



Huon Valley Council Economic Development Strategy

**“A vibrant economy
with a quality
rural lifestyle.”**

July 2009

Council Resolution - 20.020/09 - 12 August 2009

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Part A

“THE STRATEGY”

Introduction

The Huon Valley Council has adopted this Strategy to direct future economic growth of the Huon Valley, to embrace the vision of ***a vibrant economy with a quality rural lifestyle.***

The preparation of this Strategy is consistent with the outcomes of the Search Conference held during 2007 and aligns with the strategic objective as detailed in the Huon Valley 2020 Community Plan.

The Strategy provides direction to be undertaken by the Council to further develop the economy of the Huon Valley. The Strategy identifies significant opportunity for the Council, through it's staff, to work with a range of stakeholders to achieve the outcomes identified.

This Strategy is also intended to provide a resource available for review by those considering investment in the Huon Valley and other tiers of Government.

Economic wellbeing in the Huon Valley is underpinned by four significant industry drivers:-

- Aquaculture and fishing
- Forestry
- Agriculture
- Tourism

It has been recognised that there are a number of businesses involved in each of these industries. Those businesses range from solo operators through to large corporations employing many hundreds of local residents. It is the aim of this Strategy to have applicability to any sized business whether it be an existing operation or an investor considering establishment in the Huon Valley for the first time.

Key strategic areas to enhance the economic wellbeing of the Huon Valley are:-

- Infrastructure
- Business Building
- Marketing
- Skill Building
- Sustainable Communities

Each of these strategic issues have had an objective identified and a series of strategies and actions prepared which, when complete, will help meet the identified objectives.

It is recognised that the Huon Valley Community continues to undergo change on a number of fronts. One key change is to the demographics within the area, particularly noting the increasing arrival of new residents who wish to take advantage of the lifestyle opportunities offered by this unique rural location. The introduction of these residents to the area is in itself an economic driver and is welcomed.

This Strategy has been developed during a period which has also seen the onset of the global financial crisis. Whilst the impacts of this significant global event have not yet become evident in the financial data available, such a crisis further underpins the need for a sound strategic approach to the economic wellbeing of the Huon Valley.

Infrastructure

OBJECTIVE

Ensure the provision of world competitive infrastructure in transport, telecommunications, water and waterways, tourist accommodation and investment ready development sites.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arterial road network requires improvement and improved signage • High quantities of natural water • World class waterways • Seasonal temperate climate • Good and secure electricity supply • Potential natural resources to harvest to create carbon free energy (geothermal, waves, wind and sun) • The natural beauty • Significant environmental features • Rivers, waterways and wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesser quality secondary roads • Poor telecommunication coverage • Some upgrading required of wastewater treatment plants • Lack of appropriately zoned industrial land • Lack of tourist accommodation
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to better utilise natural water resources (both inside the Valley and externally) • Opportunities to utilise water generated from wastewater treatment plants • Improved utilisation of waterways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of business due to poor telecommunication • Inappropriate developments to threaten natural advantages • Road network limitations

KEY ISSUES

- Availability of Industrial Land
- Availability of Tourist Accommodation
- Availability of Accommodation for Seasonal Workers
- Adequate Telecommunication and Technology Infrastructure
- Opportunities to better utilise Natural Water and Recycled Water
- Improved Infrastructure to encourage increased use of Natural Waterways
- Southern Road Network

Infrastructure

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Key Issue	Strategies	Actions
Industrial Land	Progress the development of an industrial park in Huonville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify potential location/s • Commission a consultant to review and report on the sites identified • Prepare a development plan • Proceed with the approval processes • Implement the development plan • Promote the site for development
	Ensure there is appropriately zoned industrial land provided for the new Huon Valley Planning Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the data recently released by the State Department of Economic Development • Undertake a review of industrial land needs in all Huon Valley towns • Make provision of appropriately zones land in new Planning Scheme
Tourist Accommodation	Progress the development of investment ready tourist accommodation sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Council has resources to progress works required
	Work with potential investors who identify a site and express an interest in the Huon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Council has skilled staff to work and support potential investors identified
	Work closely with the State Department of Economic Development in raising awareness of tourist accommodation opportunities available in the Huon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationships with key State Government officers to promote the Huon Valley
	At every opportunity, promote the Huon Valley as an investment opportunity for tourist accommodation providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further develop website to attract investors
	Commission a report which undertakes an analysis to quantify tourist accommodation needs in the Huon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a brief and secure funding to appoint a consultant to undertake a review and provide a report
	Continue to work on the implementation of The Far South Regional Tourism Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Council has the resources to prioritise and progress works required

Infrastructure

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Key Issue	Strategies	Actions
Tourist Accommodation	Completion of Huon Valley Regional Tourism Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the Council has the resources to prioritise and progress works required
	Work in collaboration with investors and other tiers of Government to establish three separate five-star boutique tourist facilities giving priority for those facilities to be established at Cockle Creek, Franklin and either Tahune or Cygnet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise closely with officers of Tourism Tasmania • Work with interested land owners to develop potential of their sites • Facilitate introduction of potential investors to land owners • Ensure appropriate zoning in the Council's new Planning Scheme
	Work in collaboration with investors and other tiers of Government to establish one 3½ star tourist facility in the Port Huon / Geeveston area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise closely with officers of Tourism Tasmania • Identify specific sites • Work with land owners to develop potential of their sites
	To progress work to have each of the population centres within the Huon Valley designated as RV Friendly towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have Council maintain and present identified areas to attract RV travelers • Ensure appropriate signage and recognition of identified areas • Investigate promotional opportunities of the RV friendly locations
Seasonal Workers	To facilitate the development of accommodation to meet the growing needs of seasonal and itinerant workers who visit the Huon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a needs analysis of the seasonal accommodation needs in the Huon Valley • Ensure provision is made in the Council's new Planning Scheme for appropriately zoned land
	To facilitate seasonal worker employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with STEPS and the Business Enterprise Centre to investigate the development of an electronic (possibly web enabled) work brokerage system
Telecommunication and Information Technology	Strive for the provision of worlds best information technology infrastructure to support IT development in the Huon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a broadband development plan for the Huon Valley. Lobby for improvement to the provision of mobile telephone coverage in the Huon Valley

Infrastructure

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Key Issue	Strategies	Actions
Water	Continue the implementation of the Huon Valley Water Plan incorporating the Huon Valley Regional Water Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lobby newly established water authority to ensure implementation of Huon Valley Water and Wastewater Plans
	Work with key industry partners to identify untreated fresh water needs to meet fish bathing, irrigation and industrial water needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Liaise closely with industry representatives and the State Irrigation Development Board
	Liaise with Industry and State Government to identify needs and plan for provision of water to meet industrial and agricultural needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Investigate opportunities for the re-use of existing WWTP outfall
Waterway Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Encourage the development of commercial marinas at Franklin, Port Huon, Dover and Port Cygnet •Encourage the development of commercial boat yards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Work closely with identified investors to progress opportunities identified •Work closely with identified investors and locations appropriate for development
	Further develop smaller scale waterway infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support the Council's Marine Facilities Advisory Committee in the strategic approach to the provision of waterway infrastructure
	Encourage the further development of facilities to enhance the world-class rowing opportunities available at Franklin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Encourage the Rowing Club to investigate opportunities to enhance Club facilities
Southern Road Network	Strive for improvements to road network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lobby State and Commonwealth Governments to encourage upgrading of arterial road network

Business Building

OBJECTIVE

Provide a supportive vibrant environment in which business can grow and develop on a sustainable basis.

<h3>STRENGTHS</h3>	<h3>WEAKNESSES</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advantage of having good quality natural resources including soil and good climatic conditions • Close proximity to the Capital City (the export point) • Supportive Council with Economic Development programs • Business Enterprise Centre • Safe rural lifestyle • Stringent Quarantine barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of business ready sites • Poor service delivery in some areas eg meal providers not being open on certain days
<h3>OPPORTUNITIES</h3>	<h3>THREATS</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking and communication • More downstream processing of local produce • Increased intensive horticultural opportunities (small acre) • Working with local existing businesses to grow the business base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing export costs • Increasing fuel costs • The potential loss of a seaport in Hobart • Legalistic and delayed planning processes • Council withdrawing support for economic development • The loss of “right to farm” by existing farming operations

KEY ISSUES

- Increased Networking and Communication between existing businesses
- Increased Downstream Processing of Natural Produce and Resources
- Programs to work with existing businesses to grow business base
- Expansion of existing commercial base/s
- Continued Council resourcing of Economic Development programs

Business Building

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Key Issue	Strategies	Actions
Increased downstream processing	Encourage increased downstream processing of natural produce and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise closely with relevant State Government authorities and departments to encourage downstream processing of local produce • Encourage networking of primary producers to identify opportunities for increased downstream processing • Work closely with the Tasmanian Fruit Industry Strategy and Fruitgrowers Tasmania
Networking and Communication	Encourage improved networking and communication between established businesses within the Huon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Huon Valley/Kingborough Business Enterprise Centre in the continuation of regular networking meetings • Prepare and maintain an accurate data base of all businesses within the Huon Valley • Investigate the preparation of an Economic Development newsletter for local businesses • Encourage communication between businesses to optimise opening hours and ensure sustained customer service
Grow business base of existing business	Encourage the growth of existing businesses in the Huon Valley to optimise employment opportunities and economic expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify training programs for existing business operators • Investigate the implementation of the “Economic Gardening” concept in selected Huon Valley businesses • Work closely with Huon Valley / Kingborough BEC in its support of small businesses • Identify opportunities to develop “Buy Local” campaigns
Improve Commercial Activity in Huon Valley towns	Ensure the commercial centres of the Huon Valley remain competitive and economically active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the Council to further enhance township development and presentation • Support commercial expansion and re-development of the Huonville township particularly the area between the roundabout and bridge • Encourage the improvement of commercial facades in Huon Valley towns particularly in Huonville • Support the establishment of another major supermarket chain in Huonville • Investigate customer service training and awards program for existing Huon Valley businesses
Council involvement in Economic Development	Ensure Council support for and involvement in Economic Development programs is sustained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain resources for appropriately skilled Council staff to be dedicated to Economic Development activities • Maintain resources to enable Council to consider investment in projects which have positive economic development outcomes • Be pro-active in the identification of grant funding opportunities which will advance positive economic development outcomes
Encourage new business	Progress the development of a prospectus promoting business opportunities in the Huon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research appropriate formats for the prospectus • Encourage Council to dedicate the required resources to develop, produce and distribute the prospectus

Marketing

OBJECTIVE

Promote the Huon Valley region and its high quality produce to the world market.

