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Comments for a Tasmanian Housing Strategy and the 'Tasmanian Housing Strategy Discussion Paper September 2022'

The Writer

I have lived in Tasmania for over 34 years and was born in Sydney of Australian parents. I am a DSP recipient, not a member of, or affiliated with any political party, and not a member of any of the member organisations of the Ministerial Housing Reference Group. I own a house and live on a mostly forested property, which is mostly reserved and is located in Reedy Marsh, north of Deloraine in the Meander Valley Municipality.

Preamble

This document is designed not only as a response to the 2022 Communities Tasmania Discussion Paper, but contains ideas which the writer considers should be incorporated into a Tasmanian Housing Strategy.

It is my view and would appear obvious that a deliberation over housing and its multiple problems in Tasmania cannot be seen in isolation.

The proposition appears to be to replace the Affordable Housing Strategy with the Tasmanian Housing Strategy, presumably when the former expires but this is not clearly stated.

It would also appear that Homelessness is viewed as a problem primarily of housing supply but this paper questions whether such thinking is sufficient.

It would also appear that Affordable Housing is seen as a problem.

VISION

There is no current vision expressed in the Affordable Housing Strategy but nonetheless it states:

"...to provide a road map to guide the State's efforts over the next ten years to improve housing affordability and help those most vulnerable to housing stress and homelessness."

"This Strategy aims to achieve two key outcomes:

- a decrease in the proportion of low income Tasmanian households experiencing housing stress;

and

- a decrease in the proportion of Tasmanians experiencing homelessness.”

The good thing about the Affordable Housing Strategy 2015 to 2025 is that it specifically deals with the issue of homelessness and affordability for those most in need, at least on paper.

There is a clear set of goals identifying and prioritising those who were perceived to be most in need.

However, it may be that the Affordable Housing Strategy has not been sufficient to address the problems, even though the same Government created it as created the problems it faces.

The removal of the word “Affordable” in the 2022 Housing Strategy discussion paper and the proposed name for the new strategy is noted and concern is expressed over potential dilution of the crucial priority to the public.

The proposed Vision expressed in the ‘Tasmanian Housing Strategy Discussion Paper September 2022’ is inadequate. Its current proposed vision states:

“The Tasmanian Housing Strategy seeks to establish a 20-year framework to improve housing outcomes for all Tasmanians. The proposed aspirational vision is:”

“Every Tasmanian has access to safe, secure and affordable housing.”

This is considered inadequate, I have suggested below an amended version below.

Firstly, what does The Minister (Barnett) say?

“Housing is a fundamental need that supports people to reach their goals and potential in every other area of their lives. Every Tasmanian deserves a roof over their head and with it, the opportunity to thrive.”

I am in agreement with most of the Minister’s statement but am just a little unsure how the “roof over their head” would provide the opportunity to thrive. Indeed, surely the pressing issue, first and foremost is one of survival. Perhaps that is what he means. He does not refer to the fact that shelter is a basic human right.

The fact is that most of us have a roof over our heads, some more securely so than others. The vast chasm is clearly between those who have somewhere adequate to live and those who basically do not. This issue is not adequately reflected in the vision currently. As a result, there could be a real avoidance and dilution of the effort to provide a roof over everyone’s head and instead focus on other less crucially critical issues.

What should the Vision say? This is an amended proposal for a Vision with two components:

Every Tasmanian to have access to liveable, safe, secure and affordable, energy efficient, ecologically sustainable, durable housing, which has a low carbon impact.

No Tasmanian to be homeless.

My reasons for advocating this amended and expanded Vision are set out in this submission but briefly, particularly on the additional terms I have added:

Comment on Additional Terms

Liveable: means both ergonomically satisfactory and pleasant, including in a neighbourhood sense, that is, importantly, including amenity. Amenity is an essential component of liveability. For those with disabilities 'liveable' also definitely means designed in such way as to meet the needs of the disabilities. For some disabilities, this is termed 'accessible'. Liveable also translates into wellbeing.

