

REVIEWING AND AMENDING THE REGIONAL LAND USE STRATEGIES

Purpose

This information sheet is issued by the Department of Justice, Planning Policy Unit and provides information on when and under what circumstances the regional land use strategies are reviewed and amended. It also provides information on the requirements and processes for reviewing and considering amendments to the regional land use strategies.

Background

The *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* (LUPAA) provides for the preparation and declaration of regional land use strategies, which provide an important high-level component of the planning system. Essentially, the regional land use strategies provide the linkage between the Schedule 1 objectives of LUPAA, State Policies established under the *State Policies and Projects Act 1993*, and the future Tasmanian Planning Policies with the current interim and future Tasmanian planning schemes. They provide the mechanism by which the strategic directions of the State and each region are implemented through the land use planning system.

The regional land use strategies set out the key agreed strategic directions for a region over the medium to longer-term. They aim to provide certainty and predictability for Government, local councils, developers and the community on where, when and what type of development will proceed.

Three regional land use strategies are currently in place in Tasmania. The Minister for Planning¹ originally declared the Cradle Coast, Northern and Southern regional land use strategies on 27 October 2011².

The three regional land use strategies provide the strategic direction for future land use and development in each region over a 25-year time horizon. The strategic directions, policies and actions contained within the regional land use strategies aim to deliver sustainable settlements that are integrated across each region, integrated with services and infrastructure, and complemented

¹ Minister for Planning, the Hon Bryan Green MP.

² The three regional land use strategies are: Living on the Coast – The Cradle Coast Regional Land Use Planning Framework; Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy; and Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy 2010-2035.

by built and open space environments. They also provide directions, policies and actions to protect Tasmania’s agricultural estate and other resource-based industries and protect the State’s cultural and natural environments.

Regional land use strategies may also incorporate or reference specific local strategic documents for the purposes of reflecting the application of each strategy within a particular municipal area or sub-regional area.³

Since their declaration, a number of subsequent amendments have been made to both the northern and southern regional land use strategies. The amendments range from minor revisions and refinements to improve consistency and revisions to align with the latest planning reforms, through to broader reviews to implement more strategic changes, such as the review of the Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy to allow for components of the Greater Launceston Plan.

The regional land use strategies are currently implemented in the land use planning system through statutory zoning and planning provisions in interim planning schemes. They are a key consideration when amendments to the interim planning schemes and other existing planning schemes are being assessed. The regional land use strategies will similarly be implemented through the Local Provisions Schedules (LPSs) that form part of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

Legislative context

The regional land use strategies are given legal effect through section 5A of LUPAA.

The Minister for Planning may declare a regional land use strategy for a regional area. Amendments to a regional land use strategy may also be made by the Minister declaring an amended strategy and the Minister is also responsible for keeping the strategies under regular and periodic review.

In addition, comprehensive reviews of all three regional land use strategies will be undertaken following the implementation of the future Tasmanian Planning Policies.

When declaring a regional land use strategy under section 5A of LUPAA, the Minister must first consult with the:

- Tasmanian Planning Commission;
- planning authorities; and
- relevant State Service Agencies and State authorities.

LUPAA specifically requires all planning schemes and any amendments to a planning scheme to be, as far as practicable, consistent with the relevant regional land use strategy.

Before certifying and publicly exhibiting a draft planning scheme amendment, a local council, acting as a planning authority, needs to be satisfied that the draft amendment is consistent with the relevant regional land use strategy.

³ Before being incorporated into (or referenced in) a regional land use strategy, local strategic documents would need to be based on verifiable evidence, supported by Government and demonstrate how they reflect the strategic application of a relevant strategy.

Equally, the Tasmanian Planning Commission must be satisfied that a draft planning scheme amendment is consistent with the relevant regional land use strategy before approving the amendment. Similar legislative requirements apply to all future LPSs, and amendments to LPSs that will be in place under the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

Reviewing and amending the regional land use strategies

Regional land use strategies have a significant role to play in setting the medium to longer-term strategic directions for each region. Therefore, it is important that the strategic directions, policies and actions contained within each strategy appropriately address both current and emerging land use planning issues. To achieve this, the Minister for Planning is committed to regularly and periodically reviewing the strategies.

