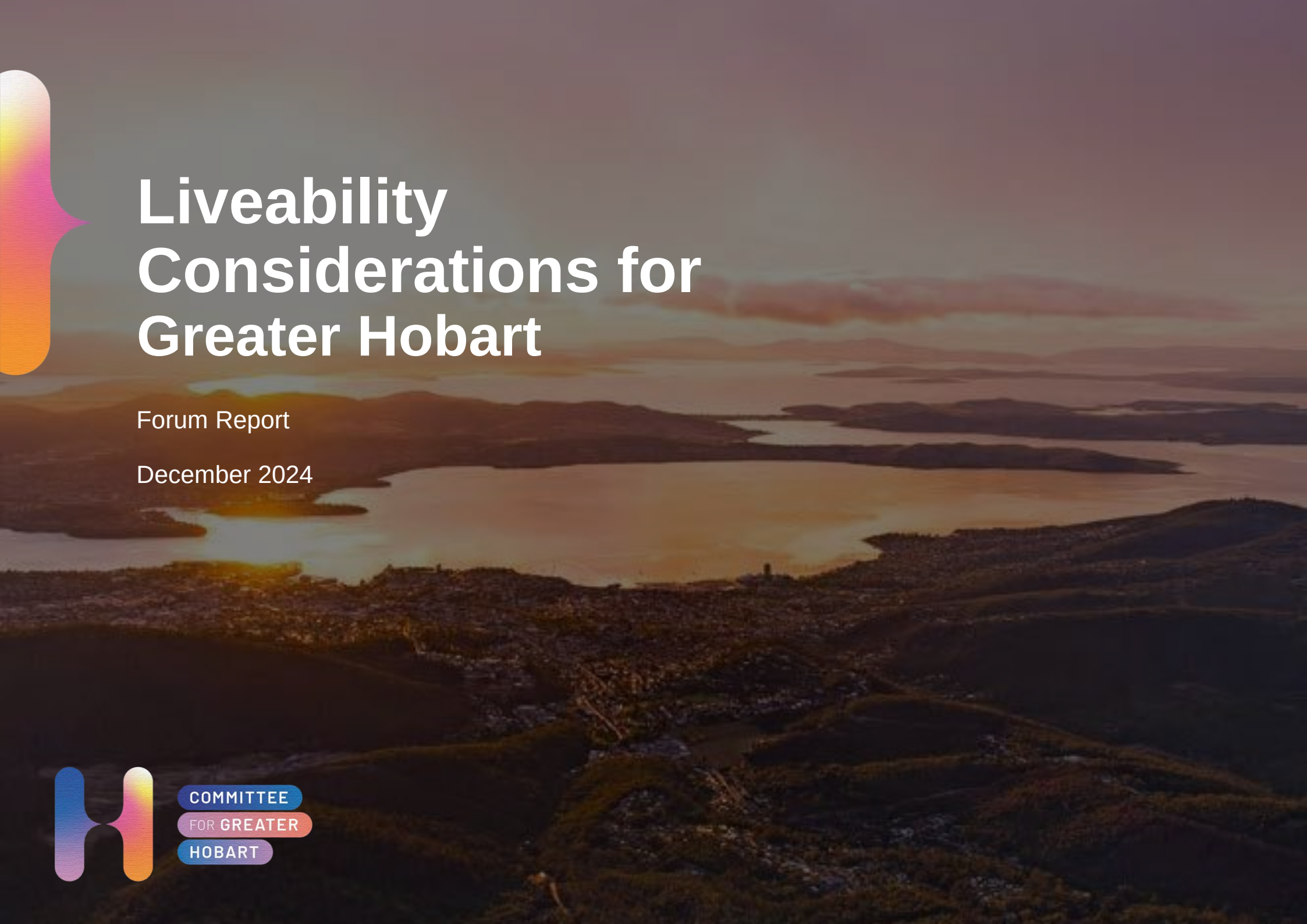


Liveability Considerations for Greater Hobart

Forum Report

December 2024

COMMITTEE FOR GREATER HOBART


We acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal community as the traditional and original owners and continuing custodians of this land.
COMMITTEE
FOR GREATER
HOBART

A message from Uncle Rodney Dillon

- Aboriginal elder and activist



Uncle Rodney with his grandchildren Ochre and Arlo

Acknowledging our history and our culture that's come before us is important. Our people didn't live here for 60,000 years by accident. They lived here for 60,000 years because they planned ahead and they protected and looked after things.

