



Towards a Sustainability Strategy for Tasmania

University of Tasmania's submission to the Tasmanian Government's public consultation

October 2023

UNIVERSITY of
TASMANIA 

Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Tasmania pays its respects to elders past and present, and to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community that continues to care for Country. We acknowledge the profound effect of colonial settlement on this Country and seek to work alongside Tasmanian Aboriginal communities, respecting their deep wisdom and knowledge as we do so.

The palawa/pakana belong to one of the world's oldest living cultures, continually resident on this Country for 42,000 years.¹ We acknowledge this history with deep respect, along with the associated wisdom, traditions, and complex cultural and political activities and practices that continue to the present.

The University of Tasmania also recognises a history of truth that acknowledges the impacts of invasion and colonisation upon Aboriginal people and their lands, resulting in forcible removal, and profound consequences for the livelihoods of generations since.

The University of Tasmania stands for a future that profoundly respects and acknowledges Aboriginal perspectives, culture, language and history, and continued efforts to realise Aboriginal justice and rights, paving the way for a strong future.

Contributors

This University of Tasmania submission was prepared by the Tasmanian Policy Exchange. The primary authors were Richard Eccleston, Meg Langridge, Robert Hortle, Sarah Hyslop and Lachlan Johnson, drawing on research and expertise from across the University with specific contributions from Corey Peterson, Catherine Elliot, Nick Towle, Carmen Primo Perez, Emma Bates, and Greg Lehman.

¹ Members of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community identify with a range of terms, including palawa, pakana, Pallawah, Aboriginal, Aborigine, Indigenous, Traditional Owners, First Nations, and First Peoples. In this submission, we use the term Tasmanian Aboriginal people and communities, while recognising that there are a number of other ways Tasmanian Aboriginal people may choose to refer to themselves.

1. Submission summary

Humanity is facing a global sustainability crisis. By living beyond the boundaries of the Earth's ecological systems, we risk condemning subsequent generations to a precarious and unpredictable future. As with all such global challenges, our response must begin with local action.

A comprehensive sustainability strategy for Tasmania will improve long-term environmental, social, and economic outcomes and make a significant contribution to the future wellbeing of the Tasmanian community. Beyond these critically important objectives, gaining recognition for the State's sustainability performance will also provide brand benefits, drive investment, and secure a competitive advantage for Tasmanian products and services in an increasingly sustainability-conscious world. An ambitious and effective strategy also has the potential to establish Tasmania as a leader in sustainability practice, including by promoting sustainable tourism and sustainability among international students.

The University of Tasmania has a deep and longstanding commitment to advancing sustainability through our teaching, research, engagement, and operational practices which have attracted national and international recognition through Times Higher Education Impact Rankings and International Green Gown awards (among others).² Reflecting this commitment, our submission responds to the Tasmanian Government's recently released sustainability strategy *Discussion Paper* by highlighting sustainability opportunities and priorities for Tasmania and then outlining the key principles that should inform the design and implementation of a state strategy to achieve them.

Drawing on the University of Tasmania's *Strategic Framework for Sustainability*, we believe that a Tasmanian **sustainability vision for 2050** must ensure that we are a sustainable place both ecologically and socially; that we work with ecosystems, not against them; and that we work together.³ Tasmania's natural environment and cultural heritage is of global significance, and we have profound obligations of stewardship, particularly as an island community.

In the past, the environmental, social, and economic challenges faced by Tasmania – and the world – were often thought of as separate concerns. We now recognise the

² Times Higher Education (2023), www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-tasmania

³ University of Tasmania (2020), *University of Tasmania Strategic Framework for Sustainability*, https://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/1302422/UOTBR200122-UTAS-Strategic-Framework-For-Sustainability-2020_vWeb_R.pdf

importance of treating environmental, social, and economic imperatives as part of a holistic system. This 'systems thinking' approach is vital to the emerging sustainability agenda, highlights the need for a state-level strategy to coordinate action, and informs the ideas presented in this submission.

Previous analysis of the growing range of sub-national sustainability strategies (see the Tasmanian Policy Exchange's *Background Research Paper No 1*. and *No 2*. on options for a Tasmanian sustainability strategy) identified a wide range of approaches that can be adapted to meet local Tasmanian priorities and opportunities. Nevertheless, there is no universally agreed-upon approach to developing and implementing a state-level sustainability strategy. We support the streamlining of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to locally specific priority areas reflecting Tasmania's unique sustainability needs and assets.

Given Tasmania's sustainability resources and ambitions, we believe the following areas should be prioritised in a Tasmanian sustainability strategy:

- Climate and renewable energy
- Health and wellbeing
- Education and skills
- Circular economy and waste
- Housing and liveability
- Natural environment
- Fair, equitable and inclusive society
- Progressing the Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty

The Tasmanian Government has already established policies across these domains but formalising and embedding them as sustainability priorities – complete with agreed goals, targets, and indicators – would help coordinate and promote sustainability outcomes, move away from operational siloes, and enhance Tasmania's sustainability credentials. It is critical that these priority areas are supported by SMART goals – that is, goals which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound – to help set clear priorities, coordinate the efforts of the government, community, and industry, and ensure accountability.

We must work together to create a society that meets the needs of all Tasmanians now and in the future, while preserving and restoring our unique natural

environment.⁴ This includes encouraging and supporting our local businesses to become more sustainable and to achieve international recognition, such as B Corp Certification.⁵ We must also ensure that our sustainability strategy is responsive and accountable to the consequences beyond our borders, as our actions have far-reaching social and ecological impacts well beyond Tasmania.

Ultimately, a comprehensive and well-designed sustainability strategy would provide Tasmania with an opportunity to improve sustainability outcomes across the environmental, social, and economic domains while gaining recognition that will benefit Tasmanians today and into the future as well as serve as a global exemplar.

Submission Structure

The remainder of the submission is divided into the following sections:

- **Section 2** outlines the value of and need for an ambitious state-level sustainability strategy. This section addresses the consultation questions about the approach required to achieve a more sustainable Tasmania as well as the role of a strategy in building on our state's many sustainability assets.
- **Section 3** summarises our views on the scope and focus of the strategy, including its aims, priority areas, and the principles that should inform its design and implementation. It also addresses the consultation questions regarding the specific priorities we believe the Tasmanian sustainability strategy should focus on.
- **Section 4** outlines the framework and process that we believe should guide the development and delivery of a Tasmanian sustainability strategy through 2024 and beyond. Again, based on extensive research, we endorse the Tasmanian Government's commitment to consultation and collaboration in relation to the development and implementation of a state sustainability strategy over the course of 2024 and into the future. Ultimately, improving sustainability outcomes requires a deep commitment to fundamental, long-term change which can only be achieved through broad-based community agreement.

