



## Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership – Submission to Premier’s Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC)

June 2020

### Executive Summary

- The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership welcomes the opportunity to submit this proposal to be a key partner in the COVID-19 recovery process.
- With an established metro scale governance framework established through the Greater Hobart Act 2019, we have a well-coordinated partnership and governance model and implementation plan ready to pivot our partnership to work in collaboration with PESRAC.
- As the layer of government closest to community, we have implemented local level actions to address the impacts of COVID-19 in the immediate crisis phase. These actions have been consistent with the legislated Emergency Management and Recovery frameworks already in place; and are ongoing.
- As we look forward, the Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership is the ideal partner to kick-start local economies, create grass roots jobs, and deliver worthwhile stimulus projects in the Greater Hobart region. We can test and deliver pilot projects quickly on the ground, serving as an active agent in stimulating the local economy.
- The Greater Hobart Councils also have the ability to be an effective agent in social recovery, including access to communities that are currently isolated and disengaged e.g. elderly people, emerging communities and multicultural communities. Each of our councils has, or is in the process of, finalising social and economic recovery plans for our communities. These local level recovery plans will place people, and the social, creative and cultural activities which enhance the social fabric of communities, at the heart of recovery planning.
- The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership has a proven track record working across all levels of government implementing the Hobart City Deal with the State and Australian Government.
- We are keen to leverage off the initiatives and projects in the Hobart City Deal to stimulate economic growth (i.e. fast-track State and Australian funding for projects including Northern Suburbs Transit Corridor (Citylink Rail) and the Urban Congestion Fund.
- This submission prioritises 8 key economic and social renewal opportunities relevant to the Greater Hobart region, and to further mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and to build momentum for recovery in the short and medium term.
- In presenting these opportunities, we aim to ensure a balance of social initiatives that focus on people and services in Greater Hobart, as well as an infrastructure construction approach to recovery:
  1. **Support for local business**
  2. **Rebuild the local creative economy**

3. Rebuild the economic impact of tourism
4. Provide key services and infrastructure to attract and retain population
5. Support for the tertiary education sector
6. Increase the budget for public transport services
7. Make bus shelters across the Greater Hobart region DDA compliant
8. Establish a Public Transport Authority

## Background

The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership is a collaboration between the Clarence, Glenorchy, Hobart and Kingborough Councils to implement the Greater Hobart Act 2019 and Hobart City Deal projects. The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership collaborates to better coordinate infrastructure, strategic land use and transport planning for future development in the Greater Hobart area.

The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership is currently developing a shared, strategic and integrated long-term vision for Greater Hobart, including a Metro Plan to support strategic land use planning for metropolitan Hobart. As the population of Greater Hobart grows and demographic changes occur over the next 30 years, the Greater Hobart Vision and Metro Plan will ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to shaping the future of Greater Hobart.

The Greater Hobart Vision and Metro Plan is expected to be delivered in early 2021. Some of the key themes will include 'A City for people', 'Interconnected but distinct and unique neighbourhoods', 'Planning for growth' and 'A Resilient City'. As we move into the recovery phase of COVID-19, the key theme of 'A Resilient City' will include strategies that build the capacity of Greater Hobart to respond to future hazards and threats including future pandemic responses.

## Our economic and social impact

The four councils of the Greater Hobart region include almost 200,000 residents representing 37% of Tasmania's population.

A significant proportion of the State's labour force (approximately 100,000 people) reside in the Greater Hobart area, and the region's economic activity accounts for 44% of the State economy value added (Tasmanian Government Department of State Growth).

In 2017-18, approximately half of Greater Hobart's economic activity (52.3%) was generated by the City of Hobart. Glenorchy and Clarence were the next largest economies in Greater Hobart, accounting for approximately 20.1% and 15.6% of total economic activity in 2016-17 (AEC 2019).

Tourism is a key industry for the local economy. The Greater Hobart region is the gateway of visitation for Tasmania, largely due to the presence of Hobart Airport in Clarence. Approximately 1.2 million tourists visited Greater Hobart in 2018 from outside Tasmania (interstate and international) staying for

approximately 3.4 million visitor nights. In 2017-18, total tourism consumption in Hobart and Southern Tasmania was worth \$2.4bn, providing approximately 17,000 direct and indirect tourism jobs in the region (TRA 2019).