<h3>STRENGTHS</h3>	<h3>WEAKNESSES</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The natural environment • Natural beauty • Quality produce • Seasonal temperate climate with climatic change • Existing recognition as the “Apple Isle” • Excellent air quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of branding • Lack of iconic tourism accommodation • Overall lack of promotion of the area • Lack of a co-ordinated approach to marketing and promotion (lots of separation and segregation particularly in the tourism industry)
<h3>OPPORTUNITIES</h3>	<h3>THREATS</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on quality, quality control • More information centres • Linkages to Tasmanian marketing • Proximity to the World Heritage area • Further promotion of natural icons • Establishment of a region information centre to assist in building tourism related development and brand image 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor or inappropriate branding • Undermining of branding through poor quality produce • Other areas with similar attributes doing it better than us

KEY ISSUES

- Develop a brand
- Develop quality control criteria to be eligible for inclusion of the brand
- Improve marketing and promotion
- Encourage co-ordinated approach between existing operators

Marketing

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Key Issue	Strategies	Actions
Develop a Brand	Undertake the development of a Huon Valley Brand to provide a marketing identity for the area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify funding opportunities to enable development of Huon Valley brand • Engage a Consultant to identify brand equities and undertake appropriate market research to underpin brand including stakeholder identification and input • Arrange for launch of new brand • Work closely with appropriate State Government and other agencies to ensure consistency of marketing
Develop quality control criteria to be eligible for inclusion of the brand	As a component of the Brand development, ensure the establishment of clear quality control criteria to be utilised for those seeking use of the Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlist appropriate professional advice and support • Consult with identified key stake holders • Develop quality control criteria for use by those seeking inclusion in Brand marketing • Work with and take advice from industry and other key stakeholders to closely monitor the use of the Brand and to maintain integrity of the Brand
Improve marketing and promotion	Initiate a range of marketing and promotional activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Council to provide resources for the establishment of a marketing plan for the Huon Valley • Ensure consistency in the marketing plan with the area promotion undertaken by those promoting tourism in the region • Website re-development (similar to www.discovermaroochy.com.au) - consider a huonvalley.com website • Traditional marketing campaign to increase awareness of the Huon Valley Brand
Encourage co-ordinated approach between existing operators	Undertake activities to enable operators to meet, communicate and exchange ideas and information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate meetings of key stake holders and industry partners to identify opportunities of working collaboratively to market the Huon Valley • Facilitate annual workshops between existing groups of operators to provide information and seek feedback

Skill Building

OBJECTIVE

Ensure a highly skilled and competitive workforce which is provided with optimum opportunity to fulfil individual potential and further the economic prosperity of the Huon Valley.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing organisations—Huon LINC, Oak Enterprises, STEPS • Increasing career opportunities in the local area • Educational facilities available in each area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current schools go to Year 10 only • A lack of co-ordinated training opportunities • Low education retention rates • Low literacy levels • Cultural issues associated with return to the workforce • Relatively low pay rates for staff
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review and improve the local education system • Build relationships between existing businesses to develop training courses • Re-skilling the existing unemployed • Making young people aware of local employment opportunities • The development of integrated resident and employee attraction programs • Promote lifestyle as a reason to move to the Huon Valley • Market the locality to qualified staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of skilled staff • Lack of professional people • Aging workforce

KEY ISSUES

- Improved educational facilities
- Improved Adult learning opportunities
- Development of additional Training schemes
- Development of resident and employee attraction programs

Skill Building

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Key Issue	Strategies	Actions
Improved educational facilities	<p>Short Term Encourage and support the implementation of the State Government's Polytechnic/Academy model in the Huon Valley</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with the Education Department, Huon LINC, Tasmanian Polytechnic and the three District High Schools in the Huon Valley to develop the model of the Tasmanian Polytechnic/Tasmanian Academy/Huon Trade Training Centre for year 11 and 12 in the Huon Valley • Negotiate and consult with the Education Department regarding land use for a site for the Polytechnic/Tasmanian Academy/Huon Trade Training Centre
	<p>Long Term To advocate on behalf of the community to lobby the State Government to consider the implantation of an educational system in the Huon Valley similar to that recently announced for the Brighton model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Middle school concept - Years 5 to 8 - Upper school concept - Years 9 to 12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby State Education Minister • Liaise with stakeholders to establish agreed position • Provide a deputation to meet with State Education Minister/Premier
Adult Learning	Encourage a range of adult literacy programs to be provided to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work in close partnership with the Huon LINC and the community to promote current and new literacy programs. • Work collaboratively with the Huon LINC in the development of an Educational Strategy for the Huon Valley
	Encourage the participation of adults into education and training opportunities in the Huon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Huon LINC and other providers to promote adult pathways into education and training

Skill Building

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Key Issue	Strategies	Actions
Training Schemes	Encourage employers within the Huon Valley to implement skill development programs within their workforces by offering:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships • Traineeships And other training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise in conjunction with Huon LINC and local business a training information day • Invite training organisations to speak about opportunities for local business to actively participate in training for their staff
	Encourage employees to progress further educational opportunities, by supporting students through VET and other work experience programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Huon LINC, Tasmanian Polytechnic, local schools and local business to develop a work experience program in the Huon Valley
Resident and employee attraction	Work to encourage HR practitioners in the Huon Valley to co-ordinate a recruitment program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a meeting of all the Managers and recruitment agencies within the Huon Valley to identify opportunities for the development of co-ordinated recruitment campaigns
	Undertake work to target additional professionals to the Huon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a recruitment strategy with local business and employment agencies to target professionals to work and live in the Huon Valley

Sustainable Communities

OBJECTIVE

Ensure appropriate community infrastructure to meet the needs of the population allowing individuals to fulfil career and personal desires.

<h3>STRENGTHS</h3>	<h3>WEAKNESSES</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good community infrastructure ie sporting, medical and community facilities • Good social networks • Strong volunteer base • Good banking facilities, particularly Community Bank • Effective Township Committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of housing • Population diversity (sparse) • Transport • Lack of banking services in some larger towns in the district
<h3>OPPORTUNITIES</h3>	<h3>THREATS</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Aged Care facilities • Population planning • Further improvement of township presentation • Additional services throughout the towns ie banking, Service Tas etc • Work closely with Community Banks in further establishing branches in the Huon Valley • Reduction of fuel prices in line with major Tasmanian towns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parochialism • Fuel costs • Loss of volunteer base • An aging demographic • Changes due to climate change

KEY ISSUES

- Progress Population Planning Initiatives
- Provision of adequate medical services
- Provision of accessible and affordable banking services
- Provision of professional services including Government agencies
- Provision of adequate transport
- Commercial activity
- Infrastructure development
- Climate change

Sustainable Communities

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Key Issue	Strategies	Actions
Population Management	Undertake the development of a Population Growth & Development Strategy for the Huon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission a consultant to develop a population growth and development strategy • Ensure close and ongoing communication with the Tasmanian Demographic Change Advisory Council
Medical Services	Closely monitor the provision of medical services in Geeveston, Dover and Cygnet and undertake a proactive approach to ensure the continuance of those medical services as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage Council to adopt the draft Rural Health Strategy for the Huon Valley
Educational facilities	See Skill Building section	
Professional services including Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate on behalf of the community and lobby the State Government to ensure the continued provision of State Government services in the Valley • Encourage the establishment of additional professional officers and offices throughout the townships in the Valley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaken an audit of existing service providers and identify gaps • Encourage the development of service directories to assist with local promotion of available professional services • Assist with the promotion of opportunities to further develop availability of additional locally based professional services
Banking Services	Play an active role to support the further development of community banks in the Huon Valley. Particularly in the townships of Huonville and Cygnet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist Community Bank proponents with site identification • Encourage the Council to utilise the services of a Huonville based Community Bank when established • Help promote the benefits of locally (community owned) based banking services
Climate change	Identify and pursue opportunities that arise due to climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor, analyse and report on publications released from the State and nationally that relate to Economic Development in terms of how the outcomes might relate to the Huon Valley
Volunteerism	Enhance the ongoing contribution to the local economy by volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the Council to support and recognise volunteer effort.

Evaluation

This Strategy shall be reviewed twice a year by the Economic Development Officer reporting to the Committee and the Committee in response authorising a report to Council.

During the first year of implementation work will be undertaken to identify the prioritisation of all actions contained within this Strategy. At the conclusion of the first years' implementation, a report will be provided for consideration by the Council's Economic Development Advisory Committee, detailing actions achieved during the first year and listing the prioritisation of other actions for the remaining four year life of the Strategy.

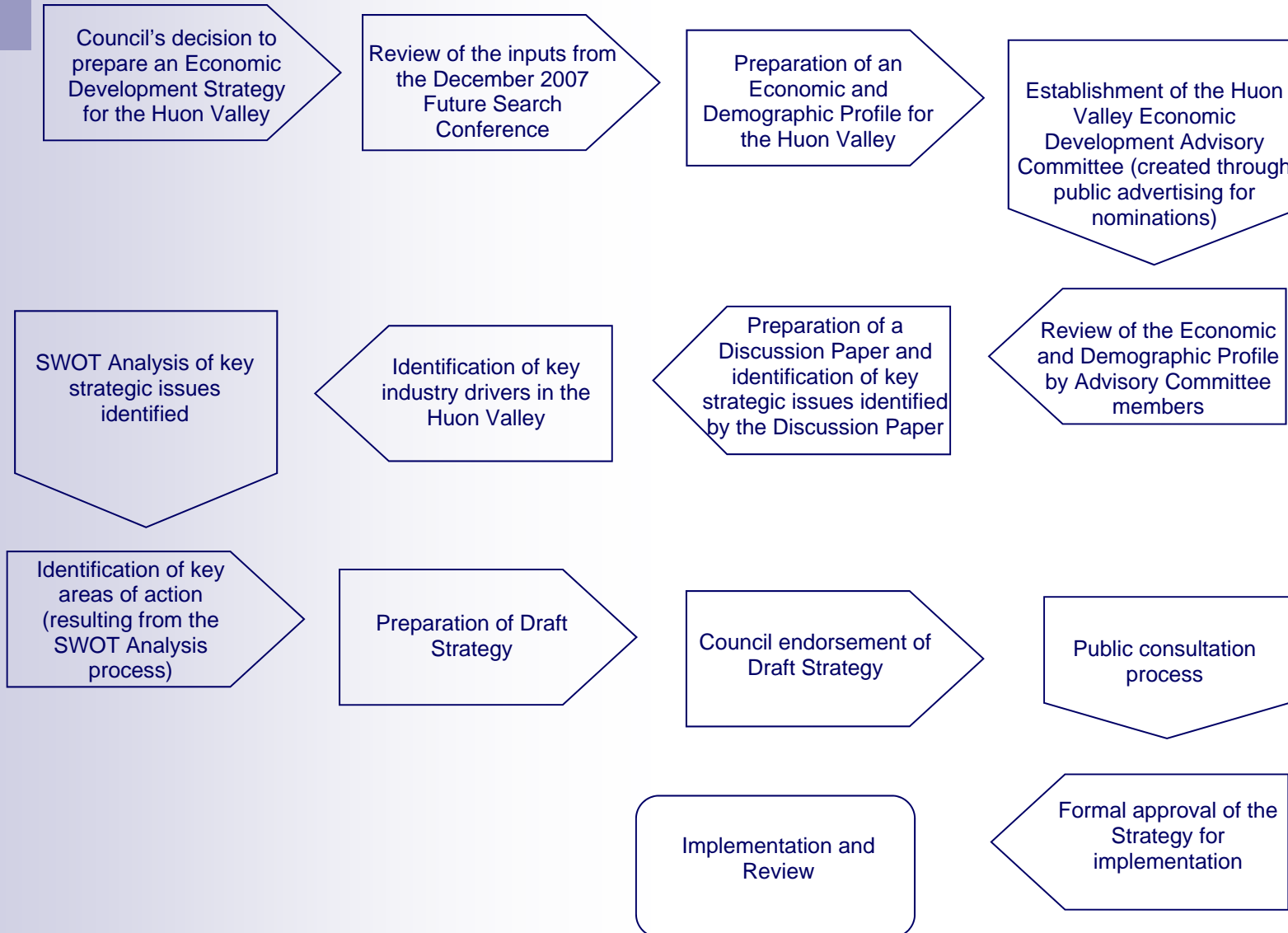
On an annual basis, the Economic Development Officer will prepare a press release to be included in the Huon Valley News and inserted on Council's website on progress implementing the Economic Development Strategy.

