

## Quarterly Progress Report to Council Members – April - June 2019

### 1. Regional Economic Development Plan (REDP) – Update

Two meetings have occurred with Council General Managers and the Mayors on next steps for the Draft REDP after feedback from the State Government. NTDC has also coordinated a private sector/stakeholder meeting on 18 April to gain other regional feedback. This was a positive meeting that reinforced the key themes and feedback to date.

At this stage the revised Draft REDP will primarily be a 'strategic document'. It will be accompanied by a rolling 3-Year Implementation Plan. It should be noted that there is no change to the strategic intent of the REDP (as previously considered by all councils). It is more an issue of what is included in the REDP Strategy document, versus what will be undertaken in the 3-year Implementation Plan in collaboration with the State Government and other key action agencies like UTAS.

The State Government officers have indicated that a workshop is required with State Government departments before the region settles on KPI's and measures where the State is involved.

#### Next Steps:

- a) July – Draft REDP (no 4) is finalized for State Government consideration
- b) End of July – circulation of the Draft REDP to Council GM's and Mayors for noting
- c) August – release of the Draft REDP for consultation
- d) August – State Government workshops
- e) October – review/circulation to Councils and other stakeholders for final sign off of the REDP and consideration of the Draft 3 Year Implementation Plan
- f) November – release of the endorsed REDP and the Draft 3 Year Implementation Plan

### 2. Population Strategy

The Population Taskforce met, and the Final Population Strategy was endorsed in April by the taskforce and the NTDC Council Members. The request for a \$50,000 contribution by Council Members for one year was supported.

Edward Obi, Population Coordinator was appointed in February 2019. Over the past three months the key activities have been as follows:

- Develop case studies of successful migrants that have settled in Northern Tasmania (both international and interstate migrants).
- Liaised with Department of State Growth to tailor their Statewide 'Make It Tasmania' to better meet the needs of Northern Tasmania.
- Meet stakeholders interested in the population challenge including the various multi-cultural community leaders.
- Started a database of migrants to Northern Tasmania that cannot find suitable work and started linking them to NTDC's networks.
- Developed an article about Northern Tasmania to feature in the UK Magazine for potential emigrants called 'Australia Magazine' (at invitation of the Dept of State Growth).
- Presented at a Roundtable discussion at the Population Symposium in June in Launceston.

Now that Edward has been in the role for a few months, he is in a position to recommend the priorities for the next 12 months. The key elements of the Population 12 Month Plan are as follows:

1. **Optimise a 'Launceston and the North East' new section on the Tasmanian (Make It Tasmania) website** - to assist migrants to select our region based on as much information as possible.
2. **Publish more profiles of successfully settled migrants** - to create positive awareness of Northern Tasmania.
3. **Develop a new 'Welcome Region' program** – to include linking people and skills already in the region to the job opportunities. At the moment the region has frustrated migrants (from interstate and international) and businesses that need to fill jobs/skills – but the two aren't connecting. This program will include cultural training, opportunities to connect business with skilled people, and overall encourage a more welcoming environment for new arrivals to the region. The program is based on a funding request to the Regional Jobs Trial which is still in development.
4. **One on one engagement with Council General Managers** - to ensure each LGA is aligned and receiving value from the Population Plan and the services available including finding ways to identify job vacancies at the LGA level and maximize the Tasmanian Employment Networking Service (TENS) in the Northern Region to get people working.
5. **Population Implementation Taskforce** – to extend the Population Taskforce into an implementation network to ensure all parties in this area of expertise are aware of what others are doing and are better able to fine-tune services to be more effective. It is envisaged for this group to meet twice per year.

### 3. Mayors Unite on Northern Region Economic Priority Projects

On 8 May all Mayors (or acting Mayors) attending a media opportunity to promote the regional priority projects in the lead up to the Federal Election.

