

PESRAC Interim Report

Summary of implementation activity

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most significant economic and social challenges Tasmania has faced. The virus has resulted in an unprecedented Government response, both in measures to restrict the spread of the virus and support for Tasmanians who have been impacted. It is clear the impact of COVID-19 will extend many years into the future.

Recognising this, the Tasmanian Government looked to strategies to minimise the short, medium and longer terms impacts on Tasmanian communities and the economy, and to ensure that Tasmania is well placed to meet the challenges and opportunities that COVID-19 brings. In the early stages of the pandemic, we gathered experts and prominent Tasmanians together, establishing the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC), to provide advice on the State's recovery from COVID-19.

PESRAC consulted extensively and formulated a series of recommendations which were contained in an Interim Report (published 20 July 2020) and a Final Report (published 16 March 2021). The Tasmanian Government accepted all 116 recommendations and immediately commenced implementation. The delivery of PESRAC's recommendations is a central part of the State's ongoing recovery journey from COVID-19.

While the implementation of the initial steps identified by PESRAC in their Interim Report is complete, work continues across Government to address many of Tasmania's structural issues through implementation of PESRAC's Final Report. This includes measures to address mental health and wellbeing, housing, skills development, digital inclusion and sustainability.

This document, including Attachment 1, summarises the Government's work on the 64 recommendations from PESRAC's Interim Report under the thematic areas identified by PESRAC. All these recommendations are now considered complete or incorporated into government's business-as-usual activity.

Commencing in 2022, detail on the implementation of recommendations will be included in the Annual Reports of each government department responsible for delivering in the respective area of activity.

Restoring demand and jobs

At the time PESRAC wrote its Interim Report, the first round of impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on the Tasmanian economy were still being felt. Lockdowns and social distancing measures put in place to suppress the virus constrained opportunities for economic activity, with significant impacts on certain sectors, particularly tourism and hospitality. Unemployment and underemployment rose as businesses closed or hibernated. There were also significant disruptions to supply chains.

While restoring demand in the economy and generating job growth is ultimately a long-term journey, the government has delivered all 34 actions recommended by PESRAC to guide the immediate recovery response. This included building confidence by clearly communicating COVID-19 risks and the public health strategies and measures that government was putting in place to address them.

We commenced building industry's capacity to recover by providing an initial investment of \$20 million to support businesses and to assist the transition to an operating model that was sustainable in a COVID-19 environment.

We reviewed our government contracts, funding agreements, grants and procurement policies to increase support to Tasmanian businesses and ensure certainty to suppliers and service providers. This was complemented by the development of the Buy Something Tasmanian directory and the Tasmanian storytelling web platform to promote the Tasmanian brand.

To support our workers, we rolled out new programs and expanded existing initiatives to support skills development including the JobTrainer Fund, the Mentoring for Success program, Skills Matching Service and the Rapid Response Skills Initiative. We also embarked on a significant reform package to transform TasTAFE to be more responsive to the training needs of the Tasmanian economy.

We also cut red tape and boosted resources to help accelerate planning and development, and commenced delivering our Construction Blitz program to deliver additional social and affordable housing across the state.

Addressing structural issues

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the functioning of the national and state economy. Between February and May 2020, 58 per cent of all employment losses across Australia were in sectors highly reliant on people's mobility and ability to congregate in numbers, including accommodation and food services, arts and recreation services and education and training. In Tasmania, the greatest impacts were felt by the accommodation and food services sector.

The government has delivered the 22 recommendations made by PESRAC to reduce the impact on those sectors and individuals. To support our tourism industry, we worked with airline carriers to re-establish visitor access and create new direct routes and launched new campaigns to attract visitors to the state. Tourism showed strong signs of recovery when state borders reopened to some jurisdictions in October 2020, supported by incentives such as the travel voucher scheme for interstate travellers as well as the Spirit of Tasmania's Bring Your Car for Free campaign.

We developed the Cultural and Creative Industries Recovery Strategy to support our arts sector, and committed funding for a range of measures to support artists, arts organisations and screen production.

We partnered with communities to remove barriers to employment, training and workforce participation by supporting the rollout of new Regional Jobs Hubs in St Helens, Huonville, Brighton and Burnie and encouraging the employment and retention of young people through payroll tax rebate schemes, apprenticeship programs and structured career pathways into the State Service.

Addressing social impacts

At the time of writing its Interim Report, PESRAC noted it was still too early in the pandemic to comprehensively understand the social impacts on the community. However, it was largely anticipated by PESRAC, governments and expert bodies around the world that the pandemic would strain people's mental health, wellbeing and feelings of social connection and cohesion. Further, the economic impacts of the pandemic would likely exacerbate social issues such as family and domestic violence, food security and housing.

