

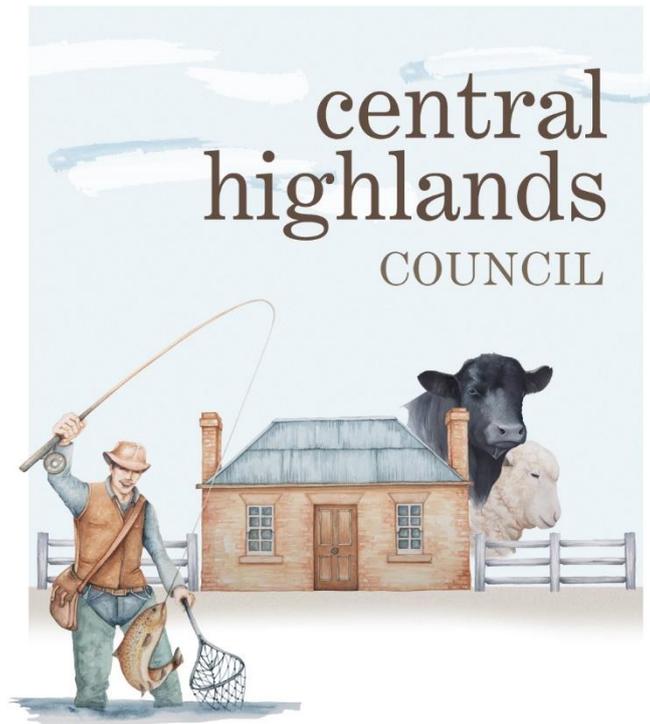
## **Agenda Attachments**

17 February 2026

Ordinary Council Meeting  
Bothwell Council Chambers

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# **Council Meeting Minutes**

**20<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**Hamilton Council Chambers**

## **Notice of Meeting of Council – Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

To Councillors,

In accordance with the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025, Notice is hereby given, that an Ordinary Meeting of Central Highlands Council is scheduled to be held in the Council Chamber, **Hamilton** on **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2026**, commencing at **5.00pm** with the business of the meeting to be in accordance with the following agenda paper.

In accordance with the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025 Part 2, Division 1, a notice of the meeting was published on the Council website on 2 January 2026.

### General Manager's Certification

PURSUANT to Section 65 (1) of the Local Government Act 1993, I hereby certify, with respect to the advice, information and/or recommendation provided for the guidance of Council in this Agenda, that:

- A. such advice, information and/or recommendation has been given by a person who has the qualifications or experience necessary to give such advice; and
- B. where any advice is given by a person who does not have the required qualifications or experience, that person has obtained and taken into account the advice from an appropriately qualified or experienced person.

Section 65(2) forbids Council from deciding any matter which requires the advice of a qualified person without considering that advice.

Dated at Bothwell this **15<sup>th</sup>** day of **January 2026**.



Stephen Mackey  
**General Manager**

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The meeting commenced at 5.00 p.m.

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### **AUDIO RECORDING DISCLAIMER**

As per *Regulation 43 of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025*, audio recordings of meetings will be made available to Councillors, staff and members of the wider community including Government Agencies at no charge and will be made available on Council's website as soon as practicable after each Council Meeting. Unlike Parliament, Council meetings are not subject to parliamentary privilege, and both Council and the individual may be liable for comments that may be regarded as offensive, derogatory and/or defamatory.

The Mayor advises the meeting and members of the public that Council Meetings, not including Closed Sessions, are audio recorded and published on Council's Website in accordance with Council's Policy 2017-50.

The Mayor also advises, that members of the public are not permitted to make audio recordings of Council Meetings without prior approval being granted.

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

I acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as the traditional and original owners and continuing custodians of this land on which we gather today and acknowledge and pay respect to Elders, past, present and emerging.

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### **CONDUCT OF COUNCIL MEETING**

Central Highlands Council takes safety seriously. We have a duty to ensure that we provide a safe workplace for our Employees, Councillors, Contractors and members of the public while present at Council's workplaces.

These premises form part of the Council's workplace, and it is expected that everyone who attends Council meetings will behave in a polite and respectful manner. People should refrain from using offensive or derogatory language or comments and not be aggressive, threatening or speak in a hostile manner.

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## **1. PRESENT**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam, and Cr S Triffett

### **1.1 IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr Stephen Mackey (General Manager) and Mrs Katrina Brazendale (Minute Secretary).

### **1.2 APOLOGIES**

Cr Y Miller

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## **2. CONSIDERATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS TO THE AGENDA**

Nil.

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## **3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST BY COUNCILLORS AND STAFF**

### **PURPOSE**

In accordance with the requirements of Part 2 Regulation 10 of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025, the chairperson of a meeting is to request Councillors to indicate whether they have, or are likely to have, a pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in any item on the Agenda.

- Stephen Mackey – Item Closed Session 3 Business Arising – December 2025 Closed Council Meeting
  - Katrina Brazendale – Item Closed Session 4.1 Australia Day Awards
  - Cr D Meacheam – Item Closed Session 4.2 Australia Day Awards
-

## 4. MINUTES

### 4.1 CONFIRMATION OF DRAFT ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – 9 DECEMBER 2025

#### **RESOLUTION 01/01.2026/C**

**Moved:** Cr J Honner

**Seconded:** Deputy Mayor J Allwright

**THAT** the Draft Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 9 December 2025 be confirmed.

**CARRIED**

#### **For the Motion**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffett

#### **Attachment – Draft Minutes**

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the report is to confirm the Council Minutes of the previous month. Copies of the minutes have been previously circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.

## 5. BUSINESS ARISING – DECEMBER 2025 COUNCIL MEETING

#### **RESOLUTION 02/01.2026/C**

**Moved:** Cr D Meacheam

**Seconded:** Cr R Cassidy

**THAT** the information be received.

**CARRIED**

#### **For the Motion**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffett

12.2	NOTICE OF MOTION – CR A Archer That the Mayor provide council with copies of correspondence forwarded and responses that have been received to date from the Premier to the letters requesting the holding of a cabinet meeting in Bothwell	Progressing
19.2	EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT	Nominations have been submitted to the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management

20.2	POTENTIAL DARK SKY RESERVE	Scheduled 3 <sup>rd</sup> February Workshop
21.9	COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETING DATES AND TIMES FOR 2026	Advertised 2 <sup>nd</sup> January 2026
21.1	BOTHWELL LIBRARY RENEWAL OF LEASE	Progressing
21.11	DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030	Advertised 17 <sup>th</sup> December 2025 and closes on 27 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
22.1	TASMANIAN AUTUMN FESTIVAL 2026	Donation of \$2,000 - Payment has been processed

### Matters still progressing from the November 2025 Council Meeting

8.3	NOTICE OF MOTION – CR D MEACHEAM THAT Council establish a working group to progress the improvement of phone and internet services on the Central Plateau; THAT the group established has a ‘sunset’ date of March 2026; and THAT via our Facebook page and website, 2 interested community group members be invited to membership	Progressing – Report to the February meeting
17.3	DOG MANAGEMENT POLICY	Progressing – submissions close 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2026 – Report to the March meeting.
17.4	DEVELOPMENT ASSESSMENT PANEL (DAP) CONSULTATION	Progressing

**REPORT BY** Katrina Brazendale, Executive Assistant

#### PURPOSE

This report aims to provide an overview of the actions undertaken from the previous minutes.

## 6. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

### RESOLUTION 03/01.2026/C

**Moved:** Cr J Honner

**Seconded:** Cr R Cassidy

**THAT** pursuant to Regulation 17 (1) of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025, Council, by an absolute majority, close the meeting to the public to consider the following matters in Closed Session:

<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Matter</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	<i>Confirmation of the Minutes - Closed Session of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 9 December 2025.</i>	<i>Regulation 17 (2)(H) of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025 – information of a personal and confidential nature or information provided to Council on the condition it is kept confidential.</i>
<b>5.1</b>	<i>Australia Day Awards 2026 - Young Citizen of the Year Award, Event of the Year Award and Certificates of excellence for community contribution.</i>	<i>Regulation 17 (2)(H) of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025 – information of a personal and confidential nature or information provided to Council on the condition it is kept confidential.</i>
<b>5.2</b>	<i>Australia Day Awards 2026- Citizen of the Year Award.</i>	<i>Regulation 17 (2)(H) of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025 – information of a personal and confidential nature or information provided to Council on the condition it is kept confidential.</i>
<b>5.3</b>	<i>Payment For Pelham Telstra Tower</i>	<i>Regulation 17 (2)(e) of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025 - contracts, and tenders, for the supply of goods and services and their terms, conditions, approval and renewal.</i>

**CARRIED**

#### **For the Motion**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffitt

#### **PURPOSE**

Under Regulation 17 (1) of the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025* states that at a meeting, a council by absolute majority, or a council committee by simple majority, may close a part of the meeting to the public for a reason specified in sub-regulation (2).

As per *Regulation 17 (1) of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025*, this motion requires an absolute majority.

**MEETING CLOSED** to the public at \_\_\_\_ p.m.

## 7. RE-OPEN MEETING TO THE PUBLIC

The meeting re-opened to the public at 6.14 p.m.

## 8. PUBLIC RELEASE ANNOUNCEMENT(S)

The Chairperson announced that pursuant to Regulation 17(6)(7) of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025 and having considered privacy and confidential issues, the Council authorised the release to the public of the following discussions, decisions, reports or documents relating to the closed meeting:

<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Matter</b>	<b>Decision</b>
2.1	<i>Confirmation of the Minutes - Closed Session of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 9 December 2025</i>	<i>THAT the Minutes of the Closed Session of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 9 December 2025 be confirmed</i>
5.1	<i>Australia Day Awards 2026 - Young Citizen of the Year Award, Event of the Year Award and Certificates of excellence for community contribution.</i>	<i>To be advised</i>
5.2	<i>Australia Day Awards 2026- Citizen of the Year Award.</i>	<i>To be advised</i>
5.3	<i>Payment For Pelham Telstra Tower</i>	<i>Commercial in confidence</i>

## 9. NOTIFICATION OF COUNCIL WORKSHOP(S) HELD

Nil

### 9.1 FUTURE WORKSHOP(S)

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is for Councillors to note the Council Workshop date(s).

The proposed next Council Workshop will be held on the following date.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 – Bothwell 9.00 a.m.

## 10. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the *Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025*, the Council conducts questions by member of the public to enable members of the public to ask question on Council related matters.

### Questions by member of the public

- (1) The chairperson of an ordinary council meeting must ensure that, if required, at least 15 minutes of that meeting is made available for questions by members of the public.
- (2) A question asked by a member of the public under regulation 37 or 38 , and the answer given to that question, is not to be debated at the ordinary council meeting.
- (3) A council is to determine any other procedures to be followed in respect of public question time at an ordinary council meeting.

### Questions without notice by member of the public

- (1) A member of the public may, on invitation by the chairperson of an ordinary council meeting, ask a question without notice at the meeting.
- (2) A public question without notice must relate to the activities of the council.
- (3) The chairperson of an ordinary council meeting may require a public question without notice to be –
  - a) put on notice in writing; and
  - b) answered at a later ordinary council meeting.

### Questions on notice by member of the public

- (1) A member of the public may, at least 7 days before an ordinary council meeting, give written notice to the general manager of a question to which the member of the public seeks an answer at the meeting.
- (2) A public question on notice must relate to the activities of the council.
- (3) The chairperson of an ordinary council meeting may address a public question on notice.
- (4) The period referred to in subregulation (1) includes Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays, but does not include –
  - a) the day on which notice is given under that subregulation; or
  - b) the day of the ordinary council meeting.

*Damian Bester and Christine Ferguson were in attendance when the meeting resumed.*

*Christine Ferguson raised the following:-*

*What is happening with the 'Back to Hamilton'*

*How to make Hamilton better*

- *Playground – underground watering system*
- *Dog Park*
- *Caravan Park – River Road expanded to enable more parking*

*Christine Ferguson left the meeting at 6.31p.m.*

**11. PETITIONS / DEPUTATIONS / PRESENTATIONS****11.1 PETITIONS**

Nil

**11.2 DEPUTATIONS**

Nil

**11.3 PRESENTATIONS**

Nil

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**12. NOTICE OF MOTIONS****PURPOSE**

Under Regulation 19 of the Local Government (Meeting Procedures) Regulations 2025 relating to Motions on Notice. It states the following:

- (1) *A Councillor may give to the general manager, at least 7 days before a meeting, give written notice of a motion, together with supporting information and reasons, for the inclusion of the motion on the next meeting.*

Nil

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**13. COUNCIL ACTING AS A PLANNING AUTHORITY PURSUANT TO THE LAND USE PLANNING AND APPROVALS ACT 1993 AND COUNCIL'S STATUTORY LAND USE PLANNING SCHEME**

Nil

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**14. ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING RESUMED**

**NOT REQUIRED**

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## 15. MONTHLY MAYORAL AND ELECTED MEMBERS ACTIVITY

### RESOLUTION 04/01.2026/C

**Moved:** Cr J Honner

**Seconded:** Cr R Cassidy

**THAT** the Council notes the Mayoral and Elected Members Activities.

**CARRIED**

#### **For the Motion**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffitt

#### IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

<b>Strategic Plan</b>	6.2 Ensure that Council members have the resources and skills development opportunities to effectively fulfil their responsibilities
<b>Council Policy</b>	Councillor Code of Conduct Policy
<b>Legislative Context</b>	Local Government Act 1993 Local Government (General) Regulations 2025 Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2024
<b>Consultation</b>	The community and stakeholders.
<b>Impact on Budget/Resources</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Risk</b>	Allocations for Councillor Conference attendance are included in the operational budget.

#### PURPOSE

This report aims to provide an overview of the Mayor and Elected Member's monthly activities.

#### BACKGROUND

The Mayor and Elected members can provide an activity report each month summarising any civic events they attend.

#### DISCUSSION

The Mayor and Elected Members represent the council at public and civic events and are the political interface between other bodies, governments, and the Council. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1993, the Mayor is designated as the spokesperson for the Council as well as a representative for the Council on regional organisations and at intergovernmental forums at regional, state, and federal levels. Reports below are provided outside the general functions of a Councillor, whereby Councillors meet with ratepayers and attend workshops.

#### **Mayor Loueen Triffitt**

3 December 2025	Discussions with Premier's Advisor
9 December 2025	Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Council Meeting (Bothwell)
9 December 2025	School Presentation (Bothwell)
12 December 2025	Catch up with the Premier
17 December 2025	School Presentation (Westerway)
23 December 2025	Council break up barbecue (Bothwell)

- Business of Council - **10**
- Ratepayer and community members – communications - **9**

- Elected Members - communications - **16**
- Council Management communications - **3**
- Legal Communications - **0**

**Deputy Mayor J Allwright**

9 December 2025 Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Council Meeting (Bothwell)  
 23 December 2025 Council break up barbecue (Bothwell)

**Cr A Archer**

9 December 2025 Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Council Meeting (Bothwell)  
 9 December 2025 Workshop Childcare (Bothwell)  
 9 December 2025 School Presentation (Bothwell)

**Cr R Cassidy**

9 December 2025 Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Council Meeting (Bothwell)  
 23 December 2025 Council break up barbecue (Bothwell)  
 7 December 2025 Final Service and deconsecration of the St Michael's Church (Bothwell)

**Cr J Hall**

7 December 2025 Tas Fire Service Christmas barbeque (Arthurs Lake)  
 7 December 2025 Final Service and deconsecration of the St Michael's Church (Bothwell)  
 9 December 2025 Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Council Meeting (Bothwell)  
 9 December 2025 Workshop Childcare (Bothwell)  
 12 December 2025 HATCH Christmas event (Ouse)  
 16 December 2025 School Presentation (Glenora)  
 18 December 2025 Tas Fire Service Christmas barbeque (Gretna)  
 23 December 2025 Council break up barbecue (Bothwell)

**Cr J Honner**

9 December 2025 Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Council Meeting (Bothwell)  
 9 December 2025 School Presentation (Bothwell)  
 23 December 2025 Council break up barbecue (Bothwell)

**Cr D Meacheam**

9 December 2025 Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Council Meeting (Bothwell)  
 10 December 2025 LGAT Learning and Development Sub-committee (On-Line).  
 12 December 2025 HATCH Christmas event, lobby State MP's. (Ouse)

**Cr Y Miller**

9 December 2025 Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Council Meeting (Bothwell)

**Cr S Triffett**

9 December 2025 Annual General Meeting and Ordinary Council Meeting (Bothwell)  
 9 December 2025 Workshop Childcare (Bothwell)  
 16 December 2025 School Presentation (Gretna)

## **15.1 MAYORAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS LETTERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

8<sup>th</sup> August 2025

The Hon. Jeremy Rockliff Premier  
Executive Building  
15 Murray Street  
Hobart TASMANIA 7000

Dear Mr Premier

### **Invitation for Cabinet to Meeting in Bothwell**

Firstly, congratulation on your re-election as Premier of Tasmania and the installation of your new cabinet.

With this said and based on our conversations during the election period with some candidates for Lyons we seek your support in your cabinet holding a meeting soon at Bothwell to meet with myself and my councillors.

As you may be aware there are matters, we wish to speak to you about and many of these are detailed below.

The Central Highland is part of Lyons which is the largest electoral area in Tasmania. The Council area covers some 8,010sq Km or approximately 12% of Tasmania's land mass within which are pristine wilderness areas and the state's best angling lakes. We are also one of the major Renewable Energy Zones in Tasmania and as such are doing our part to ensure Tasmania's goal of reaching their renewable energy targets by 2030 is achievable.

We are also Tasmania's major location for energy generation with most of the large Hydro Schemes in our municipal area.

When we seek support as most areas do during elections, we have extreme difficulty in not only getting the major parties to talk to us (Liberal or Labor) let alone getting them to find the time to visit and take the time to discuss with us those necessities that many in other parts of our state are privileged to have.

These include reestablishing medical services in Ouse which has a hospital but during the Liberal Government regime it has been closed, and the Doctor has also left.

In recent time we have been informed by the then Treasurer that we would have a part time doctor at Ouse within 6 Months. This time is well passed. This Government has also seen fit to close the Ouse school forcing those using it to travel substantial distance to another school or force families to have to sell up to be able to get their children the basic necessities of an education.

The Highland Lakes Road formerly The Lake Highway will be the major traffic route for the transport of all the material needed to develop the renewable energy projects that will benefit all of Tasmania, yet minimal to no improvements are proposed for this road.

Also, on this road south of Miena is a single lane bridge it has been the object of numerous requests to be replaced with a two-lane facility but again has fallen on deaf ears.

The request for a cabinet meeting in Bothwell for council to elaborate on these issues would be greatly appreciated.

Your faithfully

Lou Triffitt  
Mayor

---

17th October 2025

The Hon. Jeremy Rockliff Premier  
Executive Building  
15 Murray Street  
Hobart TAS 7000

Dear Mr Premier

### **Invitation for Cabinet to Meeting in Bothwell**

Firstly, congratulation on your re-election as Premier of Tasmania and the installation of your new cabinet.

With this said and based on our conversations during the election period with some candidates for Lyons we seek your support in your cabinet holding a meeting soon at Bothwell to meet with myself and my councillors. As you may be aware there are matters, we wish to speak to you about and many of these are detailed below.

The Central Highland is part of Lyons which is the largest electoral area in Tasmania. The Council area covers some 8,010sq Km or approximately 12% of Tasmania's land mass within which are pristine wilderness areas and the state's best angling lakes. We are also one of the major Renewable Energy Zones in Tasmania and as such are doing our part to ensure Tasmania's goal of reaching their renewable energy targets by 2030 is achievable.

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These include reestablishing medical services in Ouse which has a hospital but during the Liberal Government regime it has been closed, and the Doctor has also left.

In recent time we have been informed by the then Treasurer that we would have a part time doctor at Ouse within 6 Months. This time is well passed.

This Government has also seen fit to close the Ouse school forcing those using it to travel substantial distance to another school or force families to have to sell up to be able to get their children the basic necessities of an education.

The Highland Lakes Road formerly The Lake Highway will be the major traffic route for the transport of all the material needed to develop the renewable energy projects that will benefit all of Tasmania, yet minimal to no improvements are proposed for this road.

Also, on this road south of Miena is a single lane bridge it has been the object of numerous requests to be replaced with a two-lane facility but again has fallen on deaf ears.

Based on all of the above, and the fact that conservatively a further \$2 Bn in wind farm developments will occur in the next two to three years makes it essential that the government or at least the appropriate

ministers meet with council regularly to ensure we are proactive in regard to the necessary infrastructure improvements and health and education services to cater for the influx of the increased workforces needed to undertake these developments. These do not include those necessary to undertake the upgrade of the Tarraleah Power station.

The request for a cabinet meeting in Bothwell for council to elaborate on these issues would be greatly appreciated.

Your faithfully

Lou Triffitt  
Mayor

Minister for Energy and Renewables  
Minister for Parks  
Minister for Sport



Level 1, 7-9 Franklin Wharf HOBART TAS 7000 Australia  
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001 Australia  
Phone: +61 3 6165 7739  
Email: [minister.duigan@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:minister.duigan@dpac.tas.gov.au)

16<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Stephen Mackey  
Acting General Manager  
Central Highlands Council  
[smackey@centralhighlands.tas.gov.au](mailto:smackey@centralhighlands.tas.gov.au)

Dear Stephen

I am delighted to hear that your application for funding from the 2024-25 Tasmanian Active Infrastructure Grants Program has been supported by the Department of State Growth.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to ensuring more Tasmanians get active and have somewhere to participate in sport and active recreation activities.

The 2024-25 Tasmanian Active Infrastructure Grants Program supports the sport and active recreation sector to develop new infrastructure and upgrade existing infrastructure to maximise opportunities for lifelong participation in sport and active recreation.

We know participating in sport and active recreation provides benefits for both physical and mental health. We also recognise the important role it can play in providing a sense of belonging in a community and in the development of social connections.

I wish your organisation every success in undertaking the project.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nick Duigan", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Hon Nick Duigan MLC  
**Minister for Sport**

Minister for Education  
Minister for Children and Youth  
Minister for Disability Services



19 DEC 2025

Level 9, 15 Murray Street HOBART TAS 7000 Australia  
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001 Australia  
Phone: +61 3 6165 9420  
Email: [jo.palmer@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:jo.palmer@dpac.tas.gov.au)

Mr Stephen Mackey  
Acting General Manager – Central Highlands Council  
[smackey@centralhighlands.tas.gov.au](mailto:smackey@centralhighlands.tas.gov.au)

Dear Mr ~~Mackey~~ *Stephen*

Thank you for your correspondence from 29 September 2025 regarding the challenges faced by Central Highlands families in accessing Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services. I sincerely apologise for the delay in responding.

The Tasmanian Government recognises how vital access to quality early learning services is for children's development and for supporting families and communities. I commend the Central Highland Council's proactive response to understanding the context and barriers to local education and care in the Central Highlands LGA.

We are committed to supporting Tasmanian families in accessing the care they need, and also acknowledge that workforce availability is a key factor in expanding access to ECEC services. I acknowledge your partnership working with Thrive Group to develop viable models of care and a local ECEC workforce. Your work in identifying demand at Bothwell for ECEC and Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) will assist education and care providers greatly with their scoping.

The Department for Education, Children and Young People (DECYP) is also working closely with the ECEC sector to build the capacity and increase the availability of services, including in the context of national reforms to improve access to quality ECEC. This is supported by our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future with \$4.5 million to establish an Early Years Workforce Development Fund to grow the early years workforce, \$10 million to support schools to establish Outside School Hours Care in areas of need and an audit and release of surplus government land for new ECEC services.

The Building Early Education Fund (the Building Fund) is an Australian Government initiative to provide capital funding to build new and expand existing ECEC services in areas of need, including the outer suburbs and regional Australia. The Building Fund comprises a number of different funding streams, including:

- Capital funding to states and territories to build or expand ECEC services on or near school sites, and

- ECEC sector grants to build or expand ECEC services in areas of need including:
  - a large-scale grant round for large not-for-profit providers
  - a grant round for smaller providers and in-venue Family Day Care (FDC) providers.

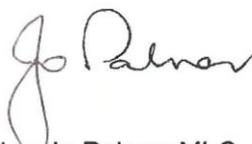
Priority sites under the Building Fund within the funding available to Tasmania will be determined in line with Australian Government criteria, which includes areas of ECEC undersupply, projected population growth, socioeconomic disadvantage and 'shovel readiness' to help bridge the gap in ECEC in Australia as soon as practical.

A further key Tasmanian Government initiative is the Early Learning for Three Year Olds (EL3) initiative that aims to increase access to ECEC in areas of low or no supply of ECEC, including in rural and remote areas. I am advised the EL3 implementation has recently made contact with the Principal and Business Manager of Bothwell District High School to discuss venue requirements for ECEC under DECYP's Co-located Partnerships Policy and Process.

Thank you again for your correspondence on this important issue. We understand the significant impact that limited access to childcare has on families and communities, particularly in regional areas. For further clarification of what is outlined in this letter and a point of contact for future reference, please contact Early Years by email at [el3@decyp.tas.gov.au](mailto:el3@decyp.tas.gov.au).

I also understand you are seeking a meeting with me on a separate matter. My office will be in touch to set up a time.

Yours sincerely



Hon Jo Palmer MLC  
**Minister for Education**

Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing  
Minister for Ageing  
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

Level 5, 4 Salamanca Place, HOBART TAS 7000

GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001

Phone: 03 6165 7794

Email: [Minister.Archer@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:Minister.Archer@dpac.tas.gov.au)

Ref: MIN25/3414



5 January 2026

Mayor Loueen Triffitt  
Central Highlands Council  
[council@centralhighlands.tas.gov.au](mailto:council@centralhighlands.tas.gov.au)

Dear Mayor Triffitt,

I am pleased to advise that on 22 December 2025, I released the exposure draft of *The Health Revolution* - Tasmania's 20-Year Preventive Health Strategy. This marks a crucial milestone in shaping a healthier future for our state. A future where prevention becomes the foundation for wellbeing, productivity, and resilience.

I would like to express my thanks to you and your representatives for your continued commitment and advocacy advancing preventive health for all Tasmanians. Local government plays a vital role in creating environments that keep people well, from planning and infrastructure to community programs. Your perspective is essential to making prevention real at the local level. We know that effective prevention cannot be driven by the Tasmanian Government alone. It requires a true partnership with the local leaders who understand the unique needs of their regions.

Over 5,000 Tasmanians contributed to the first round of consultation for the Strategy, helping to shape a shared vision for a healthier future. The exposure draft presents the high-level vision and strategic pillars for the next 20 years. We are aware that for councils to align their own long-term planning and investment with this Strategy, the direction must be clear, evidence-based, and actionable.

I now invite you to help us make it even stronger. The draft Strategy sets the long-term direction for the next 20 years. It will be supported by Action Plans and toolkits that make implementation practical, adaptable and reduce duplication of efforts across Tasmania.

Your feedback will help ensure the Strategy reflects local priorities and identifies opportunities for councils to work with the Tasmanian Government and other partners to deliver better outcomes for Tasmanians. We invite you to please review the draft and provide a submission to [consultation@health.tas.gov.au](mailto:consultation@health.tas.gov.au) by 27 February 2026.

When reviewing the draft Strategy, we'd like your perspective on whether:

1. The overall direction feels right, fair, and ambitious enough for Tasmania.
2. The long-term vision in this draft resonates with you.
3. The Strategy reflects the things you believe keep Tasmanians healthy and well.

4. The sub-pillars feel like the right building blocks to achieve our goals.
5. The commitments about how we'll deliver this work are clear and complete.
6. The language is clear, accessible, and easy to understand.
7. This plan makes you feel included in Tasmania's long-term health journey.
8. There is enough data and evidence to back the Strategy's direction and demonstrate its importance—and please suggest where this could be strengthened or if additional statistics should be included.

