



06 October 2023

Sustainability Tasmania
Department of Premier and Cabinet
By email to: policy@dpac.tas.gov.au

Re: Discussion Paper on Tasmania's Sustainability Vision and Goals

Dear Sustainability Tasmania,

The Tasmanian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute) would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Discussion Paper on Tasmania's Sustainability Vision and Goals. To develop our response, the Institute has consulted our membership for their insights and worked with our policy and advocacy team.

The Institute is highly supportive of the ambition to enact wide-scale changes pertaining to sustainability, across various areas of the built and natural environment. The themes of the Discussion Paper are broadly consistent with the Institute's position on climate action and sustainability. In this document, the Institute underscores the urgency of embracing frameworks and models that combat climate change, through actions taken in the building sector by promoting resource and material efficiency, design and procurement strategies, incentives, site specificity, adaptive reuse and rebuilding.

While the discussion paper covers a lot of ground, the Institute can primarily respond to the Aloha+ Challenge Goal 4: Smart Sustainable Communities, and the Priority Goal for Tasmania under Housing and Liveability. Our responses to the below reflect our positions on housing and urbanism, while offering suggestions and future visions of more sustainable streets, suburbs, and cities.

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

Help us write Tasmania's vision for a sustainable future grounded in wellbeing, equity, and prosperity.

- Built outcomes that carefully consider the cultural context of lutruwita / Tasmania that result from in-depth consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community.
- More infill development in the city: densification of urban spaces to cater for a range of housing typologies. This supports the 30-year Greater Hobart Plan that suggests a 70 /

30 ratio of infill compared to greenfield development.¹ Ideally, the Institute would like to promote a scenario where there is no urban sprawl.

- Transport options that reduce reliance on car transport and offer the ability for residents to commute more easily, such as pedestrian ways and cycleways.
- Provision of parks and greenery.
- Housing stock that caters to residents, and short-stay accommodation that is controlled in a manner that it does not negatively impact on housing stock.
- New housing that responds sensitively to existing settlement patterns and heritage/character precincts, and the use of smaller lots for small homes that correspond to spatial patterns of inner Hobart.
- Adaptively reusing buildings with well-informed design to provide opportunities for housing and community assets, that also contribute to reducing embodied carbon.
- Housing patterns that include courts and courtyards that facilitate urban gardens for biodiversity and habitats of native flora and fauna, as part of a broader move to balance density in the city with suburban ecologies.²
- New housing that corresponds to the National Construction Code (NCC) 2022.³
- Utilising unused urban space and retrofitting existing built forms and housing stock, effectively and strategically.
- Repair inner urban blocks with appropriately scaled mixed-use development to deliver both walkable cities and housing choices.
- Architectural and building construction practices that are carbon neutral or are working towards strategies of reducing their carbon impact.
- Utilise sustainable supply chains for materials which can include the reuse of building materials, the update of innovative new building strategies such as the use of engineered mass timber,⁴ and upgrading homes so that they are fully electrified.

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

Some changes are easy to make on the journey to sustainability and others are more challenging. Tell us what challenges you consider are the most important for achieving a sustainable future Tasmania.

- Encourage more development and infill projects, as well as a general push for more multi-residential apartments in the city. This also involves a shift of mindset towards more density in the city, particularly in suburbs that have more low-set housing stock or heritage character zones where there has historically been resistance to multi-story apartments.
- Use of sustainable building materials in the construction of new works, as well as the re-use of building materials. This can include progressive compulsory mandates for provision of local timber resources supply using international “best practice” of the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council).
- Retrofitting and re-appropriating existing buildings and transforming them into housing
- Achieving an integrated transport network, which encourages less reliance on car-transport. This is a difficult obstacle, considering the spread of population across Greater Hobart, the challenges of topography, and the number of people who currently have few alternative options except to drive.
- Cultural shift towards green transport options, facilitated by a response from city infrastructure to allow for pedestrian/cycle networks and nodes (green transport).

