Tasmania's Small Business Strategy

2036









Tasmanian Government





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We recognise the deep culture and history of this island and acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal people; the past and present custodians of this land.

Introduction



"Tasmanian businesses know their challenges best, so we have used their input to shape the support needed to drive their resilience, innovation and ambition."

Small businesses are at the heart of Tasmania's economy and communities.

Our small businesses create jobs, support local industries, strengthen regional communities and contribute to the State's long-term prosperity.

Every small business is different, but all operate in an environment that is changing rapidly.

New technologies, shifting customer expectations, workforce challenges and economic pressures are creating both opportunities and uncertainty.

Tasmania's Small Business Strategy 2036 recognises these challenges and opportunities. It provides a clear direction for how the Tasmanian Government will work with businesses and industry over the next decade to create the conditions that help small businesses succeed.

The Strategy focuses on strengthening resilience, supporting innovation, improving collaboration and helping businesses adapt to a changing operating environment.

It sets out a modern and practical framework that supports businesses at every stage of their journey, whether they are starting out, growing, adopting new technologies, entering new markets or strengthening their foundations.

To shape this Strategy, the Tasmanian Government consulted with the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) and the Tasmanian Small Business Council (TSBC), and gathered input from Tasmanian businesses, representative organisations, peak bodies and members of the public.

The Strategy reflects the contributions gathered through roundtable discussions, surveys and written submissions during two consultation processes. It captures their views on the current and emerging operating environment, the challenges they face, and the opportunities they see ahead.



Minister's foreword



Tasmania's small businesses are the backbone of our economy and the heart of our communities.

They create local jobs, deliver the products and services we rely on, drive innovation, and help make our towns and regions vibrant places to live and work.

When small business succeeds, Tasmania succeeds. That is why we are committed to working as Team Tasmania, bringing together government, industry, businesses and the community to create the conditions for small business to thrive.

Small businesses operate in an environment that is constantly evolving. Rising costs, workforce challenges, technological change and global uncertainty present real pressures, while digital transformation, renewable energy, innovation and expanding export opportunities offer exciting new possibilities for growth.

This Strategy has been shaped by the voices of Tasmania's small business community.

Through two rounds of consultation, business owners, industry representatives and community members shared their experiences, ambitions and ideas.

They told us about the challenges they face, the opportunities they see and, importantly, that success looks different for every business.

The Tasmanian Government is focussed on creating the right environment for businesses to innovate, grow and prosper in ways that reflect their own goals and aspirations.

Through four key themes, People and connections, Place, Enabling business and Technology, the Strategy sets a clear direction for strengthening Tasmania's small business ecosystem over the next decade.

The Tasmanian Government is committed to working alongside the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Tasmanian Small Business Council, local government, industry organisations and the wider business community to deliver this Strategy through practical actions, strong partnerships and ongoing collaboration.

I thank everyone who contributed their time, ideas and expertise to the development of this Strategy.

Together, we can create an environment where businesses of every size have the confidence to invest, innovate and succeed, helping to secure Tasmania's future as the best place to live, work, raise a family, invest and do business.



Hon Guy Barnett MP

Deputy Premier

Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

OUR VISION

Supporting every Tasmanian small business to succeed on its own terms

"Our role is not to define success for Tasmanian businesses, but to create the conditions that enable them to achieve their aspirations."

This Strategy looks at the current state of Tasmania's business environment and the aspirations shared by businesses, industry organisations and government.

It sets out the key themes that matter to Tasmanian businesses and the objectives that will guide future actions for government and Tasmania's business community.

The Strategy is designed to support a productive, connected and sustainable business environment for all Tasmanian small businesses.

It recognises that every business has different goals and challenges, and that success looks different for everyone.

Rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach, the Strategy focuses on government helping to create the right conditions for businesses to build their capability, strengthen their resilience, explore new opportunities and achieve their own ambitions.