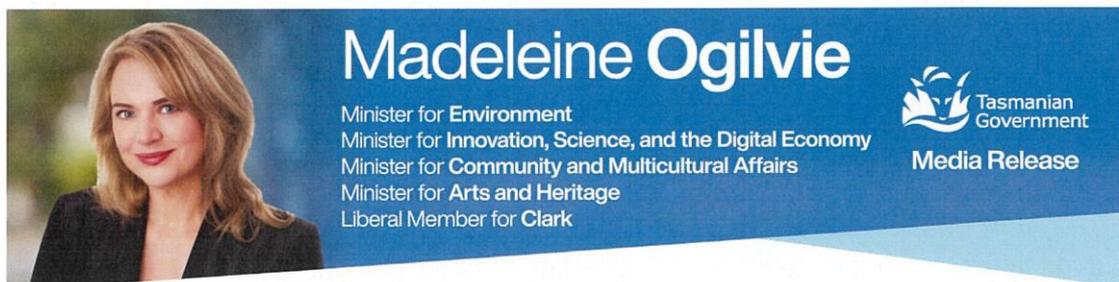
The draft and supporting materials are enclosed with this letter.

Your feedback will help determine the final shape of this document. Thank you for your leadership and commitment to building healthier communities. Together, we can create a Tasmania where more people feel well, stay well, and keep doing the things they love for as long as possible.

Yours sincerely



Hon Bridget Archer MP  
**Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing**



## **Madeleine Ogilvie, Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy**

7 January 2026

### **Upgrades to phone services on the Central Highlands welcomed**

Long awaited upgrades for telecommunications services by Telstra at Miena have been welcomed by the Tasmanian Government.

Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy, Madeleine Ogilvie, said the upgrades would bring relief to residents in the area concerned about the reliability of their service.

“Central Highlands residents have long expressed concerns about mobile phone and data outages in the Miena area particularly during periods of high visitation,” Minister Ogilvie said.

“Many Tasmanians live in remote and regional areas, and reliable phone and data services are a must for their safety.

“The Tasmanian Government has advocated for the Australian Government and Telstra to deliver improved services to those regions, and to provide solutions for the constrained network capacity issues.

“We welcome the upgrade to the Central Highlands areas of Miena, Liawenee, Steppes,

Reynolds Neck and Brandum by Telstra and we will continue to press for upgrades to other locations around the state where telecommunications network congestion results in service disruptions.”

The Tasmanian Government will continue to lobby for co-investment opportunities through programs such as the Regional Connectivity Program, Mobile Black Spot Program for regional Tasmania.

**Contact:** Trudy Brown

**Phone:** 0417 418 899

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**Our mailing address is:**  
*15 Murray St Hobart, TAS 7000*

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## 16. OPERATIONAL MATTERS ARISING (STRATEGIC THEME – COMMUNITY WELL-BEING)

### Build capacity to enhance community spirit and sense of wellbeing

- 1.1 Continue to upgrade existing public open spaces and sporting facilities and encourage community use
- 1.2 Advocate for improved health, education, transport and other government and non-government services within the Central Highlands
- 1.3 Continue to strengthen partnerships with all tiers of government
- 1.4 Support and encourage social and community events within the Central Highlands
- 1.5 Provide support to community organisations and groups
- 1.6 Foster and develop an inclusive and engaged community with a strong sense of ownership of its area
- 1.7 Foster and support youth activities in the Central Highlands

### 16.1 HEALTH AND WELLBEING PLAN 2020-2025 – MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT

#### RESOLUTION 05/01.2026/C

**Moved:** Cr J Honner

**Seconded:** Cr R Cassidy

*THAT the Health and Wellbeing report be received.*

**CARRIED**

#### **For the Motion**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffitt

#### **IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS**

<b>Strategic Plan</b>	1.5 Provide support to community organisations and groups
<b>Council Policy</b>	Health & Wellbeing Plan 2020-2025
<b>Legislative Context</b>	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i>
<b>Consultation</b>	As required
<b>Impact on Budget/Resources</b>	As per Council's approved budget
<b>Risk</b>	The council must ensure that it meets its legislative and governance responsibilities in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.

**REPORT BY** Kat Cullen, Community Development Officer

**BACKGROUND**

The following activities were performed during **December 2025**.

<b>COUNCIL PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>External Grants</b>	<p>GRANT SUCCESS: - \$500,000 to be received through Tas Active Infrastructure Grants (DPAC) Gretna Oval application. Confirmation of funding has been provided by Ministers Office, project planning to commence January once Grant Deed received.</p> <p>Building Early Education Fund – Federal investment of \$500 million in funding to build Early Childhood Education Centres. Council’s Childcare Options Analysis report will provide background to application for this grant which will open in 2026.</p>
<b>UPDATE: Council website upgrade</b>	<p>Commence content upload to new website draft.</p> <p>Engagement of photographer, as per Council decision, and commence image library to be used for website, and Council communications.</p>
<b>UPDATE: Childcare Project</b>	<p><u>Thrive Group</u> In collaboration with Council, Thrive Group hosted community info session about local childcare workforce training and development on 1 and 3 December. 8 local people are now signed up for free childcare qualification training commencing January 2026.</p> <p><u>Options Analysis</u> Ninety Mile Consulting – provided draft of Childcare Options Analysis. Updated draft to be provided to Mayor and Councillors mid-January.</p> <p><u>Westerway School After Hours Care</u> – Collaboration with school and provider to aim for program launch in 2026.</p>
<b>Community Grants</b>	<p>Coordination of community grants programs</p>
<b>RACT learner driver program</b>	<p>Coordination of final learning drivers’ lessons delivered in Bothwell by RACT. This program, funded through Cattle Hill Community Fund round 2 has been <b>free learner lessons delivered to 36 individuals</b> in the municipality.</p> 

<b>School Awards</b>	Coordination of Council's support for end of year awards. Attendance at awards.
<b>Australia Day 2026</b>	Awards nomination promotion, and event development.
<b>REPRESENTATION MEETINGS and EVENTS</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities for Children Steering Committee</li> <li>• LGAT Health &amp; Wellbeing Network meeting.</li> <li>• HATCH</li> </ul>
<b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>	
<b>Hamilton family Christmas event</b>	This community-led event, organised by families who coordinated the Halloween event, hosted a community Christmas movie on 19 January.
<b>Great lake Community Centre</b>	Working with committee to finalise council-funded insulation roofing installation project.
<b>School Holidays programs</b>	Support for school holiday programs in 2026 to be run through Action Crew Central Highlands. Commencing with film project with Gretna Junior Fire Brigade members in January, followed by craft project in Ellendale.
<b>Childcare and Ouse School</b>	Working with DEYCP and GM to support Ouse Family daycare through lack of certainty for lease at Ouse School in 2026. DECYP are considering supporting service through lease of private property in Ouse – currently scoping suitable residential properties.
<b>Ouse Online Access Centre</b>	Liaison with Acting GM, Libraries Tas and OAC to support secure ongoing functioning of OAC.
<b>COMMUNICATION and MEDIA</b>	
<b>Tourism brochure</b>	Update, edit, and reprint for Tourism Brochure exchange
<b>Residents guide</b>	Finalisation of community information and layout for printing.
<b>Council social media</b>	<p>Facebook followers: 2,876.</p> <p>December Posts: New GM announcement, Australia Day nominations and event; Telstra upgrade Great Lake and surrounds; Bush Fest 2027 save the date; swimming pool opening; review of dog management policy; seasons greeting post and holiday shutdown; advertising RACT driver program; Early Childhood Education and Care career sessions in Bothwell.</p>

<p><b>Telstra Tower upgrade – Great Lake area</b></p>	<p>Support for community messaging.</p>
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**Miena Children’s Christmas Party images – recipient of Council Community Grant.**



## 16.2 FISHING COMP DONATIONS REQUEST - WAYATINAH SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUB

### RESOLUTION 06/01.2026/C

**Moved:** Cr R Cassidy

**Seconded:** Deputy Mayor J Allwright

**THAT** Council approve a request from Wayatinah Sports and Social Club for a donation of \$500 for costs associated with registration packs for children who enter the David Gasson Memorial Fishing Competition at Wayatinah.

**CARRIED**

#### **For the Motion**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffett

**REPORT BY** Kat Cullen, Community Development Officer

[Attachment - Redacted donations request letter.](#)

#### **BACKGROUND**

Council has received a donation request from Wayatinah Sports and Social Club for \$500 for costs associated with registration packs for children who enter the David Gasson Memorial Fishing Competition at Wayatinah.

In 2025, there were 110 adults, and 86 children entered.

In recent years, Council has supported the children's registration packs by donating Council branded promotional items and merchandise remaining from the Bush Fest stock. This year, there is little remaining in the stock, and Wayatinah Sports and Social Club have been suggested to seek Council support through a cash donation

#### **FOR DISCUSSION**

The Club is seeking a donation of \$500 to purchase sunscreen, drink bottles, or hats for the registration packs for the junior entrants. This request is for an estimated \$5 per child, making 100 packs.

It is proposed that this expenditure be made against the Community Support and Donations project within the Community and Economic Development Budget, which has \$12,000 remaining for this financial year.

**17. OPERATIONAL MATTERS ARISING (STRATEGIC THEME – INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES**

<b>Manage Council’s physical assets in an efficient and effective manner</b>	
2.1	Develop and implement a 10 year Asset Management Plan for all classes of assets
2.2	Continue to lobby at regional and state levels to improve transport and infrastructure
2.3	Seek external funding to assist with upgrading of existing infrastructure and funding of new infrastructure and facilities
2.4	Ensure that the standard of existing assets and services are maintained in a cost effective manner

**17.1 WORKS & SERVICES MONTHLY REPORT – DECEMBER 2025**

**RESOLUTION 07/01.2026/C**

**Moved:** Cr J Honner

**Seconded:** Cr J Hall

**THAT** the Works & Services monthly report for December 2025 be received.

**CARRIED**

**For the Motion**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffett

**REPORT BY** Barry Harback, Acting - Works & Services Manager

**BACKGROUND**

The following activities were performed during **December 2025** by Works & Services –

<b>Grading &amp; Sheeting</b>	
<b>Maintenance Grading</b>	
<b>Potholing / shouldering</b>	14 Mile Road, Mark Tree Road, Bluff Road Interlaken, Wihareja, Black snake lane, Weasel planes, Bashon road, Vic Valley Road, Old man’s head road, Dennistoun road,
<b>Spraying:</b>	Bothwell township.
<b>Culverts / Drainage:</b>	
<b>Occupational Health and safety</b>	Monthly Toolbox Meetings Day to day JSA and daily prestart check lists completed. Monthly workplace inspections completed. Playground inspections Traffic management diary

<b>Bridges:</b>	Small Bridge, Over Pump Spillway Canal, Tarraleah 14 Mile Road Refurbishment of Bridge Beams, Bearings and Associated Components all works completed
<b>Refuse / recycling sites:</b>	Cover Hamilton Tip twice weekly
<b>Other:</b>	Bothwell swimming pool maintenance Cold mix holes Ellendale Road, replace signs Hollow tree road, replace tap Bronty toilets, repair windy loo Miena, repair porta loo Bothwell waste transfer station, Install new signs Bothwell swimming pool, cold mix holes Arthurs Lake Road,
<b>Slashing:</b>	Lang low road, Thousand acer lane, Pelham Road, Bluff Road,
<b>Municipal Town Maintenance:</b>	Collection of town rubbish twice weekly Maintenance of parks, cemetery, recreation ground and Caravan Park. Cleaning of public toilets, gutters, drains and footpaths. Collection of rubbish twice weekly Cleaning of toilets and public facilities General maintenance Mowing towns and parks Town Drainage
<b>Buildings:</b>	
<b>Plant:</b>	New Holland tractor Two new tyres Kubota zero turn mower new deck pulleys Komatsu loader new battery Bomag compacter new battery Mack truck new fan assembly
<b>Private Works:</b>	Andrew Daly Gravel delivery
<b>Casuals</b>	Toilets, rubbish and Hobart Hamilton general duties Mowing and brush cutting Gardening
<b>Program for next 4 weeks</b>	Coring and scarifying of Gretna Cricket Oval Slashing of Municipal Roads Mowing and brush cutting around towns Drainage Dawson Road Culvert installation Holmes Road Drainage works Curlys Lane Thousand Acre Lane Road works Hollow Tree Road stabilisation works Fix water brake Hamilton recreation ground Cabell and water location Ellendale footpath

## 18. OPERATIONAL MATTERS ARISING (STRATEGIC THEME – FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY)

### Manage Council's finances and assets to ensure long term viability and sustainability of Council

- 3.1 Manage finances and assets in a transparent way to allow the maximisation of resources to provide efficient and consistent delivery of services
- 3.2 Review annually, Councils Long Term Financial Management Plan and Council's Long Term Asset Management Plan
- 3.3 Where efficiency gains can be identified, resource share services with other local government councils
- 3.4 Endeavour to, and continue to lobby for, an increase in the level of grant income
- 3.5 Encourage development to expand Council's rate base
- 3.6 Identify revenue streams that could complement/substitute for existing resources
- 3.7 Develop and maintain sound risk management processes

### 18.1 MONTHLY FINANCE REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2025

#### RESOLUTION 08/01.2026/C

**Moved:** Deputy Mayor J Allwright

**Seconded:** Cr R Cassidy

THAT the Monthly Finance Report to 31 December 2025 be received.

**CARRIED**

#### For the Motion

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffett

#### IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

<b>Strategic Plan</b>	3.1 Manage finances and assets in a transparent way to allow the maximisation of resources to provide efficient and consistent delivery of services
<b>Council Policy</b>	Not applicable
<b>Legislative Context</b>	The council's decision-making is under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, and the report details the basis for the recommendation
<b>Consultation</b>	The financial statements form part of the public record within the Council minutes
<b>Impact on Budget/Resources</b>	As attached
<b>Risk</b>	The council must ensure that it meets its financial obligations. This report captures the ongoing financial performance

**REPORT BY** Zeeshan Tauqeer, Accountant

#### BACKGROUND

Financial Expenditure Analysis Report - For the Period Ended 31 December 2025

# Year-to-Date Financial Report

## As of 31 December 2025 (Financial Year 2025–26)

This report summaries Council’s year-to-date financial position and performance as at 31 December 2025, drawing on the bank account summary, comprehensive income statement, monthly operating report, and the Community & Economic Development program schedule. Comparative year-to-date figures (as at 31 December 2024) and the adopted 2025–26 budget are included for context.

### Management snapshot

Key year-to-date outcomes as at 31 December 2025 are summarised below. Figures are presented on a year-to-date basis for the 2025–26 financial year, with prior year year-to-date (as at 31 December 2024) comparatives where available.

Total revenues year-to-date were \$8,576,829 (prior year \$8,501,022), representing 80.6% of the annual budget of \$10,646,595.

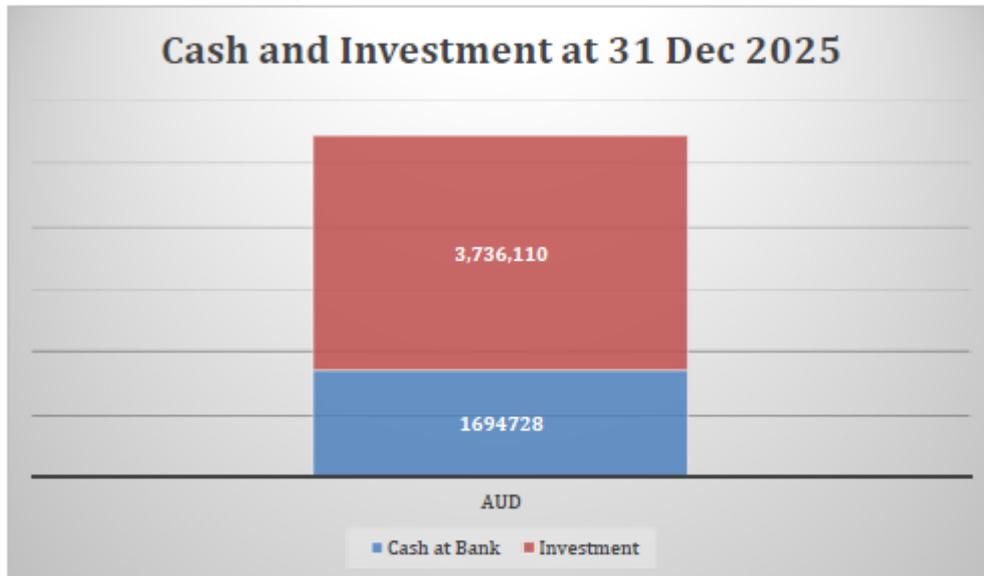
Total operating expenditure year-to-date was \$5,251,832 (prior year \$5,359,569), representing 47.9% of the annual budget of \$10,946,144.

The operating result year-to-date is a surplus of \$3,334,186 (prior year \$3,141,453). Including capital grants and other contributions of \$1,019,692 (prior year \$983,418), the overall year-to-date result is a surplus of \$4,353,878 (prior year \$4,124,871).

Capital works expenditure year-to-date totals \$352,534 (prior year \$1,163,755), representing 9.9% of the annual capital works budget of \$3,561,414.

Metric	Prior YTD (31 Dec 2024)	Current YTD (31 Dec 2025)	Movement
Cash and investments (closing)	-	\$5,430,838	-
Total revenues	\$8,501,022	\$8,586,018	\$84,996
Total operating expenditure	\$5,359,569	\$5,251,832	\$-107,737
Operating result (surplus/deficit)	\$3,141,453	\$3,334,186	\$192,733
Capital grants & other	\$983,418	\$1,019,692	\$362,74
Overall result (surplus/deficit)	\$4,124,871	\$4,353,878	\$229,007

**Cash and investment position**



Total cash and investments at 31 December 2025 were \$5,430,838.48. This balance is comprised of \$1,694,728.44 held in operating bank accounts (net of credit card balance) and \$3,736,110.04 held in short-term investments and at-call deposits.

Cash at bank and on hand includes the Commonwealth Bank general trading account balance of \$1,494,277.31 and the Westpac direct deposit account balance of \$195,219.24. The CBA credit card balance at month end was \$5231.89 and is presented within the cash at bank and on hand total.

Investments include term deposits and an at-call deposit as detailed in the bank summary schedule. Notable maturities within the current portfolio include:

- Term deposit \$500,000.00 at 3.97% (60 days), due 29 December 2025.
- Term deposit \$506,423.24 at 3.88% (37 days), due 2 January 2026.
- Term deposit \$2,640,101.96 at 4.01% (90 days), due 27 January 2026.
- At-call deposit \$89,584.84 at 3.60% (commenced 29 July 2025).

The bank summary allocates the combined cash and investment balance across the following internal liquidity groupings:

- Council Reserve: \$3,646,525.20.
- FAG, rates and fees: \$1,674,772.07.
- Community grants: \$19,956.37.

- Tascorp (St Michael and All Angels' Church, Bothwell): \$89,584.84.

Total cash at bank and on hand at 31 December 2025 was \$1,694,728.44, and total investments were \$3,736,110.04. Combined cash and investments were \$5,430,838.48.

Category	Amount	Share of total
Cash at bank and on hand	\$1,694,728.44	31.2%
Investments	\$3,736,110.04	68.8%
Total cash and investments	\$5,430,838.48	100.0%

#### Liquidity allocation (per bank summary)

Component	Amount
Council Reserve	\$3,646,525.20
Tascorp (Church) At-call	\$89,584.84
FAG & Rates & Fees	\$1,674,772.07
Community Grants	\$19,956.37

#### Operating performance (income and expenditure)

This section summarises year-to-date operating performance, based on the comprehensive income statement. Operating performance is presented on an accrual basis and includes non-cash expenses such as depreciation and amortisation.

Total Recurrent income year-to-date were \$8,576,829 (prior year \$8,501,022). Total operating expenditure year-to-date was \$5,251,832 (prior year \$5,359,569).

The resulting operating surplus is \$3,334,186 compared with \$3,141,453 at the same point last year.

#### Revenue analysis

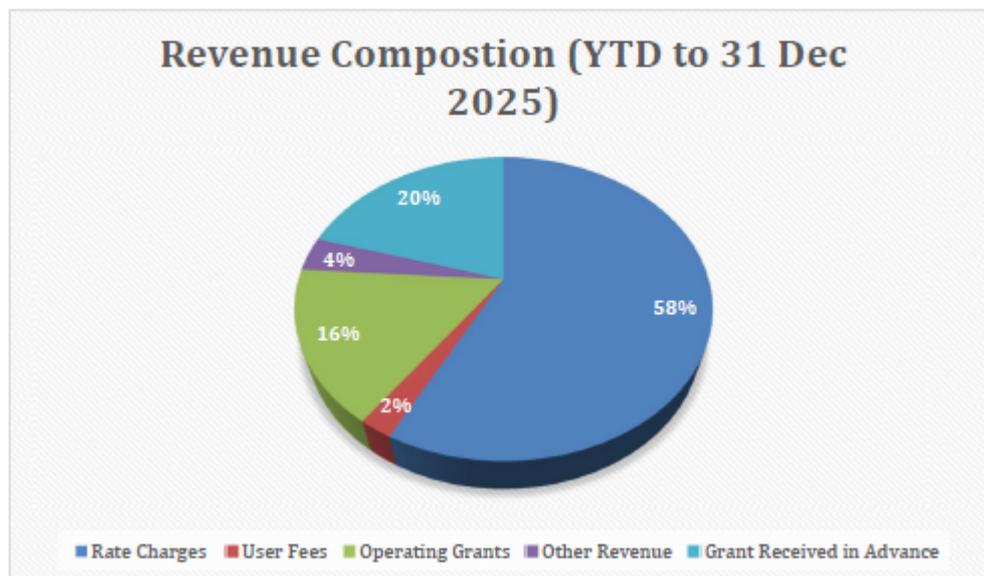
Year-to-date revenue performance by major stream is outlined below. Movements reflect year-to-date comparatives and the timing of annual revenue recognition.

- Rates & charges: Recurrent income \$4,943,026 year-to-date (prior year \$4,716,977), movement \$226,049. Annual budget is \$4,940,273; year-to-date is 100.1% of budget. Rates and charges are the primary recurrent revenue stream and are tracking at the annual budget level year-to-date.
- User fees: \$191,963 year-to-date (prior year \$35,700), movement \$56,263. Annual budget \$501,651; year-to-date is 38.3% of budget. User fees reflect fees for services and usage charges and are at a lower proportion of annual budget consistent with activity and seasonal timing.
- Operating grants: \$1,393,995 year-to-date (prior year \$301,397), movement \$1,092,598. Annual budget is \$4,428,454 year-to-date is 31.5% of budget. Operating grants include Financial Assistance Grants and

other operating grant streams; year-to-date performance is driven by grant timing and receipts recognised to date.

- Other revenue: \$310,528 year-to-date (prior year \$428,847), movement \$-118,319. Annual budget \$776,217; year-to-date is 40% of budget. Other revenue comprises interest, recoveries, reimbursements, and other miscellaneous income.
- Grants received in advance: \$1,746,506 year-to-date (prior year \$2,918,101), movement \$-1,171,595. Annual budget \$0 (budget utilisation not applicable for this stream). Grants received in advance reflect funding received before the intended recognition period and are sensitive to payment timing and grant schedules.

Revenue stream	Prior YTD	Current YTD	Movement	2025-26 budget	% of budget
Rates & charges	\$4,716,977	\$4,943,026	\$226,049	\$4,940,273	100.1%
User fees	\$135,700	\$191,963	\$56,263	\$501,651	38.3%
Operating grants	\$301,397	\$1,393,995	\$1,092,598	\$4,428,454	31.5%
Other revenue	\$428,847	\$310,528	\$-118,319	\$776,217	40%
Grants received in advance	\$2,918,101	\$1,746,506	\$-1,171,595	\$0	
<b>Total revenues</b>	<b>\$8,501,022</b>	<b>\$8,586,018</b>	<b>\$84,996</b>	<b>\$10,646,595</b>	<b>80.6%</b>

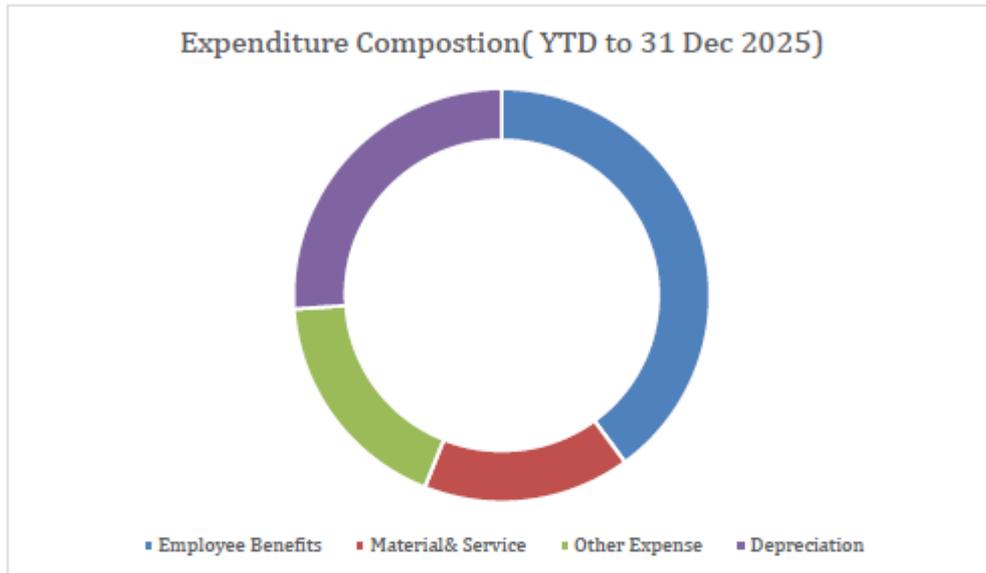


### Expenditure analysis

Year-to-date expenditure performance by major expense category is outlined below. Movements reflect year-to-date comparatives and the timing of expenditure recognition (including non-cash depreciation).

- Employee benefits: \$2,097,661 year-to-date (prior year \$1,504,709), movement \$592,952. Annual budget \$2,941,952; year-to-date is 71.0% of budget. Employee benefits include wages, salaries, superannuation, allowances, and related employment costs.
- Materials & services: \$845,714 year-to-date (prior year \$1,500,104), movement \$-654,390. Annual budget \$3,490,109; year-to-date is 24.2% of budget. Materials and services include contracted services, utilities, consumables, and other operational inputs.
- Other expenses: \$940,598 year-to-date (prior year \$1,091,885), movement \$-151,287. Annual budget \$2,116,449; year-to-date is 44.4% of budget. Other expenses include financing, contributions, and other operating costs not captured in the categories above.
- Depreciation & amortisation: \$1,367,859 year-to-date (prior year \$1,262,871), movement \$104,988. Annual budget \$2,397,634; year-to-date is 57.1% of budget. Depreciation and amortisation are non-cash expenses reflecting the consumption of Council's asset base.

Expense category	Prior YTD	Current YTD	Movement	2025-26 budget	% of budget
Employee benefits	\$1,504,709	\$2,097,661	\$592,952	\$2,941,952	71.0%
Materials & services	\$1,500,104	\$845,714	\$-654,390	\$3,490,109	24.2%
Other expenses	\$1,091,885	\$940,598	\$-151,287	\$2,116,449	44.4%
Depreciation & amortisation	\$1,262,871	\$1,367,859	\$104,988	\$2,397,634	57.1%
Total expenditure	\$5,359,569	\$5,251,832	\$-107,737	\$10,946,144	47.9%



**Departmental operating expenditure**

Departmental operating expenditure is summarised below on a year-to-date basis, showing annual budgets, prior year comparatives, and year-to-date utilisation.

- Corporate & Financial Services: \$1,407,023 year-to-date (52.5% of annual budget \$2,677,717). Prior year \$1,377,329; movement \$29,694.
- Development & Environmental Services: \$826,397 year-to-date (29.0% of annual budget \$2,845,210). Prior year \$988,961; movement \$-162,564.
- Works & Services: \$1,707,768 year-to-date (56.4% of annual budget \$3,025,581). Prior year \$1,656,399; movement \$51,369.