⁴ Doughnut Economics Action Lab (2023), *About Doughnut Economics*, <https://doughnuteconomics.org/about-doughnut-economics>

⁵ B Lab (2023), *About B Corp Certification*, <https://www.bcorporation.net/en-us/certification/>

2. The value of a Tasmanian sustainability strategy

The primary objective of a state sustainability strategy is to improve long-term environmental, social, and economic outcomes in Tasmania and make a significant contribution to the future wellbeing of the Tasmanian community. Gaining recognition for Tasmania's sustainability performance through a formal assessment process also has the potential to pay economic and social dividends in the form of increased investment and other brand benefits. The overall objective, therefore, should be to establish Tasmania as an exemplar of sustainability to the world.

2.1 Responding to the global sustainability challenge

The past two hundred years have seen unprecedented economic growth and technological innovation deliver significantly higher living standards and improved the welfare and life expectancies for the vast majority of the world's 8 billion inhabitants. For example, in 1950 almost two-thirds of the world were living in extreme poverty; by 2015 this had fallen below 10%, largely thanks to industrialisation and increased productivity.⁶ Yet this growth has come at the price of environmental degradation and the depletion of finite natural resources, leading to clear recognition that we need to reconfigure society and the economy to live within our planet's ecological limits.

The acute ecological challenges facing humanity are both a cause and consequence of broader societal and economic dynamics, such as growing inequality and declining wellbeing which, in combination, threaten future economic prosperity and the environment on which it depends.

We urgently need to reconfigure society and the economy to live within the ecological limits of our planetary systems.

The objective of a state-level sustainability strategy for Tasmania must be to develop an ambitious and systematic response to these challenges to ensure future generations of Tasmanians are able to enjoy a quality of life and a natural environment which is as good or better than that which we experience today. If a Tasmanian sustainability strategy can deliver these outcomes, it will not only contribute to a better future for Tasmania but will also enhance our capacity to support other regions of the world in their transition to sustainability.

⁶ Roser, M (n.d.), *The short history of global living conditions and why it matters that we know it*, Our World in Data, <https://ourworldindata.org/a-history-of-global-living-conditions>

2.2 The need for a holistic, systems-based approach

Best practice approaches to sustainability recognise that “economies, societies, and the living world are complex, interdependent systems” that are best understood through the lens of systems thinking.⁷ Using this approach, sustainability challenges and priorities should be regarded as being closely interlinked. For example: the degradation of our natural environment exacerbates health problems due to factors such as increased air pollution or limited access to fresh food and water; a lack of suitable, affordable housing makes it harder for people to access education and skills training; and declining health and education outcomes undermine societal stability. The complexity of these interactions is illustrated by Figure 1.⁸

Systems Thinking is a way of approaching complex issues by acknowledging them as an interlinked network of subsystems and elements.

Figure 1: The 'Sustainability Compass' demonstrates how all of the SDGs are interlinked



⁷ Doughnut Economics Action Lab (2023), *About Doughnut Economics*, <https://doughnuteconomics.org/about-doughnut-economics>

⁸ Compass Education (2023), *The Sustainability Compass and the Global Goals*, <https://compasseducation.org/compass-sdgs/>

The interconnected nature of the challenges that we face means that the best way to effectively improve long-term environmental, social, and economic outcomes in Tasmania is through a holistic statewide sustainability strategy that underpins effective and equitable action. The Tasmanian Government is uniquely placed to play a coordinating and overseeing role, ensuring that the strategy's activities are complementary and have maximum impact. This approach will have several benefits:

- Facilitating simultaneous, coordinated, and mutually reinforcing action across priority areas.
- Providing a focal point and priorities for state government departments, government business enterprises, local governments, businesses, and communities seeking to develop new initiatives.
- Unifying and amplifying the impacts of the existing government, business, and community action across the state.
- Promoting awareness and coordinating efforts to raise 'sustainability literacy'.

2.3 An opportunity to build on Tasmania's sustainability strengths

The palawa/pakana of lutruwita have lived sustainably on Country for millennia. Today, Tasmania is an island community with strong social connections and a profound sense of place. The Tasmania Project survey identified affordable housing (61%), quality healthcare (60%), quality education (56%) and environmental sustainability (47%) as the most important factors for improving wellbeing in Tasmania.⁹ Given our broad-based commitment to sustainability, combined with the global sustainability agenda, it is unsurprising that there are already numerous government, business and organisational policies and initiatives as well as community organisations and programs devoted to promoting sustainability. Tasmania has numerous sustainability assets, policies, and programs on which it can build including:

- Unique environmental and cultural assets including the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA);
- Significant renewable energy assets and a world-leading net-negative carbon emissions profile;
- Commitment to develop a state-wide wellbeing framework;

⁹ Lester, L (2020), *Initial findings from the second general survey*, Institute for Social Change, The University of Tasmania.

- Policies and programs to improve educational participation and attainment and pathways to employment;
- Comprehensive Tasmanian Housing Strategy;
- Commitment to the Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty process; and
- The University of Tasmania, the State's sole university, recognised as a leading sustainable higher education institution globally.

The central aim of a sustainability strategy is to coordinate existing initiatives across all sustainability domains in a way that integrates current efforts, sets clear priorities for improvement, and highlights both achievements and opportunities for change. In section 3, we explore in more detail the priority areas where, as a community, we should strive to improve sustainability outcomes. This process presents an opportunity to align existing efforts with credible international sustainability frameworks, thereby enabling comparison, measurement, and benchmarking. While there is no single 'right way' to do this, some international sustainability frameworks are more comprehensive and credible than others.

2.4 The value of a coordinated state-level response

A state-wide sustainability strategy should boost Tasmania's already strong sustainability credentials. Reflecting the Tasmanian community's strong connections to the natural environment combined with the growing value of our 'clean and green' brand, many communities, businesses, and state and local government policies are embracing and promoting sustainability in all its dimensions. An overarching state-level strategy, supported by timely implementation, would help to enhance our domestic and international reputation as a sustainability leader. Moreover, the formal assessment process associated with the strategy would provide additional evidence of Tasmania's world-leading sustainability performance, which has the potential to enhance community wellbeing and deliver wider economic and social benefits.

University of Tasmania as an exemplar of organisational sustainability

Over the past 13 years, the University has made steady progress towards its goal to deliver - and exemplify - holistic sustainability. Intensifying that commitment from 2019, the University has delivered broader and deeper institution-wide action. Our collective sustainability commitment, based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, is embedded in our *University Strategic Plan 2019-2024*. Our University Council endorsed our first holistic *Strategic Framework for Sustainability (2019)* and a new principles-based *Sustainability Policy (2020)*.