A section in Council's Annual Report each year shall refer to progress with the Economic Development Strategy.

At the end of the first year and third year of the life of the plan, the Economic Development Officer will in the report to the Advisory Committee, comment on whether there needs to be any updates or changes to the Strategy, and if the Committee adopts any such changes, the revised Strategy document shall be re-presented to Council for consideration, review and adoption.

Work on the development of a new Economic Development Strategy shall be undertaken in the fifth year of the term of this Strategy.

Strategy Development





Part B

“INVESTIGATIONS AND ANALYSIS”

Demographic and Economic Profile

Demographic and Economic Profile of the Huon Valley Municipal Area

1.0 Introduction

This report has been created for the Huon Valley Council in order to develop a comprehensive economic profile of the Huon Valley municipal area. The profile outlines demographic, labour force, property market and skills sustainability in the region.

Situated in Southern Tasmania, the Huon Valley municipal area is Australia's southern-most local government area. Huonville is the administrative centre of the area and is situated some 40km or 40 minutes travel south of Hobart. The area consists of six population centres, namely:

- Cygnet
- Dover
- Franklin
- Geeveston
- Huonville
- Ranelagh

Agriculture, aquaculture and fishing, forestry and tourism were found to be the major industries working within the region. Together these industries generate an economy of approximately \$380.5 million and employ 1100 residents.

The Huon Valley's economic future is also dependent on the amount of people moving in and out of the region. A housing snapshot outlines that many people are moving to the area for retirement or lifestyle choices. Property and vacant land sales are increasing with similar trends to booming areas such as Kingborough and Clarence.

Each of the abovementioned industries is primarily driven by national and international markets. Therefore, it is highly likely that such markets will determine the shape and size of the Huon Valley's economic future as opposed to the micro economy of the Huon Valley.

The economy and employment in the Huon Valley is dominated by aquaculture, agriculture, fishing and forestry industries that together employed 17.2% of the population in 2006.¹ Tourism is an emerging growth industry within the region and supports over 100 businesses in the Huon Valley area.

This profile highlights important statistical characteristics that will provide a credible basis on which to build an economic development strategy for the region.

¹ Source: ABS, 2006 census data

Demographic and Economic Profile

2.0 Methodology

Research was conducted using a combination of techniques including:

Desktop research and literature review of Population Tasmania's population projection data, the Real Estate Institute of Tasmania (REIT) quarterly property market report, and a training demand profile of the region

Data analysis of demographic, property and labour market data were obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 and 2001 census data. Note that industry data presented in the labour force section of the report are grouped according to the ANZIC code.

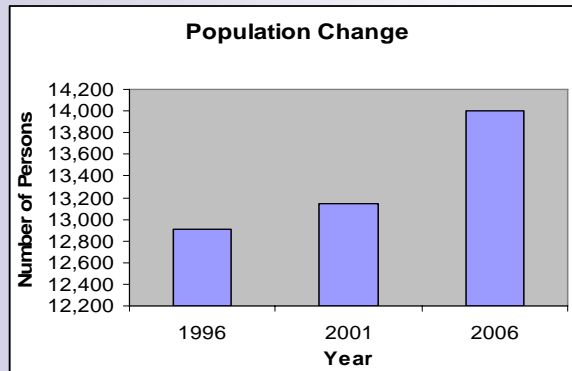
Tourism statistics were collated from the Tourism Tasmania visitor survey and from the Huon Valley Council Tourism Department. Building approval records and rateable property numbers were also obtained from the Council.

Demographic and Economic Profile

3.0 Demographics

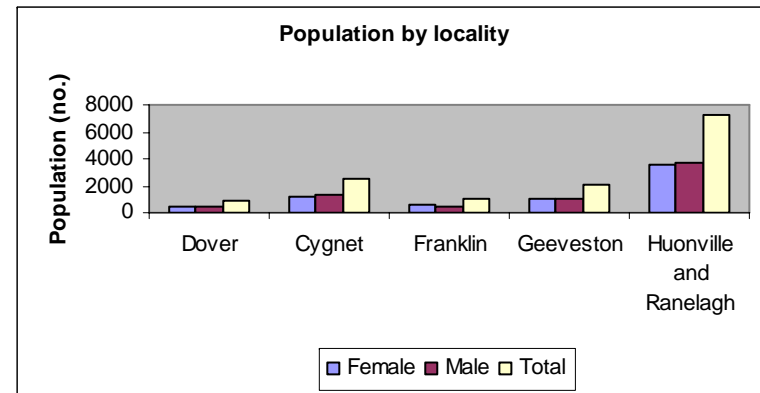
3.1 Population

Approximately 14,001 people outlined that they usually reside in the Huon Valley on the 2006 Census. Of these 14,001, 50.6% were males and 49.4% were females.



3.2 Population by locality

POPULATION BY LOCALITY			
	Female	Male	Total
Cygnnet	1,205	1,281	2,486
Dover	468	492	960
Franklin	550	503	1,053
Geeveston	995	1,019	2,014
Huonville and Ranelagh	3,560	3,630	7,190
Total	6,778	6,925	13,703

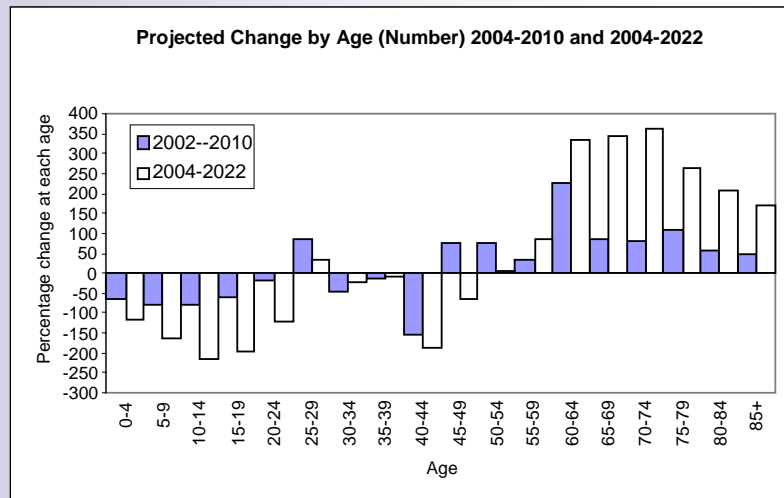


Demographic and Economic Profile

3.3 Projected residential population

Population Tasmania projects that between 2004 and 2021 the population of Huon Valley will increase in size to around 14,579.² This marks a 5% increase in the population. Further, the projected increase is significantly higher than the state-wide projected increase of 1.4%.

As the figure below outlines, the youth and working age populations of Huon Valley are projected to decline in size, while the regions' elderly population will grow substantially.



Source: [Jackson, N.O. \(2007\) Tasmania's Population](#) accessed 10/08/07

Research carried out by Population Tasmania forecasts that the population of the Huon Valley will increase by five percent over the next 15 years. The majority of this positive growth is in the age groups 55 and over. The growth will be characterised by negative growth in the population aged under 40- 54.

As the figures below indicate, the regions' youth and working age (15-64 years) populations are projected to decline in size, while its elderly population will grow substantially.

² Jackson, N.O. and Felmingham, B, (2004) CEDA LGAT *Population Ageing Project*

Demographic and Economic Profile

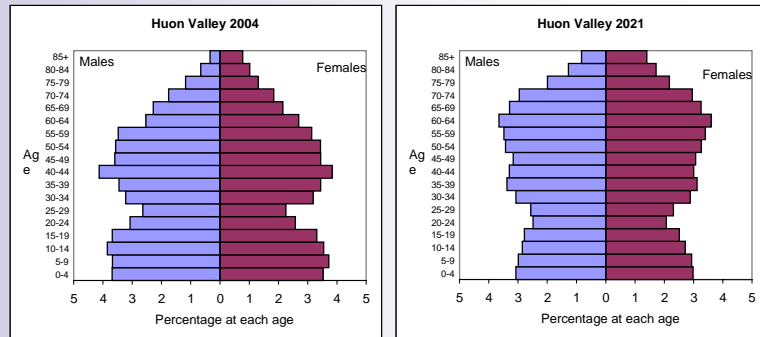
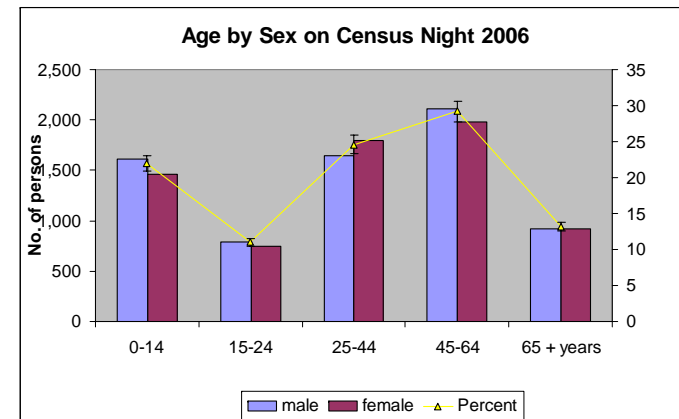


Figure 1: projected change in Huon Valley population by sex
Source: [Jackson, N.O. \(2007\) Tasmania's Population](#) accessed 10/08/07

3.4 Age by sex

AGE BY SEX ON CENSUS NIGHT 2006						
Age Group	0-14 years	15-24 years	25-44 years	45-64 years	65 years and over	Total
Male	1,614	795	1,648	2,109	923	7,089
Female	1,464	746	1,799	1,980	923	6,912
Percent	21.98%	11.00%	24.61%	29.20%	13.18%	100%
Total	3,078	1,541	3,447	4,089	1,846	14,001

In the 2006 Census 22.0% of the population usually resident in Huon Valley were children aged between 0-14 years, and 26.9% were persons aged 55 years and over.



Demographic and Economic Profile

3.5 Ageing population ³

The median age of Huon Valley residents has been gradually increasing over the past 10 years.

MEDIAN AGE OF POPULATION			
	Huon Valley	Tasmania	Australia
2006 Median age	39	39	37
2001 Median age	36	36	35
1996 Median age	34	34	35

In 2004-2005 the Huon Valley municipal area was rated the 18th oldest local government association (LGA) in Tasmania with 13.3% of its population over the age of 65. Population Tasmania has forecast that by 2021 the Huon Valley LGA will be the 15th oldest LGA in the state with people aged 65+ years making up 21.9% of the population. This increase is equivalent to a 0.5% increase per year which is faster than projected for the total of Tasmania (0.44%).