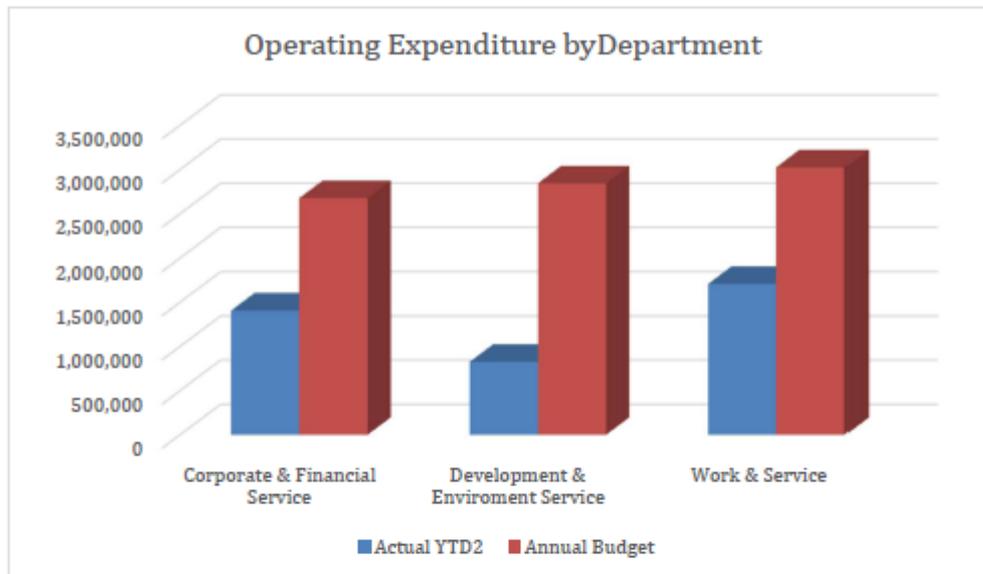
Within Works & Services, the larger year-to-date cost drivers include:

- ROAD MAINTENANCE (ROAD): \$621,524 year-to-date (57.2% of annual budget \$1,086,345).
- WASTE SERVICES: \$509,093 year-to-date (52.5% of annual budget \$968,939).
- PLANT M'TCE & OPERATING COSTS (PLANT): \$355,257 year-to-date (54.2% of annual budget \$655,036).
- PUBLIC CONVENIENCES (PC): \$125,683 year-to-date (43.3% of annual budget \$290,284).
- TOWN MOWING/TREES/STREETSCAPES(MOW): \$119,040 year-to-date (50.4% of annual budget \$236,008).
- PARKS AND GARDENS(PG): \$63,284 year-to-date (63.0% of annual budget \$100,524).

- CEMETERY (CEM): \$15,593 year-to-date (90.9% of annual budget \$17,161).

Total operating expenditure across all departments to 31 December 2025 is \$3,957,544, representing 46.3% of the annual operating budget of \$8,548,508.

Department	2025-26 budget	Prior YTD	Current YTD	Movement	% of budget
Corporate & Financial Services	\$2,677,717	\$1,377,329	\$1,407,023	\$29,694	52.5%
Development & Environmental Services	\$2,845,210	\$988,961	\$826,397	\$-162,564	29.0%
Works & Services	\$3,025,581	\$1,656,399	\$1,707,768	\$51,369	56.4%
Total all operating	\$8,548,508	\$4,022,689	\$3,957,544	\$-65,145	46.3%



### Capital works expenditure

Capital works expenditure is reported separately from operating expenditure. The summary below outlines year-to-date capital expenditure by major capital category against the approved annual capital budget, with prior year year-to-date comparatives.

- Road construction & reseals: \$256,040 year-to-date (11.7% of annual budget \$2,196,099). Prior year-to-date \$805,007.
- Buildings: \$53,146 year-to-date (40.4% of annual budget \$131,667). Prior year year-to-date \$136,280.
- Halls: \$0 year-to-date (annual budget \$0). Prior year year-to-date \$0.
- Footpaths/kerbs/gutters: \$14,244 year-to-date (5.8% of annual budget \$245,000). Prior year year-to-date \$28,185.
- Bridges: \$9,637 year-to-date (17.5% of annual budget \$55,000). Prior year year-to-date \$0.
- Infrastructure: \$2,880 year-to-date (2.7% of annual budget \$105,000). Prior year year-to-date \$28,235.

Total capital expenditure to 31 December 2025 is \$352,534, compared with \$1,163,755 at the same point last year. This represents 9.9% of the annual capital works budget of \$3,561,414.

Capital category	2025–26 budget	Current YTD	% of budget	Prior YTD
Road construction & reseals	\$2,196,099	\$256,040	11.7%	\$805,007
Buildings	\$131,667	\$53,146	40.4%	\$136,280
Footpaths/kerbs/gutters	\$245,000	\$14,244	5.8%	\$28,185
Bridges	\$55,000	\$9,637	17.5%	\$0
Infrastructure	\$105,000	\$2,880	2.7%	\$28,235
Recreation grounds	\$402,000	\$616	0.2%	\$41,990
Halls	\$0	\$15,971		\$11,755
Drainage	\$169,000	\$0	0.0%	\$4,898
Parks & gardens	\$72,000	\$0	0.0%	\$239
<b>Total capital works</b>	<b>\$3,561,414</b>	<b>\$352,534</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>\$1,163,755</b>

### Community & Economic Development program

The Community and Economic Development Support and Donations program capture operating allocations for community support, economic development initiatives, youth and children activities, and related grants. The schedule below summarises budget and year-to-date expenditure as at 31 December 2025.

- Total program budget: \$141,600. Year-to-date actual: \$32,747. Remaining balance: \$108,853.

Largest year-to-date expenditure items within the program include:

- Highlands Digest Support: \$14,364 year-to-date (budget \$15,800; remaining \$1,436).
- Community Grants: \$9,663 year-to-date (budget \$15,000; remaining \$5,337).
- Brighton Family Day Care: \$5,000 year-to-date (budget \$5,000; remaining \$0).
- Economic and Tourism Development Strategic Project: \$2,000 year-to-date (budget \$5,000; remaining \$3,000).
- Youth Service & Activities: \$1,227 year-to-date (budget \$5,000; remaining \$3,773).
- Community & Economic Development Support: \$393 year-to-date (budget \$10,000; remaining \$9,607).

Selected activity	Budget	Actual to 31 Dec 2025	Remaining
Community & Economic Development Support	\$10,000	\$393	\$9,607
Economic and Tourism Development Strategic Project	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$3,000
Youth Service & Activities	\$5,000	\$1,227	\$3,773
Children's Services and Activities	\$5,000	\$100	\$4,900
Highlands Digest Support	\$15,800	\$14,364	\$1,436
Total program (Support & Donations)	\$141,600	\$32,747	\$108,853

## **Council Expenditure on Living and Housing Units**

**Period: July 2025 to December 2025**

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### **Purpose**

This briefing provides an overview of council expenditure incurred in relation to living units and residential properties for the six-month period from July 2025 to December 2025, covering both council-owned properties and Independent Living Units.

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### **Total Expenditure**

Total council expenditure for the period amounted to \$53,811. Costs incurred include contractor payments, materials, council employee salaries, energy, pest control, council rates, water and sewerage charges, building maintenance, oncosts, and internal plant hire.

For the purposes of property cost analysis, **salaries, oncosts, and internal plant hire have been excluded** from the property-specific expenditure figures outlined below.

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### **Key Property Expenditure (Excluding Salaries and Internal Charges)**

- **Unit 01 – Ouse Housing Unit (6890 Lyne Highway): \$22,297**  
Includes contractor payments, council rates, water and sewerage, energy, and materials. This property represents the highest individual expenditure for the period.
  - **Independent Living Unit – Bothwell: \$6,162**  
Costs relate to council rates and water and sewerage charges.
  - **Doctor’s House – Victoria Valley Road: \$4,105**
  - **Cumberland Street Residence: \$3,644**
  - **Housing – High Street, Bothwell: \$2,358**
  - **Archer Drive, Bothwell (Units 1–6): \$2,523**  
Expenditure relates to contractor payments and building maintenance.
  - **Lyne Highway, Ouse – Unit 02: \$2,241**  
Costs relate to council rates and water and sewerage charges.
  - **Other Housing and Living Units:**  
Minor expenditure ranging from \$160 to \$1690 per unit, primarily relating to contractor payments, pest control, council rates, and water and sewerage charges.
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### **Ownership Consideration**

Independent Living Units are **not owned by council**. However, council incurred expenditure on these units during the reporting period, primarily in relation to statutory charges and minor maintenance and contractor service

**Rates Reconciliation as at 31 December 2025**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Rates in Debit 30th June</b>	\$196,877.36	\$217,826.72
<b>Rates in Credit 30th June</b>	-\$145,341.00	-\$150,792.81
<b>Balance 30th June</b>	<b>\$51,536.36</b>	<b>\$67,033.91</b>
Rates Raised	\$4,729,920.23	\$4,971,230.43
Penalties Raised	\$36,021.97	\$33,837.66
Supplementaries/Debit Adjustments	\$20,842.89	\$27,047.44
<b>Total Raised</b>	<b>\$4,786,785.09</b>	<b>\$5,032,115.53</b>
<b>Less:</b>		
Receipts to Date	\$3,034,229.57	\$3,155,727.25
Credit Journals	\$18,097.03	\$18,327.00
Pensioner Rate Remissions	\$128,959.45	\$134,594.52
Remissions/Supplementary Credits	\$10,566.41	\$27,872.01
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$1,646,468.99</b>	<b>\$1,762,628.66</b>

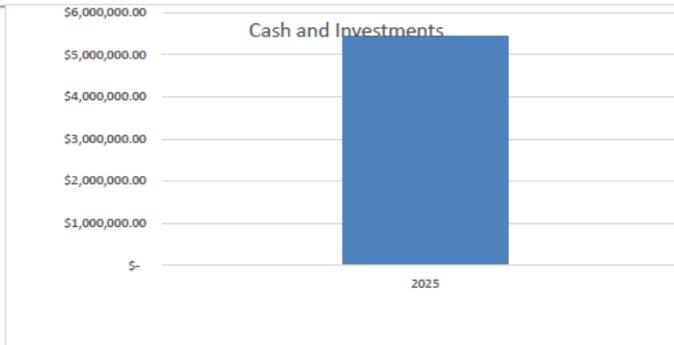
**Bank Reconciliation as at 31 December 2025**

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
Balance Brought Forward	\$6,077,399.35	\$5,021,743.82
Receipts for month	\$685,355.70	\$1,351,661.15
Expenditure for month	\$1,095,630.21	\$942,566.49
<b>Balance</b>	<b>\$5,667,124.84</b>	<b>\$5,430,838.48</b>
<b>Represented By:</b>		
Balance Commonwealth Bank	\$1,198,776.85	\$1,494,277.31
Balance Westpac Bank	\$134,974.33	\$195,219.24
CBA Credit Card	\$0.00	\$5,231.89
Investments(Council Reserves + St Michael's Church)	\$4,332,823.66	\$3,736,110.04
Petty Cash & Floats	\$550.00	
	<b>\$5,667,124.84</b>	<b>\$5,430,838.48</b>
Plus Unbanked Money		
	<b>\$5,667,124.84</b>	<b>\$5,430,838.48</b>
Less Unpresented Cheques	\$0.00	
Unreceipted amounts on bank statements	\$0.00	
	<b>\$5,667,124.84</b>	<b>\$5,430,838.48</b>

**BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES AS AT 31 December 2025**

No.	Bank Accounts	Investment Period	Current Interest		BALANCE		
			Rate %	Due Date	2025		
<b>11100 Cash at Bank and on Hand</b>							
11105	Bank 01 - Commonwealth - General Trading Account				\$	1,494,277.31	
11106	Bank 02 - Westpac - Direct Deposit Account				\$	195,219.24	
	1118 CBA Credit Card				\$	5,231.89	
11199	<b>TOTAL CASH AT BANK AND ON HAND</b>				\$	<b>1,694,728.44</b>	
<b>11200 Investments</b>							
11207	Bank 6		0	0.00	\$	-	
11207	Bank 5		60	3.97	29/12/2025	\$ 500,000.00	
11115	Bank 04		37	3.88%	2/01/2026	\$ 506,423.24	
11110	Tascorp( St Michael and All Angels' Church, Bothwell)	At CALL (29/07/2025)		3.60%		\$ 89,584.84	
11115	Bank 16		90	4.01%	27/01/2026	\$ 2,640,101.96	
11299	<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>				\$	<b>3,736,110.04</b>	
<b>TOTAL BANK ACCOUNTS AND CASH ON HAND</b>						<b>\$</b>	<b>5,430,838.48</b>

<b>Council Reserve</b>	\$	<b>3,646,525.20</b>
<b>Tascorp (St Michael and All Angels' Church, Bothwell)</b>	\$	<b>89,584.84</b>
<b>FAG&amp; RATES&amp;FEES</b>	\$	<b>1,674,772.07</b>
<b>Community Grants</b>	\$	<b>19,956.37</b>
	\$	<b>5,430,838.48</b>



**Comprehensive Income Statement**

31/12/2025

	Budget 2024-2025	Actual to date prior year	Actual to Date	Budget 2025-2026
<b>Recurrent Income</b>				
Rates Charges	\$4,682,233	\$4,716,977	\$4,943,026	\$4,940,273
User Fees	\$494,250	\$135,700	\$191,963	\$501,651
Grants - Operating	\$3,236,515	\$301,397	\$1,393,995	\$4,428,454
Other Revenue	\$704,366	\$428,847	\$301,339	\$776,217
Grants received in Advance	\$0	\$2,918,101	\$1,746,506	
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$9,117,364</b>	<b>\$8,501,022</b>	<b>\$8,576,829</b>	<b>\$10,646,595</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Employee Benefits	\$2,584,261	\$1,504,709	\$2,089,306	\$2,941,952
Materials and Services	\$2,447,768	\$1,500,104	\$845,714	\$3,490,109
Other Expenses	\$1,892,738	\$1,091,885	\$939,764	\$2,116,449
Depreciation and Amortisation	\$2,327,800	\$1,262,871	\$1,367,859	\$2,397,634
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$9,252,567</b>	<b>5,359,569</b>	<b>5,242,643</b>	<b>10,946,144</b>
<b>Operating Surplus(Deficit)</b>	<b>(135,203)</b>	<b>3,141,453</b>	<b>3,334,186</b>	<b>(299,549)</b>
Capital Grants & Other	\$2,424,996	\$983,418	\$1,019,692	\$1,415,067
<b>Surplus(Deficit)</b>	<b>2,289,793</b>	<b>4,124,871</b>	<b>4,353,878</b>	<b>1,115,518</b>
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>\$5,122,085</b>	<b>\$1,163,755</b>	<b>\$352,534</b>	<b>\$3,561,414</b>

	BUDGET 2025/26	ACTUAL TO 31-Dec-24	ACTUAL TO 31-Dec-25	% OF BUDGET SPENT	BALANCE OF BUDGET
<b>CORPORATE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>					
ADMIN HAMILTON	\$2,017,673	\$1,074,155	\$1,086,367	53.84%	\$931,306
ELECTED MEMBERS EXPENDITURE(AMEH)	\$281,916	\$155,229	\$139,606	49.52%	\$142,310
MEDICAL CENTRES(MED)	\$132,191	\$68,573	\$62,711	47.44%	\$69,480
STREET LIGHTING(STLIGHT)	\$43,994	\$18,049	\$15,153	34.44%	\$28,842
ONCOSTS	(\$470,879)	(\$301,516)	(\$237,598)	50.46%	(\$233,281)
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & RELATIONS(COR+EDEV)	\$672,822	\$362,839	\$340,784	50.65%	\$332,038
<b>TOTAL CORPORATE &amp; FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>	<b>\$2,677,717</b>	<b>\$1,377,329</b>	<b>\$1,407,023</b>	<b>52.55%</b>	<b>\$1,270,694</b>
<b>DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>					
ADMIN BOTHWELL	\$327,017	\$206,533	\$155,397	47.52%	\$171,620
ENVIRON HEALTH SERVICES (EHS)	\$38,628	\$15,756	\$17,507	45.32%	\$21,121
ANIMAL CONTROL(AC)	\$18,421	\$7,997	\$6,665	36.18%	\$11,756
PLUMBING/BUILDING CONTROL (BPC)	\$188,191	\$87,327	\$24,133	12.82%	\$164,058
SWIMMING POOLS (POOL)	\$32,572	\$15,603	\$18,334	56.29%	\$14,238
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL (DEV)	\$247,000	\$145,810	\$93,589	37.89%	\$153,411
WASTE SERVICES	\$968,939	\$507,842	\$509,093	52.54%	\$459,846
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION (EP)	\$1,024,442	\$2,093	\$1,679	0.16%	\$1,022,763
<b>TOTAL DEVELOPMENT &amp; ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>	<b>\$2,845,210</b>	<b>\$988,961</b>	<b>\$826,397</b>	<b>29.05%</b>	<b>\$2,018,813</b>
<b>WORKS AND SERVICES</b>					
PUBLIC CONVENIENCES (PC)	\$290,284	\$96,184	\$125,683	43.30%	\$164,601
CEMETERY (CEM)	\$17,161	\$6,725	\$15,593	90.86%	\$1,568
HALLS (HALL)	\$74,349	\$66,236	\$27,190	36.57%	\$47,159
PARKS AND GARDENS(PG)	\$100,524	\$78,841	\$63,284	62.95%	\$37,240
REC & RESERVES(Rec+Reserv)	\$130,679	\$57,740	\$50,321	38.51%	\$80,358
TOWN MOWING/TREES/STREETSCAPES(MOW)	\$236,008	\$115,460	\$119,040	50.44%	\$116,968
HOUSING (HOU)	\$160,753	\$93,048	\$53,488	33.27%	\$107,265
CAMPING GROUNDS (CPARK)	\$14,801	\$9,268	\$8,206	55.44%	\$6,596
LIBRARY (LIB)	\$2,640	\$1,687	\$0	0.00%	\$2,640
ROAD MAINTENANCE (ROAD)	\$1,086,345	\$718,721	\$621,524	57.21%	\$464,821
FOOTPATHS/KERBS/GUTTERS (FKG)	\$23,316	\$12,745	\$5,365	23.01%	\$17,951
BRIDGE MAINTENANCE (BRI)	\$23,388	\$3,031	\$6,489	27.74%	\$16,899
PRIVATE WORKS (PW)	\$51,372	\$12,687	\$18,732	36.46%	\$32,640
2TD-Traffic Data	\$25,000	\$0	\$7,317	29.27%	\$17,683
SUPER & VD OVERHEADS (SUPER)	\$844,041	\$436,355	\$392,816	46.54%	\$451,225
QUARRY/GRAVEL (QUARRY)	(\$181,988)	(\$21,291)	(\$50,676)	27.85%	(\$131,312)
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT(NRM)	\$179,936	\$70,018	\$101,494	56.41%	\$78,442
SEB (SEB)	\$2,000	\$305	\$875	43.73%	\$1,125
PLANT MTCE & OPERATING COSTS (PLANT)	\$655,036	\$348,558	\$355,257	54.23%	\$299,779
PLANT INCOME	(\$795,036)	(\$511,330)	(\$248,756)	31.29%	(\$546,280)
DRAINAGE (DRAIN)	\$43,130	\$35,539	\$12,530	29.05%	\$30,600
OTHER COMMUNITY AMENITIES (OCA)	\$41,842	\$21,330	\$15,730	37.59%	\$26,112
WASTE COLLECTION & ASSOC SERVICES (WAS)	\$0	\$4,542	\$6,268		(\$6,268)
FLOOD REPAIRS		\$0	\$0		
<b>TOTAL WORKS &amp; SERVICES</b>	<b>\$3,025,581</b>	<b>\$1,656,399</b>	<b>\$1,707,768</b>	<b>56.44%</b>	<b>\$1,317,813</b>
<b>DEPARTMENT TOTALS OPERATING EXPENSES</b>					
Corporate Services	\$2,677,717	\$1,377,329	\$1,407,023	52.55%	\$1,270,694
Dev. & Environmental Services	\$2,845,210	\$988,961	\$826,397	29.05%	\$2,018,813
Works & Services	\$3,025,581	\$1,656,399	\$1,707,768	56.44%	\$1,317,813
<b>Total All Operating</b>	<b>\$8,548,508</b>	<b>\$4,022,689</b>	<b>\$3,957,544</b>	<b>46.30%</b>	<b>\$4,607,320</b>

	BUDGET 2025/26	ACTUAL TO 31-Dec-24	ACTUAL TO 31-Dec-25	% OF BUDGET SPENT	BALANCE OF BUDGET
<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</b>					
<b>CORPORATE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>					
Computer Purchases	\$7,648	\$28,584	\$0	0.00%	\$7,648
Equipment	\$6,000	\$0	\$0	0.00%	\$6,000
Miscellaneous	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	0.00%	\$2,000
	\$15,648	\$28,584	\$0	0.00%	\$15,648
<b>DEVELOPMENT &amp; ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>					
Swimming Pool	\$0	\$1,870	\$0	0.00%	\$0
	\$0	\$1,870	\$0	0.00%	(\$1,870)
<b>WORKS &amp; SERVICES</b>					
Plant Purchases	\$170,000	\$76,712	\$0	0.00%	\$170,000
Camping Grounds	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	\$0
Public Conveniences	\$0	\$0	\$0	0.00%	\$0
Bridges	\$55,000	\$0	\$9,637	17.52%	\$45,363
Road Construction & Reseals	\$2,196,099	\$805,007	\$256,040	11.66%	\$1,940,059
Drainage	\$169,000	\$4,898	\$0	0.00%	\$169,000
Parks & Gardens Capital	\$72,000	\$239	\$0	0.00%	\$72,000
Infrastructure	\$105,000	\$28,235	\$2,880	2.74%	\$102,120
Footpaths, Kerbs & Gutters	\$245,000	\$28,185	\$14,244	5.81%	\$230,756
Rec Grounds	\$402,000	\$41,990	\$616	0.15%	\$401,384
Halls	\$0	\$11,755	\$15,971	0.00%	(\$15,971)
Buildings	\$131,667	\$136,280	\$53,146	40.36%	\$78,521
	\$3,545,766	\$1,133,301	\$352,534	9.94%	\$3,193,232
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL WORKS</b>					
Corporate Services	\$15,648	\$28,584	\$0	0.00%	\$15,648
Dev. & Environmental Services	\$0	\$1,870	\$0	0.00%	\$0
Works & Services	\$3,545,766	\$1,133,301	\$352,534	9.94%	\$3,193,232
	\$3,561,414	\$1,163,755	\$352,534	9.90%	\$3,208,880

**Community & Economic Development****2025/2026 Budget**

	<b>BUDGET 2025/26</b>	<b>Actual to Date 31/12/2025</b>	<b>Remaining Balance</b>
<b>Strategic Project- Whole of Community</b>			
Community & Economic Development Support	\$10,000	\$393	\$9,607
Health & Wellbeing Plan (2020-2025) Implementation	\$5,000		\$5,000
Economic and Tourism Development Strategic Project	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$3,000
<b>Youth and Children Strategic Projects</b>			\$0
New- Family Day Care Seeding Fund Bothwell	\$5,000		\$5,000
New- Ouse Family Day Care Support	\$5,000		\$5,000
Youth Service & Activities	\$5,000	\$1,227	\$3,773
Children's Services and Activities	\$5,000	\$100	\$4,900
Bothwell High School Breakfast Club	\$2,000		\$2,000
Glenora School Breakfast Club	\$1,000		\$1,000
Westerway School Breakfast Club	\$1,000		\$1,000
New-Bothwell Playproup Support	\$1,000		\$1,000
<b>Community &amp; Donation and Financial Assistance</b>			\$0
Community Grants	\$15,000	\$9,663	\$5,337
Community Support & Donations	\$10,000		\$10,000
Church Grants	\$5,000		\$5,000
Further Education Bursaries	\$1,400		\$1,400
School Awards	\$400		\$400
Central Highlands School Support	\$3,000		\$3,000
<b>Community Event</b>			\$0
ANZAC Day	\$12,000		\$12,000
Australia Day	\$4,000		\$4,000
Community Event.eg Volunteer week	\$5,000		\$5,000
<b>Community Partnerships</b>			\$0
Highlands Digest Support	\$15,800	\$14,364	\$1,436
Australasian Golf Museum contribution to power	\$5,000		\$5,000
Visitors Centre Contribution to Power	\$5,000		\$5,000
Healthy Connect Project	\$10,000		\$10,000
Brighton Family Day Care	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0
<b>Total Community &amp; Economic Development Support &amp; Donations</b>	<b>\$141,600</b>	<b>\$32,747</b>	<b>\$108,853</b>

## 19. OPERATIONAL MATTERS ARISING (STRATEGIC THEME – NATURAL ENVIRONMENT)

### Encourage responsible management of the natural resources and assets in the Central Highlands.

- 4.1 Continue to fund and support the Derwent Catchment Project
- 4.2 Continue with existing waste minimisation and recycling opportunities
- 4.3 Promote the reduce, reuse, recycle, recover message
- 4.4 Continue the program of weed reduction in the Central Highlands
- 4.5 Ensure the Central Highlands Emergency Management Plan is reviewed regularly to enable preparedness for natural events and emergencies
- 4.6 Strive to provide a clean and healthy environment
- 4.7 Support and assist practical programs that address existing environmental problems and improve the environment

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### 19.1 DERWENT CATCHMENT PROJECT

#### RESOLUTION 09/01.2026/C

**Moved:** Cr D Meacheam

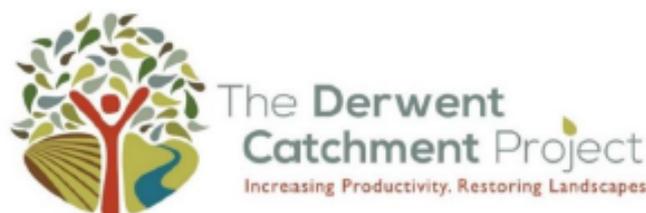
**Seconded:** Cr R Cassidy

**THAT** the Derwent Catchment Project Report be received.

**CARRIED**

**For the Motion**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffett



## Monthly Report for Central Highlands Council

3 December 2025 – 13 January 2026

### *General business*

The Nature Repair Pilot funding has now been received, with the first instalment of \$2 million coming through — an exciting milestone that will support upcoming works and enable new opportunities as the program ramps up. Orders have now been placed on a suite of new machinery to upgrade operational capability, including a Quick-sprayer and a new space-cab Ranger. Options for purchasing a large-scale chipper are being investigated by our Operations Manager, for use on the Clyde River project as well as other river restoration works.

The team enjoyed a well-earned Christmas and New Year break and are now back on the ground and getting stuck into the season, looking forward to the year ahead and the momentum the Nature Repair Pilot program is bringing. The ground crew has also welcomed two new team members, Anthony and Nathan, strengthening capacity as we head into a busy period.

### *Restoration and conservation*

*Strategic Actions: 4.1 Continue to fund and support the Derwent Catchment Project and 4.7 Support and assist practical programs that address existing environmental problems and improve the environment.*

#### **Clyde River Flood Resilience Project**

The Clyde River Flood Resilience Project Plan 2025–2028 has been completed and submitted to the Australian Government through the Disaster Ready Fund. The plan sets out a targeted, evidence-based program of works to address long-standing hydraulic constraints and improve flood behaviour along priority reaches of the Clyde River. It provides a comprehensive framework for improving flood behaviour by focusing on key hydraulic constraints rather than attempting whole-of-catchment flood mitigation, and brings together hydrological modelling, LiDAR and aerial analysis, desktop assessment, detailed field surveys and extensive landholder engagement to build a defensible understanding of how flooding occurs and where intervention will be most effective.

The plan also sets out the governance, engagement and delivery framework required to implement works safely and effectively across a complex, multi-tenure agricultural landscape. This includes clear objectives and strategy, a staged implementation program aligned with funding availability, detailed monitoring and evaluation methods, and a transparent discussion of risks, limitations and realistic outcomes. Importantly, the plan is explicit that flooding in the Clyde system is structural and ongoing, and that while large flood events are controlled by downstream constraints, targeted works can deliver meaningful local improvements in flow efficiency, drainage and flood duration at priority locations.