Energy Efficient: means the house is well insulated, designed in such a way as to be efficient to heat and cool and to have appliances which consume less power. That its orientation is approximately north facing and where it has more windows on the north, less on the west and south and that the windows are at least double glazed and cold bridges avoided.

Low Carbon Impact: means that the construction materials and the sources of materials have a lower level of emissions. Buildings are a significant source of emissions. This descriptor should include the use of recycled materials and the reuse of unused or left over materials and the proper recycling of the packaging.

Ecologically Sustainable: means a number of things, which are discussed further on in this submission. To ensure the house is not a part of a land clearance operation, including especially where the clearance would have destroyed habitat for Threatened Species. Ecologically Sustainable also means that greenfield sites on Significant and Prime Agricultural land would be avoided. Ecologically Sustainable would also cover and avoid such practices as completely stripping all the topsoil from the site and would prohibit such unfortunate greedy ideas, which also represent a potential biosecurity concern.

Durable: means solidly constructed and long lasting not only from a built perspective but also from a design quality one, with the quality of design to remain relevant and appreciated by the occupants. Durable also means the house being suitable and satisfactory for subsequent generations.

My second statement is the same as in the Affordable Housing Strategy:

"No Tasmanian to be homeless."

Homeless: Meaning without a defined dwelling place, which can be called home. This is in line with the Affordable Living Strategy's statement: *"a decrease in the proportion of Tasmanians experiencing homelessness."*

It is important to note that the problems of homelessness are not always, solely or automatically solved by way of housing solutions. Sometimes it is clearly necessary to address the root causes of homelessness such as family violence and mental illness, among others.

Comment on the existing proposed Vision terms:

Affordable: Almost all OECD countries have some sort of "affordable" housing initiative or program. Australia is a middling performer within the range of OECD countries. We could certainly do better in the Affordable Housing space. To do better in Tasmania we should raise expenditure in the area of Affordable Housing from about 6% to 10%, as Shelter has suggested in its submission to the Productivity Commission.

Safe: Many people become homeless because of fleeing family violence. It is vital they become safe and remain safe. Living out of a car is not safe.

Secure: The percentage of people renting in Tasmania is gradually increasing. Clearly, the current rental system in Tasmania is not secure, as renters can be forced to vacate at the end

of a lease with what amounts to little warning. There is a range of reasons why this might occur.

HOUSING IMPACTS ON NATURE.

In Tasmania it is proposed¹ that housing would continue to consume Greenfield sites especially including sites supporting native vegetation including sites supporting threatened species and sometimes supporting critically endangered vegetation or critically endangered species.

This is an unacceptable approach and should change without delay. This approach is completely unsustainable.

ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY OF HOUSING IN TASMANIA

There is no overt satisfactory standard, which delivers a guide as to what may be considered an overall ecological sustainability of housing quality in Tasmania. Ecological Sustainability is something, which the Liberal Government does not even wish to talk about. Yet, it is fundamental.

I have raised some aspects above in modifying the proposed vision to include the term Ecologically Sustainable: They include a development standard such that:

1. To ensure the Affordable House, indeed any house is not a part of a land clearance operation, including especially where the clearance would have destroyed habitat for Threatened Species or Vegetation Communities. These places may also be termed Priority Vegetation.
2. Ecologically Sustainable also means that Greenfield sites on Significant and Prime Agricultural land would be avoided for Affordable House (any house) development wherever possible. Often such land represents a very small percentage of our best agricultural land and should be retained for such uses as little bits add up to larger proportions.
3. Ecologically Sustainable would also cover and avoid such practices as completely stripping all the topsoil from the site and would prohibit such unfortunate greedy ideas which also represent a potential biosecurity concern.
4. Ecologically Sustainable also means:
 - a. The extra necessary measures adds to the cost of building a resilient house near the bush or other flammable environment and I cannot see a reason for choosing such a place for Affordable Housing. For other housing, this may be an acceptable risk.

¹ Such as under the draft Tasmanian Planning Policies, such as under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. Such as under the FPA's useless land clearing controls.