An “elderly/child ratio” compares the amount of elderly (65+ years) people in a population to the amount of children (0-14 years) in a population.

In 2004 the Huon Valley had an elderly to child ratio of 0.6 outlining that for every 6 elderly there are 10 children in the Huon Valley. Population Tasmania forecast that this ratio will increase markedly over the next 15 years to 1.2, or 12 elderly for every 10 children by 2021. The crossover (to more elderly than children) will occur around 2014 (see Figure 1). This compares with 2012 for Tasmania as a whole.

The ageing population will also impact the region’s labour force. Specifically, the working age population (15-64 years) in the Huon Valley is forecast to decline from its current 64.7 per cent of the population, to around 60.6 per cent by 2021. However, the region’s workforce is set to remain approximately the same size (around 8,900) (-1.6 per cent).

³ Data and forecasts of population in this section were all obtained from Jackson, N.O. and Felmingham, B, (2004) CEDA LGAT *Population Ageing Project*

Demographic and Economic Profile

Ageing Population and Labour Market Trends

An “entry/exit ratio” compares the amount of people in a population at labour market entry age (15-24 years) to the amount of people in a population approaching retirement age (55-64 years).

In 2004, the Huon Valley entry/exit ratio was 1.1 outlining that within the region 11 people are at labour market entry age while 10 people are approaching retirement age. Population Tasmania predicts that this ratio will become negative (fewer entrants than exits) around 2008, and decline to around 0.7 (seven entrants per ten exits) by 2021 as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

In comparison to the Huon Valley, the entry/exit ratio for Tasmania is currently 1.2. Forecasts outline that this will decline to 0.8 in the near future and the crossover to more exits than entrants will occur around 2012.

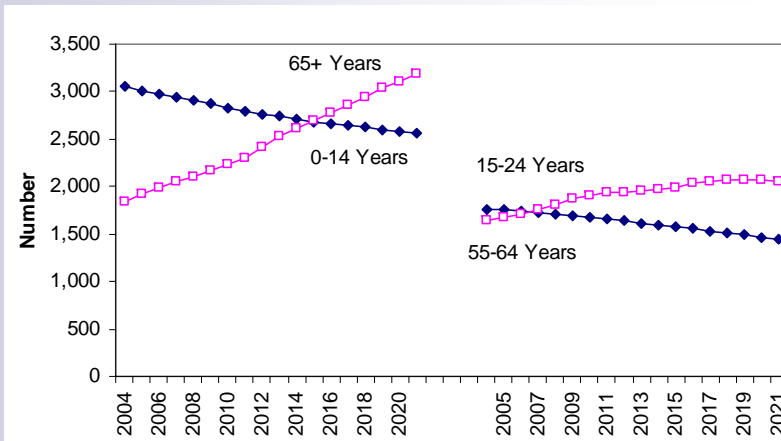


Figure 1: Projected crossovers in the number of elderly/youths and workers entering/exiting the workforce
Source: Jackson, N.O. & Felmingham, B. (2004). CEDA LGAT Population Ageing Project.

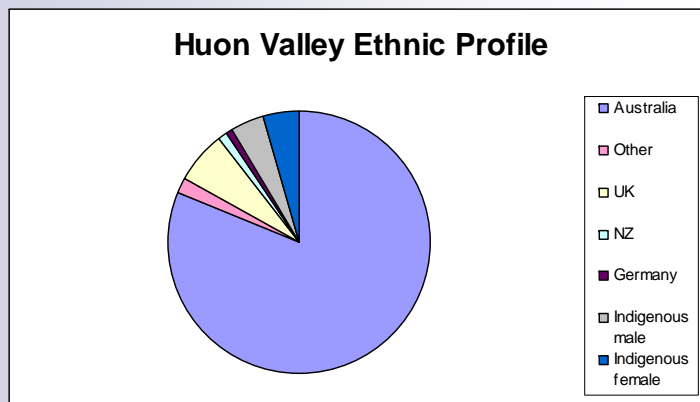
Demographic and Economic Profile

3.6 Ethnic profile

In the 2006 Census, 82.0% of persons usually resident in Huon Valley stated they were born in Australia. Other common responses within Huon Valley included the United Kingdom (920 persons), New Zealand (148 persons) and Germany (100 persons).

ETHNIC PROFILE		
	No. of Persons	% of population in Huon Valley
Australian Born	11,488	82.05
O/S Born (UK, NZ, Germany)	1,168	8.34
O/S Born (other)	496	
Speaks language other than English at home	183	1.31
<i>Indigenous People</i>		
Male	610	4.36
Female	628	4.49
Total Indigenous Persons	1,238	8.84

Source: ABS 2006 Census Data



Source: ABS 2006 Census Data

Demographic and Economic Profile

3.7 Educational attainment

The number of males that finished year 10 or equivalent is larger than the number of males that completed year 12 or equivalent. Females who live in the Huon Valley region are more likely to have completed year 12 than males.

MALES										
	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75-84 years	85 + years	Total
Year 12 or equivalent	63	108	217	245	296	290	132	43	5	1,399
Year 11 or equivalent	96	46	74	75	58	57	27	10	0	443
Year 10 or equivalent	159	109	289	473	445	296	172	32	4	1,979
Year 9 or equivalent	86	12	44	73	137	176	96	29	3	656
Year 8 or below	25	0	9	23	60	99	94	99	22	431
Did not go to school	0	0	0	0	3	5	3	0	0	11
Highest year of school not stated	66	24	60	63	102	84	85	60	8	552
Total	495	299	693	952	1,101	1,007	609	273	42	5,471

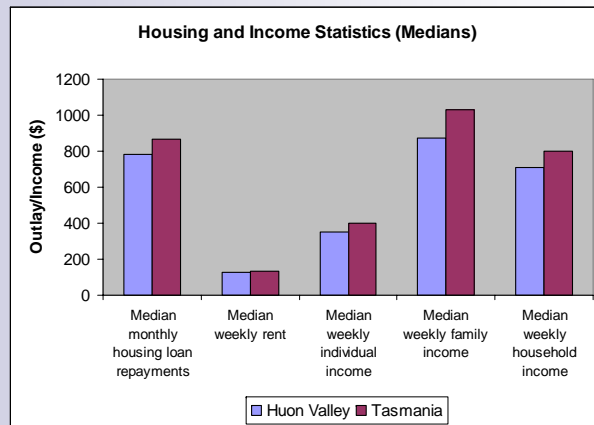
FEMALES										
	15-19 years	20-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65-74 years	75-84 years	85 + years	Total
Year 12 or equivalent	76	149	328	339	361	269	90	39	15	1,666
Year 11 or equivalent	88	39	75	99	82	41	26	10	5	465
Year 10 or equivalent	123	84	260	489	399	308	165	64	18	1,910
Year 9 or equivalent	81	4	24	56	125	163	76	22	6	557
Year 8 or below	31	4	4	15	32	64	77	86	61	374
Did not go to school	0	4	0	4	0	3	0	0	0	11
Highest year of school not stated	47	18	44	63	69	66	74	65	24	470
Total	446	302	735	1,065	1,068	914	508	286	129	5,453

Source: ABS 2006 Census Data

Demographic and Economic Profile

3.8 Selected housing and income

SELECTED HOUSING AND INCOME		
	Huon Valley	Tasmania
Median monthly housing loan repayments	780	867
Median weekly rent	130	135
Median weekly individual income	349	398
Median weekly family income	874	1,032
Median weekly household income	711	801



DWELLING BY TENURE AND LANDLORD TYPE		
	No. of dwellings	% of total occupied private dwellings in Region
Fully owned	2,260	42.8%
Being purchased	1,831	34.6%
Being rented	899	17.0%
Other	33	0.6%
Not stated	262	5.0%
Total	5,285	100%

Source: ABS, 2006 Census

Demographic and Economic Profile

4.0 Labour Force

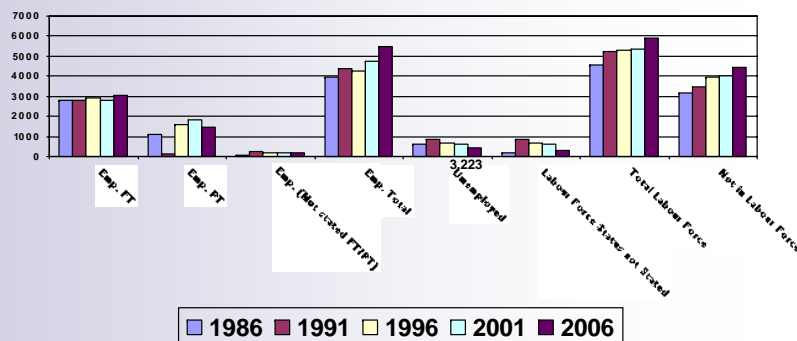
It must be noted that both 2001 and 2006 census data was used to outline the Huon Valley labour force. Therefore, the data should be analysed with caution and should not be used to make direct comparisons.

4.1 Labour force status

LABOUR FORCE STATUS					
	1986	1991	1996	2001	2006
Employed FT	2,808	2,802	2,928	2,794	3044
Employed PT	1,072	1,306	1,559	1,823	1467
Employed (Not stated FT/PT)	83	261	160	153	182
Employed Total	3,963	4,369	4,647	4,770	5,478
Unemployed	583	874	677	585	433
Labour force status not stated	202	154	236	461	279
Unemployment rate (%)	12.8%	16.7%	12.7%	10.9%	7.33%
Total Labour Force	4,546	5,243	5,324	5,355	5,911
Not in Labour Force	3,173	3,444	3,949	4,041	4,464
Total Working Age Population (15+)	7,921	8,841	9,509	9,857	10,375
Participation Rate	57.4	59.3	56.0	54.3	56.97

NOTE: Participation rate and unemployment rate have been calculated using 2006 Census Data
Source: Tasmanian Labour Economics Office, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Hobart

