UNIVERSITY of TASMANIA

A review of sustainability strategies: Options for Tasmania

BACKGROUND RESEARCH PAPER NO. 1

Prepared by the
Tasmanian Policy Exchange

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

This report has been prepared by the Tasmanian Policy Exchange (TPE) at the University of Tasmania.

The University of Tasmania pays its respects to elders past and present, and to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that continues to care for Country. We acknowledge the profound effect of colonial settlement on this Country and seek to work alongside Tasmanian Aboriginal communities, respecting their deep wisdom and knowledge as we do so.

The palawa/pakana people belong to one of the world's oldest living cultures, continually resident on this Country for at least 40,000 years. We acknowledge this history with deep respect, along with the associated wisdom, traditions, and complex cultural and political activities and practices that continue to the present.

The University of Tasmania also recognises a history of truth that acknowledges the impacts of invasion and colonisation upon Aboriginal people and their lands, resulting in forcible removal, and profound consequences for the livelihoods of generations since.

The University of Tasmania stands for a future that profoundly respects and acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language and history, and continued efforts to realise Aboriginal justice and rights, paving the way for a strong future.

ABOUT THE TASMANIAN POLICY EXCHANGE

The University of Tasmania was founded over 130 years ago to serve the Tasmanian community.

Today it remains deeply committed to working with and for Tasmanians in new and creative ways to contribute to a more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable future.

The Tasmanian Policy Exchange (TPE) was established in 2020 as a strategic initiative to enhance the University's capacity to make timely and informed contributions to policy issues and debates which will shape Tasmania's future.

The TPE is developing and testing an innovative place-based and outcomes-focused model of engagement to work with government and community partners to identify and address significant issues where the University can make a positive impact on Tasmania's future.

The 'Exchange' is not a stand-alone research centre but works with external partners to establish and frame priority policy questions, before working with staff from across the University of Tasmania to develop evidence-based policy options and longer-term collaborations.

The TPE's recent policy analysis includes:

COVID-19 and the future of work

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The future of local government review

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KEY POINTS

There is growing recognition among governments, businesses, and communities that comprehensive sustainability strategies can help to ensure that economic development and resource use today does not come at the expense of future generations or the depletion of natural resources. These growing commitments to sustainability principles create numerous opportunities for communities, businesses and regions to implement long-term strategies and practices to promote sustainability and community wellbeing.

The need to work collaboratively to develop comprehensive sustainability strategies encompassing environmental, social, and economic dimensions came to the fore with the release of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, amid growing recognition of the need to develop holistic, long-term strategies to address global sustainability challenges such as climate change.

The sustainability agenda is not new, especially in Tasmania with its internationally recognised environmental and cultural assets, including over 40, 000 years of aboriginal heritage and stewardship of lutruwita/Tasmania. Reflecting the Tasmanian community's strong connections to the natural environment combined with the growing value of our clean green 'brand', many communities, businesses, and state and local government policies are embracing and promoting sustainability in all of its dimensions.

Despite a strong foundation of sustainability in Tasmania, this review of sustainability strategies and frameworks from elsewhere in Australia and beyond has identified numerous additional benefits which would result from a carefully constructed state-level strategy designed to bolster Tasmania's sustainability credentials. This finding is consistent with the recommendation in the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council's final report that the "Tasmanian Government should develop a sustainability vision and strategy for Tasmania with ambitious goals and concrete targets and actions".

There may be a growing commitment to promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability, but there is no single agreed approach or best way to achieve it. Instead, this review of practice within and beyond Australia has identified a wide range of models, frameworks, and strategies designed to promote sustainability and measure progress over time.

Despite this diversity, it is possible to identify key principles and elements, based on the SDG approach, that are common to most credible and comprehensive regional or national sustainability strategies and which could be applied to the development of a Tasmanian approach.

A comprehensive and best-practice sustainability strategy should:

- Build on established sustainability assets and initiatives
- Commit to collaboration and fostering collective responsibility to promote sustainability
- Strive for consensus, establish clear targets, and commit to transparent reporting
- Build community awareness via education and support community-led action
- Drive innovation and leverage private investment and community programs

Existing sustainability strategies vary in many important ways, but leading examples typically exhibit some important shared characteristics. In particular, effective strategies:

- Engage with community and stakeholders to establish sustainability priorities from the 17 SDGs
- Identify and assess existing sustainability programs and policies across all levels of government, community, and industry
- Intentionally invest in sustainability governance to ensure coordination and the pursuit of common objectives

- Develop sustainability measures and targets and an independent reporting and review framework to ensure accountability and to achieve external recognition
- Develop focused sustainability action plans to coordinate existing activity and policies and promote targeted investment and innovation
- Commit to periodically reviewing progress, promote success, and learn from failure

Of the case studies presented in this report, Victoria is the Australian jurisdiction with the most sophisticated sustainability strategy. The Victorian approach, *SV2030*, combines a commitment to comprehensive sustainability reporting with an intent to coordinate existing state-level policies to meaningfully improve sustainability outcomes. However, Victoria's strategy may well be focused a little too narrowly on traditional sustainability issues, at the expense of a more holistic sustainability approach.

Internationally, a select handful of European jurisdictions, such as the Region of Flanders in Belgium, have what are arguably the most advanced and effective sustainability strategies and polices. Canada too will be an important jurisdiction to monitor as it develops its first federal Sustainability Strategy to be based on all 17 SDGs. While these international examples provide useful insights and lessons, it is important to remain mindful of the very real social, environmental, and economic differences between these cases and Tasmania.

Ultimately this review highlights the need to tailor Tasmania's sustainability strategy to ensure that it aligns with our priorities and the sustainable development opportunities available to us here in Tasmania. While adapting a strategy to meet Tasmania's needs is both important and desirable, this must be done in a transparent way that is consistent with SDG objectives and principles to ensure external credibility.

Given Tasmania's significant environmental assets and broad-based community commitment to promoting long-term sustainability, a comprehensive sustainability strategy with ambitious goals and carefully designed actions would deliver long-term benefits for community and environmental wellbeing now and into the future.

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

The formidable global challenges posed by climate change, environmental pollution, extinction, and biodiversity loss have spurred a profound and far-reaching re-appraisal of humans' relationship with the earth and its resources. At the same time, economic inequality and political discord have emerged as growing threats to social cohesion and the institutions of democratic government. In many societies, a reckoning with the past and present injustices of colonialism and the displacement of Indigenous people only compounds these issues.

Where these ills may once have been interpreted as discrete, the connections and interdependence in wide-ranging policy frameworks and interventions are now widely recognised.

One of the most compelling and holistic approaches to tackling this suite of pressing social, economic, and environmental challenges is the emerging sustainability agenda. A growing number of governments, departments and agencies, businesses, civic organisations, and other groups have adopted sustainability strategies as their instrument-of-choice for aligning their everyday activities with the need to conserve resources, build social capital, minimise environmental impact, and address economic inequality. These strategies come in many shapes and sizes, from far-reaching and transformative whole-of-government legislative frameworks to aspirational and largely symbolic statements of intent.

Despite the wide range of strategies, it is clear that the sustainability agenda is here to stay. A credible sustainability framework may demand new practices and priorities but is becoming increasingly important when securing investment, driving productivity, conserving biodiversity, avoiding catastrophic climate change impacts, and securing the wellbeing of present and future generations.

Reflecting this growing recognition of the need to adopt and promote holistic sustainability practices, the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) recommended that the State Government should develop a sustainability vision and strategy for Tasmania, with ambitious goals, and concrete targets and actions (Recommendation 38). This background paper has been prepared to inform the development of a Tasmanian sustainability strategy by reviewing sustainability strategies and frameworks in other Australian states and relevant international jurisdictions with a view to identifying principles, models, and practices which could be adopted in Tasmania.

Specifically, this paper provides a synopsis of the origins and evolution of the sustainability agenda, culminating in the formulation of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 (Parts 2 & 3), before highlighting Tasmania's exceptional natural assets, and existing sustainability-aligned initiatives (Part 4). This discussion makes the case for the adoption of an ambitious whole-of-government sustainability strategy for Tasmania that coordinates existing work and embeds the principles of best-practice sustainable development across all government decision making.

Part 5 of the report establishes a framework for categorising and assessing existing sustainability strategies elsewhere, which can serve as a starting point for the development of a Tasmanian strategy. These criteria will ensure that Tasmania is able to learn from the successes and failures of other Australian jurisdictions and international examples where appropriate. Parts 6 and 7 provide brief case studies of key Australian and international sustainability strategies of relevance to Tasmania. In Part 8, these insights are distilled into lessons that can help guide the development of a sustainability strategy in Tasmania.

In conclusion, we argue that if it is to be effective, a Tasmanian sustainability strategy should:

- Be based on the SDGs
- Integrate economic, social, and environmental elements of sustainability in a holistic and ambitious platform to drive change
- Be administered centrally via a 'joined-up' framework that is applicable to all relevant government decision making
- Set concrete and time-bound targets
- Measure and report on progress using a wide range of metrics and indicators
- Involve Tasmanians from all walks of life in a comprehensive and community-led program of public engagement
- Educate the community and advocate to other tiers of government in relation to key Tasmanian sustainability concerns.

Tasmania can and should have a world-leading sustainability strategy as a cornerstone of the State Government's efforts to protect our natural environment, responsibly grow our economy, promote community wellbeing, and build a healthy and prosperous society.

PART 2 – THE ORIGINS OF THE SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

The earth is currently in 'the Anthropocene', an unprecedented era in planetary time in which human activity has become the dominant force shaping all life on earth.

The earth is currently in 'the Anthropocene', an unprecedented era in planetary time in which human activity has become the dominant force shaping all life on earth. As the Anthropocene era has progressed, human demands on the natural environment have increased dramatically. We are now consuming more than 100 billion tonnes of natural resources per year for the first time ever, increasing more than eight per cent in just two years from 2015 to 2017.[1]

Advocacy for concerns that would now be described as sustainability issues have a long history and, in the early years, focused largely on the environment and the need to reduce the impacts of human activities on the natural world. By the 1970s the agenda had expanded to promote environmentally sustainable economic development and the pursuit of long-term community wellbeing.

In 1972, environmental issues were placed at the forefront of global political concerns through the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. This first world environment conference argued for "environmentally sound development"[2] and generated the Stockholm Declaration (consisting of 26 environmental management principals, broken down into 109 recommendations) and the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).[3]

The World Commission on Environment and Development produced the seminal *Our Common Future* report in 1987 (also known as 'the Brundtland Report'). Seeking to promote responsible social and economic development and reduce environmental impacts on the planet, the report clearly articulated the global sustainability challenge. It stated the world should aim for "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" – a statement that has subsequently become the defining objective of the global 'sustainability' agenda.[4]

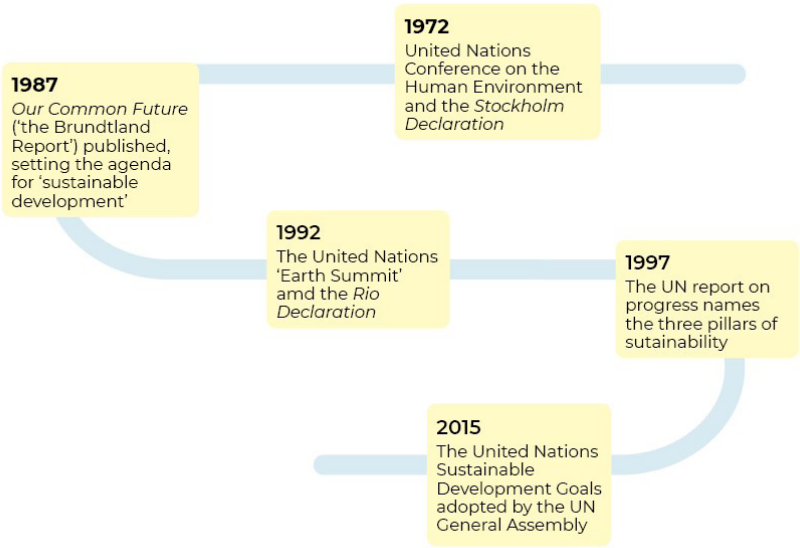
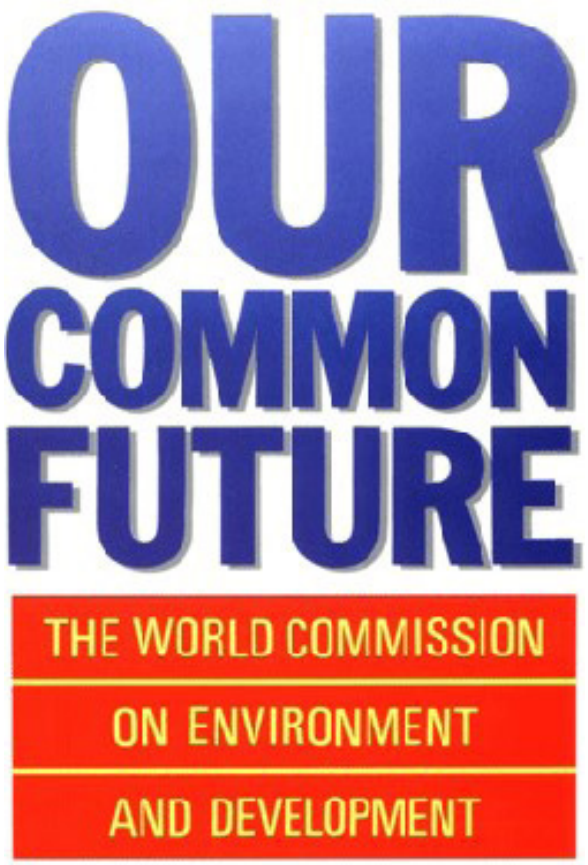


Figure 1: The evolution of the global sustainability agenda

In 1992, in another significant milestone, the UN held the 'Earth Summit' in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, hosting politicians, scientists, NGOs and media from 179 countries. At the summit, world leaders committed to support the principal of sustainable development. Among several important proclamations, innovations, and plans, the Rio Declaration established 27 universal principals as a blueprint for international action. Agenda 21 set out a plan to translate the principals in practice.[5]

The world should aim for "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"

Efforts have also been made in Australia to define the concept of sustainability as part of an agenda to advance sustainable development processes and practices. In response to the Rio Declaration, the National Ecologically Sustainable Development Steering Committee, on behalf of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), developed the National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development, which defined ecologically sustainable development as "using, conserving and enhancing the community's resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, can be increased." Following the lead of the Brundtland Commission, COAG added that sustainable development should "[aim] to meet the needs of Australians today, while conserving our ecosystems for the benefit of future generations" .[6]



PART 3 – THE COMTEMPORARY SUSTAINABILITY AGENDA

As sustainability strategies and plans have been increasingly adopted across governments, industry, and the wider community, the agenda has also broadened. The 1997 United Nations report on progress – following the 1987 *Our Common Future* report and the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development – highlighted three reinforcing components of sustainable development, 'economic growth, social development, and environmental sustainability'. These are now recognised as the three pillars of sustainability.[7] What began with an environmental focus evolved to include the social dimensions of individual, community and economic development. In doing so, 'sustainability' became an increasingly holistic concept. This broader and more inclusive definition of sustainability requires the integration and coordination of a range of issues and policy agendas to develop short- and long-term sustainable development strategies.