- b. Generally existing older buildings in Bushfire Hazard areas (more than a decade old) are simply not designed to meet any BAL bushfire level and many do not have the features necessary to withstand bushfire including features and standards within the Bushfire Hazard Code. Old houses mostly are not safe to withstand any sort of a bushfire. An upgrade program for the existing housing stock in bushfire prone areas should be considered.
 - c. Additionally vulnerable uses (in the Bushfire Hazard Code) should not ever be sited in or up against bushfire prone vegetation. Affordable Housing should be regarded as a Vulnerable Use.
5. Affordable Houses should not be built in locations, which are or will be subject to flooding.
6. Affordable Houses should not be built in locations, which are or will be subject to landslip.
7. Affordable Houses should not be built in locations, which are or will be subject to high levels of poor air drainage and frost.
8. Affordable Houses should not be built in locations, which will be subject to significant winds unless a higher standard of construction and airtightness can be achieved. This certainly is a common ecological feature of places along the coast of Tasmania and on the offshore islands. Climate change is increasing wind velocities.
9. Sustainable also has other meanings in our society. This includes:
 - Contains access to potable treated water from a municipal water scheme that meets Australian Drinking Water Standards.
 - Includes being serviced by a former municipal (Tas Water) sewerage scheme.
 - Is serviced by Municipal waste collection.
 - Is serviced by Tas Networks delivery of 240 volt AC electrical power.
 - Has a sealed, curbed and channelled public road access.
 - Is within an area, which has, at least to some extent, drainage.
 - Is served by public transport.
 - Has features such as footpaths and bike lanes/routes.

Such services are generally provided only in suburbia, known as the General Residential Zone usually. There are some other residential zones but this is the main one.

Such public services all come at a cost. Lower costs can be found by reducing some of those services. Are they all necessary?

- Such high density residential suburban areas should not now be established on flood prone land, or in bushfire prone areas or on identified landslip prone places.

However, it should be acknowledged there are people living in rural Tasmania (in a variety of zones) who are living in dwellings where some of the above services are not provided by Councils and Tas Networks, Tas Water and so forth. As a consequence of taking more responsibility for the provision of one's own building services these people, living a rural

residential existence achieve in many ways, lower CO2 emissions and a more resilient and self-sufficient lifestyle.

As cities grow new Affordable Housing inevitably becomes further and further away from the city centre, as land especially is less expensive. So whilst the ambition of Affordable Housing is to be close to employment that is obviously a declining situation.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Some would include this energy efficiency section in the above ecological sustainability section. However, there is a raft of issues when operating a building such as a house, which may be considered more specifically regarded as energy efficiency matters.

The Discussion Paper talks about new housing stock reaching a Level 6 NATHERS standard yet the minimum acceptable level now is Level 7 on the NATHERS scale. So, the Discussion Paper is either proposing to build buildings, which do not meet the minimum standard, or the Discussion Paper is out of date.

The ways in which one can achieve a particular NATHERS rating are many including solar efficient design, which has been practiced by some buildings and architects since the Second World War. Also a range of design aspects and features, which were a response to oil crisis of the 1970s.

In general, almost all existing houses and many new houses in both suburban and rural Tasmania could be improved in terms of reducing the energy consumption aspects of the design and build of the dwelling. That would make them all more affordable to operate. Buildings will be considerably better if architect designed.

I consider a higher NATHERS rating than the current level 6 proposal, should be the aspiration for all new housing, indeed a goal of NATHERS 9 would be desirable and would significantly reduce the day to day operating costs of the building. This would also assist to mitigate climate change impacts.

The concept of Affordability would therefore apply to the lifespan of the dwelling and hence ongoing operational costs of the building not just the purchase price.

There is currently no strategic or adequate financial mechanism to upgrade the existing poorly performing Tasmanian housing stock to a new energy efficient standard. That means people, including renters in particular are forced to endure lower quality housing which is expensive to run and operate. Trying to get an upgrade to a rental property would be a pathway to lose your accommodation. It should not be like that but the Tasmanian rental legislation is very poor in terms of a tenants' rights.