Thinking about the importance of planning, whether it be for environmental changes, or how we go ahead in the future, and understanding what we need in certain areas, we need to put in strong laws about looking after the ancient history of this place.

As an Aboriginal person, the steps of protection, of looking after the history, are important. Your 200-year history is important. Our 60,000-year history is important as well. If you'd been speaking to the Rodney Dillon of 40 years ago I would have told you that mine was more important than yours. And perhaps I might have been right, perhaps I might have been wrong, but today I see both of them are important.

Unless I can acknowledge that your history and your culture's important; how do I get you to understand how important mine is to me? As we get older, we understand that a bit better, and the importance of us working together.

How do we, as a group of people, preserve the truth of history? It was only a few years ago we recognised that we took the babies off Aboriginal people, and we displaced them off their land. But we haven't come to an agreement on how we all work together in the future, and how we go ahead with a planning system that involves that ancient history, and the 200 years of history together.

We need to have good solutions that recognise all the history of this place, and when we do the planning, we understand that we preserve all history and all culture that's in those areas.

For the good of our people, the long-term good of our people, this is like the leaders of the Aboriginal groups, the nations, coming together and making decisions for the future.

I just think you need to see the importance in that.

Foreword

As we go about our daily lives, most of us give little thought to how our neighbourhoods, suburbs and cities have been planned before they are constructed. Why there's a playground on that particular corner, or a shopping centre at the end of that street. The fact that we don't often think about it is testament to good urban planning – understanding the community and its needs; setting out where there should be residential growth; what amenities (such as retail, education and health and community services) are needed in the surrounding areas; and how to preserve and protect our landscape.

However, in recent years there have been concerns and questions raised – with the Committee and in other forums – about issues such as mobility, accessibility and connectivity, including infrastructure and costs. These are implications of a lack of cohesive, collaborative urban planning that can have social and environmental consequences through disconnected communities, increasing pressure on scarce resources and services, degradation of our environment and climate risks, and challenges to access already stretched essential amenities and services.

It is vital that we find a balance where we can have liveable neighbourhoods, vibrant communities, a growing economy and an environment more resilient to risk.

Tasmania's Regional Land Use Strategies plan up to 25 years ahead, setting the direction for how land use change, growth and development in our regions will be managed. They are designed to implement the state's planning policies in ways that are appropriate to each region, and guide local strategic planning and the preparation of planning schemes in the local government areas. The Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS), was first declared in 2011, with minimal updates and changes in the past 13 years. In that time there have been significant changes in our population, demographics, land use and economy.

With the STRLUS under review, the Committee saw an opportunity to bring together a diverse group of voices from across the community to workshop ways we can improve the liveability of our region and provide input into the review process.

What follows is a report on our Greater Hobart Liveability Forum, including outcomes and next steps.

Dr Dan Norton

Chair, Committee for Greater Hobart

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Acknowledgements

The Board of the Committee for Greater Hobart would like to thank the following people who helped contribute to the day being such a success:

- Uncle Rodney Dillon
- Presenters Lisa Denny, Todd Babiak and Emma Riley
- Facilitators Liz Mackevicius and Max Hardy
- Members of the STRLUS working group
- All of our fantastic participants and partners from across Greater Hobart, with a special thank you to Renee Frost and the team at Home Base, Gillian Long from Migrant Resource Centre, and Allison Merridew from Reconciliation Tasmania for all of their wonderful assistance.