Within this framework, the project scope focuses on targeted, site-specific interventions designed to restore hydraulic function at the most influential choke points along the river. Works centre on selective willow and debris management to reopen main channels, secondary channels and internal flood spill areas, supported by stabilisation and riparian revegetation where required. The approach avoids blanket clearing and instead balances hydraulic improvement with erosion risk, amenity considerations and long-term river stability. Older willows that do not contribute to blockages may be retained, while disturbed areas are stabilised using hydro-mulch and targeted planting of flood-tolerant native species.

Delivery is staged and supported by site-specific management plans, landholder agreements and a strong community engagement program, particularly in and around Bothwell where early works are planned. A robust monitoring and reporting framework (including photo-points, drone surveys, remote sensing and operational reporting) ensures outcomes can be clearly demonstrated to funders and stakeholders and used to inform adaptive management over time.



*Figure 1. New willow roots extending from a fallen trunk into the river at a heavily infested section of the Clyde.*

Within this scope, the plan identifies priority sites along the Clyde River where targeted intervention is most likely to deliver measurable flood-resilience benefits. The plan identifies 21 priority sites along the Clyde River where targeted intervention will deliver the greatest

improvement in hydraulic function and local flood resilience. Collectively, these sites cover approximately 15.4 kilometres of river and have been prioritised into a staged delivery program. This includes 14 Tier 1 sites, comprising the fully funded works program and covering approximately 8 kilometres of river, and 7 Tier 2 sites, which have been assessed and costed but are not currently funded and cover a further 7.4 kilometres. The Tier 1 sites form the committed works program for the 2026–2028 implementation period, while the Tier 2 sites are retained as future or contingent opportunities should additional funding or delivery efficiencies become available.

Progress toward implementation of the Clyde River Flood Resilience Project Plan has focused on translating the strategic framework into site-ready actions. As part of the overall project plan, site-specific Management Zone Plans have been prepared for priority locations. These plans detail the on-ground works proposed at each site and provide practical direction for the planning and implementation of flood-related willow removal and associated restoration works. Importantly, the Management Zone Plans also form the basis for Landholder Agreement packages, ensuring that landholders are fully informed about the scope, nature and location of works proposed on or adjacent to their land. Together, these documents outline the rationale for intervention, document the activities to be undertaken, and provide transparency and certainty for all parties involved.

Implementation has now commenced in the Croakers Alley Management Zone, with early engagement activities underway. Further discussions have been held with affected landholders, and preparation and signing of Landholder Agreements is progressing to formally confirm access and consent. Broader community engagement is also underway, with a letter drop to all Bothwell residents to inform them of upcoming works at Croakers Alley, and on-site signage scheduled for installation this week. These actions represent the transition from planning to delivery and demonstrate early progress toward on-ground implementation of the project.



3

*Figure 2. Just a fraction of the Croakers infestation - first in line to go!*

### **Miena Cider Gum Recovery Program**

Follow-up works at St Patricks Plains have focused on assessing whether the newly trialled possum deterrents are performing as intended. Camera traps are being checked and footage downloaded to determine if the spiky possum-proof bands are successfully preventing possum access, building on last month's monitoring of the newly completed possum-proof fencing and associated trials.



*Figure 3. Installing the spiky possum-deterrent bands at St Patrick's Plains.*

As part of this month's field work, six polycarbonate bands at the St Patricks Plains camera sites were removed and replaced with the spiky bands, with a further six bands still to be removed and swapped over. This transition will help reduce the moisture-trapping issues associated with plastic collars while maintaining an effective climbing deterrent. This work is made possible by the Saving Threatened Species Grant, funded by NRE Tasmania.

### **Hamilton native plant nursery updates**

Propagation work at the nursery remains in full swing, with Nursery Manager Karen continuing to prick out seedlings. She's being supported by Lorraine and Meagan (Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens staff) who have come on board to assist during the busy propagation season, along with volunteer Daniel. Irrigation has also now been installed in the shade house, improving efficiency and supporting seedling establishment during this high-demand period.



Figure 4. Shade house irrigation installed!

#### **Poatina intake restoration**

DCP has secured an additional \$20,000 from Hydro Tasmania to support restoration works near the Poatina intake within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. A site inspection in late November confirmed the key degradation areas and the earthworks required to prevent ongoing unauthorised camping and recreational vehicle access. The site plan has been completed, with the approach focussed on using sediment stockpiled onsite (from Hydro Tasmania's periodic intake clean-outs) to reshape and rehabilitate impacted areas and adjust access points, making informal campsites less accessible and directing visitors to established facilities at Arthurs Lake. Using onsite material also provides a biosecurity advantage by reducing the risk of introducing weeds or pathogens through imported fill.

The site was already showing signs of natural recruitment from the local seedbank, so it is anticipated that exclusion-focused earthworks, supported by local seed broadcasting, will be sufficient for vegetation to re-establish. Monitoring is recommended later in the year to confirm regeneration, with contingency for infill planting if recruitment is limited, using plants grown at the Hamilton Native Plant Nursery.

## *Weed management programs*

*Strategic Actions 4.4 Continue the program of weed reduction in the Central Highlands, and 4.7 Support and assist practical programs that address existing environmental problems and improve the environment.*

The weed treatment season is now well underway, following an improvement in weather conditions throughout December and January.

Ground crews have sprayed almost all gorse along the Interlaken Road roadsides, with the remaining section scheduled to be completed next week. Crews noted that gorse in this area is being heavily browsed and will be monitoring whether this has any impact on herbicide efficacy and overall treatment outcomes.



*Figure 5. Gorse spraying along Interlaken Road.*

Belchers Road has also been treated by the ground crew. The northern section is experiencing a significant foxglove infestation, which continues to be a major issue across the area. In response to the extent of foxglove infestation in this region, a community workshop will be delivered in Maydena, facilitated by Enviro-dynamics, to provide information on foxglove management, its recent listing as a declared weed, and landholder obligations. Local residents will receive a mailout advising the workshop date and detail.

Enviro-dynamics has received funding through NRE's Weed Action Fund to undertake this foxglove project, with DCP partnering in delivery. As part of this work, DCP will be completing extensive mapping of foxglove occurrences alongside coordinated treatment across the Central Highlands, Derwent Valley, and Brighton regions. This will improve understanding of distribution and support prioritisation of ongoing control efforts.

State Growth roadside spraying along the Lyell Highway is also progressing. The Hamilton to Ouse section has been completed, Gretna township has been sprayed, and the section between Hamilton and Gretna is being completed today (13/01/2026). With remaining operational days, the team will continue west of Ouse and extend coverage as far as time and conditions allow.

In the few days prior to Christmas, crews worked at Dee Lagoon and Tarraleah treating broom and holly. Conditions were chilly, with snowfall recorded during operations, making for a white Christmas in the highlands.



Figure 6. Dense broom infestations at Dee Lagoon getting obliterated by the crew.

This week, the team will be in the Waddamana area to treat Californian thistle at the Cattle Hill Wind Farm and undertake follow-up ragwort control across the broader Waddamana region. Follow-up is planned around the power station and within the Ouse River bed, where ongoing treatment has been conducted over multiple years. Following this, crews will move into nearby forestry coupes where ragwort infestations have been reported, to assess extent and implement control where required.

## *Community engagement*

### **Great Lake chemical storage cabinet – Cattle Hill grant**

Following last month's concrete pour for the Great Lake Weed Warriors chemical storage cabinet, the facility at the Great Lake Community Centre (Miena) is now being fitted out for operation. The cabinet has been stocked with herbicide and associated dispensing supplies, consistent with the project intent to provide the local community with weed control chemicals, spray bottles and personal protective equipment (PPE).

To support safe use, the cabinet has also been supplied with the relevant Safety Data Sheets and record-keeping materials to support the dispensing log system. In the next site visit, we will

install weed ID brochures and QR codes to direct users to guidance on appropriate control methods for priority weeds in their area, aligning with the project's planned community-facing promotion and education approach.

To launch and build community confidence in the system, we will also run an Adopt-a-Shore community working bee and workshop in Miena in February, which will include practical demonstrations of weed treatment by DCP crew and a walkthrough of how the cabinet will operate (including how community members can access supplies and the associated safety requirements).

Yours sincerely,

The Derwent Catchment Team

*Key Contacts:*

Josie Kelman (CEO) 0427 044 700

Eve Lazarus (Deputy CEO) 0429 170 048

Todd Holliday (Works Manager) 0428 192 728

Karen Phillips (Nursery Manager) 0400 039 303

Ella Weston (Weed program coordinator/NRM facilitator) 0400 953 220

## 20. OPERATIONAL MATTERS ARISING (STRATEGIC THEME – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT)

### Encourage economic viability within the municipality

- 5.1 Encourage expansion in the business sector and opening of new market opportunities
- 5.2 Support the implementation of the Southern Highlands Irrigation Scheme
- 5.3 Continue with the Highlands Tasmania and Bushfest branding
- 5.4 Encourage the establishment of alternative industries to support job creation and increase permanent residents
- 5.5 Promote our area's tourism opportunities, destinations and events
- 5.6 Support existing businesses to continue to grow and prosper
- 5.7 Develop partnerships with State Government, industry and regional bodies to promote economic and employment opportunities
- 5.8 Work with the community to further develop tourism in the area

### 20.1 DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

#### RESOLUTION 10/01.2026/C

**Moved:** Cr J Honner

**Seconded:** Cr R Cassidy

**THAT** the Development & Environmental Services Report be received.

**CARRIED**

#### For the Motion

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffitt

**REPORT BY** Kathy Bradburn, Senior Administration

### PLANNING PERMITS ISSUED UNDER DELEGATION

The following planning permits have been issued under delegation during the past month.

#### NO PERMIT REQUIRED

DA NO.	APPLICANT	LOCATION	PROPOSAL
2025/74	Spectran Group	4079 Lyell Highway, Gretna	Land Spreading of Liquid Fish Waste
2025/73	Spectran Group	749 Rotherwood Road, Lower Marshes	Land Spreading of Liquid Fish Waste
2025/68	W Handbury	2 Watkins Road, Tods Corner	Outbuilding
2025/69	C R McIntosh & D M Mcintosh	16 Anglers Crescent, MIENA	Dwelling

**PERMITTED**

DA NO.	APPLICANT	LOCATION	PROPOSAL
2025/63	HBV Architects	37-39A Patrick Street, Bothwell	Amenities Block (Toilets)

**DISCRETIONARY**

DA NO.	APPLICANT	LOCATION	PROPOSAL
2025/61	E Datlen	58 Patrick Street, Bothwell	Dwelling
2025/62	Bothwell Country Womans Association	13-15 Dalrymple Street, Bothwell	Outbuilding (Shipping Container)
2025/65	V J King, G P Szalman	134 Ellendale Road, Westerway	Dwelling & Outbuilding
2025/58	Design East Pty Ltd - Monty East	444 Jones River Road, Ellendale	Visitor Accommodation

**ANIMAL CONTROL****Dog Management Policy Review**

The Dog Management Policy is currently out for public comment with submissions closing on **11<sup>th</sup> February 2026**. Advertisements have appeared in the Mercury Newspaper and New Norfolk News and also sent to the Highland Digest. Other advertising includes Council's Website & Facebook Page, Council Offices and posters placed in local businesses throughout the municipality.

**Statistics**

Total Number of Dogs Registered in 2024/2025 Financial Year – 966

Total Number of Kennel Licences Issued for 2024/2025 Financial Year – 52

2025/2026 Dog Registration Renewal have been issued and were due by 31 July 2025.

<b>Statistics as of 09 January 2026</b>	
Number of Dogs Impounded during last month	0
Number of Dogs Currently Registered	939
Number of Dogs Pending Re-Registration	10
Number of Kennel Licence Renewals Issued	35

## 21. OPERATIONAL MATTERS ARISING (STRATEGIC THEME – GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP)

### **Provide governance and leadership in an open, transparent, accountable and responsible manner in the best interests of our community**

- 6.1 Ensure Council fulfils its legislative and governance responsibilities and its decision making is supported by sustainable policies and procedures
- 6.2 Ensure that Council members have the resources and skills development opportunities to effectively fulfil their responsibilities
- 6.3 Ensure appropriate management of risk associated with Council's operations and activities
- 6.4 Provide a supportive culture that promotes the well-being of staff and encourages staff development and continuous learning
- 6.5 Provide advocacy on behalf of the community and actively engage government and other organisations in the pursuit of community priorities
- 6.6 Consider Council's strategic direction in relation to resource sharing with neighbouring councils and opportunities for mutual benefit
- 6.7 Support and encourage community participation and engagement
- 6.8 Ensure that customers receive quality responses that are prompt, accurate and fair
- 6.9 Council decision making will be always made in open council except where legislative or legal requirements determine otherwise.

### 21.1 INQUIRY LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL REFORM

#### **RESOLUTION 11/01.2026/C**

**Moved:** Cr R Cassidy

**Seconded:** Deputy Mayor J Allwright

**THAT** Council note the draft response to the Federal Government House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport inquiry into Local Government Funding, once further comments are received from Councillors the draft response will be amended and forwarded to all councillor prior to sending.

**CARRIED**

#### **For the Motion**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffitt

**REPORT BY** Stephen Mackey, General Manager

**Attachment** - Submission of the LGAT dated 31 May 2024 in response to the previous inquiry.

## **DISCUSSION**

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport has commenced a new enquiry into the funding and financial suitability of local governments in Australia.

The committee is examining the financial relationship between local government and other levels of government in Australia, with an emphasis on funding mechanisms and fiscal sustainability.

The inquiry aims to map funding received by local government, including from the Australian Government and state/territory governments. The Committee will also be exploring barriers to infrastructure service delivery and funding for emergency and disaster recovery. It will look at how councils attract and retain skilled workers, the barriers to security, and the impact of labour hire practices.

The committee will consider if existing funding mechanisms are addressing the evolving responsibilities of local government across Tasmania.

Evidence provided to the committee's previous inquiry into Local Government Sustainability during the 47<sup>th</sup> Parliament by the Local Government Association of Tasmania will be considered as part of this new inquiry.

The committee would welcome any updated Local Government Association of Tasmania views on any of the attached terms of reference. We encourage you to make a submission to the inquiry by close of business Tuesday 3 February 2026. It is preferred that submissions are uploaded electronically, through: - [www.aph.gov.au/Committee/Submissions](http://www.aph.gov.au/Committee/Submissions).

Inquiry into local government funding- Terms of Reference

The House of representatives Standing Committee on regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport will examine the financial relationship between local government and other levels of government in Australia, with a particular emphasis on funding mechanisms and financial sustainability. In doing so, the inquiry should;

### **1. Interactions between Governments**

- i. Assess the nature and scale of Australian, state and territory government funding provided to local government, both directly and through Commonwealth-state agreements.
- ii. Examine the legislative and policy frameworks underpinning Commonwealth financial support to local government.

### **2. Identification of All funding Sources**

- i. Identify and map all sources of funding received by local government from the Australia Government and state/territory governments, including:
  - a. Untied grants (e.g., Financial Assistance Grants).
  - b. Tied/specific-purpose grants and project-based programs, co-contribution requirements and competitive grant processes.

- c. Revenue sharing arrangements (e.g., stamp duty, rate capping subsidies, GST-related disbursements where applicable).
  - d. Emergency, disaster recovery and resilience funding.
  - e. One-off or ad hoc funding streams.
- ii. Examine local government own-source revenue (such as rates, fees, charges and commercial activities).

### **3. Impacts and Effectiveness**

- i. Evaluate how funding arrangements, including indexation freezing, influences the financial sustainability, service delivery capacity and infrastructure investment of local governments.
- ii. Consider whether existing funding mechanisms are addressing the evolving responsibilities of local governments.
- iii. Identify barriers to infrastructure service delivery including trends in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce, impediments to security for local government workers and impacts of labour hire practitioners.
- iv. Explore opportunities to improve productivity and coordination of local government.

### **4. Previous Inquiry**

- i. Consider evidence provided to the House of representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport of the 47<sup>th</sup> Parliament Inquiry into Local Government Sustainability.

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Inquiry into Local Government sustainability  
Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport.

By email: [www.aph.gov.au/Committee/Submissions](http://www.aph.gov.au/Committee/Submissions).

### **Inquiry into local government sustainability**

### **Rating of wind and solar farms and rate equivalent payments**

Currently rural councils in Tasmania are disadvantaged in four ways by the State Government:

- The first relates to the payment of rates by owners and operators of wind and solar farms. Tasmania state government has not yet legislated for the PiLoR (Payment in Lieu of Rates).

- The Valuation Division has undertaken a review of the relevant codes for the rating of these but the process to have revaluations undertaken is very slow.
- We also find that the owners of crown land are allowing commercial activities such as motel complexes to be built or operated as commercial enterprises on their land, and then through a lease agreement, provide these commercial activities with a competitive advantage over similar developments, by the inclusion of an exemption for rating. This is in no way compliant with national competition principles.
- The loss of income from the rate equivalent payments made by Hydro-Electric Corporation to the State government, small rural councils are further disadvantaged.

This matter has been the subject of a motion to a Local Government Association of Tasmania general meeting and has also been communicated to the relevant government agency, but to date no action has been commenced.

### **Provision of medical services rural areas**

Many rural councils are burdened with the cost of helping to provide medical services in their municipal area. The Central Highlands Council currently has a contract with a medical provider so that a medical service can exist in Bothwell, for this we pay a substantial contract payment, plus the provision of a council residence at no cost.

We are also charged with providing a residence for the use by Ambulance Tasmania to house the paramedics who provide the service from Ouse. Ambulance Tasmania is part of Tasmania Health Service. Shouldn't they be paying for accommodation?

Councils are also currently charged with having to make substantial contributions to the Local SES for the purchase of vehicles and for operational equipment. This is in the process of changing and will require Local Government to hand over free of charge all vehicles and equipment. We will still need to make an annual monetary contribution in the order of \$10,000. These are State services.

### **Library Services online access centres**

The State government is currently in the process of transferring the provision of online access centres to councils. This may not seem significant but in some rural areas there may be several facilities. The Government will provide some ongoing funding on transfer, not indexed, for the continuation of the service for possibly 5 years, but after that it will have to be funded by ratepayers. Councils will have to budget for on-going maintenance and utilities charges for these facilities.

### **Bus Services**

Rural communities who have minimal medical services means many residents must travel long distances to major cities to access medical care. Some medical conditions or procedures will not allow them to drive. Many of these older residents are not confident driving the distance to and from Hobart or returning in the dark on rural roads or driving in city traffic, especially during rush hours. Therefore, a bus is there only option.

In former times, Miena through Bothwell to Hobart had a bus service that ran more than 75 years, but was suspended, resulting in more commuter traffic and congestion in the metropolitan areas. In recent times, the twice a week service for two of our townships has been reduced to once per fortnight. We have now been advised that if we wish this to return to the two days per fortnight we will have to pay.

Further enquiries were made about the use of the school bus run by our elderly residents in an endeavour to have a more viable service to cater for their medical and social needs. This option we were advised is not permissible as it is for school students only, though previously it was acceptable for students of all ages to travel on the bus service.

### **Heavy Vehicle Registration Fees**

This has been set at \$1.5 million, since its inception. The Tasmania State government have this year increased the payment to \$3.5 Million, but have stated that it is for one year only.

### **Grants Federal and state**

Most of these grants are disbursed on a competitive basis meaning small councils must compete with the large city councils, that have significantly more staff to research and process these applications. It would appear to be a better process if the grants were split so that there were allocations for large city councils, medium sized councils and small councils, giving all a chance to obtain funding.

### **Grants Commission Methodology**

The State Grants commission has been attempting to make the methodology used for the calculation of the grants to local government more understandable, to no avail.

The only thing that has been fully understood is the complete lack of funding provided to the relevant state grants commission by the federal government. It appears that this funding has been reducing over the years and that it is well short of the necessary 1% of Federal revenues.

The State grants commission has made a change to the methodology for the residential population. That being a change by calling it a "service population", which includes a percentage for non-residents (Holiday Homeowners), which is now being phased in.

There should also be a calculation to cover loss of income, from exempt properties. By this I mean not only, those exempt under section 87 of the Local Government Act 1993, but also those exempt as they are owned by the Government such as government business enterprises or commercial developers who have a lease agreement to occupy crown land and who are provided an exemption from the payment of rates within the crown lease.

While councils are often best positioned to deliver many public services with their local knowledge and understanding, they are not funded sufficiently to do so.

This fact has been acknowledged by the current Federal Government, who made an election commitment to provide 'fair increases' to Financial Assistance Grants, recognising the key role Financial Assistance Grants play in supporting a sustainable local government sector. This is long overdue, as over the past 30 years Financial Assistance Grants have slipped from 1

percent of Commonwealth taxation revenue, to just half a per cent. This decline has been most strongly felt in regional, rural and remote councils, where Financial Assistance Grants often make up a much higher component of their annual operating revenue. It seems perverse that this decline in Federal Assistance Grants has occurred in the period when the range of services delivered by councils because of cost shifting from higher levels of government and changing community expectations has proportionally grown.

It is critical that this inquiry recommends that the untied and non-competitive funding be restored to at least one per cent of Commonwealth taxation revenue.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Mackey  
General Manager

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## 21.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL REFORM

### **RESOLUTION 12/01.2026/C**

**Moved:** Cr A Archer

**Seconded:** Cr D Meacheam

**THAT** Council note the draft response to the consultation process regarding proposed amendments to the conduct of local government elections once further comments are received from councillors the draft res[ponce will be amended and forwarded to all councillors prior to sending.

**CARRIED 7/1**

#### **For the Motion**

Mayor L Triffitt; Deputy Mayor J Allwright; Cr A Archer; Cr R Cassidy; Cr J Hall; Cr J Honner; Cr D Meacheam and Cr S Triffett

#### **Against the Motion**

Cr R Cassidy

**REPORT BY** Stephen Mackey, General Manager

**Attachments** – [Councillors Allowances Information Sheet and Legislative Council Elections 2025 Handbook \(Page7-9\)](#)

## **DISCUSSION**

Reform1      Reduce prescription in the statutory framework to enable the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to approve the electoral process.

**PROCEEDING AS PROPOSED**

**Council supports this reform**

- Reform 2 Enable the Tasmanian Electoral Commission to approve procedures for voting, including by telephone and electronic means, for interstate and overseas electors and electors with impediments to ordinary participation, or for other classes of person prescribed by regulation.

PROCEEDING WITH REFORM

**Council supports this reform**

- Reform 3 Legislate that the Tasmanian Electoral Commission is required to approve procedures in accordance with universal franchise principles, namely all electors, including electors with additional barriers to participation, are to be afforded an opportunity to vote in an independent, secret and verifiable manner.

PROCESSING AS PROPOSED

**Council supports this reform**

- Reform 4 Require the Electoral Commissioner to publish after each election a statement on the implementation of the accessibility principles, after information, including relevant statistics and initiatives undertaken to promote universal participation in the election.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

- Reform 5 Require that a person lodging a notice of nomination must have it supported by 30 electors entitled to vote in the relevant election.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council sees no reason to change the current nomination process. There are 25,816 persons enrolled for the division of Derwent were as Central Highlands had 2,499 enrolled at the last election in 2022. If we consider, the service population for Central Highlands as per the grants commission then the number is 6,239.**

**Considering the above population details for the Legislative Council the numbers base on the proposal for this council would be as follows.**

$$\underline{30 / 2499 = 1.22\%}$$

$$\underline{30 / 6239 = .48\%}$$

**This would mean that a person nominating for the legislative council would require the following number of electors:**

$$\underline{25,816 \times 1.22\% = 315}$$

$$\underline{25816 \times .48\% = 124}$$

**The percentage of voters required to make a legislative council nomination valid is 0.038% yet for the Central Highlands it will be 1.22%**

**Bringing it into line with the Legislative Council percentage it should be one (1) person to be a valid nomination or change the process for the Legislative council to conform with the proposal for Council elections this would mean 315 for a valid legislative council nomination.**

**Legislative council, they are required to have as a minimum 10 electors for a nomination to be valid. This is only for a single candidate not one endorsed by a political party. This is as per the Legislative Council nomination handbook pages 7 & 8.**

**The term of office for the legislative council is 6 years local government is 4 years. Legislative Councillors remuneration is \$171,000 and Central Highlands councillors current allowance is \$11,893.**

Reform 6      Transfer the responsibility for the maintenance of the General Manager's Roll to the Tasmanian Electoral Commission.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 7      Amend the definition of "occupier" for enrolment purposes, to refer to actual occupation and use, and clarify that tenants and licensees are occupiers for the purpose of the Act.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 8      Strengthen verification requirements for application for enrolment on the General Manager's Roll.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 9      Expressly prohibit dual enrolment, and require a person enrolled on both the House of Assembly roll and the General Manager's Roll to be removed from the latter.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council seeks clarification as to how this will affect rural properties who currently can nominate a director to vote on behalf of the company as well as voting as an owner occupier on the House of Assembly Role. The provisions in question relate to section 255 Voting by corporations and section 256 Maximum number of votes.**

Reform 10 Require new candidates to complete a pre-nomination training course approved by the Director of Local Government.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

Council supports this reform

Reform 11 Require that the Tasmanian Electoral Commission provides all people submitting a notice of nomination the opportunity to provide a candidate information statement (in an approved format, providing prescribed information) and that the Commission is to publish candidate information through appropriate means.

REFORM WILL NOT PROCEED

Reform 12 Enable the Director of Local Government to publish council performance statements during the election periods.

REFORM WILL NOT PROCEED

Reform 13 Establish that nomination by a registered party is to be included in the information published by the Tasmanian Electoral Commission and printed on the ballot paper.

REFORM WILL NOT PROCEED

Council is of the view that this reform should be proceeded with

Reform 14 Provide for candidates whose nomination form is not lodged by a registered party to request to be identified with a group name.

THE TASMANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS DETERMINED NOT TO PROCEED WITH THIS REFORM

Reform 15 Introduce new legislation on the dissemination of misleading and deceptive statements (corresponding to the Electoral Act Review Final Report and the amended Section 197 of the Electoral Act 2004).

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 16 Remove the general restriction on publishing a candidate's name or image without their consent.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council does not support this reform**

Reform 17 Clarify the definition of electoral advertising.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

- Reform 18 Provided that only a candidate, intending candidate, or a nominated person may incur electoral expenditure; expenditure by others to promote or procure election will be an offence.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

- Reform 19 Institute authorisation requirements for electoral advertising and associated material.

REFORM WIL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

- Reform 20 Replace advertising expenditure limits with a general expenditure limit, with reference to the Legislative Council expenditure cap in the Electoral Disclosure and Funding Act 2023.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

- Reform 21 Require that a candidate is to report expenditure made on their behalf in their electoral expenditure return, in the same manner as personal expenditure. The present requirement to attribute, in full, to each candidate featured in joint advertising will be retained.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

- Reform 22 Prohibit any person from incurring any expenditure for or on behalf of a registered party with a view to promoting or procuring the election of a candidate or intending candidate.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

- Reform 23 Maintain the \$50 threshold for the disclosure of gifts and benefits and extend this requirement from incumbent councillors to all candidates, who will be required to lodge donation returns with the Tasmanian Electoral Commission.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 24 Provide that it is an offence for a person other than a candidate or intending candidate to accept a gift or benefit for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate, or for the dominant purpose of influencing the way electors vote in an election; and that it is an offence to make a gift or donation to a person other than a candidate or intending candidate for this purpose.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 25 Provide that it is an offence for a councillor, intending candidate or candidate, at any time, to accept a donation for the purpose of promoting or procuring the election of a candidate or intending candidate at a local government election:

- over \$50, including services or goods valued in kind, without recording the basic details of that donor
- over \$50 in cash
- over \$50 from a foreign donor.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 26 Provide that a local government election or by-election may not be held such that the polling period overlaps the date of a Tasmanian or Australian Government parliamentary election.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 27 Provide the Tasmanian Electoral Commission with powers of investigation.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 28 Align electoral offences and sanctions with those in the Electoral Act 2004.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 29 Provide a statutory caretaker framework, applying from the notice of election to the date of the issue of the certificate of election for all elections other than by-elections and countbacks.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 30 Provide during the caretaker period, prohibit a council from making any major policy or financial decisions, namely decisions:

- relating to the appointment, reappointment, remuneration or termination of a general manager (except acting appointments)
- committing the council to expenditure greater than 1 per cent of general revenue or \$100,000 (whichever is greater)
- directing council resources to influence voting
- relating to matters that could reasonably be deferred, except for statutory or routine operational decisions.