This step change was supported by using both the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings and the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) to inform and drive institutional sustainability initiatives. These initiatives have been co-designed across the institution and cover curriculum, research, student/staff and community engagement, and operational improvements.

Our efforts have led us to be ranked #5 in the world by the THE Impact Ranking for our performance against the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (and #1 in Climate Action for a second year in 2023), and to achieve (in an Australasian first) a Gold rating in STARS (with a goal of achieving Platinum in 2025).

Doing the right thing for holistic sustainability has delivered a range of benefits, including increasing the attraction of the University to potential students and staff and providing operational savings over time. [A 2022 survey of UTAS students](#) found 97.5% of respondents support the University's ongoing commitments to climate action. Ensuring that our curriculum is meeting the needs and expectations of our community has seen delivery of the highly successful Diploma in Sustainable Living and the offering of Majors in Sustainability across degrees. Being innovative and forward looking has also ensured the University has been prepared for legislative and regulatory change, such as reporting requirements under the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting scheme (NGERs) and the Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act.

Responses to consultation questions

What do you hope Tasmania looks like in 2050 – our society, economy, and natural environment?

We believe that a Tasmanian sustainability vision for 2050 must ensure that we are a sustainable place both ecologically, socially, and economically; that we work with ecosystems, not against them; and that we work together. A holistic approach to promoting sustainability will underpin the future wellbeing and prosperity of the Tasmanian community. But as an overarching comment on this set of questions, **we believe 2050 is too far off – we should be aiming for ambitious change by 2030**. This is a more appropriate timeframe given the fundamental importance of transitioning to more sustainable systems and practices.

What are the most important challenges we need to overcome to achieve your vision for Tasmania in 2050?

There is a growing emphasis on sustainability across the Tasmanian community and beyond. Sustainability priorities (such as those outlined in section 3 of this submission) need to be established in consultation with the Tasmanian community and perhaps our greatest challenge is reaching agreement on what these priorities should be and making a sustained commitment to improving outcomes.

Improving sustainability requires sustained and focused commitment.

By 2050 we should have implemented and refined policies and programs across these domains to deliver significant improvements in sustainability outcomes. Our ultimate goal should be to establish Tasmania as a credible leader on sustainability action.

3. Scope and focus

3.1 Strategy aims

We believe that at the broadest level, there are five aims that the strategy should seek to fulfil.

1. It should **drive ambitious change** by taking leadership and implementing sustainable policies across all aspects of government activity.
2. It should **integrate the environmental, social, and economic** elements of sustainability into a holistic platform.
3. It should **raise the level of 'sustainability literacy'** across the state by involving Tasmanians of all ages and from all walks of life in a comprehensive and community-led program of public engagement.
4. It should **promote sustainability practice and reporting** among Tasmanian businesses and community and other organisations.
5. It should **promote understanding of Tasmanian Aboriginal approaches to sustainability** in all of its dimensions by centring the concerns and perspectives of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.

3.2 Priority areas

The most common approach among leading strategies in other jurisdictions is to align sustainability initiatives with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adapted where necessary to suit the local context. We support adopting and adapting the SDGs to reflect Tasmania's unique sustainability needs and assets. In this section, we use the broad parameters of the SDG framework to identify and discuss existing initiatives, potential opportunities, and emerging priority areas which could become central elements in a Tasmanian sustainability strategy.

We endorse the seven priority areas identified in the *Discussion Paper*:

- Climate and renewable energy
- Health and wellbeing
- Education and skills
- Circular economy and waste
- Housing and liveability
- Natural environment
- Fair, equitable and inclusive society

However, we propose an overarching eighth priority area committing to working with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and progressing the Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty process.

These priority areas will be most effective when underpinned by SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound) the development of which will take place in the next stage of the sustainability strategy design process. Where possible, goals and specific sustainability targets should align with established and emerging frameworks used in other jurisdictions such as the Commonwealth’s recently established ‘Measuring what matters’ framework.¹⁰ In the following section, we provide an overview of the importance of each priority area.

We propose an overarching eighth priority area committing to working with Tasmanian Aboriginal people and progressing the Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty process

Climate and renewable energy

Climate change is the single greatest threat facing the planet. It is already directly impacting Tasmania and other communities around the world through increased bushfire risk, longer and more intense fire seasons, reduced overall rainfall, ocean heating, sea level rise, and more frequent extreme weather events. These changes will negatively affect our food production systems, physical and mental health, infrastructure, energy reliability, economic security, and biodiversity in the decades ahead.¹¹



Taking action to reduce the extent and impact of climate change, as well as to better prepare for its impacts, will bring a wide range of sustainability benefits. For this reason, aggressive climate action, emissions reduction, and the rapid decarbonisation of industries and energy systems are central elements of most contemporary sustainability strategies.

Tasmania is currently one of the few jurisdictions on earth with a net-negative emissions profile, but it could do much more to set an example to the world on

¹⁰ The Treasury (n.d.), *Measuring what matters*, <https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/measuring-what-matters>

¹¹ World Economic Forum (2021), *The Global Risks Report 2021*, https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_Global_Risks_Report_2021.pdf

climate action. To maintain its net-negative status over the longer term – which was legislated as a target in a 2022 amendment to the *Climate Change (State Action) Act 2008* – Tasmanian climate policy and renewable energy initiatives should focus on three key areas:

- **Emissions reduction:** while Tasmania is currently net-zero, there are still considerable opportunities to reduce gross emissions. From transport to heating, Tasmania’s energy system still relies heavily on fossil fuels, with roughly 41% of Tasmania’s gross emissions attributable to fossil fuel combustion in 2020.¹² The *Tasmania: Net Zero by 2030* strategy outlines a range of key potential abatement opportunities to achieve gross emissions reduction.¹³
- **Low-carbon innovation:** increasing renewable energy generation will be required to reduce fossil fuel dependence, electrify Tasmania’s transport system as well as heating and cooking, decarbonise local industry, and support the development of new low-emissions businesses and practices. Sustainable business practices will be further encouraged through initiatives like the recently announced introduction of mandatory climate reporting for Australia’s largest companies and financial institutions.¹⁴
- **Climate adaptation and resilience:** while it is essential that Tasmanian climate and sustainability policy addresses future emissions and climate change mitigation, it is also important to recognise that global climate change is already directly impacting Tasmania. Detailed and careful adaptation and planning and considerable investment will be needed to address these challenges and to protect communities, infrastructure, and the environment from climate risk.