Participating organisations

Aurora Energy
Bethlehem House
Brand Tasmania
BRG TAS
Brighton Council
Brighton Youth Action Group
CatholicCare
Central Highlands Council
Circular Economy Huon
City of Hobart
Clarence City Council
Commonwealth Bank
Complete Streets
COTA Tasmania
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Department of State Growth
Derwent Valley Council
Destination Southern Tasmania
Elders commercial
Enterprize
ERA Planning and Environment
GHD
Glamorgan Spring Bay Council
Glenorchy City Council
Greater Hobart Committee
GSD Advisors
Hamlet
Hobart City Mission
Hobartisan Books
Home Base
Homes Tasmania
Huon Valley Council
JAC Group
Kinetic
Kingborough Council
Master Builders Tasmania
McGregor & Associates
Metro Tasmania
Migrant Resource Centre Tasmania
MONA
Page Seager Lawyers
Pitt & Sherry
RACT
REIT
Reconciliation Tasmania
RDA Tasmania
Sorell Council
Southern Midlands Council
STCA
Southern Waste Authority/Wellington Park Trust
St Lukes
State Planning Office
Steople
Tasman Council
Tasmanian University Student Association
Telstra
TheProjectLab
TICT
Troublesmiths
University of Tasmania
YIMBY Hobart
Youth Network of Tasmania
Youth Representatives

Examining the State of Play

The STRLUS released in 2011 forecast that by 2035, Southern Tasmania would have an indicative planning population of 327,036 and 138,700 dwellings. However, in 2023^ the Southern Tasmanian population was already at 298,589 and the number of dwellings 138,532, with an estimated 27,665 more dwellings needed in the next 23 years.

While our population growth is predicted to slow and hit an estimated 342,066 by 2046, it still shows that the 2011 plan vastly underestimated how quickly our region would expand.

The STRLUS State of Play report, released on 23 September 2024, shows that in the past 10 years:

- A quarter of new dwelling approvals in the Region were in Clarence;
- Together, Kingborough, Brighton and Sorell made up more than a third of new dwelling approvals; and
- Inner city areas (Hobart City and Glenorchy) accommodate only one in five new homes in the region.

Without reliable, accessible alternative forms of transport, and with essential services such as medical centres and schools located further away, residents of urban areas must use private vehicles, reducing the ability to easily access these services and adding to the carbon footprint.

The impacts on our communities of increased development in previously untouched urban areas, and a lower number of denser, multi-faceted developments utilising land that is already connected to services and amenities, include:

- The Socio-Economic Index of Advantage and Disadvantage based on the 2021 Census shows that disadvantage generally increases with distance as you travel out of the Hobart metropolitan area, particularly to the west and south. This is attributed to lower incomes, less access to services and facilities, lower educational attainment, and a lower skills base.
- The STRLUS State of Play report shows that the availability of social infrastructure providing essential services to support liveable communities such as education, sport, arts and culture, and health and wellbeing significantly reduces as you travel out of the CBD.
- Without reliable, accessible alternative forms of transport, and with essential services such as medical centres and schools located further away, residents of urban areas must use private vehicles, reducing the ability to easily access these services and adding to the carbon footprint.

The impact on our environment, and the subsequent increase in risk from natural disasters such as bushfire, flooding and landslides from heavy rain, cannot be underestimated.

Renewables, Climate and Future Industries Tasmania (RECFIT) research projects in the next 75 years there will be an increase in extreme weather events such as frequency and intensity of storms, coastal erosion and inundation, longer fire seasons and more days of high-range fire danger, an increase in summer temperatures and more heatwaves, an increase in drought conditions in some parts of the state, and river flooding in some catchments.

We have already seen an increase in extreme climate and weather activity in the past 10 years, including significant bushfire seasons, unprecedented marine heatwaves and prolonged droughts.

The State Government's TasAlert website enables you to map the natural hazard information for where you live, including bushfire, coastal erosion and inundation, and landslide. A quick search shows a large amount of Greater Hobart's bushland areas listed as bushfire-prone or at risk of the impact of bushfire (smoke and embers) - an alarming amount of which is increasingly seeing residential development.

People living in more urbanised areas are also seeing the impacts of increased temperatures. Menzies Institute for Medical Research^^ shows a 9 per cent increase in deaths in Tasmania during low-intensity heat waves.

University of Tasmania research** shows that LGAs such as Glenorchy are at high risk of heat-related deaths due to low levels of tree cover, higher use of brick and concrete in construction, and higher levels of social vulnerability due to socio-economic factors and population age. The research also shows the presence of trees in neighbourhoods can reduce air temperatures by as much as 10 degrees and over roads by up to 20 degrees.