Whilst visitors are dispersed across Greater Hobart, the majority of visitation occurs within the City of Hobart (AEC 2019). Popular visitor destinations in the Greater Hobart region include Salamanca Market, MONA in Glenorchy and kunyani / Mt Wellington. Salamanca Market is the most visited tourist destination in the State, with 383 stallholders, mostly local creatives generating \$69 million into the broader pre Covid-19 economy.

Population growth in Greater Hobart tends to be stronger than all other areas of Tasmania. There has been an acceleration in population growth in recent years, driven mainly through net migration compared to previous years where it was driven by natural increase. Population growth is a key driver of local economic outcomes, providing demand for locally produced goods and services (AEC 2019).

With a poorly integrated public transport system across Greater Hobart, one of the key issues with growth in the region is an increase in traffic, with 70% of all journeys to work by car in the Greater Hobart region, and only 5% of journeys to work by public transport (Hobart City Deal 2019).

Pre COVID-19 population projections by age for Greater Hobart suggest people aged 65 and over will account for a greater proportion of population going from 17.8% to 20.8% in 2041 (AEC 2019). An aging population has implications for future demand for services such as hospitals and other forms of health and aged care, and the availability of labour to support industry/business growth.

The Greater Hobart Councils provide a range of essential services to their local communities including road construction and maintenance, planning and building, waste services, and community infrastructure such as halls, parks, recreation and aquatic facilities.

Councils in Greater Hobart are also key service providers of economic and social development activities including cultural events and festivals, community arts and tourism services. In order to provide these essential community services and functional responsibilities, collectively, the four councils of the Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership employ approximately 1300 Tasmanians in the local region.

The income to provide these services is derived from rates, fees for services and grants or loans. It is important to note that as southern metropolitan councils, the Greater Hobart Councils receive limited grants or funding from the State or Australian Government.

### **Current mitigations – *Community Support Packages***

The Greater Hobart Councils have played a key role in managing the risk of the spread of COVID-19 within the community. Councils have also managed the risk of social and economic collapse within the community and assisted in providing support services where possible, through the development of *Community*

*Support Packages.* These *Community Support Packages* are injecting millions back into the Hobart economy and to communities and businesses that are struggling.

Each of our councils has, or is in the process of, finalising social and economic recovery plans for our communities. These local level recovery plans will place people, and the social and cultural activities which enhance the social fabric of communities, at the heart of recovery planning.

Some of the initiatives in *Community Support Packages* across the Greater Hobart region include:

- Updated hardship policies are being used to provide deeper support to impacted businesses and residents, including rate deferrals and remissions where appropriate. In the last month, many hundred ratepayers (residential and commercial) have been assisted by our rating teams.
- Rent waivers, rent reductions and extended terms have been made available for all tenants of Council properties, including sports clubs.
- A large number of fees and charges have been waived until the end of the financial year.
- Free and discounted parking.
- Community and business grants programs.
- Support programs – e.g. Communication and information sharing with community through social and other media channels; Shop local programs; Safe outreach services to vulnerable communities; Advocacy and social recovery planning with local community agencies e.g. food relief networks, volunteer outreach programs.

### Current impacts of COVID-19 on Greater Hobart Councils

There are significant immediate and long-term financial implications associated with the COVID-19 pandemic through unforeseen reduced revenue. The Greater Hobart Councils face reduced revenue as a result of increased bad debts, community assistance measures and reduced fees for Council services e.g. parking, child care, and sports centre fees.

Each Council will post significant underlying deficits in 2019-20 and in coming years as they work to maintain the delivery of essential services, staffing levels and capital expenditure. In addition to those support actions, each Council will lose significant revenue through the loss of TasWater dividends.

The total financial impact of both the support measures and revenue losses to the Greater Hobart Councils since March 2020 is estimated to be worth \$15.2 million by 30 June 2020.

The Greater Hobart Councils are already planning to extend support into the community as 2020-21 budgets are finalised. For example, all four Councils will freeze rates and most fees and charges for the next financial year. Councils will also see reduced rates income through continuing to provide hardship support arrangements.

At this stage, it is estimated that the Greater Hobart Councils of Clarence, Glenorchy, Hobart and Kingborough will lose approximately \$47 million in revenue in the 2020-21 financial year.

Any further loss of revenue may have additional consequences including potential redundancies across each Council; reduction in capital expenditure and activity and accumulation of unsustainable debt on all ratepayers. In order to achieve a more balanced budget, some Councils will re-prioritise the delivery of core services to the community, with reductions in other non-essential activities, programs or service levels.

