



Draft Approach for the 2029 State of the Environment Report

TASMANIAN PLANNING COMMISSION

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Draft Approach

Summary

1. This document outlines the conceptual Approach to the 2029 State of the Environment (SoE) Report and forms the basis for more detailed planning.
2. The Tasmanian Planning Commission's (Commission) *Review of State of the Environment Reporting in Tasmania 2025* (the Review) informs this Approach.
3. The Review identified four key areas for improvement when preparing the 2029 SoE Report:

- a. **Aboriginal engagement**

Strengthen collaboration of SoE reporting with Tasmanian Aboriginal people using established frameworks and open dialogue.

- b. **Continuity, efficiency reduced burden to reporting partners**

Acknowledging that the SoE report is Tasmania's core report for the measurement, monitoring and accountability of the achievement of Tasmania's resource management objectives, undertake SoE reporting on an continuous basis to build and maintain long-term reporting partnerships that allow time for deeper engagement, less disruption to the routine business of reporting partners and encourage capacity building for SoE practitioners.

- c. **Flexibility**

Adapt to uncertainties (e.g. budget, technology, environmental change) using responsive overarching processes, specifically the UNEP's Integrated Environmental Assessment (IEA) approach.

The Commission will take on more analysis, assessment and reporting tasks, avoid duplicating existing analysis, and engage expert panels for review.

The Commission will remain open to performing targeted investigations where information gaps arise and resources allow.

- d. **Monitoring for SoE report impact and effectiveness**

Monitoring of annual SoE related budget commitments and progress of implementation of government-agreed recommendations from the 2024 SoE Report will be included in the 2029 SoE Report. In doing so, the Commission aims to gain further insight into SoE reporting impact and effectiveness.

4. At the time of writing, no budget allocation has been made for the Commission to prepare the 2029 SoE Report. The Commission estimates it will require an additional \$340,000 in ongoing annual budget to successfully implement the Approach outlined herein.

Context

5. In Australia, responsibility and accountability for environmental policy and reporting is divided between the Australian Government and state and territory governments.
6. SoE reporting is a function *imposed* on the Commission under the *Tasmanian Planning*

Commission Act 1997 (TPC Act), and by virtue of [Part 4](#) of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993* (SPP Act).

Purpose

7. The primary purpose of SoE reporting is to identify and record long-term environmental changes, trend and condition and promote and recommend actions that can lead to changes in policies and behaviors by government and non-government actors that in turn result in improved environmental outcomes.
8. The Tasmanian SoE report must also include an assessment of the achievement of the objectives of the Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS) of Tasmania. In this way, the Tasmanian SoE report serves a core function in reporting on the achievement of sustainable development in Tasmania.
9. In undertaking SoE reporting, Tasmania contributes to a national and international picture of long-term environmental change, trend and condition and has in place a mechanism to drive routine environmental policy renewal and improvement.

Audience

10. The Tasmanian Parliament is the primary audience for SoE reports as stipulated within [Part 4](#) of the SPP Act.
11. Through the process of tabling the SoE report in the Parliament the SoE report is made public and available to the wider community.

Engagement with Tasmanian Aboriginal people

12. As a priority, throughout the 2029 reporting cycle the Committee will listen to Tasmanian Aboriginal people and seek ways to achieve better engagement on Tasmanian SoE reporting.

Reporting partners

13. SoE reporting partners include science and policy experts and knowledge holders from community, government and non-government organisations.
14. SoE reporting partners provide cultural insights, policy advice, data sources, data analysis, technical content, case studies, quality assurance and other feedback.
15. Reducing the burden on partner organisations by allowing sufficient time to build, maintain relationships, engage, consult and provide opportunity for meaningful and high-quality contributions is critical to SoE success.
16. The 2029 SoE report will be guided by an overarching *Integrated Environmental Assessment* (IEA) process that will be undertaken for each theme.
17. Each IEA will include:
 - a. analysis of environmental indicators for changes and trends in the environment;
 - b. analysis of other information that is relevant to the assessment;
 - c. determination of environmental condition by weighing analysis of environmental indicators and other information; and
 - d. recommendations for future environmental management.

18. As a default starting point, each IEA will use the Driver-Pressure-State-Impact-Response (DPSIR) framework.
19. Other frameworks may be applied to the IEA in addition to, or instead of, the DPSIR framework.

Themes

20. Themes provide broad categories around which SoE report information is organised. The 2024 SoE Report was structured around six themes: Coasts and Marine; Land; Biodiversity; Rivers and Wetlands; Air; and Waste. Each theme integrated indicator reports, including trend analyses, pressures and responses, with case studies.
21. For the 2029 SoE Report, one of the themes will be the assessment of the achievement of the RMPS objectives as mandated by the SPP Act.
22. Other 2029 SoE Report themes will be selected by the SoE Steering Committee within a conceptual framework and take into account continuity with previous SoE reports.

Indicators

23. Environmental indicators are the primary evidence base for IEAs and form the basis for assessment of long-term changes and trends in the environment.
24. Indicators are supported by key measures (that may for example be in the form of time series data) of physical, chemical, biological or socio-economic topics relating to the environment.
25. By using indicators, it is possible to evaluate the fundamental condition of the environment without having to capture the full complexity of the system.
26. Indicators will be selected by the SoE Steering Committee within a conceptual framework and take into account continuity with previous SoE reports.
27. If there is inadequate data to support an indicator, the indicator will not be included in the assessment of environmental condition within the IEA. However, this information will be collected, as it assists in the identification of information gaps and guides future investigations or monitoring programs.