The existing housing stock of Tasmania has many shortcomings and generally requires the consumption of a lot of energy to keep people comfortable, in winter especially. Additionally some dwellings overheat in summer as well. Some localities, which now provide dormer suburb services, are comprised of shacks. One example in the south would be Dodges Ferry and one in the North would be Beauty Point. Nice places perhaps but quite an amount of the housing stock is of inadequate quality for permanent modern accommodation.

Very briefly for either existing house stock or new designs, the things that could be done to raise the energy efficiency of houses, would be (noting some measures do not apply to an existing building) in designing a new building. The following list would be the most usual and cost effective design choices:

- To orient the house to the North, with less window area on the South side.
- To increase the floor, walls and ceiling insulation significantly.
- To increase airtightness and reduce drafts.
- To double glaze or triple glaze all windows and skylights.
- To address and reduce poor thermal (cold) bridge design aspects.
- To increase thermal mass and have it designed and located so winter sun warms it.
- To shade the windows and the north wall from hot summer sun.
- To ensure thermal mass is placed on the inside of the insulated envelope and not the outside (such as usually but erroneously occurs in a conventional brick veneer house).

Some of these design matters will increase the purchase price and cost but all will return a long term benefit for the residents and owners and will make a more sustainable, lower emitting, more comfortable dwelling, which will be more affordable.

TASMANIA'S POPULATION AND ITS CURRENT GROWTH TRAJECTORY

The Liberals' population growth ambition of 2013 was always a reflection of the fact that the Liberals have been doing as the Property Council told them.

*"In March 2013, the then opposition leader for the Liberal Party, Will Hodgeman, announced a population target of 650,000 Tasmanians by 2050."*²

*"Migration will need to increase considerably to replace this projected slowing down and to achieve both the short term population targets desired by the Property Council and the longer term objectives of the Tasmanian Liberal government."*³

In September 2015, the Liberal State Government introduced, seemingly with minimal consultation or notice, a Population Growth Strategy⁴. It was obviously a fate accomplished. Why would the community make comment when the decision had effectively been made some years ago?

A number of actions ensued. The Liberal's 2015 Population Growth Strategy asserts:

"Population growth strengthens the economy, creates more job opportunities and a greater diversity. That's why we have created Tasmania's Population Growth Strategy, which aims to increase our population to 650 000 by 2050."

This poorly designed population strategy was primarily about the economy and jobs and perhaps the amorphous human diversity (whatever that may be), not about ecological sustainability, at all. Nor did it adequately deal with the consequences including homelessness and for housing especially affordable housing, which has become much harder to access as more people find themselves needing assistance as a consequence.

Tasmania's Population Growth Strategy states:

² Lisa Denny – University of Tasmania

³ Lisa Denny – University of Tasmania

⁴ ISBN: 978-1-921527-48-7 © State of Tasmania September 2015

*This is a targeted and comprehensive set of actions aimed at encouraging more people to our state through job creation, migration **and ensuring Tasmania is recognised as the great place it is to live and work.***

There is absolutely no proof that the benefits of supposedly strengthening the economy outweigh the disadvantages. This may not be the place to argue such matters but briefly it must be said that the Liberal assertions (in the Population Growth Strategy), which were made without evidence in 2015, have brought the Tasmanian housing crisis to the place where it is today including the increased, longer wait, social housing waiting list, the increased homelessness the housing affordability stress and a range of other impacts.

Regarding the Property Council's idea to strengthen the economy, perhaps rather did it feather and feed the pockets of the wealthier in our society, some of which coincidentally make up the operatives within the Property Council of Tasmania? Did they all get richer? Is the economy stronger or does it simply appear as if it is? What is a stronger economy?

Now the Property Council of Tasmania sit on the Ministerial appointed 'Housing Reference Group', but I wish to argue they should not and that installing them on this group which assess submissions such as this one is fundamentally absurd and ridiculous. This is the sort of thing, which happens in banana republics. I am quite disgusted.

