

06 October 2023

Ms Jenny Gale
Secretary
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Email: policy@dpac.tas.gov.au

Submission: Tasmanian Sustainability Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the State Government's proposed *Tasmanian Sustainability Strategy*.

I believe an ideal Tasmania has no poverty, has a thriving environment, and is a place where people live in harmony with the natural world and with a comfortable standard of living. An ideal Tasmania is one where Tasmanians are happy, healthy and can reach their full potential.

I believe the UN Sustainable Development Goals provide a reasonable framework through which to focus attention for progress. However, we should pay attention to alternative metrics and indicators such as the Genuine Progress Indicator, or the *Measuring What Matters* framework, and exercise caution when interpreting purely financial indicators like the Gross State Product.

To achieve an ideal Tasmania, I believe we need to focus on eradicating poverty and adapting to a changing climate, particularly with respect to mitigating harm caused by more frequent and severe high-energy weather events.

My vision for a sustainable future for Tasmania includes:

- Decent, meaningful and remunerative work in sustainable industries.
- A healthy and biodiverse environment where native flora and fauna is able to thrive.
- Eradication of poverty so that no Tasmanian suffers deprivation.
- A Tasmania where housing is a human right and every Tasmanian has a safe place to call home that can be kept warm in the winter and cool in the summer.
- Free and functional public transport that is frequent and reliable.
- Good health and well-being where the urban built environment promotes a healthy lifestyle with access to the natural world.
- A state where clean energy and fast internet access is free or at minimum cost so that innovators and entrepreneurs have low or no barriers to start new businesses from home.
- Quality education so that all Tasmanians can reach their full potential.
- A reduction in economic inequality and improvements in social mobility.

To eradicate poverty, we need a jobs and income guarantee so that no Tasmanian need suffer abject privation. The right to a safe and secure place to call home, one that can be kept warm in the winter and cool in the summer must be guaranteed. The right to access timely preventative and acute healthcare, both for the body (including dental!) and for the mind, and the right to a decent and meaningful remunerative work should be guaranteed basics for all Tasmanians.

Tasmania is a state in one of the wealthiest countries in the world at the wealthiest time in human history and so I believe it is not too much to expect that we can eradicate poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity in the near term.

Only when a basic material standard of living for Tasmanians can be guaranteed will we be able to have an ideal state, one where every individual can reach their full potential. In 2005, there was an initiative in New Zealand called the *Mayors Taskforce for Jobs: working towards the 'zero waste' of New Zealanders*. In Tasmania, it should be a strategic priority to attain a 'zero waste' economy – zero waste of resources and zero waste of people.

Throughout Tasmania, there are still too few place-based options for meaningful, remunerative work in low-pollution, low-emissions industries, which results in the dual problem of a brain-drain and wasted potential for many Tasmanians, particularly young people.

A sustainable Tasmania will require government intervention in the market to ensure all Tasmanians who want a job can get one and that workers in unsustainable or highly volatile industries are provided options for a just transition to more secure employment. This will help insulate Tasmanian workers from the harms caused by downturns in the business cycle or a negative outlook in global financial markets.

To foster environmentally sustainable economic growth and decent jobs, we need to redefine 'work' to be more flexible and to include aspects of the caring economy that are currently chronically and systemically undervalued. The following are my three priorities for addressing the employment ecosystem to address the supply-side, the demand-side and bridging the gap between supply and demand.

SUPPLY

1. Thin markets, particularly in rural and regional areas, require the government to become an active co-producer of employment opportunities, not just an arms-length 'purchaser' of employment services.
 - a. The government should be co-designing jobs locally, hiring, and then stepping back to allow the community to take the reins, ideally with a federally funded, locally administered job guarantee program.
2. Address place-based needs and respond to community priorities.
 - a. Which growth industries build community capacity and are sustainable in the long term? Do they have social licence and a low environment and emissions footprint?
3. Projects need to build community capacity, not just deliver services.

BRIDGING

1. The government should help connect people wanting to work but not currently engaged in employment services and/or income support with employment options both in the public and private sectors. Employment solutions need to be people-centred and flexible, not coercive or punitive.
2. To improve productivity, we need improved social infrastructure including housing, transport, education, health, mental health & dental to address complex barriers to employment. Investment in efficient public transport, libraries, schools, playgrounds, sports facilities, swimming pools, and community gardens will help create a virtuous cycle where families enjoy improved health and well-being, and the state benefits from a more highly skilled, literate, and productive workforce.

3. The Government needs to lean into the employment ecosystem and not just expect the private sector to do all the heavy lifting to train and hire unemployed workers. The private sector cannot be solely relied upon to improve aggregate demand.

DEMAND

1. To improve demand for workers, Tasmania should pilot a federally funded, locally administered job guarantee program so that everyone who wants a job can get one.
2. Build people's capability and cultivate a local employment ecosystem that can embrace a 21st-century labour market.
3. Promote employers of choice, champion flexible work, and promote micro-credentials.

Employment is a function of aggregate demand. Even if a business-owner wants to hire more workers, if the business doesn't have sufficient customers, they will not hire. In that sense, the customers are the job creators for the business.

As the 1945 White Paper on Full Employment in Australia pointed out, "The amount of employment available at any time depends on the volume of production being undertaken. This in turn depends on the demand for goods and services - that is, on expenditure by individuals, firms, public authorities and overseas buyers. Full employment can be maintained only as long as total expenditure provides a market for all the goods and services turned out by Australians."

Where private consumption and overseas expenditure is insufficient to employ all the available labour, expenditure by governments and local authorities on regularly recurring items such as defence, transport, education, police, health and medical services, maintenance of public capital equipment, or new investment on capital expenditure such as railways, bridges, buildings, land development, power and light, water conservation and irrigation, etc. must be made to stimulate demand for local labour.

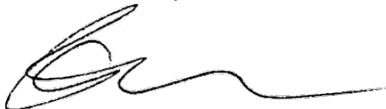
If I were to choose six of the seventeen UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to focus on they would be:

- No Poverty
- Reduced inequalities
- Good health and well-being
- Quality education
- Climate action
- Affordable and clean energy

Whilst there is always more work to be done, I believe that out of the seventeen SDGs Tasmania is doing well with clean energy, clean water and sanitation, towards zero hunger and the goal regarding strong institutions.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to staying involved in the process as the Strategy takes shape.

Yours sincerely,



Gideon Cordover