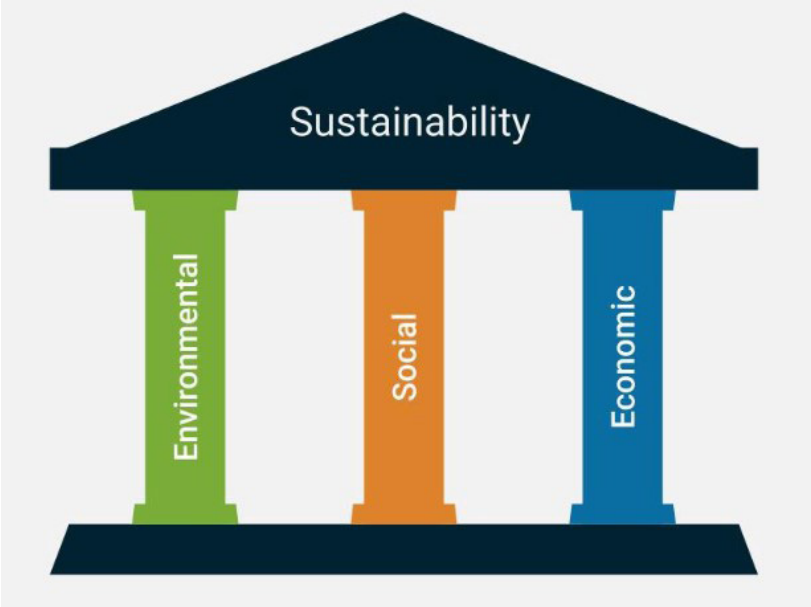


Figure 2: The evolution of the global sustainability agenda

3.1 The three-pillar framework for sustainability

The three-pillar framework emerged as a historical critique of established economic development models combined with an ambition to establish a holistic model that reflected the interconnected and mutually dependent nature of economic, social, and environmental factors in sustainable development. While this framework has attracted critiques, leading to the development of alternative approaches centred around values, principles of equity, and the 'Natural Step' framework, there is widespread agreement that the contemporary three-pillar agenda for sustainability is a good approach and it informs the formulation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

What began with an environmental focus evolved to include the social dimensions of individual, community and economic development

3.2 The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The SDG model, and the associated 2030 Agenda of "ensuring no one is left behind",[8] reflected growing concern that many less developed countries did not have the resources to pursue a sustainability agenda. The SDGs comprise 17 goals for sustainable development, defined with 169 targets assessed against 232 unique indicators. The agenda sought to be relevant to all countries and all people, and to support those "furthest behind first".[9] Interpretation and implementation of the SDG agenda does, of course, vary across countries and regions, with individuals, enterprises, and governments having different capacities, strengths, and priorities.

The SDG agenda and the framework that underlies it have served as catalysts for the development of numerous national, regional, and local sustainability strategies relevant to Tasmania (see Parts 6 and 7 of this report). Significantly, the SDG framework allows for solutions to be customised at different scales and for different communities and groups. This versatility has enabled its widespread adoption by governments in many countries and at many levels, from the national through to the local (see Parts 6 and 7 for examples). At a national level, the adoption of SDG strategies tends to focus on holistic SDGs and targets, contrasting with local government and community levels, which usually address more specific targets and indicators.

A key element of the SDG approach is the ability to prioritise selected indicators and assess progress towards achieving the goals. In formally adopting the SDGs, countries may agree to undertake regular state-led voluntary reviews ('Voluntary National Reviews' or 'VNRs') of their progress towards goals at national, regional, and global levels. The aim of these reviews is to facilitate the sharing of experiences, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.[10]

Figure 3: The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2018, Australia undertook a voluntary review across 86 targets and 144 indicators. An independent analysis of Australia's voluntary review by Allen et al. (2020) highlighted success with health and education metrics but poor performance in addressing inequality and climate change.[11] While these reviews provide important insight into progress on sustainability goals, critics argue that more transparent and rigorous evaluation processes are required.[12] Review and evaluation frameworks, including Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) have also been adopted at (and adapted for) sub-national levels, with implications for development of a Tasmanian sustainability framework (these are discussed in greater detail in Parts 6 and 7 of this report) .[13]

3.3 Commercial certification and branding of sustainability

The implementation of the SDG agenda, combined with a growing awareness of the need to promote sustainability across all levels of society, has seen the development of a number of alternative but complementary sustainability initiatives. For example, a growing number of businesses, particularly large-listed companies, are developing and reporting against more formalised environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards in response to consumer and investor pressures to demonstrate their sustainability credentials.

Like the SDGs, 'ESG' frameworks seek to measure performance across a range of sustainability indicators although specific measures are usually developed by the company or organisation seeking a sustainability assessment with certification from a private provider. While this system of private sustainability certification has been criticised for its variability and lack of transparency, high-profile organisations and listed companies are increasingly being subject to significant external pressure to improve the quality and integrity of their ESG reporting. The ESG approach has been developed primarily for business and organisational use (a summary of established sustainability reporting frameworks is provided in Table 1); it has been adapted for regional sustainability reporting as is used in both Queensland and Western Australia.

"We focus on sustainability not because we're environmentalists, but because we are capitalists and fiduciaries to our clients" Larry Fink

The contemporary sustainability agenda is by no means the exclusive domain of government: the growing demand for sustainable options by consumers, investors, and stakeholders is driving corporate practices and an uptake of sustainability frameworks. As Larry Fink, the CEO of the world's largest fund manager, Black Rock, stated in his annual letter to CEOs in 2022: "We focus on sustainability not because we're environmentalists, but because we are capitalists and fiduciaries to our clients".[14] From the food we eat to superannuation investment, citizens are demanding sustainable choices. This growing trend is especially relevant to Tasmania given our brand and position in key export markets. Unsurprisingly, community consultation undertaken for PESRAC and recent survey research confirms that Tasmanian residents are demanding more sustainable, local food and product choices.[15]

Sustainability standards for the production of goods and services are increasingly common. By adhering to and achieving sustainability certification, producers are able to secure a market advantage and in some cases secure price premiums for their products and services. While certification first emerged in agricultural and forestry industries (e.g., Forest Stewardship Certification), it has also become increasingly popular in other industries such as tourism and investment. There has also been a recent transition from certification of products. to certification of enterprises (e.g., B Corp Certification).

The expansion of certification and accreditation is creating significant opportunity for jurisdictions with strong sustainability credentials to capitalise on branding. The benefits of sustainability placed-based branding already provide major incentives for investment in tourism and industry. Other islands such as The Azores are achieving brand benefits through jurisdiction-wide certification of sustainability.[16] Tasmania's already global brand and 'Clean Green' image – what PESRAC calls Tasmania's 'enduring competitive advantage' – could be enhanced through certification.[17] However, while there are growing benefits associated with sustainability certification, governments and communities also need to ensure that certification and subsequent standards are credible in order to achieve ongoing positive branding and recognition.

3.4 Government Coordination

Business and community sustainability initiatives are important, but governments play a critical role in coordinating sustainability agendas to ensure individual strategies are complementary to maximise their impact. In Australia, the road towards developing a national sustainability strategy or framework has been bumpy.

In 2005, the House of Representatives Environment and Heritage Committee recommended that the Australian Government develop a set of environmental (or sustainability) objectives, implement a national report card on progress towards the objectives, and encourage similar programs at a community level.[18] In 2007, the same committee recommended that a national sustainability charter be created, together with a technical implementation agreement containing long-term, measurable targets developed collaboratively and under the guidance of a new Sustainability Commission.[19] To date there has been little progress at a federal level towards implementing these initiatives, leaving the states to drive the sustainability agenda.

Challenges facing the development of a national sustainability strategy have been recognised as: achieving policy coordination in a federal system of government; gaining the attention of government(s); establishing national values, objectives and indicators; cost to industry and government funding; and suitability of current ratings systems.[20] In a federal system, the ability for state and national governments to coordinate sustainability agendas from state and local governments is critical. A key benefit of establishing a state-level sustainability strategy in Tasmania is the potential to coordinate and amplify the many established and emerging sustainability initiatives across the state.

PART 4 – SUSTAINABILITY IN TASMANIA

Sustainability is not new to Tasmania, with the Tasmanian Aboriginal (palawa/pakana) people living on Country and caring for lutruwita's land, seas, and waterways for over 40,000 years.[21] The landscape itself has been actively shaped by Tasmanian Aboriginal people over tens of thousands of years; the ways palawa/pakana people hunted, gathered, and used fire had a major influence on the structure and distribution of plant and animal communities today.[22] Tasmanian Aboriginal people have an age-old connection with their ancestral lands and waters and continue to steward Country today through the continuation of knowledge about how to use and care for the environment.[23] Tasmanian Aboriginal land stewardship is a critical component of sustainability, in that it offers a different perspective and value system than that of conventional, science-derived land management.[24]

Tasmania's growing reputation for its pristine natural environment, cultural assets, high quality agricultural produce, and world-leading emissions profile now underpin Tasmania's brand, delivering significant social and economic benefits

While many European settler-colonial practices during the 19th century were not sustainable by contemporary standards, Tasmania's small population, remoteness, and relatively limited intra-state transport did foster a culture of resourcefulness and self-sufficiency – important elements of sustainability practice that persist to this day.

A growing awareness and recognition of Tasmania's unique environment and natural beauty saw Mount Field and Freycinet declared national parks in 1916. These were among the first national parks in Australia, and they became a precedent for the significant system of parks and reserves established in Tasmania in recent years.

4.1 International recognition

Since the 1980s, Tasmania has gained international recognition for its significant natural and cultural heritage. Tasmania is home to unique flora and fauna resulting from the separation of the island from the mainland 8000 years ago. Significant cultural assets include evidence of tens of thousands of years of palawa/pakana occupation, as well as more recent colonial heritage.[25]

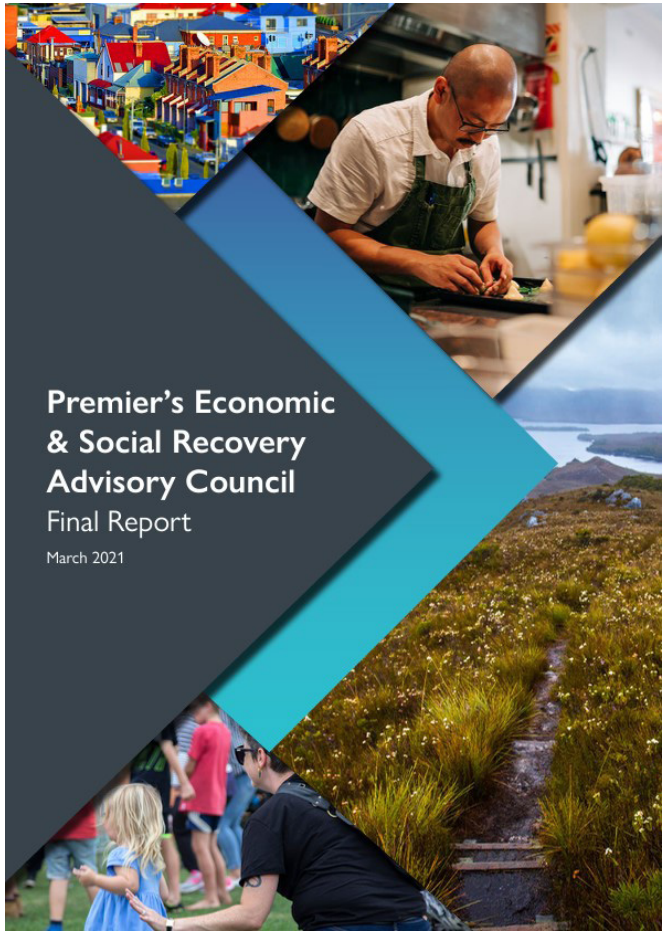
Reflecting these natural and cultural values, around 40% of Tasmania's landmass today is protected in national parks and reserves[26] and almost a fifth of the state is included in the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA), the only World Heritage site (along with Mount Taishan in China) that meets seven out of the 10 classification criteria.[27] More recently, in 2013 Tasmania became one of the few jurisdictions internationally to achieve a net-negative emissions profile, demonstrating leadership on climate action.[28]

Tasmania's growing reputation for its pristine natural environment, cultural assets, high quality agricultural produce, and world-leading emissions profile now underpin Tasmania's brand, delivering significant social and economic benefits. Strong growth in the state's tourism sector, agricultural exports, and migration highlight potential benefits that could be further enhanced through the development of a comprehensive sustainability strategy.

The importance of sustainability for the economic and social wellbeing of future generations has been highlighted by PESRAC. Following extensive community consultation, PESRAC found that the environment was essential for the long-term health, wellbeing, and prosperity of the Tasmanian community and that strong sustainability credentials will be essential in maintaining Tasmania's brand and competitive advantage.[29] Specifically, PESRAC called for the development of a sustainability strategy with "ambitious goals, and concrete targets and actions" focusing on:[30]

- Decarbonising the economy;
- Water resource allocation, security and quality;
- Adoption of circular economy principles; and
- Ensuring a consistent and coordinated government approach to sustainability.