REFORM TO PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 31 Provide that during the caretaker period, it is an offence for a council to:

- publish any material promoting any candidate or group of candidates, or seeking to influence voters
- publish material related to the election other than information promoting participation or official electoral process information
- make council resources available to benefit one candidate over others

REFORM TO PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 32 Provide that major policy or financial decisions of a council during the caretaker period are of no effect, and provide that person who incur loss or damage due to an ineffectual decision of a council, who act in good faith, are entitled to recover compensation from the council.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Reform 33 Increase the proportion of electors signing a petition to compel a council to hold an elector poll to 20 per cent; while restricting the matters about which an elector poll may be held to matters with a legitimate connection to the exercise of a council's functions or powers or to the incorporation of the council. As determined by the council.

REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council supports this reform**

Of the 33 reform proposals we make comment on the following:

- Reform 9 Expressly prohibit dual enrolment, and require a person enrolled on both the House of Assembly roll and the General Manager's Roll to be removed from the latter.

## REFORM WILL PROCEED

Council seeks clarification as to how this will affect rural properties who currently can nominate a director to vote on behalf of the company as well as voting as an owner occupier on the House of Assembly Role. The provisions in question relate to section 255 Voting by corporations and section 256 Maximum number of votes.

- Reform 5 Require that a person lodging a notice of nomination must have it supported by 30 electors entitled to vote in the relevant election.

## REFORM WILL PROCEED

**Council sees no reason to change the current nomination process. There are 25,816 persons enrolled for the division of Derwent were as Central Highlands had 2,499 enrolled at the last election in 2022. If we consider, the service population for Central Highlands as per the grants commission then the number is 6,239.**

**Considering the above population details for the Legislative Council the numbers base on the proposal for this council would be as follows.**

$$30 / 2499 = 1.22\%$$

$$30 / 6239 = .48\%$$

**This would mean that a person nominating for the legislative council would require the following number of electors:**

$$25,816 \times 1.22\% = 315$$

$$25816 \times .48\% = 124$$

**The percentage of voters required to make a legislative council nomination valid is 0.038% yet for the Central Highlands it will be 1.22% Bringing it into line with the Legislative Council percentage it should be one (1) person to be a valid nomination or change the process for the Legislative council to conform with the proposal for Council elections this would mean 315 for a valid legislative council nomination.**

**Legislative council, they are required to have as a minimum 10 electors for a nomination to be valid. This is only for a single candidate not one endorsed by a political party. This is as per the Legislative Council nomination handbook pages 7 & 8.**

**The term of office for the legislative council is 6 years local government is 4 years. Legislative Councillors remuneration is \$171,000 and Central Highlands councillors' current allowance is \$11,893.**

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**22. CONSIDERATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEMS TO THE AGENDA**

Nil.

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**23. CLOSURE**

Mayor Triffitt thanked everyone for their contribution and declared the meeting closed at 7.23 p.m.



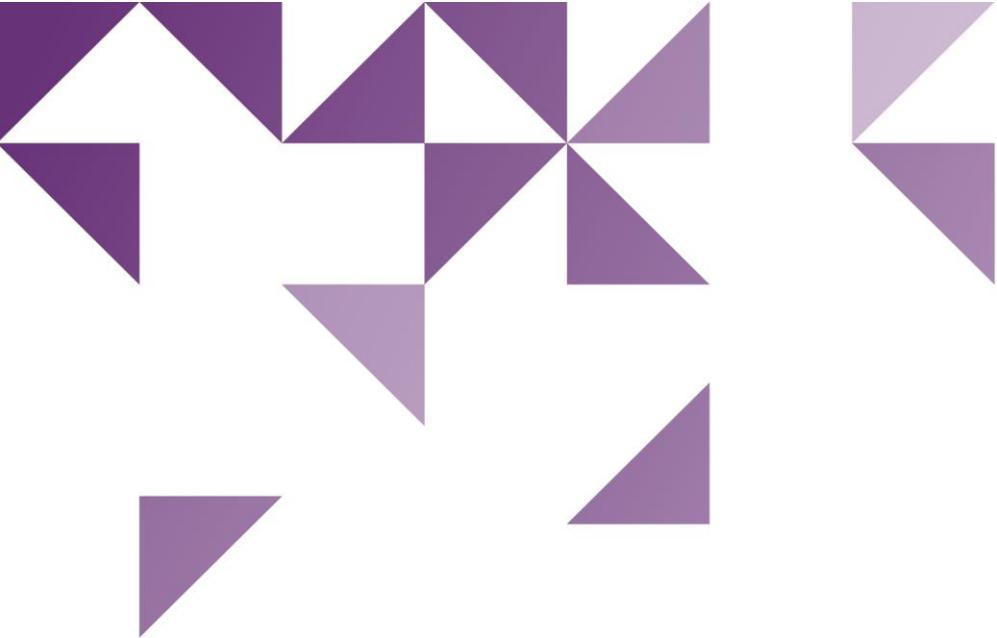
**Local Government Gifts and Donations  
Consultation paper**

2 February 2026

Have your say:  
Misconduct risks and the  
regulation of gifts and donations  
in local government



INTEGRITY  
COMMISSION  
TASMANIA



The objectives of the Integrity Commission are to:

- improve the standard of conduct, propriety and ethics of public authorities in Tasmania
- enhance public confidence that misconduct by public officers will be appropriately investigated and dealt with, and
- enhance the quality of, and commitment to, ethical conduct by adopting a strong, educative, preventative and advisory role.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land upon which we work. We recognise and value Aboriginal histories, knowledge and lived experiences, and commit to being culturally inclusive and respectful in our working relationships with all Aboriginal people.

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This report and further information about the Commission can be found on the website at:  
[www.integrity.tas.gov.au](http://www.integrity.tas.gov.au)

GPO Box 822  
Hobart Tasmania 7001  
Phone: 1300 720 289  
Email: [contact@integrity.tas.gov.au](mailto:contact@integrity.tas.gov.au)

**Local government consultation paper**

**Have your say: Misconduct risks and the regulation of gifts and donations in local government**

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## Executive summary

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As part of the Integrity Commission's function to uphold, promote and ensure adherence to standards of conduct, propriety and ethics in public authorities, we undertook a research project examining the offer and acceptance of gifts and donations in local government. We identified that the current regulatory framework presents a number of misconduct risks, including a lack of consistency across policies and procedures and a lack of awareness about the potential impacts on good governance when local government employees, elected members or candidates accept gifts and donations.

The Commission has decided to release a consultation paper. The paper documents the findings of the research project and seeks submissions from the local government sector, the public sector more broadly and members of the public on the potential misconduct risks that arise in the context of gifts and donations in local government and whether and how changes should be made to the current regulatory framework. We aim to ensure that these risks are communicated to the public and to promote discussion about potential solutions.

This paper includes the following submission prompts:

1. Do you have any general comments or observations about the misconduct risks of offering and accepting gifts and donations in local government?
2. How serious do you think these risks are?
3. Is the current legal and regulatory framework that governs gifts and donations in local government adequate? Why/why not?
4. Would you support the introduction of a personal interests return scheme for elected members and/or employees?
5. Do you support the government's proposal to require that all electoral candidates declare gifts and donations received during an electoral period?
6. Should other council officials – including staff, contractors and subcontractors, trainees and volunteers – be subject to a code of conduct?
7. Should the legislation/code of conduct prescribe additional monitoring procedures? Do you have any general comments or observations about what those procedures should be?
8. Do you support the introduction of a model gifts and donations policy? If so, what should be included?
9. Should the policy apply to both elected members and other council officials? Should there be separate policies for each?
10. Is the current declaration threshold of \$50 appropriate? Why/why not?
11. Should gifts and donations in local government be regulated differently? Should they be defined?
12. Should the definitions of **gift** and **donation** be consistent across all councils? Why/why not?
13. Should elected members and other council officials be subject to different obligations? Why/why not?

## 1. Introduction

The Integrity Commission (the Commission) is an independent statutory authority established by the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* (Tas).

The Commission's objectives are to:

- ▼ improve the standard of conduct, propriety and ethics of public authorities in Tasmania
- ▼ enhance public confidence that misconduct by public officers will be appropriately investigated and dealt with, and
- ▼ enhance the quality of, and commitment to, ethical conduct by adopting a strong, educative, preventative and advisory role.

Section 31 of the *Integrity Commission Act 2009* (Tas) sets out the Commission's educative, preventative and advisory functions. This includes a function to 'undertake research into matters related to ethical conduct' and to 'take such steps as the Integrity Commission considers necessary to uphold, promote and ensure adherence to standards of conduct, propriety and ethics in public authorities'.

As part of that function, the Commission has decided to release a consultation paper seeking submissions from the local government sector, the public sector more broadly and members of the public on the potential misconduct risks that arise when local government employees, elected members or candidates accept gifts and donations and whether and how changes should be made to the current regulatory framework. We aim to ensure that these risks are communicated to the public and to promote discussion about potential solutions.

The outcomes sought are that:

- ▼ statewide, good practice gifts and donations policies that apply to all council officials are implemented
- ▼ through a consultative process, the recommendations have widespread support from councils
- ▼ statewide, good practice gifts and donations templates are developed
- ▼ policies are regularly reviewed and up to date
- ▼ the distinction between gifts and donations is understood and reflected in policies
- ▼ council officials understand their responsibilities and the process for declaring offers of gifts or donations
- ▼ council officials understand the principles that underlie gift policies
- ▼ the 'thanks is enough' message is reinforced
- ▼ council officials are encouraged to report instances of alleged misconduct, and
- ▼ councils are supported to implement robust monitoring and oversight systems.

## 2. Background

This consultation paper documents the findings of a research project (Project Twelvetrees) undertaken by the Commission that examined the offer and acceptance of gifts and donations in local government. The project drew on earlier work on this and related issues.

The Commission's previous relevant work in this area includes an own-motion investigation into gifts and benefits in the state service (Operation Kilo)<sup>1</sup> and a research report on the management of conflicts of interest between local councillors and property developers (Project Fisher).<sup>2</sup>

The Commission has also audited state service organisations' public gift registers. The audit reviewed compliance with the gifts and benefits declaration and approval requirements introduced by the whole-of-government *Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy* (Project Vulcan).<sup>3</sup>

Project Fisher arose from a Commission investigation which found that a local government candidate had accepted a substantial campaign donation from a developer; there was no requirement for the candidate to declare this.<sup>4</sup> This is because, while councillors are subject to some donation and gift declaration requirements under section 56B of the *Local Government Act 1993* (Tas) (LG Act) when they are in office, there is no requirement for candidates to declare donations/gifts before they are elected.

While there has been media reporting about, and detailed changes to, legislation governing electoral donations to parliamentary candidates in Tasmania, there has not been an equivalent focus in the media or by the Commission on local government.

Project Twelvetrees examined the legal and regulatory framework governing gifts and donations in local government, including codes of conduct and council policies. It also conducted a compliance audit of publicly available council gift registers.

Our assessment was that there is considerable uniformity in most councils' gifts and benefits policies. Most policies do not distinguish between gifts and donations and so do not deal with each independently. Many gift policies combine broad policy statements but do not have a clear process for employees and elected members to follow.

The small number of declarations in the gift registers also suggests that council officials may be accepting gifts and donations without reporting them as required. The fact that so few employee declarations are recorded raises questions about whether it is appropriate that employees escape the public scrutiny that councillors are subject to.

Overall, the project identified that gifts and donations appear to be a risk factor for good governance in local government.

### 3. How to make a submission

We invite you to submit your views on misconduct risks in the regulation of gifts and donations in local government.

This consultation paper discusses key topics covered in Project Twelvetrees. Each topic is accompanied by prompts to assist you in making a submission. The prompt questions are included in the paper to help you, but your submission does not need to address all or any of them.

You are also welcome to highlight relevant issues for consideration beyond these topics.

We will read and carefully consider all submissions. If you choose to respond to specific prompts or content, please clearly show in your submission which parts you are referring to as this will help our analysis. We will use these submissions, along with our research to date, to prepare a short final paper with recommendations to the relevant bodies such as the Local Government Association of Tasmania and the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Office of Local Government.

We will treat all submissions as public unless you ask us to treat your submission as confidential or to not publish your name (and/or the name of your organisation).

We will not publish submissions that we believe are defamatory or offensive. If your submission includes information that could identify other people, then we may not publish all or part of that submission.

Copyright in submissions remains with the author(s), not with the Commission.

The deadline for submissions is 5:00 pm, Monday 2 March 2026.

You can provide your submission in writing via one of the following options:

- ▼ Email [contact@integrity.tas.gov.au](mailto:contact@integrity.tas.gov.au)
- ▼ Post Local government gifts and donations consultation paper  
Integrity Commission Tasmania  
GPO Box 822  
Hobart TAS 7001

Queries about the submission process can be made via email to [contact@integrity.tas.gov.au](mailto:contact@integrity.tas.gov.au).

## Accessibility of submissions

We understand that not all people or groups are equally placed to access and understand information. We want to make sure that our information is accessible and easily understood by people with diverse communication needs.

If making a written submission is not accessible to you, please visit our accessibility page at [integrity.tas.gov.au/accessibility](https://integrity.tas.gov.au/accessibility) or phone 1300 720 289 to get advice on other ways to participate.

Where possible, please type your submission in plain English and provide it in Microsoft Word format or equivalent. The easiest way of making your submission is through our online portal.

## 4. Misconduct risks

As public officers, local government councillors and employees act on behalf of the community. They must act impartially in providing advice and in the decisions they make and ensure that they neither seek nor gain personal benefit from their position.<sup>5</sup> The offer and acceptance of gifts and donations, if not managed and monitored appropriately and transparently, gives rise to a number of risks to impartiality and public perceptions of impartiality, including:

- ▼ the perception that public officials might be unduly influenced or open to bribery
- ▼ people's tendency to feel a sense of indebtedness and a need to reciprocate when they are given something, even if the gift, benefit or hospitality is of a modest value
- ▼ the conflict of interest that could be created between a public official's duty and their personal interests because of the relationship that could form with the gift giver
- ▼ the possibility of benefiting some individuals or organisations through influenced or unjust decisions, while unfairly disadvantaging others
- ▼ the risk that a public official is compromised once they have accepted a gift (for example, they could be subject to threats of exposure unless they continue to provide preferable treatment to the giver), and
- ▼ the potential for an organisation's independence and reputation to be brought into disrepute.<sup>6</sup>

Some gift givers may be motivated by a sense of appreciation for work done. Others may seek privileged access to decision-makers and favourable consideration of their interests. But it can be difficult to distinguish an unobjectionable gift that is given as a token of thanks from a gift that is intended to win favour with the recipient. The benefit to the giver may not be obvious, particularly when the benefit does not occur until later.

The risks may be heightened at the local level for a number of reasons.

- ▼ By their nature, local councils directly affect their constituents' lives – whether it be in their roles as planning authorities and regulators or their responsibilities for community health, waste management, public spaces, animals and roads.
- ▼ It has been said that 'proximity to the people and the discretion that local officials have in exercising their functions can make local government highly vulnerable to corruption.'<sup>7</sup>
- ▼ Even when no improper advantage is sought, it may be difficult to dissuade members of the public from a longstanding community practice of giving gifts to council workers to show appreciation.

- ▼ Councils' core businesses of land planning, procurement, and licensing and permits are all key risk areas. Competition for limited council resources is high, so some constituents may see the offer of a gift to a council officer with discretionary power as a way to influence or prioritise decisions in their favour.
- ▼ Candidates for local government elections incur significantly lower campaign costs than state or federal candidates, so smaller donations can have a significant impact. Thus, even small donations may create a sense of obligation and 'implicit bargains of favourable treatment or a *culture* of delivering preferential treatment to moneyed interests.'<sup>8</sup>
- ▼ A recent phone survey of Tasmanian residents, *The Future of Local Government Review: Tasmanian Residents State-Wide Phone Survey Report*, supports the notion that residents have considerable contact with their local council. Just under half of the 1,000 survey respondents reported that they had direct contact with their local council in the previous 12 months (45%). The survey found an inverse correlation between the population of the local government area and direct contact with the local council. The smaller the population, the more likely it is that residents have direct contact with their council.<sup>9</sup>
- ▼ A high turnover of council chief executive officers and staff also creates difficulties in implementing and maintaining a culture of integrity.<sup>10</sup>

### Submission prompt

1. Do you have any general comments or observations about the misconduct risks of offering and accepting gifts and donations in local government?
2. How serious do you think these risks are?

## 5. Legal and regulatory framework

### 5.1. *Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulations 2025*

Sitting councillors must disclose the receipt of gifts and donations under section 56A of the *LG Act*. Section 56A provides that councillors must notify the general manager in writing and in accordance with the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2025 (Tas) (LGG Regulations)*. The wording of the provisions in both the *LG Act* and the *LGG Regulations* suggests that the councillor must receive the benefit directly. Under regulation 31 of the *LGG Regulations*, the threshold for disclosures is a monetary value of \$50 or a series of gifts with a combined monetary value of \$50 in a financial year.

The prescribed thresholds do not apply to employees and other council workers. Instead, for the most part, their responsibilities are set out in the gift policy and/or an employee code of conduct. Therefore, to the extent that these instruments conform with the legislation, other council workers are, in effect, subject to the same limits.

In its application, the legislation does not distinguish between a gift and a donation.

Perhaps the most common type of donation is an election campaign donation, but other donations may be made for a specific purpose. For example, an individual might donate to an employee's sporting club and expect favourable treatment in return. It may be impossible to trace donations to third-party recipients without a robust system of personal interest disclosures.

Unlike other Australian jurisdictions, Tasmania does not have a **personal interests return scheme** for elected members or employees, and there are no campaign donation disclosure requirements for local government candidates who are not sitting councillors. A personal interests return scheme requires that people in public office submit a record of their personal interests in such things as property, shares, additional paid employment, and associations with businesses or companies. It may also require the disclosure of a spouse's interests. Such schemes commonly require an initial return and an annual update.

The state government has indicated an intention to require that all electoral candidates declare gifts and donations received during an electoral period;<sup>11</sup> however, to date, the necessary amendments to the *LG Act* have not been implemented.

The general manager must keep a register of gifts and donations and make it available on the council's website. The register must be updated 'at least monthly'.<sup>12</sup> A media article from 2021 suggests that some councils may not be complying with this requirement, observing that '[m]ost Tasmanian councils are in breach of state government regulations that require monthly updates on their websites of all donations and gifts to councillors of more than \$50.'<sup>13</sup>

Beyond recording declarations, the *LG Act* does not require the general manager to monitor the offer and acceptance of gifts and donations.

Our audit examined declarations in gift registers up to the end of March 2024. It identified a total of just over 600 declarations in the publicly available gift registers. Two councils did not publish a gift register. The earliest record is dated August 2012 (before the requirement to publish a gift register was enacted), and the latest is March 2024.

However, the coverage across councils and across this period is very inconsistent. Few registers have met the legislative requirement to update the register 'at least monthly', although more than 60% were updated during the six months before the end date of the audit. A substantial number appear not to have been updated since 2022.

As might be expected, the 4 largest municipalities by population account for nearly 70% of the declared gifts. Given such patchy records, the numbers are not statistically significant. But it is clear that, apart from some of the larger municipalities, very few gifts are declared by councillors and even fewer by employees.

These findings suggest that the acceptance and declaration of gifts and donations should be subject to more robust monitoring.

The *LG Act* also imposes disclosure obligations for pecuniary interests, but only when the interest relates to a matter discussed at a council meeting.<sup>14</sup> A 'pecuniary interest' is one that is to do with money or financial matters. If a councillor has a pecuniary interest in a matter that comes before council, it must be declared at the meeting and the councillor must leave the meeting before the discussion begins.

A councillor has an interest if they, or a close associate, would expect to receive a pecuniary benefit or detriment if a matter was decided in a particular way.<sup>15</sup> A **close associate** includes a councillor's immediate family members and immediate family members of the spouse or partner of a councillor.<sup>16</sup> Similar obligations apply to council employees and the general manager under section 55 of the *LG Act*.

Respective councillor and employee codes of conduct separately impose requirements to disclose potential non-pecuniary conflicts of interest.<sup>17</sup>

## 5.2. Codes of conduct

Elected members are bound by codes of conduct that are mandated by section 28T of the *LG Act*. These codes of conduct mirror schedule 1 part 6 of the *Local Government (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2024* (Model Code) relating to gifts and benefits:

1. A councillor may accept an offer of a gift or benefit if it directly relates to the carrying out of the councillor's public duties, is appropriate in the circumstances and is not in contravention of relevant legislation.
2. A councillor must avoid situations in which a reasonable person would consider that a person or body, through the provisions of gifts or benefits, is securing, or attempting to secure, influence or a favour from the councillor or the council.

Although it is not a requirement of the *LG Act*, in some cases, other council officials – including staff, contractors and subcontractors, trainees and volunteers – are subject to separate codes of conduct.

The Model Code does not include a requirement to declare the receipt of gifts or donations, nor does it create a monitoring system.

### Submission prompt

3. Is the current legal and regulatory framework that governs gifts and donations in local government adequate? Why/why not?
4. Would you support the introduction of a personal interests return scheme for elected members and/or employees?
5. Do you support the government's proposal to require that all electoral candidates declare gifts and donations received during an electoral period?
6. Should other council officials – including staff, contractors and subcontractors, trainees and volunteers – be subject to a code of conduct?
7. Should the legislation/code of conduct prescribe additional monitoring procedures? Do you have any general comments or observations on what those procedures should be?

## 5.3. Gifts and donations policies

In addition to the above legislative and quasi-legislative instruments, most councils have specific policies for accepting gifts and benefits/donations. We audited these, as well as the registers, as part of our research project.

Twenty-four (of 29) local councils have publicly available gift policies. The other 5 councils deal with the receipt of gifts and benefits generically within their respective councillor and/or employee codes of conduct. Aside from minor differences in terminology and structure, the gift policies are similar in style and content:

- ▼ All policies include references to gifts and benefits, but nearly half do not refer to donations. Those that do, fail to differentiate between gifts and donations and, hence, do not deal with each independently.
- ▼ Most policies apply to **council officials**. This generally includes the mayor, councillors, council staff (including staff engaged through an employment agency), council committee members, volunteers and contractors.
- ▼ A small minority of councils have separate gift policies for council employees.
- ▼ Most policies set the disclosure threshold no higher than that prescribed by the *LG Act* (\$50).

### Submission prompt

8. Do you support the introduction of a model gifts and donations policy? If so, what should be included?
9. Should the policy apply to both elected members and other council officials? Should there be separate policies for each?
10. Is the current declaration threshold of \$50 appropriate? Why/why not?

## Defining gifts and donations

There is no legislative definition of either **gift** or **donation**. The *Macquarie Dictionary* defines **donation** as:

1. the act of presenting something as a gift.
2. a gift, as to a fund; a contribution.<sup>18</sup>

**Gift** is defined as:

1. something given; a present.
2. the act of giving.<sup>19</sup>

The essence of a donation is that, unlike a gift, it is given to benefit a specific purpose, such as a donation to a councillor's re-election campaign. For this consultation paper, **donation** refers to a financial donation and does not include such things as food or gift vouchers, which would be considered gifts.

Most policies define **gift** in essentially the same way, as 'a tangible item provided at no charge or a discounted price. Gifts may include, but are not limited to items such as cash, property (real or otherwise), goods and services made available at heavily discounted prices, alcohol, clothes, products, invitations to social functions and tickets to sporting, theatrical or music events.'<sup>20</sup>

The few policies that define **donation** mostly use definition 1 from the *Macquarie Dictionary*.

Most policies do not make a distinction between gifts and donations. However, a gift is not the same as a donation. As noted above, a donation is given for a specific purpose or cause. A gift may be given simply as a token of appreciation, with or without an expectation of reciprocal benefit.

The difference suggests that they should be regulated differently. Strict limits on accepting gifts may be appropriate, even to the extent of prohibiting them entirely. Indeed, it is arguable that there are no circumstances in which an individual employee should accept gifts for doing paid work.

However, there may be good reasons for allowing electoral donations, as long as they are regulated. A report by the federal Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters into the funding of political parties and election campaigns emphasised that attempts to regulate electoral funding and disclosure systems must not 'unduly restrict the ability of individuals and groups to engage in the political arena, whether through donating to a candidate, political party or third party'.<sup>21</sup> The report noted, '[t]he use of donations as a form of political expression is an essential element of participatory democracy.'<sup>22</sup>

#### Submission prompt

11. Should gifts and donations in local government be regulated differently? Should they be defined?
12. Should the definitions of **gift** and **donation** be consistent across all councils? Why/why not?

## Council officials and/or councillors

Part 5A of the *LG Act* (relating to the receipt of gifts and donations) and part 6 of the Model Code only apply to elected councillors. Therefore, individual council policies establish the obligations of employees in relation to gifts and donations.

As noted above, most policies apply to both councillors and other council workers generally. For the most part, policies are consistent across the local government areas. Accordingly, most council officials in Tasmania are subject to similar obligations in relation to accepting gifts and donations.

Decisions of council employees can significantly affect both the domestic and business interests of ratepayers. Elected members are responsible for high-level strategy and policy, but the responsibility for operational activities is generally delegated to the chief executive officer and then passed on to an appropriate council officer. Delegated decision-makers with specific operational functions often have a more direct and immediate impact on constituents' interests.

Some roles within council may be considered particularly vulnerable to attempts at improper influence, and the risk may be heightened if the role of the council officer is to provide advice to assist council decision-making or if they have developed a regular business relationship with a constituent.

There is also the risk that councillors will seek to influence council employees, for example, to speed up applications for themselves or an associate.

