Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy – Consultation Draft - Break O'Day Council Submission

Executive Summary

Break O'Day Council welcomes the Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy (EDIS) Consultation Draft and strongly supports its focus on private investment, productivity, regional activation and workforce capability.

The Strategy aligns closely with Council's Economic Development Strategy, Break O'Day population analysis, and delivery mechanisms through the Regional Jobs Hub (Break O'Day Employment Connect) and emerging Regional University Study Hub.

Break O'Day is a small, dispersed east coast municipality with a strong natural amenity, growing visitor economy, and expanding aquaculture and health sectors. However, our economic growth is fundamentally constrained by workforce availability, youth outmigration, and housing supply.

Council's population and workforce analysis identifies that:

- A significant proportion of young people leave the region to pursue education and employment
- Local employers face persistent skill shortages across key sectors
- Incoming residents (including remote workers and professionals) are not systematically integrated into the local economy

These dynamics reinforce a central point:

Workforce coordination—particularly youth retention and participation—is the critical enabler of economic diversification in regional Tasmania.

The Regional Jobs Hub network plays a critical role in workforce participation requiring recognition and funding as ongoing, core economic infrastructure. Without this, the objectives of the Strategy will not be realised in regions like Break O'Day.

Priority 1 – Unlocking Private Investment

Break O'Day's investment opportunities in aquaculture, premium agriculture, tourism and health services are well established. However, investment is consistently constrained by:

- Workforce availability
- Housing supply (particularly worker accommodation)
- Planning and land readiness

Council has implemented:

- Strategic investigations to identify industrial and residential land capacity
- Discussions with Homes Tasmania and targeted local businesses for worker accommodation and industry growth
- Local processes to streamline development where possible

In practice, investors require certainty not only on land and approvals, but on workforce access.

Council recommends:

- Integration of Regional Jobs Hub labour market data into investment facilitation processes
- A single "front door" model that includes local government and Jobs Hubs as delivery partners
- Accelerated pathways for workforce housing and industry-supporting development

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Priority 2 – Accelerating Growth and Innovation

Innovation in Break O'Day is applied, industry-led and place-based, particularly in:

- Aquaculture technologies
- Specialty agriculture
- Nature-based tourism experiences

The key constraint is not ideas, but access to skills, training and industry connections.

The Study Hub and Jobs Hub together provide the only locally embedded interface between:

- Industry
- Training providers
- Emerging research partnerships

Council recommends:

- Support for regional, applied innovation models—not only traditional R&D pathways
- Funding for small-scale demonstration and pilot projects in regional industries
- Leveraging Study Hubs and Jobs Hubs as connectors between education, innovation and industry

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Priority 3 – Lifting Productivity

Productivity challenges in Break O'Day are structural:

- Ageing workforce
- Small business base with limited capacity for digital adoption
- Connectivity gaps in more remote communities

Council is addressing these through:

- Digital connectivity improvements and advocacy
- Workforce development through the Jobs Hub
- Training delivery through the Study Hub

The population analysis highlights the need to better utilise:

- Underemployed residents
- Incoming remote workers
- Retired or semi-retired professionals willing to contribute locally

The Regional Jobs Hub is the mechanism that activates this "hidden workforce" through:

- Employment matching
- Skills identification
- Employer engagement

Council recommends:

- Investment in digital infrastructure and skills programs delivered locally
- Expansion of place-based workforce coordination through Jobs Hubs
- Improved access to regional datasets to support business and workforce planning

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Priority 4 – Activating Our Regions

Break O'Day demonstrates both the strengths and challenges of regional Tasmania:

- High liveability and natural amenity attracting new residents
- Modest population growth with significant ageing
- Dispersed settlements increasing service and workforce challenges

Council's population analysis emphasises that future growth depends on:

- Retaining young people
- Attracting working-age households
- Better integrating new residents into the local economy

The Regional Jobs Hub plays a central role in regional activation by:

- Connecting local people to local jobs

- Supporting school-to-work transitions
- Assisting new residents to find employment and contribute to the community

Council recommends:

- Support for regional delivery models that combine economic, workforce and community outcomes
- Recognition of Jobs Hubs as a core component of regional activation

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Priority 5 – Growing Our Capability (Key Focus)

This priority is critical for Break O'Day.

The region faces:

- Persistent skill shortages in health, aged care, construction and tourism
- Youth outmigration linked to limited education and career pathways
- Barriers to attracting skilled workers, including housing and service access

The Youth Jobs Strategy and Population Strategy both confirm that:

- Young people leave primarily for education and employment opportunities
- Retention improves when clear local pathways exist
- Early engagement (school-to-work transitions) is critical

The Regional Jobs Hub and Study Hub together form the foundation of this pathway:

- Jobs Hub: connects young people to employers, identifies local demand, supports transitions
- Study Hub: enables access to tertiary education without leaving the region

This integrated model is already delivering outcomes, but is constrained by short-term funding.

Council's position is clear:

The Regional Jobs Hub network is critical workforce and employment infrastructure and must be funded on an ongoing, secure basis.

Without ongoing funding:

- Youth retention initiatives cannot be sustained
- Employers cannot rely on consistent workforce support
- Data and workforce planning capability is lost
- Alignment with the Youth Jobs Strategy cannot be achieved

Council recommends:

- Transitioning the Jobs Hub network to recurrent baseline funding
- Embedding Jobs Hubs within the State's economic and workforce infrastructure framework
- Aligning Jobs Hubs with Study Hubs, migration settings and housing policy

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Priority 6 – Strengthening Infrastructure

In Break O'Day, infrastructure constraints directly impact workforce and economic outcomes:

- Housing availability limits workforce growth
- Transport and digital connectivity affect access to employment
- Health and aged care infrastructure drive workforce demand

Council is progressing:

- Worker accommodation and housing initiatives
- Digital connectivity improvements
- Advocacy for transport upgrades

However, infrastructure investment alone will not deliver outcomes without workforce coordination.

Council recommends:

- Recognising workforce systems (Jobs Hubs) as enabling infrastructure alongside physical assets
- Addressing first-mover disadvantage in small regional communities
- Aligning infrastructure investment with workforce and population data

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Cross-Cutting Theme: Youth Retention and Regional Workforce

Across all priorities, youth retention is the defining issue for Break O'Day.

The evidence is clear:

- Young people leave due to limited local education and career pathways
- Regions that provide visible pathways retain and attract youth
- Workforce shortages are directly linked to youth outmigration

Council's approach—through the Jobs Hub, Study Hub and population analysis—is to:

- Create local education-to-employment pathways
- Support young people to remain in the region
- Connect education, training and industry

This approach aligns strongly with the Youth Jobs Strategy and should be recognised as a core delivery model.

Conclusion and Key Recommendation

Break O'Day Council strongly supports the direction of the Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy.

However, successful implementation in regional Tasmania depends on recognising that workforce coordination is fundamental economic infrastructure.

Council's key recommendation is:

The Tasmanian Government should recognise and fund the Regional Jobs Hub network as ongoing, core economic infrastructure, essential to delivering investment, productivity, regional activation and workforce outcomes.

Sustained investment in the Jobs Hub network—alongside continued support for Study Hubs—will enable:

- Youth to remain in regional communities
- Employers to access the workforce they need
- Investors to proceed with confidence
- Regional economies to grow sustainably

Break O'Day Council looks forward to continued collaboration with the Tasmanian Government to deliver these outcomes.