To support families, individuals and our most vulnerable members of society, the Tasmanian Government provided funding for Tasmanian Lifeline to provide mental health support, waived fees and refunded school levies, capped prices for utilities, introduced protections for renters, and provided relief payments to low-income persons and temporary visa holders who were otherwise ineligible for Commonwealth support.

PESRAC's six recommendations on addressing social impacts were focused on ensuring that support for life's basic needs continued to be provided.

We reviewed and monitored our funding of core support services and stepped up our funding commitments to address family violence, food security and mental health. We worked with the Mental Health Council of Tasmania to deliver a tool for Tasmanians to check in on their mental health and wellbeing. Recognising the benefit of personal contact, services returned to face-to-face delivery of community support services as soon as it was safe to do so, as well as retaining online services where they provided beneficial outcomes for clients.

We supported community-based and school-based food security models by launching the School Lunch Pilot Program and by releasing our Food Security Strategy which provides a blueprint for current and future government activity concerning food relief.

Delivering government services differently

The COVID-19 pandemic has required an emergency response like no other. Governments around the world, like businesses and individuals, have had to rapidly adapt to the situation and embrace alternative ways of operating. There has never been a more important time to ensure the Tasmanian Government is able to provide the leadership, advice and support required to ensure the state recovers from COVID-19, and that it continues to thrive into the future.

The government has delivered both recommendations made by PESRAC on government services delivery.

A dedicated, capable and well-functioning state service is essential to ensure we can continue to deliver essential Government Services across the State. We accelerated the review into the Tasmanian State Service and released the final report in September 2021. The review made 77 recommendations for reform across the public sector.

We established three COVID-19 Regional Recovery Committees in the north, north west and south of the State to support a regional model for recovery. The Committees support our ongoing response to and recovery from COVID-19, by advising us on the key impacts of the pandemic in their region, their region's priorities for recovery, and identifying community-led, place-based recovery activities.

PESRAC Interim Report recommendations – implementation

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
Restoring demand and jobs		
1.	The State Government should continue delivering clear and consistent messaging to shift the community’s mindset from ‘stay at home, save lives, to the importance of all Tasmanians working towards recovery’	The Tasmanian Government implemented many major campaigns, using a range of media and channels, to continue to inform and engage all sectors of the community in each phase of the State’s COVID-19 response. This ranged from the initial messaging on “stay home save lives”, to COVID safe behaviours and workplaces, to more recent campaigns including vaccinations, Tasmania’s reopening plan and the transition to living with COVID in the community.
2.	The State Government should explain to the community its future COVID-19 management strategy including how any future outbreaks will be handled (priority)	The Government released several of its strategies on the management of COVID-19, including Our Plan to Rebuild a Stronger Tasmania, Case and Outbreak Management Framework, COVID-safe schools plan and 4-Point Delta Shield Plan. In addition, the government provided regular updates via the media and to the Tasmanian Government’s coronavirus website.
3.	The State Government should explain the risk management basis of COVID-19 restrictions as those decisions are being made - including any reimposed or new restrictions.	The Government committed to ensuring the risk-management rationale behind key decisions was clearly (and proactively) communicated at every opportunity. This included public briefings broadcast via ABC Facebook and the Premier’s Facebook page as well as media releases, press conference transcripts and regular updates to the coronavirus website.

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4.	The State Government should pay special attention to building public confidence in the capacity of Tasmania's health system to deal with future COVID-19 outbreaks.	To build public confidence in the response, the Department of Health ensured that public messaging about COVID-19 risk management and health system preparedness was clear, accurate, and consistent, as well as communicated widely and accessibly for maximum reach.
5.	The State Government should give confidence to Tasmanians that control mechanisms to manage COVID-19 risks are being rigorously applied, particularly in the context of relaxing interstate border restrictions.	Widespread multimedia public communication was implemented to communicate control mechanisms and reassure Tasmanians that the relaxing of borders did not also mean a relaxing of public health measures and COVID-19 alertness. The scientific basis for these decisions was made available wherever possible.
6.	The State Government should further support small and medium business to access private-sector financial/business advice to assist them adapting to the post-COVID-19 environment (priority).	The Tasmanian Government invested \$3.65 million in a range of financial/business advice programs for small and medium businesses, including the Small Business Advice for Recovery grant program, COVID-19 Small Business Financial Counselling Program, Digital Ready for Business program and expansion of advisory, referral and mentorship services.
7.	The State Government should provide a round of small business sustainment grants, or a loans program, for businesses transitioning to a sustainable post-COVID-19 operating model.	On 28 July 2020, the Tasmanian Government announced the \$20 million COVID-19 Small Business Sustainability and Recovery Assistance Package to support businesses through the challenges of COVID-19 and assist in their transition to a sustainable post-COVID-19 operating model.
8.	The State Government should ensure that the Tasmanian Development Board has the capacity to support viable recovering and growing businesses by making timely decisions regarding the level of the Board's Loans Cap.	The Tasmanian Government provides financial assistance to businesses primarily through the Tasmania Development and Resources, governed by the Tasmanian Development Board. Financial assistance is typically provided by way of loans, grants and guarantees. The Government and relevant agencies continue to work alongside the Board to ensure it is able to meet its ongoing financial commitments in support of Tasmanian businesses.
9.	The State Government should continue the requirements implemented during COVID-19 for Government agencies and Government businesses to pay their Tasmanian suppliers on 14-day terms.	In March 2020, the Government initiated a range of relief and stimulatory measures including reducing the period by which an agency is required to pay suppliers from 30 days to 14 days of the agency receiving an invoice, unless otherwise required by contractual arrangements.