**Submission prompt**

13. Should elected members and other council officials be subject to different obligations?  
Why/why not?

## References

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- <sup>9</sup> Institute for Regional Futures, *The Future of Local Government Review: Tasmanian Residents State-Wide Phone Survey Report* (April 2023) 15 <[www.futurelocal.tas.gov.au/publications/](http://www.futurelocal.tas.gov.au/publications/)>. For populations under 10,000, the figure is 54% compared with 36% for the major cities. For councils with a population of fewer than 5,000 residents, almost 60% had direct contact with their council in the last 12 months.
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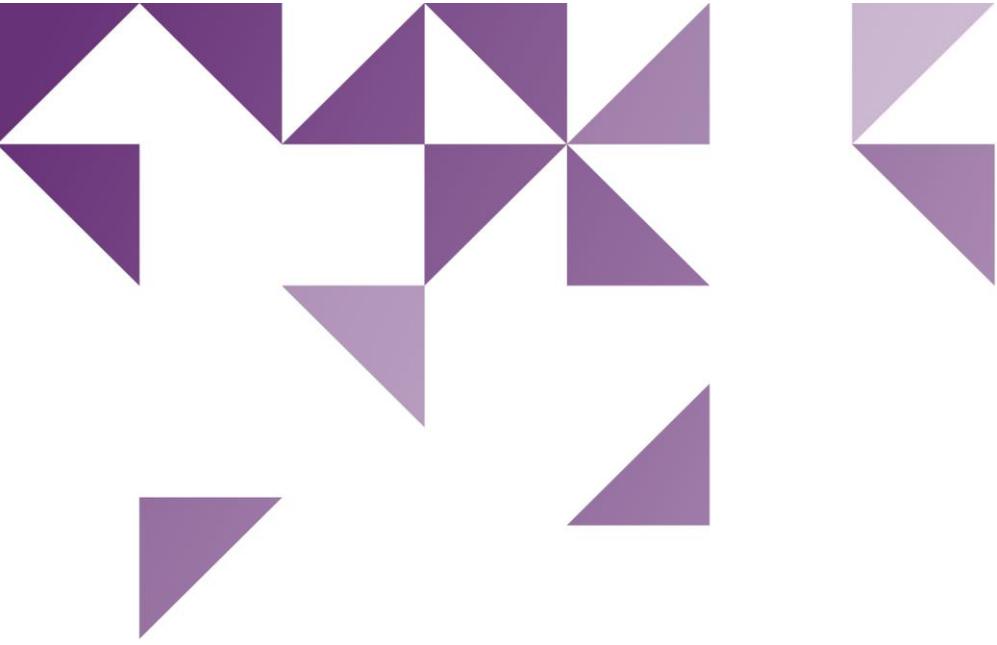
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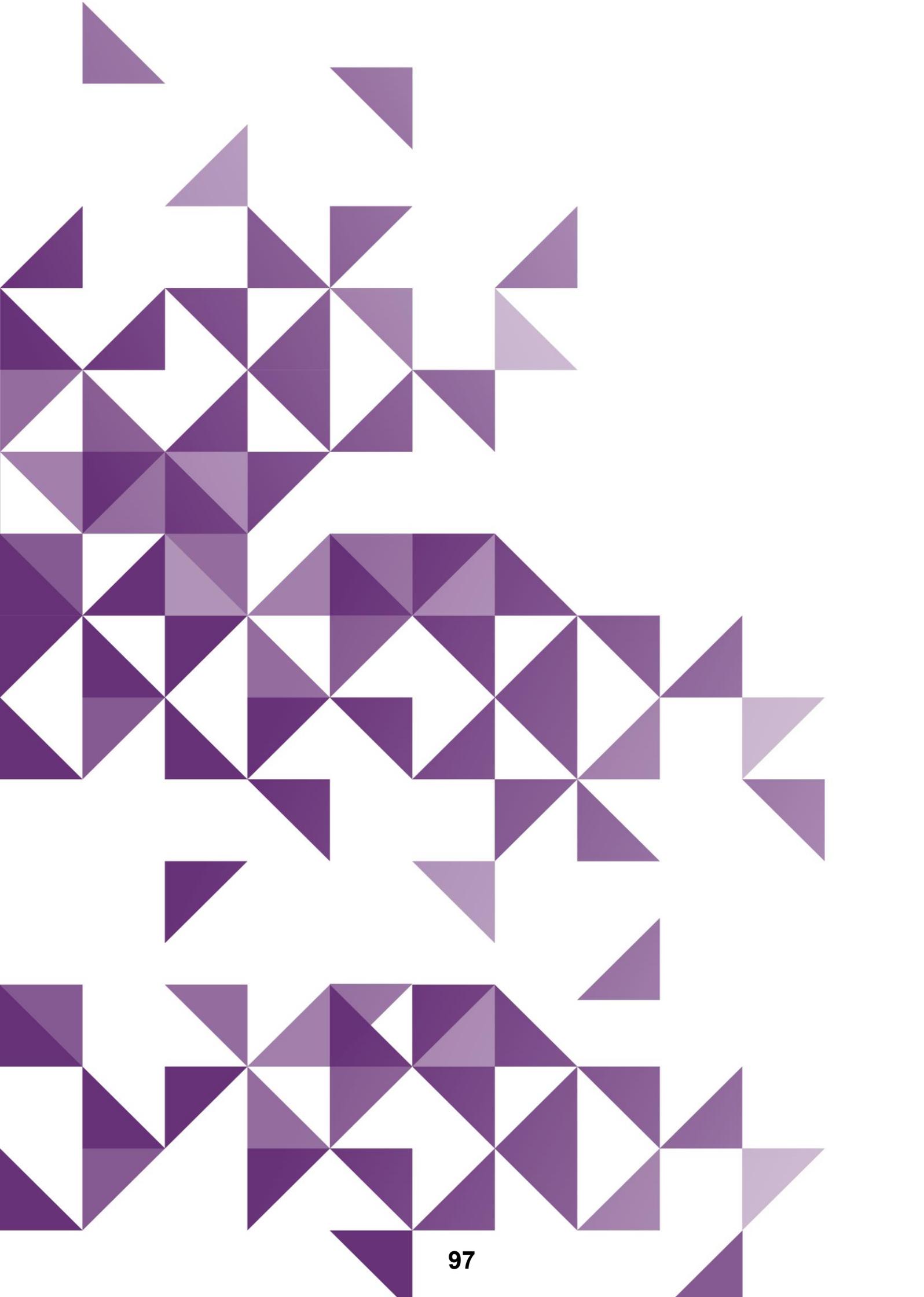
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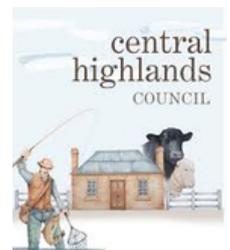
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# Central Highlands Early Childhood Education & Care Needs Analysis





**We acknowledge the Palawa people as the Traditional Owners of the lands of the Central Highlands Council and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.**

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# About This Analysis

## Understanding early childhood education and care in the Central Highlands

**Access to early childhood education and care (ECEC) plays a critical role in supporting children’s development, enabling parents to participate in the workforce, and sustaining the long-term vitality of rural communities.** In the Central Highlands, families face persistent challenges accessing reliable, local early learning and care due to dispersed settlements, limited service availability, and workforce constraints.

With small townships, long travel distances, and no regular public transport, many families rely on informal care arrangements or travel outside the local government area to meet their childcare needs. These pressures affect workforce participation, limit access to early learning, and contribute to broader challenges in attracting and retaining younger families in the region.

Central Highlands Council commissioned this ECEC Needs Analysis to build a clear, evidence-based understanding of current and future demand, and to identify pathways to strengthen early learning access over time.

***How can early childhood education and care be strengthened across the Central Highlands to support families today and community sustainability into the future?***

# How This Analysis Was Developed

This analysis draws on a combination of quantitative data and qualitative insight to develop a robust understanding of ECEC need and feasibility across the Central Highlands.

Demographic, enrolment, and workforce data were analysed to quantify current and future childcare demand, supply, and educator availability. This was complemented by a targeted community survey, which received 42 responses, and a series of consultations and focus groups with families, educators, schools, and service providers to understand service gaps, partnership potential, and on-the-ground delivery constraints.

Together, these inputs ensure the analysis reflects both measurable trends and lived experience, providing a strong foundation for Council and state-level decision-making.

## 45+ Data Analysed

Retrieved from national and state databases and service providers datasets.

## 42 Community Survey Responses

Capturing family perspectives on access, affordability, and preferred service models, focusing on Bothwell.

## Consultations & Focus Group

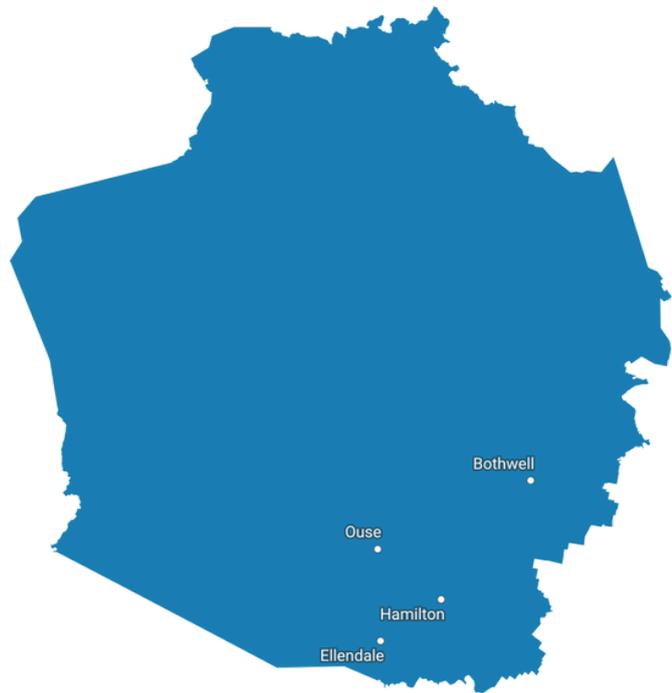
With early-years providers, schools, and families within Central Highlands & neighbouring LGA



# The Central Highlands Today

The Central Highlands is home to around 2,520 people, spread across a large and geographically dispersed municipality. The region has an older median age of 50, limited housing turnover, and small townships that function as essential service hubs for surrounding rural communities.

Population growth is concentrated in Ouse, Hamilton, Ellendale, and Bothwell, while more than 800 residents live outside the main townships. With no regular public transport, families rely heavily on private vehicles to access services.



Despite an ageing population profile, there are clear signs of family renewal. **The Central Highlands records growth among children (+12% to 55%) and young adults (+24% to 60%) in the main townships of Ouse, Hamilton, Ellendale, and Bothwell compared to 2016.** Housing activity has increased since 2021, with **9–10 new dwellings per year**. Additionally, 791 residents did not live in the Central Highlands five years prior, of which **15.3% were aged 0-4 years** (i.e., not born five years ago), signalling sustained demand from families.

## Our Communities

**2,520** (+18% from 2016) **15% of population**

Total Population (2021) Age 0-4

**50 years old** **791 newcomers**

Median Age From the past five years

**9-10 dwellings per annum**

As dwelling growth from 2011 to 2021, with 20% comes from Bothwell, Hamilton and Ouse

**54%**

Worked full-time

**32%**

Worked part-time

**\$1,013**

Median weekly household income

**Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (30%)**

Largest industry of employment



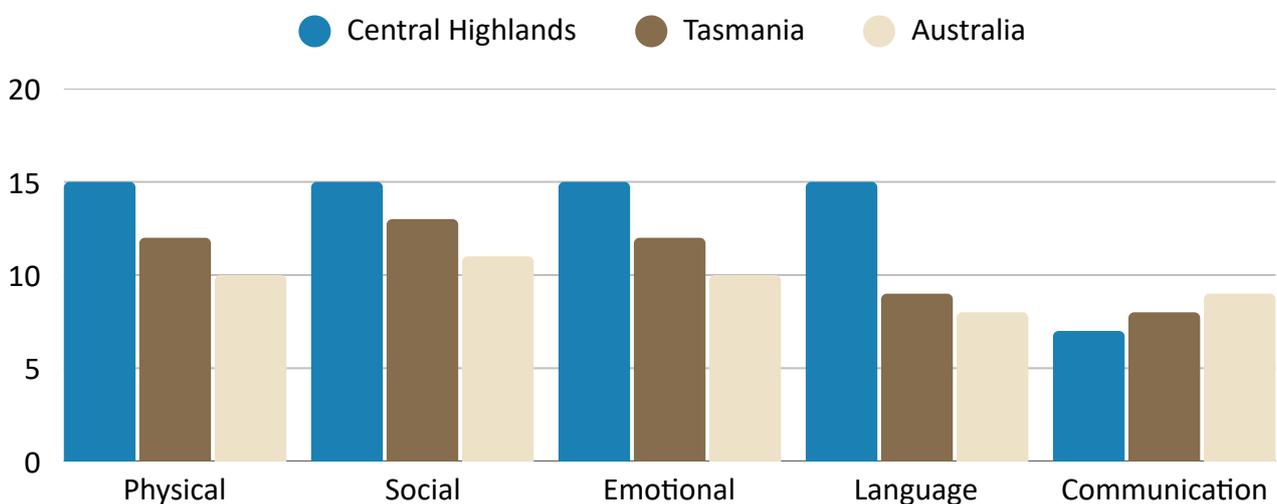
# Why Early Years Access Matters Locally

Children in the Central Highlands demonstrate strong early health outcomes, including 97% immunisation coverage by age five. However, developmental outcomes indicate emerging challenges that elevate the importance of access to early learning.

Australian Early Development Census data shows that 30% of children are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains, and 15% are vulnerable on two or more domains. Vulnerability is most pronounced in language and communication, where rates are 1.7 times higher than the national average.

Limited access to ECEC can compound vulnerability by reducing exposure to structured early learning and early intervention. Improving access to ECEC is therefore a critical lever for improving school readiness and long-term outcomes.

## Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable in 2024



# How Families Access Care

Population change across the Central Highlands is reshaping how families access early learning and care. While modest in scale, growth in young families and births signals confidence in local communities and a need to ensure essential services keep pace.

Analysis indicates that approximately 40–42 children aged 0–4 in the Central Highlands would use early childhood education and care each year if appropriate services were available. Based on typical participation and usage patterns, this equates to a need for around 25 ECEC places at any one time.

## 7 Places

Current capacity

## 18 Places

Capacity shortfall by 2029

With limited local ECEC provision, families across the Central Highlands rely on a combination of local services, travel and informal care. Some families, particularly in and around Ouse, access the existing Family Day Care service; however, capacity is limited, and demand increases at certain times of the year. Many families travel up to **35-46 minutes** outside the municipality to Glenora, New Norfolk or Brighton, depending on location and daily travel patterns.



Where formal childcare is not available or feasible, families rely on informal care or use part-time programs such as Playgroup and Launching into Learning. While these options provide important social and developmental benefits, they do not meet the needs of families requiring consistent, full-day care and can place additional pressure on families and workforce participation.

# ECEC Workforce

Consultations and the workforce workshop identified several educators already living in the area. The Central Highlands currently has one active ECEC educator, delivering Family Day Care in Ouse. While other educators are reported to be working outside of the region.

Between 2019 and 2023, Central Highlands recorded 15 early childhood graduates (10 Certificate III and 5 Diploma). Through the Thrive program, six local students commenced Certificate III training in 2026. This suggests that the region has an active educator and a broader pool of qualified and interested residents to support future ECEC models.

## Our ECEC Workforce

### 15 graduates

From Central Highlands (2019-23)

- 10 Certificate III
- 5 Diploma

### 147 educators

In the South East region (as of Sep 2024)

### Approx. 3 educators

Reside in Central Highlands

Distance to work (excluding to Ouse)

- 35-46 minutes  
To New Norfolk
- 35-42 minutes  
To Brighton

### 6 local students signed up for Cert III in 2026

Through Thrive Group, supported to do coursework locally

Place of work:



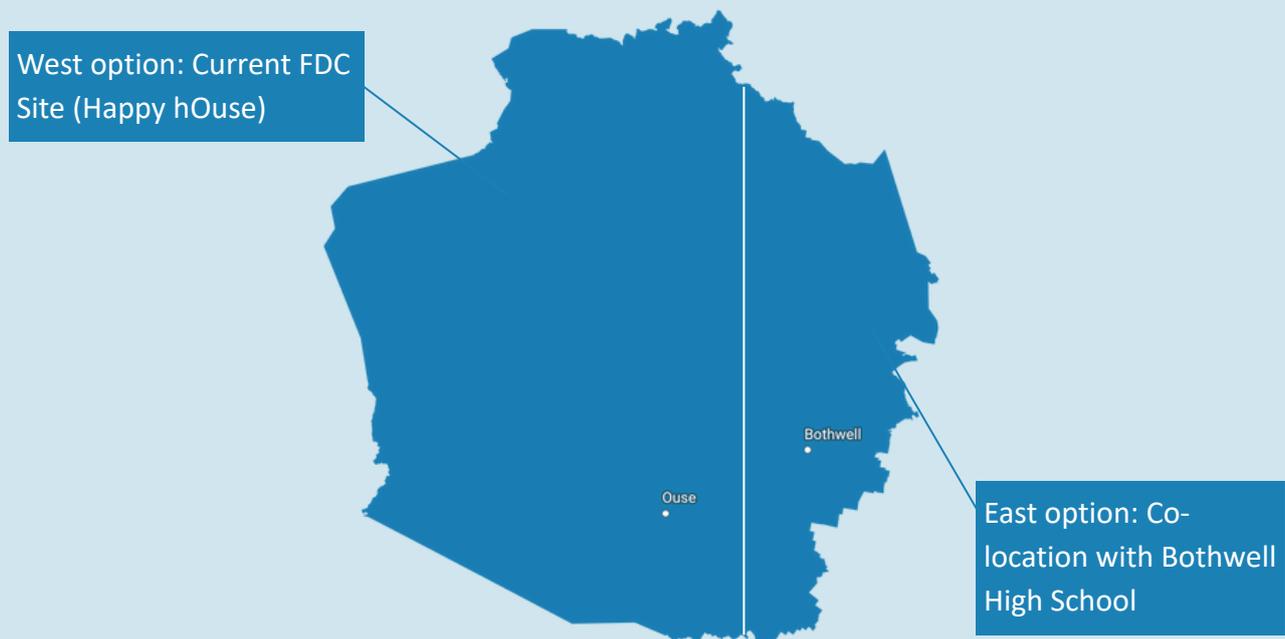
# Building Early Learning Access Across the Central Highlands

Planning for early childhood education and care in the Central Highlands requires a flexible, place-based approach that responds to geography, travel patterns, workforce availability and existing infrastructure. To identify viable pathways forward, this analysis considered a wide range of potential service options across both the western and eastern parts of the municipality.

In the western Central Highlands, the analysis similarly considered a range of potential sites and models for the Ouse and surroundings communities, including opportunities arising from potential changes to current Family Day Care arrangements beyond 2026, and greenfield options.

In the eastern Central Highlands, options considered included adapting or repurposing existing community sites, co-locating services with the school, and exploring new standalone development where appropriate for the Bothwell and surrounding communities

Within these broader pathways, the analysis identifies specific locations in both the west and east where interim action is most feasible, recognising that longer-term service models will require additional time to confirm workforce availability, secure sustainable funding, and progress planning and partnership arrangements. These locations allow Council to respond to immediate access gaps using existing assets, while maintaining flexibility to refine long-term service models and scale over time.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Central Highlands Council thanks the local families, educators, schools, service providers and community members who shared their time and insights to inform this Early Childhood Education and Care Needs Analysis. Their contributions were vital in shaping a clear, place-based understanding of early learning and care across the municipality.

Council also acknowledges the support of government agencies and sector stakeholders, and thanks Ninety Mile Consulting (NMC) for their assistance in delivering this analysis.

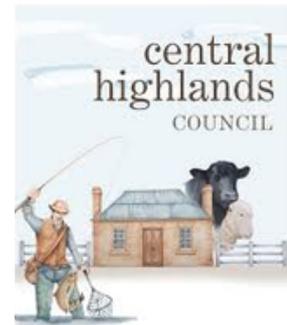
This document is intended to support advocacy, planning and partnership, providing a practical foundation for strengthening early learning and care for families in the Central Highlands.

## Contact

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**CENTRAL HIGHLANDS COUNCIL**  
**SUBMISSION TO THE DRAFT SOUTHERN TASMANIA REGIONAL LAND USE STRATEGY**  
**12 February 2026**

**SUMMARY**

The Draft Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS) is a missed opportunity to plan for a different future for Tasmanians, one in which there is a just society that gives equal opportunity and prosperity to all.

The Draft STRLUS entrenches the status quo, perpetuating the idea that change will be small, slow and incremental. It is not a plan for the future.

If this document is enacted, Tasmania's planning system will continue to exacerbate the housing crisis and private sector economic prosperity initiatives will continue to be frustrated.

Both the Draft STRLUS and the newly created Tasmanian Planning Policies fail to acknowledge the Housing Crisis and its social implications, let alone provide any pro-active policies to address it.

There are no future-oriented pro-active socio-economic strategies to avoid the future demographic doom projected by demographers. On current projections, Tasmania's population is projected to age significantly and grow little. The STRLUS does not set the scene for innovative, creative thinking and the motivation to pursue prosperity and development equity in pursuit of lifestyles and livelihoods in non-urban locations.

The Draft STRLUS perpetrates the existing approach rather than addressing the needs of the future.

It fails to recognise the role and accept the responsibility that policy instruments play in facilitating growth and economic prosperity.

However, Tasmania has the opportunity to learn from past mistakes and plan for a different future now.

Community well-being is determined first and foremost by the just access to, and equitable share of, the benefits of economic prosperity and its determinants.

This should be at the heart of the document; pro-active strategies and enabling aspirational targets, creating as many opportunities as is reasonably possible for equitable access to housing and economic prosperity.

## **1 FAILURE TO PROVIDE FOR ENOUGH FUTURE HOUSING**

The Draft STRLUS and the recently approved Tasmanian Planning Policies (TPPs) do not provide for enough future housing opportunities.

### **1.1 No Acknowledgment of the Housing Crisis.**

The Draft STRLUS is silent in regard to the Housing Crisis, which is the worst it has been in a century and would appear to be the most important issue to most members of the community.

The Housing Crisis is also not mentioned in the State's recently released TPPs.

Most worryingly, the Draft STRLUS (page 27) believes the current supply of residential land is sufficient:

*"Pressures on housing affordability are likely to continue, but can be addressed at least in part, by ensuring capacity for new homes is maintained ..."*

The Draft STRLUS (and the TPPs) adopts a 'business as usual' stance to the provision of new housing. There is no sense of urgency to ramp up housing supply or do anything different than we have done in recent decades.

The Housing Crisis has many contributing factors, only some of which are within the power of the State's planning system to address. Nevertheless the planning system is the foundation to motivate the Housing Crisis solution, and should contribute everything it can towards this aim.

### **1.2 No Mention of Tasmania's Housing Target Under the National Housing Accord.**

Australia has set a nominal housing target under the National Housing Accord. Whilst this may be aspirational, it is important to acknowledge this target if we are to address the Housing Crisis and the impact of the lack of appropriate housing and housing certainty to a significant proportion of the population. The term Housing Crisis obscures the social cost of the shortfall and its flow-on effects.

The National Housing Accord identifies that the rate at which we are providing new housing is half that necessary to address the Housing Crisis; 51%. (Refer table below.)

Yet both the Draft STRLUS and the TPPs pay no heed to Tasmania's housing target under the National Housing Accord. Whether this target can be achieved or not in the short term is not a reason to ignore it.

It is the private sector that builds most housing. The planning system needs to make as many opportunities for development available as is reasonably possible.

In many rural municipalities there is a lot of easy-to-win new housing capacity in rural towns. With a significant labour shortage in our agriculture and rural industries (in part due to a lack

of housing opportunities), we need to facilitate more housing and increased population. It is not clear why the Draft STRLUS endeavours to place limits on growth possibilities in rural towns.

Unfortunately, the current business-as-usual approach embedded within the Draft STRLUS means maintaining artificial restrictions on housing supply opportunities.

**Table O.1 Gross new housing supply by state and territory**

State/territory	Gross new housing supply, 2019–20 to 2023–24	Gross new housing supply, 2024–25 to 2028–29 (forecast)	Implied share of 1.2 million Housing Accord target*	Gross new supply forecast, ratio to share of target* (%)
New South Wales	251,000	246,000	376,000	65
Victoria	306,000	300,000	306,000	98
Queensland	166,000	194,000	246,000	79
Western Australia	75,000	105,000	129,000	81
South Australia	54,000	59,000	84,000	71
Tasmania	16,000	13,000	26,000	51
ACT	24,000	16,000	21,000	78
Northern Territory	3,000	4,000	11,000	31
<b>Australia</b>	<b>896,000</b>	<b>938,000</b>	<b>1,200,000</b>	<b>78</b>

\* The Council has apportioned the Housing Accord target to each state and territory by using their share of the national population in December 2022 (these were the latest population figures available when the 1.2 million Housing Accord target was agreed in August 2023). Of the available options for calculating jurisdictions' share of the target, the Council has chosen this method because it is transparent and stable over time. Alternative approaches could be based on projected population growth over the Housing Accord period. The calculated target shares do not reflect formal agreement between the Australian and state and territory governments.

Note: The sums of figures across states and territories may not align with national totals due to rounding.

Source: NHSAC 2025, ABS National, state and territory population 2023 and ABS Building Activity 2025

### 1.3 A Passive Acceptance of Demographic Projections and a Lack of Aspirational Planning

Population and demographic projections claim that, over the next 25 years:

- Tasmania's population growth will slow down.
- Tasmania's population will age significantly .

Instead of passively accepting thus future, we should take the demographers' projections as a call to action.

The focus on future growth needs to be balanced with consideration of shortfalls. There is a shortfall in many of the capital domains on which social inclusion and economic prosperity are based. Even if population growth was to slow, the unmet housing demand necessitates the provision of zoning to support this. This is a critical factor in regional towns and settlements.

An acceptance of projected slow growth creates a false narrative that Tasmania is doomed to spiral downwards to become little more than one large retirement village. If we put aside the fundamental flaws in arriving at this conclusion described elsewhere in this report and accept slow growth projections as true, then the question is: what do we do with this information?

The response from Tasmania's State planning system is to passively accept this doom and adopt it as the premise on which the amount of new residential zoning is based.

Further, it does not consider the critical complementary commercial and industrial facilitation necessary to ensure local areas work and provide opportunities that would attract a new younger cohort and start to reverse demographic trends.

As demographer Lisa Denny states, this demographic doom is: *"what will happen if nothing changes"*.

This paper contends that changes will be of two types:

- Those changes that will be thrust upon us no matter what we do:
  - For example: climate change-driven immigration to Tasmania, which will further drive demand for housing in the future.
    - Tasmania could, in fact, view this as an opportunity to proactively attract a younger cohort of migrants.
- Those changes that we choose to make.
  - Proactive, forward looking socio-economic strategies.
    - Tasmania's own policy of hydro-industrialisation in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is one example. Hydro-electric schemes and the new industries they facilitated enabled Tasmania to absorb large numbers of post-war European migrants and their families whilst providing plentiful jobs and improving overall living standards.
    - The Republic of Ireland's dramatic change in thinking that led to its 'Celtic Tiger' economic revival is another example. The term refers to the economy of Ireland from the mid-1990s to the end of the first decade of the 21st century, a period of rapid real economic improvement and population growth. Although certain mistakes paused the revival for seven years after 2010, the economy is now growing significantly again and Ireland is no longer the poor Western European backwater it once was up to the 1990s.

In short: strategic land use planning does not have to be passive and reactive. It can be – and should be – proactive and aspirational.

Tasmania can choose to aim to change the future from what it would otherwise be.

But this will need a fundamental change in mindset within the State's planning system.

This is particularly relevant to socio-economic planning (refer Chapter 2, below) but is also highly relevant to the provision of land for housing supply. Indeed the two are intertwined.

#### **1.4 Confusing Past Supply with Past Demand**

A critical flaw in the State Planning System's approach, which is instilled in the Draft STRLUS, is in adopting past housing / population growth as a proxy for demand when the region has undersupplied housing for decades.

Setting residential land supply targets based on 'population projections' that are based on past supply statistics is a fundamental error that Tasmania's planning system has been making for three decades. If historical supply had matched demand there would be no Housing Crisis.

This method has continuously underestimated past demand. These numbers are then projected into the future, continuing to exacerbate the Housing Crisis.

Local government, embedded within the community, knows that demand exists through regular and consistent anecdotal evidence. Yet this evidence is not accepted by the State's planning system that only recognises the above (flawed) statistical methodology.

A clear way of understanding this 'self-checkmate' is: if there are no lots available then there has been no growth in the new housing. The State's planning system wrongly interprets this statistic as clear evidence of 'no demand'.

This results in rural communities being stuck, with no new residential land being allowed by the State, despite strong demand. The same applies on a bigger scale to greater Hobart.

Past statistics are from a constrained world in which the supply of residential land development opportunities has not equalled demand. This fundamental fact appears to be unrecognised within the State's planning system.

For the State's planning system to continue to demand that Council Planning Authorities provide irrefutable evidence that demand exists before allowing new rezonings in the middle of the worst Housing Crisis in a century fails to comprehend that factors that are constraining real/actual supply of land and the provision of housing.

Rather than using past supply statistics, factors such as vacancy rates and local employee shortages are preferable measures of housing demand.

A new STRLUS presents an opportunity for Tasmania's planning system to set pro-active strategies. We should not defer this major reset to a future iteration of the STRLUS.

Every *reasonable* measure that can be done to increase housing supply must be done. We should at least base our housing target on our share of the National Housing Accord target. This is double the growth envisaged within the Draft STRLUS.

We will need infill and greenfield in Greater Hobart and growth in rural towns if we are to make a dent in the Housing Crisis.

