

TASMANIAN PLANNING COMMISSION





Prepared and published by:

Tasmanian Planning Commission
GPO Box 1691
Hobart Tasmania 7001

30 October 2014

TASMANIAN PLANNING COMMISSION

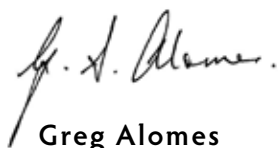
30 October 2014

The Hon Peter Gutwein MP
Minister for Planning and Local Government
Level 9, 15 Murray Street
HOBART TAS 7000

Dear Minister

I have pleasure in submitting to you the Annual Report of the Tasmanian Planning Commission for the year ended 30 June 2014, in accordance with section 19 of the *Tasmanian Planning Commission Act 1997*.

Yours sincerely



Greg Alomes
EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER



PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS

Photos provided by staff of the Tasmanian Planning Commission, The Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts.

GLOSSARY

COAG	Council of Australian Governments
GIS	Geographic Information System
IPS	Interim Planning Scheme
LIPS	Launceston Interim Planning Scheme
LIST	Land Information System Tasmania
LUPAA	<i>Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993</i>
PD1	Planning Directive No. 1
RMPS	Resource Management and Planning System
SOE	State of the Environment
SCOTI	Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure



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As the State planning authority, we will implement best practice planning systems to enable planning reform and sustainable development.

VISION

We will integrate strategic land use planning with State and regional economic, infrastructure, social and environmental planning, for the sustainable development of settlements, infrastructure and natural resources.

We will undertake independent assessment, review, advisory and determination functions consistent with legislative provisions and natural justice principles.

We will access information and advice to contribute to quality evidence-based assessment, policy development and decision making.

MISSION

Professional

- » To promote best practice planning and act with fairness, integrity and impartiality.

Accountable

- » To promote transparency and take responsibility for our decisions and actions.

Collaborative

- » To respect and value the expertise and abilities of others and seek to work in partnership, while maintaining our independence.

Creative

- » To be flexible, responsive, forward thinking and innovative.

VALUES



EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The 2013-14 financial year saw substantial progress in the implementation of planning reforms to improve the performance of Tasmania's planning system. Key milestones included:

- ♦ formal assessment of the declared Launceston Interim Planning Scheme;
- ♦ declaration of all 9 interim planning schemes in the Cradle Coast Region;
- ♦ declaration of a further 6 interim planning schemes in the Northern Region;
- ♦ submission of 12 draft interim planning schemes in the Southern Region;
- ♦ introduction of further statewide planning directives and legislative amendments; and
- ♦ development of single statewide digital planning system.

The result is that 28 of the 29 councils across the State have new interim planning schemes with a consistent format, structure and zoning, based on the planning scheme template for Tasmania in Planning Directive No.1 (PD1).

In practical terms, the 23 template zones in PD1 replace the 436 different land use zones in existing planning schemes, with a reasonable level of regionally consistent planning provisions for each zone. This is a significant reform but further work such as that

implemented in Planning Directive 4.1 - Statewide Standards for Residential Development, is required to achieve greater statewide consistency in planning provisions.

The Tasmanian Planning Commission's formal assessment of the Launceston Interim Planning Scheme will make a substantial contribution to this end by improving the drafting quality and consistency of planning provisions. Similarly, work on the Planning Schemes Online Project will transform the way Tasmanians access planning scheme information, by bringing statewide planning and development information and services together on a single website.

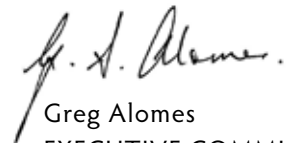
The new Government elected in March 2014 has committed to implement a statewide planning scheme with consistent statewide planning provisions for each type of zone, and a consistent suite of statewide planning codes. This forms part of a broader reform program to make Tasmania's planning system 'fairer, faster, cheaper and simpler'.

In May 2014, the Government established the Planning Reform Taskforce charged with providing advice on key elements of the planning reform program.

The Commission is assisting the Government and the

Taskforce to implement a more efficient process for declaring and finalising the interim planning scheme process in 2014-15 and provide a consistent platform for the transition to a statewide planning scheme.

I thank and commend Commissioners, staff and local government for their work in delivering these positive reform outcomes in 2013-14.