PESRAC recommended that while the strategy should have a strong focus on environmental considerations, it should also encompass broader aspects of sustainability including social factors and ensure decisions account for the interests of future generations. It also suggested that the strategy should be both focused on Tasmanian priorities and be aligned with the SDGs.



4.2 Sustainability initiatives in Tasmania

Reflecting Tasmania's unique environmental and cultural assets, sustainability principles are increasingly incorporated in specific state and local government strategies and policies, as well as in the policies and practices of a wide range of community groups, organisations, and businesses. State Government examples of these include Tasmania's *Sustainable Agri-Food Plan 2019-2023* and the *Draft Waste Action Plan*. The former seeks to support the growth of the agricultural sector while protecting the environment and preserving natural capital; the latter draft plan intends to focus attention on Tasmania's waste and resource recovery challenges and outlines a number of Government commitments including the introduction of a legislated state-wide landfill levy and a Container Refund Scheme.

Tasmanian local governments are also developing their own sustainability strategies. The *City of Hobart Sustainable Hobart Action Plan 2020-2025* outlines 42 projects which are intended to improve the social, economic, and cultural well-being of residents, communities, and businesses in the LGA (See Part 6.4 below). The *City of Launceston Sustainability Strategy* outlines the council's commitment to action on climate change and sustainability, a set of guiding principles, and its intention to build a living action plan, which will complement the Strategy.

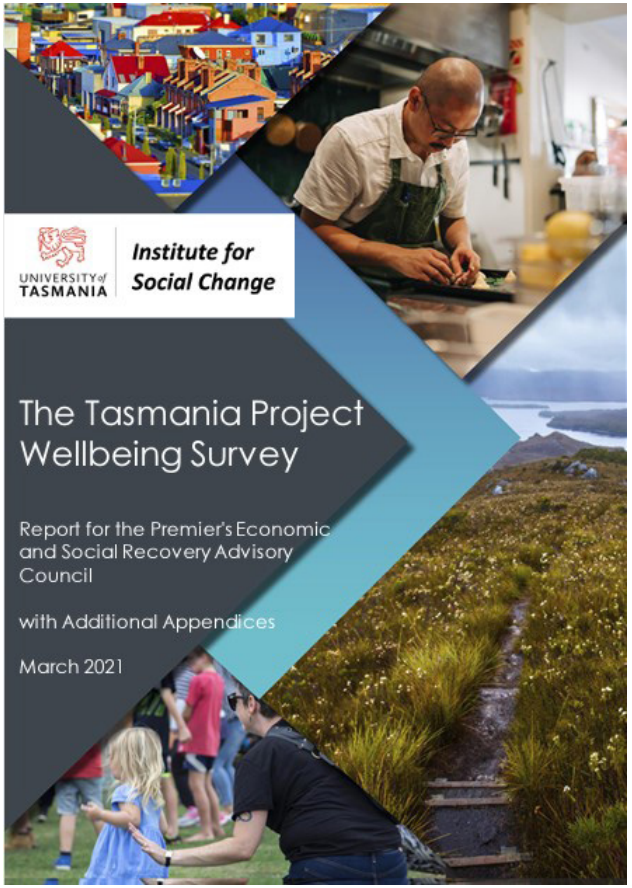
Reflecting the demands of investors, consumers, and other stakeholders, a growing number of Tasmanian businesses and other organisations are embracing and promoting sustainability principles. The University of Tasmania established a comprehensive *Strategic Framework for Sustainability* incorporating its governance, teaching, research, community engagement, and operations. Since 2016, the University has been certified carbon neutral.[31] In 2021 the University was recognised as the sustainability university of the year in the national Green Gown awards. It aims to be among the first universities globally to achieve a platinum rating under the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) rating system.[32]

In terms of businesses, Marinova, a Tasmanian biotechnology company focused on fucoidan products (related to algae), has developed a list of its sustainability practices and their alignment with seven SDGs.[33] Hobart Airport has similarly committed to aligning with eight SDGs, and publishes an Annual Environment Report summarising its environmental performance over the course of the financial year.[34] Spring Bay Mill, an events venue on the east coast of Tasmania, located on the site of what used to be the world's largest wood chip mill, is committed to a range of sustainability measures including ecological regeneration, energy saving, and waste reduction practices in its development and operation.

Equally important has been the development of an active, grassroots sustainability movement across the Tasmanian community identifying and promoting sustainability practices across the state.

Researchers at the University of Tasmania have conducted survey research with over 2300 Tasmanians to assess which sustainability indicators were most important for supporting individual and community wellbeing during the pandemic. The research team from the Institute for Social Change is now developing a sophisticated set of community wellbeing measures and methods that could be incorporated into a Tasmanian sustainability framework.

Tasmania's unique natural assets and growing commitment to sustainability underscore the need for a state-wide sustainability strategy to integrate and amplify the many and varied sustainability initiatives that are already established. Indeed, as our analysis of regional sustainability frameworks presented below concludes, integrating existing sustainability initiatives to enhance coordination and sustainability outcomes is a key feature of effective models.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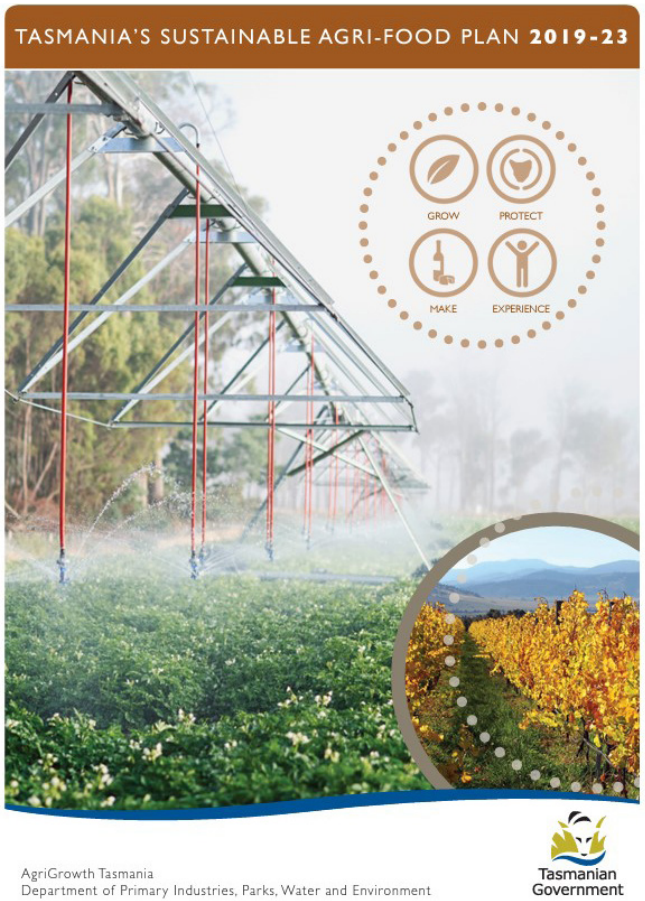
Institute for Social Change
The Tasmania Project Wellbeing Survey
Report for the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council
with Additional Appendices
March 2021


TASMANIA'S SUSTAINABLE AGRI-FOOD PLAN 2019-23
GROW
PROTECT
MAKE
EXPERIENCE
AgriGrowth Tasmania
Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment
Tasmanian Government

PART 5 – ASSESSING SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

Since the launch of the United Nation's 2030 Agenda in 2015, national, regional, and local governments around the world have developed frameworks and strategic plans to guide their sustainability activities throughout the 'Decade of Action' and beyond. As noted above, the SDGs provide a valuable tool for setting and implementing sustainability priorities. However, and as will be demonstrated in this section, other sustainability frameworks have also been deployed at a regional or national scale. For example, ESG frameworks have been adopted in Queensland and Western Australia (South Australia is also currently developing an ESG framework), while place-specific approaches such as New Zealand's He Ara Waiora framework are also emerging.

In states and territories that do not have overarching whole-of-government sustainability strategies, several departments and agencies have developed their own standalone approaches. Individual communities, businesses, and other organisations are also adopting their own sustainability frameworks to set priorities and measure progress, highlighting the important role that a state-level umbrella strategy can have in coordinating and amplifying existing community and business-level initiatives. A summary of established sustainability frameworks that have been developed and applied at different scales is provided below (Table 1).

Within the broad SDG approach, there are also a range of different sustainability frameworks and strategies that vary in their scope and aims, as well as in the specific policy instruments and transition strategies they employ. Some jurisdictions have adopted activity-based sustainability 'action plans' (City of Hobart), while others use the budgeting process to set broadly defined wellbeing and sustainability priorities and to drive change (New Zealand). Still others focus on monitoring progress via annual sustainability reporting coupled with ESG certification (Queensland). Whatever the framework employed, there is clearly growing commitment to promoting sustainability. It is also apparent that different jurisdictions, reflecting their specific ambitions and circumstances, are adapting the SDG and other frameworks and instruments in varying ways to develop their own approaches to achieving more sustainable societies by 2030.

Given the growing range of sustainability frameworks and approaches being developed and implemented globally, it is important to analyse and compare sustainability strategies with a view to identifying the most relevant and appropriate framework and strategy for Tasmania. To this end, we have identified a range of criteria to guide our analysis of relevant sustainability strategies at different scales, from city strategies – Hobart, Sydney, and Helsinki (Finland) – to state or regional strategies – Victoria, Queensland, Flanders (Belgium), and Hawai'i (US) – and national strategies – New Zealand, Wales, and Canada.

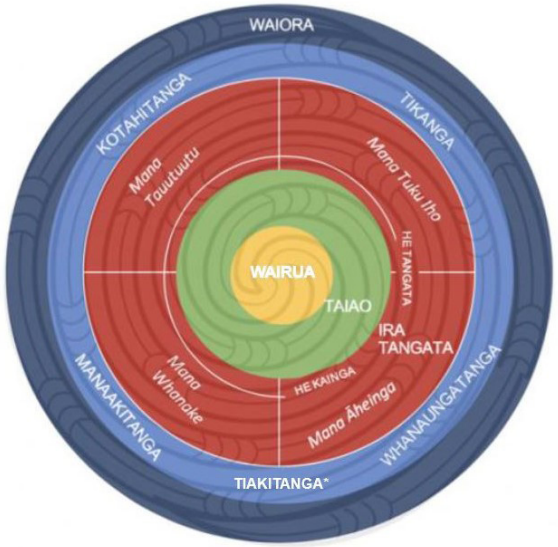


Figure 4: Draft He Ara Waiora framework

Table 1: Selected sustainability frameworks

Framework	Features	Scale	References
United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	· Comprehensive framework across 17 measures and 144 indicators · National peer review available	· National and international framework that can be applied regionally	· https://sdgs.un.org/ · https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/dp/wellbeing-frameworks-treasury-html#section-7
Wellbeing	· Alternative to SDGs, focus on community wellbeing and how other sustainability indicators support that outcome · NZ and Wales as good examples	· National or regional framework	· https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2022-04/sp-wellbeing-aotearoa-new-zealand-12apr22.pdf · https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-10/well-being-future-generations-wales-act-2015-the-essentials-2021.pdf
Environment, Social and Governance (ESG)	· Benchmarking and reporting framework for a wide range of environmental, social and governance indicators · No universal standard and certified by private organisations	· Designed for businesses and organisations · Used by Queensland Government to assess the State's performance	· https://www.unglobalcompact.org/take-action/action/private-sustainability-finance · https://s3.treasury.qld.gov.au/files/Queensland-Sustainability-Report-November-2021-1.pdf
EEA Urban Metabolism Framework	· Benchmarking the inflows, production, stocks and outflows of urban metabolism · Urban metabolism includes categories such as energy, water, material, and waste	· Designed to be applied at city level	· https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-15-8983-6_7
European Green Capital Award	· Recognition to encourage cities to commit to ambitious sustainability strategies	· Cities	· https://ec.europa.eu/environment/topics/urban-environment/european-green-capital-award/about-eu-green-capital-award_en
European Green City Tool	· Self-assessment and benchmarking tool for cities and regions	· Cities and Regions	· https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/greencitytool/home/
Reference Frameworks for Sustainable Cities	· Support framework selection · Provides support from initiation to monitoring of progress	· Cities · Private organisations	· http://rfsc.eu/
STAR Community Rating System	· Provides a set of characteristics for a sustainable community e.g. instils resiliency	· Communities and organisations	· https://stars.aashe.org/ · https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/university-of-tasmania-no-state/report/2020-07-15/

5.1 Types of sustainability models

Having undertaken a systematic review of policy and academic literature, six broad criteria have been identified that can be used to categorise and evaluate the structure and aims of different sustainability strategies. These criteria and categories within them are summarised below.

i: Definitional scope of sustainability

The first consideration that can be used to distinguish between frameworks is how 'sustainability' is defined by a given strategy. As was noted in Part 3 of this report, the concept of sustainability has evolved over time to become more holistic and inclusive of social and economic, as well as environmental, considerations. This evolution has culminated in broad-based adoption of the SDGs following their release in 2015 (Part 3). Yet, as we have noted, some regional and national sustainability strategies adopt ***selective*** definitions and prioritise a smaller number of specific sustainability dimensions over others. Other plans (such as Canada's or the City of Sydney's) embrace a ***comprehensive*** definition of sustainability and seek to improve outcomes across all 17 of the SDGs (See Parts 6 & 7). Alternatives include adoption of a ***general*** definition of sustainability with a commitment to ensuring future generations can enjoy the environmental, social, and economic resources we can access today, but without any direct linkage to the SDGs. The final approach is to frame sustainability in compatible but ***alternative*** terms, such as the Wellbeing Budget approach adopted in New Zealand and Wales.