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
10.	Government agencies should seek the agreement of existing major contractors to agree on 14-day terms with their Tasmanian suppliers.	In response to the above change to creditor payment terms, Heads of Agency within the Tasmanian Government took ownership of liaising with major contractors to ensure these terms were met. Treasury continues to monitor and report on the payment of invoices across the Government sector and engages with agencies to encourage adherence to this shorter timeframe.
11.	The State Government should amend its standard contracting framework to require contractors to trade on 14-day terms with their Tasmanian suppliers.	Tasmanian Government agencies are transitioning to using a new suite of goods and services contracting templates, which includes the following requirements in standard contract terms for goods and services contracts: "The Tasmanian Government expects the Supplier trade with its Tasmanian based suppliers on trading terms that include a requirement that the Supplier pays invoices (received from its Tasmanian based suppliers) within 14 days."
12.	The State Government should immediately modify contracts with community service providers, where performance has met expectations, to extend their duration to provide appropriate funding certainty (priority).	While the process of reviewing recurrent community service grants is ongoing as they have different start dates and durations, Communities Tasmania reviewed key community services contracts following the release of PESRAC recommendation and found many were already on a multi-year footing. Those that were due to expire within the March 2020 to September 2021 period were renewed and extended for the maximum period possible, where performance met expectations and aligned with business plans and approved government funding. The general approach toward community services funding agreements is to guarantee three or more years where it is appropriate to do so. Many contracts include an extension clause that is activated if performance meets agreed criteria.
13.	Contracts should provide flexibility in the nature of service delivery, reflecting new models developed during COVID-19.	Existing contractual frameworks were reviewed and assessed for suitability in the COVID-19 environment to ensure that the current approach provides ample flexibility.

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14.	The State Government should fund a program of free VET courses in qualifications directly related to demonstrated jobs growth. These should be delivered rapidly and flexibly by TasTAFE and other training providers endorsed by industry.	In response to both COVID-19 related job loss and state-wide skills shortages, the Tasmanian Government introduced the JobTrainer Fund – a joint initiative with the Australian Government that provides no-cost training in full qualifications and skill sets for Tasmanian job seekers, school leavers and people aged 17 to 24. JobTrainer has been extended until 31 December 2022.
15.	Group training organisations, labour hire firms, and other job matching services should be funded to support recruitment, mentoring and rotation of apprentices, trainees and short-term workers across employers that cannot currently commit to long-term employment contracts.	The Department of State Growth (via Skills Tasmania) met regularly with the Tasmanian Group Training Organisation Network on strategies to expand the awareness and use of group training organisations, including necessary funding arrangements to support the training and development of Tasmanian workers. The Skills Matching Service was established in April 2020 to help match job-ready workers with industries and businesses who need staff urgently. The Government also launched Mentoring for Success on 1 March 2021, a program that assists group training organisations to engage with new small and medium businesses to support an increase in apprenticeship and traineeship commencements (and completions) in Tasmania.
16.	The State Government should fully fund the Rapid Response Skills Initiative past 2020.	On 27 March 2020, the Tasmanian Government announced the existing Rapid Response Skills Initiative would be expanded, with an additional allocation of \$6.3 million as part of the Government's COVID-19 stimulus package.
17.	The State Government should enable TasTAFE to implement an internal workforce transition plan to ensure TasTAFE's trainers have up to date and contemporary industry skills.	The Tasmanian Government has committed to reform TasTAFE as a not-for-profit government business that is responsive to the needs of Tasmanian industries. Legislation passed through Parliament on 25 November 2021 which includes a business model for TasTAFE that has been designed to best suit its role and functions. This model provides more autonomy and flexibility so that TasTAFE can work more closely with industry and employers, ensure trainers are equipped with up-to-date industry skills and can be more responsive to evolving training needs.
18.	The State Government should require agencies to purchase from Tasmanian business on an 'if not why not' basis for at least the next two years (priority)	On 31 July 2020, the Government's Buy Local Policy was amended to increase support for Tasmanian businesses and enhance opportunities for local suppliers, including:

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
19.	The State Government should include in its standard government contracting framework a requirement that government contractors use local suppliers on a similar 'if not why not' basis (priority).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mandatory requirements for procurement planning to ensure agencies focus on maximising opportunities for local businesses before going to the broader market; • the disaggregation of substantial procurement opportunities; • incorporation of an Economic and Social Benefits Test evaluation criterion; • a requirement for successful suppliers to complete a Tasmanian Industry Participation Plan for high-value procurements and for private sector projects that receive Government support.
20.	Government businesses should be subject to as strong buying local requirements as government agencies (priority).	Government businesses are required to comply with the Buy Local Treasurer's Instructions and Guideline for Government businesses, with a key requirement being that Government businesses ensure that procurement policies maximise the opportunities for local businesses
21.	The State Government should work in a consultative way – including across relevant State government agencies and government businesses – with peak business groups, industry and sector leaders to support initiatives across sectors to 'Buy Tasmanian' products and services including the Brand Tasmania 'Showcase Initiative'.	Trade Tasmania (with the support of Brand Tasmania), in partnership with the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI), built the Buy Something Tasmanian directory. Tourism Tasmania partnered with Brand Tasmania, TCCI and regional tourism organisations to promote the Make Yourself at Home campaign on a microsite within the Buy Something Tasmanian website. This initiative allowed locals to access current information about tourism-based businesses and offered a holiday planning tool. Additionally, the new Tasmanian digital storytelling platform provides a virtual doorway to promote the state as place to live, visit, work, study, trade with and invest in.

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
22.	Areas of government responsible for planning decisions, permits and related approvals, including the Land Titles Office, should be fully resourced to ensure timely decision-making (priority).	<p>The 2020-21 State Budget delivered additional funding of \$5.8 million to enhance regulatory approvals and permit processing across the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.4m over four years for the Supporting Regulatory Approvals and Permitting initiative, taking in the broader environmental and Aboriginal Cultural Heritage portfolios; • \$1.2m over four years for additional resources for the Land Titles Office; • \$2.2m over two years for the Crown Lands Transaction Turnaround Time initiative.
23.	The State Government should fast-track the implementation of statutory timeframes for TasNetworks and TasWater to deliver infrastructure permits for development projects.	The <i>Building and Construction Regulatory Reform Amendments Act 2020</i> puts in place regulations to require both TasNetworks and TasWater to implement statutory timeframes for a series of commercial and consumer interactions, ranging from approval of designs through to connection of services.
24.	Reforms under consideration to deliver a fit-for-purpose building and construction regulatory framework should be given the strongest-possible mandate and priority for completion.	In June and November 2020 respectively, the Tasmanian Parliament passed two Building and Construction (Regulatory Reform Amendments) Bills to give effect to Tranches 1 and 2 of the reforms. The remaining reforms that make up Tranche 3 are being implemented through policy, process, and subordinate legislation changes.
25.	Local government should prioritise the resourcing of development applications and planning approvals to ensure that legislative timeframes are met, if not bettered.	The Tasmanian Government undertakes an annual collection of a broad range of council financial and performance data, including data relating to meeting legislative timeframes. Monitoring of council performance is one mechanism to encourage councils to prioritise meeting these timeframes. A number of new or amended statutory timeframes were introduced through the <i>Building and Construction (Regulatory Reform Amendments) Act 2020</i> and <i>Building and Construction (Regulatory Reform Amendments) Act (No. 2) 2020</i> .

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26.	The State Government should change the regulatory framework for developments that fall within 'no permit required' and 'permitted use' under planning schemes to deliver an efficient and timely approach for dealing with planning outcomes.	A new scheme was introduced from 1 January 2022 for the licensing of private planners for the production of "no planning approval required" certificates. In addition, an interim planning directive was issued in February 2021 which implemented additional exemptions from requiring a planning permit for minor works. These exemptions became part of the State Planning Provisions in February 2022.
27.	The Government should take a much more active approach to engaging with the private sector to facilitate major projects in Tasmania.	The Office of the Coordinator General is undertaking work to engage with the private sector to facilitate major projects in Tasmania and pursue development opportunities with several Tasmania-based businesses to enable their development plans. Part of this new approach involved adapting to changing market conditions, including maintaining a digital presence at online investment seminars as well as creating and using virtual investment promotional footage to assist investors in overcoming the inability to undertake site visits.
28.	The State Government should carefully manage the roll-out of its 'Construction Blitz' program. The flow of housing construction should be scheduled to deliver the intended stimulatory effect without over-heating the industry (priority).	Grants totalling \$120.6 million have been provided to deliver an additional 1,000 new social and affordable housing properties across Tasmania by June 2023. These are being developed in partnership with Tasmanian community housing providers.
29.	The State Government should further support all enterprises adapting to new COVID-19 Safe Workplace requirements.	The COVID-19 Safe Workplaces Framework has been implemented to support businesses and workplaces in Tasmania to continue to operate, or reopen, while protecting the health and safety of Tasmanians during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through extensive communications campaigns and direct outreach, the Government is ensuring that organisations understand their obligations and are well equipped with the resources and tools they need to keep their employees and visitors safe.
30.	The compliance arrangements need to be clear and as simple as possible, and penalties limited to genuinely recalcitrant non-compliers.	