Greg Alomes
EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER

COMMISSION OVERVIEW

THE COMMISSION

The Commission has a full-time Executive Commissioner and seven part-time Commissioners, each appointed under section 5 of the Tasmanian Planning Commission Act 1997 for their specific area of expertise. As at 30 June 2014 the Commission included:

- ♦ Greg Alomes – Chair and Executive Commissioner;
- ♦ Sandra Hogue – planning experience nominated by the Local Government Association;
- ♦ John Ramsay – expertise and management experience in resource conservation;
- ♦ Brett Torossi – expertise in commercial development;
- ♦ Roger Howlett – resource conservation or planning experience representing community interests;
- ♦ Ann Cunningham – public administration experience in regard to project implementation;
- ♦ Appointment pending – Commissioner who is the Head of the State Service Agency that is responsible for the administration of transport and provision of infrastructure; and
- ♦ Michael Brewster – appointed as the CEO of the Regional Corporations and the Common Services Corporation (TasWater).



Greg Alomes



Brett Torossi



Sandra Hogue



Roger Howlett



John Ramsay



Ann Cunningham

2013-14 saw a change in the composition of the Commission. The Commission would like to thank Helen Hudson, Norm MacIlfatrick and Miles Hampton for the contribution they made to the Commission's functions in their time as Commissioners, and welcome Michael Brewster and Ann Cunningham as new Commissioners.



Michael Brewster



LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The Commission operates as an independent statutory body under the *Tasmanian Planning Commission Act 1997*.

Table 1 summarises the various legislative provisions under which the Commission operates.

The Commission also has designated roles and functions under the following Acts:

- ♦ *Aboriginal Lands Act 1995*
- ♦ *Conveyancing and Law of Property Act 1884*
- ♦ *Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994*
- ♦ *Forestry Act 1920*
- ♦ *Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993*
- ♦ *Major Infrastructure Development Approvals Act 1999*
- ♦ *Marine Farming Planning Act 1995*
- ♦ *Survey Co-ordination Act 1944*.

Table 1: Legislative Framework

<i>Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993</i>
Assessing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ interim planning schemes and dispensations ♦ projects of regional significance ♦ draft planning directives. Approving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ planning schemes and planning scheme amendments. Advising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ the Minister in relation to land use planning ♦ local government in relation to planning schemes. Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ for the coordinated provision of transport, and infrastructure, for land development.
<i>National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002</i>
Reviewing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ representations and the report of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife, relating to draft reserve management plans.
<i>Public Land (Administration and Forests) Act 1991</i>
Inquiring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ into public land use.
<i>State Policies and Projects Act 1993</i>
Assessing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ projects of State significance ♦ draft State Policies. Preparing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ the Tasmanian State of the Environment report.
<i>Tasmanian Planning Commission Act 1997</i>
Establishes the constitution, functions and powers of the Commission and Commissioners.
<i>Water Management Act 1999</i>
Reviewing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ representations and the report of the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment relating to draft water management plans.
<i>Wellington Park Act 1993</i>
Reviewing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ representations and the report of the Wellington Park Management Trust, relating to draft management plans.



RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING SYSTEM

As the State's principal land use planning body, the Commission has an integral role in furthering the objectives of Tasmania's Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS).

The overall statutory objectives of the RMPS are:

- ♦ to promote the sustainable development of natural and physical resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity;
- ♦ to provide for the fair, orderly and sustainable use and development of air, land and water;
- ♦ to encourage public involvement in resource management and planning;
- ♦ to facilitate economic development in accordance with the objectives set out in the above paragraphs; and
- ♦ to promote the sharing of responsibility for resource management and planning between the different spheres of Government, the community and industry in the State.

Each of the Acts listed in Table 1 include a schedule containing the RMPS objectives. There is a general requirement that undertaking the powers and functions of these Acts will promote the objectives. For example,

section 5 of the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* states that:

'It is the obligation of any person on whom a function is imposed or a power is conferred under this Act to perform the function or exercise the power in such a manner as to further the objectives set out in Schedule 1.'

Supporting the overarching RMPS objectives are additional objectives, which are specific to the land use planning process. These seek to:

- ♦ require sound strategic planning and coordinated action by local and State Government;
- ♦ establish a system of planning instruments as the principal means of setting objectives, policies and controls for the use, development and protection of land;
- ♦ ensure that the effects on the environment are considered and provide for explicit consideration of social and economic impacts when decisions are made about the use and development of land; and
- ♦ ensure that land use and development planning and policy is easily integrated with environmental, social, economic, conservation and resource management policies at State, regional and municipal levels.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Minister for Planning and Local Government has responsibility for the administration of the *Tasmanian Planning Commission Act 1997*, *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*, Part 2 of the *Public Land (Administration and Forests) Act 1991* and Part 4 and section 46 of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993*.