Definitional scope: key categories

1. ***Comprehensive*** sustainability strategy: a framework that explicitly seeks to achieve progress across all 17 SDGs (e.g., Canada, Hawai'i)
2. ***Selective*** sustainability strategy: a framework that prioritises a select range of SDGs over others (e.g., Victoria)
3. ***General*** sustainability strategy: a framework where there is a general ambition to improve social, economic, and environmental sustainability (e.g., City of Hobart)
4. ***Alternative*** sustainability strategy: a framework that adopts an alternative definition of sustainability (e.g., New Zealand & Wales)..

ii: Measurement of sustainability

The second category concerns a jurisdiction's commitment to measuring progress towards achieving outcomes. An ambitious ***comprehensive*** measurement of sustainability includes commitments to measuring and reporting progress towards all targets or SDGs listed within the strategy using a wide range of relevant metrics and indicators. A ***selective*** measurement approach adopts similar measurement and progress reporting standards but prioritises a smaller number of specific targets or SDGs.

Systematic measurement frameworks involve a slightly different and devolved approach in which high-level sustainability strategies are identified with progress measured and reported, but with few specific linked sustainability initiatives or transition plans to promote change. Instead, the expectation is that all government agencies and programs will embrace sustainability practices with a view to achieving systemic change. Queensland's framework is an example of this approach in that it comprises a commitment to report progress towards achieving sustainability outcomes without offering new targets, commitments, objectives, or plans. Rather, the ESG-based reporting

framework is the Queensland Government's way of centralising information about its existing efforts towards achieving environmental, social, and governance goals.

Finally, ***aspirational*** here reflects a commitment to achieving high-level sustainability aims and outcomes but lacks detailed targets and reporting mechanisms or specific initiatives to improve outcomes. Aspirational sustainability models are largely symbolic.

Measurement: key categories

1. ***Comprehensive*** outcomes framework (e.g., Canada, Flanders)
2. ***Selective*** outcomes framework (e.g., City of Hobart)
3. ***Systematic*** reporting framework (e.g., Queensland)
4. ***Aspirational*** outcomes framework (e.g., Hawai'i).

iii: Coordination to promote sustainability

Given the broad variation in scope observed in different strategies, an important feature of state and national frameworks is the extent to which they seek to integrate existing sustainability policies and initiatives to enhance coordination and improve outcomes.

Some state-level strategies focus explicitly on promoting ***external*** coordination with national and local government and a broad cross-section of business and community partners, while others are primarily concerned with coordinating and aligning sustainability practices ***internally*** across agencies and programs within government. Some comprehensive strategies, such as that of Flanders, involve both internal and external coordination to promote a whole-of-economy approach.

Reflecting the importance of collaboration and coordination, many sustainability frameworks ***aspire*** to promote coordination through education and awareness but lack specific commitments and resources to enhance and sustain collaboration in relation to sustainability challenges.

Finally, some sustainability frameworks include only a ***limited*** or negligible commitment to enhance coordination, instead focussing on a series of specific sustainability-focused programs such as improving waste-management practices.

Coordination: key categories

1. ***External*** coordination (e.g., Flanders)
2. ***Internal*** coordination (e.g., Victoria)
3. ***Aspirational*** coordination
4. ***Limited*** coordination.

iv: Sustainability transitions:

The fourth criterion, sustainability transitions, assesses whether a jurisdiction has implemented specific initiatives to deliver sustainability outcomes. Sustainability transition plans are detailed, often sector-specific, frameworks for promoting transitions towards more sustainable systems. These approaches recognise the complex and interconnected nature of economic, social, and ecological systems as well as the need to develop sophisticated approaches to deliver systemic change.[36] In practical terms, the sustainability transitions category attempts to establish the extent to which policy is actively trying to change individual, community, and business practices to enhance sustainability and to establish specific sustainability domains as priorities.

Our review of national and international sustainability frameworks has identified four broad categories:

Transitions: key categories

1. ***Explicit*** strategies feature clearly defined and resourced industry transition plans across key sectors (e.g., Victoria)
2. ***Emerging*** transition plans include a broad policy commitment to developing plans over time (e.g., Flanders)
3. ***Target-based*** transition plans describe the scenario where there are plans for a small number of key sectors such as emissions reduction plans (e.g., City of Hobart)
4. ***None***: sustainability frameworks or strategies without explicit transition plans (e.g., City of Sydney).

v: Policy instruments and interventions used to promote sustainability

There are a range of policy instruments that can be used - either in combination or individually - to promote sustainability, including public investment, grants or subsidies, regulation, taxes or fees, regulation, education, and promotional strategies designed to encourage sustainable practices. The specific policy instruments and initiatives employed in a given strategy will differ depending on the sustainability domain in question, level of government, and resources available. For example, policy instruments implemented by a city council will inevitably differ from those implemented by a national government due to local governments' more limited powers and resources. Different sustainability strategies also deploy these instruments and resources in different ways that reflect varied local conditions, community expectations, and legislative or judicative circumstances. Where practicable, implementation and outcomes of sustainability strategies are likely to be enhanced by deep community engagement, co-design, and delivery in partnership. Finally, governments at all levels typically enjoy enormous leadership and information resources.

Policy instruments: key categories

1. ***Public capital investment*** (including via social impact investment or partnership arrangements with commercial operators or civic/NFP organisations)
2. ***Public operational subsidies and grants***
3. ***Taxation*** and charges
4. ***Regulation***
5. ***Education and advocacy*** to promote sustainability and behavioural change
6. **Sustainability *planning and support*** for organisations and communities
7. ***Investment in research***
8. ***Contracting and procurement***
9. ***Sustainability governance and reporting.***

vi: Governance of sustainability strategies

The final criterion concerns internal governance arrangements to support sustainability frameworks. Considerations include who delivers the strategy (separate agency etc.), how it is funded, and whether there is independent oversight or an advisory board.

Given the complexity of sustainability governance and the number of stakeholders involved, strategies need to articulate how decisions are made and priorities established, who is responsible for implementation of the strategy and whether there is a formal process to periodically review the strategy and update it over time.

Governance approaches used to support sustainability strategies fall into four broad categories. ***Independent*** governance models involve the creation of a new statutory agency or authority to develop and implement a sustainability strategy. Such entities often feature an independent board, advisory panel, or expert committee.

A ***multi-level*** governance model may include elements of an independent model but also formal representation from other tiers of government and stakeholder groups.

An ***agency-based*** model is where an existing government agency is required to develop and deliver a sustainability framework under legislation whereas under a ***policy-based*** governance model, a framework is developed without a legislative basis and with minimal direct accountability to parliament.

Governance: key categories

1. ***Independent*** Governance: established under legislation, separate agency/ authority, independent board, and reporting
2. ***Multi-level*** Governance: different levels of government and key stakeholders given explicit governance functions
3. ***Agency*** Governance: established under legislation, administered by existing agency/agencies
4. ***Policy-based*** Governance: established as policy with little direct parliamentary oversight.

Table 2: Criteria and categories for assessing sustainability frameworks

Sustainability criteria	Assessment categories
1. **Definitional scope of sustainability**	• ***Comprehensive*** sustainability strategy to achieve progress across all 17 SDGs • ***Selective*** sustainability strategy to achieve progress across a select range of SDGs • ***General*** sustainability strategy – a framework where there is a general ambition to improve social, economic, and environmental sustainability • ***Alternative*** sustainability strategy – a framework that adopts an alternative definition of sustainability such as 'wellbeing'
2. **Measurement of sustainability**	• ***Comprehensive*** outcomes framework • ***Selective*** outcomes framework • ***Systematic*** reporting framework • ***Aspirational*** outcomes Framework
3. **Coordination to promote sustainability**	• ***External*** coordination • ***Internal*** coordination • ***Aspirational*** coordination • ***Limited*** coordination
4. **Sustainability transition plans**	• ***Explicit*** and resourced industry transition plans • ***Emerging*** transition plans (policy commitment to developing them) • ***Target-based*** industry transition plans • ***None*** - no explicit industry plan
5. **Policy instruments**	• ***Public capital investment*** • ***Public operational subsidies and grants*** • ***Taxation*** and charges • ***Regulation*** • ***Education and advocacy*** to promote sustainability · Sustainability ***planning and support*** for organisations and communities • ***Investment in research*** • ***Contracting and procurement***
6. **Sustainability governance and reporting**	• ***Independent*** governance (established under legislation, separate agency/authority, independent board, and reporting) • ***Multi-level*** governance (different levels of government and key stakeholders given explicit governance functions) • ***Agency*** governance (established under legislation, administered by existing agency/agencies) • ***Policy-based*** governance (established as policy with little direct parliamentary oversight)

PART 6 – AUSTRALIAN EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

A growing number of Australian organisations, communities, and governments at different levels are developing and implementing sustainability strategies and frameworks. This section provides more detailed analysis of four Australian examples of sustainability strategies that contain lessons for Tasmania.

As noted in Table 3 below, only three states have whole-of-government sustainability frameworks. Of these, only Victoria's is an explicit sustainability strategy. Queensland and Western Australia both produce sustainability reports using an ESG framework, and Western Australia also presents existing sustainability initiatives using the UNDSGs framework. South Australia is also currently developing an ESG reporting process.

The two Australian states with the most developed sustainability approaches are Victoria and Queensland, with Victoria in particular establishing a stand-alone statutory authority, Sustainability Victoria, and committing to apply an SDG framework to priority areas, including emissions and waste reduction and promoting a circular economy. Queensland's sustainability approach by contrast focuses on measuring and supporting existing sustainability initiatives but without a dedicated agency or explicit new programs to improve performance over time.

In addition to state-level sustainability frameworks, a number of cities and municipalities have their own plans, with the cities of Hobart and Sydney providing good examples. Inevitably, city-level strategies focus on local issues and systems over which they have more control, such as waste management, planning, and community wellbeing, typically accompanied by aspirational targets around outcomes such as emission reduction and inequality. While operating at a different scale, regional and city-level sustainability strategies provide insights into the possible priorities of a state strategy while highlighting the importance of aligning and supporting existing initiatives.

Table 3: Sustainability frameworks in Australian states and territories

Jurisdiction	Sustainability strategy or ESG report?	Responsible agency	Framework
Victoria	Sustainability strategy, whole-of-government	Sustainability Victoria	SDGs
Queensland	ESG report, whole-of-government	Queensland Treasury	ESG (assessed and certified by MSCI)
Western Australia	ESG report, whole-of-government	Department of Treasury	ESG and SDG
Australian Capital Territory	Agency-specific sustainability strategies	N/A	Various
South Australia	Agency-specific sustainability strategies	N/A	Various
Northern Territory	Agency-specific sustainability strategies	N/A	Various
New South Wales	Agency-specific sustainability strategies	N/A	Various

6.1 Victoria – *SV2030: A Decade of Action*

Victoria has the most comprehensive state sustainability strategy in Australia in terms of its design and key elements, although its scope is largely limited to waste and emissions reduction and to promoting a circular economy.

The Victorian sustainability strategy is delivered by a discrete statutory authority, Sustainability Victoria, established under the *Sustainability Victoria Act 2005*. Victoria's current strategy, *SV2030: A Decade of Action*, is a 10-year plan informed by circular economy principles which seeks to achieve a "more prosperous Victoria, a more prosperous economy, [and] a more prosperous planet".[37]

Key Features

Victoria's sustainability strategy is broadly informed by an SDG approach but with an emphasis on circular economy principles, such as waste reduction, ecological restoration and regeneration, and emissions reduction. Sustainability Victoria has oversight of two key sustainability policies: *Recycling Victoria: A New Economy* (2020) with a target of diverting 80% of waste from landfill by 2030 and the *Climate Change Strategy* (2021), which sets out targets to reduce the state's emissions by 28-33% by 2025, and 45-50% by 2030 (from 2005 levels).[38] More specific programs, targets, and reporting are contained within the annual Sustainability Victoria Business Plans, with the *Business Plan 2020-21* establishing five strategic priorities:

1. Influencing producers and regulators to retain the highest product value
2. Enabling resource recovery and reuse
3. Leading community behaviour change to reduce emissions and waste
4. Proactively identifying future opportunities through data insights and systems thinking
5. Partnering with community to achieve local solutions.

The Business Plans contain a range of short-term outcomes, accompanied by specific, measurable targets. Progress towards those targets is reported on in Annual Reports.[39]

Some specific programs resulting from the Strategy are listed in Table 4.:

Table 4: Selected outcomes resulting from SV2030

Objective	Targets in Business Plan (2020-21)	Actual outcomes (Annual Report 2020-21)
Reducing waste and recycling better (UN SDG 12)	10,000 tonnes of organics diverted from landfill (SDG 12.3 and 11.6)	28,286 tonnes of organics diverted from landfill
Action on climate change (UN SDG 7)	25 carbon-neutral homes built in the pilot program (SDG 7.1 and 11.1)	32 carbon neutral homes built in the pilot program
Boost Victoria's economy and create new jobs (UN SDG 8)	30 new jobs created (FTE) (SDG 8.5)	40 new jobs created (FTE)
Promote innovation and R&D into low-carbon products and industries consistent with circular economy principles (UN SDG 8)	5 businesses use recycled content in their production processes or create new products (SDG 8.4 and 12.6)	13 businesses used recycled content in their production processes or created new products
Develop a diversified and resilient waste and resource recovery sector (UN SDG 12)	15 new or upgraded facilities able to recover and reprocess materials (SDG 12.5 and 11.6)	35 new or upgraded facilities able to recover and reprocess materials
Improve energy efficiency and accelerate transition to clean energy (UN SDG 7)	8,500,000 kWh of energy saved by Victorian schools (7.1)	13,400,000 kWh of energy saved by Victorian schools

In order to achieve these broad sustainability objectives, a wide range of policy instruments have been employed, from small-scale grants, to piloting new technologies and products (such as a small number of net-zero homes), to large scale investment in energy efficiency across Victorian schools. The strategy also includes education and engagement programmes to promote behavioural change and support community action through place-based projects.

Victoria: Distinctive elements and insights for Tasmania

Victoria's sustainability strategy provides a good example of a comprehensive, contemporary approach. It is informed by the SDG framework but with a specific focus on developing the circular economy and emissions reduction. The strategy is supported by an independent statutory authority and there is a legislative obligation to report progress against a range of sustainability measures as per the SDG approach.