When you consider Tasmania has a greater proportion of elderly people, a greater proportion of those living with a chronic health condition, and the highest proportion of those living in disadvantaged regions, when compared to other Australian jurisdictions*, it is vital that we find a balance where we can have liveable neighbourhoods, vibrant communities, a growing economy and an environment more resilient to risk.

The Committee for Greater Hobart convened a forum on 15 October 2024 that brought together members, government and business leaders, community groups and young people discuss the opportunities to improve liveability in the region.

As an independent voice free from political or special interest, the Committee stepped in to facilitate discussion between government, businesses and the community – something that was identified as lacking but is essential to building a better future for all of the region's residents.

It also provided a platform for participants to have input into the Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS), as well as increase the understanding of the role urban planning plays in key liveability benchmarks including climate, population, housing, mobility and wellbeing.

COMMITTEE FOR GREATER HOBART



Assets and strengths in the Greater Hobart community

The Greater Hobart community knows how to achieve great things. Participants were invited to share a story about a memorable achievement in the Greater Hobart community and reflect on what we can learn from these experiences. In particular, the skills, strengths, qualities that we can bring to planning for the future of Greater Hobart.

The activity was personal, enabling participants to draw out common factors of success. Those telling their stories did so with smiles, laughter and animated gestures. Those listening showed genuine curiosity and active listening.

Following the 1:1 conversations, table hosts scribed reflections from the group. The key themes from the reflections included:

Smallness as a strength: the region's scale should be seen as a benefit and opportunity; things can get done; it's agile. Obstacles can be overcome and hurdles jumped. It takes persistence. It's big enough to have all the moving parts, but small enough so people know each other. It makes Tasmania ideal for pilot projects.

Building on its scale, the region has many **connected networks**, as well as diverse opinions and skills. This common purpose and shared passion is complemented by diverse perspectives, which make for better outcomes and problem solving. The ability to connect with others, share a vision, and engage diverse voices is essential. These networks mean that ideas can get championed; when you connect to the right people, great things can happen.

A shared **passion and commitment** to a common goal are present, and there is genuine enthusiasm and care for the community. This passion often translates into a drive to improve places, foster inclusion, and create positive impacts. The alignment between personal values and project outcomes strengthens motivation and momentum.

Resilience, perseverance, and tenacity emerged as critical qualities. Despite challenges, there is capacity to persist, the courage to take risks, the ability to solve problems creatively, and pivot when necessary. This means that ideas are turned into actions and projects. Being adaptable, maintaining a positive outlook and a willingness to learn were also emphasized as essential to dealing with uncertainty and achieving long-term goals.



Paired conversations

‘A deep understanding of our population age structure and projected change over time is key to planning for current and future liveability’

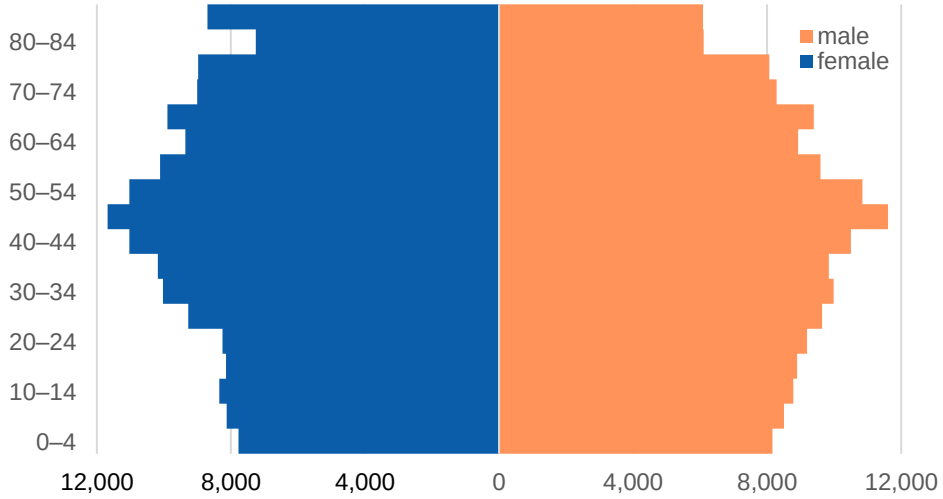
- Workforce Demographer Lisa Denny

Planning for the current and future liveability of a place requires deep understanding of its population age structure - the distribution of its community by age and sex - and projected change over time.