Economic overview



Global outlook

The global economy continues to face a mix of pressures, with geopolitical tensions disrupting trade routes, lifting energy prices and adding volatility to global markets.

These pressures are flowing through supply chains, increasing transport and input costs and keeping inflation elevated in many countries.[1]

In Australia, higher costs, tighter financial conditions and cautious consumer spending have contributed to slower economic growth.

Tasmania is not immune to these challenges so for small business, this means operating in an environment of squeezed margins, uneven demand and difficulty with planning and investing for the future.[1]

To navigate this environment small businesses will need to focus on managing costs, strengthening capability and remaining adaptable.

Building these capabilities will help businesses respond to current pressures while positioning them to make the most of emerging opportunities in sectors such as renewable energy, tourism, healthcare and specialised technological and analytical services.[2]

Fortunately, our strong labour market, diverse industries and connected communities provide a foundation for resilience.[2]

1. Deloitte Access Economics, Business Outlook – June 2026
2. Regional Development Australia, Tasmania Economic Review 2025



Tasmanian businesses

Small businesses are the backbone of Tasmania's economy and the heart of our communities.

Tasmania's economy is characterised by strong connections between businesses, industries, communities and regions.

These interdependencies support economic participation, productivity, resilience and growth across the state.

More than 42,000 small businesses operate across the state, making up around 97 per cent of all Tasmanian businesses.[3]

From family farms and tradies to retailers, tourism operators, manufacturers, start-ups, social enterprises, community-based businesses and professional services, they create jobs, support local industries and drive economic activity across the state.

Their contribution is especially important in rural and regional Tasmania, where small businesses provide essential goods and services, create local employment opportunities and play a vital role in the social fabric of communities.

Family businesses also make an important contribution with knowledge, skills and experience often being built over generations.

Nationally, around 70 per cent of businesses are family-owned, highlighting the significance of family enterprise to the broader economy.[4] Tasmania is proudly a small business state.

Despite a changing economic environment, Tasmanians continue to back themselves by starting new businesses, investing in existing ones and pursuing new opportunities.

Tasmania has consistently recorded the highest business survival rate in the nation, reflecting the resilience, determination and entrepreneurial spirit of our business community.[5]

This strategy recognises that when small businesses succeed, Tasmania succeeds. It is focussed on creating the conditions that help businesses adapt, grow and build on their strengths, ensuring they continue to create jobs, support local economies and contribute to a strong and resilient Tasmania.

3. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Counts of Australian Businesses, June 2020 to June 2024
4. Family Business Association, Who we are, viewed 26 August 2026, www.familybusinessassociation.org/about-FBA
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Counts of Australian Businesses, June 2020 to June 2024



Technology

Technology is now a core driver of productivity and competitiveness for small business.

Across Australia, digital tools are delivering measurable gains with around 40 per cent of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) already using artificial intelligence (AI).[6]

Technology is reshaping daily business practice. Marketing, sales and customer service are seeing the fastest uptake, while compliance, record-keeping and financial tasks are becoming increasingly automated.[7]

This increase in automation has the potential to free up time for businesses, creating space for them to focus on higher-value work.

Tasmania is well positioned to benefit from this shift. Our size, diversity and connected business community make the state an ideal environment for testing and adopting new digital tools.

However, digital connectivity, particularly in regional areas, remains a barrier for many small businesses.

Improving access to reliable internet and digital infrastructure will be essential to ensure businesses can adopt new technologies, reach national and global markets, and strengthen innovation, competitiveness and long-term resilience.[8]

6. National AI centre, AI Adoption Tracker 2025-26
7. NAB, SME Business Insights: Embracing AI – April 2026
8. Tasmanian Trade Strategy 2030



Labour market and population

Tasmania's labour market is strong.[9] This strength brings pressure, including tight labour supply, persistent skills shortages and the effects of an aging workforce.

Structural barriers such as access to childcare and regional unemployment limit workforce participation.

