

3rd July 2023

Tasmanian Housing Strategy

Email: brad.kelly@homes.tas.gov.au

Subject: CCA response to the Tasmanian Housing Strategy

Dear Brad

The Cradle Coast Authority thanks the Tasmanian Government for their invitation to provide feedback on the Tasmanian Housing Strategy Exposure Draft ('The strategy'). We further thank you for the opportunity to make our submission by this letter as well as using the on-line pro-forma.

Our submission is based on input from the Cradle Coast Regional Economic Development Committee and Natural Resources Management Committee.

We note and commend the ambition of the Strategy and recognition of the complexity of the housing system, the problems besetting it and the feedback loops between housing, economic health and social wellbeing. We further acknowledge the broad scope of the themes and objectives of the strategy and the implicit recognition that complex problems require complex solutions.

We acknowledge it is a high level strategy and will be implemented through 'action plans' that will be developed subsequent to the finalisation and adoption of the strategy.

However, we consider that reconciling these laudable objectives will be very challenging and invite the State Government to prepare for these challenges. In particular we are concerned that in striving to meet one objective we might make it more difficult to meet others. For example, conventional wisdom has it that the easiest path to build more homes, faster, as envisaged by the strategy is to build the required homes in a few large projects on the periphery of towns and cities. However, as the strategy and background documents correctly point out this may cause significant problems by concentrating poverty, inviting stigmatization as well consigning people to diminished lives of vulnerability and social exclusion in what are likely to be highly car dependent locations.

The strategy also recognises that in many ways the best solution for sustainability and social integration is to ensure the new dwellings are integrated into existing communities. We share this belief; however, this requires many more planning applications, site investigations and many bespoke planning and architectural solutions than would a few large developments. This tends to slow down development which is counter to the intention of theme 1.

Furthermore, emphasizing urban infill development is also highly likely to provoke resistance in the host communities. NIMBYism (not in my back yard) and BANANAism (build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone) arise through fear, concern about loss of amenity and concerns about negative impacts on value with people from a different social stratum living nearby. These can be overcome but it needs good design and careful consultation.

To assist in minimising these conflicts we would like to suggest the development of design guidelines including advice on addressing interfaces with existing developments and how new housing developments can be designed and managed to be a good neighbour.

We also note that meeting the targets for housing will require a significant intensification of towns and cities and in doing so will increase demand and pressure on social infrastructure such as parks, footpaths, health care and education. These facilities will need to keep pace with the development of the dwellings to avoid health and social problems that will otherwise arise.

We are also mindful that some of the present political concerns comes from community concern about the high profile of homelessness as homeless people make camps in parks and on foreshores. We would like to point out that if we just address this issue in isolation and move homeless people into the lowest level of the housing system, into shelters without further provision to move them progressively to more permanent and secure housing we merely sweep the problem under the carpet.

We note Councils are on the front line in dealing with these issues and presently rely significantly on ad hoc interventions and the goodwill of officers going over and above their official roles. We suggest that resourcing councils to address them is critical to the success of the strategy. This will require skills in planning and design and community engagement.

We observe that at present the Tasmanian housing system is relatively homogenous with little in the way of the innovative housing types that will be required to meet the objectives of the plan. We note that at present there is weak demand for this type of housing and suggest an objective is set to foster that demand.

We also observe that achieving the state government's goal of 10000 new social housing units by 2035 will require building on 4,500 hectares at the permitted minimum lot size of 450m². Add roads, open space etc this area rises to 5000 hectares or 50 km sq., in and around urban areas which are by definition high profile locations. Whilst acknowledging clever design and innovative infill solutions will significantly diminish this area, it will still represent a significant land use that will make an impact on the identity, character and liveability of our towns and cities. We suggest that the strategy should rise to the challenge and opportunity this represents and seek to ensure the design, landscape, integration and social infrastructure associated with these developments considers its potential to contribute to the liveability of our settlements.

To conclude, the CCA support the strategy and recognise the importance of taking co-ordinated action in this field. However, we believe it is important that the development of action plans as envisaged in the strategy need to consider all objectives rather than be confined to silos for individual objectives. Otherwise in meeting one objective we may make it more difficult to meet others. In addition, we recommend:

- Greater clarity on the role of local government to address the problem and a commitment to the resources needed to fulfil these responsibilities.
- Promote better design standards to raise the bar of development, in particular in relation to addressing issues of neighbourhood character and integration with surroundings; and
- Suggest greater emphasis on measures to increase the market demand for the innovative types of housing that will be needed (urban infill, shoptop, etc).

Kindest Regards,



CRADLE COAST
AUTHORITY

Stronger Councils, Stronger Region

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