Just as an individual’s, couple’s or family’s needs change over time, so too does their concept of liveability.

The characteristics of a place that support wellbeing and quality of life - collectively termed the ‘liveability’ of a place - are significant in attracting and retaining people in communities. As interstate and international migration plays a larger role in population change in Tasmania, and the shape of population age structures within the state, perceived and actual liveability will become even more important for communities and their future sustainability.

Population age structures are visual representations of a community and are often given names that reflect their shape. These shapes, and how they change over time, can also reflect the broader needs of the population and help inform policy development in terms of investment in services, infrastructure, amenities and other liveability qualities, as well as land use planning.



Projected population age structure, Southern Tasmania, 2038

Within Southern Tasmania, seven different types of population age structures are projected to evolve over the next 15 years, based on the recent patterns of population change for their area - the inverse coffin, middle-aged spread, pyramid, column, apple-core, coffin and the tornado.

The further away from services, employment and quality education that a Local Government Area (LGA) is, and the older the population, the more volatile the age structure and the more vulnerable the community is to poor liveability factors.

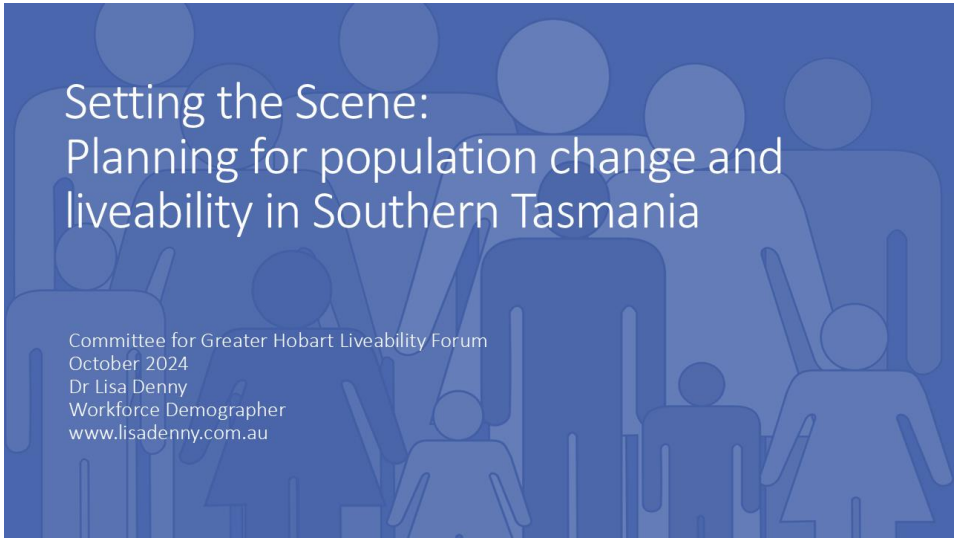
While the Southern Tasmania region is projected to grow by 32,000 people over the next 15 years at an average rate of 0.72% per annum, almost half (45%) of this growth will be in the population aged between 65 and 84 years of age, and 25% in the population aged 85 or older.

By 2038, it is projected that 24.8% of the Southern Tasmanian region population will be aged 65 or older. In comparison, the number of children living in Southern Tasmania will increase by 886 over the 15 years to account for 15% of the population, and the number of working age Tasmanians (15- to 64-year-olds) will increase by 27% to represent 60% of the population. However, projected population change differs considerably for each of the 12 LGAs that make up Southern Tasmania.

Based on the age structure, which reflects stages of life, a population will have different needs in terms of services, infrastructure and amenities. The factors that both determine, and contribute to, liveability will differ by LGA. These population age structures need to be planned for in terms of housing, education, health services, transport, recreation and other liveability factors that attract, retain or deter people from the respective communities.

While planning for growth has traditionally focused on critical infrastructure planning for more people, liveability factors across the lifespan now need to be embedded in the planning process.