Professional vacancies have increased over the past decade, and Tasmania now relies more heavily on attracting skilled workers from interstate and overseas.[9]

Looking ahead, Tasmania will need a workforce with stronger digital capability, higher technical and professional skills, and expanded capacity in health, care and community services.

Future workforce needs will continue to be shaped by technological change, with investment in digital infrastructure, energy and engineering influencing labour demand.

Growing demand for health and care services, driven by demographic trends, will also increase the need for workers with strong social and cognitive skills.[10]

At the same time, Tasmania's stability, lifestyle and affordability continue to attract skilled migrants and entrepreneurs, creating new opportunities for innovation and growth.

9. Regional Development Australia, Tasmania Economic Review 2025
10. Deloitte Access Economics, Business Outlook – June 2026



"Tasmania has what the world wants."

Trade activity and exports

Trade is a major driver of Tasmania's economy and an important pathway for small businesses to grow, innovate and create jobs.

Whether supplying products and services within Tasmania, across Australia or around the world, small businesses play a vital role in building a strong, diverse and resilient economy.

Tasmania's competitive advantage is underpinned by world-class agriculture, abundant renewable energy, clean water, beautiful scenery, a rigorous biosecurity system, leading research capability and a culture of innovation.

Together with the strength of Brand Tasmania, these attributes support a reputation for quality, sustainability and authenticity, enabling Tasmanian businesses to compete in premium markets.

By aligning with Brand Tasmania, businesses can build greater trust with customers, differentiate themselves in competitive markets and reinforce the value of Tasmanian products and services.

As global markets continue to evolve, more businesses will need to build the confidence and capability to participate in trade, embrace new technologies, build digital and export readiness, and respond to changing customer expectations.

Through strong partnerships between business, industry and government, and support to align with the Tasmanian brand, this Strategy will support small businesses to build capability, strengthen their competitiveness and seize new opportunities.



Climate change and energy transition

Climate change and the shift to cleaner energy are reshaping how small businesses operate in Tasmania.

More frequent extreme weather, rising insurance costs and supply-chain disruptions are creating real pressure, while the move to low-emissions production demands new skills, technology and investment.[11]

Tasmania's 100 per cent renewable electricity, clean water and rigorous biosecurity supports low-carbon, high-quality production.

Combined with strong research capability, these advantages position small businesses to benefit from lower-cost electrification, energy efficient technologies and rising demand for sustainable products and services.

Strengthening resilience, investing in new technologies and building the skills required for the renewable economy could help businesses to lower costs and grow and innovate by taking advantage of emerging markets in a cleaner, more competitive economy.

11. Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2023-25

About the Strategy



Tasmania's Small Business Strategy 2036 marks a new chapter for Tasmania's small business community.

It reflects a renewed long-term commitment to supporting businesses by providing the practical supports and settings they need to succeed on their own terms.

Tasmania's small businesses have diverse aspirations including growth, building capability, increasing resilience and planning for the future.

This Strategy provides a clear 10-year vision that responds to these varied goals while recognising the opportunities and challenges businesses will face as the economy, technology and markets continue to evolve.

While the Strategy sets a long-term direction, it is designed to deliver practical outcomes from the outset.

An Implementation Plan will sit alongside the Strategy, translating it into tangible actions that can be delivered now, while remaining responsive to changing business needs and emerging opportunities over time.

This approach provides a long-term vision, while ensuring government, industry and the small business community can continue to work together to take meaningful action and deliver real benefits throughout the life of the Strategy.

Themes

In 2022, consultation was undertaken to inform the previous Strategy, the Small Business Growth Strategy 2026.

The ideas, discussions and feedback gathered during the consultation led to the identification of four themes capturing what's important to Tasmanian businesses, where challenges and opportunities lie, and areas to focus on to enable growth in whatever form it may take for our businesses.