We therefore support the goal included in the *Discussion Paper* that “All Tasmanians have access to affordable clean energy, transition to fossil fuel alternatives, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience to the impacts of climate change”.

¹² TPE (2022), *Sustainability Background Paper No. 2*

¹³ Point Advisory (2021), *Tasmania: Net Zero by 2030*, https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0029/136829/Tasmanian_Emissions_Pathway_Review_-_Summary_Report.pdf

¹⁴ Chalmers, J (2023), *Maximising investment opportunities and managing climate risks*, <https://ministers.treasury.gov.au/ministers/jim-chalmers-2022/media-releases/maximising-investment-opportunities-and-managing-climate>

Samsø leading in the global energy transition

The Danish island community of Samsø is a true world leader in emissions reduction, energy transitions, efficiency, and the electrification of economic and social systems. Samsø has had 100% self-sufficient renewable electricity since 2007, using local wind, solar, and biomass energy to satisfy the entire island's energy needs. It is one of the few regions in the world that, like Tasmania, enjoys a net-negative CO₂-e emissions profile, and continues to innovate in service of ambitious efficiency and ecological sustainability goals.

Samsø is also unusual for its comparatively high level of public ownership of its electricity generation and local storage/microgrid infrastructure. Even though the island now absorbs more CO₂-e than it emits, it is continuing to reduce existing gross emissions via investments in biogas, battery storage, and renewable, no-emission fuel sources for transportation, with a goal to be 100% fossil-fuel free and 100% carbon-free by 2030.

Health and wellbeing

Health and wellbeing are core to sustainability because they are essential determinants of whether individuals can be active and engaged members of the community and economy. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, governments and communities around the world are reviewing and reforming health and wellbeing systems and strategies to improve outcomes and ensure that citizens can live longer and fuller lives.



A sustainability strategy should aim to complement, coordinate, leverage, and enhance existing objectives, such as the *Healthy Tasmania Five-year Strategic Plan 2022-2026*, a preventative health and early intervention strategy developed to target the social and economic drivers of ill health and health inequity.¹⁵ Given Tasmania's demographic profile there should be a specific focus on promoting wellbeing and providing appropriate care for older Tasmanians.

¹⁵ Department of Health, *Healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan 2022-2026*, Tasmanian Government, https://www.health.tas.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-03/Healthy_Tasmania_Five-Year_Strategic_Plan_2022%E2%80%932026_DoHTasmania2022.pdf

A sustainability strategy should also aim to complement the future state wellbeing strategy and Australia's first national wellbeing framework, *Measuring What Matters*.¹⁶ The *Measuring What Matters* framework has five wellbeing themes – healthy, secure, sustainable, cohesive, and prosperous – and 50 indicators to monitor and track progress. An online dashboard tracks progress towards specific, measurable indicators and is updated annually.¹⁷ Coordinating with existing health and wellbeing strategies and frameworks encourages a systems approach which will provide the best opportunity to address Tasmania's health challenges and improve the ability of the healthcare system to meet Tasmanians' needs.

Actions within the health and wellbeing priority area should focus on promoting a broad range of healthy behaviours and preventative health measures. Measures of health and wellbeing can be at the individual level, such as life expectancy, infant and child mortality, suicide rate, and chronic health conditions, as well as at the system level, taking a birds-eye view of accessibility, quality and continuity of care, and effectiveness. Into the future, ensuring food security will be key to sustainable communities. Indeed, a recent University of Tasmania study found that 50% of Tasmanian households have recently experienced food insecurity to some degree.¹⁸ This is mirrored in University of Tasmania surveys of students and staff which showed that 42% of students and almost 17% of staff are food insecure to some degree.

A best-practice sustainability strategy should be holistic and inclusive and have a specific focus on addressing variations in health and wellbeing outcomes across Tasmanian communities. A systems view also recognises that we can measure infrastructure that enables or detracts from aspirations to promote healthy living, for example, accessibility of active transport modes, or proximity and density of healthy food outlets.

We therefore support the goal included in the *Discussion Paper* that "All Tasmanians have the opportunity to live healthy, active lives in communities that support connections to people, place and culture".

¹⁶ The Treasury (n.d.), *Measuring what matters*, <https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/measuring-what-matters>

¹⁷ The Treasury (n.d.), *Dashboard*, <https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/measuring-what-matters/dashboard>

¹⁸ Kent, K, Murray, S, Kocar, S, Seivwright, A & Visentin, D (2022), *Quality food is too expensive to afford: 1 in 2 Tasmanians are food insecure in 2022 due to the rising cost of living*, Institute for Social Change, https://www.utas.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1630662/TTP8-Food-insecurity.pdf

Health and sustainability in Flanders

Flanders in Belgium provides a valuable illustration of how health can be incorporated into a sustainability strategy. Flanders has aligned its *Vision 2050* strategy directly with the SDGs, and tracks progress using Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).

Flanders has five objectives directly connected to SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing). Flanders' approach to incorporating health, wellbeing, and sustainability offers a possible model for Tasmania. While the two jurisdictions have different issues and contexts, the formula of *Vision 2050* and its implementation roadmap set out clear objectives, indicators, and timeframes that match the region's specific needs with the SDGs. Moreover, wide engagement with stakeholders has helped the program develop a shared vision, with a strategy coordinated and integrated holistically through levels of government and across relevant organisations and departments.

Sustainability strategies and wellbeing frameworks

The move towards measuring wellbeing reflects widespread recognition that there is more to development and progress in our societies than can be measured by GDP or other economic metrics.

Sustainability strategies and wellbeing frameworks are increasingly being adopted by governments at various levels around the world. The two approaches are complementary and, reflecting a systems approach, our view is that a carefully designed sustainability strategy is an important policy tool for enhancing long-term community wellbeing.

Human wellbeing is dependent on and enhanced by natural environments and, without the latter, the wellbeing and even survival of humanity is not possible. Humans are interdependent on the natural environment and long-term human and social wellbeing is dependent on sustainable environmental practices and natural resource use.

Education and skills

Education is vital for empowering individuals and for underpinning inclusive and prosperous communities. It is critical to personal development and wellbeing, enables employment opportunities and social interactions, and is associated with higher earnings, job security, better mental and physical health outcomes, improved emotional wellbeing, and personal fulfilment.¹⁹ Moreover, education underpins adaptive, resilient, and thriving communities, and is central to future wellbeing and prosperity. This is especially important in the transition to a knowledge economy, where work and maintaining social connections and accessing services requires functional literacy.²⁰



Outcomes in Tasmania's education system have improved in recent years, but significant issues remain.²¹ Nearly 49% of Tasmanians were considered functionally illiterate in the OECD's most recent assessments, compared with 41.7% nationally,²² and despite recent improvement only 59% of eligible Tasmanians gained a year 12 or equivalent qualification in 2020 (a figure well below the national average of 72%).²³ Despite a headline low unemployment rate, Tasmania also suffers from workforce participation rate which is below the national average and skills shortages in a range of occupations.