During the consultation stage for the sustainability strategy, some critics suggested that *SV2030* focused too heavily on waste management and recycling at the expense of other circular economy objectives, such as avoiding the use of finite resources in the production of goods and services in the first place.[40] This is of note for any sustainability strategy seeking to create a circular economy: curbing consumption is a central aspect of circular economy, so it is important that strategies do not prioritise recycling over other important principles such as reduction.[41] The Victorian government has also been criticised for allowing waste incineration to occur - known as Waste to Energy processes - which critics find to be incompatible with a circular economy because it does not retain resources in the system for as long as possible.[42]

This approach is of relevance to Tasmania and is consistent with the ambition of being a national leader in sustainability. Whether a statutory authority is the best model for Tasmania is an open question given the state's small size. A greater focus on promoting collaboration across government and with other stakeholders should be the priority for a small jurisdiction such as Tasmania. Indeed, a whole-of-government approach with central agency oversight, as opposed to an authority-based model, may be more conducive to developing and delivering a comprehensive plan across a wider range of SDG goals that are central to Tasmania's future. For example, the Tasmanian government's recent commitment to developing a whole-of-state wellbeing framework could be a central pillar of a broader sustainability strategy.[43]

6.2 Queensland – *Sustainability Report 2021*

In 2021, the Queensland Government committed to a systematic process of ESG reporting via the publication of annual sustainability reports.[44] The Queensland government identified seven ESG focus areas:

- Climate action
- Exposure to environmental externalities and vulnerability to natural disasters
- Environmental protection and natural resource management
- Investment in education and health services
- Equitable access to opportunities and services
- Economic risk
- Financial management.

While this approach broadly conforms to the three-pillar conceptualisation of sustainability, the primary function of the framework is to report on outcomes from established programs and policies rather than to inform new initiatives and strategies designed to improve outcomes.

Key features

Despite these limitations, the *Sustainability Report* does identify and integrate several sustainability related commitments and targets from existing policies with specific measurable outcomes. These include, for example:

- A target of 50% renewable energy by 2030
- A 30% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050
- A goal for 90% of young people to be in higher education, training, or employment after completing year 12 by 2030.

The model also includes the compilation and reporting of a wide range of data relevant to measuring sustainability outcomes, including:

- Total net CO2-e emissions (aggregate and per capita)
- Net emissions of particulate matter
- Renewable energy as a share of total energy consumption
- Electricity generation by fuel type
- Primary energy consumption by fuel type
- Net clearing of forests
- Status and number of vulnerable, endangered, and extinct flora and fauna species
- Protected areas (parks, forests, and reserves) by estate type
- Various labour force statistics
- Family violence statistics (incidence, counselling, cases closed)
- Life expectancy and prevalence of common comorbidities and risk factors
- Household income
- Various government finance statistics.

The use of an ESG framework (as opposed to SDGs, for example) does complicate the interpretation of Queensland's approach. On one hand, the *Sustainability Report* presents targets, outcomes, and progress against key metrics relevant to all three core components of sustainability, which aligns with a best practice sustainability strategy. On the other hand, however, the framework does not contain new policy commitments, explicit industry transition plans, or ambitions to enhance coordination around sustainability goals. Consistent with the ESG approach, the model is concerned with reporting sustainability and potentially assessing the sustainability impacts of future

policies and projects (including private sector projects). As part of its new sustainability reporting process Queensland has received an ESG rating of AA (though trending negative) from Morgan Stanley Capital Investments (MSCI), a respected ESG ratings agency.

Queensland: Distinctive elements and insights for Tasmania

Queensland's approach to promoting sustainability is a reporting framework for existing policies rather than a comprehensive sustainability strategy. The Queensland case does demonstrate how ESG reporting methods can be used at a state level and the cross-section of seven ESG measures spanning environmental, health, and educational outcomes could be adopted by Tasmania. However, the lack of ambition and commitment to innovation and explicit commitment to new policies and programs to improve sustainability outcomes is a major limitation of the Queensland approach.

6.3 City of Sydney – *Sustainable Sydney 2030: Community Strategic Plan 2017-2021*

The City of Sydney is one of Australia's smallest councils by area (25km2) and includes the Sydney CBD and surrounding suburbs. It has an estimated resident population of 248,000 or approximately 4.6% of the population of Greater Sydney.[45]

The City of Sydney's sustainability strategy, *Sustainable Sydney 2030: Community Strategic Plan*, was adopted in 2008 and is updated every four years, most recently in 2017. The strategy conforms to the three-pillar conception of sustainability, noting that "sustainable development is not just about the physical environment. It is also about the economy, society, and culture ".[46]

Key Features

Ten targets are established under the Plan, which align with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to be met by 2030 (unless otherwise stated):

1. A 70% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions on 2006 levels by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050
2. 50% of electricity demand met by renewable sources, zero increase in potable water use, and a 50% increase in total tree canopy cover
3. At least 138,000 dwellings in the city
4. 7.5% of all city housing to be social housing and 7.5% affordable housing delivered by not-for-profit providers
5. At least 465,000 jobs in the city
6. 80% increase in number of trips to work taken on public transport
7. At least 10% of all total trips by bicycle and 50% by pedestrian movement
8. Every resident to live within walking distance of key services (fresh food, childcare, healthcare, leisure, social, learning, and cultural infrastructure)
9. Every resident to live within a 3-minute walk from continuous green links to the harbour foreshore, harbour parklands, or Moore/Centennial/Sydney Park
10. Improved community cohesion and social interaction (based on at least 65% of people reporting a belief that 'most people can be trusted').

To measure success and report on progress, the City of Sydney uses a suite of community wellbeing indicators comprising more than 100 measures across five domains:

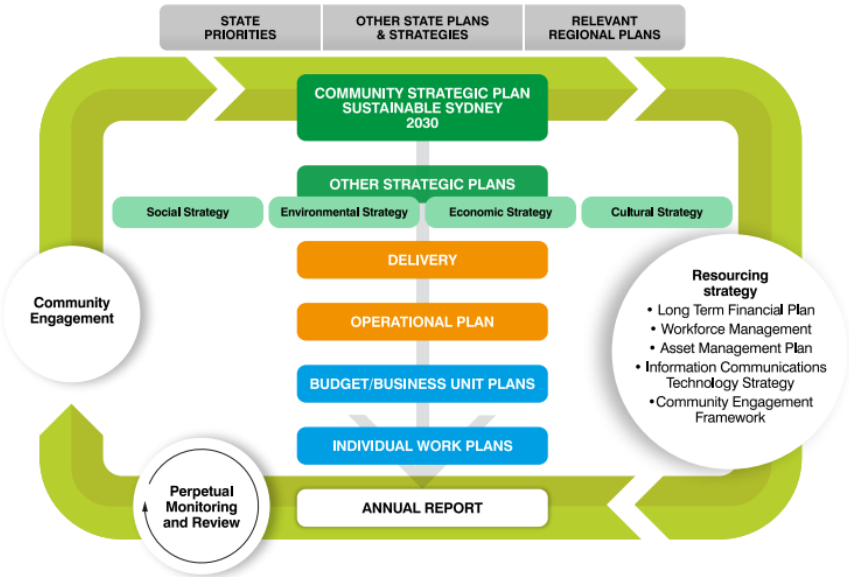
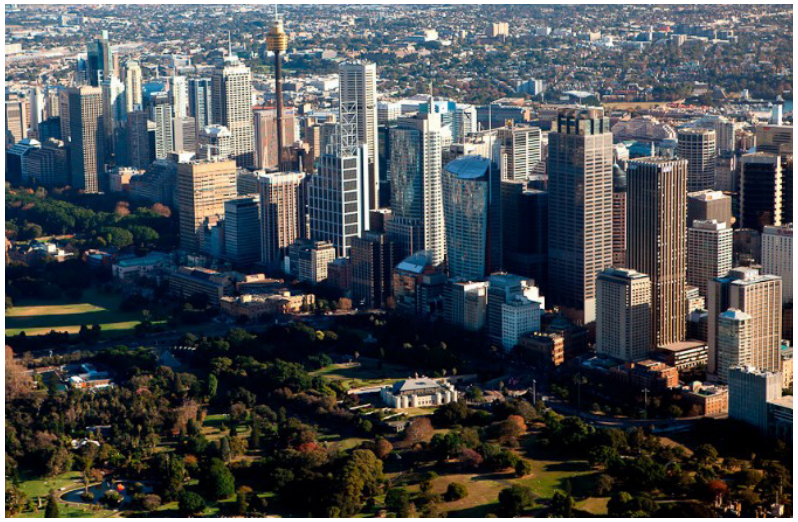


Figure 5: City of Sydney's sustainability strategy approach

- Healthy, safe, and inclusive communities
- Culturally rich and vibrant communities
- Democratic and engaged communities
- Dynamic and resilient local communities
- Sustainable environments.

The City's four-year Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan are monitored through six-monthly, annual, and four-yearly performance reports as well as quarterly financial reports. These set out progress and results of the planned projects, programs, and activities, and include several service measures and performance indicators.



Accountabilities and reporting obligations are managed via a series of more specific policies based on the four-yearly strategy, which are embodied with operational and budget plans and assessed via an annual reporting framework.

City of Sydney: Distinctive elements and insights for Tasmania

When established in 2008, the *Sustainable Sydney Plan* was regarded as an exemplar of urban sustainability planning. It established 10 clear and measurable medium-term sustainability targets which were supported by a series of policies designed to achieve sustainability outcomes. The process through which sustainability objectives have been integrated into community consultation, operational planning, and budgeting processes (see Figure 4 above) also provides an example from which Tasmania could learn. However, it is important to note that the City of Sydney is a physically small and highly urbanised local government area and thus differs significantly from Tasmania in terms of its geography, economy, and demographics.

6.4 City of Hobart – Sustainable Hobart Action Plan 2020-2025

Hobart City Council's *Sustainable Hobart Action Plan 2020-2025* builds on previous climate action policies and provides a framework for supporting a range of established environmental initiatives. It does not explicitly follow the SDG framework, instead defining sustainability as "the quality of progressing in a way that minimises or removes the requirement for the consistent increased application of new resources".[47]

Key Features

The Plan contains over 40 actions in six key areas (leadership, mobility, energy, resilience, waste, governance), designed to meet eight strategic goals:

1. To sustainably meet the rapid changes in Hobart's demographics and population
2. To create a path to a zero-emissions future for the City and community
3. To deliver on the community's vision for Hobart, described in the document *Hobart: A community vision for our island capital* (2018)
4. To prepare our city to withstand storm, sea level rise, flood, bushfire, and other natural hazards
5. To challenge the people of Hobart with exciting, smart, innovative, and affordable solutions to energy management, transport and other areas
6. To collaborate with all areas of the City and external stakeholders to drive efficiency in our processes, development and actions
7. To provide leadership and collaboration at local, regional, national, and international levels
8. To deliver better and more efficient services and programs for the people of Hobart.

Each action area comprises objectives, actions, and timeframes, but few of the actions include specific and measurable targets, especially in the case of targets over which the Council has little direct control. Specific targets that are articulated include: 100% net renewable electricity by 2040; reducing the city of Hobart's 2020 corporate greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2030; and 40% vegetation canopy by 2046. Also, the City intends to identify targets and actions by 2022 to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions. Coordination within and beyond the council (with community, local businesses, research organisations such as UTAS, and state and federal governments) is discussed in general terms.

The *Sustainable Hobart Action Plan* utilises a range of policy instruments, including:

- Encouraging education and behavioural change through initiatives such as the Sustainable Hobart Information Portal
- Incorporating sustainability principals into areas of planning
- Investing in the roll out of technologies such as 'Energy Audit Toolkits', which measure domestic, business, and educational settings to monitor the environmental performance of buildings
- Providing grants of up to $55,000 annually to support community sustainability initiatives
- While no specific regulatory changes are described in the Plan, in 2021 HCC enacted a bylaw to ban single use plastics for takeaway food, the first of its kind in Australia.[48]

The *Sustainable Hobart Action Plan* provides a framework to support other initiatives already underway, such as the *Capital City Strategic Plan* and the transitional *Waste Management Strategy 2030*. The latter specifies zero waste to landfill by 2030, with targets to be measured annually (at a minimum) by systematic internal audits and reviews. In addition, the Waste Strategy will be formally reviewed at five-year intervals, and is coordinated internally across council teams, and integrated with state and national policies.[49]

City of Hobart: Distinctive elements and insights for Tasmania

The *Sustainable Hobart Action Plan* is wide-ranging and aspirational, although like many city plans, could include a greater number of defined actions and identifiable measurables, as well as outlining oversight and accountability provisions.

In general, local government sustainability strategies are commitments and signals of intent. Often, local governments are operating with relatively limited powers to effect 'big picture' change. However, even with these limitations, the City of Hobart has led by example within its area of control, through measures such as the *Single-Use Plastics By-law 2020*. This nation-leading ban demonstrates how local governments can set the agenda on sustainability issues and become sites of innovative policy experimentation. To enhance cooperation and coordination, local government strategies should align with state and national ones where appropriate and vice versa; state and national governments can undoubtedly learn from local government strategies. Tasmania, in the development of a state sustainability strategy, should seek wherever possible to align with existing strategies such as the *Sustainable Hobart Action Plan* to enhance vertical coordination.