A series of false and potentially misleading claims have been made in the Liberal Government's 2015 Population Growth Strategy.

The 2015 Population Growth Strategy blithely and erroneously states on Page 10:

"Unlike in some other Australian jurisdictions, there are no major constraints in Tasmania to population expansion. Tasmania does not have any shortages of land or of water for household use in the major urban areas where most population growth is likely to occur. The scale of possible population increases in Tasmania's cities is not expected to result in the same congestion issues that some cities in mainland Australian are facing.

Equally, environmental impacts are likely to be manageable under current regulatory arrangements."

Such misleading statements are obviously facile and simply, blatantly not true. For example, causing and exacerbating the processes whereby other species become more endangered is a major constraint. Housing in Tasmania is regularly constructed in places, which have natural environment, vegetation and habitat. In Australia, Land Clearance is and has been regarded for over two decades as a Nationally Listed Threatening Process under EPBC Law. The problem is the EPBC Law is weak and Tasmania basically has few land clearance controls.

It is morally unreasonable and ecologically unsustainable to remove, decimate, liquidate and destroy threatened species habitat. The presence of significant Threatened Species habitat in close proximity to our major settlements is absolutely a major constraint and this should be recognised by the Housing Strategy now.

So the 2015 Population Growth Strategy, were it to be relied upon for the purposes of constructing a new Housing Strategy, would potentially misdirect those creating the new Housing Strategy, which would presumably still have an affordability and a homelessness focus. An overt focus is called for anyway.

Further expansion of housing stock should exclude Threatened Species habitat and thus almost certainly that would mean no more land clearance for housing development in Tasmania. If you wish to have a genuinely ecologically sustainable housing industry, this would be the first step.

I am aware that it is proposed to place Affordable Housing on Prime Agricultural Land; the subject of a State Policy, the example of which I am aware is at Huntingfield near Kingston. Converting Prime Agricultural Land to Affordable Housing is a sure indicator there are major constraints. The towns of the NW coast are surrounded by Prime Agricultural Land.

Clearly if there is a deliberate strategy to grow the number of people in Tasmania there will be a range of consequences including the social ones which are now manifest. These are increased homelessness, increased rental prices, decreased rental availability and the increase in property sales prices right across Tasmania. This makes such ideas and strategies socially as well as environmentally unsustainable.

It is not possible to claim such matters are justifiable by using claims of strengthening the economy. I wish to make the point that all of these social matters are more important than the particular economy, which the Property Council and the Liberal Party had in mind to strengthen. Indeed, it must be said that the Economy is simply an artificial social construct. We have seen under the COVID pandemic just how easy it is to change the economic construct.

It is my view that this 2015 Population Growth Strategy was never adequately or widely advertised as a growth strategy for the public consultation but it was advertised in some way. However, regardless, the level of community response was woeful and this very small response of 40 submissions indicates the process was tantamount to an ambush.

The State Growth website states:

“Input into the development of this strategy

On 30 April 2015, the Department of State Growth released a Population Discussion Paper and commenced a six week public consultation process to seek input into the development of this Population Growth Strategy.

More than 40 submissions were received from organisations and interested individuals, with respect to growing Tasmania’s population. These submissions have informed the development of this strategy.

Consensus from the consultation process was that population growth will rely on Tasmania being able to provide meaningful work opportunities and superior lifestyle advantages. Tasmania boasts some of the world’s most liveable and beautiful cities. As our population grows, we understand we will need to maintain Tasmania’s liveability.”

I emphasise this last statement within the strategy, which is obviously also a bald faced fallacy. The decline in liveability has been obvious and significant since the 2015 Population Growth Strategy.

I claim the 2015 consultation was never adequately promoted. Simple as that!

What are: “superior lifestyle advantages” if they do not include a local appreciation of the local area’s amenity. Why would existing residents forego their superior lifestyle advantages? Why would the State Government on the one hand spruik the benefits of superior lifestyle advantages and on the other be prepared to allow the destruction, diminution and degradation of the very same superior lifestyle advantages through use of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, which is facilitating the building of small, inadequate house on tiny, postage stamp sized blocks which have all their superior lifestyle advantages concreted over.

