



Submission 8

NRM South

ment in Southern Tasmania

2 June 2008

RECEIVED
04/06/08

Review of the Planning System
GPO Box 1691
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Mr Stevens

REVIEW OF THE PLANNING SYSTEM OF TASMANIA

Thank you for the invitation to participate in the review of the planning system of Tasmania, as per your letter of 1 May 2008.

I note that the terms of reference of your review relate principally to the structures and processes underpinning the planning system. These matters are outside NRM South's brief. However, NRM South has a strong interest in the outcomes of the planning system, rather than planning structures and processes per se.

Under the *Natural Resource Management Act 2002*, NRM South is tasked, inter alia, with *facilitating the integration of natural resource management and planning activities* for our region, which is contiguous with the area under the jurisdiction of the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority. NRM South's other regional responsibilities include:

- developing and facilitating implementation of a strategy for natural resource management in the region
- coordinating the region's participation in national and State programs relating to natural resource management
- identifying the priorities for natural resource management for the region
- promoting natural resource management principles articulated in the Natural Resource Management Framework
- monitoring and evaluating implementation of the regional strategy and
- developing and implementing processes to ensure appropriate education and training in natural resource management.

As relevant for this review, NRM South's brief is to ensure that planning decisions do not have an adverse effect on the region's natural resources identified as having high priority. NRM South is working very closely with the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority on a number of matters to enhance Local Government engagement in natural resource management within our region. One specific project is building on existing Council information and data systems to develop a framework for more integrated management of and access to NRM information and data within Local Government. The STCA is reviewing the business case for regional or sub-regional resource-sharing GIS options for Southern Tasmania, as well as structures that will improve communication between the councils, and between Local Government and other key stakeholders such as the Tasmanian Government.

The three Tasmanian NRM regional bodies have agreed that the regional natural resource management strategies should be recognised as a tool to inform statutory land use planning. We consider it highly desirable to establish processes to improve linkages between the regional NRM strategies and the statutory land use planning system. However, we have argued it is not appropriate to require a formal link by legislation between the regional NRM strategies and the statutory land use planning system. The regional strategies are simply not designed for that purpose. Nor is the current level of science supporting the regional NRM strategies seen as robust enough yet for that purpose.

However, establishing a link between the regional natural resource management strategies and statutory land use planning is clearly important to ensure that natural resource management issues are taken into consideration in assessing development applications and land use change. This matter is of great concern nationally for the 56 regional bodies around Australia who are responsible for natural resource management, including in those states where the NRM regions have regulatory responsibilities. Peri-urban and coastal areas and productive landscapes are the areas most vulnerable to inappropriate land use planning and development and compromised natural resource values. The regional natural resource management strategies should be seen as a useful tool for providing advice to local government and the planning system generally on natural resource management priorities.

Current moves towards a more regional scale of local government planning and land use planning, including the proposed regional land use strategies, are certainly relevant to improving the link between natural resource management planning and statutory planning. The regional land use plan now being developed in the Cradle Coast region under the Better Regional Partnerships program should provide some guidance on the extent to which regional natural resource management strategies in their current form can be used to support and assist regional land use strategies and land use planning at the regional level.

NRM South recommends that natural resource management should be considered a matter of regional significance (as per TOR 1(e)) and that any review of planning policies and land use planning should take into account the principles and priorities for natural resource management.

Ideally, all regional planning, including natural resource management planning and statutory planning, should be interlinked. The regional planning model being developed in South East Queensland should be reviewed as potentially very useful for Tasmania.

I look forward to hearing the outcomes of your deliberations. Please do not hesitate to contact me by telephone on (03) 6208 6100 or email: director@nrmsouth.org.au if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Elwell-Gavins
Director