Amendments to regional land use strategies will need to be considered over time for a number of reasons. Importantly, amendments to the strategies will generally occur as part of the reviews that are conducted by the Minister for Planning. The Minister for Planning may consider an amendment to a strategy outside the normal review periods under exceptional circumstances.

Any amendment to a regional land use strategy that is requested by an individual or a planning authority would need to be supported by documentation that identified and justified the need for the amendment. Moreover, as the regional land use strategies are a regional plan, it would require the general support from all councils within the region.

The request would also be subject to a rigorous assessment process to ensure that the agreed medium and longer-term strategic directions contained in the relevant strategy are not undermined. This is necessary to ensure that any site-specific amendments to a regional land use strategy do not lead to unintended regional planning outcomes.

An amendment to a regional land use strategy may need to be considered for purposes such as:

- implementing broader legislative reform or overarching State policies or strategies (e.g. the future Tasmanian Planning Policies);
- implementing any revised background analysis of issues in response to changes such as demographics, emerging planning issues, housing supply and demand, or population growth projections;
- incorporating or referring to local or sub-regional strategy planning work that is based on verifiable and agreed evidence and reflects the application of a regional land use strategy in a municipal area or sub-regional area;
- incorporating contemporary community expectations; or
- making minor refinements to correct errors or clarify the operation of a strategy.

It is also important to consider that amending a regional land use strategy is not always the most appropriate course of action to facilitate use and development within a region. This is because the strategies represent the agreed and approved strategic directions for each ‘entire’ region and provide certainty to the broad community, infrastructure providers and governments as to medium and long-term investment decisions. Consequently, use and development should be directed in the first instance to those agreed areas identified in the relevant strategy.⁴

Information requirements to support an amendment request

The information requirements for considering a request to amend a regional land use strategy will be dependent on the nature of the proposed amendment.

Before an individual or a planning authority considers whether or not to make a request to amend a regional land use strategy, it is recommended that early discussions take place with the Planning Policy Unit within the Department of Justice to determine if specific information requirements will be required to enable the consideration of the proposed amendment.

All requests to amend a regional land use strategy should include, as a minimum, the following information.

Minimum information requirements to support an amendment request

1. All requests for an amendment to a regional land use strategy should first be directed to the **relevant local planning authority** or **regional body representing the local planning authorities in the region**.
2. All draft amendments to a regional land use strategy should be submitted in writing to the Minister for Planning by the **relevant local planning authority** or **regional body representing the local planning authorities in the region**.
3. The supporting documentation should include details on why the amendment is being sought to the regional land use strategy.
4. The supporting documentation should include appropriate justification for any strategic or policy changes being sought and demonstrate how the proposed amendment:
 - (a) furthers the Schedule 1 objectives of LUPAA;
 - (b) is in accordance with State Policies made under section 11 of the *State Policies and Project Act 1993*;
 - (c) is consistent with the Tasmanian Planning Policies, once they are made; and
 - (d) meets the overarching strategic directions and related policies in the regional land use strategy.

⁴ For example, the Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy and Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy 2010-2035 direct residential development in areas within a relevant Urban Growth Boundary or growth corridors.

As the regional land use strategies represent the agreed and approved strategic directions for the planning authorities that are located in a particular region and the State, any proposed amendments need to consider the impacts on these entities and should be based on an agreed position.

To assist with the consideration of an amendment to a regional land use strategy, it is strongly recommended that written endorsement for the proposed change is sought from all the planning authorities in the relevant region.

It is also strongly recommended that consultation with relevant State Service agencies, State authorities and other infrastructure providers be undertaken before making a request for an amendment to ensure that any significant issues are avoided when the Minister for Planning consults as part of considering the merits of the amendment request.

In addition, amendments that seek to modify an urban growth boundary (or equivalent), settlement growth management strategies, or seek other modifications to a regional settlement strategy, will usually require additional supporting information such as an analysis of current residential land supply and demand, using accepted contemporary and verifiable data sources, that considers the region in its entirety.

