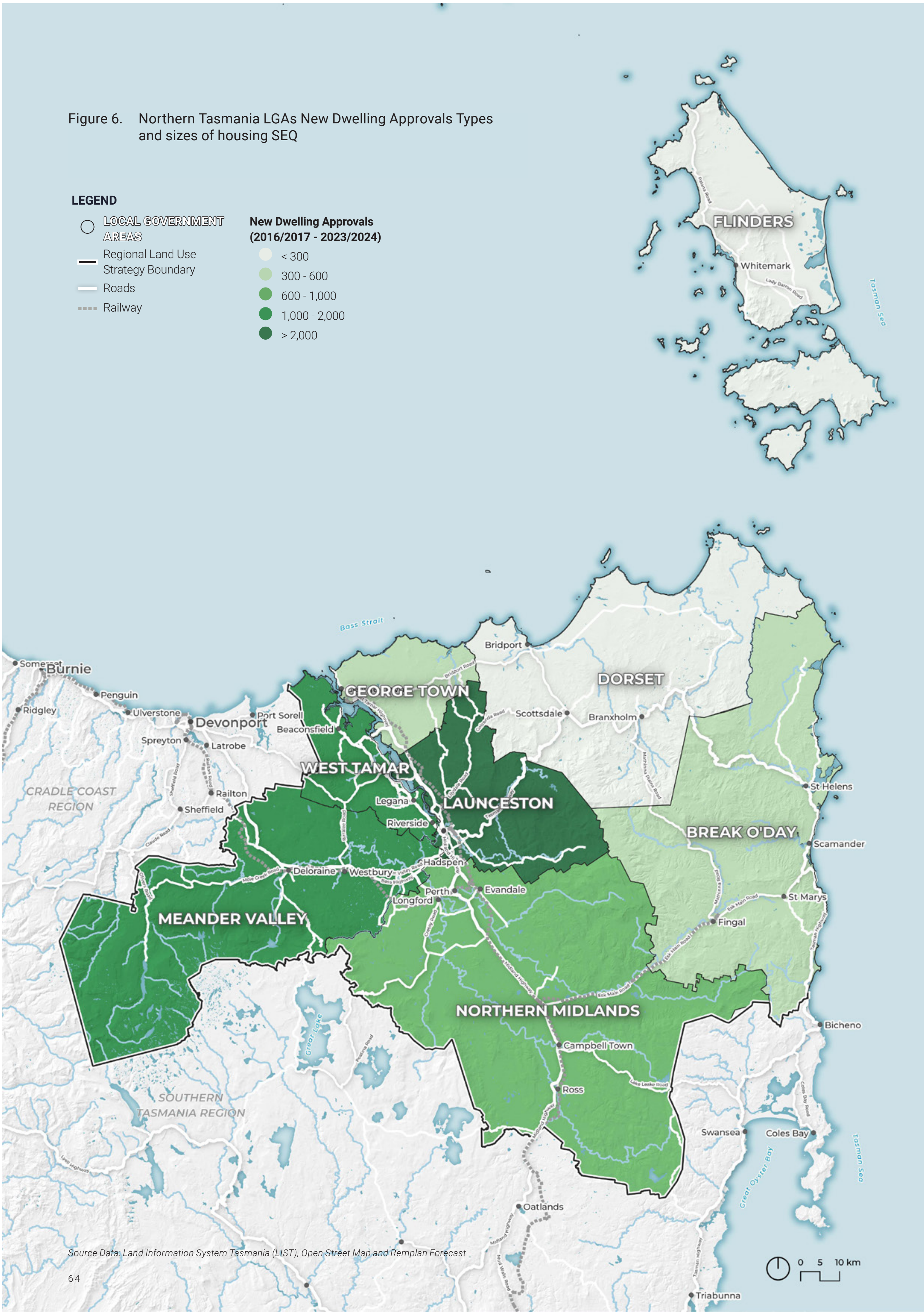
The more established areas of Launceston have historically been attractive for migrants, however there are patterns of this group relocating from inner-city areas to new subdivisions in outer suburbs in search of more affordable housing.

The different needs of these communities for social infrastructure and employment opportunities creates challenges for managing growth and ensuring access to services and facilities. Many cities and regions face the challenge of aligning infrastructure and service provision with population growth and change. This becomes particularly acute in cases where growth patterns result in the dispersion of the population over a wide area. Continued patterns of suburbanisation and sprawl in Northern Tasmania have resulted in a heightened need to extend and upgrade existing roads, water, sewer, electricity, and other essential services, and reinforced the reality of car dependence to access jobs, schools and services. A greater focus on infill, consolidation and renewal will assist in reducing car dependence and better targeting investment in infrastructure and services.

Region	House	Other	Total New Dwellings	LGA Share of New Dwelling Approvals in Northern Tasmania (%)	LGA Share of Population (2023)
Launceston	1,834	192	2,026	33.4%	46.2%
West Tamar	1,129	18	1,147	18.9%	16.7%
Meander Valley	973	112	1,085	17.9%	13.7%
Northern Midlands	669	27	696	11.5%	9.1%
Break O'Day	400	0	400	6.6%	4.5%
George Town	336	15	351	5.8%	4.7%
Dorset	293	0	293	4.8%	4.5%
Flinders	58	16	74	1.2%	0.6%
Northern Tasmania	**5,692**	**380**	**6,072**	**100.0%**	**100%**

Table 3. New Dwelling Approvals in Northern Tasmania from FY2016/17 to FY 2023/24
Source: ABS (2021)

Figure 6. Northern Tasmania LGAs New Dwelling Approvals Types and sizes of housing SEQ



Source Data: Land Information System Tasmania (LIST), Open Street Map and Remplan Forecast

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Approximately 86% of the existing housing stock in Northern Tasmania is separate houses and 12.3% are townhouses[45]. The mix of housing types has remained largely unchanged in recent years. Approximately 94% of new dwelling approvals in Northern Tasmania between FY2016/17 and 2023/24 were single dwelling houses. There is a limited variety of dwelling types and sizes to meet current and evolving housing needs.

Houses are generally larger than required for the number of occupants, with an average of 2.39 persons per household across the Region and 45.7% of dwellings in Northern Tasmania being occupied by 1 or 2 people[46], despite the substantial majority of housing stock being larger, separate houses.

Average Household Size	Average persons per dwelling (2023)
Northern Tasmania	**2.39**
Break O'Day	2.07
Dorset	2.32
Flinders (Tas.)	1.93
George Town	2.32
Launceston	2.39
Meander Valley	2.41
Northern Midlands	2.39
West Tamar	2.50

Table 4. Average Household Size
Source: Remplan Forecast

This has resulted in housing stock that is increasingly underutilised with 'spare' capacity in many dwellings for more occupants. New housing construction is also predominately occurring in the form of low density and large lot subdivisions, in fringe urban areas and some rural living areas, which do not align with the type and size of housing that current and future residents will need. There is very little activity in urban or infill renewal development in central Launceston or other established towns across the Region. This is in part due to planning controls that restrict or make the approval of these developments more difficult, but is also a product of competition from greenfield growth which is not accurately accounted for.

The pattern of an ageing population, along with continued decreases in household size generally, will create the need for smaller and more varied housing, located near employment opportunities, services, and facilities.

Housing affordability

Housing affordability is an issue for Northern Tasmania, driven by population growth, a lag in delivery of new housing and limited housing diversity. Like many other regions in Tasmania, Northern Tasmania is grappling with the effects of a recent surge in population and residential demand that has significantly increased housing prices and affordability.

Migration has contributed to increased demand, price rises through increased financial capacity of new residents, and greater competition for housing. Tasmanians are increasingly having to compete for affordable housing to purchase and rent, and rates of home ownership are declining. The housing challenges in Northern Tasmania are becoming more severe due to the cost-of-living crisis, which is driven by inflationary pressures, slow wage growth and recent increases in interest rates. This has led to a decrease in the borrowing ability of first-time home buyers and an increase in the rates of rental and mortgage stress.

Housing stress is defined as more than 30% of household income spent on mortgage or rental payments. Within Northern Tasmania, this has a substantial impact on renters, with approximately one third experiencing housing stress, compared to approximately 10% of mortgage holders. More than a quarter of households are renters and the proportion of renters is increasing, meaning rental affordability is a significant and growing challenge. Rising inflation and interest rates also place additional strain on household finances. For residents, decisions about where to live are often driven first by housing affordability and availability, and this can lead to trade-offs against the need to travel for work, education or to access social services and entertainment. While the up-front costs of housing in more remote locations may be comparatively lower (or perceived as better value for money) the hidden costs of things like transport to access education, work and services are less of a consideration but may contribute over time to higher costs of living or lower quality of life.

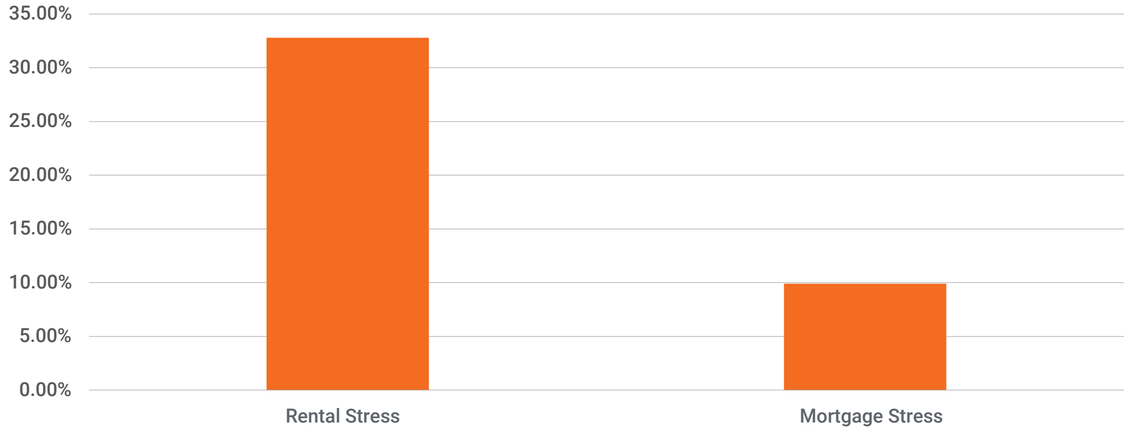


Figure 7. Northern Tasmania – Rates of Housing Stress
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2021

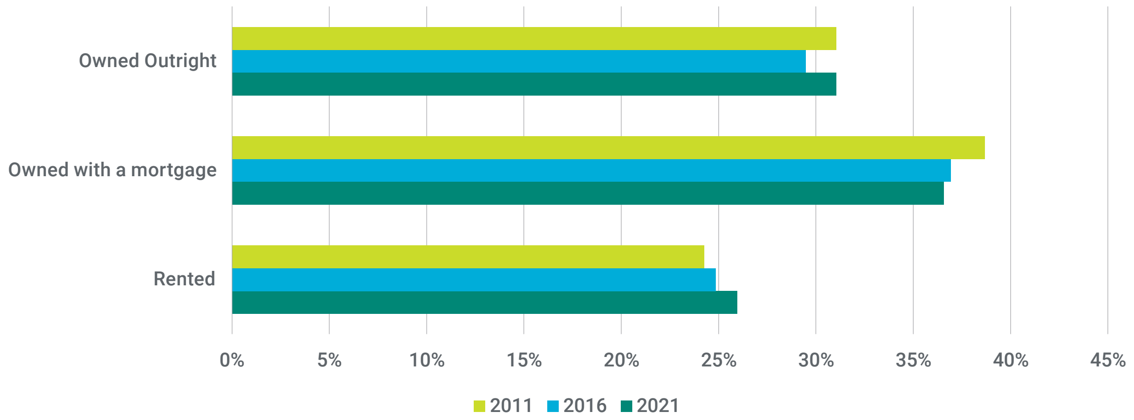


Figure 8. Northern Tasmania – Changes in Dwelling Tenure
Source: Remplan Community, Based on ABS Census 2021
Note: Excludes 'other' tenure types

Placemaking for Northern Tasmania

'Placemaking' describes the process by which spatial, economic, social and cultural levers can be pulled to create vibrancy of place; be it a city, town, village or particular area within an urban context. Placemaking is related to decisions about how growth will be managed across Northern Tasmania.

Different approaches to how the metropolitan area of greater Launceston grows, and how other townships across the Region respond to this growth, will impact on the potential to create enhance and sustain places that are vibrant, attractive and prosperous.

Northern Tasmania has an array of vibrant hubs and towns, spanning the major regional centre of Launceston which hosts year-round events and civic activity, through to small townships which, despite their smaller size, have unique identities that draw local and national and international visitors. These attractive features include economic or employment opportunities, the natural environment, history and heritage, or cultural, recreational and entertainment attractions. For many of these towns, opportunities to retain, uplift and in instances, diversify these unique identities and characteristics will be central to the ongoing success of these towns and villages.

For residents, decisions about where to live are often driven first by housing affordability and availability, and this can lead to trade-offs against the need to travel for work, education or to access social services and entertainment.