6.5 Summary table

	Summary	Definitional scope	Meaurement	Coordination	Transition	Instruments	Governance
Victoria ***SV2030* (2021)**	*SV2030* is a 'big picture' vision with 3 focus areas: 1) Investment and innovation; 2) Behaviour change and education; 3) Community action. In its efforts to achieve a circular economy in Victoria, it is aligned with some of the SDGs.	***Selective***	***Comprehensive*** - SV's annual reports map outcome measures (aligned with the SDGs) against focus areas and 14 targets.	***Internal***	***Explicit***- Focus is on circular economy and emission reduction.	*Public investment; regulation*	*Independent* - Agency established under the *Sustainability Victoria Act 2005*
Queensland ***Sustainability Report 2021***	This inaugural *Sustainability Report* provides information on the Queensland Government's policies that support environmental, social and governance (ESG) outcomes.	***General***	***Systematic***- The Report summarises its outcomes according to the ESG framework. Queensland is rated on its ESG Index outcomes by MSCI, a private investment company that provides ESG ratings (MSCI 2022).	***Internal***	***None***	***Public investment; public grants; education and behavioural change***	***Agency-based*** (Queensland Treasury)
City of Sydney ***Sustainable Sydney 2030***	*SS2030* has 10 strategic directions across environmental, social and economic domains, linked to the SDGs.	***Comprehensive*** - "The City defines sustainability, in keeping with the Brundtland Report of 1987, as meeting the environmental, social and economic needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." I	***Comprehensive*** - The City has developed its own community wellbeing indicators (more than 100 measures across 5 domains). Progress against the 10 strategic directions is measured and reported in regular reports.	***Internal***	***None***	***Public investment; advocacy; education and behavioural change***	***Policy-based***
City of Hobart **Sustainable Hobart Action Plan 2020-2025**	The Plan has 8 strategic goals, not linked to the SDGs, but encompassing social, environmental, and economic concerns as well as governance and civic involvement.	***General***	***Selective*** - Some areas are measured and reported on annually. See for example, the *Greenhouse Gas Annual Report* and *Waste Management Strategy*	***Internal*** (with some general commitments to external coordination)	***Target-based*** - See for example, the *Waste Management Strategy 2030*	***Education and behavioural change; public investment; grants; planning; regulatory***	***Policy-based*** governance

PART 7 - INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

A number of international jurisdictions are developing and implementing sustainability strategies, plans, and frameworks. This section provides more detailed analysis of six examples of sustainability strategies of relevance to Tasmania, demonstrating a variety of approaches to implementing sustainability practices.

New Zealand, Wales, and Canada all have national plans for achieving social, environmental, and economic objectives. New Zealand and Wales both implement national 'wellbeing' agendas rather than 'sustainability', the former through *Wellbeing Budgets* and the latter through the *Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act*. Canada takes a vastly different approach, with a comprehensive sustainability strategy encapsulating all 17 SDG goals and 99 federal agencies or organisations. These represent different, but well-regarded, approaches to capturing sustainability concerns at a national level. Both Canada and New Zealand additionally integrate the concerns and perspectives of their Indigenous populations into their strategies, also providing a valuable example for Tasmania in this regard.

Hawai'i and Flanders both represent regional/state-level sustainability strategies within federal systems of governance. Hawai'i's position as an island state brings unique challenges and opportunities which makes it a particularly valuable comparison for Tasmania. Also included in this comparative study is the City of Helsinki, which, despite being a city rather than a region, can be used to demonstrate processes of localising the SDGs and sustainability in general.

Figure 6 image credit: IT in Canada Online

7.1 Canada – Draft Federal Sustainable Development Strategy 2022-2026

Canada's approach to sustainability is instructive and relevant to Australia due to the two nations' similar history, culture, and political institutions. Like Australia, Canada is a federal system and member of the Commonwealth with a colonial history that makes consideration of First Nations issues an imperative for government policy initiatives. The Canadian Government issued its draft *Sustainable Development Strategy* in March 2022, describing its whole-of-government approach.

Key features

Since 2008, the *Federal Sustainable Development Act* has required the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to table and report on a *Federal Sustainable Development Strategy* every three years. In 2020, amendments to the Act shifted the focus from environment alone to include social and economic aspects of sustainable development, and to promote a whole-of-government approach.

"the Government of Canada recognises the importance of involving Indigenous peoples in developing the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy given their Traditional Knowledge and their unique understanding of, and connection to, Canada's lands and waters"

Adopting the SDG framework and a commitment to all 17 goals, the Strategy is one of the most comprehensive globally. The Canadian approach emphasises the interrelationships between environmental, economic, and social dimensions of sustainable development, while its specific focus on the environmental aspects of the SDGs highlights the environment as a critical component of sustainable development in the context of climate change, biodiversity loss, and other urgent environmental challenges facing Canada and the world.

There are 99 Canadian federal government agencies or organisations that will contribute to achieving the Strategy's aims, and that were likewise involved in its design. Key to the Strategy are timeframes, measurability, and accountability for achieving the goals. The Strategy focuses on intergenerational equity by emphasising the need for the Strategy to continually evolve.

An underlying emphasis and strength of the Strategy is the inclusion of Canada's Indigenous people, stating that "the Government of Canada recognises the importance of involving Indigenous peoples in developing the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy given their Traditional Knowledge and their unique understanding of, and connection to, Canada's lands and waters ".[50]

The governing Act specifies a consultation period of not less than 120 days for each new iteration of the Strategy to ensure the future accountability of Canadian governments regarding sustainability. The current draft Strategy is open for feedback from Canadians until late July 2022.[51]

Canada: Distinctive elements and insights for Tasmania

A distinctive and laudable element of Canada's sustainability Strategy is its commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples. The Strategy commits to working collaboratively with First Nations people to progress reconciliation while also ensuring a just sustainability transition. From the consultative nature of community engagement to supporting Indigenous businesses through an entrepreneurship program, the Strategy is unique and important in having a holistic and inclusive approach to addressing sustainability by achieving the SDGs.

The Canadian Strategy recognises that the shift to a clean economy poses risks of disruption, particularly for workers with fewer marketable skills, and so emphasises the importance of pursuing these transitions in a just and inclusive manner, providing affected workers and communities with new opportunities for training and employment. This approach offers a way to ease potential tensions between economic development and environmental concerns on the journey to a sustainable future.

The Strategy also attempts to provide accountability via measurable, time-bound targets, with each assigned a responsible minister. The same measures for accountability also ensure transparency of the development and assessment of the Strategy and progress. In addition to internal assessments, the Strategy has developed a petition process for Canadians to communicate sustainable development feedback and concerns to the federal government.

Similarities in Australia and Canada's political structures allows for an important case study comparison. Canada's coordinated federal approach, including the input of 99 federal agencies or organisations, is an important precedent for vertical governmental structures to propose and implement sustainability strategies. To develop a strategy and coordinate a state-wide sustainable transition, the Tasmanian Government will face similar issues and challenges to those experienced by the Canadian Government.

7.2 New Zealand – Wellbeing Budget 2022

New Zealand is a key case study due to its cultural and economic similarities to Tasmania, and because of the uniqueness of its approach to implementing sustainability and wellbeing. As in Tasmania, the tourism industry is an important economic driver in New Zealand, particularly focused around New Zealand's exemplary natural landscapes

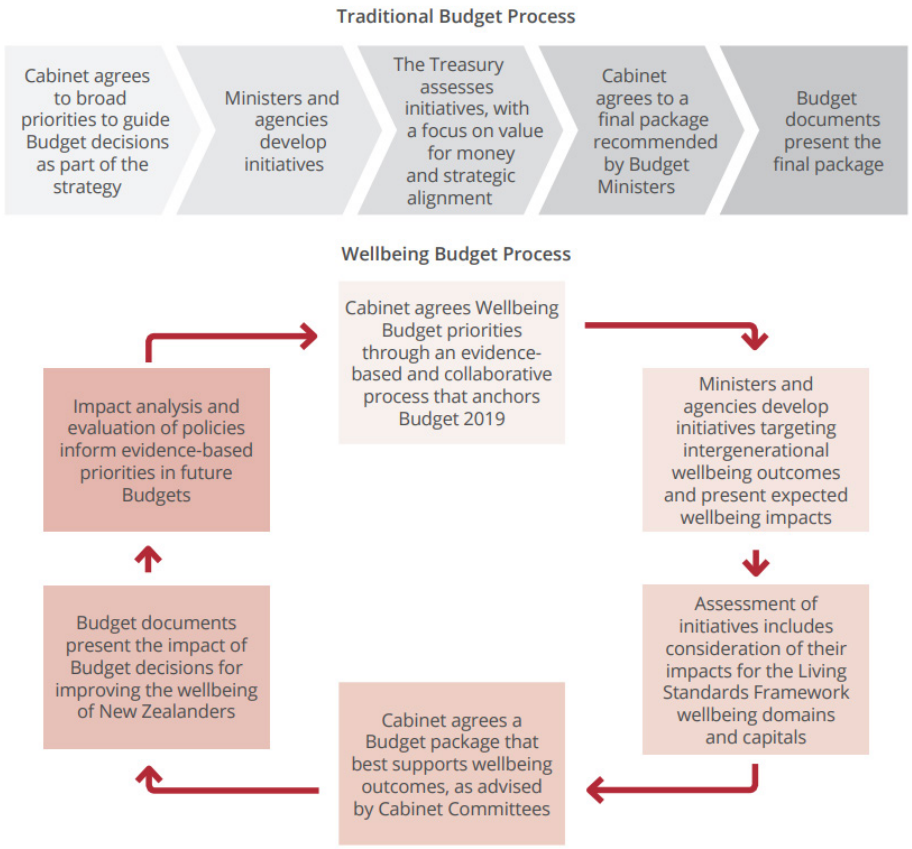


Figure 7: New Zealand's wellbeing budget approach

and wildlife, with about one-third of its land area protected within national parks and reserves.[52] International education is an important and growing industry, and agriculture, horticulture, forestry, mining, and fishing also all comprise major industries. As will be elaborated below, the New Zealand government has developed its own place-based conceptualisation of 'wellbeing' to guide budgeting decisions towards improving social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

Key features

New Zealand pioneered Wellbeing Budgets as a holistic policy initiative starting in 2019. The most recent *Wellbeing Budget 2022* seeks to address five wellbeing objectives:

1. Just transition – shifting towards a low-carbon economy in a way that supports workers, businesses, and communities.
2. Physical and mental wellbeing – good physical and mental health, and timely access to care and support.
3. Future of work – investing in industry transformation plans in agriculture, construction, manufacturing and digital technologies, rural connectivity, innovation in tourism, and regional economic development.
4. Māori and Pacific peoples – investing heavily in Māori and Pacific education, language, training, employment, media, homes, skills, and business support
5. Child wellbeing – supporting children and their families, including through programmes to prevent family and sexual violence, and supporting child and family wellbeing in the family justice system.

At least one of those five criteria must be satisfied by any new spending proposal advanced in the Budget in an effort to move beyond traditional measures of success, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP).[53] This shift in emphasis was accompanied by a redesign of the Budget's documentation and presentation to clearly indicate how any Budget items or measures, including the government's balance sheet and assets, were

contributing to improvements in wellbeing. Their governance approach helps to break down agency siloes and increase cooperation and collaboration across government. The Wellbeing Budget's wide-ranging focus on sustainable environmental management, social and community wellbeing, and economic development mark it out as broadly analogous to a sustainability strategy for the purposes of this review.

Each budget handed down is accompanied by a *Wellbeing Budget Policy Statement* outlining how budget measures meet the criteria mentioned above. The Budget is accompanied by partner initiatives emphasising the prioritisation of wellbeing outcomes in other areas of government too. Perhaps most important among these has been the amendment of New Zealand's *Public Finance Act 1989* to require the production of four-yearly Wellbeing Reports addressing the current state of wellbeing in NZ according to several different indicators, changes in wellbeing over time, and an assessment of the sustainability of and risks to wellbeing improvement.

New Zealand: Distinctive elements and insights for Tasmania

The *Wellbeing Budget* contains a number of distinctive elements and was the first budgeting approach of its kind in the world.54 Despite New Zealand's adoption of a novel, alternative approach to defining sustainability, paired with a measurement and assessment framework that is not directly aligned with the SDGs, the approach does contain lessons for Tasmania. Firstly adopting a 'budget-style' approach to sustainability and wellbeing issues could be explored. In this vein, the Premier's Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council recently recommended that the Tasmanian Government consider adopting a health and wellbeing impact process into budgetary decision making, pointing to the New Zealand example (PHWAC).

Of special relevance to Tasmania is the integration and representation of Māori and Pacific Islander issues as a key pillar of sustainable development and community wellbeing. In Tasmania, the incorporation of indigenous traditional land management practices can offer benefits across several sustainability domains. Indigenous cultural practices on country produce meaningful social and cultural benefits for First Nations people in Tasmania and are also a vehicle for advancing broader reconciliation and community cohesion goals. In addition, research on indigenous land management practices in Australia – cultural burns in particular – suggests that many have demonstrated ecological benefits as well as social and cultural ones.

Finally, New Zealand's inclusion of social, economic, and environmental sustainability issues within a broadly defined framework of wellbeing has clear parallels with the Tasmanian Government's emerging wellbeing agenda, and the PESRAC and PHWAC processes in particular.

7.3 Wales – Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015

The *Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* establishes a legally binding commitment to wellbeing goals for national government, local government, and other specified public bodies. The Act requires these Welsh public bodies to consider the long-term impacts of their decisions, to work together with communities and each other, and to work to prevent persistent problems such as climate change, poverty, and inequality.

Figure 8: Wales' wellbeing goals

Key features

'Wellbeing' replaced the words 'Sustainable development' in the title of the Act in an effort to make it clear that it was not solely relating to environmental concerns.[55] Sustainable development itself is defined in the Act as the "process of improving the economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the wellbeing goals".[56] The seven wellbeing goals identified by the Welsh Government are:

1. A prosperous Wales
2. A resilient Wales
3. A more equal Wales
4. A healthier Wales
5. A Wales of cohesive communities
6. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
7. A globally responsible Wales

There are a number of public bodies listed within the Act that are that are required to work towards these goals, including Welsh ministers, local authorities, local health boards, national park authorities, fire and rescue authorities, Natural Resources Wales, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, and more.

The Act requires that these public bodies carry out sustainable development; set and publish objectives that are designed to maximise their contribution to achieving the wellbeing goals; and take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives. To this end, public bodies must publish a *Wellbeing Statement* when setting their wellbeing objectives, and *Annual Reports* showing the progress they have made in meeting their objectives.

To help track progress towards achieving the wellbeing goals, ministers are required to set national indicators. These indicators must be quantitatively or qualitatively measurable, measurable over a period of time, and measurable in relation to Wales.

Ministers are required to publish *Annual Progress Reports* tracking progress towards these indicators, and they must publish a Future Trends Report within twelve months after a Senedd (Welsh parliament) election.

The Act is overseen by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales and, to a lesser degree, by the Auditor General for Wales. The Commissioner's main role is to help ensure that public bodies are held accountable for their performance in achieving the wellbeing goals, by providing advice to public bodies; researching the wellbeing goals; conducting reviews into public bodies' activities; making recommendations to public bodies; and publishing *Future Generations Reports* a year before a Senedd election.