The following additional supporting information should also be included.

1. Justification for any additional land being required beyond that already provided for under the existing regional land use strategy. This analysis should include the current population growth projections prepared by the Department of Treasury and Finance.
2. Analysis and justification of the potential dwelling yield for the proposed additional area of land.
3. Analysis of land consumption (i.e. land taken up for development) since the regional land use strategy was declared.
4. Justification for any additional land being located in the proposed area, considering the suitability of the area in terms of access to existing physical infrastructure, public transport, and activity centres that provide social services, retail and employment opportunities.
5. Consideration of appropriate sequencing of land release within the local area and region.
6. Consideration of any targets for infill development required by the regional land use strategy.
7. Potential for land use conflicts with use and development on adjacent land that might arise from the proposed amendment.

The following matters must be considered if an amendment is proposed to a regional land use strategy to develop ‘greenfield’ land⁵. These matters may also need to be considered for amendments relating to some infill development (such as ‘brownfield’ and ‘greyfield’ development⁶).

The following matters should be considered.

1. How the amendment accords with the other strategic directions and policies in the relevant regional land use strategy.
2. Impacts on natural values, such as threatened native vegetation communities, threatened flora and fauna species, wetland and waterway values, and coastal values.
3. Impacts on cultural values, such as historic heritage values, Aboriginal heritage values and scenic values.
4. The potential loss of agricultural land from Tasmania’s agricultural estate (including but not limited to prime agricultural land and land within irrigation districts) or land for other resource-based industries (e.g. extractive industries).
5. The potential for land use conflicts with adjoining land, such as agricultural land and nearby agricultural activities, other resource-based industries (e.g. forestry and extractive industries) and industrial land taking into account future demand for this land.
6. Risks from natural hazards, such as bushfire, flooding, coastal erosion and coastal inundation, and landslip hazards.
7. Risks associated with potential land contamination.
8. The potential for impacts on the efficiency of the State and local road networks (including potential impacts/compatibility with public transport and linkages with pedestrian and cycle ways), and the rail network (where applicable).

Process for considering an amendment request

The process for considering an amendment request to a regional land use strategy will depend on the nature and scope of the request and the adequacy of the supporting documentation.

As a minimum, the Minister for Planning is required to consult with the Tasmanian Planning Commission, planning authorities, and relevant State Service agencies (e.g. Department of State

⁵ Greenfield land is generally former agricultural or undeveloped natural land on the periphery of towns and cities that has been identified for urban development

⁶ Brownfield sites are underutilised or former industrial or commercial sites in an urban environment characterised by the presence of potential site contamination. Greyfield sites are underutilised, derelict or vacant residential or commercial sites in an urban environment that are not contaminated.

Growth) and State authorities (e.g. TasNetworks) on all amendments to regional land use strategies).

The Minister will consult with these relevant entities for a period of at least 5 weeks. The Minister may also need to consult with other infrastructure providers, where relevant, such as TasWater and TasGas.

For amendments seeking to incorporate broader strategic changes to a regional land use strategy, the Minister for Planning is also likely to seek public input through a formal public exhibition process during this 5 week consultation period. Broader strategic changes have the potential to affect property rights and the community should be afforded natural justice before the Minister declares an amended strategy.

The Minister for Planning will also require all planning authorities in the relevant region to agree to the proposed amendment.

Following the consultation period, the Minister for Planning will consider any submissions received and seek advice from the Department of Justice, Planning Policy Unit before determining whether or not to declare an amended regional land use strategy and whether any modifications are required to the amendment prior to declaration. Procedural fairness will be afforded to all parties prior to making a decision on the amendment request.

Where can I get more information?

General enquiries about the requirements and process for considering amendments to the regional land use strategies should be directed to:

Planning Policy Unit
Department of Justice
GPO Box 825
HOBART TAS 7001

Telephone (03) 6166 1429
Email: planning.unit@justice.tas.gov.au

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