### 4. NTDC Project Involvement Update

- 1 **Mobile Blackspot Working Group** – NTDC (through John Pitt) has been working with Simon Cowling from DPIPW (Agri Scorecard custodian) on a project to advocate for the elimination of mobile blackspots in agri production areas. The main reason is to improve the productivity in regional areas particularly for: precision agriculture; seasonal workforce attraction and retention; safety; farm family resilience; and ag tech applications.

At this time, the State Government prioritises blackspot round bids on SES grounds only but are potentially open to an argument based on the economic opportunity cost to agriculture.

NTDC has helped to form a group and commence a pilot in Northern Midlands which will:

- Identify blackspots in existing and potential high productivity areas and;
- Assess the economic opportunity cost associated with this.

The plan is to then:

- Extend the methodology across other NTDC member municipalities to form a regional set of priorities and;
- Brief DSG and relevant Ministers in time for the priorities to be considered (including co-investment arguments) in the recently announced \$160M funding round.

- 2 **Lamb Tasmania** – NTDC is working with stakeholders to look at how farmers may be better able to add value to their meat by improving the processing options and the provenance/marketing. NTDC and RDA Tasmania continue to host the Northern Tasmania Food Network events.
- 3 **UNESCO Creative Cities (Gastronomy)** – NTDC is supporting an industry-led group that are investigating the potential for bidding for a UNESCO Creative City in the next two years. The value for the bid needs to be identified and preferably be extended value to the region.
- 4 **Hydrogen Energy Plant (Bell Bay)** – NTDC has met with various proponents interested in the potential of hydrogen energy production at the Bell Bay Industrial Precinct. To date NTDC has also secured six letters of support from industry stakeholders to fully scope out the opportunity. Funding for the Hydrogen Scoping Study was not secured through the Federal Election process; however, the Federal Government are continuing to progress their Hydrogen Energy Roadmap

Strategy for Australia. NTDC's lobbying of the State Government has ensured there is now a working group considering Hydrogen Energy and a Tasinvest proposal has been developed to encourage private-sector proponents to make contact with the State Government. NTDC is now working closely with the State Government to meet with visiting international and interstate proponents and work through the likely challenges in securing a potential demonstration project for Bell Bay.

- 5 **Extension of the LoRA Network throughout Northern Tasmania** – NTDC is working with Definium Technologies in Launceston, to consider how we might extend the LoRA network from covering Launceston, and a few other regional centres, to becoming available throughout our region. The opportunities for this would mean:
- Councils can use sensors to monitor aspects of their operations cost effectively (for example, monitor the usage of public toilets to schedule cleaning effectively).
  - Allow schools and community organization to use the LoRA network for free (therefor exposing children and others to better understand the technology and applications).
  - Encourage businesses to use the technology to improve their agricultural production, manufacturing, and other applications (for example: to be advised of the water levels in a dam or river).

NTDC will work with each Council to ensure opportunities to learn how LoRA might work in each municipality.

- 6 **UTAS Transformation** – NTDC continue to work closely with UTAS senior executives to ensure the areas of education excellence align with the Regional Economic Development Plan sector opportunities – for example in Food Systems. Also providing more opportunities for the Launceston Institute for Applied Science and Design to better engage with business via our projects, so they become a gateway into UTAS and provide greater business access to the research and development resources available.

## 5. NTDC Funding Extension

NTDC will be preparing information for each Council Member by the end of this calendar year, to consider extending the current three-year funding agreement for another three years.

The proposal to be considered by Member Councils will be aligned with the finalized Regional Economic Development Plan and the Three-Year Implementation Plan. It is anticipated that NTDC will have a greater idea of how State and Federal Government (potentially through the extended City Deal) can assist to resource the priorities identified in the REDP.

## 6. Next Council Members Meeting –

The next meeting is the AGM of NTDC. All councilors as well as Mayors are welcome. There will be a guest speaker, so please hold from 1pm on the 6 November for the meeting.

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If any elected or Council staff members have any questions please contact us.

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