The Premier has responsibility for the administration of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993* (except Part 4) and the Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage has responsibility for the administration of the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.

REPORT ON PERFORMANCE

The *Tasmanian Planning Commission Act 1997*, the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*, the Ministerial Statement of Expectation 2012-14 and the Commission's Business Plan 2012-2014 set out the Commission's principal responsibilities and performance obligations.

This Annual Report documents the Commission's activities against its five corporate goals (see Table 2).

Table 2: Tasmanian Planning Commission Goals

Goal 1
Develop and maintain an integrated strategic and statutory planning framework.
Goal 2
Implement strategic planning projects.
Goal 3
Effectively undertake assessment, review and determination functions.
Goal 4
Facilitate key spatial data to inform evidence based decision making and policy development.
Goal 5
Establish and maintain effective corporate and communication arrangements.

GOAL

Develop and maintain an integrated strategic and statutory planning framework



LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS

S.43A - Combined Dispensation/ Development and dispensation amendments Application Legislation

In late 2013, the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPAA) was amended to further streamline planning approval processes associated with the introduction of new interim planning schemes.

LUPAA has provided for a concurrent assessment of a scheme amendment and development application under existing planning schemes. This process, known as a section 43A application, has proven to be a successful way of combining the previous two stage approval process into a single process.

The 2013 amendments to LUPAA extended this combined process to new interim schemes, thereby streamlining the approvals process for developments which require dispensations from interim schemes. This change will save time and cost for applicants, councils and the Commission.

The new process is scheduled to commence on 3 July 2014.

The Government has advised the Commission it intends to introduce legislation in late 2014 to further improve planning scheme amendment processes.

Private certification of compliance

The 2013 amendments to LUPAA provide for the introduction of 'private certification'. Private certification of compliance involves the use of accredited practitioners to perform some of the assessment roles traditionally, and solely performed by councils. The building industry views the use of private certification as a mechanism that will increase the efficiency of approval processes and thus support additional investment and development.

Under this reform, private planning certifiers can 'sign-off' that both single and multiple dwelling developments comply with the Standards. In the case of single dwellings this should mean that only building approval is required. Changes to the Building Act specify that permit authorities must accept a planning certificate as fulfilling its planning related responsibilities under the regulations.

Local government and industry advice was sought on the specific measures for this extension to private certification. Initially private certification of compliance will apply to low-impact residential and related development.

However, the legislative amendments could potentially extend private certification to 'permitted' use and development in planning schemes.

The reforms are expected to be implemented in 2014-15 in conjunction with other Government planning reforms.



Improved enforcement arrangements

The 2013 amendments to LUPAA provide for improved enforcement processes. The provisions introduced more efficient and effective enforcement arrangements by providing a more responsive and less expensive system of enforcement procedures.

These efficiencies were achieved through a system comprising 'authorised officers', infringement notices, 'intention to issue' notices and enforcement notices. The amendments retained the existing obligations that LUPAA placed on councils and individuals regarding compliance with planning laws and regulations, but placed a greater emphasis on ensuring compliance with these obligations.

The amendments removed the need for individuals and community organisations to act as the 'watch-dogs' of the system and now require an individual or community group to first seek redress through the relevant council, and places the onus on a council to act to ensure compliance with their planning scheme.

The amendments retain access for individuals and community organisations to both the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal and the courts, in circumstances where councils have not acted on a matter or for other procedural contraventions. A person also retains the right to apply to the Tribunal for an order where the legal 'person' that has committed, is committing, or is likely to commit an offence, is a council.

The new procedures provide a more conciliatory and cost effective approach to addressing planning offences by avoiding the Tribunal and court processes in the first instance.

The reforms are expected to be implemented in 2014-15 in conjunction with other Government planning reforms.

Digital planning amendments

The 2013 amendments to LUPAA provide for the submission, exhibition, approval and registration of the state's planning schemes in digital format.

This is the first step in a long-term program to transition administrative processes within the resource management and planning system from paper to more efficient digital systems (see Planning Schemes Online Project below).