¹ https://www.greaterhobart.tas.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/345717/30-Year_Greater_Hobart_Plan.PDF

² <https://landscapeaustralia.com/articles/suburban-refuge-designing-for-biodiversity-in-our-cities/>

³ <https://ncc.abcb.gov.au/editions/ncc-2022>

⁴ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-08-08/tasmania-s-first-timber-high-rise-building-under-construction/102696848>

If we streamline the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals 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?

The SDGs can be adapted to Tasmania's circumstances and local priorities, however, a smaller number of focused goals reflecting Tasmanians' priorities and aspirations could be more effective for motivating community-wide change.

The Institute is closely affiliated with the International Union Of Architects (UIA), who have developed a range of resources on the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Institute strongly supports all 17 of these goals which we would like to see assisting the Tasmanian Government when designing and creating our built environment.⁵

Viewing sustainability through a housing and built environment lens, the Institute would like to promote the following six SDGs.

7: Affordable and Clean Energy

9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

12: Responsible Consumption and Production

13: Climate Action

15: Life on Land

The key SDG that aligns mostly closely with the Institute's own goals and values is Sustainable Cities and Communities. The Institute believes that focusing on this goal will have carry-over effects to the other Goals. This could play in the following scenarios:

- A sustainable city could satisfy some of the suggestions offered for the previous questions, by concentrating the population more in the centre of the city and integrating a robust public transport network alongside green transport options. This would locate residents closer to key amenities, which would minimise travel. Moving towards higher-density living reduced urban sprawl and can facilitate more resource sharing and smaller carbon outputs per household.
- Centralisation of housing and services, which can better facilitate affordable and clean energy options.
- Infrastructure can better serve its occupants, if key areas of population density are identified, and engineered to operate more effectively over shorter distances.
- Resource sharing in suburbs and cities can allow for more responsible consumption and production
- Public areas shared among residents can be given more attention and priority, especially on the city fringe.
- Aiming for all these goals would constitute a form of climate action.

⁵ <https://www.uia-architectes.org/en/commission/sdgs/>

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

Not everything can be done at once – sustainability strategies require incremental change over short, medium, and longer time horizons. Your response will help us understand what you consider to be Tasmania's immediate and long-term priorities.

Areas working well

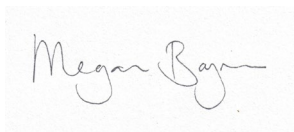
- Hobart as a city is of relatively small scale. For people living closer to the centre, there are shorter distances between their place of residence and key amenities and their place of work. This reduces reliance on cars as a form of transport.

There are many considerations that should be taken into account when addressing sustainability in terms of housing and the built environment in Tasmania.

- Tasmanian housing stock, especially older houses, have various design impediments that impact a household's energy usage. This includes solar orientation, built materials, poor insulation, older building fabric (e.g. Georgian dwellings with limited windows or poor solar orientation). Schemes could be introduced that allow Tasmanians to better occupy their houses, and new works that are built to consider passive heating, cooling, orientation, and durability.
- Residents are reliant on the use of cars to get to work and key amenities. This issue is a consequence of limited and poor public transport options, large distances between suburbs and places of work and key amenities, a cultural attitude towards car use, and the topography of Hobart. More robust transport options need to be considered and integrated.
- Currently there are many unused or underused areas in Hobart (empty lots or disused buildings), that could be used more strategically to enable green spaces, housing options, or mixed-use developments.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important document, that has potential for wide-scale impacts. Please contact us if you would like to discuss any of the points raised further, as we are very happy to continue the conversation.

Kind regards,



Megan Baynes

Chapter President, Tasmanian Chapter
Australian Institute of Architects



Jennifer Nichols

Executive Director, Tasmanian Chapter
Australian Institute of Architects

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation with over 13,000 members across Australia and overseas. The Institute exists to advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice, and expand and advocate the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our communities, economy and culture. The Institute actively works to maintain and improve the quality of our built environment by promoting better, responsible and environmental design. To learn more about the Institute, log on to www.architecture.com.au.