Growth in Greater Launceston

The current 2011 NTRLUS outlines challenges presented with the existing settlement pattern of the Region, being dispersed and characterised by relatively low residential densities, at approximately 10 dwellings per hectare. To address these challenges the 2011 NTRLUS seeks to establish a regionally sustainable urban settlement pattern, outlining growth capacity for 20 years through a spatial framework comprising three key Regional Land Use Categories:

- Urban Growth Areas
- Rural Areas
- Natural Environment Areas

Within Urban Growth Areas, land is classified according to whether it's established and developed urban settlement or areas intended for urban development:

- **Priority Consolidation Area** – land in established urban areas focused on the Launceston Central Area, which supports a range of urban uses and development to provide improved access, services, amenity and liveability.
- **Supporting Consolidation Area** – comprising land in established suburbs which is separate from Priority Consolidation Areas and supports reliable and effective transportation, physically connects new urban settlements to existing communities and supports a wide range of services and facilities through access to existing or planned activity centres.
- **Growth Corridor** – comprising land contiguous with existing urban areas, including greenfield land, which will be developed to accommodate projected population growth where the land is determined to be suitable for urban development.
- **Future Investigation Area** – including Employment, Residential or Strategic Reserve Investigation Areas, identified in the Greater Launceston Plan to facilitate assessment of their potential for future urban development which will consolidate the Greater Launceston Area. These areas are considered by the existing NTRLUS to be inside an Urban Growth Area and can be rezoned for urban development, with an expectation that a local strategy for each spatial area will be produced prior to any applications for rezoning to urban uses.

The existing NTRLUS also sets a series of settlement pattern strategies which seek to promote the containment of settlements within identified Urban Growth Areas. There is a focus on consolidating and developing the Greater Launceston Area and sub-regional centres, through identification of infill opportunities within existing settlements and urban centres, and around activity centres and key public transport nodes and networks. The existing NTRLUS also sets intended density targets across the Northern Tasmanian Regional Activity Centre Hierarchy as follows:

Activity Centre Hierarchy	Locations	Infill Density target
Principal Activity Centre	Launceston CAD includes CBD and inner core frame areas	25+ dwellings per hectare
Major Activity Centre	Mowbray and Kings Meadows	
Suburban Activity Centre	Prospect, Legana, Prospect Vale, Newstead, Ravenswood and Riverside	Up to 25 dwellings per hectare
District Service Centre	George Town, Longford, Scottsdale, St Helens, Deloraine, Campbell Town and Exeter	
Neighbourhood or Town Centre	Lilydale, St Leonards, Perth, Newnham, Beaconsfield, Evandale, Norwood, St Marys, Youngtown, Bridport, Trevallyn, Westbury, Waverley, Windsor and West Launceston	N/A. Some residential adjoining in centre/ town residential development offering a greater mix of housing types and densities than outer laying residential areas.
Land or Minor Centre	N/A	N/A. May include residential land uses, however interspersed.
Specialist Centre	Launceston Airport / Translink, UTAS City Campus	N/A. May include specialised accommodation relating to centre's focus (i.e. student accommodation).

Table 5. Existing NTRLUS - Northern Tasmanian Regional Activity Centre Hierarchy

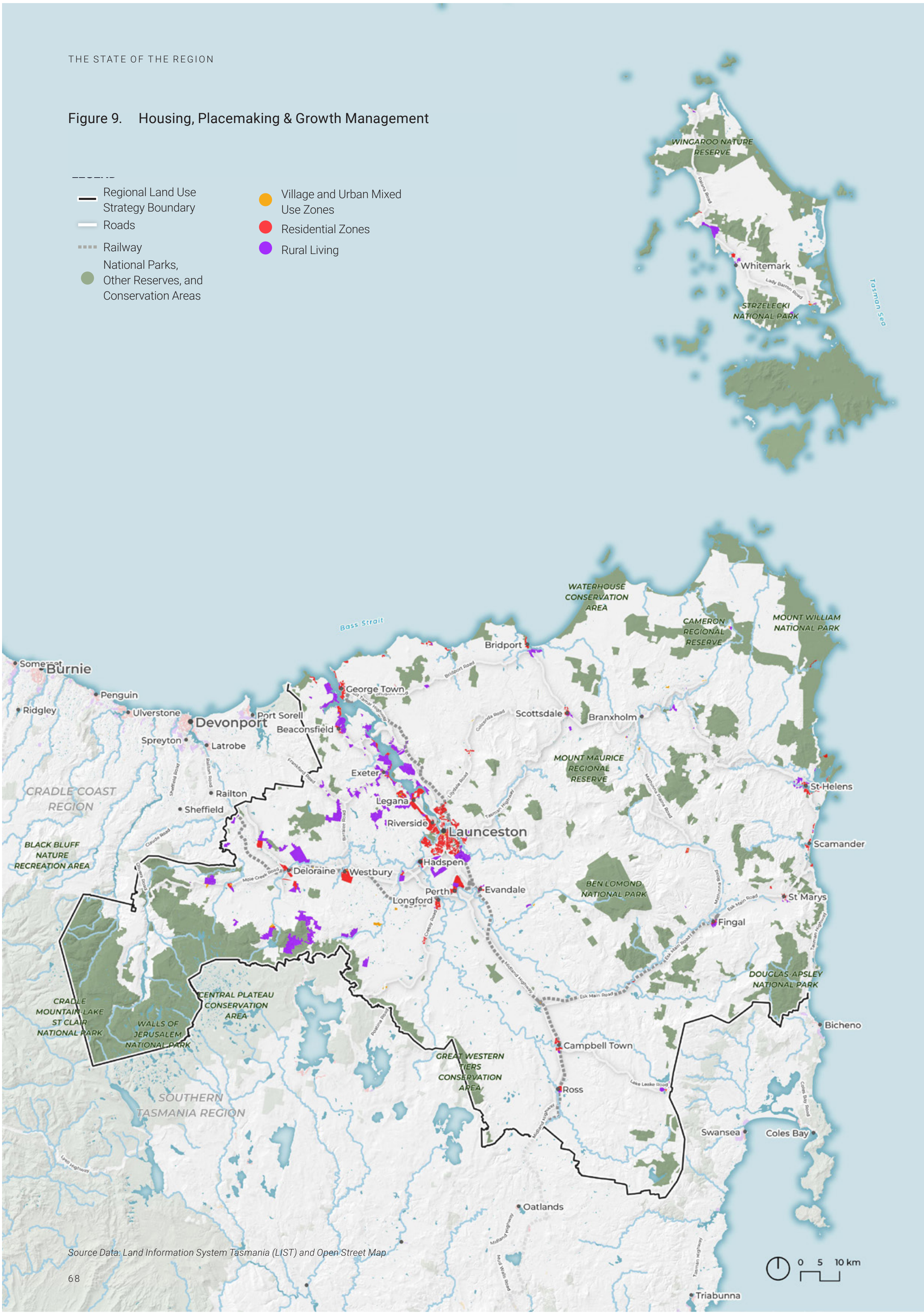


Figure 9. Housing, Placemaking & Growth Management

The 2014 Greater Launceston Plan has also adopted a minimum target density in excess of 15 dwellings per hectare for infill development in urban consolidation areas, and a minimum target density of 15 dwellings per hectare for greenfield developments within the growth corridors. In addition, the plan outlines a strategic objective of achieving an approximate balance in future housing development of approximately 44 percent infill development in Priority Consolidation Areas focused on the Launceston Central Area and serviced by principal public transport routes, and approximately 56 percent greenfield development, focussed on identified growth corridors. The Greater Launceston Plan also outlines that the majority of greenfield growth (in excess of 75 percent) will be met in three key growth corridors, being:

- **St Leonards - Waverley corridor, City of Launceston:** extending south-east along the northern edge of the North Esk river valley, including planned residential areas of Waverley and St Leonards
- **South-West corridor, Meander Valley Council:** extending north and west from Prospect Vale to include the localities of Blackstone Heights and Travellers Rest and the planned community of Hadspen
- **Riverside - Legana corridor, West Tamar Council:** extending north from Riverside to include the Legana district and the adjoining Grindelwald and Rosevears areas.

Growth in Towns and Villages

The towns and villages of Northern Tasmania are deeply rooted in history, many with strong ties to early agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and other resource-based industries. Larger towns function as sub-regional hubs, offering administrative, retail, and commercial services, especially in areas where access to major urban centres is limited. Smaller villages serve local populations, with mixed-use centres providing essential daily services. Each town and village have unique characteristics that shape their identity and sense of place, making them important to protect and enhance. Additionally, towns like Scottsdale and St Helens act as vital service hubs, supporting surrounding remote communities with essential facilities and infrastructure.

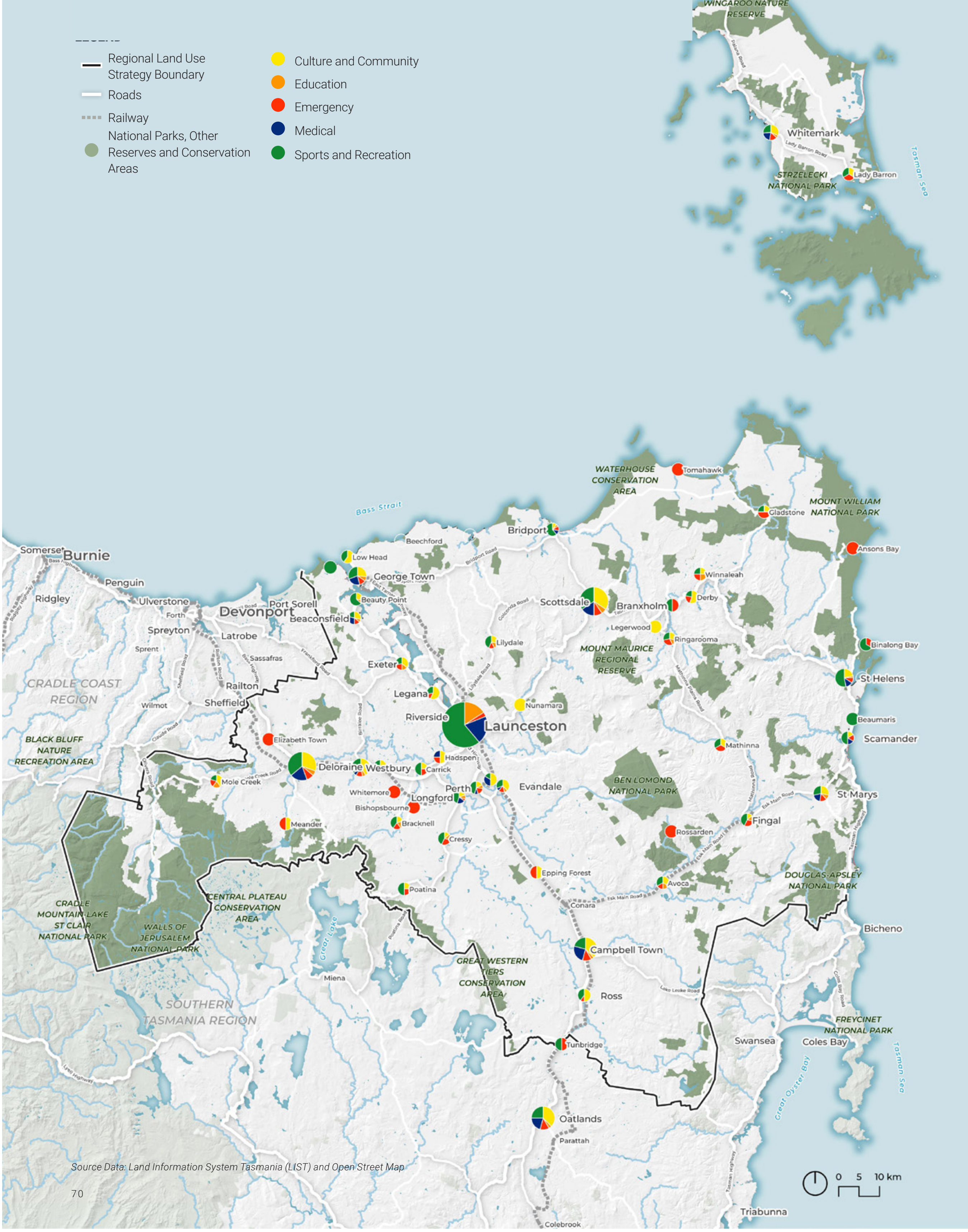
Population growth in Northern Tasmania's towns and villages is influenced by a variety of factors, including the Region's natural amenities and lifestyle offerings. Coastal areas are attracting retirees and young families from other states and major urban centres in Tasmania, leading to increased long-term resident populations. Simultaneously, tourist visitation, especially through short-stay holiday rentals, has intensified in these locations. However, these patterns bring challenges, such as ensuring adequate services for ageing populations in remote areas, particularly in aged care and healthcare. Effective planning is essential to address these demographic shifts while maintaining community vitality.

Economic diversification is crucial to the sustainability and growth of towns and villages in Northern Tasmania. Many traditional industries are transitioning to tourism or incorporating advancements such as irrigation-based agriculture and renewable energy. Tourism is particularly significant, with destinations like the Blue Derby Mountain Bike Trails and scenic coastal towns like Bridport and St. Helens, which attract both domestic and international visitors. However, the shift toward tourism-driven economies has placed pressure on housing availability, as permanent dwellings are increasingly converted to short-term accommodations, affecting the affordability for local residents.