Other information

28. Other information will be drawn into IEAs where available and as appropriate. This includes literature reviews; expert elicitation; citizen science supporting expert analysis; GIS analysis; case studies, targeted investigations, modelling or other information that is credible and relevant.

Engagement of partners

29. Early engagement with partners will focus on the Approach to the 2029 SoE Report and identifying data to support each theme level IEA.
30. Where partners are also data owners, they will, as a starting point, be asked to review indicator reports including trend and change analysis of data they provide.

IEA panel evaluation

31. An expert science and policy panel (IEA panel) will convene to evaluate each theme level IEA

and associated recommendations.

32. The SoE Committee will determine IEA panel participants.

Government response

33. In its December 2024 [Response](#) to the 2024 SoE Report, the Tasmanian Government noted its intention to focus on four priority areas, including developing a long-term vision and strategy for Tasmania's environment.

34. The Commission notes there is an opportunity for Government to refine or review its response to the SoE report recommendations. Different responses to SoE recommendations may be considered at any point, including when new information emerges, priorities shift or changes in government arise.

35. Annual budget processes are typically a government's most tangible expression of a government's priorities.

36. Monitoring of annual budget commitments and progress of implementation of government-agreed recommendations from the 2024 SoE Report will be included in the 2029 SoE Report. In doing so, the Commission aims to gain further insight into SoE reporting impact and effectiveness.

Products

37. The minimum product for SoE reporting is a 'stand-alone' document or documents produced in a common, digital format that is printable and accessible such as an A4 PDF document.

38. A limited number of print copies of the 2029 SoE Report will be made available for the purposes of tabling the report before both houses of Parliament and providing copies for parliamentarians. Print copies will also be made available for public access and display for example at public libraries and at the office of the Commission as required under the SPP Act.

39. Arrangements will be made to allow individuals to print additional copies at their own expense.

40. This does not prohibit the development of additional products to meet needs if they arise and as resources become available.

Approvals and transmission to Parliament

41. Each theme level IEA will be collated into the final 2029 SoE Report, considered by the Commission and, when approved, submitted to the Minister for Planning.

42. Under the SPP Act, the Minister must table a SoE report in both Houses of Parliament within the first 15 sitting days of the House after the report is received by the Minister.

Publication and copyright

43. When a SoE report is tabled in Parliament it is published within the meaning of the Copyright Act.

44. The State of Tasmania is the publisher of SoE reports.

45. The SoE report is prepared under the direction of the State of Tasmania by virtue of an Act of Parliament, the SPP Act.
46. The copyright for the SoE report vests in the State of Tasmania.
47. Routine disclosure is when the Commission publishes information that may be of public interest. This includes records of consultation around SoE reporting including feedback provided by expert panels and other submissions.
48. Deferment provisions set out in section 17 of the *Right to Information Act 2009* apply or may apply to material prepared for the SoE report in that:
- a. the SoE report is prepared for presentation to parliament; and
 - b. the majority of records associated with preparation of SoE reports are subject to planned routine disclosure, including records of consultation, engagement and review, as they are of broad interest to stakeholders.
49. Further details regarding [how the Commission discloses information](#) is available on its website.

Summary of roles and responsibility

Table 1: Key roles in the 2029 SoE Report

Role	Responsibility
Commissioning entity	Parliament of Tasmania
Project sponsor	Tasmanian Planning Commission
Administrative service and budget management	The Department of Justice supports the Commission's functions including SoE reporting with the provision of administrative services and budget management as part of a broader arrangement under section 4 of the <i>Administrative Arrangement Act 1990</i> and section 48 of the SPP Act.
Secretariat	SoE Steering Committee established by the Commission
Practitioner	Persons including organisations that are responsible for drafting indicator reports and Integrated Environmental Assessments and includes parties that contribute to analysis and narrative.
Partners	Reporting partners include knowledge holders, experts and subject matter experts from community, government, non-government, science and research bodies.
Reviewers	Experts or governmental representatives who are invited to review and provide suggestions for changes to SoE report assessments. Reviewers may also be partners.
User	Persons or organisations who may refer to the SoE report including: - Parliament - governments - decision makers within the Tasmanian RMPS The information in an SoE report may be used for: - policy development - RMPS deliberations and decisions - education

Mandate, spatial scope, audience and budget

Table 2: Summary of mandate, spatial scope, audience and budget

Mandate	SoE reporting is a function <i>imposed</i> on the Commission by an Act of Parliament.
Spatial scope	The Tasmanian SoE report is a sub-national report within the Tasmanian state jurisdiction. The Tasmanian SoE report relates to all the areas within Tasmania's coastal waters as depicted here: https://d28rz98at9flks.cloudfront.net/70315/AMJ_70315.pdf This area includes 334 islands including the Tasmanian mainland and surrounding coastal waters band. Where relevant, the SoE report will consider environmental information that falls outside this area.
Audience	The primary audience of the Tasmanian SoE report is the Parliament of Tasmania. The report is published by the Crown upon tabling in Parliament, and therefore, the wider community is also a key audience.
Budget	The Commission incurred a direct cost of \$744,000 for the 2009 SoE Report and \$1million for the 2024 SoE Report. No additional ongoing budget commitment has been made to the Commission for the 2029 reporting cycle. The estimated additional budget required by the Commission to perform SoE reporting in line with the Approach outlined herein is \$340,000 per annum. It is estimated that the overall cost (i.e. over a 5 year reporting period) will be around \$1.7 million.

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Cover image: Brand Tasmania and Studio Hubert, Walking Track with Fagus

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TASMANIAN
PLANNING COMMISSION

