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18 August 2026

The Hon Felix Ellis MP
Minister for Business, Industry and Resources

By email: economy@building.tas.gov.au

Dear Minister

Submission on the Consultation Draft Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy

West Tamar Council (**Council**) appreciates the opportunity to provide a submission on the Tasmanian Government's *Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy – Consultation Draft*.

Council is broadly supportive of the Strategy's intent to strengthen Tasmania's long-term economic resilience by unlocking private investment, lifting productivity, activating regions, growing workforce capability and aligning infrastructure with economic priorities. Council particularly welcomes the Strategy's recognition that Tasmania's economic future will be shaped region by region, and that councils and communities are essential partners in translating statewide priorities into practical, place-based outcomes.

Council's submission is made in that context. The Strategy will be most effective where it is implemented in genuine partnership with local government, recognising councils' statutory planning responsibilities, local infrastructure obligations, direct relationships with communities and businesses, and detailed understanding of the constraints and opportunities that shape investment at the local level.

General support for the Strategy

Council supports the Strategy's vision of a thriving and dynamic Tasmanian economy that creates opportunity for every region and every generation. This is consistent with Council's own strategic direction, including supporting local jobs and enterprise growth closer to home, reducing barriers to business growth, and advocating for policy, funding and infrastructure settings that expand local employment opportunity.

Council also supports the Strategy's focus on private investment as a key driver of long-term prosperity. In the West Tamar context, investment attraction must be supported by clear planning pathways, coordinated infrastructure sequencing, available industrial land, reliable transport and digital connectivity, and confidence that State and local priorities are aligned.

Collaboration with councils must be central to implementation

Council strongly encourages the Tasmanian Government to make collaboration with councils a central feature of the final Strategy and any future action plans. The draft Strategy appropriately identifies councils and communities as partners in regional implementation;

however, this should be reflected in clear governance, early engagement and practical mechanisms for joint planning, not simply consultation after key directions have already been set.

Councils are often the first point of contact for businesses seeking to establish, expand or invest in a region. They are also responsible for local land use planning, development assessment, local roads, stormwater, community infrastructure and place-based economic development activities. For this reason, the Strategy's objectives of faster investment pathways, land readiness and regional activation cannot be achieved without structured and ongoing collaboration with local government.

Council recommends that the final Strategy include a clear commitment to co-designing regional implementation mechanisms with councils, including shared data, agreed regional priorities, clear escalation pathways for investment barriers, and regular engagement on infrastructure sequencing and land supply.

Growth must be aligned with council plans and local infrastructure capacity

Council supports the Strategy's recognition that housing supply, land readiness and infrastructure sequencing are economic enablers. In practice, growth will only be sustainable where State investment facilitation and planning reform are aligned with council strategic plans, structure plans, settlement strategies, infrastructure plans and community expectations.

The West Tamar is experiencing growth pressures and investment opportunities across residential, commercial and light industrial settings. To ensure this growth occurs in the right locations and at the right pace, Council considers it critical that State economic development priorities are integrated with local strategic planning and that councils are involved early in identifying where growth can be supported, where constraints exist, and what infrastructure is required to unlock development.

Council supports planning reform that provides clearer and more predictable pathways for investment. However, reform must maintain confidence in orderly planning, local place-making and infrastructure capacity. Faster pathways should not come at the expense of early engagement with councils, nor should they shift infrastructure costs or delivery risks to local government without appropriate funding, sequencing or partnership arrangements.

Investment attraction requires fit-for-purpose enabling infrastructure

Council strongly supports the Strategy's focus on strengthening infrastructure and aligning infrastructure, energy, digital connectivity and land supply with economic priorities. In regional Tasmania, investment attraction is directly linked to the availability, reliability and timing of enabling infrastructure. Businesses and investors need confidence that transport, water, wastewater, energy, digital and industrial land infrastructure will be capable of supporting growth.

In this regard, Council wishes to highlight the importance of the Launceston Sewerage Transformation Project at Ti Tree Bend. Investment in this infrastructure is critical to supporting industrial growth within the West Tamar and the broader northern region. Without fit-for-purpose sewerage infrastructure, the ability to attract and accommodate new industrial activity will be constrained, regardless of the strength of Tasmania's investment proposition.

Council considers that the final Strategy should identify enabling infrastructure of regional economic significance and establish a clear process for prioritising, funding and sequencing such investment. This should include infrastructure that unlocks industrial land, supports

logistics and supply chains, enables housing and workforce growth, and strengthens the competitiveness of existing and future businesses.

Investor confidence and regional prospectuses

Council supports the proposed use of sharper sector and regional investment prospectuses. These prospectuses will be most useful where they are developed with councils and reflect local planning realities, infrastructure capacity, land readiness, workforce needs and community expectations. A regional investment prospectus that is not grounded in local plans risks overstating investment readiness or directing interest to areas where growth cannot be supported in the short to medium term.

Council recommends that regional prospectuses be prepared through a genuine partnership model with councils, Regional Development Australia, industry and relevant infrastructure providers. This would provide investors with a clearer and more credible proposition, while also helping government identify the policy, planning and infrastructure actions required to convert interest into delivered investment.

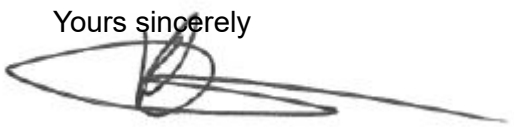
Summary of Council's position

- Council supports the overall intent and direction of the *Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy*.
- Council considers that genuine collaboration with local government must be central to the Strategy's implementation.
- State economic priorities should be aligned with council strategic plans, land use planning, infrastructure planning and community expectations.
- Investment attraction will depend on fit-for-purpose enabling infrastructure, including infrastructure that supports industrial growth in the West Tamar.
- The Launceston Sewerage Transformation Project at Ti Tree Bend should be recognised as critical enabling infrastructure for industrial growth in the West Tamar and northern Tasmania.
- Regional investment prospectuses should be developed in partnership with councils and grounded in local planning, infrastructure and workforce realities.

Council would welcome the opportunity to continue working with the Tasmanian Government on the finalisation and implementation of the Strategy, particularly in relation to regional activation, investment facilitation, infrastructure sequencing and planning reform.

If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact me on 6323 9300 or via email at wtc@wtc.tas.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Kristen Desmond
Chief Executive Officer