Providing access to quality education and lifelong learning is critical for long-term sustainability. Preference should be given to evidence-based targets which reflect the varied language, reading, writing, and numeracy requirements of Tasmanian communities. This priority area includes improving functional literacy, which is fundamental to a sustainable community. There should be a specific focus on

¹⁹ Francis, D & McArthur, G (2020), *Poor reading, poor self-concept, and anxiety: A review of the evidence and some practical advice*, Learning Difficulties Australia, <https://researchers.mq.edu.au/en/publications/poor-reading-poor-self-concept-and-anxiety-a-review-of-the-eviden>; Lamb, S, Huo, S, Walstab, A, Wade, A, Maire, Q, Doecke, E, Jackson, J & Endekov, Z (2020), *Educational opportunity in Australia 2020: Who succeeds and who misses out*, Centre for International Research on Education Systems, Victoria University, <https://www.vu.edu.au/sites/default/files/educational-opportunity-in-australia-2020.pdf>; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) (2022), *Secondary education: school retention and completion*, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-welfare/secondaryeducation-school-retention-completion>

²⁰ Merriam, S, & Kee, Y (2014), *Promoting community wellbeing: The case for lifelong learning for older adults*, Adult Education Quarterly, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1022823>

²¹ Baker, E (2021), *Fewer than 60 per cent of Tasmanian students finish year 12 but that could be changing*, ABC, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-06-11/tasmanian-high-school-low-retention-rates-changing/10020565>

²² Tasmanian 100% Literacy Alliance (2021), *Tasmanian 100% Literacy Alliance: The roadmap to a literate Tasmania*, <https://www.tasmanianliteracyalliance.org/>

²³ Literacy Advisory Panel (2022). *Paper One: Setting the Scene: Tasmania's Communitywide Framework*. Department of Premier and Cabinet, <https://apo.org.au/organisation/316245>; Tasmanian Assessment, Standards & Certification (2022), *Tasmanian Certificate of Education Attainment: State level TCE data (2017-2021)*, <https://www.tasc.tas.gov.au/wpcontent/uploads/2022/05/TCE-Attainment-data-2017-2021.pdf>

improving educational equity and supporting participation and attainment in regional and disadvantaged communities.

We therefore support the goal included in the *Discussion Paper* of “Full functional literacy and numeracy through quality education at all ages to ensure everyone can succeed, and ensure we are ready for future industries and technology”.

Circular economy and waste

The aim of a circular economy approach is to establish “a regenerative system in which resource input and waste,

emission, and energy leakage are minimised by slowing, closing, and narrowing material and energy loops. This can be achieved through long-lasting design, maintenance, repair, reuse, remanufacturing, refurbishing, and recycling”.²⁴



Tasmania’s island status and relative isolation mean that minimising waste, producing and consuming efficiently, and closing material- and energy-use loops are both economic as well as sustainability imperatives. The circular economy approach involves assessing the ecological and financial costs of inputs to production and maximising their value through strategic use and reuse. Tasmania’s high levels of renewable energy generation and a world-leading net-negative carbon emissions profile are a clear source of competitive advantage in such a framework, especially if these resources are used to produce high-value products on-island.

Thus far, Tasmanian circular economy initiatives have for the most part been focused on waste management and bioenergy. These existing initiatives are an important first step, but current efforts would benefit from embracing a more comprehensive conception of the circular economy. In its consultation, the Premier’s Social and Economic Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) found strong support for a circular economy in Tasmania and pointed out that “reducing waste and recycling are good starting points of the circular economy but there is much more to it. Other countries and places are taking bolder steps. The only truly sustainable economy is a circular one, where we no longer rely on the consumption of finite resources and where all

²⁴ Geissdoerfer, M, Savaget, P, Bocken, N, & Hultink, E (2017), *The Circular Economy – A new sustainability paradigm?*, Journal of Cleaner Production, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.12.048>

materials used in manufacturing are from recycled sources. This is a long, but important, journey for the world to embrace”.²⁵

The goal outlined in the *Discussion Paper* to “Eliminate the disposal of waste to the environment through better consumption choices, product design and developing circular economies” is an important first step but could be more

Accelerating the phasing out of single-use plastic in Tasmania

Tasmania is making progress towards phasing out single use plastics and developing and promoting sustainable alternatives. The Tasmanian Government has committed to working with all levels of government to phase out problematic single-use plastics such as plastic straws, bowls, plates, and utensils by 2025. The intermediate goal is to phase out problematic single-use plastics from government events and facilities by 2023, with a state-wide legislative phase-out to be in place by 2025.

This clear short-term sustainability goal will lead to better environmental outcomes, given that three-quarters of rubbish along the Australian coastline is plastic. It will also generate new business and employment opportunities in the organic resource recovery sector, as the Tasmanian Government has provided \$6 million to support the establishment of two new composting facilities to assist in managing increased organic waste in Tasmania.

The Netherlands’ path to a circular economy

In 2016, the Netherlands outlined an ambitious strategy for developing a waste-free and fully circular economy by 2050. The strategy lays out a clear timeline with targets and milestones for reporting. Further outcomes to be affected by the strategy include:

- By 2030, the Dutch Government is expecting a 50% reduction in raw materials consumption.
- By 2050, the Netherlands aims to achieve a waste-free economy that runs as much as possible on sustainable and renewable raw materials, and in which products and raw materials are reused.

Implementation plans are updated regularly and are subject to progress reporting, which details outcomes including in those areas where considerable challenges remain.

²⁵ Premier’s Economic & Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) (2021), *Final Report*, https://www.pesrac.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/283196/Final_Report_WCAG2.pdf

Housing and liveability

Safe, suitable, and affordable housing underpins personal and community wellbeing and is vitally important social and economic

infrastructure. Insecure housing is linked to a wide range of sustainability indicators, because it is detrimental to health and wellbeing as well as to participation in education and employment.



Tasmania has experienced rapidly rising property values and rents, historically low rental vacancy, high levels of rental and mortgage stress, a long social housing waiting list, and elevated levels of homelessness. Housing affordability, access for low-income households, suitability, and liveability should be central elements in Tasmania's sustainability strategy.