The consultation to inform this Strategy confirmed that these four themes remain highly relevant to small businesses, and as a result they have all been carried over into Tasmania's Small Business Strategy 2036.

Objectives

Each theme in this Strategy has three objectives. These objectives have been adapted from responses to the ideas, discussions and feedback gathered during the consultation processes undertaken to inform the Strategy.

They bring closely related issues together, providing a clear and coordinated framework for government, industry and the business community to work towards shared outcomes.

At a time when businesses and governments are operating under tight budgets in a challenging global environment, these objectives will help focus effort on the areas that can have the greatest impact for Tasmania's small business community.

Putting the Strategy into action

The Tasmanian Government will work with our partner organisations, the TCCI and TSBC, along with the wider business community, to develop a flexible and responsive Implementation Plan to sit alongside the Strategy.

The Implementation Plan will draw on the Enabling action and small business priorities that sit alongside each of the Strategy's objectives to form practical and actionable pathways for delivering the Strategy.

The Implementation Plan will be adapted and updated throughout the course of the Strategy, helping us stay agile and adapt to changes in the operating environment, while giving businesses clear information about what they can expect from Government and industry.

The Implementation Plan will bring together activities already underway across government agencies and the business community, as well as newly identified activities that support the Strategy's objectives.

The Implementation Plan will set out specific actions Government, industry and businesses will take under each theme and will include measurable outcomes to track progress.

Themes and objectives

The Strategy is grouped into four themes, each with three key objectives that will drive the implementation of the Strategy.





People and connections

1. Networking and collaboration
2. Local purchasing
3. Attracting and supporting people to live and work in Tasmania

Place

1. Tasmanian brand
2. Operating in a uniquely Tasmanian environment
3. Environment, climate and renewable energy





Enabling business

1. Business advice and support
2. Operating environment
3. Red tape reduction

Technology

1. Digital connectivity
2. Market opportunities and diversification
3. Digital capability

THEME ONE

People and connections



This theme encompasses the people who run our businesses, those who work in them and buy from them, and the importance and reliance on connections between these people, businesses and government.

Networking and collaboration

The connections between people, businesses, industries and suppliers are crucial to business success and growth. There is a role for government and industry representative bodies to support and encourage these connections, whether that is through facilitating introductions, or creating spaces and events where connections can naturally occur.

Stronger networks will support collaboration, uncover new opportunities and foster resilience against future disruptions.

Enabling action: Strengthen networking and collaboration opportunities by creating, supporting and participating in forums within and across industries.

Small business priorities:

- Meaningful connections between businesses, industries, suppliers and support organisations
- Access to networking, learning and specialist guidance when businesses need it
- Accessible, welcoming and inclusive networks and support services that meet the diverse needs of Tasmania's business community
- Strong local, regional and industry connections that foster collaboration, knowledge sharing and collective problem-solving



Local purchasing

Local purchasing plays an important role in strengthening Tasmania's economy.

Government agencies and councils can support local suppliers by improving visibility of purchasing opportunities, making procurement processes easier to navigate and helping businesses build the capability to compete for contracts. These efforts can strengthen local supply chains, encourage collaboration and supplier diversity, support local jobs and contribute to a more resilient Tasmanian economy.

Opportunities to support local purchasing will be pursued within the procurement frameworks, policies and obligations applicable to each participating purchaser. For Tasmanian Government agencies, this includes value for money, open, impartial and effective competition, the Buy Local Policy, Treasurer's Instructions, and any applicable national and international procurement requirements.

Enabling action: Identify opportunities to build on existing purchasing and procurement policies and practices that support local suppliers, including practical measures to improve access to opportunities, visibility of tenders and collaboration.