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
31.	Simple templates and tools should be made widely available and small organisations given proactive assistance to meet their minimum requirements.	The Tasmanian Government developed several tools and templates to support organisations navigating COVID-19 requirements. Templates to support industry in the implementation of the COVID Safe Workplaces Framework were developed in consultation with industry peak bodies. Support was provided to small organisations through the WorkSafe Tasmania free Advisory Service, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Work Health and Safety Service (funded by the WorkCover Tasmania Board) and industry forums and podcasts provided by WorkSafe Tasmania senior executives. Workplace advisory visits have been conducted with individual businesses and ZOOM sessions held with audiences of up to 1,000 businesses to take them through how to prepare a COVID Safety Plan and meet the minimum requirements.
32.	Common approaches for common situations should be encouraged, not bespoke arrangements for each situation.	The Tasmanian Government, in consultation with industry, developed 57 industry-specific guidelines for the appropriate sectors to enable tailored and consistent control measures for industries developing their COVID Safety Plan. Industries were classified and any common challenges and environments were noted before guidelines were thoughtfully produced. Individual industry requests for more targeted information were actioned accordingly.
33.	The State Government should engage with Volunteering Tasmania to develop support measures to enable organisations to retain and attract volunteers.	The Government is providing over \$350,000 to Volunteering Tasmania, which commenced a state-wide campaign to encourage Tasmanians to return to volunteering or take up volunteering for the first time. The Volunteer Engagement Project aims to understand the needs of volunteers across all sectors, the barriers to involvement, and how best to reconnect volunteers during the COVID-19 recovery. They also began a Volunteer Management Innovation Program to help volunteering organisations adapt their operations after COVID-19, covering topics like recruitment, support and managing a more flexible workforce.

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
34.	Workplace Standards should make special efforts, including by providing simple templates, to assist volunteer-based organisations develop COVID-19 Safety Plans.	<p>The following templates and tools were developed by the Tasmanian Government and identified as particularly useful guidelines for volunteer-based organisations developing COVID-19 Safety Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry Sector Guidelines targeted at specific sectors or subsectors, • Small Business COVID Safety Plan Template, • Medium Business COVID Safety Plan Template, • Checklist – How to keep your workers safe and limit the spread of COVID-19.
Addressing structural issues		
35.	<p>The State Government should take a leadership role in collaborating with all Tasmania’s elected representatives, to ensure a common voice in lobbying the Australian Government to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide a transition path for COVID-19 income supplements; • provide a transition path for JobKeeper for all sectors, and particularly those most exposed to closed international borders and physical distancing requirements; • continue the International Freight Assistance Mechanism while there is a material reduction in air capacity into key markets; and • extend beyond September the current relaxed insolvency measures for enterprises (priority). 	<p>Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tasmanian Government has proactively engaged and collaborated with all elected officials to present a strong and consistent Tasmanian voice in our national engagements. While the specific issues raised by PESRAC have been addressed, there remains an ongoing role for Government to advocate in the interests of the Tasmanian community to ensure we receive the support required. The Government continues to raise these matters in appropriate intergovernmental forums.</p>

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
36.	The State Government should take all appropriate steps to re-establish visitor access to Tasmania at maximum feasible capacity once border controls allow demand to resume. This should include appropriate liaison with the Access Working Group, and should focus on both air and sea access, as well as the best evolving balance between them.	<p>Tourism Tasmania ensured that all appropriate steps have been taken to allow for the maximum capacity of tourists and visitors to return to Tasmania as COVID-19 restrictions eased. The re-establishment of core routes to Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane was a priority. Recovery of Adelaide, Perth and Gold Coast was also important as the market shows a clear preference for direct flights. In addition to the re-establishment of routes, Tourism Tasmania:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encouraged additional carriers onto open routes, • established new direct routes, including to New Zealand, • Constructed a temporary border processing facility at Hobart Airport.
37.	The State Government should provide clear direction to the TT-Line Board that it is to lead not lag passenger capacity into Tasmania, particularly in the absence of substantial air access.	In February 2021, the Government wrote to the Chair of TT-line formally conveying the Government's expectations concerning passenger capacity, noting the significant steps that have been taken to maintain them during the period of interstate travel restrictions and the very strong response to passenger campaigns. Passenger demand was tempered during 2021 by extended periods in which interstate travel was severely restricted. However, where travel had been less restricted, capacity generally rebounded.
38.	The State Government should build on the current intrastate and interstate marketing campaign by developing additional cost-effective practical initiatives to drive spending (priority).	<p>Tourism Tasmania developed and launched several key programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Make Yourself at Home campaigns, • the Come Down for Air campaign, • the Off Season winter marketing program, • Tassie Holiday Voucher program. <p>The campaigns have been effective in driving demand when border restrictions allow, with domestic visitor spend showing strong growth compared to 2019.</p>