The growing and changing populations of towns and villages require responsive infrastructure and services. Rural and coastal growth areas face challenges related to ageing populations, requiring upgrades to health and community facilities to maintain a good quality of life. Many rural living areas also lack adequate urban infrastructure, such as water supply and sewer systems, relying instead on self-contained services like on-site wastewater systems. Without careful management this can harm environmental values such as water quality. Seasonal population fluctuations from tourism impose further stress on existing infrastructure, underscoring the need for investment in both social and physical infrastructure.

Sustainable development is essential for the long-term viability of Northern Tasmania's towns and villages. Growth should be directed toward existing settlement areas to maximise the use of established utilities and infrastructure, while avoiding linear development along coastlines to preserve environmental and community values. Supporting neighbourhood and rural town centres is essential for strengthening local communities and encouraging population stability. Careful planning is also needed to manage economic growth, environmental conservation, and the diverse needs of residents and visitors alike, ensuring a sustainable future for the Region.

Figure 10. Northern Tasmania Region Social Infrastructure Overview



Source Data: Land Information System Tasmania (LIST) and Open Street Map

3.1.4 Social Infrastructure

Social infrastructure includes places and spaces that allow people to come together, support community life and celebrate and experience culture. This includes access to schools, TAFE and universities, hospitals, community health centres and medical centres, outdoor and indoor sport and recreation facilities like aquatic centres, sports courts and sports fields, parks and playgrounds, community centres, libraries, community arts and creative centres, museums, galleries and performing arts centres.

In Northern Tasmania, social infrastructure is highly concentrated in Launceston with major facilities such as UTAS Inveresk campus, Queen Victoria Museum/Art Gallery, Launceston General Hospital, Australian Maritime College and TasTAFE. Existing provision of social infrastructure across the Region is also primarily isolated to the core townships including, Launceston, Scottsdale, Deloraine and Campbell Town, which play an important role in the provision of services to residents of these towns, in addition to surrounding townships, including within rural and remote locations.

Population growth will put pressure on existing social infrastructure. However, it is important to recognise that communities are diverse, and needs will be different across the Region depending on the social, economic and environmental context. The community fabric of different areas has also changed, with lower proportions of school aged children, the loss of young people and skilled workers, and an ageing population. This leads to challenges like under-utilisation of existing infrastructure and facilities, where to plan for and provide schools and the availability of community spaces and health services to support older people and ageing-in-place. Maximising the use of existing well-located social infrastructure may also require the re-use or shared-use of existing facilities, to cost-effectively meet the changing needs of the community. Governance and ownership of assets are challenges for coordinated planning and delivery, and for shared use of existing facilities.

The forecast growth of towns and coastal villages will necessitate upgrades to existing as well as the delivery of new social infrastructure and services. Opportunities may exist to make better use of existing social infrastructure in these growing areas, facilitating the co-location of suitable and compatible social infrastructure. Growth will be more cost efficient if new housing is placed in locations that have good access to under-utilised social infrastructure and services. Comparatively, continuing to deliver new housing in isolated, greenfield areas on the fringe with minimal infill development in established areas is likely to create demand for governments to deliver new social infrastructure (at potentially great cost) while existing facilities operate below capacity or cannot be sustained.

Figure 10 maps the distribution of different types of social infrastructure, with larger circles indicating more social services and the colours representing the range of available services in each location. This illustrates the Region's heavy reliance on Launceston to access high-order community facilities and services. This means outer suburban areas within greater Launceston have ageing social infrastructure which is already at capacity. With forecasted growth in these areas (for example Perth which is forecasted population growth from 3,000 to 6,000 people) there is pressure on areas to upgrade existing and deliver new social infrastructure. This presents a gap in both the current regional network of social infrastructure and on newer suburbs/broad-hectare developments. In addition to new suburban growth areas, there is also relatively poor provision of social infrastructure and community services in coastal settlements, like Greens Beach and Bridport, which have experienced growth in permanent residents in a historically *"shack-style"* town that has until recently had relatively few permanent residents.

Many localities within Northern Tasmania are facing challenges of an ageing population, therefore the provision of community services, particularly health services, is a key focus for many towns. Whilst responding to the challenges of an ageing population remains important, it should not come at the expense of social infrastructure that is responsive to the needs of youth, including public open space, playgrounds and other local cultural spaces. Collectively, these spaces are vital for all community members and assist with attracting retaining younger people.

3.1.5 Theme 1: Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

- Relatively affordable housing combined with lifestyle and amenities, largely related to the natural environment, are key attractors for young people and families to the Region.
- Deliver more affordable housing for local people in the Region by supporting models that provide sustainable and suitable homes for people in towns and villages that could benefit from the economic uplift of a stable or growing population.
- Promote and support healthy, active outdoor lifestyles that attract and retain younger people to the Region.
- More equitable access to employment, education, health, and community services across the Region in Launceston would assist to attract and retain people of working age support family retention and drives population growth.
- Regular monitoring of demographic trends to better inform adaptable and responsive growth strategies for the Region.
- Launceston's growing international student population is a potential avenue to grow the proportion of younger more qualified residents.
- Enabling and encouraging more diverse housing types, such as townhouses, apartments, and multi-dwelling options, so that housing better meets existing and projected needs of a changing population.
- Better coordination and masterplanning of greenfield developments to support varied housing options, more efficient use of land and better environmental and community outcomes.
- Leveraging population growth within the Region's existing urban areas and towns where the majority of social and physical infrastructure and services are located to enable more equitable, cost-effective and efficient growth.
- More compact and sustainable urban growth to diversify housing options, improve local access to jobs and services, and reduce car dependency.
- Encouraging compact, diverse housing within existing towns and villages can contribute to more vibrant centres and active main streets.
- The planning system enabling and incentivising more diverse and compact housing so that new housing is appropriate to the needs of an older population and smaller households.
- Co-locating community facilities and using existing cultural and community buildings can stimulate local creative industries, foster innovation, and enhance access to services, particularly in rural, coastal, and remote areas.
- Expanding and improving mental health and disability support services.

Challenges

- Affordability of housing is increasingly a challenge particularly for people on lower incomes.
- Broader issues, such as federal policies, high construction costs, and financing difficulties, constraining housing delivery and sustainable growth in the Region.
- Planning for fluctuations in the rate of population growth over the long term that are largely outside the control of governments but make planning for infrastructure and services challenging.
- Ageing populations, the departure of working-age professionals, and the loss of younger, skilled people to other regions or interstate are affecting community sustainability. Supporting ageing-in-place, and attracting and retaining a younger workforce, are important to sustainable population structures and access to services like health care and education.
- Rising housing demand in coastal areas, driven by lifestyle preferences and short-stay accommodation, increases pressures on housing affordability and availability.
- Opportunities for economic development and the delivery of human services (that rely on attracting qualified workers) are constrained by a tight housing market and lack of appropriate housing choices, particularly in locations with a strong tourist industry.
- Achieving the right balance between infill and greenfield residential development, and maximising the use of existing physical and social infrastructure.
- The historic dominance of low density housing combined with smaller households and an ageing population have led to underutilised housing stock.
- Statutory planning provisions (in the Tasmanian Planning Scheme) make the delivery of more compact and diverse housing difficult.
- More realistic assessments of the capacity of zoned land to accommodate housing, including consideration of environmental constraints to development of zoned land, use of 'vacant' land for holiday accommodation, and whether available land is suitable to accommodate the types of housing needed by the community in the right locations.
- Climate change and natural hazards pose risks to heritage sites.
- Inconsistencies in heritage protection across council areas, with stronger recognition in Launceston and Northern Midlands compared to other areas.
- Adaptive reuse of heritage places is limited by legislation and planning controls.
- Aboriginal cultural heritage is under-represented and can be difficult to incorporate into planning processes. Ongoing collaboration with the Aboriginal community is needed to understand key needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people, and enabling Aboriginal people to care for their own communities and Country.

Evandale Market
Nick Hanson Visuals

THEME 2

Climate, Landscape, Environmental Values, Natural Hazards & Environmental Risks

3.2 Theme 2: Climate, Landscape, Environmental Values, Natural Hazards & Environmental Risks

3.2.1 Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Climate

Landscape Character

The Northern Tasmania Region is defined by its expansive network of green and blue infrastructure, environmental assets and landscapes which is bounded by wilderness and the coast. The Region's landscape is characterised by undulating rural hinterland and green inland areas located in valleys and along river channels overlooked by mountainous eucalypt forests and escarpments.

The city of Launceston and many of the Region's urban areas are concentrated along the River Tamar, a tidal estuary stretching from Launceston to the Bass Strait.

The landscape along the northern and eastern coastline is varied and rugged, featuring stretches of rocky shorelines, exposed headlands, sheltered beach coves and sandy bays. Mountain ranges (particularly the Great Western Tiers), steep ridgelines and karst landforms (like Mole Creek) are prominent features across much of the Region, and provide a high level of scenic amenity and settings for outdoor recreation. Flinders also has dramatic and varied landscapes, from granite cliffs to rolling green farmland through the northern area of Flinders Island.

The Tasmanian Wilderness, a UNESCO-heritage listed area, frames a significant proportion of the south-western fringe of the Region (1,354km²). National parks, regional reserves and conservation areas are located across the Region. A significant expanse of this Region is densely forested and classified as threatened, endangered and priority vegetation.

These landscape features shape the lifestyle and movement of people across the Region, and serve as a major attraction for visitors and migrants. The Region's wilderness and wildlife are a significant driver for inter-state and international visitation. Nearly half of all tourists who visit Tasmania cite the natural environment as their primary reason for visiting the Region[47]. The Region's economy is also heavily supported by the natural environment, with many agricultural industries and aquaculture producers depending on natural assets and resources. Additionally, towns like Derby have harnessed the natural landscape to transform the former tin-mining town into an internationally recognised mountain-biking hub, creating economic success based on a combination of nature and recreation based tourism and adaptive re-use of redundant mining operations.

Natural Heritage

National Parks and other reserves

Figure 11 highlights the National Parks and other reserves of Northern Tasmania. The southern and western fringes of the Region are entirely National Parks and Conservation Areas including the Cradle Mountain – Lake St Clair National Park and Great Western Tiers Conservation Area, which form part of the UNESCO-heritage listed Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. Other National Parks are dispersed across the north-east and east of the Region. These national parks tend to follow the mountainous areas, such as the Ben Lomond National Park which is home to Tasmania's second highest peak and a striking glacial landscape. Other significant waterways and coastlines across the Region including the edges of coastal townships in Dorset, Break O'Day and Flinders encompass coastal conservation areas including the Waterhouse Conservation Area and Bay of Fires Conservation Area.

The extent and diversity of protected natural areas and landscapes contribute to the Northern Region's highly valued landscape character and the regional economy through ecological services and nature and recreation-based tourism. These provide employment opportunities often in more remote parts of the Region where job opportunities are limited and traditional industries may be transitioning or declining. The recreational and scenic landscape opportunities are highly valued by both residents and tourists.

Scenic and Landscape Protection Areas

In addition to formal conservation reserves, the Tasmanian Planning Scheme includes land use planning mechanisms to protect landscape and scenic values across the Region.

Different councils apply these controls to their area to reflect local conditions. **Figure 11** includes Scenic Protection Areas and Landscape Conservation Zones that apply under planning schemes.

Waterways and Wetlands

The Northern Region encompasses some of the State's most significant river and waterway catchments, focussed on the South Esk River and River Tamar catchments which are the major river and estuarine systems in the Northern Region.

Flowing north-east through towns and farmland, the South Esk River is the longest river in Tasmania. It rises near the Upper Esk in the north east, and joins the mouth of kanamaluka/River Tamar at Launceston before entering the Bass Strait at George Town, covering a distance of over 250km. The South Esk River catchment, includes the South Esk River, Tinamirakuna / Macquarie River, the Break O'Day River, the Nile River, and the St Pauls River, along with their tributaries.

The South Esk River Catchment is an important source of water for farming, drinking water and hydro-electricity generation (i.e. Trevallyn hydroelectric Power station adjacent to the River Tamar north of Launceston). The River Tamar estuary, at nearly 70km long, has an important influence on the Region, contributing significantly to port activity, linking Launceston with the port at Bell Bay near George Town, and shaping the character of many towns including Launceston, Riverside, Legana, Beauty Point, Exeter and George Town. The River Tamar also includes a series of unique wetland ecosystem comprising mudflats, lagoons and islands filled with plant and animal life.

The northern (Bass Strait) and eastern (Tasman Sea) coastlines also features broad intertidal flats, saltmarshes and other smaller watercourses including inlets and estuaries. The Ringarooma River system is a key waterway within Northern Tasmania, flowing from a watershed below Mount Maurice to the Tasman Sea of the South Pacific Ocean. Located at the far north-east coast of Tasmania, between Cape Portland and Waterhouse Point, the Floodplain Lower Ringarooma River is a Ramsar site containing a complex wetland, coastal and estuarine ecosystem providing habitat for nationally threatened species.

The Meander River catchment is a natural area of land that drains water into the Meander River. The catchment includes the Great Western Tiers and the towns of Meander and Deloraine.