If the needs of the community within these populations are not met through appropriate planning and provisions, then it is not likely that the projected population age structures will eventuate. On the other hand, proactive strategic planning can help projected population age structures to become more favourable shapes, supporting more sustainable communities and enhancing the liveability aspects for the region and the LGAs within it.





Dr Lisa Denny is a Workforce Demographer who takes complex, research and data-driven insights and interprets complex economic and social issues to help clients understand the inter-related nature of population change, the economy, the work force and the broader community, and works with them to develop informed strategic policy advice and solutions.

Click here to view the full presentation

'Today’s world is so loud and somewhat samey, that the quietness and stillness of Tasmania is attractive'

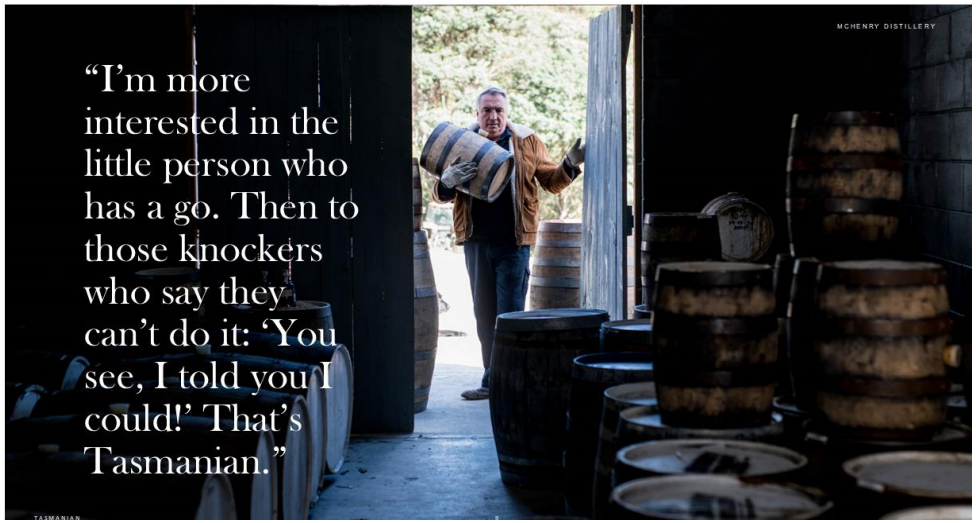
- Brand Tasmania CEO Todd Babiak

Before I arrived in Tasmania, I'd never heard the word “bogan” before. People would smile as they would tell me the story of the two-headed scar. But it would turn serious. They would talk about being left off the map, mocked in the media, growing up feeling like second-class Australians. Growing up without confidence was difficult for so many of the people we interviewed.

Yet the turn in the story was often despite all of that, or maybe even because of it in some ways, Tasmanians had to work harder for everything. You speak of businesses, arts organisations, and enterprises that feel like they could not have happened anywhere else. “Did you know we invented Australian whiskey?” “Did you know we invented the wave piercing catamaran?” Then there’s MONA, permaculture, the TSO, Blundstone, the Hydro, Procreate, the creation of Palawa Kani.

They would highlight the difficulty: history, isolation, tough economic and social conditions. “Everyone said we couldn’t do it, that it wouldn’t work – not here. But we did it anyway.”

We summed up these insights – taken from hundreds of interviews – with “the quiet pursuit of the extraordinary”.



McHenry Distillery. Image credit: Natalie Mendham Photography

Today’s world is so loud and somewhat samey, that the quietness and stillness of Tasmania is attractive – not to everyone, but to some people, our people. And then the grit and determination, the creativity, the sense of invention you need to succeed here. That's something Tasmanians – particularly our young people – are increasingly proud of.

But to attract more people to live here, to keep great people here, we have to be honest about challenges and barriers.

No-one thinks Tasmania is cheap and easy. In fact, if anything, Australians think it's going to be harder to live here. People who research Tasmania as a place to live worry about healthcare, education, and affordability; if all they're seeing in the media is how it's broken, it's not working, they won't come.

Greater Hobart has so many advantages: natural beauty, heritage architecture, fabulous food and drink, arts and culture. There's something Tasmanians tell each other, in positive and negative ways: "Nothing ever changes here."