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
39.	The State Government should implement and fund the Community Arts and Cultural Development strategy.	In November 2020, the State Government launched the Cultural and Creative Industries Recovery Strategy: 2020 and Beyond, which encourages innovative ways of working and communicating the value of the sector to the Tasmanian community as it recovers from COVID-19 and beyond. The Tasmanian Government provided an additional \$4 million funding as part of the State Budget 2020-21 through the Recovery Strategy to support the cultural and creative industries.
40.	The State Government should drive the development of effective job placement approaches that enable regional led solutions and provide for employer and job seeker matching at a local level.	In response to the need for effective job placement opportunities at a local level, the Department of State Growth began coordinating the roll out of four new Regional Jobs Hubs in St Helens, Huonville, Brighton and Burnie. The St Helens and Brighton Hubs are now open, joining the existing Hubs in Sorell, George Town and Glenorchy. The two remaining Hubs are expected to open soon. The Hubs deliver practical results for Tasmanian job seekers and employers by utilising local leadership and community support in the job placement process. This approach results in tailored assistance to both those searching for local work opportunities and the businesses looking to hire.
41.	The State Government should accelerate existing strategies to deliver improved educational opportunities that meet individual student needs as well as providing clearer pathways to jobs in identified post-COVID-19 industry priority areas, the training system and university.	<p>The Department of Education delivered the following strategies to improve educational opportunities and provide clearer pathways to jobs, the training system and university:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Community Services Package of Learning in 2021 and 2022 for Years 9 and 10 students, • Scoping work for Careers Pathway Maps and Career Selection Guides to be integrated into the development of student career and pathway resources, • Six General Capabilities Short Qualifications were granted Formal Recognition of Learning status by the Office of Tasmanian Assessment, Standards and Certification. These Short Qualifications are available for all year 11 and 12 students in Tasmanian government and non-government schools in 2021 and 2022.

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42.	The State Government should rigorously monitor and enforce apprentice requirements for government building and construction works as required in the Building and Construction Training Policy.	On 1 January 2021, an updated Building and Construction Training Policy came into effect. While the scope of the policy remains unchanged, updates included modernised wording and clarification of roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders. Under the policy, contractors are required to use apprentices for a minimum of 20 per cent of the labour required for work undertaken on government-funded building and construction contracts. Overall analysis indicates that apprentice and trainee requirements are being met under the policy.
43.	A similar model should be applied to capital work programs for government businesses.	The Government has approved the development of a Treasurer's Instruction and Guideline for Government Businesses to apply the intent of the Building and Construction Training Policy. Using the Guideline, Government businesses will develop individual policies that apply the intent of the Policy to the entity in a manner that is appropriate and encourages training across the spectrum of skills. The Department of Treasury and Finance are currently developing the new Treasurer's Instruction and Guideline in consultation with the Department of State Growth (Skills Tasmania).
44.	The roll-out of the affordable housing stimulus as part of the 'Construction Blitz' program should contain apprenticeship requirements on a similar basis to those that apply to the Government's own construction program.	In addition to supplying affordable housing to Tasmanians, the Construction Blitz program presented an opportunity for the State Government to help Tasmanian apprentices enter the construction industry. To implement this recommendation, the Government requires that apprentices are engaged on projects throughout the entire construction phase. Twenty per cent of the construction labour for the delivery of 1,000 properties has and will be undertaken by apprentices.