Small business priorities:

- Fair and accessible opportunities to compete for government, council and private sector purchasing opportunities
- Clear, visible and proportionate procurement processes that are easier to understand and navigate, particularly for small businesses
- Greater visibility of future purchasing opportunities, where practicable, to help businesses plan, invest, collaborate and build capability
- Purchasing practices that recognise the contribution of local suppliers and encourage participation by businesses of different sizes, sectors and regions, consistent with applicable procurement requirements

Attracting and supporting people to live and work in Tasmania

A skilled, available and diverse workforce is important to the growth and sustainability of Tasmania's small business sector. This requires a coordinated approach to workforce participation, skills development and training, and that is a priority action area under the State's Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy.

Small businesses need access to relevant training pathways and opportunities to develop and train staff. This includes strengthening connections between businesses and training providers, promoting apprenticeships and traineeships, and considering how existing programs and services can better respond to workforce needs.

In sectors such as hospitality, where businesses can experience persistent workforce shortages and rely on overseas workers to meet demand, supporting local skills development and employment pathways is particularly important.

Workforce planning also needs to recognise the respective roles of the Tasmanian and Australian Governments, including the Australian Government's responsibility for migration policy.

At the state level, opportunities to support workforce participation, skills development and population growth should be aligned to and informed by economic growth, demographic change and demand for services.

These efforts should be supported by the conditions that enable people to live and work in Tasmania, including housing, childcare, transport and safe, inclusive and welcoming workplaces and communities. These factors are particularly important in regional areas where access to workers, training and essential services can be more challenging. Consideration must be given to the priorities of local employers and their communities that is underpinned by data.

Enabling action: Support the conditions that help small businesses attract, develop and retain workers, strengthen local skills pathways and respond to workforce needs, as a priority under the Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy.

Small business priorities:

- Accessible training pathways and stronger connections between small businesses and training providers to help address skills gaps and support workforce development
- Opportunities for Tasmanians to develop relevant skills and enter or progress in employment, including through apprenticeships, traineeships and other training pathways
- Alignment between small business workforce needs, existing education, training and employment programs, and relevant population and workforce policies
- Supported implementation of Tasmania's Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy, including engagement with the Australian Government on national migration settings where these affect small business workforce needs
- Strong, coordinated consideration of all the factors that help businesses attract and retain workers, including housing, childcare, transport and inclusive workplaces, particularly in regional Tasmania

THEME TWO

Place



Tasmania has enormous appeal as a place to live, work and do business. Tasmania's drawcards are many, bringing tourists, entrepreneurs and new residents attracted by the lifestyle opportunities, natural environment and interconnected communities.

Tasmanian brand

Tasmania's brand is one of the state's most valuable strategic assets. It is built on our shared values, our beautiful natural environment, our cultural heritage, the quality of what we grow, make and produce, and the people and communities that call Tasmania home. Tasmanian small businesses exemplify our quiet pursuit of the extraordinary. Many Tasmanian businesses are small by choice, with business owners focussing on the quality of their products and services, their community connection and the lifestyle opportunities that Tasmania offers.

Tasmania's small businesses have an opportunity to leverage the strength and reputation of the Tasmanian brand to differentiate themselves and create value. The Tasmanian brand mark provides a recognised way for businesses to demonstrate their connection to Tasmania, helping to communicate authenticity and quality, build customer trust, and enhance the visibility of their products and services.

Enabling action: Help grow the capability of Tasmanian business to leverage and use the Tasmanian brand.

Small business priorities:

- Greater use of the Tasmanian brand, including the Tasmanian brand mark, to strengthen business reputation, competitiveness and growth
- Clear communication of the uniquely Tasmanian value behind the products, services and experiences businesses provide
- Recognition of Tasmania's communities, lifestyle and values as a distinct advantage for Tasmanian businesses
- Accessible pathways for small businesses to connect with and benefit from Brand Tasmania initiatives



Operating in a uniquely Tasmanian environment

Our communities may be smaller than those in other states, but our small size and geographical position have also generated a culture of resourcefulness and resilience, demonstrated by Tasmania's strong business survival rate.