The land between Tasmania's Great Western Tiers and the East Coast Range represents one of Australia's 15 national biodiversity hotspots. The area is home to threatened animals including the Eastern Bettong and the Eastern Barred Bandicoot.

The Northern Slopes, Northern Midlands, Ben Lomond and Furneaux bioregions sit within the Northern Tasmania Region. Within these bioregions, there are several wetlands and waterways protected under the Reserve Estate or listed under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Northern Tasmania's perennial rivers and vast quantity of water assets provides the Region a high level of water security for rural, urban, industrial and hydro-electricity uses.

Climate change

Tasmania's Northern Region experiences a temperate climate with moderate temperature ranges. Long-term average temperatures have increased by up to 0.15°C per decade since the 1950s. Rainfall distribution varies significantly across the Region, with coastal areas receiving more rainfall than inland areas. However, there has been a noticeable decline in average annual rainfall since the mid-1970s, particularly during autumn. The Region is expected to face more intense extreme weather events, posing risks to communities, infrastructure and the environment.

Very hot days could see temperature increases of up to 5°C, accompanied by longer heatwaves and an increased likelihood of bushfires. By the end of this century, average annual temperatures in the Region are expected to rise by around 3°C. The number of summer days exceeding 25°C will increase, and the hottest days of the year could be 3.5°C to 5.1°C warmer. Frost risk days are predicted to significantly decrease. Buildings, towns and cities will need to be designed to accommodate warmer temperatures, including more shade and better insulation.

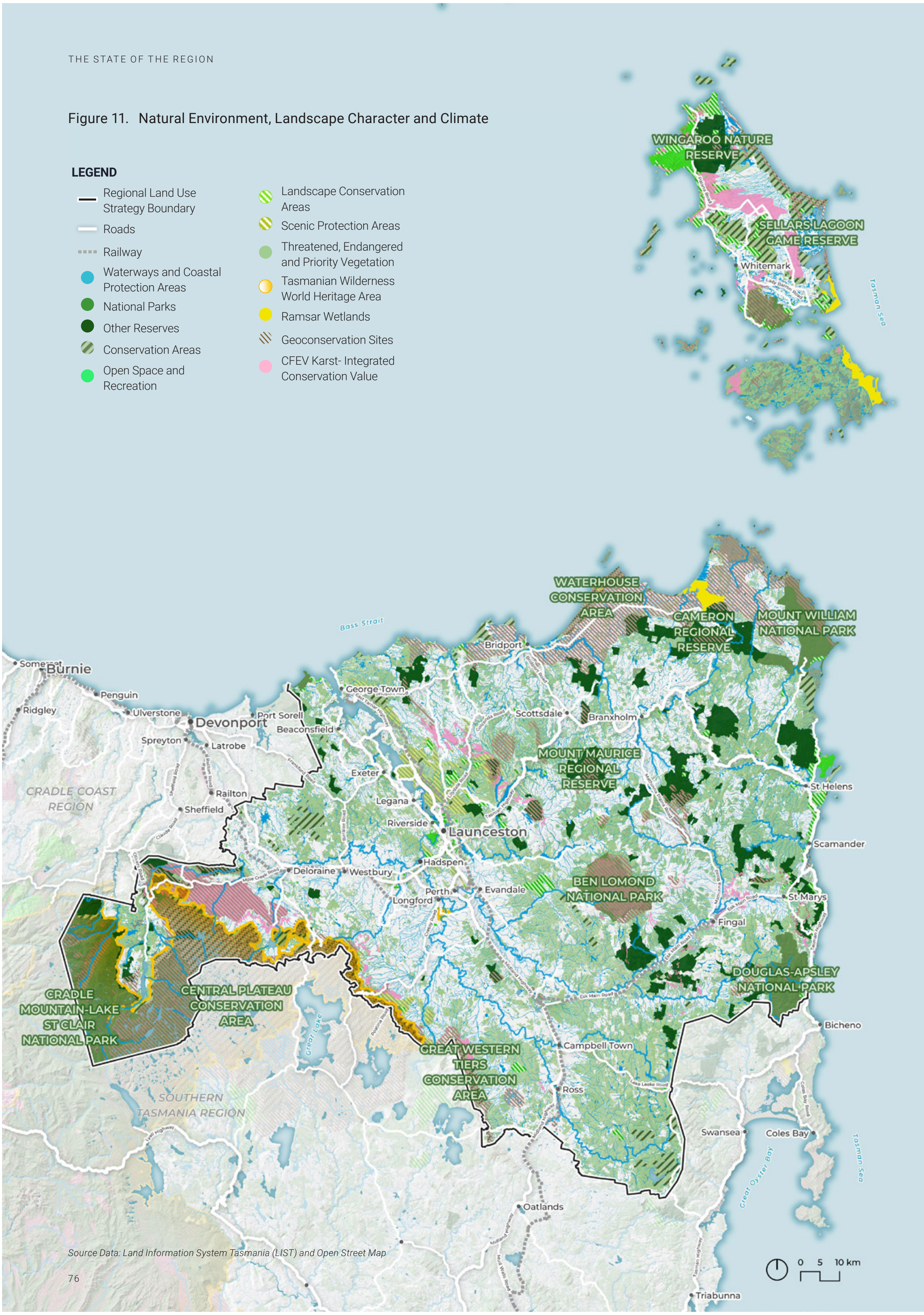
Rainfall patterns are predicted to change. Short, intense rainfall events are projected to become more frequent, increasing the risk of flooding. Dry periods are also predicted to get longer and annual rainfall may drop by 9% to 14%. Evaporation rates are expected to rise by 23% to 24%, further stressing water resources for agriculture, human consumption and for fighting fires.

Coastal areas will face greater inundation risks. Current 100-year storm tide events may occur every five years by 2090. Communities, buildings and infrastructure on the coast may be at risk from inundation and this may require changes to land use patterns over time.

Fire risks will escalate, with the Forest Fire Danger Index projected to rise by 41% to 52%. Much of the Region is already under threat from bushfires, and closer consideration of settlement patterns, design of new developments and building construction standards will be required to address increased frequency and severity of bushfires.

To help the Region adapt to future climate change, the University of Tasmania Climate Futures Tasmania has produced Individual Climate Profiles for each council area in the Region. During this process, councils identified climate indices to support their decision-making processes for issues such as development planning, engineering and assets design and procurement (i.e. stormwater, roads and civil), emergency management, corporate services, environmental and public health services and facilities, community development and emergency management.

Figure 11. Natural Environment, Landscape Character and Climate



Source Data: Land Information System Tasmania (LIST) and Open Street Map

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3.2.2 Natural Hazards & Environmental Risks

Natural hazards and environmental risks have implications for land use planning in Northern Tasmania, particularly given the Region’s dispersed pattern of towns and urban areas, isolated residential areas, interfaces between natural and urban areas, and extensive coastline. The Region's strong agriculture and aquaculture sectors, nature based tourism, port activity and history of mining and forestry benefit from the Region's natural environment, but can also present threats to natural systems and environmental quality.

Land use planning is an important tool to assist in reducing the impacts of natural hazards and environmental risks by identifying:

- Where natural hazards are located and utilising mapping to see the highest risk areas.
- The areas where there is least risk from natural hazards to human life and therefore what types of development are best suited where (i.e. residential, industrial, commercial).
- Areas which may already be developed and have existing infrastructure and services to make the best use of already-developed land.
- How people and goods currently get around the Region and whether efficiencies can be achieved to reduce the distance and number of trips.
- Ecosystems that should be protected from land use impacts.
- Where the most ecologically and economically valuable water sources, ecosystems and flow regimes are that benefit natural systems and maintain agriculture and aquaculture productivity.
- Sensitive wetlands, riparian and coastal foreshore areas to be protected.

Natural Hazards

Northern Tasmania has historically been and will continue to be affected by natural hazards. Recent events of extreme flooding, bushfire, drought, biosecurity concerns and marine heatwaves have already resulted in environmental, economic and social impacts according to the Tasmanian Government[48]. Climate change and its associated impacts including sea level rise and increase in extreme climate and weather activity, will affect the majority of Northern Tasmania, especially coastal areas. Land use related impacts are particularly relevant to planning for climate change induced changes to the frequency and severity of natural hazards.

Risks of inundation and riverine flooding in low-lying areas, landslide and accelerated coastal erosion are key concerns in Northern Tasmania, particularly as infrequent periods of heavy rainfall can occur.[49] In recent years, destructive flooding has impacted the Northern Region (2022), especially Launceston, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands and Break O’Day. Overtime, coastal areas along the north and east coast have been affected by accelerated coastal erosion following king tides and storm surges. Within Northern Tasmania, there is also an observed risk of historic flood protection infrastructure such as levees not providing sufficient protection for current and projected future flood events. Furthermore, a number of townships which rely on a single or small number of key road connections for access also presents a risk of isolation during flood events.

All of the Northern Region is classified as bushfire prone area and bushfires are becoming increasingly common. Significant bushfire events in recent history include the north-west bushfires (2016) and the 2018/19 bushfire season which impacted the broader state. Future bushfire seasons are likely to be longer, and fires more intense and destructive.

A significant proportion of the Northern Region is subject to landslip hazard and are identified as landslide affected areas due to the Region’s steep topography across the hinterlands.

Based on the projected changes to Tasmania's climate by 2100, Northern Tasmania is likely to experience similar environmental changes that may translate into increased risk of natural disasters including:

- Increased coastal inundation and erosion of vulnerable coastal shorelines from more storm tide events and sea-level rises.
- Accelerated risk of river flooding and the impacts for surrounding inland residential and agricultural areas.
- Increased bushfire frequency and intensity.
- Periods of prolonged low rainfall reducing the storage levels for hydro-electricity generation, and increasing water demand from population growth and irrigation.
- Increased runoff in agricultural areas due to changes in rainfall and evapotranspiration.
- Increased risk of landslides as a result of extreme rainfall periods.
- Increased extreme weather events including more frequent, intense storm and flood events, increased coastal erosion, longer fire seasons, drought, and river flooding.
- 'Urban heat island' effects will continue to make developed urban areas warmer unless managed, increasing reliance on artificial cooling.

To keep people safe and protect the environment, land use planning the Region will need to continue to adapt to projected climate changes and the associated natural hazards. Evidence-based risk data such as up-to-date Tasmanian Strategic Flood Mapping, predicted sea level rise and coastal erosion mapping, bushfire and landslide prone areas will be a vital part of the land use planning toolkit to inform decisions and reduce risks. While much of this data now exists, there are some gaps in the level of detail (for example, more gradation in levels of hazard for bushfire prone areas) that if addressed would assist to make better informed land use planning decisions.

Environmental Risks

A range of economic activities are underpinned by the Region's unique natural environment and resources, particularly, agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and mining. The Northern Region's fertile soils support a range of agricultural activities including dairy and beef production, cropping, and significant horticulture. Rural land and agricultural land uses predominate across the Region, with the most fertile land situated in valleys.

The following challenges arising from human impacts and interventions are likely to increase pressure on the natural systems of Northern Tasmania:

- Increased environmental pressure from the growing population, particularly the encroachment of larger lot subdivisions and development on agricultural land and conservation areas.
- Pressures from agriculture on the natural environment including changes to water tables and water quality, degradation of native vegetation and decline in biodiversity and soil structure.
- Legacy impacts of contamination from heavy industry including land and water pollution and ongoing air quality impacts.
- Land, water and air pollution from mining, light industrial production and port activity.
- Impacts on native forests, ecological diversity and connectivity from forestry operations.
- Impacts of growing viticulture and horticulture industries due to favourable climatic conditions, impacting settlement patterns, natural and water resource planning.
- Impacts linked to the introduction and spread of invasive species.
- Impacts from aquaculture on marine ecosystems and water quality.
- Changing sea-water temperatures creating conditions for invasive marine species and changing the growth and distribution of marine vegetation, with associated impacts on recreational and commercial fishing, and aquaculture.
- Loss of wildlife and their natural habitats through urban sprawl and greenfield development as the population continues to grow.

