



2016/17 State Budget Analysis: Planning

TasCOSS provided advice to the State Government to assist it to work towards the following outcome:

Tasmania's planning system supports and promotes the social goals of affordable housing, good health and social inclusion through access to work, learning services and social hubs.

Analysis

Effective spatial planning for social inclusion has been one of TasCOSS's key interests in recent years. Good planning in relation to land use, transport and services infrastructure, and urban design has the potential to facilitate and encourage the supply of affordable and sustainable housing and transport, to promote healthy and socially connected lifestyles, and to support access to education, employment, basic services, and participation in the community. In the absence of overarching guidance at the State level, however, market forces alone are not guaranteed to deliver adequate results, particularly in the area of housing affordability but also in areas such as access to healthy food and transport.

The creation of a statewide planning scheme is only the first step towards a reorientation of the Resource Management and Planning System towards planning for positive social outcomes. The Government must also deliver an overarching set of high-level statements of principle that lay out the planning system's social, economic and environmental objectives and identify strategies and guidelines for achieving them.

The Tasmanian Government continues to indicate a commitment to a wholesale reform of the state's spatial planning system, to include the development of a suite of state planning policies intended to provide strategic direction to the planning system. The Budget's funding for planning reform and for the Tasmanian Planning Commission appears to support this goal; it remains to be seen when, how, and to what effect the promised policies will be delivered.

Initiatives

TasCOSS is happy to see that funds continue to be allocated for planning reform and for the Tasmanian Planning Commission, each of which has received an additional \$200k in 2016-17.

Gaps

The governance of spatial planning—how decisions related to spatial planning are made and implemented—is in its own way as important as a planning system's outcomes. TasCOSS believes that the reform of the planning system currently underway presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to

engage Tasmanians in the discussion about the social objectives of the State’s planning system. Spatial planning in Australia has tended to be top-down and the province of highly specialised bureaucratic cultures and operating systems. This situation runs contrary to the basic object of planning processes, which is to create environments that are pleasant, efficient and safe for all residents—a series of criteria that can only be judged by Tasmanians themselves. Indeed, one of the objectives of the Tasmanian Resource Management and Planning System is “to encourage public involvement in resource management and planning.”

TasCOSS believes strongly that the Government should fund and hold a series of consultations across the State to inform the Government of what stakeholders and residents across the State think the planning system’s key social goals and concerns should be. Consultations must include Tasmanians whose voices can be hard to hear, including low-income and disadvantaged Tasmanians, older and younger people, people living with disability, Aboriginal Tasmanians, and people from CALD backgrounds. Consultations should include as a minimum:

- Hobart and the South East
- Launceston and the North East, and
- The North West and West Coast.

[More background can be found in TasCOSS’s 2016 Budget Priorities Submission: Planning](#)