Liveability is likewise inextricably linked to wellbeing and the sustainability of communities, and may include such things as access to nature, clean air, recreational opportunities, and public transport. Beyond addressing acute housing shortages there is also an ambition to establish more connected, sustainable, and liveable cities and towns, which would deliver a broad range of sustainability and wellbeing benefits.

We support the goal within the *Discussion Paper* of ensuring "Access to affordable, energy efficient and climate resilient housing and urban communities, built sustainably with infrastructure to support safety and resilience".

Natural environment

Tasmanians are stewards of remarkable and internationally recognised



environmental assets and ecological systems which warrant careful protection and management in their own right, and because they are central to our identity and the state’s future prosperity, with benefits ranging from wellbeing to agricultural and aquaculture production, tourism, and energy security. While the Tasmanian Government already recognises the need for sustainable management of Tasmania’s natural environment through various programs and documents, these measures are fragmented and would benefit from being brought together within a comprehensive and holistic strategy. In particular, the sustainability strategy could be coordinated with State of the Environment reporting.²⁶

A sustainability strategy should articulate clear goals and actions to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt biodiversity loss, and conserve threatened species. We need to reduce pollution of all kinds, maintain environmental values through stringent biosecurity measures, and ensure there is a Comprehensive, Adequate and Representative (CAR) reserve system across terrestrial and marine areas.

We agree with the goal of “Strong natural resources and environmental management through protection and regenerative practices across all sectors to preserve the quality of air, land and water, and enhancing biodiversity”.

²⁶ Tasmanian Planning Commission (n.d.), *State of the Environment Reports*, <https://www.planning.tas.gov.au/other-resources/state-of-the-environment>

Natural capital accounting

Natural capital accounting is a method that makes it possible to calculate the total stocks and flows of natural resources and services in a given region, bringing together environmental, social, and economic information to improve our understanding of our environmental assets, and their contribution to our economy and wellbeing.

The United Nation's System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA) is the internationally accepted standard for natural capital accounting, providing a framework for explaining the relationship between the environment and the economy, and measuring and tracking changes in ecosystem services.

In 2018 the Australian Government adopted the SEEA through the *Environmental Economic Accounting: A Common National Approach* strategy and action plan, stating that "whilst great progress has been made in monitoring and reporting on the environment, existing environmental information is sometimes piecemeal or inconsistent, doesn't provide sufficient insight into long term environmental trends and crucially, is not linked to socioeconomic data or the services and benefits the environment provides".¹ By integrating data relating to environmental assets with socioeconomic data, a more complete picture can be presented to decision makers on how to optimise environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

Natural capital accounting is compatible with the SDGs; "while the SDGs provide a policy framework, natural capital accounting provides the necessary data to move towards sustainable development".² Natural capital accounting makes explicit the links, synergies and trade-offs between the economy and the environment, aiding in the design of integrated policies.

The ABS has supported environmental-economic accounting at the national level in Australia. Any efforts at the Tasmanian level to integrate natural capital accounting into the sustainability strategy should align with the national approach.

¹ https://eea.environment.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-06/Strategy%20for%20Common%20National%20Approach%20to%20EEA_20180426_final.pdf

² <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/323151568692500022/pdf/Natural-Capital-Accounting-and-the-Sustainable-Development-Goals.pdf>

**Fair, equitable and inclusive
society**



The sustainability strategy should play a role in ensuring that all

members of society are empowered to participate in the Tasmanian community, and that communities and workplaces are accessible and accepting of all individuals. This has the benefit of creating a diverse, equitable, multicultural community, helping to drive economic growth and improve the standard of living for all Tasmanians.

Gender inequality is still prevalent in the state, and as of 2016, Tasmanian women earned an average of \$1,238.60 per week compared to an average of \$1,401 per week for men; a difference of \$162.40 per week.²⁷ Furthermore, the gender pay gap has grown over the past 20 years. In recent years, there have been many reports of harassment and hate crimes targeting people on the basis of their sexual orientation, race, and religion within the state.²⁸ There is persistent and entrenched disadvantage in many communities and new arrivals and migrants face challenges building social connections, securing employment, and feeling as though they belong in the Tasmanian community.²⁹

We agree with the goal to “Eradicate all forms of discrimination including gender, age, sexuality, disability, race, and ethnicity, for an inclusive and equitable society. Promote the voice, culture, heritage, and empowerment of Tasmanian Aboriginal people”.

However, we believe there should be a separate priority area specifically focusing on the equity and inclusion of Tasmanian Aboriginal people and protection of their culture and heritage, given Tasmania’s history of colonial invasion and violent dispossession.

²⁷ Tasmanian Government (n.d.), *Gender Pay Gap*, <https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/genderpaygap>

²⁸ Gibson, J (2023), *Tasmania considers tougher sentencing laws for crimes motivated by hate and prejudice*, ABC, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-24/tasmania-considers-tougher-sentencing-laws-for-hate-crimes/102764828>

²⁹ Rockliff, J (2020), *No place for racism in Tasmania*, https://www.premier.tas.gov.au/releases/no_place_for_racism_in_tasmania

Progressing the Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty

While we support the priority area included within the *Discussion Paper* of a 'Fair, Equitable and Inclusive Society', we think it is critically important

to establish a specific commitment to promoting the rights and needs of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Therefore, we argue that Tasmania's strategy should explicitly focus on progressing the established Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty Process with a view to promoting the voice, culture, heritage, and empowerment of Tasmanian Aboriginal people.



The palawa/pakana belong to one of the world's oldest living cultures and have been sustainably managing Country for 42,000 years.

There is now recognition of the profound and ongoing impacts of invasion and colonisation upon Aboriginal people and their lands, resulting in dispossession, social and cultural disruption, and intergenerational trauma. Best practice sustainability strategies in other parts of the world

acknowledge and promote Indigenous perspectives, culture, language, and history, while championing justice, rights, and opportunities for First Nations people. Given Tasmania's history of invasion and dispossession, it is especially important that a state-level sustainability strategy reflects and supports the aspirations of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and promotes and protects their culture and heritage as central pillars of sustainability and community wellbeing.

Promoting the voice, culture, heritage, and empowerment of Tasmanian Aboriginal people should be a specific, overarching priority in Tasmania's sustainability strategy

The SDG framework does not explicitly seek to promote the rights and wellbeing of First Nations people, and the lack of references in the 2030 Agenda to specific First

Establishing a distinct sustainability domain devoted to promoting the culture, knowledge and empowerment of Tasmanian Aboriginal people will set a powerful precedent

Nations issues such as collective land rights, self-determination, and cultural sensitivity has been widely criticised.³⁰ We believe that establishing a distinct sustainability domain devoted to promoting the culture, knowledge and empowerment of Tasmanian Aboriginal

³⁰ United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) (n.d.). 'Indigenous Peoples and the 2030 Agenda'. <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/Docs-updates/backgroundSDG.pdf>

people will set a powerful precedent for other jurisdictions implementing their own sustainability strategies in the future.