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
45.	The State Government should extend the payroll tax rebate schemes for youth employees, and for apprentices and trainees.	<p>This recommendation was implemented through the introduction of the Payroll Tax Rebate (Apprentices, Trainees and Youth Employees) Amendment Bill 2020 which amended the <i>Payroll Tax Rebate (Apprentices, Trainees and Youth Employees) Act 2017</i> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extend the payroll tax rebate scheme as it relates to youth employees for 18 months from 31 December 2020 to 30 June 2022, • extend the payroll tax rebate scheme as it relates to apprentices and trainees for 12 months from 30 June 2021 to 30 June 2022, • expand the payroll tax rebate scheme for apprentices and trainees from all industries from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2022.
46.	The State Government should implement a structured approach to increasing the share of its own workforce represented by young people.	<p>Providing opportunities for young people to work with the Tasmanian State Service continues to be part of the Government's ongoing processes, with several established youth recruitment activities providing structured career pathways for young people into the State Service. In response to the PESRAC recommendation, the State Service increased its intake of graduate, school-based traineeships and cadets which contributed to an increase of 460 employees under the age of 30 between March 2020 and June 2021.</p>
47.	The State Government should support further industry programs to enhance workplace cultural change and development pipelines for women.	<p>This Government is committed to helping women gain employment and feel safe working in non-traditional fields. Since the introduction of the Women on Boards Strategy in 2015, the number of women on Tasmanian Boards has increased from 33.8 per cent in June 2015, to 47.4 per cent as of September 2021 – an increase of 13.6 per cent. In addition, 87 women have gone through the Australian Institute of Company Directors' courses through our Women's Leadership Scholarship. The Government has committed over \$4 million to strengthen the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in sectors where women are traditionally under-represented. Further action in this area remains ongoing.</p>

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
48.	The Tasmanian State Sector should create traineeship pipelines within Government and maintain at least gender parity in recruitment.	<p>In response to the PESRAC recommendation, the State Service increased its commitment to school-based traineeships and provided a further 13 opportunities for Year 11 or 12 students in 2022. This builds on 33 school-based trainees employed since the pilot program in 2018-19.</p> <p>The Government's commitment to the Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect Standards supports the ongoing work to achieve diversity in the workforce and equal gender representation in the State Service. In addition, the Heads of Departments Commitment to Gender Diversity continues to provide the motivation to identify the barriers to women working in the senior levels of the State Service.</p>
49.	Government agencies should embed flexible working arrangements delivered successfully through the COVID-19 suppression period, to support the recruitment and advancement of women in the State Service.	Flexible working arrangements have become embedded across the State Service for workplace flexibility as well as COVID-19 safety. The total number of female State Service employees increased between March 2021 and March 2022 by 1,267.
50.	The State Government should prioritise work, including shared data capability, to identify, engage and support vulnerable cohorts that may have ongoing disproportionate adverse impacts during recovery, including through disruption to education, training, and employment (priority).	In 2021, the Tasmanian Government signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on Data Sharing to assist in the secure interchange of data to support citizen services and information sharing across states. As a signatory to the agreement, Tasmania participated in national data sharing for a range of initiatives to support vulnerable cohorts in addition to data sharing system reforms.
51.	Vulnerable Students Panels across all sectors should be continued, appropriately resourced, embedded within the education system and bolstered by a comprehensive case management system.	In response to learning disruptions caused by the pandemic, the Government established Vulnerable Students Panels – a collaborative initiative between the Department of Education and the Department of Communities to help vulnerable students remain engaged. To enable the continued support of students, the panels are embedded into the education system and supported by a case management platform developed to securely share data across the relevant government agencies.

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
52.	The State Government should review its capital program and place a higher weighting on distributing activity towards smaller-scale regional projects.	The Tasmanian Government directed additional support to areas identified as most in need of funding through both new and existing Budget allocations in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 State Budgets.
53.	The State Government should use its influence to encourage government businesses and other public-sector infrastructure providers to establish capital project priorities that place a higher weighting on distributing activity towards smaller-scale regional projects.	Recent experience in the civil construction industry is that contractors with necessary prequalification do not submit tenders for small jobs, but larger projects will and do create jobs in the local community, through subcontracting aspects of the works to local contractors. The Department of State Growth's work program has a considerable proportion of discretionary maintenance and capital expenditure in each of the regions across the State. Infrastructure Tasmania has also incorporated this PESRAC recommendation into the redevelopment of the 10 Year Infrastructure Pipeline which shows the spread of infrastructure projects by both scale and region, allowing better market preparedness and understanding of upcoming regional projects. Providing greater visibility and information on regional projects also helps to support and encourage publicly funded infrastructure providers to plan more infrastructure projects in regional areas.
54.	<p>The State Government, with the support of the Australian Government, should address digital inclusion and equity across Tasmanian communities, including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • addressing critical regional mobile and internet black spots; and • making available at little or no cost, devices and other resources needed to enable disadvantaged Tasmanians to engage in education, employment and to seek the assistance they may require from support services, regardless of location. 	The Department of State Growth has engaged with the Australian Government and telecommunications carriers on a range of opportunities and has invested more than \$5.88 million to improve the state's digital infrastructure. During 2020, the Department of Education loaned students over 6,400 devices and over 650 dongles with filtered internet access. This was in addition to more than 23,000 devices that schools already held for use by students in and away from the classroom.