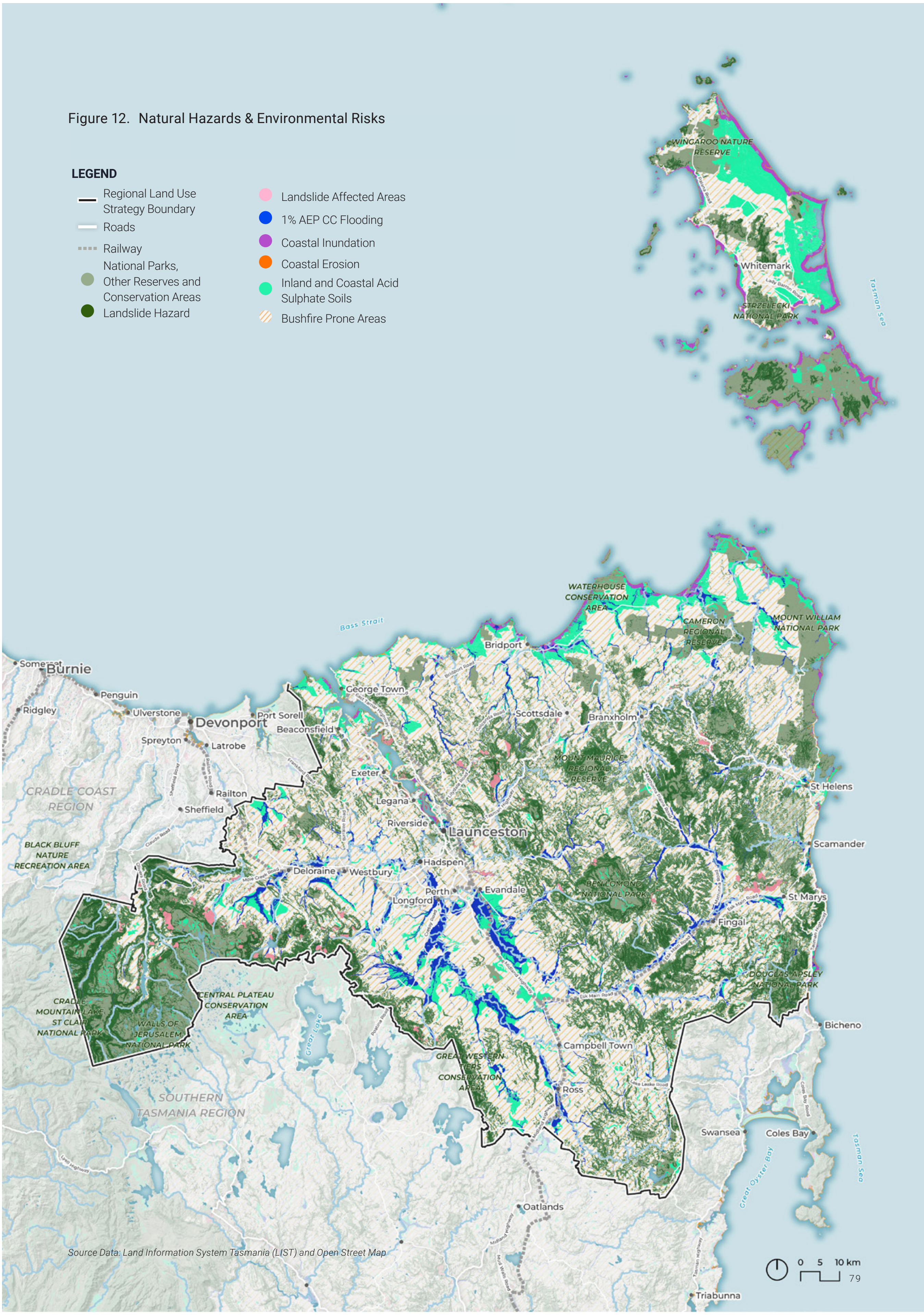


Figure 12. Natural Hazards & Environmental Risks
LEGEND
Regional Land Use Strategy Boundary
Roads
Railway
National Parks, Other Reserves and Conservation Areas
Landslide Hazard
Landslide Affected Areas
1% AEP CC Flooding
Coastal Inundation
Coastal Erosion
Inland and Coastal Acid Sulphate Soils
Bushfire Prone Areas
WINGAROO NATURE RESERVE
Whitemark
STRZELECKI NATIONAL PARK
Tasman Sea
Bass Strait
WATERHOUSE CONSERVATION AREA
CAMERON REGIONAL RESERVE
MOUNT WILLIAM NATIONAL PARK
Bridport
George Town
Scottsdale
Branxholm
Burnie
Penguin
Ridgley
Ulverstone
Devonport
Port Sorell
Beaconsfield
Spreyton
Latrobe
Exeter
MOUNT MAURICE REGIONAL RESERVE
St Helens
CRADLE COAST REGION
Railton
Sheffield
Legana
Riverside
Launceston
Scamander
BLACK BLUFF NATURE RECREATION AREA
Hadspen
Deloraine
Westbury
Perth
Evandale
Longford
BEN LOMOND NATIONAL PARK
St Marys
Fingal
DOUGLAS APSLEY NATIONAL PARK
CENTRAL PLATEAU CONSERVATION AREA
CRADLE MOUNTAIN-LAKE ST CLAIR NATIONAL PARK
WALLS OF JERUSALEM NATIONAL PARK
Bicheno
Campbell Town
GREAT WESTERN TIERS CONSERVATION AREA
SOUTHERN TASMANIA REGION
Ross
Swansea
Coles Bay
Oatlands
Source Data: Land Information System Tasmania (LIST) and Open Street Map
0 5 10 km
79
Triabunna

3.2.3 Theme 2: Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

- Celebrate, protect and promote the Region's natural landscapes and wildlife as significant drivers for inter-state and international visitation.
- Guide and enable innovation and adaptation to support the retention and growth of nature-based tourism and recreation land uses.
- Collaborate with Tasmania's research institutions (i.e. UTAS) to implement climate-first decision-making approaches to embed resilience in regional land-use planning.
- Implement climate risk assessments and adaptation plans to manage changing natural hazards through land use planning.
- Prioritise and facilitate emissions and waste reduction and contribute to reducing land and water contamination through more sustainable and efficient planning for land use growth and change.
- Support innovations in agriculture and aquaculture that prioritise the protection and sustainable management of natural assets.
- Apply sustainable approaches to growth management across the Region to balance the need for more housing and changing housing needs of the community with the preservation of the Region's natural environment and it's value to the community and economy.
- Utilise insights provided by the State GIS mapping database of natural hazards and values to inform sustainable and resilient land use patterns.

Challenges

- Enabling growth of urban areas, towns and villages while protecting the Region's highly valued natural environment.
- Planning responses to increased risk of inundation and riverine flooding, landslide and accelerated coastal erosion in existing low-lying urban areas and towns, including areas already developed and land that is zoned but not yet developed, or has potential for more intensive land use under current planning controls.
- Communicating climate change and natural hazard related risks to the community and stakeholders, where increased risk is predicted and constraints on the use of land have changed.
- Long term maintenance and resilience of transport networks impacted by natural hazard events and ensure regional land use considers potential access and evacuation matters.
- Ensure regional land use planning considers the increased frequency and intensity of potential natural disasters and new challenges (i.e. climate change refugees) in a changing and more variable climate environment.
- Balancing conservation of the Region's natural assets and the viability and sustainability of industry, agriculture, aquaculture, and tourism.
- Planning to avoid identifying land for new development that is exposed to unacceptable bushfire risk, with predicted changes to bushfire frequency and intensity.
- Maintaining up-to-date spatial data on natural values and natural hazards, and providing clear direction on how to apply data and information to regional and local land use planning with limited resources and when risk assessments are changing due to climate change.
- Limited assessment of different risk levels for some natural hazards (for example, bushfire prone land) currently makes it difficult to determine areas suitable for different land uses.
- Improving the consistency of applying planning controls that protect the natural environment, and resourcing within local government to undertake necessary assessments to inform planning controls designed to protect the natural environment and manage natural hazards.

Flinders Island
Ethos Urban

THEME 3

Economic Activity & Infrastructure

3.3 Theme 3: Economic Activity and Infrastructure

3.3.1 Economic Activity and productivity

The Region's Economy

Northern Tasmania's economy contributed more than a quarter of Tasmania's Gross Regional Product (GRP) in 2024[50] and continues to contribute to the state's economic growth. It has a diverse economic base, with a blend of more established urban centres, semi-rural and rural areas, with variance in economic activities and employment across the Region.

The Region has a significant rural population base and has sustained traditional industries in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing which still make strong regional economic contributions. As Launceston continues to grow, the economy has diversified, with an increasing focus on population and consumer serving industries, especially health care and social assistance. Across the Region, the largest employment and industry sectors include:

Figure 13. Northern Tasmania largest employment and industry sectors[58]

Key industries and employment sectors vary across the Region, with higher concentrations of population-serving activities in Launceston and West Tamar, manufacturing and construction in George Town, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands and West Tamar, and the dominance of agriculture, fisheries and forestry industries in rural and coastal areas.

Northern Tasmania's economic performance is strongly influenced by its population patterns. Periods of economic growth typically align with periods of population growth and increasing consumer purchasing power. The Region's strong visitor economy is also growing and diversifying, with tourists increasingly attracted to the Region's unique environmental offerings, land and water-based recreational activities, gastronomy and viticulture.

In recent years, Tasmania's economy has performed well, underpinned by a major population and tourism 'boom' post COVID-19. The Northern Region's diverse economy assists to insulate it from cyclical downturns in specific sectors and provides a diversity of options for long term economic growth.

Education and qualification levels in Northern Tasmania are lower than the Tasmanian and wider Australian averages. Northern Tasmania faces a major economic challenge with an ageing population and the migration of young people to the mainland for work and education which reduces its skilled workforce. This makes it harder to sustain economic growth and attract high-value, innovative industries.

In summary, Northern Tasmania's main employment characteristics and opportunities are related to:

- Health care & social assistance, driven by the location of major facilities, like the Launceston General Hospital, within the Region, and the further investment and expansion of these facilities (e.g. implementation of Launceston General Hospital Precinct Masterplan).
- Growing employment opportunities in the health care and social assistance sectors in response to the Region's ageing population.

- Other key industries including education, public administration and retail are directly linked to serving the needs of the Region's community.
- Increasing growth in accommodation and food services, including food and viticulture based tourism within the Region, focussed on wineries, distilleries, lavender, dairy, beef and fishing, provides economic opportunities which also support synergies with traditional agriculture industries.
- Agriculture and food processing continue to be important within the regional economy. Further innovations in agricultural process and improved irrigation infrastructure, provide opportunities to add value, strength and diversity to agricultural produce and employment.
- Construction is also a major employer within Northern Tasmania, reflecting continued and sustained activity particularly in housing construction over recent years, despite supply pressures and constraints on materials.
- The Port of Bell Bay is a critical hub for Northern Tasmania's (and the whole state's) economy around supply chain and freight logistics. It facilitates opportunities for emerging industries (including renewable energy generation) alongside the consolidation of established operations within the forestry and mineral sectors.

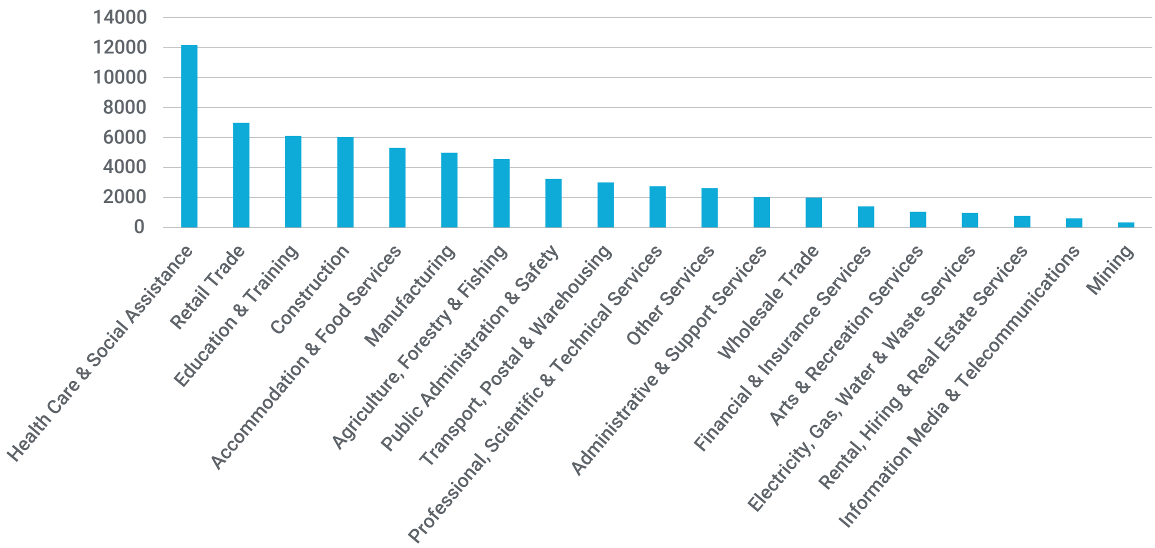
Key economic figures:[51]

10.4 Billion
Gross Regional Product

66,969 Workers
Workforce

Largest industry of Employment
Health care + Social assistance
18.2% of all jobs

Figure 14. Key industries of employment in Northern Tasmania
Source: Remplan Economy, based on ABS 2021 Census Place of Work Employment



Industrial Uses and Activity

Key industrial uses and associated activity is located across central and northern areas in the Region. Bell Bay and George Town support the state's largest heavy industrial precinct and light industrial activities. The Precinct comprises a diverse range of resource manufacturing including metal smelting, alloy production and forest processing facilities, and is responsible for 59% of all Tasmania's manufactured exports.[52]

The emerging Launceston Airport TRANSlink precinct also presents a growing key industrial location within the Region. It provides freight and logistics services, taking advantage of its location adjacent to Launceston Airport and key transport corridors. A Feasibility study and business case are to be prepared to support the delivery of a Launceston Airport TRANSlink Facility.

Other smaller or specialised industry clusters are scattered throughout the Region, some with links to specific industries like forestry and timber milling (e.g. Branxholm), aquaculture (e.g. Launceston, Break O'Day, Dorset and Flinders), and agricultural production (e.g. many areas across Meander Valley, Flinders, Dorset and the Northern Midlands).