Labour Force Status



Demographic and Economic Profile

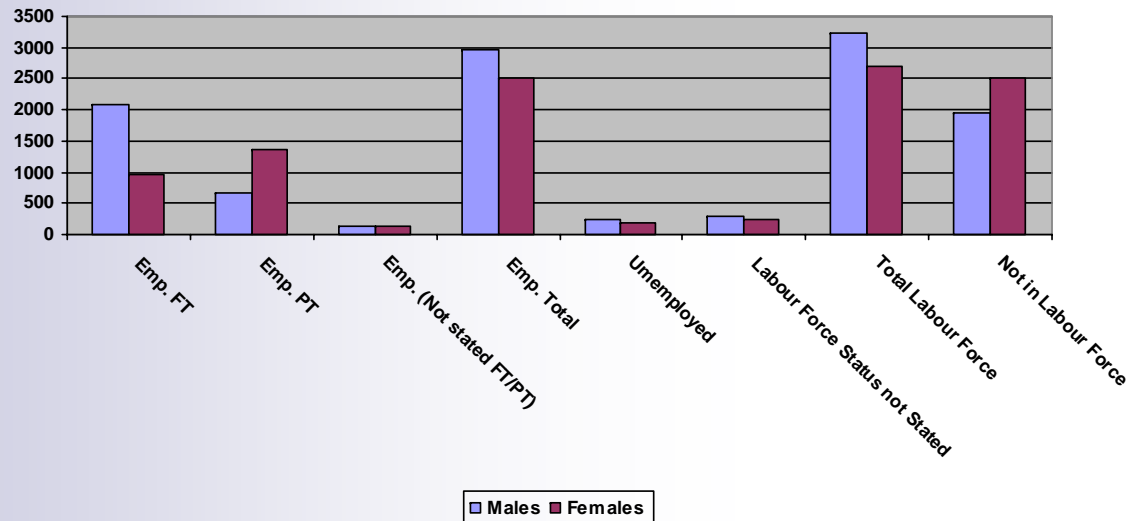
4.2 Labour force status by gender

LABOUR FORCE STATUS BY GENDER 2006 CENSUS				
	Males	Male %	Females	Female %
Employed FT	2,092	70.0%	952	30.0%
Employed PT	657	34.2%	1,368	65.8%
Emp. (Not stated FT/PT)	124	67.3%	128	32.7%
Employed Total	2,972	56.3%	2,506	43.7%
Unemployed	251	67.2%	182	32.8%
Labour force status not stated	298	46.6%	250	53.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	-	-	-	-
Total Labour Force	3,223	57.5%	2,688	42.5%
Not in Labour Force	1,951	41.5%	2,513	58.5%
Total Working Age Population (15+)	5,472	50.4%	5,451	49.6%
Participation Rate	61.9%	-	46.6%	-

NOTE: Full-time is defined as having worked 35 hours. Part-time

Source: Tasmanian Labour Economics Office, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Hobart

Labour Force Status by Gender



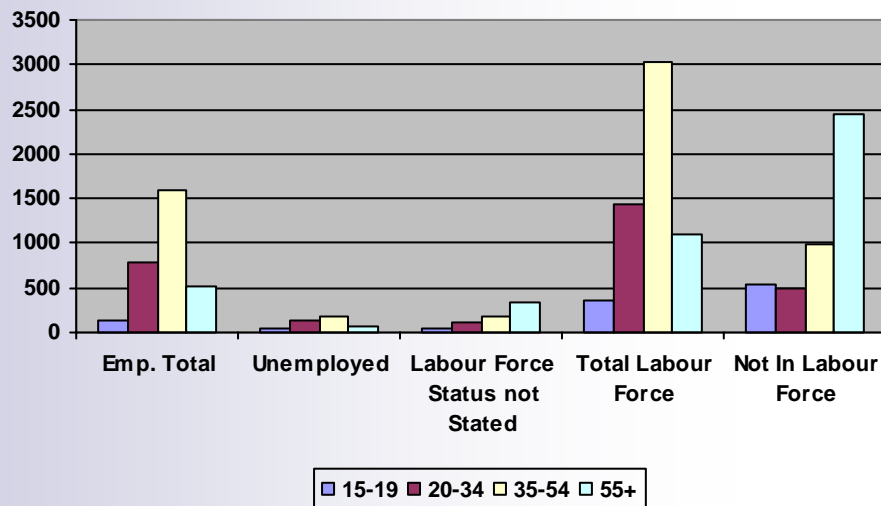
Demographic and Economic Profile

4.3 Labour force status by age

LABOUR FORCE STATUS BY AGE 2006 CENSUS				
	15-19	20-34	35-54	55+
Employed total	143	796	1,593	512
Unemployed	47	137	183	65
Labour Force Status Not Stated	55	102	184	341
Unemployment Rate (%)	20.9%	12.9%	9.5%	7.8%
Total Labour Force	355	1,435	3,018	1,103
Not in Labour Force	531	495	984	2,455
Total Working Age Population (15+)	941	2,032	4,186	3,765
Participation Rate (%)	38.8%	69.8%	70.3%	26.1%

Source: Tasmanian Labour Economics Office, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Hobart

Labour Force Status by Age



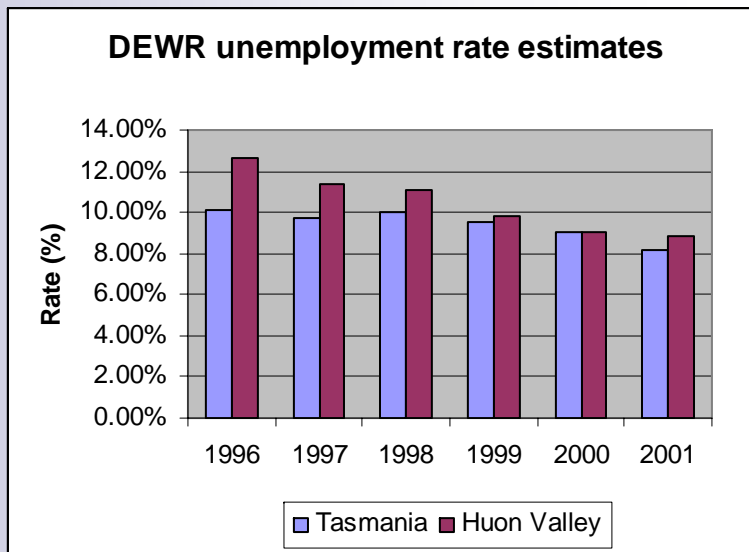
Demographic and Economic Profile

4.4 Unemployment rate estimates

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE ESTIMATES						
Unemployment Rate	June 1996	June 1997	June 1998	June 1999	June 2000	June 2001
Tasmania	10.1%	9.7%	10.0%	9.5%	9.0%	8.2%
Huon Valley	12.6%	11.4%	11.1%	9.8%	9.0%	8.8%

NOTE: The unemployment rate estimates above are from the Department of Workplace Relations publication 'Small Area Labour Markets' and are not directly comparable with the official labour force survey figures in common use.

Source: Tasmanian Labour Economics Office, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Hobart



NOTE: Based on the 2006 Census data the actual 2006 unemployment rate of the Huon Valley is 7.33%.

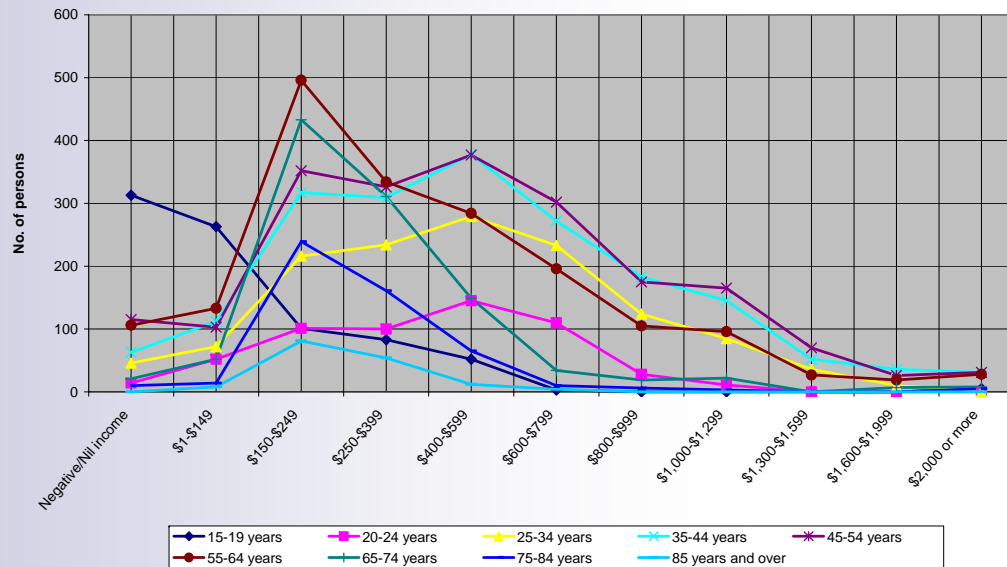
Demographic and Economic Profile

4.5 Per capita income by age

GROSS INDIVIDUAL INCOME BY AGE 2006 CENSUS										
	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	65-74 yrs	75-84 yrs	85 + yrs	Total
Negative/Nil income	313	14	46	63	115	106	21	10	0	688
\$1-\$149	263	52	72	112	103	133	52	14	8	809
\$150-\$249	101	101	216	317	352	496	433	239	81	2,336
\$250-\$399	83	100	234	309	326	334	311	161	54	1,912
\$400-\$599	52	145	279	378	377	284	149	65	12	1,741
\$600-\$799	3	110	233	272	302	196	34	10	4	1,164
\$800-\$999	0	28	124	183	175	105	19	6	0	640
\$1,000-\$1,299	0	11	85	145	165	96	22	3	0	527
\$1,300-\$1,599	0	0	36	52	70	27	0	0	0	185
\$1,600-\$1,999	0	0	10	36	26	19	7	0	0	98
\$2,000 or more	5	0	0	31	31	28	8	5	0	108
Individual income not stated	120	41	93	120	127	96	59	45	14	715

Source: ABS 2006 Census Data

Gross weekly income by age (all persons)

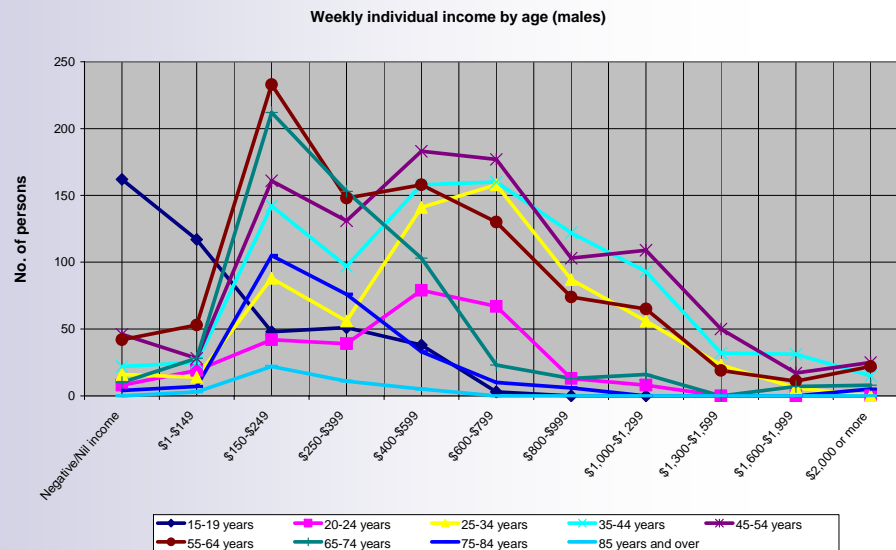


Demographic and Economic Profile

4.6 Weekly individual income by age (males)

WEEKLY INDIVIDUAL INCOME BY AGE (MALES) 2006 CENSUS										
	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	65-74 yrs	75-84 yrs	85 + yrs	Total
Negative/Nil income	162	8	16	22	46	42	10	4	0	310
\$1-\$149	117	19	14	25	28	53	28	7	3	294
\$150-\$249	48	42	88	142	161	233	212	105	22	1,053
\$250-\$399	51	39	56	97	131	148	153	76	11	762
\$400-\$599	38	79	141	158	183	158	103	33	5	898
\$600-\$799	3	67	158	160	177	130	23	10	0	728
\$800-\$999	0	13	87	122	103	74	13	6	0	418
\$1,000-\$1,299	0	8	56	93	109	65	16	0	0	347
\$1,300-\$1,599	0	0	23	32	50	19	0	0	0	124
\$1,600-\$1,999	0	0	6	31	17	11	7	0	0	72
\$2,000 or more	0	0	0	15	25	22	8	5	0	75
Individual income not stated	75	26	48	55	72	52	34	26	3	391