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
55.	The State Government should expand the roll out of digital literacy initiatives in communities around Tasmania utilising existing networks such as Libraries Tasmania and Service Tasmania.	<p>Service Tasmania and Libraries Tasmania extended support across its network for people needing assistance with the Check in Tas app, complementing the work of the Public Health Hotline. Service Tasmania recruited additional staff to assist clients across the network to integrate the vaccine certificate into the Check in Tas app. The following initiatives were also expanded and/or further developed to tackle digital literacy more broadly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Ready for Daily Life, • Libraries Tasmania’s digital literacy services on email, e-safety and computer basics, • 26Ten’s digital literacy options in conjunction with functional literacy and numeracy programs.
56.	The State Government should work with regional councils to explore innovative approaches to community transport to better connect people living in regional areas to education and work opportunities.	The Tasmanian Government committed \$3.2 million to expand the Area Connect community transport bus service in March 2021. Area Connect is a social enterprise subsidiary of not-for-profit entity Community Transport Services Tasmania (CTST). The Government indicated the service would expand to service 16 Tasmanian local government areas on a “low cost or free” basis, to service the regional jobs hubs introduced under a parallel initiative.
Focusing on addressing the social impacts		
57.	The State Government should quickly review how the additional COVID-19 government funding for mental health; family violence; and emergency food relief has been used and the outcomes delivered (priority)	Two funding streams are available to support Tasmanians experiencing family and sexual violence during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
58.	Monitoring and rapid contingency planning should be undertaken to ascertain if further additional funding is needed across these important community impact areas.	<p>1. Tasmanian Government funding of \$2.7 million (all programs and services now implemented),</p> <p>2. Australian Government funding of \$3.363 million through the National Partnership COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Responses (the National Partnership).</p> <p>In terms of emergency food relief, in October 2020 additional funding was allocated to Loaves and Fishes, Hamlet, and Foodbank Tasmania. A review of this arrangement informed the Food Security Strategy, released in 2021.</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government committed up to \$1.5 million to continuing the support of a dedicated 1800 phone number, to allow Tasmanians to receive psychological support and provide an outreach service for older Tasmanians and industries significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This service, known as A Tasmanian Lifeline, is administered by Lifeline Tasmania and commenced on 1 May 2020.</p>
59.	In developing COVID-19 Safe Workplace approaches, the State Government should prioritise restoring face-to-face service delivery (directly and through purchased services), particularly for community support services.	To reduce the likelihood of exposure and spread of COVID-19, Government and government-funded community support service providers reduced some face-to-face contact by instead using phone or online communication, or by postponing meetings for non-critical services. These services reverted back to face-to-face as soon as it was safe to do so.
60.	Where digital service delivery has delivered improved outcomes from a client perspective, those changes should be maintained.	During COVID-19, Government introduced a number of new digital service delivery channels such as increased use of TeleHealth. Many of these new digital channels are not specific to COVID-19 and have been maintained through the recovery phase and beyond to provide improved service delivery and flexibility for Tasmanians.

Rec No.	Recommendation	Implementation
61.	The State Government should develop and provide Tasmanians with a 'whole of population screening tool' so the general public can 'check in' on their mental health and seek help early if needed. This should be supported by a public awareness campaign to prevent long-term impacts and raise awareness of the newly-funded access points for help.	The Department of Communities Tasmania collaborated with the Mental Health Council of Tasmania (MHCT) to deliver a website that would allow the general public to 'check in' on their mental health. The MHCT's #Checkin site is fully operational and includes activities and information on a range of services that can help Tasmanians to boost mental wellness, as well as offering free #Checkin Small Business Toolkits for local operators that might be impacted by navigating challenging circumstances.
62.	The State Government should plan and transition from increased emergency food relief provision towards community-based and school-based food security models.	The Tasmanian Food Security Strategy was publicly released on 20 August 2021. The Strategy provides a blueprint for current and future Government activity impacting food relief and will be supported by the development of a co-designed Action Plan. During the 2021 State Election, the Tasmanian Government committed funding of \$1.4 million to the Tasmanian Schools Canteen Association (TSCA) to deliver and evaluate the School Lunch Pilot Program in 2022 and 2023, commencing with 15 Government schools in Term 1, 2022 and increasing to a total of 30 Government schools in 2023.
Improving government delivery		
63.	The State Government should implement a regionally-based model for coordinating the recovery journey.	The Government established three COVID-19 Regional Recovery Committees in the North, North-West and South of the State. Members are based in the relevant region and include representatives from the business sector, the community services industry, government and the local community. Committees provide advice to Government on COVID-19 impacts and recommended recovery activities, as Tasmania's recovery journey progresses.
64.	The State Government should accelerate the Tasmanian State Service Review.	The Independent Review of the Tasmanian State Service was completed by Dr Ian Watt AC, and a final report was publicly released on 6 September 2021. The Report includes 77 recommendations, which are organised into a 'Roadmap for Reform'. The Tasmanian Government supports, or supports in-principle, all 77 recommendations of the Independent Review of the State Service.