Agriculture, Mining, Forestry and Aquaculture

Primary production has historically been important to Northern Tasmania's regional, facilitating employment opportunities across the rural and coastal areas with high quality agricultural land and aquaculture opportunities. Some of these historically important industries are declining or transitioning to different methods of production, particularly with forestry and aquaculture.

Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing is one of the dominant industry of employment in[53]:

1,134 Jobs
Northern Midlands

1,056 Jobs
Meander Valley

734 Jobs
Dorset

117 Jobs
Flinders

Irrigation is a strong driver of agricultural production and the growth of fruit and vegetable crops, however can have significant impacts such as the occurrence of dryland salinity, water quality and aquaculture. Potato and lavender farms across Dorset and the vast berry farms at Hillwood in George Town and Christmas Hills in Meander Valley are dependent on irrigation and large-scale production for efficiency. Expansive vineyards (for example across Rosevears, Rowella, Pipers River and across much of West Tamar) have continued to expand across the north-eastern and southern parts of the Region. Some rural economies are diversifying through the growing emergence of agricultural value-add activities which are increasingly attracting tourists. The growth in agritourism is seeing the integration of industry sectors that were previously separate.

Whilst not as substantial as agriculture, aquaculture makes an important contribution to the regional economy with marine farming leases operating across different parts of the Region, including some inland areas (i.e. salmon ponds and hatcheries in Bridport and Springfield) and coastal areas (i.e. oyster farms in St Helens).

Tourism

Tourism is a significant contributor to the Region's economy. Tourists are primarily attracted to visit the Northern Region due to its unique environmental offerings, land and water-based recreational activities, gastronomy and viticulture, arts and culture.

The Northern Region tourism sector was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, like elsewhere in Australia and globally. The Region has seen immense growth in outdoor tourism, for example mountain-biking, hiking and bush-walking, vineyards and wineries, lavender farm visitation, fishing and other forms of wilderness activities.

Many tourists will choose to stay in Launceston and make day trips to key sights around the region. Towns such as Derby, Bridport, Flinders Island and north-eastern coast areas which form the Bay of Fires all experience significant short-term growth in visitation in both on and off-season periods. However the increasing demand for short stay accommodation in these areas combined with requirements for seasonal worker accommodation, is placing stress on existing infrastructure and housing supply. Whilst benefiting the local economy and driving accommodation choice to meet the demand of tourists, these benefits will need to be balanced with the availability and affordability of housing for permanent residents, key workers and seasonal workers is critical to the viability of these towns and other industries, like health care and agriculture.

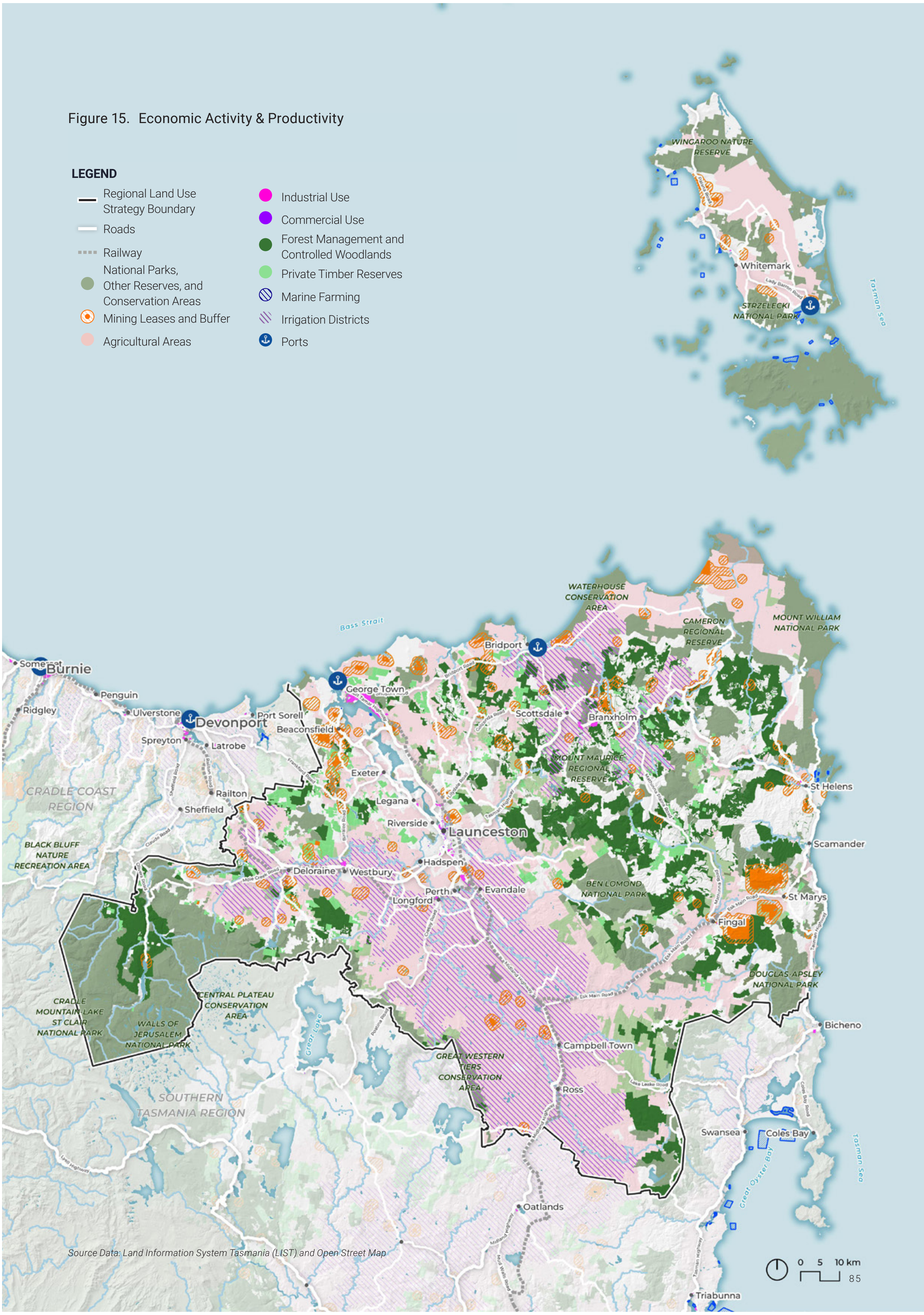


Figure 15. Economic Activity & Productivity
LEGEND
Regional Land Use Strategy Boundary
Roads
Railway
National Parks, Other Reserves, and Conservation Areas
Mining Leases and Buffer
Agricultural Areas
Industrial Use
Commercial Use
Forest Management and Controlled Woodlands
Private Timber Reserves
Marine Farming
Irrigation Districts
Ports
Bass Strait
Tasman Sea
WINGAROO NATURE RESERVE
Whitemark
STRZELECKI NATIONAL PARK
WATERHOUSE CONSERVATION AREA
CAMERON REGIONAL RESERVE
MOUNT WILLIAM NATIONAL PARK
Bridport
George Town
Scottsdale
Branxholm
Burnie
Penguin
Ridgley
Ulverstone
Devonport
Port Sorell
Beaconsfield
Spreyton
Latrobe
Exeter
Legana
Riverside
Launceston
Railton
Sheffield
CRADLE COAST REGION
MOUNT MAURICE REGIONAL RESERVE
St Helens
Scamander
BLACK BLUFF NATURE RECREATION AREA
Hadspen
Deloraine
Westbury
Perth
Evandale
Longford
BEN LOMOND NATIONAL PARK
St Marys
Fingal
DOUGLAS APSLEY NATIONAL PARK
CRADLE MOUNTAIN-LAKE ST CLAIR NATIONAL PARK
WALLS OF JERUSALEM NATIONAL PARK
CENTRAL PLATEAU CONSERVATION AREA
Bicheno
Campbell Town
GREAT WESTERN TIERS CONSERVATION AREA
Ross
SOUTHERN TASMANIA REGION
Swansea
Coles Bay
Oatlands
Triabunna
Source Data: Land Information System Tasmania (LIST) and Open Street Map
0 5 10 km
85

3.3.2 Movement and Connectivity

Northern Tasmania's regional transport system comprises the National highway network, State roads, main arterial roads, council-owned roads and related infrastructure that facilitate the movement of people to and from greater Launceston, as well as across the cradle coast and southern regions.

Freight rail runs along the western edge and down through the central spine of the Region, providing connections to Bell Bay, which processes 86% of imports to Tasmania, alongside Burnie and Devonport located outside of the Region. The freight rail network extends from the intermodal terminal at Brighton (south of the Region) to Bell Bay (Tasmania's major bulk port). There are also connections to central Launceston and Fingal in the east. Bridport, on the northern edge of the Region, provides a terminal for Bass Straight ferry services to Lady Barron Port on Flinders Island. Freight ships transport livestock from Flinders Island to Bridport and the Australian mainland.

Launceston Airport, the nation's 12th busiest airport, performs well above the comparative population of the Region. In 2018/2019, the airport accommodated more than 1.35 million passengers, with this projected to grow to 2.5 million by 2040[54].

Despite its remote location, air and sea connections are maintained to Flinders Island from mainland Tasmania and Australia, providing an important passenger and freight connection to this community. However, these connections are vulnerable to inclement weather, which can disrupt the continuity of access and services.

Bass, East Tamar, and Midland Highways are the highest order roads in Northern Tasmania. The access they facilitate between cities, towns, villages and other municipalities across the Region and the broader Tasmanian highway network, is critical for local movement, regional connectivity, freight and tourism. The Industry Road and Dalrymple Road route running north/south between Launceston and the North East is continuing to grow in importance as a freight route while Frankford Road provides important connections from the north west to Bell Bay.

Main towns and settlements across the Region are serviced by a bus based public transport network. The focus of the network is to transport passengers to and from Launceston as the principal activity centre and for urban Launceston, including Prospect, Riverside, Kings Meadows and Mowbray to the Launceston CBD. Intercity services connect Launceston to the north west coast and Hobart. Regional services also connect to the east coast via Fingal/Avoca, Burnie and Devonport, St Helens and St Marys.

However, most residents in the Northern Region are reliant on cars for most of their travel. Only 1.2% of trips to work across the Region were via public transport, while 73.6% were by private vehicle.[55] Limited public transport coverage, distance between work, home and services due to low density and dispersed settlement patterns, dominant car culture and undulating topography are key reasons for the high car dependency and limited uptake of public transport across the Region.

At the same time, only 0.4% of trips to work were by bicycle and 4% via walking[56]. Uptake of active transport in the Region has been limited, despite strategic initiatives and projects planned to be delivered and council specific strategic plans such as the *Greater Launceston Passenger Transport Framework and West Tamar Trail Strategy*.[57]

Growth in outer urban and greenfield areas places increased pressure on the road network, while being difficult to service with public or active transport. Encouraging higher density development, particularly near existing services, is important in supporting improved economies of scale in service provision and providing greater modal choice for households. Maintaining a more efficient, reliable and functional commuter zone within Greater Launceston, connections to surrounding towns and outer villages in balance with ensuring the effective movement of freight transport across the Region, are important considerations.

Planning for a sustainable cost-effective transport network for the Northern Region requires integration of land use, transport and utilities planning. Moving toward a higher proportion of travel by public transport, walking and cycling will require a coordinated approach to land use, infrastructure and service planning. Land use planning decisions, in particular, can make a significant contribution to increasing the proportion of travel undertaken by public transport, walking and cycling. For example, by locating housing near existing public transport corridors, and supporting infill and more compact urban forms. Conflicts and competition for road capacity between freight vehicles, residents and visitors utilising main roads is also a critical issue in the Region, heightened by the challenging terrain, variable road conditions and existing bottlenecks. The engineering efforts and costs associated with the steep terrain and upgrading alignments and road conditions are also extensive and a hurdle for future planning.

Figure 16. Movement & Connectivity

Source Data: Land Information System Tasmania (LIST), Open Street Map and Overview of Tasmania's Freight System, Strategic Infrastructure Corridors (Strategic and Recreational Use) Act 2016

3.3.3 Utilities

The expansion of smaller coastal communities and rural residential areas, as more people relocate to outer towns and villages across the Region (refer to **Theme 1**), increases pressure on current infrastructure and network services areas. This pressure is exacerbated by the Region's ageing population and the opportunity to support ageing in place. Demographic shifts and population growth in the outer areas also place stress on the efficient use of existing infrastructure and necessitate the need to expand and upgrade networks.

The delivery of essential utility services such as water, sewage, electricity and telecommunications is influenced by the patterns of growth and changes in factors such as population density in residential areas, the location of major industries and employment centres and increasingly in the future, climate change. Certain industries, such as large-scale manufacturing, require substantial amounts of water or electricity, and the availability of these resources can significantly impact the choice of business location, as well as the ability to move or expand these operations.