The amendments will formally establish the digital planning system as the authorised, legally recognised, version of planning documentation in force in Tasmania. This will eliminate any uncertainty regarding the up-to-date legal version that is inherent in the current paper based system.

It is anticipated that the amendments will take effect in the latter part of 2014.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PLANNING SYSTEM

A number of initiatives to improve the planning system were progressed and completed in 2013-14.

Review of Standards for Single and Multiple Dwellings in Interim planning schemes

Planning Directive No. 4 was issued in August 2011, introducing six planning standards for single dwelling development within appropriate residential zones in most planning schemes across the State.

Following extensive consultation with key industry and local government stakeholders and a comprehensive public hearing process, the Commission recommended a modified Planning Directive 4.1 to, and approved by, the Minister of Planning in late 2013.

The modifications provide consistent statewide development standards for both single and multiple dwellings and make planning approval for residential development easier and simpler.

Planning Directive 4.1 became operational in all interim planning schemes on 28 February 2014.

A review of the operational effectiveness and efficiency of Planning Directive 4.1 will be incorporated as part of the Government's planning reform program and the implementation of a statewide planning scheme.



NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY AGENDA

The State contributes to national planning initiatives through representation on the Council of Australian Government's Standing Council on Transport and Infrastructure (SCOTI).

The Commission has continued to provide support to representatives on the Council and related working groups.

PLANNING SCHEMES ONLINE PROJECT

The Planning Schemes Online Project is bringing statewide planning, development information and services together on a single website and will transform the way Tasmanians access planning information. The project is a partnership between State and local government.

The foundation for the project is a content management system for managing and publishing the new interim planning schemes online. The nine Cradle Coast interim planning schemes were transferred into the system in mid-2013, bringing the total number of schemes in the system to 22. The system was also used for the statutory public exhibition process on these schemes in late 2013.

A new online planning enquiry service was launched with the Launceston City Council on 22 February 2014 as a pilot project, prior to wider application across the State. This enquiry service enables users to search planning schemes online and identify the zoning and planning provisions that apply to an individual property and any new development on that property.

Work also commenced on a new assessments management database, which will provide Commission staff, councils, applicants and the public with access to information and documents relating to current Commission assessments.

Legislative amendments to LUPAA were passed by Parliament in late 2013 to provide legal recognition for digital planning documentation (refer above).

It is anticipated that new services and broader statewide coverage will be integrated with the Government's planning reform program.



Implement strategic planning projects



CONTRIBUTION TO STATE GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

The Commission contributed to State Government strategic economic and infrastructure planning through various interdepartmental committees.

INTERIM PLANNING SCHEMES / PLANNING REFORM

Significant progress has been made in implementing interim planning schemes in 2013-14.

The Launceston Interim Planning Scheme (LIPS) was the first interim scheme declared and made operational in late 2012. The Launceston City Council conducted the 6 month statutory public exhibition, representation and review process and submitted a report to the Commission in March 2013.

The independent panel delegated authority to hear and determine LIPS completed the public hearings with representors in late 2013. In the first half of 2014, the LIPS panel commenced a major review and re-drafting of planning provisions under each zone and code in LIPS.

When completed in late 2014, LIPS will contain a comprehensive set of consistent, well-drafted provisions, consistent with the statewide planning scheme template (Planning Directive No.1).

A further 13 of the 17 councils in the Northern and Cradle Coast regions had their interim planning schemes declared and publicly exhibited for representations in 2013-14.

Following receipt of Council reports on representations received, the Commission will commence the formal assessment of these interim schemes on a regional basis.

The 12 southern councils submitted their draft interim planning schemes to the Minister from February to April 2014. The Minister has sought advice from the Commission on the extent to which the draft interim schemes comply with LUPAA. This advice is scheduled to be provided in late 2014.

Following the State Election in March 2014, the new Government has initiated further planning reforms to Tasmania's planning system, including implementation of a single statewide planning scheme.

In May 2014, the Government established the Planning Reform Taskforce to provide advice on implementation of the planning reform program.

Draft legislation is being prepared to implement the first stage of its reform program. The draft legislative amendments are intended to provide a more efficient process to finalise the interim planning scheme process in preparation for the introduction a single statewide planning scheme.



REGIONAL LAND USE STRATEGIES (REGIONAL STRATEGIES)

Regional Land Use Strategies (Regional Strategies) provide direction for future land use and development that matches the capabilities and economic development potential of each region. Regional Strategies are implemented through zoning and planning provisions in interim planning schemes.