It is essential that the Tasmanian Aboriginal community determines their own priorities regarding sustainability goals and indicators through genuine collaboration and participatory processes. The indicative high-level goals below are based on the *Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty* report, and practices in other jurisdictions such as New Zealand and Canada.³¹

Truth-telling, treaty, and land returns

The Pathway report emphasises that the issues of truth-telling and treaty are intertwined and can be carried out concurrently.³² Truth-telling is a tool for acknowledging, recording, and healing the trauma experienced by the Tasmanian Aboriginal community. In consultation with Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the report authors found unanimous support for a truth-telling process, with the community seeing it as essential to achieving autonomy and self-determination. Truth-telling is also vital for non-Indigenous people, as it helps them to better understand the history and achievements of Tasmanian Aboriginal people. An example of how this process could work in Tasmania is provided by the Yoorrook Justice Commission in Victoria (see below). Truth-telling also ensures that long-term adverse impacts on non-Indigenous people involved in colonisation are acknowledged and understood, ensuring inclusive and enduring reconciliation outcomes.

A treaty between the Tasmanian Aboriginal people and the State Government would be a legally binding acknowledgment of Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples' pre-existing sovereignty as traditional owners of the land, and of the continuing injustices resulting from colonisation. It could result in substantive outcomes including some form of self-government or sharing of power; the return of land; ownership and control of Aboriginal heritage and practices; and sharing of wealth and resources.

Economic participation and self-determination

The Pathway report captures the aspirations of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community to have economic and employment opportunities on Country, recognising that being on Country is "healing for Aboriginal people, restorative of identity and vital to wellbeing".³³ This can be achieved through land hand-back; joint and co-

³¹ Warner, K, McCormack, T, & Kurnadi, F (2021), *Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty Report*, https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/627242/Pathway_to_Truth-Telling_and_Treaty_251121.pdf

³² Ibid 31.

³³ Ibid 31.

management of land; and the provision of fishing or other rights to natural cultural resources through licenses or quotas to enable employment and the growth of a sustainable commercial cultural fishery or other sectors. Equitable participation of Aboriginal people in the Tasmanian economy will also require increasing community capacity to partner with existing industry and lead innovative enterprise across diverse sectors including culture, tourism, agriculture, and energy.

Increased awareness of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and history

Education is needed to address the ongoing lack of understanding in the broader community about Tasmanian Aboriginal cultural heritage and the ongoing intergenerational trauma of colonisation. Linked with truth-telling, it is important to ensure that awareness of Tasmania's history of colonial invasion and violent dispossession, the resilience and survival of Tasmanian Aboriginal people, the richness of their culture, and their ongoing, deep connection to Country are embedded into school curricula and the public consciousness. Education and skills development for Aboriginal people is also necessary to enable equitable participation, partnership, and leadership of this process.

Closing the gap

In addition to the governance and economic reforms outlined above, a sustainability strategy should incorporate specific social and economic targets from the *Closing the Gap* process. For example, there are 17 Target Areas listed in the *Tasmanian Closing the Gap Implementation Plan 2021-2023*.³⁴ Indicators could include the proportion of Tasmanian Aboriginal people enrolled in different levels of education; the proportion of Tasmanian Aboriginal people in employment or training; the proportion of Tasmanian Aboriginal people living in appropriate housing; and the rate of Tasmanian Aboriginal incarceration. These metrics could capture the specific social and economic benefits of the Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty process and other reform initiatives.

³⁴ Department of Premier and Cabinet (2021), *Closing the Gap: Tasmanian Implementation Plan 2021-2023*, https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0027/228852/Closing-the-Gap-Tasmanian-Implementation-Plan-August-2021.pdf

The [Yoorrook Justice Commission](#) is the first formal truth-telling process into historical and ongoing injustices experiences by First Peoples in Victoria.

It has three goals:

- Establishing an official record of the impact that colonisation had on the First Peoples in Victoria.
- Developing a shared understanding among all Victorians of the impact of colonisation and the diversity, strength, and resilience of First Peoples' cultures.
- Making recommendations for healing, system reform and practical changes to laws, policy and education, as well as to matters to be included in future treaties.

It is seeking to achieve these goals using five mechanisms:

- Hearing stories and gathering information from First Peoples in Victoria on their experience of past and ongoing injustices and how their cultures and knowledge has survived.
- Supporting First Peoples to choose how they wish to share their experiences, to avoid experiencing further trauma.
- Examining information that is already available and seeking new information in areas where there are gaps in knowledge.
- Seeking information from the Victorian Government and other institutions to give evidence about current and past practices and policies.
- Making recommendations for systems change and practical changes to laws, policy and practices.

Consultation questions

If we streamline the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to around six sustainability topics or focus areas for Tasmania's sustainability goals, what would they be, or do you think we should simply align with the SDGs?

We support the streamlining of the SDGs to locally specific priority areas reflecting Tasmania's unique sustainability needs and assets, and endorse the following eight priority areas:

- Climate and renewable energy
- Health and wellbeing
- Education and skills
- Circular economy and waste
- Housing and liveability
- Natural environment
- Fair, equitable and inclusive society
- Progressing the Pathway to Truth-Telling and Treaty

In what areas of sustainability do you think Tasmania is doing well, and are there other priorities where we could do better?

We have noted throughout this submission Tasmania's many and varied sustainability assets and achievements, including:

- Unique environmental and cultural assets such as the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA);
- Significant renewable energy assets and a world-leading net-negative carbon emissions profile;
- Strong community and identity and enviable lifestyle for most; and a
- Diverse and generally sustainable agriculture sector.

The key sustainability challenges for the state are improving equity, inclusion, health, and education. Given Tasmania's history of invasion and dispossession, further efforts towards promoting and protecting Tasmanian Aboriginal culture and heritage and progressing the Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty process are needed. Nearly 49% of Tasmanians were considered functionally illiterate in the OECD's most recent assessments, compared with 41.7% nationally, and Tasmanian rates of smoking, risky alcohol consumption, exposure of children to tobacco smoke in the home, obesity, cancers and chronic disease are all above the national averages. A comprehensive system-wide sustainability strategy is an opportunity to improve our performance in these areas.