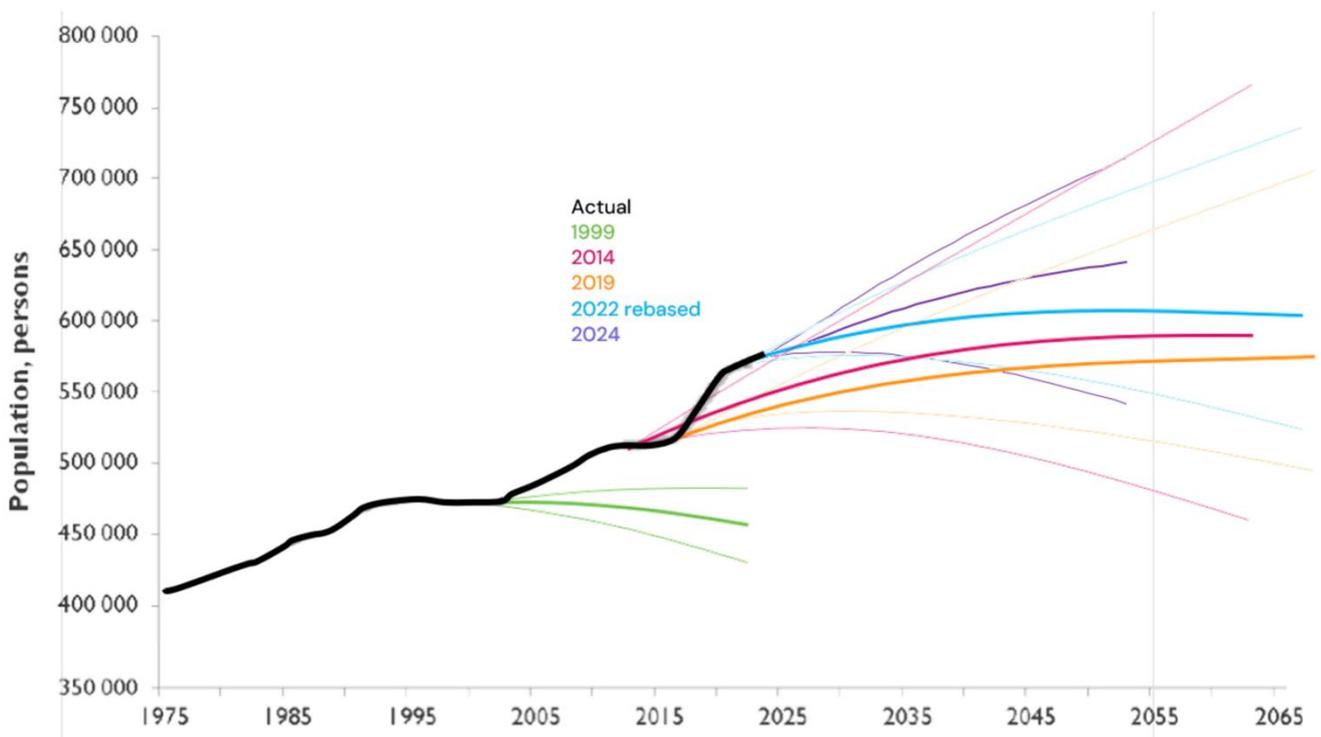
There are numerous townships in the region that offer excellent liveability with a good degree of service. The opportunity to maximise those attributes and make these towns more sustainable in the longer term should be made available where Councils and their local communities are pursuing pro-active socio-economic development strategies.

The following chart demonstrates the State's chronic problem in underestimating demand. Population projections have consistently undershot the eventual reality.

Accepting population projections as inevitable was a mistake of the 2010 STRLUS.

We are now making the same mistake, with RemPlan and Treasury both projecting a slowing growth rate over the next 25 years.

The real world consequences of underestimating demand are worse than those of over estimating demand, as the depth of the Housing Crisis attests.



The State's planning system metes out new residential zoned land that is the *minimum theoretically necessary*. However, it should be allowing the *maximum reasonably possible*.

We have created an artificial shortage of zoned land, and when supply does not meet demand, prices go up. This pushes up prices at all levels of the housing market, with the most socially disadvantaged at the bottom of the market missing out in increasing numbers. Home ownership aspirations and rental opportunities are equally impacted.

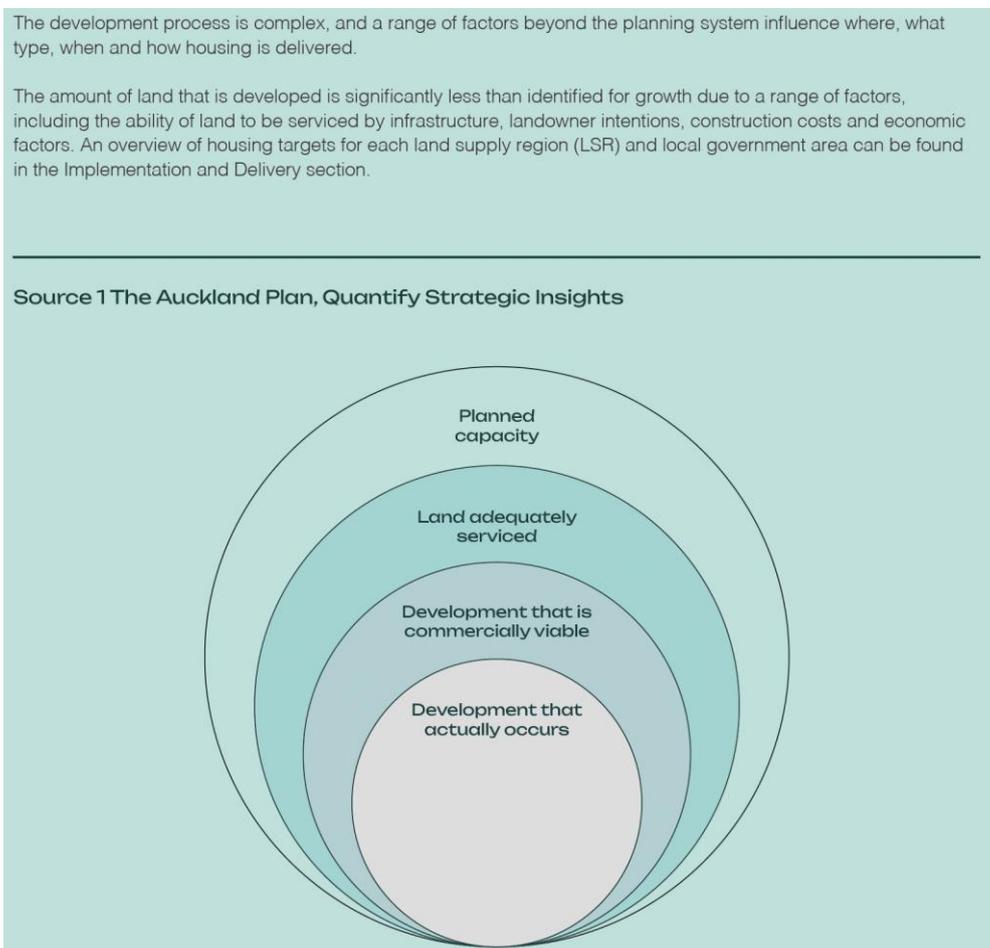
The law of supply and demand is as real and omnipresent as gravity.

Additionally, the minimal opportunity conditions we have created has encouraged land-banking by property developers.

### 1.5 Maintaining Unrealistic View of the Residential Land Supply Industry

More land should be made available given the Tasmanian market particularly does not operate in accordance with neat planning theories.

The following diagram from the Auckland Regional Plan (recently adopted into the Adelaide Regional Plan) illustrates the need to zone more land for residential use than we might calculate we need:



The diagram recognises the real relationship between land zoned for residential development opportunity and real-world residential land supply. This is the difference between theoretical supply, as imagined by the State's planning system, and the real-world supply that materialises in practice.

Put simply: landowners and developers do not line up to subdivide on time and in sequence in an orderly fashion. Our strategic planning system has to account for this fact.

In addition to the above, the Draft STRLUS does not understand that inner city medium density dwellings are relatively expensive to construct and are not the preferred option for the majority of the population. Whether we like it or not, most people prefer a detached house with a front and back yard and many don't mind living on the city fringe or in country towns. Contrary to the thinking underpinning the Draft STRLUS, greater Hobart is not of such a size that it experiences all the very real problems of much larger cities.

The longer we ignore these realities, the longer the Tasmanian planning system will remain part of the Housing Crisis problem and not become part of the Housing Crisis solution.

More land needs to be rezoned for potential residential use, not less.

This will need a major change of mindset within Tasmania's State planning system.

To signal such as change of mindset, in the new STRLUS the chapter titled 'Growth Management' should be renamed to 'Growth Facilitation'.

## **1.6 Ignoring Future Climate Change Driven Immigration**

Increased climate change-induced immigration to Tasmania will occur over coming decades.

To deny this is to deny Climate Change.

Local Government, embedded in the community as it is, is aware of regular and consistent anecdotal evidence that it is already happening. People are moving to Tasmania now and are giving Climate Change as either the main reason or one of the reasons for doing so.

As Climate Change worsens, the mainland heat extremes and other catastrophic weather events will get worse. Whatever the current increase in demand is that is driven by climate change now, we have to acknowledge that it will increase in the future.

Whilst this is difficult to objectively measure, the STRLUS should recognise this impact on future housing demand and enable increases in housing supply opportunities without necessitating amendments to the STRLUS.

A small ripple outwards from the mainland States will manifest as a large increase in demand for Tasmanian residential properties – which will come on top of the existing unmet demand.

Population projections based on past statistics do not, and cannot, take Climate Change-driven immigration pressure into account. RemPlan and other demographers have all stated that the reason for not considering this issue is because they cannot gather data on something that will happen in the future. However, this is no reason for the State planning system to ignore this issue.

It is not the function of demographers to assess this future influence. (They can only look backwards for statistical evidence.)

But it is the job of the planning system is to plan for the future. In doing so it must take into account a range of information and 'future thinking'. Not just past statistics.

This is one of many reasons why the STRLUS and the Tasmanian Planning Policies must be forward-looking, aspirational and pro-active.

### **1.7 A Flawed Concept of Growth Boundaries.**

The Settlement Growth Boundary (SGB) / Metropolitan Urban Boundary (MUB) concept within the STRLUS is mis-construed and is not fit for purpose. This is because:

- It is merely a short-term guide to the next parcels of land to be rezoned to residential use.
- It does not have a sufficiently long time horizon to be otherwise useful.
  - The stated minimum 15 / 25 year time horizon implies that a longer timeframe could be envisaged. However, past practice has shown that the State's planning system will take the stated range as the limit.
- The major infrastructure providers, for instance, would prefer a much longer timeframe, even a 50-year time horizon, to adequately plan their infrastructure.
  - Infrastructure providers build assets with 50-100 year lifespans. They need to size the major components properly.
  - Without longer timeframes, calculating headworks charges per new lot in a given future catchment area becomes difficult or impossible. The total long term catchment is needed, not a short term increment.
    - This would appear to be a major reason why TasWater has adopted its 'first mover pays' policy, (a policy that is causing bottlenecks in the supply chain for new residential lots).
  - At least one of the major infrastructure providers, frustrated with the State planning system's short time horizons, has now started developing their own 50-year growth estimates.

- The current SGB/MUBs are based on 'population projections' which are fundamentally flawed for multiple reasons described elsewhere in this report.

SGBs, if we must have them, should be the outer long-term limit of settlement growth.

- They may approximately identify land that will be used for residential, commercial, industrial, open space or recreational, etc. purposes, but should not pre-define such spatial arrangements.
  - This thought process should be left to local structure planning.
  - The level of detail imposed by the State should only be that necessary to address genuine regional strategic land use planning matters.
  - The current highly definitive approach represents a major over-reach by the State's planning system in local-level planning issues. These should be left to the Council Planning Authorities and their local communities.

Concerns expressed by the TPC in its 2025 recommendation to the Planning Minister that an expanded MUB around Greater Hobart will lead to un-serviced residential lots and/or an over-supply of residential lots were unfounded:

- Drawing a MUB is just the first of three major decision points before new residential lots materialise.
  - The rezoning stage is the second, at which the issue of infrastructure servicing is explored in a general sense.
  - The subdivision development application stage is the third, at which the infrastructure servicing issues are addressed in great detail. It is simply not possible for a residential subdivision to receive planning approval unless the servicing challenges have been resolved between the proponent, the infrastructure providers and the local Council.
  - Then, there is ultimately a judgment of financial risk on the part of the developer, taking into account the cost of development (which includes infrastructure costs) balanced against the potential sale value of the lots and the time in which it will take to sell them. If the sums don't add up to an acceptable risk, the proponent will not go forward with the development of the subdivision.
- The Free Market will ensure there is not an over-supply of lots. If we ever approach the point of market over-supply, this will send a price signal to developers who will slow or cease investment in subdivisions. (Tasmania's housing supply system is a long way from this point, as the depth of the Housing Crisis attests, however.)

The fact that the Tasmanian Planning Commission apparently does not understand the above is deeply concerning. Yet it perhaps goes some way to explaining past refusals of rezoning applications put up by Council Planning Authorities.

SGBs are not the only way to manage growth in rural communities and represent an unnecessary restriction. They preclude the consideration of opportunities not previously recognised, however, this does not make these opportunities inappropriate. The tests contained in the LUPAA and other considerations in the STRLUS can analyse whether growth is appropriate or not, in a locality.

Issues such as intentional or unintentional land-banking by landowners and old zonings on undeveloped land that have services or environmental constraints are matters that influence whether residential land supply in a given town is effective, affordable and realistic.

Within the Draft STRLUS there is no recognition of the complexity of the economics of developing land, only a fixation with drawing lines on maps to set where the growth is imagined to go in the short term.

A MUB around Greater Hobart is justified on the basis that it is one large settlement cut up between multiple Council Planning Authorities and there are issues that need to be managed in a coordinated way across the whole area.

This is not that case for rural towns, however, and the content of the STRLUS needs to be altered to reflect that the strategy of mapping growth boundaries is just one way to achieve the objectives, but is not prioritised above an appropriate demonstration of alternatives, or additional opportunities. In this way, settlements that are better placed to set out the preferred growth areas within a spatial boundary can implement this, however, this does not preclude other settlements or areas demonstrating sustainability through growth on a case-by-case basis, as the detailed work is undertaken.

Whilst the case exists for a MUB around Greater Hobart, the criticisms in this paper on the State planning system's *concept* of a MUB / SGB remain valid. The proposed Greater Hobart MUB is short sighted spatially & temporally, and in the range of issues it ought to address.

### **1.8 Unnecessarily Micro-Managing Rural Communities and Regional Towns**

The draft STRLUS appears to be written on the presumption that it knows everything at the local level.

Rural towns do not need Settlement Growth Boundaries. They particularly do not need them imposed in an adversarial manner by the State's centralised planning system.

Nor do they need the 'de facto' Settlement Growth Boundaries set up by the Draft STRLUS through which towns with no SGBs are limited to existing zoned land.

This paper contends there are no regionally significant strategic planning reasons for SGBs.

There is no flexibility to consider the practical realisation of currently zoned land and the maintenance of a rolling reserve of land supply that is practically and commercially developable.

The imposition of growth restrictions on rural towns is unnecessary and will impede any future revitalisation opportunities. For example the instance where a significant employer may be looking for a new location. Having to amend the planning scheme to allow for such opportunities is often enough to dissuade such potential investors, but having to amend the STRLUS would most certainly spell the end of any such opportunity.

We need a planning system that is nimble and responsive if it is to be a facilitator rather than a hindrance in revitalising local communities.

Overall, the underlying intent of the Draft STRLUS appears to be to direct population growth and economic opportunity to Greater Hobart, away from rural communities.

This demonstrates a failure of the State's planning system to understand the function of rural towns as service centres to surrounding economic engines. These are mostly made up of export-oriented industries that bring new prosperity into the Tasmanian community.

Generally speaking, there are no regional strategic planning ramifications if these towns grow and it is unwarranted for the centralised State planning system to interfere with the aspirations and sustainability of rural communities and their surrounding rural industries.

What matters regionally is where the next 100,000 people will live and around Greater Hobart, not whether rural towns grow by a hundreds of people.

Essentially, rural towns perform different and more significant functions than similar sized urban/suburban centres within Greater Hobart. In the Draft STRLUS they are treated the same.

The Draft STRLUS appears to be written with a focus on metropolitan planning practice and has a simplistic view of rural and regional areas, failing to recognise the role that these localities, settlements and communities have in the broader economy. (An example of this is the significant over-use of the Agriculture Zone in the Southern Tasmania that was imposed by the State's planning system.)

### 1.9 Pursuing the Perfect at the Expense of the Good.

The TPPs and the Draft STRLUS demand the perfect pattern of growth and development. This approach often leads to development stagnation, expansion choke-points and exacerbates land-banking.

Greater Hobart is not a big city with all the problems of a big city demanding rigid-theory strategic land use planning solutions.

The biggest problem by far, right now, is the Housing Crisis.

We need to find many new housing development opportunities for both the private and public sector to take up that provide reasonably acceptable outcomes.

We need many *reasonably well* located homes, not few *perfectly* located homes.

Pursuit of the perfect is the enemy of the good.

## 2. ABSENCE OF ASPIRATIONAL SOCIAL-ECONOMIC PLANNING

(Section 2 by Dr Martin Farley)

Policy instruments influence a place's culture, for better or worse.

The Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS) is a key governance instrument establishing the policy, rules and practice of land use and development within the region. It ought to be the link between the values and aspirations of the Southern Tasmanian community and how they manifest in the development & sustainability of the natural and built environment.

While it may be considered a technical document which identifies "we can develop and do this here and not there", the strategy is a translation of principles and values which intersect those of the community, impacting how the Southern Region and locales works as a place, how industry sectors and businesses operate and how people pursue aspirations, livelihoods and live. If the governance strategy is "out of synch" with the aspirations and values of the regional community, the whole system is compromised.

Government policy instruments are important; they establish the stance which frames the rules. In the land use context, stance can be considered on a continuum from constraining, through benign to facilitative to active promotion, the STRLUS is considered heavily weighted to a constraining stance when considering the dynamics of a place.

The test for the STRLUS is the degree to which it supports the aspirations of the community, reflected in Council Strategy, State Government and industry policy and individuals' business and life goals, while mitigating harm to others and the environment in the short and longer term.

This analysis concludes that the STRLUS does not reflect a strategic or dynamic futures orientation and facilitative stance and requires a pivot to this perspective to enable aspiration, creativity and innovation in the built and developed environment, simultaneously addressing strategic region wide challenges such as housing shortages.

The regional dimension is important but can mask local perspectives. Central Highlands is an example where the renewable energy investment pipeline shocks the way in which the community operates and the constraints of the planning system create an opportunity cost to the community by being unable to efficiently provide local housing and to convert jobs into resident population. This flows on to create challenges in providing the local service infrastructure which underpins liveability and wellbeing and therefore resident attraction – a cycle of growth or decline centred on land use.

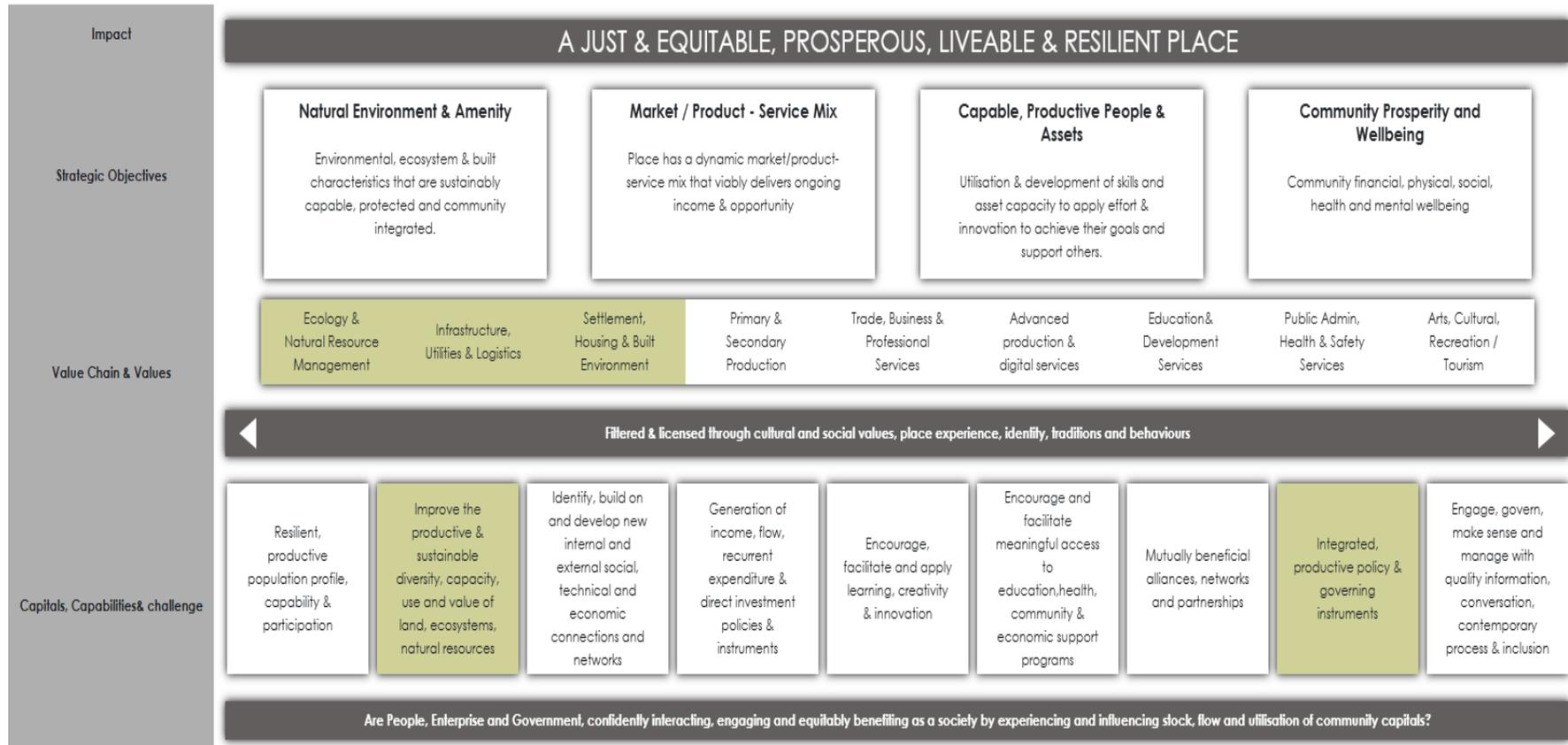
Dynamics and the places and policy instruments to beneficially exploit or mitigate those dynamics is important, particularly when the strategy is designed with a focus on stability and order that is illusional at the margins. Smaller, rural LGAs are susceptible to shocks and flow-on which would not statistically significantly impact a city, attraction of a new business, or a small industrial sub-division.

In the absence of dynamic rules/conditions a just & equitable process to ensure the pathway to rezoning and locally significant development is not limited to those resourced with high levels of capital and capacity to carry risk is required. Such processes exist in other jurisdictions.

The figure below is a general representation of the factors that frame how a place operates, that is how it applies along with its natural environment, population, capital base and formal/informal institutions and relationships. These capitals work together as inputs into what people and organisations do to deliver & create value for themselves, domestic/export markets and the community and simultaneously contribute to the strategic objectives which frame sustainable liveability and wellbeing.

The STRLUS is a component of the region's community capitals profile, highlighted in green it identifies the relationship the STRLUS as a governance instrument and its impact on the achievement of "best use" of land so that the first 3 elements of the value chain are optimised so that the following elements of the value chain deliver opportunity and just equitable participation and benefits in the short to medium to longer term.

The framework is scalable, the principles and dimensions applying at both the regional and local levels.



### **3. FLAWS IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THE DRAFT STRLUS**

#### **3.1 Insufficient Input from the Local Elected Representatives of the People**

The process to develop the Draft STRLUS was flawed.

Policy was developed without any formalised or methodical input from the locally elected representatives of the people. The Councillors.

There was no pro-active empowerment of the elected representatives to input the values and aspirations of the people they were elected to represent.

This is one of the reasons why the Draft STRLUS is devoid of aspiration and pro-active socio-economic development thinking.

It should be recognised that the will of the people - their hopes, aspirations and values – flows through their elected representatives, first and foremost.

The will of the people is not garnered through public consultation processes, especially those that engage with a tiny fraction of the population.

#### **3.2 The State of Play Report Included Statements of Policy and Values - Without Input From, or Endorsement of, the Local Elected Representatives of the People.**

The State of Play Report was intended to be merely a statistical snapshot of the current situation in the region. It was to contain objective information only, and was not to venture into the realm of policy creation or value judgments. As such, it was reasonable to determine that it did not need the endorsement of the local elected representatives of the people.

However, its 'Region Shapers' are clearly policy positions.

These have been transferred into the Draft STRLUS and now clearly function as 'given' policy positions.

Yet they were never put to the elected representatives of the people for endorsement.

The Draft STRLUS should not imply that Council elected representatives share any measure of political accountability for them.

If they are to remain, it is the Planning Minister that will have to accept political responsibility for them.

### **3.3 Preliminary The Draft STRLUS Not Referred to Councils for Input.**

The original Project Plan for the development of the Draft STRLUS, as agreed between the State and the 12 Councils, included a stage where a penultimate draft would be formally referred to Councils for endorsement (or otherwise) before a draft was finalised by the Minister for general public consultation.

This would have at least gone a little way to addressing the lack of formal engagement with the local elected representatives.

However, this critical stage was abandoned, seemingly at the last minute, and the Draft STRLUS went directly to general community consultation from the Minister's office.

Therefore, statements within the Draft STRLUS that it has been developed 'through a collaborative process with the 12 Southern Councils' are, at the very least, an exaggeration.

## **4. SIGNIFICANT FLAWS IN THE DRAFT STRLUS**

As detailed above, this paper contends that there are major foundational flaws in the Draft STRLUS which, largely, are unable to be remedied through amendments to the text. This is particularly relevant to the way rural areas and towns are dealt with.

In general, these constitute an unnecessary centralist overreach into micro-managing local planning matters that have no regional implications. These will need to be remedied by removal from the document.

Nevertheless, the following issues are raised which could be addressed through changes to the text:

### **4.1 Tasmanian Aboriginal People Today.**

On page 5, the Draft STRLUS states that *"The only survivors of the invasion of Lutruwita/Tasmania were the people of the Northeast Nation .... As no other nations survive ..."*

The implications of this is that only people who trace their ancestors to Aboriginal people who were removed to Flinders Island by Robinson are Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

This is not supported by Council, as there are many Tasmanian Aboriginal people in the municipality who are descended from those that were not taken to Flinders Island.

#### **4.2 Significant Agricultural Land:**

The refocussing of the protection of agricultural land to 'prime and significant agricultural land' is supported, as it represents an effort to return to dealing with this issue as Parliament intended in the State Policy on the Protection of Agricultural Land.

This needs to translate into a significant general reduction in the amount of land in the Agriculture Zone in Southern Tasmania, which should be rezoned back to the Rural Zone.

It is noted that 'significant agricultural land' is not defined in the Draft STRLUS, which is a major deficiency.

The clearest way to address this is to take the Significant Agriculture Land map from the 2010 STRLUS and add any new irrigated farmland areas. Then define the term via this map. (The map can then be updated as considered necessary.)

This would cover-off on more than 99% of this issue and avoid the need for costly and time-consuming re-definition processes that would have to occur within the ongoing operation of the STRLUS, at the expense of Council Planning Authorities.

The reasons that the Agriculture Zone should only apply to prime and significant agricultural land include:

- The Agriculture Zone is restrictive for rural use/development other than agriculture. It omits a range of potential rural and complementary industries.
- The Rural Zone is a multi-purpose zone (including agriculture) and therefore provides opportunity for a broad range of economic activity.
- Poor-to-average agricultural land is abundant in Southern Tasmania and the change of relatively small proportions to another industry would not constitute a significant loss to Tasmania's agricultural estate.
- The Agriculture Zone when applied to poor-to-average agricultural land does not provide for its highest and best use, and therefore represents a socio-economic opportunity cost.
- Significant remnant priority vegetation is better recognised and protected in the Rural Zone.

#### **4.3 Figure 13, Map of Agriculture and Marine Farming Areas:**

The 'Agriculture Area' depicted on this map should be recast as the Significant Agriculture Land Area, using the above suggested methodology.

#### **4.4 In the Glossary: Definition of Working Forest:**

The definition of 'working forest' would appear to omit native forestry on long-term rotations. For example: 75-95 years for sawlogs. A legal interpretation of 'in continual harvesting' could well exclude such forests.

#### **4.5 Sustainable Economic Growth Chapter: Renewable Energy:**

New major renewable energy projects will play a very significant role in boosting the region's economic prosperity in the future. The impact on Tasmania's economic prosperity has the potential to be as significant as hydro-industrialisation was in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but **only if** we adopt aspirational pro-active strategies to facilitate this new future and eliminate unnecessary blockages.