Regional Strategies for the Cradle Coast, Northern and Southern regions were declared by the Minister for Planning in October 2011.

In 2013, the Northern and Southern regions reviewed, updated and publicly exhibited their respective Regional Strategies. The Minister declared both revised Regional Strategies in October 2013 for implementation in draft interim planning schemes.

Councils in some regions have also initiated further strategic planning projects, such as the Greater Launceston Plan and industrial land use strategies. It is expected relevant land use and development components of these projects will be incorporated in future revisions of the Regional Strategies.

The role and effectiveness of Regional Strategies will be reviewed as part of the Government's planning reform program. It is expected that governance arrangements for the review and revision of Regional Strategies will form part of this review.

ACTIVITY CENTRES PROJECT

An 'activity centre network' is a planned network of settlements connected by transport infrastructure. Each activity centre provides a range of complementary employment opportunities, commercial/retail facilities, government services, community infrastructure, entertainment and residential accommodation. Each centre is supported by a range of passenger (private and public) and freight transport infrastructure and services.

Each of the State's 3 Regional Strategies specified a network of settlements, as well as supporting policies and strategies. However, each region has used different terminology and criteria to categorise these settlements.

In 2013, the Commission initiated a project in conjunction with the Department of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, to develop a consistent statewide classification system for activity centres based on work undertaken for the Regional Strategies.

An external consultant (Hill PDA) was appointed to deliver the project and provide an independent assessment of previous work and recommend a consistent statewide classification system.

The project was managed by the Commission with oversight by a steering committee comprising representatives from the three regional council authorities (Northern Tasmania Development, Cradle Coast Authority and Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority); and the Departments of

Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, and Health and Human Services.

In February 2014, the consultants delivered a report outlining a proposed statewide classification system for application in future revisions of Regional Strategies.



Effectively
undertake
assessment,
review and
determination
functions



COMPLIANCE REVIEWS

Much of the Commission's work in 2013-14 involved statutory compliance reviews of draft interim planning schemes at the request of the Minister for Planning.

The Commission established an Interim Planning Scheme (IPS) Advisory Committee, to oversee this task. The Advisory Committee comprises a Commissioner and two Senior Planning Consultants.

The reviews identify the extent to which draft interim planning schemes comply with Division 1A and other relevant provisions of LUPAA.

The Advisory Committee provides written advice to the Minister and recommends modifications that may be necessary to ensure an interim scheme is legally compliant with LUPAA.

In 2013-14, the Minister declared the following 13 interim schemes based on advice and modifications recommended by the Advisory Committee:

- ♦ George Town Interim Planning Scheme 2013 on 9 October 2013
- ♦ Meander Valley Interim Planning Scheme 2013 on 16 October 2013
- ♦ West Tamar Interim Planning Scheme 2013 on 16 October 2013
- ♦ Dorset Interim Planning Scheme 2013 on 20 November 2013; and

- ♦ Burnie, Devonport, Central Coast, Latrobe, Waratah-Wynyard, Circular Head, West Coast, Kentish and King Island Interim planning schemes on 16 October 2013.

In May 2014, the Advisory Committee commenced a review of draft interim planning schemes submitted by the 12 southern councils to the Minister in early 2014.

The Advisory Committee has completed a review of the regional planning provisions in the 12 draft interim schemes and is scheduled to complete a review of the individual interim schemes later in 2014.



ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

The Commission delegates authority to independent panels to undertake its statutory assessment functions. Panel members are appointed on the basis of the skills, expertise and experience required to undertake a professional and independent assessment.

Planning scheme amendments

During 2013-14, the Commission received 50 applications from councils to amend planning schemes, and 14 combined amendment and development applications (section 43A of the Act).

Under LUPAA, the Commission must hear and determine applications within 90 days of receiving a council's report on public representations. The Minister may grant an extension if required to complete an assessment.

In 2013-14, the median number of time taken for assessments was 91 days.

The introduction of interim planning schemes and the dispensation process as the means to change interim schemes has replaced the normal scheme amendment process. Consequently, the number of planning scheme amendment applications decreased significantly in 2013-14 and the number of dispensation applications increased.

Table 3 shows key amendment processing data for 2013-14.