In our research with young Tasmanians, they're pretty attracted to certain kinds of change. They want active transportation options. They want smooth, reliable – even electrified – public transportation. They want places to live and maybe even study in the CBD. But we don't always invite young people into these conversations.

If we tell them, at the dinner table and on Facebook, that nothing will ever change here, that we're not interested in what they might like Hobart to become, we're essentially telling this highly mobile population of energetic and ambitious people to leave.

This is an easy way to improve the way we work and build together – to invite young people into the conversation, meaningfully.

One of the most powerful messages we hear is about connectedness and community. Being Tasmanian means something, and that's positive. It's profound. Yet if we continually tell newcomers it takes 25 years to be Tasmanian, or that they need five generations of grandparents in the graveyard, we shouldn't be surprised if they seem reluctant to commit fully.

Belonging is important to the people we are working to attract – ambitious introverts who love nature.

Tasmanians are friendly. What can we do to take it a step further, to be more welcoming?

Greater Hobart is already one of the most spectacular small cities in the world. Small is beautiful, and in Tasmania we can even make big things feel small, human, and special.

For its next phase of growth we can do what Tasmanians have always done, at their best: take a few risks, make a few sacrifices, and act with curiosity, creativity, and a genuine invitation to people who want to help.



As CEO of Brand Tasmania, Todd Babiak would be the first to tell you he has one of the best jobs in the world - working with all Tasmanians to bring our brand to life for the economic, social and cultural benefit of the entire community. He is a strong believer in the power of storytelling and narrative and its ability to change people, places and companies.

Click here to view the full presentation

The STRLUS Region Shapers

	1	**Planning for the Region is grounded in an understanding of, respect for, and connections to culture, history and Country**
	2	**Land use and economic activity respect, protect and respond sustainably to the Region's unique natural environment**
	3	**Communities across Southern Tasmania are safe and resilient to natural hazards and climate change.**
	4	**Communities in the Region are sustainable, connected and diverse.**
	5	**Social services and infrastructure are planned and delivered to support a growing and changing community.**
	6	**Employment and economic clusters are accessible and transport networks support how, where and why people and goods move.**
	7	**The Region's economy leverages its unique strengths and provides a stable base for employment growth and diversification.**

Idea and opportunity generation for Greater Hobart

Participants were invited to identify an idea or opportunity they had for the future of Greater Hobart, and to note which of the seven STRLUS Region Shapers it was best matched to.

Table discussions for each Region Shaper were then held, and participants asked to collaboratively discuss ideas, and answer the following questions, while also bringing knowledge of the qualities and attributes from earlier parts of the day.

Questions:

- What are we trying to resolve/achieve?
- What is the idea or challenge being explored?
- What existing strengths can we draw upon? How can we leverage what is already in place?
- What makes us think this idea will make a difference? What would success look like?
- Who can be part of this strategy? What do we need to execute it? Or at least to begin?
- What would be the next step? Who might take the lead?



Table conversations - STRLUS Region Shapers



The STRLUS Region Shapers – the big ideas

	**1**	**Genuine First Nations engagement -** It should look and feel different to previous plans in terms of how it reflects Aboriginal values and approach. What does planning for land mean in First Nations context? Should we be planning for longer than 30 years (ie 300-400 years)? Tasmanian Aboriginal people should lead the review of the STRLUS.
	**2**	**More flexible planning system -** There should be consistency in application of the scheme across regions and planners need to facilitate community aspirations. Schemes needs to respond to changing needs, rather than be static.
	**3**	**Education and informing with data for decision making -** There's an increased desirability to live here, but we need to make sure we use data to inform people about risks and have resilient housing stock.
	**4**	**Revitalise our villages -** We need to revitalise centres, including by incentivisisng infill / medium density, and by providing access to services. This can help reinforce that inner-city living can work for families.
	**5**	**Universal access with village hubs, social support services -** Including intergenerational connections; The right services in the right locations. **Land Development Authority** - Including to support greater density.
	**6**	**Genuine engagement with youth; Using one degree of separation to generate opportunities** **Development levy for public transport -** Create a funding stream from development that flows to public transport investment
	**7**	**Growing liveability to attract enterprise -** What can be done to increase liveability to attract business and investment?