The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership wants to ensure we have the capacity to deliver priority services into the future and to minimise cost shifting.

### [A partnership approach to recovery](#)

The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership welcomes the opportunity to submit this proposal to be a key partner in the COVID-19 recovery process to the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC).

With an established metro scale governance framework established through the Greater Hobart Act 2019, we have a well-coordinated partnership model and implementation plan ready to pivot our partnership to work in collaboration with PESRAC.

As the layer of government closest to community, we have implemented local level actions to address the impacts of COVID-19 in the immediate crisis phase.

As we look forward, the Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership is the ideal partner to kick-start local economies, create grass roots jobs, and deliver worthwhile stimulus projects in the Greater Hobart region. We can test and deliver pilot projects quickly on the ground, serving as an active agent in economic stimulus.

The Greater Hobart Councils also have the ability to be an effective agent in social recovery, including access to communities that are currently isolated and disengaged e.g. elderly, emerging communities and multicultural communities.

The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership has a proven track record working across all levels of government implementing the Hobart City Deal with the State and Australian Government.

We are keen to leverage off the initiatives and projects in the Hobart City Deal to stimulate economic growth (i.e. fast-track State and Australian funding for projects including Northern Suburbs Transit Corridor (Citylink Rail), Bridgewater Bridge and the Urban Congestion Fund).

Through a partnership approach, with State and Australian Government support and funding, the Greater Hobart Councils will be able to continue to improve the cities in which ratepayers and community members live, visit and do business.

The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership commends initiatives such as the *Working for Victoria* program which creates employment for people who have lost their jobs due to the impacts of coronavirus, while delivering a valuable community service. With adequate funding to cover all management and administrative costs, this program could be implemented in partnership with the Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership to resource the creation of short term jobs. The Greater Hobart Councils would welcome this type of investment in people to deliver short term community services such as managing city and bushland vegetation to support resilience from bushfire by managing fire trails / breaks; and in greening the City through tree planting. (Victorian State Government 2020)

This submission prioritises 8 key economic and social renewal opportunities to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and to build momentum for recovery in the short and medium term:

### Eight opportunities for economic and social renewal in the short to medium term in Greater Hobart:

#### 1. Support for small businesses

Hobart City Council recently surveyed almost 200 small businesses to identify how best to support their local recovery in the short and medium term. The survey found that local businesses are concerned about the impact on their businesses once Job Keeper is scaled back or removed in the short term and medium term. The survey also indicated that local businesses accessed and welcomed the cash grants from the State Government and Hobart City Council and would like to see this type of support continue.

A key opportunity identified in the survey was that supporting local businesses will be essential as we move further along the recovery continuum as local supply chains and downstream processing will become even more relevant and required. With international trade stagnating, being able to source products locally and to potentially value add will be paramount.

Promote 'new collar' pathways for a local workforce with the technical and soft skills needed to work in the contemporary technology industry, so that local labour costs may not be as prohibitive if technology and automation can be developed. Supporting the local IT sector and increasing NBN capacity is also key in developing these responses.

Initiatives to support local business in Greater Hobart could include:

- State Government to continue to provide cash grants that could be facilitated through the Greater Hobart Councils could to support local businesses to pivot to online trading or to support local supply chain automation
- Funding for Activity City –immediate support for businesses to adapt and build resilience
- Funding for Glenorchy Jobs Hub and the Green Shoots Incubator in Glenorchy –a small business start-up and incubator

#### 2. Rebuild the local creative economy

Greater Hobart enjoys strong brand reputation and representation within the creative, visual arts and cultural sector. The creative economy contributes to cultural diversity, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and technological advancement. Creativity is key to innovation, driving sustainability and prosperity.

In all of the Greater Hobart council areas, the Arts and Recreation Services sector has suffered heavily at the hands of COVID-19. An estimated 895 jobs in this sector have been lost in the Greater Hobart region, with a further 1371 currently protected by Job Keeper and therefore vulnerable (Profile id 2020).

There is clear opportunity for Greater Hobart to rebuild this sector through diversification and developing stronger links that contribute to a vibrant and productive creative economy. All Councils within Greater Hobart have specialisation in Arts and Recreation services and have available greenspace and facilities to accommodate industry growth.

Population attraction activities that promote Greater Hobart as a location with a vibrant existing cultural economy should be pursued. Population attraction collateral should also highlight Greater Hobart as an ideal location for working from home activities (enabling the attraction of sole-trading creative businesses) and which expand the take up of digital services.