Key issues related to the provision of utilities infrastructure and services networks across the Northern Tasmanian Region include:

- Trunk utilities are concentrated on the western side of the Region, while eastern areas along the coastline are experiencing growth pressure but don't have access to trunk utilities (i.e. St Helens, Scamander, Binalong Bay).
- Inequitable distribution of costs amongst developers to support the long-term planning and delivery of key services across the Region.
- There are challenges with the telecommunication infrastructure outside of existing settlements, which leads to underserviced new residential areas, such as new developments on industrial land or new residential subdivisions far from existing fixed-line networks. This constrains the likelihood of providing new connections.
- Existing connectivity issues in smaller coastal settlements and remote rural residential areas, particularly those which rely on satellite connections e.g. Flinders Island or experience population fluctuations in peak seasons.
- Frequent issues with stormwater management due to lack of necessary upgrades to ageing and insufficient infrastructure across the Region, impacting the capacity for coordinated growth.
- Issues with existing powerlines (overhead vs underground) and the associated risk considering increased likelihood of extreme weather events including more frequent and intense storms, flood events and bushfires.
- Issues with necessary service provisions for key industries (i.e. hydrogen production facilities and solar farms), where infrastructure has not kept pace with emerging economic opportunity and industrial development opportunities.
- Issues in existing built up areas that significantly restrict the capacity of existing areas to redevelop and densify (i.e. combined stormwater-sewerage, stormwater systems designed for less impervious surfaces).
- Challenges associated with coordinating and aligning growth with service provision by state government agencies (i.e. TasNetworks, Taswater), particularly in areas with changing populations or remote locations.
- Upgrades to the TasNetworks Electricity Network is required to enable the further expansion of key economic and employment hubs such as the TRANSlink Precinct and further developments at the Launceston Airport.


Figure 17. Utilities & Serviced Areas
LEGEND
Regional Land Use Strategy Boundary
Roads
Railway
National Parks, Other Reserves, and Conservation Areas
Water Serviced Land
Sewer Serviced Land
Renewal Energy Zones
Existing Hydro Assets
Electricity Transmission Corridor
Gas Pipeline Easement
Gas Distribution Pipe
WINGAROO NATURE RESERVE
Whitemark
STRZELECKI NATIONAL PARK
Tasman Sea
Bass Strait
WATERHOUSE CONSERVATION AREA
CAMERON REGIONAL RESERVE
MOUNT WILLIAM NATIONAL PARK
Bridport
Burnie
Somerset
Penguin
Ridgley
Ulverstone
Devonport
Port Sorell
Beaconsfield
George Town
Scottsdale
Branxholm
Spreyton
Latrobe
Exeter
MOUNT MAURICE REGIONAL RESERVE
St Helens
CRADLE COAST REGION
Railton
Sheffield
Legana
Riverside
Launceston
Scamander
BLACK BLUFF NATURE RECREATION AREA
Hadspen
Deloraine
Westbury
Perth
Evandale
Longford
BEN LOMOND NATIONAL PARK
St Marys
Fingal
DOUGLAS-APSLEY NATIONAL PARK
CENTRAL PLATEAU CONSERVATION AREA
CRADLE MOUNTAIN-LAKE ST CLAIR NATIONAL PARK
WALLS OF JERUSALEM NATIONAL PARK
Bicheno
Campbell Town
GREAT WESTERN TIERS CONSERVATION AREA
Ross
SOUTHERN TASMANIA REGION
Swansea
Coles Bay
Great Oyster Bay
Oatlands
Triabunna
Source Data: Land Information System Tasmania (LIST) and Open Street Map
0 5 10 km
89

3.3.4 Theme 3: Opportunities and Challenges

Opportunities

- Land use planning that values and enables both traditional and emerging industries, creativity, entrepreneurship and research and development leveraging the Region's strengths.
- Planning frameworks accommodate the evolution of agricultural and tourism related businesses, recognising the benefits of co-location and integration between sectors (for example agritourism, eco-tourism, native food and bush medicine).
- Attract investment and growth of the Region's agriculture and tourism industries through the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy designation awarded to the Region in 2021.
- Provide for employment opportunities and attract workers, particularly to more remote parts of the Region in health care and education to support investments in major facilities and infrastructure and improve access to services for an ageing population.
- Strengthen the role of Northern Tasmania as a destination for tourism based on recreation, nature-based activities, viticulture and food.
- Build on the unique characteristics and traditional economic base of smaller towns and villages to increase and diversify local economic activity, job opportunities, improve resilience to economic cycles and impacts from mega-trends.
- Protect high quality agricultural land and invest in irrigation infrastructure, supporting innovations and continued growth in food processing and value-add food industries.
- Land use planning recognises the importance of freight infrastructure in the Region to economic development for Tasmania, and the role of key freight terminals including the Launceston Airport, the Port of Bell Bay and adjacent heavy industry precinct.
- Increase patronage of the existing public transport system by encourage infill development and consolidation to make public transport more cost- effective.
- Explore infrastructure funding options to support strategically funded provision of utilities, transport infrastructure, parks and community facilities for new, growing or changing communities.
- Collaborate with utility providers and stakeholders (energy, gas, and water) to coordinate land use and infrastructure planning to support growing and changing community needs and maximise the efficiency of infrastructure investment.

Challenges

- Protecting high-value agricultural land and natural assets from the pressures of land use change or interface issues driven by population growth and urban expansion.
- Adapting to the impacts of climate change across key sectors of the Region's economy, particularly agriculture and tourism.
- Improving access to high-value employment and training opportunities for younger people, skilled and professional people in rural and remote locations.
- The isolation of communities caused by the constraints of topography and challenges of improving transport infrastructure.
- The competing use of major roads for freight transport, tourism traffic, and residential travel creates safety issues and pressure to upgrade infrastructure often through challenging terrain.
- Protect key passenger and freight corridors from encroachment by incompatible land use and development.
- Improving coordination between councils, State government and utility companies so that planning for growth is integrated with assessment of the capacity of existing infrastructure networks and services and the costs and impacts of extending or augmenting infrastructure.
- The lack of infrastructure contribution mechanisms to support developers, spread development costs provide alternative funding sources for planning and delivery of key infrastructure needed to support growth across the Region.
- Increasing costs of infrastructure provision and ongoing maintenance across all levels of government.
- Address the tensions between different industries that rely on the same natural resources, such as forestry and tourism, or built form/land use, such as workforce and tourist accommodation.
- Protect strategic resources from incompatible land use to ensure sufficient supply of materials to the building and construction industry.

Cameron Jones Visuals

PART 4 — FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

Flinders Island Cattle
Studio Hubert

4.1 Findings from the State of Play

The opportunities and challenges for each theme in **Chapter 3**, along with the insights from the eight councils in the Region in **Chapter 2**, have been reviewed and synthesised into **key findings**. Associated with the findings are **gaps, challenges** and **needs** that provide further depth and direction to inform a Vision for the Region and Regional Strategic Directions. These will in turn inform the next phases of preparing the new NTRLUS.

People, Communities and Growth

Key findings of the State of Play	Gaps, challenges and needs
Historic cultural heritage is integral to the identity of and for bringing visitors to, many places across the Region.	• The recording, assessment and listing of historic cultural heritage is inconsistent across the nine councils in the Region. • Mechanisms to permit adaptive re-use of heritage items are limited and can be a constraint to active management, conservation and use of heritage items. • The stigma associated with heritage listed items is often seen as a deterrent for development and adaptive reuse, rather than being celebrated as a unique characteristic of the Region's identity and major drawcard for visitors and future residents.
Aboriginal people retain strong connections to Country and have valuable knowledge to contribute to sustainable land use management.	• Understanding who can speak for Country is not clear amongst non-Aboriginal people. • The history of conflict and displacement of Aboriginal people and associated trauma is particularly acute in Northern Tasmania. • The palawa's connection to lutruwita is particularly strong and is continuous in Northern Tasmania. • Policies, practices and processes for collaboration with, involvement of and leadership by Aboriginal people are opportunities to improve land use planning practice, but are currently limited in Tasmania.
The capacity to continue to supply new housing must be maintained to accommodate projected needs of a growing and changing community.	• Clear and up-to-date information on population growth and change, and population projections are needed to inform the required supply of housing and plan for infrastructure. • Population forecasts do not account well for highly variable rates of growth and change that have occurred historically and are likely to occur over the 30 year life of the Regional Land Use Strategy. • Current approaches to the assessment of residential land supply and housing capacity do not fully consider the real development capacity of vacant zoned land, infill potential, consolidation opportunities, and the availability of or ability to deliver enabling infrastructure. • There are gaps between population policies at the state, regional and local levels and the links to land use planning are not clear. • Opportunities exist to proactively apply strategic land use planning to implementation of population policies around the attraction and retention of residents.
The current housing stock across the Region is not well matched with the needs of households, particularly as the population ages and households get smaller.	• The draft Tasmanian Planning Policies (TPPS) and draft Medium Density Design Guidelines aim to facilitate more diverse housing that match housing types with housing need. • Planning and delivery mechanisms (particularly under the TPS) currently constrain housing diversity by preferencing or permitting a limited range of housing types. • The TPS doesn't encourage, or in some cases permit delivery of these housing types.
Low density urban areas, towns and villages have limited housing diversity, poor access to services, jobs and amenities, and poor social outcomes.	• Social infrastructure like schools, health care, and community centres, and established transport networks are concentrated in existing urban areas and towns, and much of this infrastructure has capacity to support growth. • The costs of providing social infrastructure to support continued outward expansion are relatively high, and outward growth without appropriate planning and/or delivery of social infrastructure increases inequity and further under-utilises existing facilities. • Measures in the current NTRLUS to limit the outward growth of towns and cities are limited to urban or settlement boundaries, which are not effective on their own as a means of controlling and directing growth. • Mechanisms to encourage and enable alternatives to greenfield growth, particularly more compact and diverse urban areas, towns and villages, are limited in the TPS. • There is currently limited alignment of statutory planning provisions to State and Regional policy and strategic planning outcomes in relation to housing diversity, affordability and suitability, which constrains the planning and delivery of more compact, efficient and equitable land use patterns.

The Natural Environment, Natural Hazards and Environmental Risks

Key findings of the State of Play	Gaps, challenges and needs
Access to and appreciation of the natural environment are key attractors to people visiting or moving to the Region	• The 2024 draft Population Discussion Paper[59] and research undertaken by Destination Tasmania both clearly establish a link between visitation from interstate or overseas leading to new residents moving to the Region. Nature-based lifestyle opportunities are a key attractor. • Land use planning controls to protect areas of scenic natural value or biodiversity value are applied inconsistently. • There is a lack of funding and resourcing to undertake comprehensive assessments of scenic landscape values and biodiversity values to inform land use planning provisions
Population growth and continued outward expansion of urban areas, towns and villages risks impacting on the natural values of the Region.	• Pressures on the natural environment from a growing population are often in locations with highly sensitive or valued natural assets, particularly the coast. • Measures in the current NTRLUS and other parts of the land use planning system to contain outward growth and impacts on the natural environment have not materially changed patterns of growth.
Interactions between cities, towns, villages, infrastructure and the natural environment creates exposure to natural hazards including flooding, bushfire and coastal erosion.	• Some established towns, villages and urban areas are located on land at risk of flooding or coastal inundation, and new information including climate change modelling and more comprehensive flood modelling more accurately assesses risks. • New information is available on the potential increased extent or severity of natural hazards as a result of climate change and should be used to inform regional and local land use planning decisions. • The land use planning response to increasing natural hazard risks does not currently consider how to address issues with areas that are already developed or how to avoid exposing communities to risk when planning for growth. • The ability to improve connections within the Region is constrained by the natural environment, particularly steep topography and waterways, and natural disasters like flooding and landslip sometimes cut off access for periods of time to parts of the Region.

Economic Activity and Infrastructure

Key findings of the State of Play	Gaps, challenges and needs
Industry and economic activity are dynamic, and new ways of growing and diversifying the Region's economy are emerging.	• Land use planning is currently focused on separation of land uses and does not accommodate changes to industry and business operations particularly where different land uses (such as tourism and agricultural production) are increasingly combining to diversify and strengthen local economies. • Leveraging Launceston's role as a key centre for tertiary education and higher order services and understanding and maximising the opportunities to distribute the benefits of these strengths across the Region.
More diverse economic activity is central to supporting growth and sustaining communities in across the Region.	• A more open approach to assessing land uses that contribute to social and economic development outcomes would enable innovation, growth and diversification of the Region's economy. • Leveraging the Region's reputation for high quality food and wine through planning frameworks that permit and encourage the combination of agriculture/aquaculture and tourism enterprises.
The unique advantages of climate and geography create niche opportunities for agricultural production and aquaculture that are central to the economy of some parts of the Region.	• Protecting key agriculture and aquaculture areas in the Region including wine and food production in the Tamar Valley and Meander Valley, beef cattle on Flinders Island, wineries and fisheries on the east coast. • There is a gap in understanding for how to respond to the impacts of a changing climate in these specialist production locations, including more frequent fires, changes to water quality due to rainfall changes, changes to water temperature, availability of water for irrigation. • It is difficult to protect sensitive agricultural production (eg wineries) from interface impacts through appropriate land use controls.
An ageing population in some parts of the Region increases demand for workers in aged care, health care and retail.	• Attracting skilled and qualified workers and enabling them to stay for the long term is a challenge in more remote parts of the Region. • Families or households with multiple workers seeking financial stability are difficult to attract with the Region's current employment capacity. • Access to quality education, sports and recreation, and ongoing training and career progression are limited in some parts of the Region. This can be a constraint to attracting workers in key sectors needed to support an older community.
Maintaining and improving transport connections across the Region will support efficient movement of goods and services, growing tourism travel and expand economic development opportunities.	• Climate change is predicted to increase the intensity and frequency of floods and fires, putting already strained and expensive to maintain transport infrastructure under more pressure. • Access to Flinders Island/the Furneaux group is already impacted by adverse weather and changes to weather patterns may increase impacts on the access for both people and goods essential to the economic and social sustainability on the islands.
The broader economic benefits from key industry and logistics facilities like the Port of Bell Bay is recognised for their role in growing renewables based activities and providing for exports of the Region's produce.	• Measures to protect heavy vehicle and rail access to and from the Port of Bell Bay and facilitate the efficient movement of freight from the impacts of incompatible development are unclear, and would benefit from a regional approach to avoid conflicts.
There is a growing understanding of the relative costs, benefits and issues with expanding infrastructure networks to support growth in order to meet housing needs.	• Decisions about where growth occurs and when do not fully account for infrastructure needs, costs, or impacts beyond individual council areas. • A regional approach to planning for growth that integrates infrastructure and land use planning would contribute to prioritising growth where the costs and benefits of infrastructure provision best support population and economic growth. • The lack of compact and mixed use development near key transport routes is hindering public transport patronage and efficiency (particularly in Greater Launceston) and leading to costly and inefficient to services.

