



COMMUNIQUÉ

MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND TASMANIAN ECONOMIC COUNCIL

THURSDAY 31 JULY, 2014

TASMANIA

SHARED VISION FOR JOBS AND GROWTH

Tasmania is in a unique position. Although it has experienced challenges, Tasmania also has many outstanding opportunities to grow the local economy and create jobs.

The Joint Commonwealth and Tasmanian Economic Council's (JCTEC's) objective is to create an environment that grows and attracts investment in Tasmania.

This is a true partnership — a joint undertaking by the Commonwealth Government, the Tasmanian Government, and members of Tasmania's business community to build a consensus for the reforms necessary to drive competitiveness.

The Prime Minister, Premier, Commonwealth and Tasmanian Ministers, and members of the Tasmanian Business community met today to take concrete steps for long-term economic growth in Tasmania.

State and Commonwealth Ministers highlighted the work being done by respective governments to get Tasmania back on track. Some of these initiatives include:

- The Tasmanian Government's commitment to cut red and green tape by 20 per cent, prioritise infrastructure and skilled migration, grow the agriculture sector tenfold, to \$10 billion by 2050, and develop a framework for leveraging the State's natural resources and energy, providing opportunities for investment in downstream processing through innovative technologies; and
- The Commonwealth Government's commitment to the *Economic Growth Plan for Tasmania*, which will boost jobs and investment, and drive the necessary reforms to take advantage of the State's natural and competitive advantages. This plan supports initiatives like the \$400 million upgrade of the Midland Highway, the upgrading of Hobart airport and the establishment of the Major Projects Approval Agency in Launceston.

Making Tasmania an attractive place to invest

State and Commonwealth Ministers discussed their commitment to grow and attract investment in Tasmania. Both the Tasmanian and the Commonwealth Government have set clear policy directions to remove unnecessary regulatory burden on businesses, individuals and the community and to support private sector investment and create jobs.

The Council agreed that investment growth and attraction would be its primary objective over the 12-18 months and recommended that the Commonwealth and Tasmanian Governments continue their work in providing more certainty to investors who are undertaking the development approvals process.

Support for Major Projects

Council members acknowledged the efforts by both Governments to ensure that Tasmania is open for business – particularly through the Commonwealth’s newly established Tasmanian Major Projects Approval Agency (the Agency) and work underway to establish the Tasmanian Government’s Office of the Coordinator General, both in Launceston.

The Agency will provide a single point of entry into processes governing Commonwealth development approval. An advisory board, chaired by Mr Bob Calvert, will oversee the eligibility of projects to be assisted by the Agency. Mr Calvert will sit on the JCTEC and advise the Council on the progress of the agency’s work.

The Agency will complement and work closely with the Office of the Co-ordinator General, in its role of ensuring companies undertaking major projects in Tasmania are aware of all their regulatory obligations and approval pathways.

The Council discussed the importance of establishing a strong partnership between the Agency and Office of the Co-ordinator General and agreed to examine ways to increase operational efficiency of the two agencies, including co-location and resource sharing.

The Commonwealth and Tasmanian Governments will sign a Memorandum of Understanding, further cementing this partnership between the two Governments.

Tasmanian shipping and freight

The Council discussed the work of the Productivity Commission on Tasmanian Shipping and Freight and the challenges Tasmania faces in bringing its goods to market. Business Members and the Tasmanian Government provided their views to the Commonwealth Government to consider, noting the importance of coastal shipping to Tasmania, and their broad support for national coastal shipping reforms that enhance competition in sea freight and place downward pressure on prices. The Prime Minister agreed to consider the views of the Business Members and the Tasmanian Government in developing the Commonwealth’s response to the report.

Work Plan for the JCTEC

The Council agreed that its future work program would focus on priority action areas under the broad theme of ‘investment growth and attraction’. The Council agreed to the development of a work plan to guide future work on competitive reforms to boost Tasmania’s long-term growth.

Future meetings of the JCTEC

Council members agreed to meet twice more before the end of 2014, with a further two meetings in the first half of 2015.

Further details on the Council are available here: <http://www.treasury.gov.au/Policy-Topics/PublicPolicyAndGovt/tas-eco-council>