STRLUS working group feedback

- Very positive day.
- Interesting Tasmanian observation in the morning to remind us all of the context in which we live and work.
- As a planning industry we still have so far to go in education.
- Wonderful to have such a broad range of attendees eg private industry, youth groups etc.
- Independence of CfGH was a wonderful opportunity. It would have been a very different day if it had been organised by government. Really beneficial in setting the tone for the day.
- Was a great way to start the conversation about regional planning issues.
- Great facilitators.
- Great to connect encourage people to take those conversations to their own networks.
- Great to see group recognise the potential of palawa input in making the plan stronger.
- Good ideas were ranked so it was group consensus.
- Inspiring and thought-provoking day.

Other participant reflections

- Greater Hobart needs to make collaboration more systematic.
- Good data = good decision making.
- Greater Hobart needs to have a more consistent approach across all stakeholders, with a common view on what weaves us together.
- There needs to be a reduction in power differentials between the ‘usual voices’ and under-represented groups.
- At times, those seeking input from a stakeholder group (particularly the under-represented, such as young people) should consider visiting and attending that group’s meetings/events to gain feedback, as opposed to inviting a representative to join/provide feedback on behalf of the group.
- It was quite remarkable to have all of those people in the same room at the same time trying to come up with solutions for our region's future. This in itself, is impressive and shouldn't be shrugged off. I left the event feeling hopeful for the future and that positive change is possible.
- It was a great networking day and being able to, as a young person, share the thoughts I had and for them to get listened to was great.
- I thought a missed opportunity was looking at accessibility through the social model. Not taking that approach means that accessibility remains an add-on to civic planning.

Next steps

The following are activities the Committee will be looking into further in terms of ‘quick wins’ and medium to longer term activities. The committee acknowledges that a number of participants indicated activities they were willing to work on, and appreciates their willingness to commit to building a better future for our region.

Next steps

Engage diverse voices to create a vibrant culture and respect for Country

- Engage with Reconciliation Tasmania to ensure planning is grounded in culture and respect for Country.

- Work with Brand Tasmania and multicultural community representatives to explore how as a community we can shift the “friendly but not welcoming” aspects of Greater Hobart, especially given our demographic challenges. This may include the development of welcome packs for new arrivals to the state and identify other potential actions that can make under-represented communities more welcome.

- In partnership with stakeholders such as YNOT and Home Base, develop a strategy to establish a permanent Youth Panel for Greater Hobart with financially resourced support to identify and commission research on key topics and issues that impact young people in our region. Membership of the panel would also involve opportunities to build leadership capacity to ensure our future generations can continue to take the region forward.

Next steps

Investigate ways to diversify the supply of housing, especially through consideration of "density done well"

- Understand the present challenges surrounding progress and incentivisation for medium density and existing work under way to address these challenges. Following interest from a number of stakeholders, this may include convening a "round table" to develop a deeper understanding of the different dimensions impacting on the development of infill and density as part of the housing mix in Greater Hobart. This may include:
    a. Consideration of different governance structures that will support the development of projects that demonstrate a mix of housing options for a range of demographics, through the lense of livability and as examples of "density done well".
    b. Advocate for coordinated planning of preferred growth locations, including with infrastructure and transport entities, and key stakeholders.
    c. Investigate the potential for a pilot/demonstration project of medium density at a key location in Greater Hobart that has the characteristics of preferred location for medium density (ie access to services, appropriate surrounding scale, existing infrastructure etc).

Next steps

Improve liveability, including vibrant villages/townships

- Better understand the “critical mass” required for villages and townships to be more self supporting with services, employment, and vibrancy.

- Continue to consider regional governance options for long term decision making to support the continued sustainable development, livability and activation of villages across Greater Hobart.

Next steps

Build fit-for-purpose data to inform planning

- Establish a framework for collecting, managing and updating data relevant for Greater Hobart, including:
    a. Identifying relevant existing data sources at appropriate geographies.
    b. Identifying potential approaches to address gaps in data, particularly at the small area (eg village/township) level.

- Within a long-term framework, consider how the planning system can be more dynamic and responsive to new data and understanding of key issues that are shaping our region, eg. Climate, technology, demographics.