

Please find below the submission on behalf of Circular Head Council. The top 3 priority areas related to the Tasmanian Housing Strategy for the Circular Head Council are identified as:

- 1) Planning approvals (cutting red tape)
- 2) Types of housing (housing choice and better utilisation of land), and;
- 3) Workforce (lack of trades to build housing)

We have provided matters for consideration under these key headings.

We have seen the submission from the Cradle Coast Authority and support the matters raised in it. We have avoided replicating that submission.

### **Planning approvals**

- New overlays are making No permit required applications for dwellings into Discretionary applications, resulting in increased timeframes and costs for applicants.
- Housing supply could be increased by amending the State Planning Provisions to provide a smaller minimum lot size in the rural living zone, or increasing use of the low density residential zone instead of rural living, which would result in better utilisation of land and increased densities.
- The short-stay accommodation industry isn't really an issue in the North-West, as short stays are largely limited to shacks and holiday homes. Seeing gentrification of these shack sites, with a greater percentage becoming permanent dwellings.
- Development of guidelines to support greater densities could be put in place. WWC developed guidelines to support their settlement strategy. Education and promotion about these opportunities can assist, similar to the state's ancillary dwelling project.
- Increasing the role of private developers and local government in improving housing supply, could be achieved by creating awareness of the supply of land. A list or map of Greenfield sites might instigate sale of land and address land banking. There has been interest in such maps in the development of settlement strategies at WWC and CHC.

### **Types of housing**

- Provision of a range of housing choices. A lot of current land supply is left over from strategic planning 20-30 years ago, and has not been developed due to constraints or there is no point of difference to suburbia. Some supply of new land needs to be attractive (views, proximity to attractions such as coastlines) with a mix of zones.
- The Circular Head region is experiencing a range of housing pressures across rental and home owners' markets, both in supply, type, and affordability. Circular Head Council submits that the Tasmanian Housing Strategy should encompass and accommodate the nuances and unique challenges faced by the regions across Tasmania, as a 'one size fits all' approach is unlikely to 'fit all', in a state where our challenges and needs are so varied geographically, particularly between the North and South. There are a number of strategies already in place across Tasmania wherein local communities have identified their challenges and aspirations for housing, liveability and population growth, which should inform the state strategy. In Circular Head, the Sustainable Murchison Community Plan and Cradle Coast Regional Futures Plan, are of particular significance. In Circular Head, particular pressures are felt

amongst singles and those looking for 'worker housing', as well as those leasing their home in an incredibly tight and increasingly unaffordable rental market.

- A challenge of particular significance in the North of the state relates to the condition and liveability of existing houses, many of which sit vacant due to their poor upkeep or damages. It is likely that many of these older houses in poorer condition may, if properly restored, be more sustainable into the long term than a new development could achieve. Some consideration in the strategy should be given to addressing the under-utilisation of existing housing due to maintenance and repair issues.
- The Circular Head Workforce Planning Study, completed in 2021, highlights a number of local, economic and community development challenges to be addressed in order to address workforce shortages in the region. The availability of housing is key to this, though other significant regional challenges include a lack of access and long waiting lists to healthcare and childcare services, lack of public transport links and other community infrastructure, and challenges in recruiting to key roles including teaching and childhood education. As recommended by the PESRAC Report (2021), Circular Head Council submits that the Tasmanian Housing Strategy should encompass factors beyond merely the supply, affordability and sustainability of housing. For *communities* to be sustainable, this Housing Strategy must be built around state strategies for population growth and precinct planning, workforce development, community development, and health and wellbeing.
- Housing condition, location, security of tenure and access to community infrastructure all have significant impacts on population health and wellbeing. The location of future developments must be considered as crucial to building healthy and sustainable communities, as well as the available infrastructure, amenity and social links servicing these locations. In Circular Head there are pressures on existing infrastructure and amenity which would be exacerbated by any population growth, likely to flow from the supply of additional housing. Circular Head Council submits that the Tasmanian Housing Strategy should encompass place-making and precinct planning (rather than just 'housing') to ensure required social infrastructure is incorporated and that 'liveability' is front and centre. This submission echoes the advice of PESRAC (2021) who recommended that the Housing Strategy should encompass alignment of essential social and economic infrastructure.
- In 2021 Circular Head Council conducted a resident settlement survey which attracted 174 responses and found that the number one concern of locals was "lack of housing options and availability". Residents also identified their number one priority to improve quality of life in the region as 'easier access to health and education', followed by 'better recreation areas and activities' and 'better housing'. This highlights the existing demand for quality housing as well as aligned infrastructure, services, and community amenities. Any increase in housing therefore should be accompanied by strategies to enhance local infrastructure, services, amenities, and workforces to achieve the same.

## **Workforce**

- Any strategy needs to be deliverable. Therefore a key focus should be training and the development of a workforce that is able to construct the number of dwellings required.
- The population in Circular Head has grown at a significantly lower rate than the state overall, without benefiting from an increase in workforce as has occurred in other parts of the state. Circular Head has an ageing population and a shortage of workers to fill existing vacancies in

the region, with many businesses resorting to utilising overseas workers to staff their businesses. Utilisation of interstate or immigrant workforces is challenged in Circular Head for businesses who are unable to source local accommodation to house these workers. Public transport is rarely an option for commuting from other regions, given the limited routes and timetable available, particularly for industries and businesses outside of the city centre of Smithton.

- In 2021, the Circular Head Education & Training Consultative Committee (CHETCC), a special committee of Council, was awarded funding from the Department of State Growth (Tas) to undertake a regional Workforce Planning Study, which was completed with the assistance of advisory firm KPMG. Using a combination of official labour force estimates and consultations with employers, the Workforce Planning Study found that the Circular Head region could use an additional 300 – 400 workers almost immediately or over the next three years, with the majority of our industries struggling to fill immediate staff shortages, in both skilled and unskilled roles. This projection does not include additional workers required in the construction of planned energy developments (n = 350~), largely in the construction workforce. Throughout consultation, local business and industry representatives told us that housing and rental property supply and the growing cost to buy or rent in the region is a key impediment to attracting workers.
- Circular Head's Job Ratio in 2021 was 0.97, almost a 1:1 ratio of jobs-to-eligible-workers. A job ratio of >1 indicates there are more jobs available than workers to fill those roles. Building and Construction has one of the highest job ratios in Circular Head at 1.46, meaning there are already insufficient tradespeople available to cater for existing construction works, not factoring in planned renewable energy developments or the construction of new dwellings on any significant scale. This will present a challenge to the development of further housing in the region, without accommodation readily available to house an imported construction workforce. In line with the recommendations of PESRAC (2021), the Tasmanian housing Strategy should address the issue of construction workforce availability and how this workforce will be supported to grow (in the locations required) and carry out the significant scale of development required.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into this project.

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