This resourcefulness and resilience enables us to confront significant and ongoing challenges, particularly in regional areas where location related challenges are intensified. Despite longer distances to key markets and higher transport and distribution costs, we maintain our competitiveness through quality.

Enabling action: Play to Tasmania's strengths, by building business resilience and improving processes that address challenges relating to our location and size, while leveraging the advantages of the Tasmanian way of life, including our vibrant arts, culture and community connections.

Small business priorities:

- Resilient and adaptable businesses that are equipped to respond to changing economic, environmental and market conditions
- Reliable access to the infrastructure, services and support needed to overcome the challenges associated with distance, scale and regionality
- Greater recognition and use of Tasmania's lifestyle, culture and sense of place as drivers of business success and competitiveness
- Strong collaboration, innovation and resourcefulness that help businesses turn Tasmania's size and location into an advantage
- Recognising and supporting the vital role small businesses play in providing essential goods and services within their local communities



Environment, climate and renewable energy

Tasmania's location provides us with clean air and water, and a cool climate, creating the perfect environment for our high-quality produce and experiences. Tasmania's environmental credentials, including 100 per cent renewable energy and net zero emissions, place it at the forefront of the world's transition to clean energy and emissions reductions. These natural assets form a key part of the Tasmanian brand and benefit both new and existing businesses.

Our business community places a high value on environmental responsibility and sustainability. Supporting businesses to adopt sustainable practices, alongside protecting Tasmania's natural assets through appropriate biosecurity measures, climate adaptation initiatives and resilience to natural disasters, will help maintain our competitive advantage and support long-term economic prosperity.

As Tasmania advances its renewable energy and climate ambitions, including a target to double renewable electricity generation by 2040 and sustain net zero emissions, or lower, from 2030, the opportunities for businesses will continue to expand.[12]

Enabling action: Leverage our natural and cultural assets, supporting environmental sustainability and resilience, and enabling businesses to harness Tasmania's unique environmental and clean energy competitive advantages.

Small business priorities:

- Strong business resilience to climate impacts, natural disasters, biosecurity hazards and other disruptions, supported by effective planning and preparedness
- Business confidence to assess environmental performance, plan for emissions reductions and report on sustainability outcomes
- Sustainable business practices that strengthen competitiveness, reduce costs and support long-term success
- Greater opportunities for businesses to benefit from Tasmania's renewable energy leadership and transition to a low-emissions economy

12. Tasmania's Climate Change Action Plan 2023-25

THEME THREE

Enabling business

Tasmania's geography, attributes and community provide a key point of difference for our products, services and experiences, but it also requires a different approach to supporting our businesses.

Our businesses want flexible, innovative, and efficient policies, processes and approaches to assist them to reach their full potential and to grow in their own way.

Business advice and support

Many business owners seek ongoing support to build their business skills and knowledge in areas such as marketing, risk management, scaling up, business continuity, disaster preparedness, and financial, strategic and succession planning.

New and aspiring business owners also require support to navigate the early stages of establishing and operating a business.

Responding to the challenges of running a business including financial uncertainty, workforce pressures, daily operational demands and balancing work with personal responsibilities requires access to the right support at the right time.

Reliable, trusted and specialised guidance, knowing where and how to get help, and timely access to practical support enables new businesses to establish strong foundations from the outset, and supports existing businesses to maximise their time and resources, building resilience for long-term sustainability.

Enabling action: Ensure that the business advice and support services available to new and existing Tasmanian small businesses are accessible, fit for purpose and relevant to current and emerging business needs.