Source: ABS 2006 Census Data

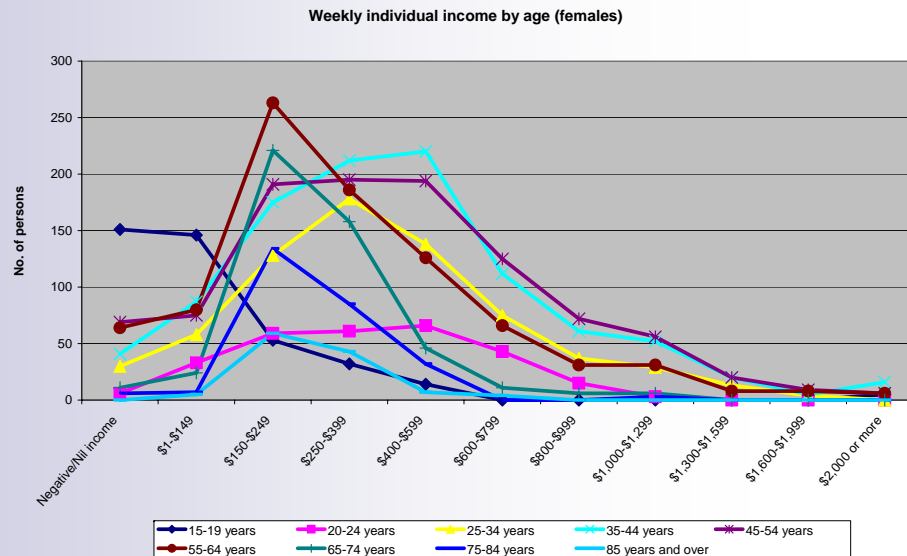


Demographic and Economic Profile

4.7 Weekly individual income by age (females)

WEEKLY INDIVIDUAL INCOME BY AGE (FEMALES) 2006 CENSUS										
	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	65-74 yrs	75-84 yrs	85 + yrs	Total
Negative/Nil income	151	6	30	41	69	64	11	6	0	378
\$1-\$149	146	33	58	87	75	80	24	7	5	515
\$150-\$249	53	59	128	175	191	263	221	134	59	1,283
\$250-\$399	32	61	178	212	195	186	158	85	43	1,150
\$400-\$599	14	66	138	220	194	126	46	32	7	843
\$600-\$799	0	43	75	112	125	66	11	0	4	436
\$800-\$999	0	15	37	61	72	31	6	0	0	222
\$1,000-\$1,299	0	3	29	52	56	31	6	3	0	180
\$1,300-\$1,599	0	0	13	20	20	8	0	0	0	61
\$1,600-\$1,999	0	0	4	5	9	8	0	0	0	26
\$2,000 or more	5	0	0	16	6	6	0	0	0	33
Individual income not stated	45	15	45	65	55	44	25	19	11	324

Source: ABS 2006 Census Data



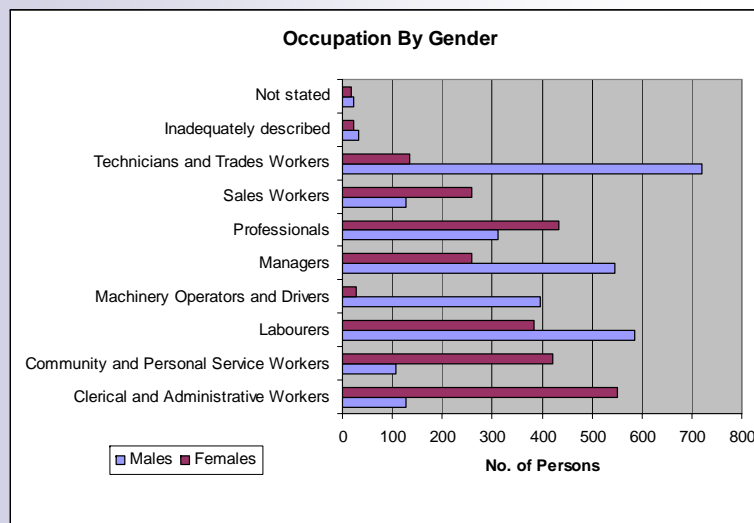
Demographic and Economic Profile

4.8 Occupation by gender

OCCUPATION BY GENDER 2006 CENSUS

	Males	Females	Persons	% Female	% of Total Male	% of Total Female
Clerical and Administrative Workers	126	550	676	10.0	4.2	21.9
Community and Personal Service Workers	106	420	526	7.6	3.5	16.7
Labourers	586	385	971	7.0	19.6	15.3
Machinery Operators and Drivers	397	28	425	0.5	13.3	1.1
Managers	546	258	804	4.7	18.3	10.2
Professionals	312	434	746	7.9	10.4	17.3
Sales Workers	126	259	385	4.7	4.2	10.3
Technicians and Trades Workers	721	134	855	2.4	24.2	5.3
Inadequately described	32	22	54	0.4	1.0	0.8
Not stated	23	17	40	0.3	0.7	0.6
Total	2,975	2,507	5,482	45.5	100.00	100.00

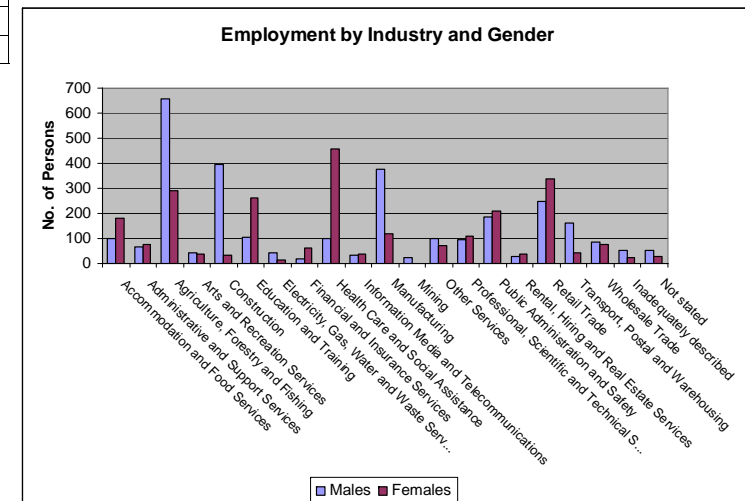
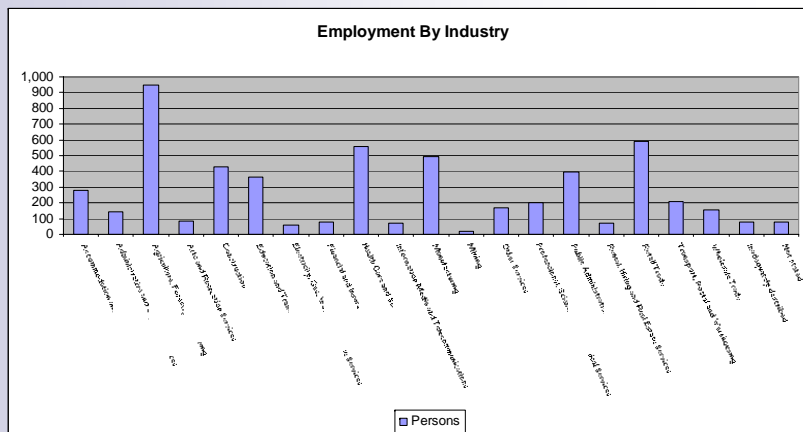
Source: ABS 2006 Census Data



Demographic and Economic Profile

4.9 Industry by gender

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY AND GENDER 2006 CENSUS			
	Males	Females	Persons
Accommodation and Food Services	101	180	281
Administrative and Support Services	65	77	142
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	659	289	948
Arts and Recreation Services	45	40	85
Construction	396	35	431
Education and Training	106	260	366
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	44	14	58
Financial and Insurance Services	18	61	79
Health Care and Social Assistance	98	458	556
Information Media and Telecommunications	33	38	71
Manufacturing	376	117	493
Mining	22	0	22
Other Services	101	70	171
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	93	109	202
Public Administration and Safety	186	209	395
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	30	39	69
Retail Trade	250	338	588
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	164	42	206
Wholesale Trade	84	75	159
Inadequately described	53	26	79
Not stated	51	30	81
Total	2,975	2,507	5,482



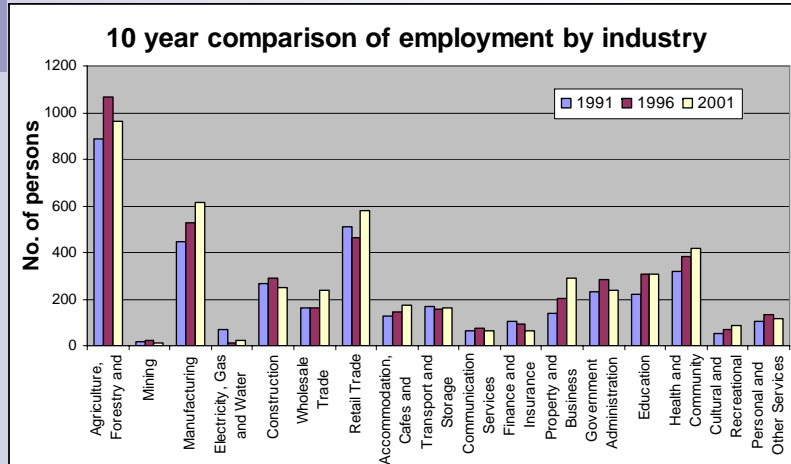
Demographic and Economic Profile

4.10 Employment by industry

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, COMPARISON (1991-2006)							
Employed persons	1991	1996	2001	2006	% Change 91-06	% of Huon Valley 2001	% of Tasmania
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	885	1,064	964	947	-7.0%	20.3%	7.9%
Mining	18	24	9	22	-22.0%	0.2%	0.6%
Manufacturing	447	530	613	493	10.29%	12.9%	2.9%
Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	72	11	21	57	20.53%	0.4%	1.2%
Construction	269	287	252	431	-60.22%	5.3%	2.7%
Wholesale Trade	161	165	235	159	1.24%	4.9%	2.8%
Retail Trade	511	464	582	589	15.26%	12.2%	2.1%
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	126	147	176	281	123%	3.6%	1.8%
Transport and Storage	170	159	165	207		3.5%	2.1%
Finance and Insurance	106	93	61	79		1.3%	1.4%
Property and Business Services	139	205	288	n/a		6.1%	2.0%
Government Administration and Defence	232	284	240	n/a		5.0%	2.5%
Education	222	309	309	365		6.5%	2.1%
Health and Community Services	320	384	419	555		8.8%	2.0%
Cultural and Recreational Services	54	68	85	n/a		1.8%	2.0%
Personal and Other Services	105	134	115	n/a		2.4%	1.7%
Non-classifiable economic units	24	33	54	80		1.1%	3.6%
Not stated	441	216	108	82		2.3%	3.2%
Total	4,368	4,650	4,757	4347			