I wish to overtly criticise this planning scheme intensification aspect because it represents a bad faith situation where the benefits of superior lifestyle advantages are not realised in this model.

The following statement after talking about “superior lifestyle advantages” is tantamount to a promise:

“Tasmania boasts some of the world’s most liveable and beautiful cities. As our population grows, we understand we will need to maintain Tasmania’s liveability.”

Personally, I consider this to be a disgraceful lie; it was never a Liberal intention to maintain Tasmania’s liveability. One can see this lie when the Tasmanian Planning Scheme is analysed.

The Population Growth Strategy states on page 12:

“Planning for our growing population.

The Tasmanian Government provides extensive services to Tasmanians, including schools, healthcare, infrastructure and policing. As our population grows, government will need to plan for, and deliver services to a larger population.”

This statement shows they have not done adequate advance planning at the time of the strategy and I argue still they have not adequately considered the implications, not embarked on the necessary upgrades to infrastructure, such as houses, roads, schools and so forth. Amazing! That is the reason there has been a deterioration in the social situation re housing.

- Has the hospital waiting list blown out? Yes.
- Has it become harder to get to see a GP almost everywhere in Tasmania? Yes.
- Has the traffic in Hobart and surrounding suburbs become much more clogged? Yes!
- Has the traffic in Launceston become more clogged? Yes!
- Have sewerage treatment systems required expensive upgrades leading to higher rates? Yes.
- Has liveability in Tasmania improved? No! Has it declined? Yes!
- All across Tasmania, have suburban blocks of land being created shrunk markedly in size since 2015? Yes?
- Has the minimum lot size of residential land in virtually every Residential Zone within the Tasmanian Planning Scheme shrunk significantly? Yes!
- Has there been a decline in amenity in almost every residential zone and every city and town in Tasmania? Yes!

What did the 2015 Population Growth Strategy say?

“Through our consultation, three key themes emerged in terms of growing Tasmania’s population.

These were:

- *the need for strong economic performance, including providing real work opportunities and investment in education and training*
- *the need to improve and promote Tasmania’s liveability*
- *the need to plan for growth, including provision of social and economic infrastructure.”*

What a miserable hopeless failure. This is a garbage strategy: the Tasmanian public have been hoodwinked. This strategy had no intention to improve Tasmania's liveability whatsoever. That was a bald faced lie. The opposite has occurred and I argue that the decline in liveability outcome was foreseeable and was known. This is a disgraceful outcome and is a good enough reason for trashing the Population Growth Strategy and moving to something a little more intelligent.

What is economic infrastructure? Does anyone know? It is spin!

In 2018 a Population Growth Strategy update stated:

"The Strategy includes 50 actions, centred on three key areas:

- *supporting job creation and workforce development*
- *supporting interstate and overseas migration*
- *building on and promoting Tasmania's liveability."*

In 2018 they are down to promoting Tasmania's liveability. Still State Growth have not admitted it is a part of the big lie.

Nothing about the consequences, the increasing homeless problem, the increasing cost of real estate and nothing about the decline in availability of rental properties. Nothing about the increasing purchase of investment properties and nothing about the diversion of these away from long term housing stock for renters to things like Air BnB. The trouble is, it is just an investment.

Only now in 2022 is there potentially a review perhaps with a public comment opportunity for an update to the 2015 Population Growth Strategy.

This Tasmanian 2015 Population Growth Strategy has had a number of disastrous consequences. I hope to explore some of those in this submission document because it has a massive impact on any Tasmanian Housing Strategy, especially one with a focus on Affordable Housing.

Indeed the notion of having a separate housing strategy that is not connected to the population strategy and indeed a settlement strategy, which looks at the spatial issues, is quite absurd.

IMPACTS OF TASMANIA HAVING A POPULATION GROWTH AMBITION

State Treasury States:

"Population projections for Tasmania and its Local Government Areas

Every five years, the Department of Treasury and Finance prepares population projections for Tasmania covering a period of 50 years and for Tasmania's Local Government Areas for 25 years.