The overarching challenge for the Tasmanian Government is to implement strategies and policies to enhance our environmental and social wellbeing, while at the same time ensuring sustainable economic development and supporting more sustainable practices and processes across our primary industries. Importantly, the Government will also need to work hard to bring all Tasmanians along on this journey. A holistic sustainability strategy which recognises the interlinkages between all domains of sustainability is essential to help us as a state and community move beyond the myth which is often promoted that environmental and social wellbeing must come at the expense of economic wellbeing. Tasmania's sustainability strategy should therefore be carefully developed with the intention of contributing to resolving this decades' long debate.

4. The development and implementation of a sustainability strategy

4.1 Design principles

The *Discussion Paper* states that a comprehensive and best-practice sustainability strategy should:

- Build on established sustainability assets and initiatives;
- Commit to collaboration and fostering collective responsibility to promote sustainability;
- Strive for consensus, establish clear targets, and commit to transparent reporting;
- Build community awareness via education and support community-led action;
- Drive innovation and leverage private investment and community programs; and
- Aim for sustainability objectives that increase the wellbeing of present and future generations of Tasmanians.

We support these principles, with the caveat that while ‘striving for consensus’ is important, it cannot come at the cost of undermining progress towards sustainability. The Tasmanian Government needs to have vision and leadership. Inevitably, some actions in one area of sustainability – environment, society, or economy – will impact other areas, and critical actions like reducing our reliance on fossil fuels or protecting natural habitats cannot be avoided because ‘consensus’ hasn’t yet been reached, such as with industries with vested interests in the continued exploitation of fossil fuels and natural resources.

In addition to these principles, we believe the strategy should also strive towards:

Accountability: the strategy will need a systematic plan for achieving its proposed targets; this means ensuring that each goal is broken down into a set of short-, medium-, and long-term targets that are timebound and measurable. This approach is also known as setting SMART goals; that is, goals which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound. It should be possible for the Tasmanian community to easily understand how achieving these targets will logically result in meeting the overarching goal. For example, the *Measuring What Matters* national

wellbeing framework measures progress towards 50 specific, measurable indicators and updates progress annually on an online dashboard.³⁵ Similarly, progress in Hawai'i's Aloha+ Challenge is measured through the Aloha+ Dashboard, an online open-data platform to track progress, provide accountability and ensure transparency on Hawai'i's sustainability goals.³⁶ For the Tasmanian sustainability strategy, assessment processes must be clearly outlined in the strategy and conducted in a transparent, consistent, and rigorous fashion to ensure Tasmanians can assess progress and identify successes or shortcomings. This could be accomplished, at least in part, through the publication of frequent sustainability reports to support accountability and public focus.

Systems thinking: the strategy must approach all three pillars of sustainability – environment, society, and economy – as interconnected, which means each program or initiative created to further the strategy's goals must be premised on the understanding that it will have repercussions across multiple areas related to sustainability. On the positive side, this means identifying areas where programs and initiatives can be mutually reinforcing. Conversely, policymakers must be aware of situations where improvements in one area are detrimental to other areas, and both seek to minimise the potential for conflict and engage processes to achieve a resolution and acknowledge trade-offs where conflict does occur.

Evolution: the strategy should feature built-in requirements for ongoing learning and evaluation that feed into updates to the strategy. This continual process of evolution should be a cornerstone of the strategy's design, ensuring that initiatives are responsive to success and able to adjust where progress has been insufficient.

Coordination: sustainability needs to be integrated into all government processes and decision making if the strategy is to be credible and effective, rather than seen as a separate area of government activity. The strategy should be coordinated with action at other levels of government, relevant community organisations, businesses, national or international peer jurisdictions, and international organisations.

³⁵ The Treasury (n.d.), *Dashboard*, <https://treasury.gov.au/policy-topics/measuring-what-matters/dashboard>

³⁶ Hawaii Green Growth (2018), *Aloha+ Challenge Dashboard: Measuring Hawai'i's Sustainability*, <https://aloha-challenge.hawaiigreengrowth.org/dashboard/>

4.2 The design and implementation of a state-level sustainability framework

Further consultation will be necessary to determine the key organisational and operational elements of a sustainability strategy and an implementation work plan.

This work, to be conducted over the course of 2024, should include:

- A commitment to develop (and resource) a sustainability strategy.
- Detailed audit and assessment of existing government (relevant Commonwealth, state and local), industry, and community plans and policies to align existing work and priorities as well as to identify gaps.
- Final detailed consultation on domains, targets, and progress measurement.
- Specific plans, including existing and new initiatives, for how key sectors (e.g., transport, energy) will work towards achieving the goals.
- Developing policy instruments and strategies to drive sustainability outcomes. These will include traditional policy instruments such as grants or regulation but will also include market development, certification, education, and behavioural insights to encourage sustainable practices.
- Internal governance arrangements for the strategy's delivery, including who will be responsible for stewardship of the strategy; the oversight mechanism (i.e., whether there will be an independent board or advisory group); progress reporting requirements; the process for reviewing and updating the strategy; and participation in the regional peer review framework.
- A clear approach to coordination that identifies key partners and methods of engagement. The strategy needs to have a statutory basis.

Conclusion

A comprehensive sustainability strategy for Tasmania will improve long-term environmental, social, and economic outcomes and make a significant contribution to the future wellbeing of the Tasmanian community. The University is deeply committed to supporting the Tasmanian Government and community with this agenda. Reflecting this commitment, this submission has responded to the recently released sustainability strategy *Discussion Paper* by highlighting sustainability priorities for Tasmania and outlining the key principles that should inform the design and implementation of a state strategy to achieve these priorities.

We believe that a Tasmanian sustainability vision for 2050 must ensure that we are a sustainable place ecologically, socially, and economically; that we set and report against interim targets; that we work with ecosystems, not against them; and that we work together.

Sustainability priorities need to be established in consultation with the Tasmanian community; perhaps our greatest challenge will be reaching agreement on what these priorities should be and making a sustained commitment to improving outcomes. Accountability to these priorities must be ensured through specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound (SMART) goals, and adherence to a clear implementation plan to be outlined in the next stage of development of the sustainability strategy.

By 2050 we should have implemented and refined policies and programs across these domains to deliver significant improvements in sustainability outcomes. Our ultimate goal should be to establish Tasmania as a credible and authentic leader on sustainability action.

We endorse the streamlining of the SDGs to eight local priority areas: climate and renewable energy; health and wellbeing; education and skills; circular economy and waste; housing and liveability; natural environment; fair, equitable and inclusive society; and progressing the Pathway to Truth-telling and Treaty process.

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