



The North East Bioregional Network is not for profit community based nature conservation group with a strong interest in land use planning. We have participated in a number of TPC and RMPAT hearings as well as making representations on numerous land use planning processes such as the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

Property development is the biggest industry in Australia and in recent years has become a much bigger industry in Tasmania. As well as being a large industry it is also one that is very susceptible to corruption given the huge amounts of money developers and associated infrastructure industries stand to gain from policies and laws which favour them.

While the initial impression is that the main thrust of the Strategy is to provide more social and affordable housing it soon becomes apparent that the definition of affordable housing basically means mainly just increasing housing supply and that there is a broader agenda of increasing property development full stop

We believe the underlying tenet of the proposed housing strategy and the establishment of Homes Tasmania is fundamentally flawed because rather than seeking to address the causes of housing problems it appears the intent is to continue to support and expand the property development industry through the implementation of ever more pro- development policies, laws and tax and other financial incentives including weakening planning laws to “make rezoning applications easier”(page 21).

The State Governments policy of strongly supporting population growth and mass industrial tourism are some of the key reasons why the “housing crisis” exists. As acknowledged on page 27 “Demand for housing is being driven by population growth.....”. While the discussion paper acknowledges population is a Challenge (page 11) the Housing Strategy supports population growth and rationalises the need for more housing in the statement below on page 10:

“The Tasmanian Government has set a target to grow the population to 650 000 people by 2050 to drive economic growth, create jobs and improve the standard of living for all Tasmanians⁶.

Based on the most recent data, to meet this target the State’s population

will need to grow
by an average of around 2 800 persons per year until 2050. This target is
an important factor
in why we are developing a Housing Strategy that will help deliver the level
of housing supply
required to meet this demand

There is of course a dismal circularity to this argument. The only solution to a problem created by population growth is to build more houses. To build more houses requires the continuation and implementation of more subsidies, incentives and weakening planning laws. More population growth is required to maintain demand for more housing etc etc Relevantly the Strategy states on page 24 a goal is that “supply in urban and regional Tasmania meets demand” while on page 21 it is recommended to “Establish a statutory housing authority – Homes Tasmania – to drive increased housing supply”. The take home message from this is that the Government's intention is to continue to implement policies, laws and subsidies that both create demand and respond to that demand in terms of property development. While there is undoubtedly a need for more social housing the Tasmanian Housing Strategy is not fit for purpose as its primary focus appears to be on boosting housing supply for the benefit of property developers rather than a holistic approach that fully and meaningfully addresses the causes of the “housing crisis”.

On page 30 it is explained that “opportunities also exist to challenge some of the NIMBY attitudes that are present.....”. The use of the term NIMBY strongly aligns with recent messaging employed by property development lobbyists seeking to ostracise any individual or community group with concerns about the impacts of proposed developments. As such the Strategy discussion paper perhaps unwittingly or deliberately uses language that suggests a coalition with the property development industry and key organisations such as the Property Council, Housing Industry Australia and the Master Builders Association. This isn't surprising given the history of these organisations in working with the Government on the previous “planning reform” processes such as the Planning Reform Taskforce. It does however raise concerns about the purpose of establishing Homes Tasmania and whether its major objective will be to further the interests of the property development industry rather than address the causes of the “housing crisis”.

There is virtually no acknowledgement in the entire discussion paper about the environmental impacts of urban development expansion such as clearing of

native bushland, increased impacts on waterways and wetlands from urban run off/stormwater, increased pressure for fuel reduction burning to protect new developments from bushfire, increased roadkill, loss of agricultural land etc. Instead a narrow definition of environment is followed purely related to decreasing emissions. While paying attention to building design is an important consideration to reduce climate change impacts the lack of reference to the multiple environmental impacts associated with providing increased housing is a serious omission. Likewise the impacts of urban intensification on water supplies, residential amenity, traffic congestion, noise pollution, flooding etc is also side stepped apart from acknowledging that infrastructure will be required to satisfactorily meet the needs of ever growing development. The cost of such infrastructure is a huge impost on the public purse (assuming it is even implemented) and in the main can be viewed as a public subsidy to facilitate property development for the benefit of the private sector.

Conclusion.

The North East Bioregional Network supports land use planning approaches which are values based rather than growth and demand orientated. **The use of land should be determined by the inherent and potential values of the land rather than the demand for their use or development.**

The Tasmanian Housing Strategy discussion paper reflects a very one dimensional business as usual perspective in regards to land use planning which is not acceptable in the 21st century. We need to move beyond population/property development ponzi schemes towards land use planning principles and related policies (such as population) where values such as natural landscapes, biodiversity, scenic beauty, intrinsic attractiveness, overall desirability, liveability and quality of life are protected and maintained rather than being subservient to the ideological dogma of development and growth at any cost. We reject the notion that advocating for the above is a form of NIMBYISM and further request that the Housing Strategy team ensures they consult widely and thoroughly with community groups who have a history of being actively engaged in and having high levels of expertise in land use planning issues because they are important stakeholders in this process. Without such consultation the process and strategy lacks balance. The Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania group can assist with providing information to the Government regarding community groups that should be consulted.

As William J Lines wrote in his book False Economy about urban development:

“.....as Gosnells filled up...turned into a waste land of traffic lights and bitumen,of new and old used car lots , chain link fenced machinery dumps,parking lots, shopping centres, and fast food outlets. Ever busy ever building ever in motion ever discarding the old for the new few people paused to think about what they were so busy building and what they had destroyed and thrown away. But most of what they built was depressing, brutal and ugly. With their eyes on the future most people were too busy to notice spreading ugliness and they unwittingly but irrevocably bequeathed ugliness to the future.”

We recommend the following to assist with addressing housing problems in Tasmania:

- Stabilise rather than grow Tasmania’s population
- Adopt steady state economic principles
- Cap tourism visitor numbers and limit Air BnB
- Strengthen money laundering laws [drive up prices](#)
- Abolish negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions on real estate; [negative gearing and concessional capital gains tax](#)
- Limit foreign and interstate investment in real estate;
- Phase out interest only home loans; and
- Phase out provisions allowing Self-Managed Superannuation Funds to borrow for investment in real estate

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