Finally, the Act ensures coordination between different levels of government and the community through establishing Public Services Boards (PSBs) for each local authority area in Wales. These PSBs include the local authority; the local health board; the Welsh Fire and Rescue Authority; and the Natural Resources Body. Each PSB must additionally invite the following, who can choose whether or not to accept the invitation: Welsh Ministers; the police constable and Chief for a given area; probation services; and at least one voluntary organisation.

Each PSB must work towards improving the wellbeing of its area by working to achieve the goals, and they must prepare and publish a *Local Wellbeing Plan* setting out their objectives and the steps that will be taken to meet them, and *Annual Reports* showing progress against their *Local Wellbeing Plan*.

Wales: Distinctive elements and insights for Tasmania

While the Act is not a sustainability 'strategy' or 'plan', it aims to have the same impact in that it sets out a broad set of goals for the wellbeing (defined analogously to sustainability) of Wales, and establishes an obligation for ministers, public bodies, and local authorities to work towards those goals. This Welsh approach attempts to establish wellbeing as a priority throughout its governance systems, demands a well-coordinated approach, and heavily emphasises accountability.

The establishment of PSBs ensures efforts are made towards the wellbeing goals at the local level as well as the national level, and that these efforts are integrated and aligned. It also encourages a place-based approach to be developed in each local area.

The requirement for ministers, public bodies, and PSBs to develop indicators and objectives, and to publish annual reports tracking progress towards those indicators and objectives, is a thorough approach to ensuring accountability and transparency at multiple levels. The oversight of all these activities by the Future Generations Commissioner further ensures that public bodies are held to account for their adherence to the Act. For example, in 2019 the Commissioner challenged Welsh ministers' plans to develop a new motorway to relieve traffic congestion in South Wales, questioning how it aligned with the *Future Generations Act*. The project was consequently scrapped based on environmental concerns and Wales's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.[57] The Premier's Health and Wellbeing Advisory Council in its submission to the recent Tasmanian State Service Review recommended that the appointment of an independent person or body in charge of monitoring government decision-making to ensure it considers wellbeing outcomes be explored.

The Act is comparable to New Zealand's Wellbeing Budgets in that it adopts an alternative definition of sustainable development, 'wellbeing'. It is also comparable to New Zealand and Canada in that the 'strategy' is legislated and aims to coordinate the actions of (almost) all national and local government bodies to work together towards common goals.

7.4 Flanders - Vision 2050: A Long-term Strategy for Flanders and Focus 2030: A 2030 Objectives Framework for Flanders

Belgium, like Australia, has a federal structural of government. Flanders is one of three Regions of Belgium and was home to a population of 6.58 million in 2019 (57% of the Belgian population).[59] It is one of the key economic engines of the country, accounting for 83% of overall Belgian exports in 2018.[60] Flanders has been selected as a case study to demonstrate sub-national sustainability implementation in a federal country. Flanders shaped its *Vision 2050* and *Focus 2030* strategies through an SDG lens, and together these documents provide a holistic example of how to adapt and implement the SDGs at a regional level. Flanders is also one of a growing number of jurisdictions conducting voluntary local reviews (VLRs) to track their progress towards the SDGs, a process which may be of interest to Tasmania in the future.

Key features

Flanders has had a sustainability strategy in place since 2006, with updates every five years. The most recent iteration, adopted in 2016, is *Vision 2050: A long-term strategy for Flanders*. The *Vision 2050* platform is underpinned by seven "transition priorities":[61]

1. Circular economy: In a circular economy, we are more efficient with raw materials, energy, water, space, and food by closing cycles in a smart manner. Natural resources are reused wherever possible. Smartly designed products based on biodegradable and recyclable materials will form the basis of smart material cycles in order to create less waste and reduce resource consumption.
2. Smart living: It is more comfortable to live where 80% of people's daily needs are within walking or cycling distance. The proximity and inter-weaving of functions of smart living maximise comfort and convenience. New housing and infrastructure must respond to such needs; optimal use of information and communication technology (ICT) ensures smart and sustainable buildings, neighbourhoods, and cities.
3. Industry 4.0: Flanders strives to become a leader in new technologies and concepts in industry 4.0, such as 3D printing, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, robotics, and other innovations. In so doing, it can strengthen its competitiveness and maintain prosperity in a rapidly changing world.
4. Lifelong learning: Talent and knowledge are the key driving forces behind progress and innovation. For this reason, Flanders will stimulate the development of competencies and talent by responding to the demand for skills in a changing economy and society and provide everyone with the opportunity to fully develop their potential.
5. Caring and living together in 2050: Flanders must give young people every opportunity, with the best possible start and support in life, but it also needs to provide its ageing population with an adequate quality of life through the use of innovation. Flanders aims to invest in a new model of care which is patient/client-centred and tailored to the needs of society.
6. Transport and mobility: Flanders is working on a smoother, safer and more environmentally friendly transport system, which is why technological innovations in transportation and logistics must be embedded quickly to increase flexibility within Flanders and thus reduce their environmental impact.
7. Energy: Flanders focuses on the transition to a low-carbon, sustainable, reliable

and affordable energy system. That system maximises the use of renewables and provides a realistic energy mix.

These seven focus areas signal a broad approach to defining sustainability that takes in its social, economic, and environmental dimensions, in line with the three-pillar approach. Moreover, a three-pillar intergovernmental approach to sustainable development, including recognition of key intergenerational equity considerations, is actually enshrined in Belgium's constitution. Article 7bis, adopted in 2007, requires that "in the exercise of their respective competences, the Federal State, the Communities, and the Regions pursue the objectives of sustainable development in its social, economic, and environmental aspects, taking into account the solidarity between the generations".[62]

The implementation roadmap for the current phase of the broader *Vision 2050* strategy is detailed in *Focus 2030: A 2030 objectives framework for Flanders*, which sets 53 social, economic, environmental, and governance targets linked with the 17 SDGs.[63] Progress towards or satisfaction of these targets is assessed with reference to a comprehensive set of 111 indicators and metrics.[64]

The Flanders Strategy is unique in its development of a new governance model to manage their transition priorities. Each of the seven transition priorities contains:

- A transition manager who acts as the operational leader of the transition and helps determine the specific approach and structure of the transition process
- Two responsible ministers designated for each transition
- External stakeholders whose role is to ensure ongoing community engagement

According to experts, a key strength of the Flanders Strategy has been the involvement of different stakeholders in its design and implementation, which created "a strong common understanding of the challenges and a solid base for support for future solutions and decisions," boding well for future transparency and documented decision-making processes.[65]

Flanders: Distinctive elements and insights for Tasmania

The comprehensive and holistic approach to defining, measuring, implementing, and governing sustainable development in Flanders represents a leading example of a best-practice sustainable development strategy. The Flanders approach addresses all 17 SDGs via explicit targets, most of which are to be achieved within a 2030 timeframe, and measures progress towards targets using a diverse and comprehensive array of metrics and indicators. A key feature of relevance for designing an effective sustainability strategy in other jurisdictions is the Flemish approach to coordination. *Vision 2050* and *Focus 2030* have been designed and implemented with input from all levels of the Belgian federation, civic organisations, the business community, and even international organisations such as the OECD. This collaborative approach has ensured a high-level of political buy-in and enhanced the Strategy's effectiveness by securing the cooperation of all relevant authorities and institutions, from municipal authorities to the central government.

7.5 Hawai'i - Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan: Charting a course for the decade of action (2020-2030)

Hawai'i, as an island state in a federal system, is similar to Tasmania in several important respects. Hawai'i released its first *Sustainability Plan* in 2008, and after an exhaustive process of consultation, released a second iteration in 2021.

Key features

The *Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan: Charting a Course for the Decade of Action* understands sustainability as striking a balance between economic, social, and environmental priorities, and as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The key sustainability priorities include climate action, sustainable cities and communities, clean and affordable energy, and increased local food production and food security.

The Plan identifies eight focus areas, 38 strategies, and 250 recommended actions. The focus areas for the 'decade of action' are:

- Promoting a sustainable economic recovery
- Reducing GHG emissions
- Improving climate resilience
- Advancing sustainable communities
- Advancing equity
- Institutionalising sustainability throughout government
- Preserving the natural environment
- Perpetuating traditional ecology, knowledge, and values.

The Plan is divided into two key functions in that it serves as a checkpoint, evaluating how existing commitments in Hawai'i make progress towards the SDGs, and as an opportunity for recommitment, with a range of recommendations to address the gaps in existing initiatives.

The Plan aligns with the 17 SDGs, which are considered the "destination".[66] For this updated Plan, the Office of Planning conducted a review of more than 150 existing laws, plans, policies, programs, and strategies relevant to sustainability and climate change in Hawai'i to determine how its activities align with the 17 SDGs, and to identify gaps where the SDGs are not being addressed by existing efforts. Following this, in coordination with existing State policies, State and County agency programs, and voluntary initiatives such as the Aloha+ Challenge and the Sustainable Hawai'i initiative, this Plan recommends additional actions to achieve sustainability. The updated Plan provides recommendations for priority action areas over 2020-2030, however, it does not provide a step-by-step guide for what each individual and organisation should do.

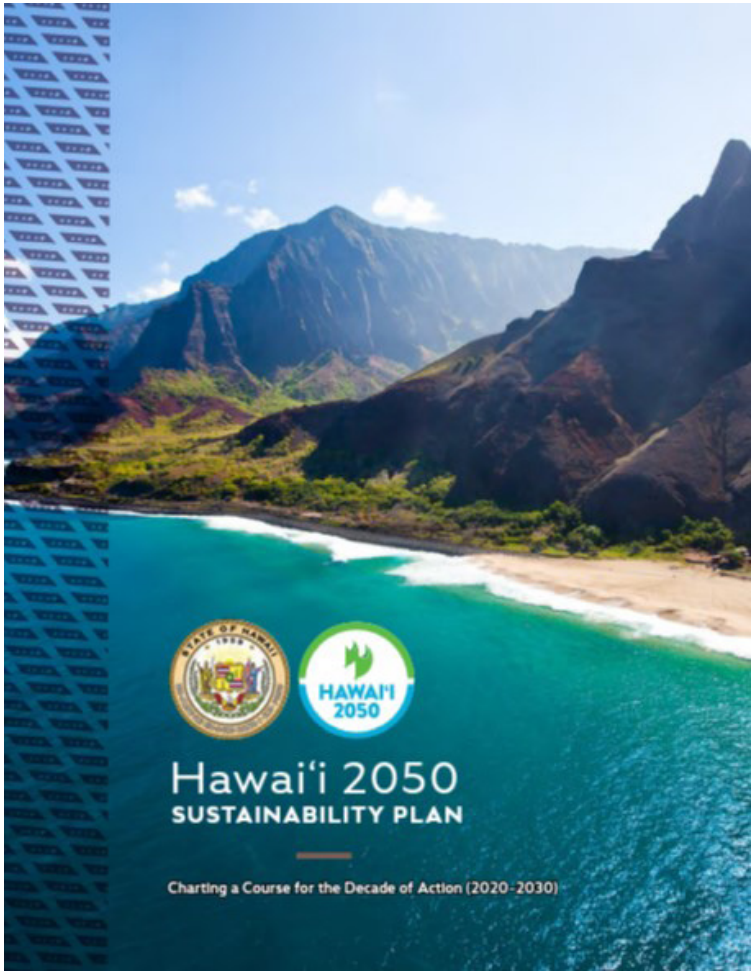
The Plan aspires to develop metrics to define success and enable measurement and tracking of progress, stating that "defined endpoints and metrics for success will make it possible to measure advancements and identify where gaps remain; in some cases, targets and metrics have already been identified whereas a collective vision will need to be developed in other cases".[67]

Hawai'i: Distinctive elements and insights for Tasmania

As an island state, Hawai'i has unique challenges and unique opportunities, and can serve as an example for other islands seeking to model sustainability. The Plan emphasises the need to increase Hawai'i's local food production and food security, reflecting the islands' geographical isolation and the fact that 85% of their food is imported, while commodity crops are exported (Food Security Hawai'i n.d.). The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the need to support local agriculture.

The Plan seeks to raise awareness of the Hawaiian cultural ethos of environmental guardianship, through its incorporation of a "Kānaka Maoli" worldview.[68] Like New Zealand and Canada, this provides another example for Tasmania to learn from when incorporating First Nations' perspectives into any future sustainability initiatives.

The Plan is also unique in its alignment with voluntary, non-governmental sustainability and climate initiatives, such as the Aloha+ Challenge which was developed by Hawai'i Green Growth (HGG). The HGG Local2030 Hub is a public-private partnership bringing together stakeholders from government, private sector, and civil society.[69] HGG was responsible for devising the Aloha+ Challenge, a local framework to achieve the SDGs, and consequently was invited by the UN to become a Local2030 sustainability hub in 2018. HGG has been responsible for conducting Hawai'i's VLRs of progress on the SDGs. Hawai'i demonstrates an approach to sustainability (via its strategy and its voluntary initiatives) that seeks to coordinate and bring along all sectors of the community, including government, business, and civic stakeholders.



7.6 Helsinki – A place of growth: Helsinki City Strategy 2021-2025

Nordic jurisdictions are leading actors on climate change and sustainability issues. The City of Helsinki in Finland is recognised as a global leader in sustainability and was the second city in the world (and the first in Europe) to commit to conducting voluntary local reviews (VLRs) of progress towards the SDGs (to which more than 200 cities worldwide have since committed).[70]

Key features

Although Helsinki's City Strategy is an overarching 'master strategy', it has a distinct sustainable development focus. Every four years, at the commencement of each council term, the Strategy is renewed and re-released. Helsinki's overarching vision is for the city to become the best functioning city in the world through a 'sustainable growth' approach. Its objectives conform to the three-pillar definition of sustainability and emphasise the interconnected nature of these aims. For example, the Strategy argues that supporting art and culture and efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change can lead to sustainable economic development and better health outcomes.