The last series of projections were published in April 2019 and consisted of three different scenarios, starting from the ABS estimated resident population as at 30 June 2017.

Since these projections were prepared, the ABS has released population data that have been rebased with the ABS 2021 Census of Population and Housing. The rebasing of Tasmanian population data with the 2021 Census has led to a significant upward revision to the previous population estimates, with much stronger growth recorded than under any of the population projection scenarios.

As the latest population estimates are now considerably higher than any of the projection scenarios, it is considered that they are no longer appropriate to be used for planning purposes. As such, the population projections have been temporarily removed from this website.

The required data to produce a comprehensive new set of population projections are not yet available. However, applying the previous projection growth rates to the rebased population estimates will develop an interim update of the previous projections. These are likely to be published in early October 2022.”⁵

The headless chook prevails. Surely, the above statement is another indicator that the Government has no idea about what to do now. What a disaster?

This 2015 Tasmanian Population Growth Strategy is one of the main reasons for the housing shortage. This was a Strategy, which was never properly planned, dreamed up by those who believe in laissez faire and who have little idea of the complexities of such a strategy.

Lisa Denny (UTAS) imputes the shallowness of the strategy when she states:

“Population growth for growth’s sake (as a proxy for economic growth), without consideration for the economic and social implications this creates, might actually result in a type which puts at risk the longer term economic viability of the state.”

In many ways whilst the 2015 Tasmanian Population Growth Strategy has certainly grown the population, it has done so in such a way in which Tasmania was poorly prepared.

This will be exacerbated by the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, which is an amenity nightmare, of open slather type intensification, which will create a lot of discontent and will destroy what is so special about Tasmania to so many people.

So in September 2022 the Housing Strategy Discussion Paper by Communities Tasmania states:

“Over the past decade, Tasmania’s population has grown by 11.4 per cent from the June quarter 2012 to the December quarter 2021 (from 511 724 to 569 827 people).”

This extraordinary population growth has created and caused a significant unaffordability problem for low income families and vulnerable single people. It has also caused and or exacerbated growing homelessness and worsened the housing stress problem.

This 2015 Tasmanian Population Growth Strategy should now be significantly reduced and curtailed.

A steady state population would be a far more sensible ambition which protects Tasmania and which would give those on a lower income and those who are more disadvantaged a better opportunity to gain secure affordable housing and to avoid homelessness.

FOCUS AREA: AFFORDABLE HOUSING

I am not expert in this area. I would support initiatives to assist people to have a house, to own a house, what would appear to be termed social housing, or to more securely and reasonably rent a home.

⁵ <https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/economy/economic-data/2019-population-projections-for-tasmania-and-its-local-government-areas>

I consider that when the government contributes to helping people buy a house for residential purposes, it would be reasonable to place a covenant on the land to make sure it is not converted at some stage into short term accommodation for example.

TAMANIAN PLANNING SCHEME AND TASMANIAN PLANNING POLICIES

It is being suggested that the new Tasmanian Planning Scheme (TPS) is facilitating solutions to the problems of housing. The Liberal Government installed Ms Mary Massina from the Property Council into the Planning Reform Taskforce. It was this Taskforce, which took the Launceston Interim Planning Scheme and refashioned it on intensification steroids into the TPS.

URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARIES

Almost all towns in Tasmania do not have an Urban Growth Boundary. Yet, this is an important part of ensuring that the current zones of residential land are not simply expanded into the towns surrounding paddocks or bush. Only a few cities have Urban Growth Boundaries and this is unfortunate in ecological sustainability terms.

THE HOUSING REFERENCE GROUP

I am opposed to the Property Council being included on the reference panel. They are the ones who have exacerbated the problems currently at the doors of the range of organisations otherwise around the table.

Conclusion.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comment on housing strategy for Tasmania. I look forward to a future when all Tasmanians a place of to call home.

ENDS