Source: Tasmanian Labour Economics Office, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Hobart

Demographic and Economic Profile



4.11 Travel to work

METHOD OF TRANSPORT TO WORK				
	Males	Females	Persons	% of Total Employed
One Method Only:				
Bus	30	33	63	1.3%
Ferry	3	0	3	0.1%
Taxi	0	0	0	0.0%
Car, as driver	1,683	1,175	2,813	59.0%
Car, as passenger	200	196	396	8.3%
Truck	102	4	106	2.2%
Motorbike/ motor scooter	13	0	13	0.3%
Bicycle	11	0	11	0.2%
Other	30	9	39	0.8%
Walked only	126	83	209	4.4%
Total	2,153	1,500	3,653	76.6%

NOTE: numbers commuting out of the region will be available in late December 2007 (ABS 2006 Census Data)
 Source: Tasmanian Labour Economics Office, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Hobart

Demographic and Economic Profile

5.0 Economic Activity

The region is dominated by four major industry groups;

- aquaculture and fishing
- agriculture
- Forestry
- Tourism

EMPLOYMENT IN FOUR MAJOR INDUSTRY GROUPS			
Employed persons	Males	Females	Persons
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing:			
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, undefined	4	0	4
Agriculture	409	192	601
Services to Agriculture; Hunting and Trapping	5	8	13
Forestry and Logging	98	13	111
Commercial Fishing	167	52	219
Total	683	265	948
Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants	62	90	152
TOTAL	745	355	1100

Source: ABS 2001 Census Data

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES IN HUON VALLEY BY INDUSTRY									
	Non employing	1-4	5-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200+	Total	Total employing
Agriculture Forestry and Fishing	252	57	30	21	9	9	3	381	129
Accommodation Cafes and Restaurants	297	123	63	15	3	6	3	510	213

Source: ABS ABN database

Demographic and Economic Profile

The extent of agricultural and forestry practices is roughly indicated by the land tenure as most private land is utilised for agriculture.⁴

Land Tenure	Approximate Area (ha)
Private Land	77,335
State Forest	122,512
Reserved Land	346,126
Total	545,973

Source: Huon Valley Land Use and Development Strategy

The fastest growing industry sectors are aquaculture and forestry, the agriculture sector is relatively stable and the tourism industry has yet to reach its potential. These four nodes of industry are made up of long supply chains that either directly control or highly influence most other industries in the Huon Valley. Therefore, by identifying the microeconomic and macroeconomic impacts on each of these industries one is able to forecast the demand for labour (skill demand), the future of the industries within the region, and outline the economic variables that will shape the region's economy. Research outlines that the main influencing drivers of the Huon Valley's economic prosperity and thus demand for labour are macro issues that are not controllable within the region.⁵

It is also important to identify barriers to employment in the region as such factors influence unemployment and compound skill shortages in the area. A recently completed training demand profile of the region identified that the major employment barrier for the region is its location and its relative isolation from Hobart. This barrier means that employers must source employment from a small labour pool - a factor that contributes to issues in worker attraction and retention.

⁴ Huon Valley Land Use and Development Strategy

⁵ Industry, Business and Training Profile of the Huon Valley and Bruny Island 2007 draft (version 0.9)

Demographic and Economic Profile

5.1 Aquaculture and fishing

The Salmon Aquaculture industry in Tasmania is the most valuable in Australia. Valued at \$220 million dollars in 2005, the industry is currently estimated to be worth \$300 million. Over three-quarters of the state's aquaculture production is devoted to producing salmonoids. In 2005-06 the unit price of salmonoids increased by 30% as a result of higher world prices for the fish.

The Huon Valley grows and processes 75% of all Tasmanian Salmon with the two major companies being Huon Aquaculture and Tassal. There are few shell fish farms in the Huon and many registered aquaculture companies are inactive.

Aquaculture in the Huon Valley will continue to grow in the immediate future however the peak growth rate of both major companies has most likely already past. Production rates will increase within both Huon Aquaculture and Tassal as they attempt to establish themselves in the international salmon market.

AQUACULTURE AND FISHING IN THE HUON VALLEY	
Number of marine farms	25
Amount of coastal waters used for marine farming	333 ha
Approximate value of aquaculture industry	\$225 million ⁶
Key aquaculture products	Atlantic Salmon, Pacific Oysters, Mussels
Number of employees directly employed in marine farms and associated downstream processing	400 ⁷
Number of fishing boats	30 boats operate out of region
Weight landed in region ⁸	740,526kg
Approximate value of fishing industry	\$40 million ⁹
Key fishing products	Abalone, rock lobster
Number of employees directly employed in commercial fishing	219 ¹⁰

Source: Huon Valley Land Use and Development Strategy, DPIW fishing scorecard

⁶ Approximation: 75% of state salmon production occurs in Huon Valley region. State wide industry \$300 million (2005) Source: [Department of Economic Development](#) industry snapshot

⁷ Sourced from ABS 2001 census data

⁸ Source: DPIW (2006), Region defined as Including Dover, South Port, Cygnet, Verona Sands

⁹ Source: DPIW (2006), outlines the value of rock lobster, abalone, scale fish, mussels and oysters landed in the region. Much of the fish are transported to other locations within Tasmania for processing.

¹⁰ Sourced from ABS 2001 census data

Demographic and Economic Profile

The Huon area provides attractive ports for fishermen as they are close to the west coast fishing areas, the richest zones in Tasmania. The main fishing ports in the Huon Valley are Dover and Southport. Dover is the largest port in the Huon and used to be considered the richest town in Australia due to the number of abalone divers that lived there.

*Skill shortages and barriers to employment*¹¹

The Huon Valley aquaculture and fishing industries experience much of the same skill shortages to those being felt in the rest of the state. The major barriers to employment of location of the businesses and demographic characteristics of the area accentuate the skill shortages. Consultations with industry representatives outlined the following as the most significant barriers to employment in the Huon Valley aquaculture industry:

- relative isolation of the Huon Valley and travel time needed to get to work
- low retention of processing staff possible causes for this may include; attractiveness of work, lifestyle choices, and irregular working hours
- literacy and numeracy that are thought to be responsible for a low level of workers with the motivation and confidence to seek promotion in the industry.

*Macroeconomic and microeconomic impacts*¹²

The Huon Valley aquaculture and fishing industries are mainly impacted by the following variables:

- market expansion and globalisation such as the threat of international competition
- participation factors such as demographic change and worker attraction and retention

¹¹ Industry, Business and Training Profile of the Huon Valley and Bruny Island 2007 draft (version 0.9)

¹² Industry, Business and Training Profile of the Huon Valley and Bruny Island 2007 draft (version 0.9)

Demographic and Economic Profile

5.2 Agriculture

The gross value of Tasmanian agricultural production in this period was \$903m.¹³ This represented 3% of the total gross value of Australian agricultural production.

Agriculture in the Huon is dominated by cherry and apple growing. While the apple industry is no longer as significant as it once was, it is still Tasmania's main fruit crop. In 2004-05, two thirds of all apples produced in Tasmania came from the Southern Statistical Division (30,400 tonnes).¹⁴

In recent years, other crops such as cherries and strawberries have grown in significance. Labour is highly seasonal and there are low levels of permanent employees.

AGRICULTURE IN THE HUON VALLEY	
Amount of land used for farming	77,335ha
Approximate value of key products within industry:	
Apples	\$38,250,000 ¹⁵
Cherries	\$5,000,000 ¹⁶
Blackcurrants	\$245,000 ¹⁷
TOTAL	\$43,495,000
Number of employees directly employed on farms and associated downstream processing	601 ¹⁸

¹³ Source: [ABS](#) accessed October 2007

¹⁴ Source: [ABS](#) accessed October 2007

¹⁵ Source: [DPIW](#) (2004) Approximated as the Huon Valley produces 85% of state's apples. Therefore, value of region's apple industry = 85% of gross (state) value [= \$45m]

¹⁶ Source: [DPIW](#) (2004/05)

Demographic and Economic Profile

*Skill shortages and barriers to employment*¹⁹

Agriculture businesses in the Huon Valley experienced no major barriers in employing permanent staff. These businesses also experience almost no skill shortages, skill demand is driven by external factors out of the region, have little emphasis on formal training, experience no employment attraction issues, and have only small problems with the retention of seasonal fruit pickers.

*Macroeconomic and microeconomic impacts*²⁰

The Huon Agriculture industry is mainly influenced by large scale drivers while local scale micro factors only affect the demand for casual seasonal pickers. The major impacting variables of the industry include:

- consumer preferences towards new and different varieties of produce
- globalisation and international markets for fruit (especially cherries)
- market demand, particularly the need to increase productivity and technology due to interstate competition in the domestic market

¹⁹ Industry, Business and Training Profile of the Huon Valley and Bruny Island 2007 draft (version 0.9)

²⁰ Industry, Business and Training Profile of the Huon Valley and Bruny Island 2007 draft (version 0.9)

Demographic and Economic Profile

5.3 Forestry

Approximately 49 per cent of Tasmania's land area is covered by forests. The Tasmanian forest industry is worth around \$120 million and employs approximately 7700 people, representing around 3.5 per cent of the total Tasmanian workforce.²¹ Additionally, there is an estimated additional 1,300 people employed through associated activities such as transport manufacturing and road building.

The industry also significantly contributes to the national forestry industry by producing 19 per cent of total Australian hardwood production, 50 per cent of Australian-produced paper products and 70 per cent of Australian woodchip exports.²²

Harvesting in the Huon Valley Region is predominately conducted in state forests that are controlled and managed by Forestry Tasmania. The majority of forestry contractors are small businesses. The multi million dollar rotary-veneer mill Ta Ann was opened in the region mid 2007.

In terms of numbers of workers working locally in forestry, the table below represents the estimated number of full time employees in 2006.

Employment type	Number of employees
Forestry Tasmania	72
Contract harvesting	259
Silviculture	25
Tahune AirWalk	26
Local sawmills	129
Total	551

Source: Forestry Tasmania

The future of forestry will be greatly influenced by the international market for wood chips and the construction of the proposed Gunn's Bell Bay Pulp mill. The outcome of the Pulp Mill will possibly secure all forestry jobs in the immediate future and cause growth within the industry.