Dispensations – Interim planning schemes

Under LUPAA, a person can apply for a dispensation from a local provision of an interim planning scheme during the life of the interim scheme.

New systems have been established to manage the assessment of dispensation applications.

In 2013-14, 16 valid applications were received. 12 were granted with conditions, while four were refused.

Urgent Amendments – Interim planning schemes

Section 30IA of the Act is used to correct an error or inconsistency that stops an IPS from operating properly. Five urgent amendments were authorised by the Minister during 2013-14.

Draft Planning Directives

In late 2012 the Minister directed the Commission to undertake an assessment of Draft Planning Directive – Standards for Residential Development in the General Residential Zone (draft Directive).

The draft Directive contains a common set of development standards for multiple dwellings, consistent with commitments made under the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) planning reform agenda. The development standards were developed in consultation with industry stakeholders and local government.

The assessment was delegated to an independent panel, which publicly exhibited the draft Directive, invited representations and held public hearings.

Following the hearings the panel consulted with representors on a revised version of the Directive.

In its report to the Minister in December 2013, the panel recommended issuing the draft Directive as modified by the panel. This recommendation was accepted and the Minister issued the Planning Directive, which came into effect on 28 February 2014.

The Planning Directive applies to all dwellings in the General Residential Zone, including single dwellings, villa units and townhouses. A Planning Advisory Note and Information Sheet were published to assist with implementation of PD 4.1.

The Commission is also assessing a draft Planning Directive on Statewide Codes. The draft Planning Directive incorporates four statewide codes that are to be mandatory common provisions for use and development. The codes include:

- ♦ Landslide Code;
- ♦ Potentially Contaminated Land Code;
- ♦ Flood Prone Land Code; and
- ♦ Road and Railway Assets Code.

It is anticipated that the independent panel appointed by the Commission to assess the draft Planning Directive will finalise the Road and Railway Assets Code and Potentially Contaminated Land Code in the 2014-15 financial year.

The Landslide Code and Flood Prone Land Codes require redrafting in accordance with new state-wide guidelines on how to address natural risks and hazards in land use planning. These codes will be incorporated into the Government's single statewide planning scheme program.



Minor modifications to Planning Directives

During the reporting period, the Minister has issued minor modifications to:

- ♦ Planning Directive No. 5 – Bushfire-Prone Areas Code
- ♦ Planning Directive 4.1 – Standards for Residential Development in the General Residential Zone
- ♦ Planning Directive No. 1 – The Format and Structure of Planning Schemes.

Reviews of Management Plans

The Commission completed reviews of the Draft Ringarooma River Catchment Water Management Plan 2012 and the Draft Macquarie River Catchment Water Management Plan 2012 in 2013-14.

Both Draft Plans were referred to the Commission by the Minister for Primary Industries and Water. The Commission's role is to review public representations submitted on each Draft Plan and the report responding to each representation prepared by the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment.

The Commission received the referral for the Draft Ringarooma River Catchment Water Management Plan 2012 in May 2013 and submitted its recommendations and report to the Minister in December 2013.

The Commission received the referral for the Draft Macquarie River Catchment Water Management Plan 2012 in August 2013 and submitted its recommendations and report to the Minister in February 2014.

Table 3: Draft planning scheme amendment statistics for 2013-14

	2013-14	2012-13
Draft Planning Scheme Amendments		
Scheme amendments approved as certified	14	20
Scheme amendments approved with modifications	10	16
Scheme amendments altered to a substantial degree	2	0
Scheme amendments rejected	8	15
Percentage requiring modification or alteration to a substantial degree	34%	31%
Percentage rejected	19%	29%
Total amendments finalised by the Commission	34	51
Time taken for assessment (average number of days)	91	101
Permits (combined Permit & Amendment Process – section 43A of the Act)		
Permit applications approved	3	3
Permit applications approved with modifications	8	10
Permit applications refused	1	7
Total permits finalised by the Commission	12	20
Percentage requiring modification	54%	50%
Percentage refused	4%	35%



As part of the major review of the 2005 Wellington Park Management Plan, the Chairperson of the Wellington Park Management Trust referred copies of the public representations and the Trust's report on its responses to the Commission in May 2013. The Commission submitted its report and recommendations to the Trust in December 2013.

There were no new directions from the Minister for Environment, Parks and Heritage during 2013-14 regarding draft management plans prepared under the *National Parks and Reserves Management Act 2002*.