Specifically, the Strategy aims to ensure that Helsinki can offer:

- The most equitable and effective place to learn
- Ambitious climate objectives and nature conservation
- Art and culture as enablers of a good life
- An international city of equality
- Safe neighbourhoods with distinctive identities
- A smoothly functioning and beautiful city
- Intelligent traffic solutions that underpin smooth transport
- Improved health and wellbeing for Helsinki residents
- Responsible finances as the basis for sustainable growth
- Data and digitalisation to help run a smart city

The Strategy is designed to encourage all employees of the City to factor its guiding principles into everyday decision making and is intended as a starting point for more detailed annual planning of activities and goals throughout the City's business units and services. In this way, the Strategy also ensures that the Helsinki Government provides leadership on sustainability action, transitioning itself away from unsustainable practices. The Strategy underpins a number of other more action-oriented tools such as the *Climate Change Adaptation Policies 2019-2025*, *Carbon-neutral Helsinki 2035 Action Plan, Environmental Protection Plan for 2015-2024*, *Biodiversity Action Plan* and the *Roadmap for Circular and Sharing Economy*.

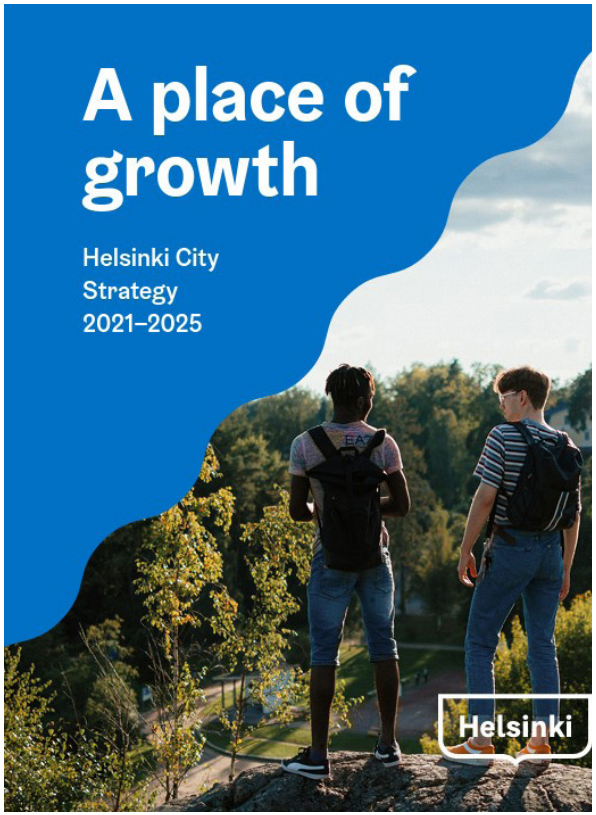
The Strategy states that action against its aims will be assessed with both qualitative and quantitative measures. Its many objectives range from requiring city decision makers to consider the impact of all decisions from a climate perspective, strengthening access to adult education and apprenticeship training, through to increasing early-stage mental health services.

Halfway through the Strategy's term a report on its implementation is provided to council. Helsinki has also committed to undertaking Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs). These have been designed by the United Nations to be a joint tool and language that, in conjunction with Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), can be used by national, sub-national, regional, and local governments to measure their progress against the SDGs.

Thus far, the City of Helsinki has submitted two VLR reports, in 2019 and 2021. In these reports, the City has mapped its progress against the SDGs and indicated where further improvement is needed.

Helsinki City: Distinctive elements and insights for Tasmania

Helsinki's approach to sustainable development is relevant to the Tasmanian context in a number of ways. Like Helsinki, Tasmania has a vibrant and distinctive arts and culture sector which can continue to play a positive role in the wellbeing of the Tasmanian community into the future. Helsinki's adoption of a holistic vision of sustainability, with a strong commitment to social, environmental, and economic objectives, is notable and important in this context. Given Tasmania's precious natural assets and socio-economic positioning, a similar holistic approach to achieving ongoing sustainability is warranted. Finally, Helsinki's commitment to the VLR process is laudable, improving accountability and offering the opportunity for independent expert feedback that ultimately improves sustainability outcomes.



7.7 Summary table

	Summary	Definitional scope	Meaurement	Coordination	Transition	Instruments	Governance
Canada ***Draft Federal Sustainable Development Strategy 2022-2026***	This comprehensive strategy contains 17 goals matching the 17 SDGs, with a particular emphasis on the environmental aspects of each SDG.	***Comprehensive***	***Comprehensive*** - From 2022 all targets are required to be specific and measurable, include a timeframe, and identify one or more ministers responsible for their achievement.	***Internal*** – Federal organisations' departmental strategies complement the federal strategy by setting out what individual organisations will do to support its goals and targets.	***Explicit***	*Public capital investment; public subsidies and grants; taxation; regulation; education and advocacy; sustainability planning*	***Agency*** – *All 99 federal agencies and organisations are required to contribute to the strategy.*
New Zealand ***Wellbeing Budgets***	This approach adopts 'wellbeing' as the lens through which all budget commitments are made, with wellbeing understood as relying on the growth, distribution, and sustainability of natural, social, human, and financial/physical capital (itself based on the OECD's Four Capitals Model).	***Alternative***	***Selective*** - The New Zealand approach sets out a series of broadly sustainability-aligned criteria that budget items must satisfy. Measurement and assessment of progress against pre-determined indicators is provided annually in Wellbeing Budget Policy Statements and 4-yearly Wellbeing Reports.	***Internal***	***Emerging*** - With some areas more mature than others, such as the national Emissions Reduction Plan, released in May 2022	***Public capital investment; public operational subsidies and grants; taxation and charges***	***Agency*** - Wellbeing budgets are required by legislation – frameworks developed by Treasury with objectives developed with advice from sector experts and the Governments' Chief Science Advisors.
Wales ***Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015***	The Act requires public bodies in Wales to set objectives to work towards seven wellbeing goals which aim to improve economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing.	***Alternative***	***Systematic***	***Internal and external*** – There is a degree of external coordination with voluntary organisations, as well as coordination between different tiers of government.	***Taget-based***	***Public investment; public subsidies and grants; taxation and charges; regulation; education and advocacy***	***Policy-based***

	Summary	Definitional scope	Meaurement	Coordination	Transition	Instruments	Governance
Flanders ***Vision 2050*** ***Focus 2030***	This strategy is comprised of two components, Vision 2050 which sets out broad objectives, and Focus 2030 which provides the implementation roadmap. Its targets are linked to the SDGs.	***Comprehensive***	***Comprehensive***	***Internal*** and ***external***	***Target-based***	***Public investment; public subsidies and grants; taxation and charges; regulation; education and advocacy***	***Policy-based***
Hawai'i ***2050 Sustainability Plan: Charting a course for the decade of action (2020-2030)*** ***(2021)***	This holistic plan maps the state's commitments to each of the 17 SDGs as well as recommended actions to be undertaken between 2021 to 2030 and 38 strategies to facilitate those actions.	***Comprehensive***	***Aspirational*** - Hawai'i is currently developing a set of metrics to enable measurement against goals.	***External and internal***	***None*** - Although a sustainable tourism plan is forthcoming.	***Public grants; agricultural loans; education and advocacy; public investment; planning and support; investment in research***	***Agency*** - State of Hawai'i's Office of Planning and Sustainable Development
Helsinki: ***A place of growth 2021-2025***	While this is an overarching city strategy, it has a sustainable growth approach, and its key objectives are social, economic and environmental. It tracks its progress towards the SDGs in voluntary local reviews (VLRs).	***Comprehensive***	***Comprehensive*** (provisional) - The Strategy states there will be monitoring of key goals and indicators, via a report halfway through the strategy period, and in annual reports.	***Internal***	***None***	***Public investment; planning and support; public grants; education and advocacy***	***Policy-based***

PART 8: TOWARDS A SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FOR TASMANIA - KEY INSIGHTS

There is growing recognition among governments, businesses, and communities that a comprehensive regional sustainability strategy can help ensure that economic development and resource use today do not come at the expense of future generations or the natural environment.

The literature review and case study analysis presented in this report have highlighted the need to work collaboratively to develop a comprehensive sustainability strategy which encompasses environmental, social, and economic dimensions to address long-term global sustainability challenges such as climate change.

The sustainability agenda is not new, especially in Tasmania with its history of environmentalism and internationally recognised environmental and cultural assets, including over 35,000 years of Aboriginal heritage and stewardship of lutruwita/ Tasmania. Reflecting the Tasmanian community's strong connections to the natural environment combined with the growing value of our clean green 'brand', many communities, businesses, and state and local government policies are embracing and promoting sustainability in all its dimensions.

This review of sustainability strategies and frameworks from elsewhere in Australia and beyond highlights how a carefully designed state-level strategy could enhance Tasmania's sustainability credentials and benefit the entire community. This finding is consistent with the recommendation in PESRAC's final report that the "Tasmanian Government should develop a sustainability vision and strategy for Tasmania with ambitious goals and concrete targets and actions".[71]

There is a wide range of models, frameworks, and strategies designed to promote sustainability and measure progress over time

There may be a growing commitment to promoting environmental, social, and economic sustainability but there is no single agreed approach or best way to achieve it. Instead, this review has identified a wide range of models, frameworks, and strategies designed to promote sustainability and measure progress over time.

Despite this diversity it is possible to identify some key principles and elements, based on the SDG approach, that are common to most credible and comprehensive regional or national sustainability strategies and should therefore be applied in Tasmania.

8.1 Principles

A comprehensive and best-practice sustainability strategy should:

- Build on established sustainability assets and initiatives
- Commit to collaboration and fostering collective responsibility to promote sustainability
- Strive for consensus, establish clear targets, and commit to transparent reporting
- Build community awareness via education and support community-led action across all sustainability domains
- Drive innovation and leverage private investment and community programs
- Aim for sustainability objectives that increase the wellbeing of present and future generations of Tasmanians

8.2 Key elements of comprehensive sustainability strategies

Existing sustainability strategies vary in many important ways, but leading examples typically exhibit some key shared characteristics. In particular, effective strategies:

- Engage with community and stakeholders, with a special focus on Tasmanian Aboriginal people and young Tasmanians, to establish sustainability priorities from the 17 SDGs
- Identify and assess existing sustainability programs and policies across all levels of government, community, and industry
- Intentionally invest in sustainability governance to ensure coordination and common objectives

- Develop sustainability measures and targets and an independent reporting and review framework and body to ensure accountability and to achieve external recognition
- Develop focused sustainability action plans to coordinate existing activity and policies and promote targeted investment and innovation across industries and sectors
- Periodically review progress, promote success, and learn from failures with a view to establishing Tasmania as an international example of sustainable development.

Of the case studies presented in this report, Victoria is the Australian jurisdiction with the most sophisticated sustainability strategy. The Victorian approach, *SV2030*, is an example of strategy which includes comprehensive sustainability reporting combined with a clear commitment to coordinating existing state-level policies to meaningfully improve sustainability outcomes. However, Victoria's strategy may well be focused a little too narrowly on traditional sustainability issues, at the expense of a more holistic sustainability approach. This may point to the desirability of a central government agency taking carriage of a state sustainability strategy, rather than a specialist agency such as Sustainability Victoria.

Similarly, city-level sustainability strategies such Sydney's and Hobart's demonstrate how cities can identify urban sustainability priorities and develop targeted programs to improve outcomes in these domains despite being limited to specific spheres of action. Our review also highlights how state-level strategies should seek to support, coordinate, and promote local government sustainability plans.

Internationally, a select handful of European jurisdictions, such as the Region of Flanders in Belgium, have what are arguably the most sophisticated sustainability strategies and polices. Canada too has recently released its first draft *Federal Sustainability Strategy*, attempting an ambitious and whole-of-government approach to sustainability. Its approach to the design and implementation of the strategy will remain instructive to both Australia and Tasmania.

New Zealand is also a noteworthy case in that it adopts an explicit community wellbeing focus with the national budget process being the key policy instrument to coordinate and prioritise wellbeing programs and initiatives. This approach is relevant to Tasmania given the recently announced intention to develop a Tasmanian wellbeing framework, as is New Zealand's commitment to focusing on Māori and Pacific Islander perspectives.

Hawai'i, as an island state with considerable natural assets, provides an instructive example for Tasmania. Its sustainability strategy includes an important focus on building the state's capacity to provide sustainable locally grown food to its own communities into the future, together with the other benefits that this would bring. The strategy, together with other voluntary state-wide initiatives such as the Aloha+ Challenge, seek to bring the Hawaiian community as a whole on the sustainability journey.

A final key finding from the international cases in general, and from the City of Helsinki sustainability strategy in particular, is the need to engage with communities to build a broad consensus for the objectives of a sustainability strategy and the long terms benefits that are likely to flow from it.

While these international examples provide useful insights it is important to remain mindful of the very real social, environmental, and economic differences between these cases and Tasmania. Ultimately this review highlights the need to tailor Tasmania's sustainability strategy to ensure that it aligns with our priorities and reflects the sustainable development opportunities available to us here in Tasmania. While adapting a strategy to meet Tasmania's needs is both important and desirable, it must be done in a

This review highlights the need to tailor Tasmania's sustainability strategy to ensure that it aligns with our priorities and reflects the sustainable development opportunities available to us

transparent way that is consistent with the SDGs and principles to ensure external credibility.

The Tasmanian Policy Exchange's second background paper to inform the development of a Tasmanian sustainability strategy will provide more detailed analysis of the specific sustainability opportunities and priorities a Tasmanian strategy could promote including:

- Supporting the further decarbonisation of the Tasmanian economy to retain the state's world leading emissions profile
- The promotion and adoption of circular economy principles
- Continuing to improve waste and water management practices
- Protecting Tasmania's natural and cultural heritage and natural capital
- Integrating Tasmania's proposed wellbeing framework
- Coordinating existing and future community, business local, state, and federal sustainability policies and initiatives in Tasmania; and
- Developing a robust reporting and assessment framework to ensure that Tasmania gets recognition for and can leverage its sustainability credentials.

Given Tasmania's significant environmental assets combined with a broad-based community commitment to promoting long-term sustainability, a comprehensive strategy with ambitious goals and carefully designed actions would deliver long terms benefits for community and environmental wellbeing.

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