4.2 Next steps for the NTRLUS

The following diagram summarises the NTRLUS drafting process. The State of Play Report will be followed by and will inform the development of a Vision and Regional Strategic Directions to conclude Phase 1 of the new NTRLUS project. Stakeholder engagement will be central to agreeing the Vision and Regional Strategic Directions in the next stage of Phase 1.

Community engagement, managed and implemented by NTDC, will also play an important role in building on and refining the findings of this report to inform the new NTRLUS.

We are here (Phase 1)

Phase 0 Project Initiation and Scoping	Phase 1 'State of Play' / Regional Strategic Directions	Phase 2 Regional Infrastructure Analysis and Planning	Phase 3 Sustainable Growth Analysis, Community Needs and Development of NTRLUS and Framework
Outcome Establish project foundations and implement project management framework.	**Outcome** A clear strategic direction and regional vision are established, providing a well-consulted foundation for the NTRLUS development.	**Outcome** Comprehensive understanding of current infrastructure capacity and recommendations for managing growth impacts.	**Outcome** (a) A well-defined regional settlement pattern that supports sustainable growth and community needs. (b) A comprehensive NTRLUS policy document with implementation plan that aligns with legislative requirements and supports enablement and facilitation of regional growth.
Milestones • Formation and approval of the project governance structure. • Approval of the project plan objectives and approach. • Establishment of a risk management framework. • Undertake NTRLUS stakeholder mapping	**Milestones** • Completion of Engagement Strategy. • Completion of State of Play Document. • Completion of Strategic Directions Document.	**Milestones** • Analyse current infrastructure capacity. • Identification of gaps in available data with scoping of specific discrete projects. • Synthesise findings into a report / position paper.	**Milestones** • Conduct land suitability analysis. • Model growth options for housing and employment. • Integrate infrastructure analysis findings. • Develop NTRLUS and implementation plan. • Draft supporting report for legislative compliance. • Design and layout of NTRLUS document.
Outputs • Project Plan • Risk Issues Register • Stakeholder Map • Project Schedule	**Outputs** • Engagement Strategy • State of Play Report • Regional Strategic Directions	**Outputs** • Infrastructure Analysis • Gap Analysis	**Outputs** • Settlement Pattern Analysis • Growth Options Paper • Revised NTRLUS • Implementation Plan

Continuous Phase: Regional Communications Plan and Community Engagement

Outcome: Effective community engagement and communication throughout the project lifecycle, ensuring stakeholder and community input and support.

Figure 18. NTRLUS Process and Timing

4.3 Bibliography

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- Northern Regional Drought Resilience Project (DPAC) – 2024-2025
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- NRM Nth Strategy & TEER program
- Statewide Flood Mapping (SES) – Release TBA
- Stormwater Working Group – updated Australian Rainfall and Runoff climate indices (IPWEA Tas) – November 2024
- Statewide Climate Risk Assessment (ReCFIT & CCO) – November 2024
- Tasmanian Climate Change Action Plan & Emission Reduction and Resilience Plans (ERRPs) for: Waste; Transport; Energy; Industrial Processes; Agriculture; and Land Use /Forestry. (ReCFIT CCO) – 2023-2024
- Review of State Planning Provisions (DPAC SPO) – 2023-2025
- Disaster Resilience Strategy (DPAC) – 2024-2025
- Community Health and Wellbeing Principles (DPAC) – 2024
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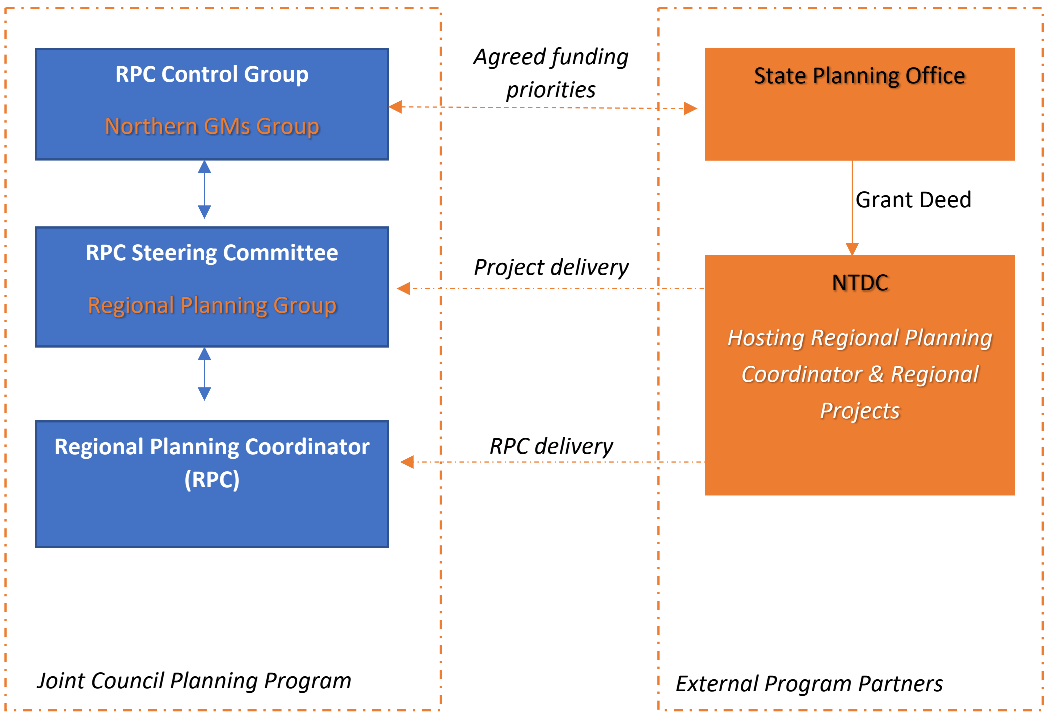
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD

Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy Review
Governance Structure & Terms of Reference

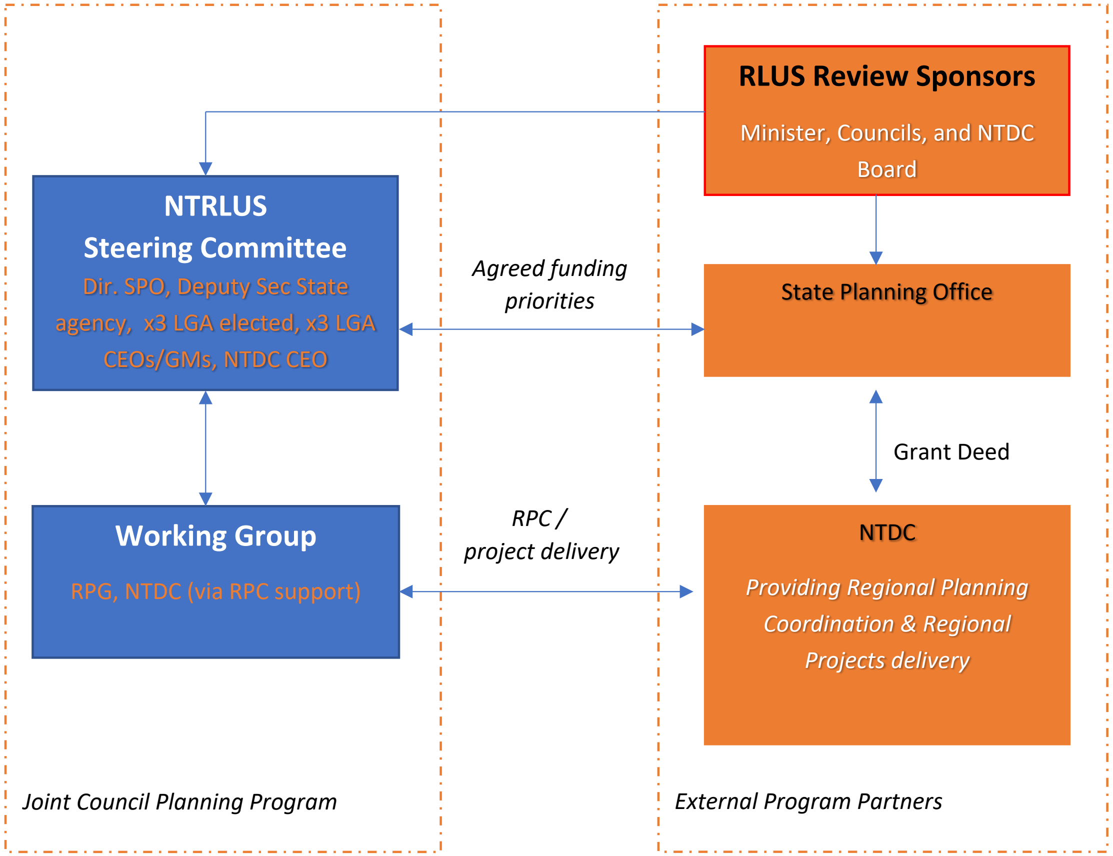
EXISTING GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF NTRLUS (ENDORSED 2022)



1

Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy Review
Governance Structure & Terms of Reference

NEW GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



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Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy Review
Governance Structure & Terms of Reference

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FRAMEWORK

Component	Who	Function	Regularity
Review Sponsor	Minister (w Councils, NTDC Board referenced)	• Issue of guidelines/ protocols • Inter-governmental liaison • Document structure, specifications & requirements • Application of State Policy • Funding and timeline	As required
Steering Committee	Government reps x3 Council Elected officials x3 Council CEOs/GMs NTDC CEO Guests: RPG Chair / RPC	• Approve Project Plan • Ensure project outcomes & deliverables are achieved • Provide general direction, guidance & support • Provide guidance to and regular communications with Working Group • Approve release of key Project deliverables • Establish communication channels and maintain regular project updates with elected members & executives of the Councils • Approval of regional projects to SPO • Endorse Budget	Quarterly CEO/GM meeting - 6 weekly

Working Group	Regional Planning Group of x8 planning reps from LGAs
	X1 senior planning advisor of SPO
	up to x2 additional State agency reps
	x1 CEO/GM from one Council
	Regional Planning Coordinator
	NTDC Admin support
		• Provide advice to the Steering Committee and RPC on regional planning matters
		• Report to and provide regular updates to Steering Committee
		• Provide advice on technical planning issues as relevant to:
		  ○ the implementation of the TPPs
		  ○ the Implementation of the RLUS into local provisions schedules
		  ○ any other relevant technical planning matters
		• prepare the draft NTRLUS for endorsement by the Steering Committee
		• Input to RPC activities and tasks in Work Plan
		• Oversight and endorsement of RPC project submissions
			RPG meeting (monthly)

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Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy Review
Governance Structure & Terms of Reference

RPC Oversight Group	Nominated Council Planner(s) Chair RPG NTDC CEO	• Technical planning advice • Steering Committee/working group liaison • Day to day oversight for workplan deliverables • Dispute resolution	Fortnightly work in progress meetings

NTDC RPC support	NTDC CEO
	NTDC Admin support
	Regional (Planning) Project Coordinator
		• Work in partnership & collaboratively with councils and State agencies to achieve deliverables required to prepare the NTRLUS review
		• Deliver the agree outcomes in the grant deed with the State
		• Provide support to the RPC to:
		  ○ Prepare the project plan for NTRLUS review in consultation with Steering Committee and working group
		  ○ Oversee and manage the project in accordance with the Project Plan and undertake various agreed tasks required to deliver the project
		  ○ Coordinate input into the NTRLUS review from SPO, Steering Committee, Working Group and any experts and consultants as agreed
		  ○ Prepare NTRLUS content and associated materials based on the above inputs.
			Participation in meeting structure (above)
			Members Representative Group meeting
			Annual General Meeting