A new STRLUS has the potential to do this. We need to do this now, and not put it off to a future iteration.

For a start, Renewable Energy should be added to the top of the first paragraph of this chapter.

Further, this potential is much more than renewable energy 'supply'. It is in attracting future oriented industries that want to take advantage of this supply.

#### **4.6 Sustainable Economic Growth Chapter: Linkages**

This chapter should include explicit acknowledgment of the crucial link between zoning for identified economic engines, (those which generate export income and create local supply opportunities) and the role of service centres in supporting the transactions which generate income multipliers. This is particularly crucial for rural areas.

#### **4.7 Table 9, Activity Centre Categorisation:**

The definition of Neighbourhood Centre under 'catchment' makes sense for centres in metro Hobart, but does not make sense in a rural context where towns are often spatially spread out to a greater degree. In the rural town context, the community that a Neighbourhood Centre services is not the 'immediate community' within the 200-400 metre nominated distance for residential consolidation. This will not make sense in the particular context of many towns. It is proposed that a new definition for this concept for rural towns be developed.

#### **4.8 De-Facto Rural Residential Land:**

The removal of the existing STRLUS mechanism enabling the recognition of de-facto rural residential land use is a flaw. Such land, if zoned Rural Living, represents 'low hanging fruit' in terms of increasing potential housing supply with no adverse land use planning consequences and no loss of viable agricultural land.

Indeed, the major impact would be a positive one, wherein residents obtain a planning scheme zone that matches their existing lifestyle, with some gaining the option of subdividing much-needed new residential blocks.

It is noted that the draft STRLUS and the TPPs appear to have taken on an almost fanatical opposition to new rural residential. This is at odds with similar jurisdictions in Australia and New Zealand.

This is opposed as there are some situations around Southern Tasmania where the highest and best use of land is this land use.

Rural residential lots are in demand and they enable a range of hobby farming semi-commercial enterprises and environmentally self-sufficient lifestyle choices.

Typically, these are on mediocre agricultural land that is already fractured into non-economically viable lot sizes in locations that do not threaten commercial agriculture or other rural industries, are not subject to unacceptable risks and do not contain high-priority environmental values.

#### **4.9 No Distinction Between Local Industrial Land and Export-Oriented Industrial Land**

3.4.2.5 should include a statement to acknowledge that demand for industrial land can only be projected for local service industrial land, not for the export-oriented industries that require locations outside existing industrial precinct.

A supply and demand analysis for industrial land can only be undertaken for local industries servicing the needs of a local population. It cannot be done for many export-oriented industries which often have unique and unpredictable locational requirements.

The planning system needs to make as many locational options potentially available as is reasonably possible and appropriate. (This is one reason why the Agricultural Zone should only apply to prime and significant land and that the multi-use Rural Zone should apply otherwise.)

If a planning scheme amendment is required or, worse still, an amendment to the STRLUS, the delay, cost and risk to potential investors will usually mean that these economic prosperity opportunities will be lost to Tasmania before they get to first base. Investors will look elsewhere in Australia or overseas to put their money.

If we do not provide flexibility and insist on locking in the deterministic approach embedded in the Draft STRLUS, Tasmania will be overlooked for some potential new jobs & investment, and the future economic prosperity of Tasmania will be lessened.

#### **4.10 No Mechanism to Enable Balanced Decisions at the Tasmanian Planning Commission.**

The Draft STRLUS includes a chapter on protecting environmental values and a chapter on sustainable economic growth.

But there is no detail on how to balance the drive to protect values with the economic development imperative.

This will mean that the need to protect relatively small values will over-ride significant economic development initiatives in TPC considerations.

The same fate will befall many opportunities to increase housing supply.

### **5. CENTRAL HIGHLANDS – SPECIFIC ISSUES**

As set out in Council's Strategic Plan, Central Highlands is in the early to mid-phase of a major renewable energy development transformation driven by national, state and local responses to climate change. This has followed significant, structural shocks occurring over the past 70 years, including

- The post WW2 hydro power development to stimulate industrialisation across the State,
- The introduction of large-scale irrigation and ongoing diversification to cropping and intensive horticulture as the proportion and intensity of cold days declines, allowing their production at these altitudes,
- The increased capitalisation and digitisation of agriculture, and
- The less visible but emerging from its initial carbon farming base, recognition that land and aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity provide potential income and, for the Central Highlands, new forms of conservation and regeneration income and job potential, including experiential tourism.

The latest renewable energy phase is the most rapid, largest scale investment of these.

Despite these prior shocks, the characteristics of the key traditional settlements and overall permanent population level is little changed, with the average permanent resident age of 49, indicating Central Highlands is not capturing the growth and benefit from the planned construction and operations expansion. Residential growth has centred on settlements adjoining trout fishing lakes and, while attracting a small permanent population, are primarily holiday homes.

The lack of housing and population places a major constraint on the community achieving sustainable benefit from this private investment.

Analysis indicates that by 2030, the currently committed multibillion dollar investment in renewable energy infrastructure will result in 237 permanent operations and maintenance jobs. Currently planned investment in intensive horticulture is estimated to deliver a further 75 permanent and up to 290 seasonal jobs.

Alongside these production changes, tourism jobs increased by some 20% during the most recent Census period, a clear indicator of increased demand.

In conjunction with our long-term strategies Central Highlands strategic priorities for the next 5-10 years are to:

1. **Transform most of the forecast permanent job growth from investment in renewables, increasingly intensive horticulture and recreation development opportunities into permanent resident growth.** This is important in scale and the attraction of residents within the period of their lives where they are employed, establishing homes and businesses, educating their children locally use local facilities and engage in the community. This includes consideration of independent living units to free up larger housing stock and developing housing to match people's later life-cycle needs.
2. **Facilitate improvement in the scope and capacity of primary and community health, emergency response and children's and vocational education access** to support Central Highlands liveability, the safety of workforces associated with construction, seasonal and operational activities and visitation.
3. **Initiate changes to land use policy and zoning to support residential growth in Bothwell, Hamilton, Ouse and Ellendale which matches the rural living/village nature of our settlements,** to define specific purpose precincts such as tourism, intensive horticulture and renewable energy value-add to generate community benefit from this major investment phase.
4. **Consider how the need for construction, seasonal and tourism accommodation can be combined to deliver long term benefit** beyond their specific purpose and subject to this consideration potentially pursue external investment.
5. **Reflect the fact that across Central Highlands specific land uses/activities are not neatly quarantined in single use land packages, the whole place works as series of systemic natural and developed overlays** or adjacent activities where traditional activities and new opportunities combine to generate diversity and create resilience by determining a more strategic, dynamic approach to planning.

### **6.1 Settlement Growth Boundaries for Bothwell and Ouse.**

The proposed Settlement Growth Boundary (SGB) at Bothwell and Ouse is inappropriate. In addition to the generally flawed concept of SGBs contained within the Draft STRLUS as described elsewhere in this report, it does not accord with the Bothwell and Ouse Structure Plans recently developed by Council with the local community.

### **6.2 Categorisation of Bothwell**

In Table 2: Bothwell should be recognised as a Service Hub. The town provides services for the surrounding economic engines such as expanded irrigation-based agriculture and the Central Tasmanian Renewable Energy Zone.

Services within Bothwell include the Council office, rural supplies, hotels, shops, post office, fuel, mechanics, school, sport and recreation facilities and clubs, caravan park, retirement units, doctor's rooms and tourist attractions. It is an hour from Greater Hobart and serves a large modernising agricultural region which is intensifying through additional irrigation and is the gateway to the Central Plateau world-class trout fishery and recreation area.

The STRLUS ought to be about the future, not about locking-in the status quo. Bothwell will become the major service centre for the coming construction boom for renewable energy projects within the Central Tasmanian Renewable Energy Zone. This will amplify its role as a Service Hub and the STRLUS should enable this future and not hinder it.

### **6.3 Categorisation of Hamilton/Ouse Twin Towns**

In Table 2: Hamilton should be recognised as a Tourist Destination with its central historic heritage precinct, substantial infrastructure for RV tourism and ready access to surrounding tourism regions.

Ouse should be recognised as a Service Hub. It provides services for the surrounding economic engines, such as the expanding irrigation-based agriculture and the Central Tasmanian Renewable Energy Zone and half a dozen major hydro-electric dams and power stations.

It is also the gateway to the West Coast, including the Lake St Clair region, the southern end of Tasmania's most visited National Park and multiple other natural tourism attractions.

### **6.4 Council's Clean Energy Industry Benefits Plan**

Central Highlands Council has recently completed Structure Plans for Bothwell, Hamilton & Ouse and is preparing to undertake an Integrated Clean Energy Industry Benefits Plan for the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone.

Central Highlands Council objects to any aspect of the Draft STRLUS which is at cross-purposes with these plans.

The Clean Energy Industry Benefits Plan is aimed at ensuring the coming multi-\$billion construction boom in Central Highlands associated with Renewable Energy Projects over the next decade does not come and go and leave few legacy benefits. Council plans to leverage this boom to revitalise its towns, communities and industries.

In addition to the Renewable Energy projects themselves, a proposed Renewable Energy Business Park approximately 10km north of Bothwell is proposed as one of the key elements of Council's vision for the future, along with supporting infrastructure projects in the towns. These include proposed residential workers' accommodation precincts in Bothwell and Ouse, (which would transform to family homes, aged care, tourist accommodation, etc. after the construction boom), educational/training facilities, plus supporting social infrastructure such as child care and health.

This should be specifically mentioned within 3.4.2.5, both in the text and on relevant maps.

[\(Locational map to be inserted\)](#)

Council supports statements recognising renewable energy and the Renewable Energy Zone in 3.4.2.4. However, work by the State Government's ReCFIT program, Coordinator General, AEMO, Council and multiple renewable energy proponents enable a greater degree of detail to be recognised by the STRLUS. This would lead to a welcome increased level of certainty for these interrelated developments that are crucial for the future economic prosperity of Tasmania.

The general absence of aspiration planning within the STRLUS has been noted above. Tentative steps towards recognising and facilitating a new renewable energy future are welcome, but not enough.

Communities need a planning system that enables planning for the future, not one that embeds the past.

STRLUS should facilitate such thinking or, at the very least, not stand in its way as other communities outside the Renewable Energy Zone identify new initiatives for renewal and economic prosperity.

## **6.5 Main Roads**

Main roads in rural areas, such as Highland Lakes Road, are economic development enablers, social enablers and emergency response enablers. This is the basis upon which the Draft STRLUS should treat such infrastructure.

28 January 2026

Damian Mackey

Special Project Manager

Via email: [dmackey@southernmidlands.tas.gov.au](mailto:dmackey@southernmidlands.tas.gov.au)

Dear Damian,

## **DRAFT SOUTHERN TASMANIAN REGIONAL LAND USE STRATEGY: SUBMISSION**

### **CENTRAL HIGHLANDS COUNCIL**

Niche Planning Studio recently completed Structure Plans for the towns of Bothwell, Hamilton and Ouse, which have been adopted by Central Highlands Council and are guiding growth and development in the region.

These three towns are located within the Central Highlands municipality and enjoy distinct natural advantages that conventional planning approaches often overlook. Hamilton sits perfectly positioned for climate migrants - elevated, flood-free, with existing community infrastructure. Bothwell offers the heritage charm that appeals to tree-changers and remote workers seeking authentic rural character. Ouse provides outdoor recreation access that aligns with lifestyle preferences driving urban-to-rural migration.

## **1. Draft Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy**

### **1.1 Purpose**

The draft Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS) aims to address land use issues that cross multiple local government boundaries in a coordinated fashion, and we commend the State Planning Office on this approach. However, we are concerned that, overall, the strategy prescribes specific required approaches rather than offering flexibility in how desired outcomes can be achieved. This prescriptive approach limits the adaptability that is essential to effective strategic planning.

As a strategy document designed to spatially apply the Tasmanian Planning Provisions at a regional level, the STRLUS should provide a flexible framework that allows local governments to tailor implementation to their specific community needs and contexts. Additionally, the STRLUS must remain adaptable to changing circumstances, planning for growth rather than the status quo.

### **1.2 Key Challenges and Opportunities**

Southern Tasmania faces a number of key challenges into the next few decades. Relevant challenges to the Central Highlands municipality have been summarised in the draft STRLUS as:

#### **Planning and Urban Design**

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- Population and Housing Pressures
  - Housing affordability constraints
  - Growing demand for diverse housing typologies.
  - Aging population wanting to 'age-in-place'.
- Urban Sprawl & Infrastructure Costs
  - Extended pattern of low-density residential development increasing infrastructure delivery costs.
  - Higher transport costs disproportionately affecting disadvantaged households.
- Climate Change & Environmental Hazards
  - Increasing frequency and severity of climate change impacts, e.g. bushfires, floods and coastal erosion.
  - Prolonged droughts.
- Environmental Protection
  - Need to balance population and economic growth with protection of the region's unique natural environment.
  - Native vegetation and habitats outside protected areas impacted by agriculture, resource extraction and urbanisation.

The draft STRLUS identifies key opportunities that can be capitalised on, arising from and building on these challenges, relevant to the Central Highlands, as:

- Compact, Sustainable Growth
  - Achieving more efficient use of existing infrastructure through infill and urban renewal.
  - Supporting a "live local" ethos where people can access work, services, and amenities nearby.
- Economic Diversification
  - Building on the region's competitive advantages in tourism, education, research, and innovation.
  - Expanding renewable energy generation in the Central Highlands REZ.
  - Value-adding to agricultural production through farm-gate industries and artisan production.
  - Opportunities for adaptive reuse of heritage buildings and cultural interpretation.

- Natural Assets as Economic Drivers
  - UNESCO World Heritage areas, National Parks, and unique landscapes attracting visitors.
  - Clean environment supporting premium agricultural product.
  - Natural environment underpinning reputation for quality local goods and experiences.
- Strategic Infrastructure Investment
  - Coordinated delivery of infrastructure aligned with growth areas.
  - Digital infrastructure enabling remote work and service delivery to regional communities.

Many of the strategies outlined under these opportunities appear more appropriate for state-level policy or local planning scheme provisions rather than regional strategic guidance, failing to recognize that regional councils outside metropolitan Hobart face fundamentally different challenges, growth pressures, infrastructure constraints, and community expectations than those within the greater Hobart area. A truly regional strategy should establish principles and outcomes that enable local innovation and responsiveness, rather than imposing one-size-fits-all requirements that may be impractical or inappropriate for smaller councils with limited resources and distinct rural or coastal characteristics.

### 1.3 Regional Structure Planning

#### 1.3.1 Local Context and Character

Structure plans prepared at the local level can respond to the specific character, heritage values, and community identity of individual towns and neighbourhoods in ways that a regional strategy cannot. Each locality within Southern Tasmania has unique topographical features, established development patterns, and heritage considerations that require detailed, place-based analysis rather than broad regional directives. Local structure plans can incorporate fine-grained design responses that respect existing streetscapes, landmark buildings, and public spaces that contribute to local identity.

#### 1.3.2 Infrastructure Capacity and Sequencing

While the STRLUS identifies broad growth areas and infrastructure corridors, local structure planning provides the necessary detail to assess actual infrastructure capacity, costs, and delivery timing. Local councils are better positioned to work directly with infrastructure providers like TasWater and TasNetworks to determine specific lot yields, development staging, and the triggers for infrastructure upgrades based on local network constraints and available funding. This detailed coordination cannot be adequately addressed at a regional scale, particularly for smaller towns where infrastructure constraints may significantly limit development potential.

#### 1.3.3 Community Engagement and Local Knowledge

Local government structure planning processes enable meaningful engagement with communities about how their specific town or neighbourhood should evolve. Local councils understand the

nuances of community aspirations, concerns about development impacts, and preferences for housing types and densities that a regional strategy cannot capture. This engagement ensures that planning outcomes reflect local priorities and maintains community trust in the planning system, which is essential for successful implementation.

#### 1.3.4 Flexibility and Adaptive Management

Structure plans at the local level can be more readily adapted to respond to changing circumstances, market conditions, or unforeseen opportunities without requiring amendments to a state-declared regional strategy. Local councils can adjust structure plans to reflect emerging economic opportunities, shifts in housing demand, or lessons learned from implemented development, providing the agility needed for effective strategic planning. The STRLUS, as a declared instrument under the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993, requires ministerial declaration and is therefore less responsive to local change.

#### 1.3.5 Site-Specific Constraints and Opportunities

Local structure planning can properly assess site-specific matters such as detailed landslip mapping, localised flooding risks, contaminated land, bushfire management strategies, and property ownership patterns. These factors significantly influence the feasibility, staging, and design of development but vary considerably even within small geographic areas. A regional strategy cannot provide the level of detailed analysis required to determine appropriate development outcomes at the lot or precinct scale.

#### 1.3.6 Balancing Competing Objectives

While the draft STRLUS establishes regional strategies across themes like growth management, environmental values, and economic development, local structure planning is better suited to resolving tensions between competing objectives in specific locations. For example, a local structure plan can determine the appropriate balance between residential densification and heritage conservation in a historic town centre such as Bothwell. These trade-offs require detailed assessment of local conditions and community values rather than regional-level policy directives.

#### 1.3.7 Resource and Capacity Considerations

Regional councils outside Metropolitan Hobart often have limited planning resources, smaller budgets, and different technical capacities compared to larger urban councils. Local structure planning allows councils to prioritise planning efforts where they are most needed and scale the complexity of planning responses to match available resources and the significance of anticipated change. Prescriptive regional requirements may impose unrealistic expectations on smaller councils that cannot be effectively implemented without additional state support.

### 1.4 Overall Recommendations

The strategy would be more effective if it articulated what needs to be achieved across the region (such as housing diversity, infrastructure efficiency, environmental protection, and climate resilience) without dictating how each council must achieve those outcomes. This approach would recognise that a coastal village in Tasman faces fundamentally different planning challenges than a growth area in

Kingston, and that councils are best placed to determine the most appropriate and practical responses for their communities.

By providing flexibility for local implementation, the STRLUS would enable innovation, allow councils to tailor responses to their specific contexts and capacities, and maintain the adaptability essential for effective strategic planning over a 25-year timeframe. Structure plans at the local level would then become the primary mechanism for translating regional principles into actionable, site-specific planning frameworks that can be effectively implemented through the Tasmanian Planning Scheme, supported by meaningful community engagement and aligned with available resources and infrastructure capacity. Too often, rural councils avoid strategic planning because they doubt their capacity to implement sophisticated recommendations. Allowing for flexibility and encouraging aspiration within the STRLUS framework can enable local Councils to deliver practical outcomes that are properly designed for rural contexts and resource limitations.

## 2. Central Highlands Adopted Structure Plans

### 2.1 Bothwell

The adopted Bothwell Structure Plan envisions Bothwell as a thriving service hub for the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone. This has not been reflected in the draft STRLUS, with the proposed Settlement Growth Boundary (SGB) for Bothwell not aligned with the boundary in the adopted Bothwell Structure Plan. The adopted Structure Plan shows the boundary extending to the north along the River Clyde, and extends to the west and the east, rather than the more central designation around the highway shown in the draft STRLUS.

The boundary in the adopted Bothwell Structure Plan has been carefully considered based on technical reports, including flood hazard mapping, and analysis of residential land supply. Community and key stakeholders were actively engaged and consulted to ensure the settlement boundary was appropriate and considered aspirational population growth – as is the aim of flexible and adaptable strategic planning grappling with wicked problems.

As a general rule of thumb, there needs to be approximately 15 years of vacant supply of land available to prevent speculative land behaviour and upward pressure on land and housing affordability. This ensures that there is an ample supply of serviced, residentially zoned land available for development and allows for the fact not all landowners will move to develop their landholdings immediately, if ever.

The classification of Bothwell in the draft STRLUS as a Town and Tourist Destination should be expanded to include Service Hub. The definition of Service Hub is a town that offers convenience goods, services and some community facilities to the surrounding areas. With economic development occurring within the regional hinterland of Bothwell, including development of renewable energy generators and expansion of primary production, Bothwell will be required to meet the day-to-day needs of this growth. Classification of the town as a Service Hub encourages this development, and flags to developers and investors that this type of expansion and land use is appropriate in this location.

The Bothwell Structure Plan has several objectives and strategies aimed to aid Bothwell in future growth and development as a Service Hub, and support for this in the draft STRLUS would bolster the strategic aims of the adopted Structure Plan. The Bothwell Structure Plan pioneers innovative economic development opportunities emerging from the region's designation as a Renewable Energy Zone. This status brings significant infrastructure investment that creates opportunities for community development funding, enhanced connectivity, and economic diversification beyond traditional agricultural activities.

By planning aspirationally, both in considering the potential for economic investment and in future population growth, we've addressed the chicken-and-egg problem facing rural communities. Towns can't attract new residents without infrastructure and amenities, but they can't justify infrastructure investment without population growth. We've created frameworks that justify infrastructure investment now, which then enables the growth we're planning for, and the update of the STRLUS offers the perfect opportunity for regional planning to do the same.

## 2.2 Hamilton and Ouse

Hamilton and Ouse have not been allocated a defined role within the draft STRLUS. These two towns serve a similar population within their rural hinterlands. The adopted Structure Plans consider them as "twin towns", with Ouse meeting most of the day-to-day needs of the population, and Hamilton functioning as a tourist destination.

The historic charm of Hamilton, and the adopted Structure Plan guiding development of the town as a tourist destination that celebrates and shares its heritage would merit the listing of Hamilton as a Tourist Destination. This would further support the adopted local planning policy, and assist in guiding future development and growth of the region.

Ouse should reflect its growing role in the region with a classification as a Service Hub. The projected investment in the Central Highlands Renewable Energy Zone deserves greater consideration within the draft STRLUS, including planning for aspirational outcomes. Facilitating development of not only the renewable energy infrastructure, but supporting infrastructure for employees, including residential, social and community infrastructure will provide an opportunity for Southern Tasmania as a whole.

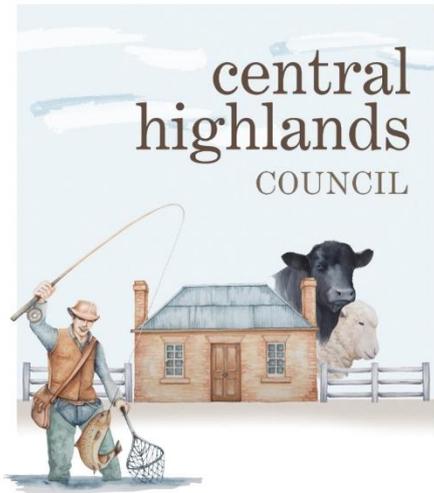
Should you have any queries, or wish to discuss please contact myself or the undersigned on xxxxxx or via email xxxx@nicheplanningstudio.com.au

Kind regards,



**Nicola Smith**

Director



# **TERMS OF REFERENCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY SPECIAL COMMITTEE**

## **1. NAME**

The name of the Committee shall be the Economic Development Advisory Special Committee is convened in accordance with Section 23 and 24 of the Local Government Act 1993.

## **2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To review, prioritise and implement the actions contained within the Councils Strategic Plan
- To work in partnership with relevant industry stakeholders including the State Government to facilitate and expand the economic base for the Central Highlands.
- To investigate opportunities for economic development of the Central Highlands.

## **3. MEMBERSHIP**

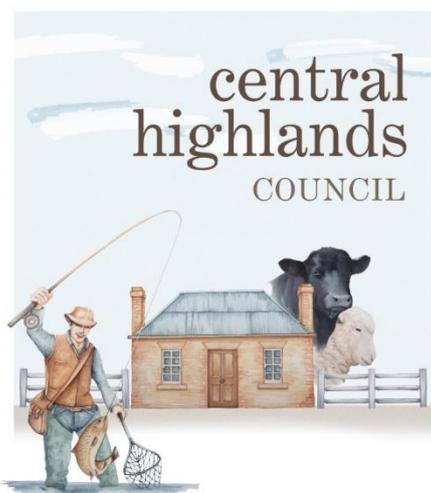
- Council, by Absolute majority, shall appoint a committee for a two-year term, such committee to be appointed at the first full council meeting after the Council elections.
- Each member of the Committee shall be eligible for re-appointment.

#### **4. MANAGEMENT**

- The formation and conduct of the Committee shall be in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 and any other statutory requirements.
- A Council Officer, not necessarily a Committee member, shall be appointed by the Council to prepare an agendas and minutes, on behalf of the committee. Minutes shall be circulated to all Committee members, not later than seven days after each meeting.
- The committee shall meet regularly at intervals sufficient to administer the affairs of the committee. Preferably, there shall be not less than (4) meetings per year.
- The quorum for a meeting of the Committee shall be at least 50% of the members of the committee.
- The Committee is an advisory committee, and as such, all decisions of the Committee shall be presented as recommendations to Council for consideration.
- Minutes of the Committee meeting are to be included in Council's agenda papers.
- The Council may adopt, amend, reject or refer back to the Committee any issues arising from the minutes.
- The Committee shall not direct Council staff.
- The Committee does not have the authority or power to commit Council or any association, organisation, group or individual to expenditure without first gaining approval of Council for the expenditure.
- Committee members wishing to address the Committee may do so in writing providing information and proposals for consideration.
- The Committee may call upon consultants or guests with specific expertise or as the need arises and invite them to attend meetings. Such persons shall not be entitled to vote on any decision arising from such meetings.
- Members shall act in the best interests of the Committee.

**DATE OF NEXT REVIEW**

**ADOPTED BY COUNCIL – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2025**



# **TERMS OF REFERENCE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

## **1. PURPOSE**

To assist with the development of community services which contribute to the character, culture, and identity of the Central Highlands, and to pursue an active community role in proactive participation with local communities.

The Community Development Committee covers a wide range of issues, altogether ensuring the Central Highlands is a vibrant, inclusive and safe place to live for all people, all ages and abilities.

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The focus of the Community Development Committee is matters relating to social, cultural and community well-being.

The Committee

- Promotes active citizenship, community participation and community partnerships
- Seeks to address cultural, and social disadvantage as well as promote equity for all people residing in the Central Highlands.
- Work in partnership with key agencies and organisations.
- Is innovative and creative in ways it contributes to social and community wellbeing.

The Community Development Committee considers and reports to council on issues and activities relating to:

- Community organisations
- Culture and Heritage
- Sports recreation and leisure services and facilities.
- Open spaces in the public realm: Parks, Reserves, Gardens, Cemeteries, Memorials, Statues and Public Art.
- Youth
- Civic Awards
- Public Health
- Local and Community event, programmes and activities
- Community Development and support, including grants.
- Communities of place, identity and interest
- Township revitalisation

### **3. MEMBERSHIP**

- Council by absolute majority, shall appoint four elected members to the committee for a two-year term, such committee to be appointed after the first full council meeting following the council elections.
- In accordance with the Local government Act 1993 and any other acts or regulations or council policies.
- Each Member of the committee shall be eligible for reappointment.

### **4. MANAGEMENT**

- The formation of the Committee shall be in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and any other statutory requirements.
- The Mayor shall be the Chairperson of the Committee.
- A Councill Officer, not necessarily a Committee member, shall be appointed by the General Manager to prepare agendas and minutes on behalf of the Committee. Minutes shall be circulated to all committee members not later (7) days after each meeting.
- The Committee shall meet regularly at intervals sufficient to administer the affairs of the Committee. Preferably there shall be not less than (4) meetings per year.
- The quorum of the committee shall be at least 50% of the members on the committee.

- The Committee is an advisory committee and as such, all decisions of the Committee shall be presented as recommendations to Council for consideration,
- Minutes of each Committee meeting shall be presented to Council.
- The Council may adopt, amend, reject or refer back to the Committee any issues arising from the minutes.
- The Committee shall not direct staff.
- The Committee will not have the authority or power to commit the Council or any association, organization, group or individual to expenditure without Council endorsement.
- The Committee may call upon consultants or guests with specific expertise or as the need arises and invite them to attend meetings. Such persons shall not be entitled to vote on any decision arising from such meetings.
- Members shall act in the best interests of the Committee.

**DATE OF NEXT REVIEW**

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