Other Assessments

There were no assessments of draft State Policies, projects of State or regional significance, during 2013-14.

The Commission did not receive any references in relation to the use of public land during 2013-14.

State of the Environment Reporting

The Commission is responsible for the preparation of the Tasmanian State of the Environment (SoE) Report, pursuant to section 29 of the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993* (Act). The Act requires that reports are tabled in Parliament every five years.

The 2009 SoE Report concluded that the extent and quality of data available was not to a standard or sufficiently up-to-date to meet the statutory requirements for SoE reporting.

In 2012, the Commission initiated a review of the SoE reporting process. The primary aim of the review was to ensure that future SoE reporting continued to be a relevant and cost effective tool for the Tasmanian Government and community.

The review identified significant concerns about the costs and benefits of the current approach and the need to substantially revise reporting methodologies in line with rapid advances in environmental data management and reporting systems, such as the Government's statistical assets and capability strategy, 'Stats Matters', and the 'Sense-T' initiative funded by the Australian Government.

The outcomes of the SoE review will be considered as part of the Government's planning reform program.

GOAL 4

Facilitate key spatial data to inform evidence based decision making and policy development

SPATIAL DATA INFORMING EVIDENCE BASED DECISION MAKING

Digital geographic information system (GIS) mapping for declared interim schemes is being published online through Land Information System Tasmania (the LIST).

Planning scheme mapping was released on the LIST for 15 interim planning schemes across the Northern and Cradle Coast regions during 2013-14.

The Commission has continued to contribute to improved spatial information through its contributions to various Government spatial information and data committees.





Establish
and maintain
effective
corporate and
communication
arrangements

WEBSITE REVIEW

A new website for the Commission has been developed, which will be launched later in 2014 as part of the implementation of the Planning Schemes Online Project.

SUPPORTING THE MINISTER

The Commission provides regular advice to the Minister for Planning in relation to relevant statutory and strategic planning responsibilities and obligations.

During 2013-14 this was accomplished through regular briefings and updates on emergent planning issues, as well as advice on the performance of local government statutory development assessment processes and the implementation of planning reforms.

The Commission also provided support to the Minister through the preparation of responses to Ministerial correspondence and Parliamentary Notices of Motion, drafting of Question Time Briefs and updating the Minister on the Commission's activities.

ADVICE TO AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

In 2013-14, the Commission continued to liaise with councils and regional councils to progress initiatives under the planning reform agenda.

The Commission continued to provide information to councils on the preparation of interim planning schemes through the council planners portal on its website

The current project to redevelop the Commission's website will be focussed on ensuring that the website is an effective means for communicating information to stakeholders.

Commission officers also provided advice to, and participated in, a number of cross State Government agency initiatives.

The Executive Commissioner and Directors regularly attend and speak at workshops and seminars relating to Commission processes and land use planning matters.





PHYSICAL ASSETS

During 2013-14, the Commission's Launceston office space in Cornwall Square underwent alterations as part of the general building refurbishment.

The Commission replaced its two four wheel drive pool vehicles with electric-petrol hybrid vehicles.

In its ongoing efforts to reduce operating costs, the Commission will continue to explore opportunities to realise rental savings through co-locating staff.

SUPPORT TO COMMISSIONERS, DELEGATED PANELS AND ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The Commission provided administrative and planning support to Commissioners, delegated panels and advisory committees during 2013-14.

MONITOR AND REVIEW INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES FOR STATUTORY PROCESSES

The statutory assessment processes are regularly monitored and reviewed through an internal committee, where performance of the systems and procedures is discussed and recommendations formed for consideration by the Executive Commissioner. This committee's role has increased as a consequence of planning reforms and further amendments to LUPAA.

As part of the Planning Scheme Online Project, the Commission has initiated a review of its assessments administrative processes with a view to automating the publishing of upcoming hearing information and assessment outcomes through the Planning Schemes Online website in 2014-15.

RE-PROFILING THE COMMISSION'S STAFFING SKILL-BASE TO STRENGTHEN THE LEVEL OF PLANNING AND SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT EXPERTISE

The Commission has made a number of staff changes to increase its internal capacity to handle compliance reviews and formal assessments of interim planning schemes and the introduction of digital planning systems.

The Commission will continue to strengthen its skill base, through re-profiling, to respond to the Government's planning reform program and an anticipated increase in its assessment workload.

Prepared and published by:

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October 2014