Small business priorities:

- Clear, trusted and easy to find support that is responsive to business feedback and connects businesses to the right guidance quickly, reducing the need to navigate multiple information sources
- Practical, timely advice tailored to busy small business owners, with short, actionable support in areas such as marketing, compliance, planning, risk management and day-to-day operational challenges
- Specialised support for new and early stage business owners, helping them navigate registrations, compliance, planning and early decision making with confidence
- Guidance that helps businesses strengthen long-term resilience through mental health support, succession planning, disaster preparedness, business continuity and financial planning



Operating environment

The operating environment for many Tasmanian businesses is impacted by challenges experienced elsewhere. These include rising energy, freight, transport and fuel costs, the increasing cost of materials, insurance and regulatory compliance, and supply chain disruptions. Cost-of-living pressures also affect household spending and reduce consumer demand, placing additional pressure on many businesses.

Labour and skills shortages compound these pressures, and many impacts are felt more acutely in regional areas. Lack of certainty is one of the biggest challenges many businesses face and is a key constraint in enabling businesses to achieve their goals.

For many small businesses, managing day-to-day operations has become increasingly complex, affecting both business viability and confidence, making it more difficult for small businesses to invest, expand and respond to new opportunities.

Despite these pressures, small businesses continue to demonstrate resilience, adaptability and a strong commitment to their communities. Supporting businesses to navigate these challenges is important to building confidence, encouraging investment and growth, and helping them take advantage of new opportunities.

Enabling action: Work with all levels of government and key stakeholders to increase certainty for businesses to meet the ongoing challenges that exist with the current and future operating environment.

Small business priorities:

- Clear and predictable policy settings that give businesses greater certainty to plan, invest and make decisions in a changing economic environment
- Coordinated government action that provides consistent advice, shared information and reduced duplication, helping businesses navigate cost pressures and operational challenges
- Businesses positioned well to manage rising costs and disruptions, including fuel, freight, insurance, materials, compliance and supply chain pressures
- Recognition of regional realities, with support tailored to the issues faced by regional businesses
- Measures that alleviate cost pressures on small businesses and support their capacity to remain sustainable and to invest, employ and grow



Red tape reduction

Red tape and bureaucracy can create significant challenges for businesses, adding unnecessary cost, complexity and delays. Reducing these barriers requires a holistic, whole-of-government commitment, with all agencies recognising their responsibility to identify and address unnecessary requirements, duplication and processes that create avoidable burdens for business.

A coordinated approach across government is important to addressing systemic issues, prioritising practical improvements and making it easier for businesses to engage with government. Clear pathways, consistent information and timely responses should be a priority across the public sector.

Enabling action: Support the Government's commitment to reducing red tape by encouraging a whole-of-government focus on identifying barriers, improving coordination and pursuing practical opportunities to simplify processes for Tasmanian businesses.

Small business priorities:

- Simplified requirements, reduced duplication and improved consistency in processes that create unnecessary costs, administrative burden and delays for businesses
- Shared commitment across government to identify, elevate and prioritise red tape issues, with each agency responsible for addressing barriers within its remit and contributing to broader solutions where required, including engagement on the design of regulatory reforms, and tracking and reporting on legislative change progress and impacts to small business
- Practical information about key government processes, including where to go, who to contact, and the steps involved in seeking approvals or accessing support
- Clear communication and timely responses to business enquiries and processes affecting investment, hiring, development, procurement, planning and day-to-day operations

THEME FOUR

Technology



Technology is a vital and increasingly significant part of the modern business environment. In Tasmania, it can address challenges, increase productivity, open new markets, and help businesses to be efficient and accessible.

Digital connectivity

Reliable internet is the foundation of any digital activity, and this is especially important for regional businesses. Unstable networks can cause frustrating and avoidable setbacks. Reliable internet connections also enable professionals to move to, and work remotely from, regional areas while enjoying the lifestyle benefits that are on offer. Improving and maintaining Tasmania's digital infrastructure requires coordinated action by all levels of government and across industry.

Enabling action: Advocate for and work with industry, the Australian Government and local government to help improve the capacity, resilience and reach of Tasmania's digital networks, and consumer access to independent advice about connectivity solutions.