State funded initiatives to expand the creative economy could include:

- Showcase – creative workforce hub in Glenorchy
- Corridor of Modern Art (COMA) in Glenorchy
- State Government investment in a regional performance theatre in Southern Tasmania
- State investment into significant cultural and social events when allowable
- Playful City – using public art and commissioned artists to create spaces in the City for children
- The commissioning of a Tasmanian Aboriginal Artist to undertake a major public art installation in Hobart
- The traffic signal box project – a joint project with State Government – the commissioning of artists to paint the traffic signal boxes across the City in conjunction with local communities

### 3. Rebuild the economic impact of tourism

Initiatives that ensure adequate and appropriate infrastructure, products and experiences are on offer, in keeping with Tasmania’s tourism brand, will assist in retaining and dispersing visitors within the region. Pre-requisites for increasing the economic impact of tourism includes investment in the infrastructure required to provide access for tourists to Greater Hobart. Council can use its resources to promote local events and activities that support business capacity building and other economic development related initiatives

State funded strategies to drive appropriate product development to encourage greater visitation, expenditure and dispersal within Greater Hobart, could include:

- kunyani/Mt Wellington:
  - Halls Saddle visitor and transport hub – a gateway to transform access to kunyani/Mt Wellington and dramatically improve the visitor experience of Tasmania's third most visited tourist attraction

- Upgrade and extension of the existing world class mountain biking network by linking gaps and in the trails and completing a network of 47km of track.
- Safety improvement for the existing road including guard rails and resurfacing
- Work with *Destination Southern Tasmania* to develop a Southern regional tourism approach to established destinations such as Richmond/Coal Valley
- Develop a strategy to develop caravan parks across the Greater Hobart region to accommodate recreational vehicles in Greater Hobart which then disperse across the state e.g. making Berriedale Caravan Park development ready in Glenorchy
- Cycling tourism (road, mountain and cyclocross events)
- Arts & Culture tourism

#### 4. Provide key services and infrastructure to attract and retain population

Population growth in Greater Hobart has accelerated in recent years, placing a strain on existing housing and transport infrastructure. Accommodating future population growth in Greater Hobart will require additional soft and hard infrastructure investment and attraction.

One of the key opportunities is to leverage off the initiatives and projects which already exist in the Hobart City Deal to stimulate economic growth. By fast-tracking State and Australian funding for projects including Northern Suburbs Transit Corridor (Citylink Rail), Bridgewater Bridge and the Urban Congestion Fund, the stimulus impact of these projects (which are already committed and scoped) could be accelerated.

Infrastructure projects to stimulate economic growth and support population growth in the Greater Hobart region could include:

- City Link Rail – activating the Northern Suburbs Transit Corridor
- Urban Congestion Fund – accelerate the \$25M Australian Government commitment
- Fast track the Derwent Ferry Service – with linked cycling and parking infrastructure in Bellerive or Rosny Park to further support the hotel/hospitality school development and ferry services
- Bridgewater Bridge
- State investment in place making initiatives such as: the Clarence City Heart project - to integrate the Rosny Golf Course with the Clarence CBD; the Cityscape project –creating an active, vibrant city centre for Glenorchy; the Kingston Town Centre revitalisation project; and the Elizabeth Street and Newtown precinct upgrades in Hobart.

Another opportunity to attract and retain population, is to leverage the growing COVID-19 macro trend of remote working. Remote working can provide local residents with greater options to choose where they live based on liveability rather than access to employment. Councils can facilitate place making activities that promote liveability and may serve as a catalyst to further economic development.

In order to meet the needs of an ageing population, it will also be important to identify and promote population driven sectors such as health care and aged care in the region.



## 5. Support for the Tertiary Education sector

Technical, Vocational and Tertiary Education Services (including undergraduate and postgraduate) is the tenth largest export from Greater Hobart forming 3.0% of exports (AEC 2019). It is fundamental for Greater Hobart to support a strong relationship with the University of Tasmania (UTAS), in recognition of its importance as the only University in Tasmania and its contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of the Greater Hobart region.

The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership recognises the significant impact of COVID-19 on UTAS in the short to medium term. As we progress through the recovery phase, the future re-location of the UTAS southern campus to central Hobart from Sandy Bay will be a strategic city-shaping exercise with the potential to transform Greater Hobart into a University Town.

The Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership will continue to work in partnership with UTAS and the State Government through the Hobart City Deal to relocate the UTAS southern campus to establish a city-centric University, with a wide reach into the network of settlements that make up the Greater Hobart region. This initiative will progress the ongoing development of Hobart as a smart, liveable and investment ready city as well as ensuring that tertiary students continue to contribute to the community and economic life of the Greater Hobart region.

In the short to medium term, place making activities can continue to enable the future relocation of the southern UTAS campus to Hobart City:

- State Government funded strategies to support Local Government and UTAS investment and planning in urban design, public realm and active transport initiatives could 'pave the way' for the future development of Greater Hobart as a University Town. For example, bike paths and cycle ways could be funded and constructed now in Hobart to align with the intercity cycle network and the Tasman Bridge cycleway to encourage commuter cycling in the Greater Hobart region.

## 6. Increase the budget for public transport services

To enable a thriving Greater Hobart region we need an efficient, integrated public transport system that responds to the needs of passengers by providing frequent, reliable, affordable and accessible services. Our collective challenge is to provide a public transport system that makes public transport a more attractive option than the private vehicle option, particularly during COVID-19 recovery to get people back on to public transport (and making it more attractive than before).

The current level of per capita funding is inadequate for meeting the public transport needs of Tasmanians. It is unlikely to achieve the expansion and integration of services that will be necessary to address our key growth challenges and overcome transport disadvantage. An increase in investment now will enable the barriers to accessing public transport to be addressed and establish a sustainable system that can accommodate future growth and changes in technology.

In order to put Tasmania's investment closer to all other jurisdictions the Greater Hobart Councils recommend a budget increase for public transport services so that Tasmania is spending a minimum of \$300 per capita. This commitment would be a starting point for addressing the joint targets of reducing congestion and increasing the use of public transport established within the Hobart City Deal Implementation Plan.

## **7. Make bus shelters across Greater Hobart DDA compliant**

One important way of reducing traffic congestion and encouraging more people onto public bus transport is through adequate infrastructure at bus stops. Passengers benefit from appropriate footpaths and lighting, shelter and seating and connectivity through free WiFi and real time display screens.

By 2022, 100% of bus stops must be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant by meeting standards in relation to minimum infrastructure for footpaths, shelter, lighting and information. Tasmania's ability to provide this vital infrastructure and meet the 2022 deadline is currently being hampered by the lack of clear responsibility for the funding and maintenance of bus shelters in Tasmania.

As part of being a smart city, Greater Hobart also has an opportunity to create a digital bus shelter backbone that helps connect Greater Hobart's services and precincts. The digital bus shelter services could include: Digital wayfinding to complement traditional signage, Public WiFi, Full LoRA Network (long range, low power), CCTV infrastructure upgrades, Innovation precinct alliance projects, Public and environmental planning analytics, Tourism and promotion.

An investment in a digital bus shelter backbone for Greater Hobart would help increase the use of public transport, reduce traffic congestion, and enhance public safety. It would also help create a common user experience and promote digital and social equality. Dedicated resources, and increased funding within State Government to coordinate the management and maintenance of bus stops and shelters will ensure compliance with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act by 2022.

## **8. Establish a Public Transport Authority**

There is no overarching passenger transport strategy or framework for the State, neither is there a single agency with system-wide responsibility for land use planning and public transport planning. This lack of strategic approach and lack of integrated decision-making is hampering responses to our complex growth challenges.

Establishing a Public Transport Authority with dedicated resources within State Government would enable the development of coordinated, strategic public transport policy. A Public Transport Authority would also provide support to Metro Tasmania and other contractors to increase the frequency, reliability, affordability and accessibility of buses across the Greater Hobart region.

In summary, the Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership is keen and well positioned to be a key partner in the PESRAC roadmap to recovery process.

The Mayors of the Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Premier’s Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council to discuss the eight economic and social recovery opportunities that we have prioritised for the Greater Hobart region.

For further information please contact Kat Panjari, Executive Officer, Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership. [panjarik@hobartcity.com.au](mailto:panjarik@hobartcity.com.au) / 0418 475 130  
Yours Sincerely



Lord Mayor of Hobart  
Cr Anna Reynolds



Mayor of Clarence  
Ald Doug Chipman



Mayor of Glenorchy  
Ald Kristie Johnston



Mayor of Kingborough  
Cr Dean Winter

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