Small business priorities:

- Reliable, high capacity internet and mobile coverage, especially in regional areas where outages and black spots disrupt trading, payments and safety
- Coordinated focus across State Government, Australian Government, telecommunications providers and councils to accelerate infrastructure upgrades and reduce duplication
- Connectivity solutions that support business continuity, including backup connectivity to manage digital disruptions



Market opportunities and diversification

Information and communications technology can help Tasmanian businesses overcome the challenges of distance by strengthening their online presence, connecting with customers and promoting their products and services locally, nationally and internationally. Digital tools can create opportunities to increase sales, build brand awareness, reach new customers and diversify revenue streams.

Government has a role in complementing industry and Australian Government initiatives by helping businesses understand available opportunities and connect with relevant support, while avoiding duplication.

Enabling action: Support Tasmanian businesses to build their online presence, connect with customers, and identify market opportunities by complementing relevant State Government, Australian Government and industry initiatives.

Small business priorities:

- Businesses with strengthened digital marketing and e-commerce capabilities to promote products and services, reach customers and pursue new sales opportunities
- Businesses supported to identify opportunities to grow across local, interstate and international markets and diversify their customer base and revenue streams
- Existing export support delivered by the State Government, Australian Government and industry, complemented with clear pathways to relevant information and assistance
- Strong business awareness of transparent platform practices, available dispute resolution pathways and practical considerations when using digital platforms to sell goods and services



Digital capability

Tasmanian businesses are at varying stages of digital maturity. Some need to build the skills and confidence to use technology effectively in their operations, while others are seeking to optimise existing systems and respond to emerging technologies, including AI. Effective use of digital tools can help businesses improve efficiency, manage risks, strengthen resilience, and meet relevant legal and regulatory requirements.

As the digital environment continues to evolve, businesses need practical information and guidance to understand emerging opportunities and challenges. A coordinated approach that complements existing industry and Australian Government initiatives can help businesses identify relevant support and build their digital capability.

Enabling action: Complement existing initiatives delivered by industry and the Australian Government by helping businesses identify relevant tools, information and support to strengthen digital capability, adopt technology, and respond to emerging opportunities and risks.

Small business priorities:

- Businesses well positioned to assess their digital capability and identify practical opportunities for improvement and growth
- Relevant, accessible guidance that recognises differing levels of digital maturity and the time constraints faced by small business owners
- Strong business awareness of the opportunities, risks and practical considerations associated with AI, automation, cloud-based tools and digital payments
- Access to practical guidance on scams, data protection, account security, recovery and business continuity planning

Agreement

The Tasmanian Government, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Tasmanian Small Business Council share an ambition to help Tasmanian small businesses succeed.

We will continue to work together to identify priorities, inform implementation and review progress, with the aim of supporting a strong and sustainable business environment in Tasmania.



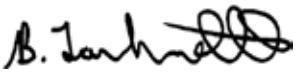
Guy Barnett
Deputy Premier
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs

Tasmanian Government



Geoff Fader AM
Chair, Tasmanian Small Business Council

Tasmanian Small Business Council
Uniting Small Business



Becher Townshend
Chair, Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

TCCI

Continuing the conversation

The Tasmanian Government is already taking action in many of the areas outlined in this Strategy, and alignment to existing and future policy has been a key consideration.

As the Implementation Plan that follows on from this Strategy is developed, the Tasmanian Government and its strategy partners will continue the conversation with Tasmanian businesses.

Throughout the consultation undertaken in developing this Strategy, stakeholders consistently emphasised the importance of ongoing partnerships for successful implementation.

The Tasmanian Government will continue to engage with businesses, representative organisations, local government, community organisations and other stakeholders throughout the life of this Strategy. This will ensure delivery benefits from local knowledge, expertise and experience, and reflects the diverse needs of Tasmania's small business community.

If you have any enquiries or feedback relating to this Strategy or the Implementation Plan, please contact Business Tasmania at ask@business.tas.gov.au or phone 1800 440 026.

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