²¹ Source: [DPIW](#) accessed August 2007

²² Source: [DPIW](#) accessed August 2007

²³ Source: [Forestry Tasmania 2006 Annual Report](#)

Demographic and Economic Profile

FORESTRY IN THE HUON VALLEY	
Amount of land used for farming	122,512 ha
Key products within industry and amount produced: ²³	
Sawlog (m3)	77,786
Veneer (m3)	2,819
Regrowth peeler (tonnes)	33,316
Special species (m3)	346
Pulpwood (tonnes)	298,702
Fuel and firewood (m3)	1,846
Posts & poles (units)	2,145
Craftwood (units)	192
Minor products (units)	798
Estimated value of industry	\$19.5 million ²⁴

Source: Forestry Tasmania 2006 Annual Report

Skill shortages and barriers to employment ²⁵

A state-wide analysis of training demands within the forestry industry outlined that, although it is difficult to recruit some occupations, it is believed that it is not because of a lack of skill but due to the social and political climate in the state. The two major barriers to employing workers in the industry include:

- Perception of the forestry industry and the stigma attached to working in it. The largest impact of this is felt in higher management positions and the attraction of university graduates and forester degree applicants
- Literacy and numeracy revealed through the changes in technology shifting work from manual harvesting to mechanical harvesting

²⁴ Based on sales revenue, Source: [Forestry Tasmania 2006 Annual Report](#). Note, estimates made before opening of Ta Ann

²⁵ Industry, Business and Training Profile of the Huon Valley and Bruny Island 2007 draft (version 0.9)

Demographic and Economic Profile

*Macroeconomic and microeconomic impacts*²⁶

The Huon Valley forestry industry is driven by international demand for product, in particular wood chips. Specifically, the following factors all drive demand for forestry products produced within the region:

- Globalisation
- Market expansion, for example ventures such as Ta Ann provide more jobs in the forestry industry
- Competition and productivity demands as countries such as South Africa and China enter the woodchip market
- Regulatory compliance such as the Regional Forest Agreement and the Tasmanian Community Forest Agreement provide job security and drive demand for skilled labour
- Participation factors predominantly worker attraction and retention play a role in the demand for skilled labour within the forestry industry

²⁶ Industry, Business and Training Profile of the Huon Valley and Bruny Island 2007 draft (version 0.9)

Demographic and Economic Profile

5.4 Tourism

In year ending June 2007 visitors to the state spent \$1.32 billion. In this period holiday visitors²⁷ on average stayed 8.8 nights, spent \$2,332 per visit and \$243 per night.²⁸

The Huon Valley municipality is located on the Huon Trail that received 217,500 visitors from July 2006 to June 2007.

Tourism in the Huon Valley is still in its early stages and is still not self sustaining with many businesses closing during the winter months. In 2001 the accommodation, café and restaurant sector employed 173 persons in the Huon Valley community or 3.64% of the workforce. Tourist numbers are still not consistent throughout the year so work is highly seasonal and casual employment dominates the industry.

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES IN HUON VALLEY TOURISM INDUSTRY ²⁹									
	Non employing	1-4	5-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200+	Total	Total employing
Accommodation Cafes and Restaurants	297	123	63	15	3	6	3	510	213

Source: ABS ABN database

TOURISM IN THE HUON VALLEY	
Number of businesses (employing)	213
Number of residents employed in industry	173
Average number of employees employed by industry businesses	1.23
Estimated (dollar) value of industry (from overnight stays)	\$34,700,400
Estimated (dollar) value of industry (from only visiting/passing through visitors)	\$17,739,000
TOTAL Estimated (dollar) value of industry	\$52,439,400

²⁷ Holiday visitors defines those visiting for holiday not business, sporting or conference purposes. Also does not include Tasmanians as visitors are surveyed at airports on the way to leaving the state.

²⁸ [Tourism Tasmania Visitor Survey](#)

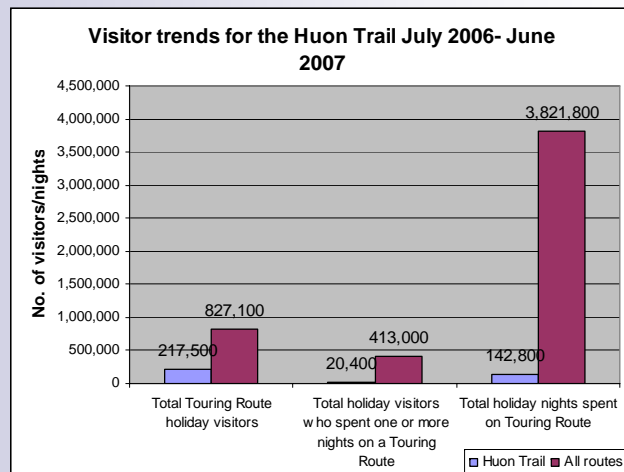
²⁹ It is recognised that tourism businesses can include businesses such as petrol stations, retail outlets and other service providers. However, for the purpose of this analysis, tourism operators are defined as accommodation, cafes and restaurant establishments.

Demographic and Economic Profile

5.4.1 Holiday visitor numbers and trends

The average number of nights that holiday visitors spent on the Huon Trail from July 2006 to June 2007 was 5.1 nights. This represents a 96.2% increase in average nights stayed when compared to the previous year (2.6 nights on average).

HOLIDAY VISITOR NUMBERS AND TRENDS JULY 06- JUNE 07					
	July 2003- June 2004	July 2004 – June 2005	July 2005- June 2004	July 2006- June 2007	% change from July 2005- June 2004 to July 2006- June 2007
Total Touring Route holiday visitors:					
Huon Trail	249,900	229,400	233,300	217,500	-6.8%
All routes	739,800	757,600	812,500	827,100	1.8%
Total holiday visitors who spent one or more nights on a Touring Route:					
Huon Trail	32,400	29,200	28,600	20,400	-28.6%
All routes	419,000	387,000	422,400	413,000	-2.2%
Total holiday nights spent on Touring Route:					
Huon Trail	81,900	73,300	72,200	142,800	97.7%
All routes	3,795,000	3,487,900	3,540,800	3,821,800	7.9%

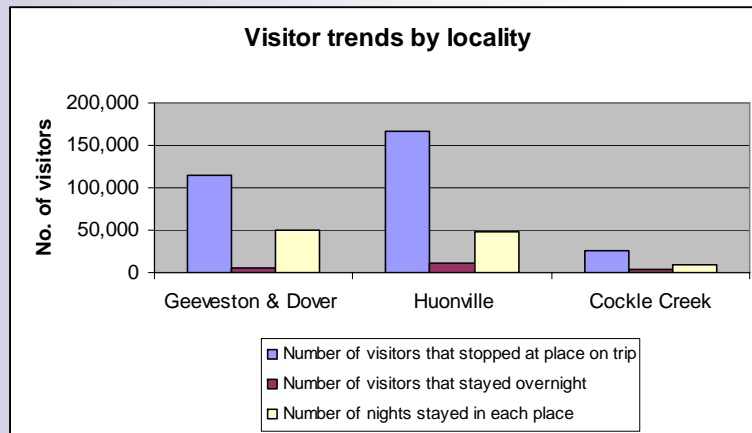


Demographic and Economic Profile

5.4.2 Visitor numbers by locality

VISITOR TRENDS BY LOCALITY JULY 06 - JULY 07			
	Geeveston & Dover ³⁰	Huonville	Cockle Creek
Number of visitors that stopped at place on trip	114,000	167,400	25,600
Number of visitors that stayed overnight	5,900	11,700	3,900
Number of nights stayed in each place	50,500	47,500	8,900

Source: Tourism Tasmania Visitor Survey



Skill shortages and barriers to employment³¹

The Huon Valley tourism industry faces the same skill shortages as the Tasmania-wide industry. However, these shortages are accentuated by the relative isolation of the area.

The main skills unique to the area that are in need are customer service based. There is a demand for these services delivered by locals with local knowledge which enable visitors to have a bigger connection with the area and a greater cultural experience. Services include general hospitality customer service and guides.

³⁰ Dover was taken off the survey in 2006 and Cockle Creek was added. At the same time Geeveston numbers significantly increased. Therefore it is likely that visitors to Dover have been included in Geeveston and Cockle Creek figures.

³¹ Industry, Business and Training Profile of the Huon Valley and Bruny Island 2007 draft (version 0.9)

Demographic and Economic Profile

Tourism businesses in the Huon valley experienced the following major barriers in employing workers;

- the location of the Huon Valley
 - employing from a small pool source
 - the fluctuation of working hours throughout the year
- attraction and retention of workers

Macroeconomic and microeconomic impacts ³²

Tourism in the Huon Valley is comprised of mainly micro hospitality businesses that are heavily impacted by micro economic factors and other larger industries working within the region.

The Huon Valley tourism industry is predominantly based on interstate visitation and is therefore heavily influenced by the domestic tourism market.

The local industry is also influenced by micro drivers such as customer service demands, employing from a small labour pool source and employer arrangements of working hours. These drivers are typical of regional tourist areas in Tasmania.

Demographic and Economic Profile

6.0 Real Estate and Housing

Residential vacant land in the Huon Valley is selling very well in comparison to other regions in Southern Tasmania, particularly Kingborough and Hobart.

6.1 Number of rateable properties in the Huon Valley

NUMBER OF RATEABLE PROPERTIES EFFECTIVE 1 JULY 2007	
	Number
Residential properties ³³	5,835
Total rateable properties	9,283

6.2 Property sales and prices

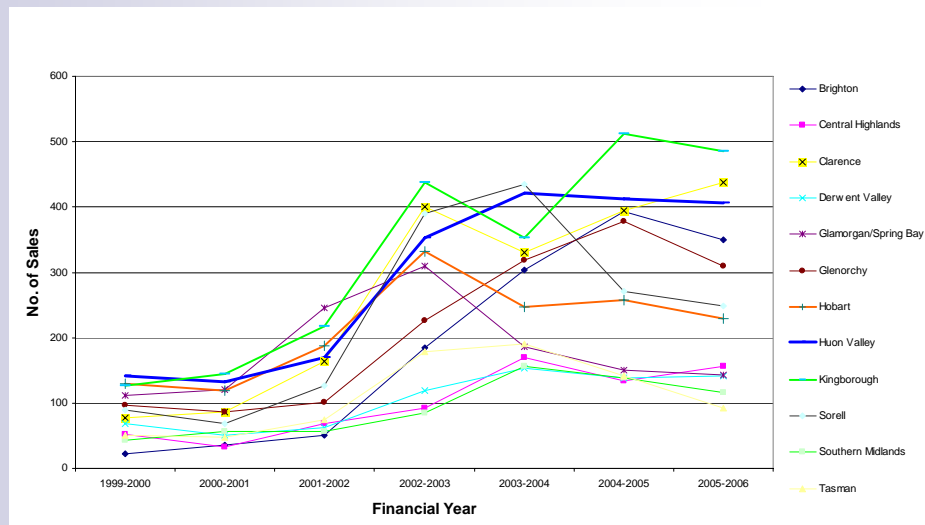


Figure 2: Residential Vacant Property Sales within Southern Tasmanian Municipalities
Source: ABS census data

³³ Defined under the R code as residential

Demographic and Economic Profile

NUMBER OF PROPERTY SALES BY LOCALITY QUARTER ENDING JUNE 2007

Suburb	No. of Sales	% change from previous quarter	% change from same qtr previous yr
Cygnets	4	-42.90%	-50.00%
Dover	5	-37.50%	-54.50%
Geeveston	10	-9.10%	-37.50%
Huonville	24	60.00%	100.00%
Ranelagh	8	-27.30%	166.70%

Source: Real Estate Institute of Tasmania quarterly market synopsis June 2007

MEDIAN PROPERTY PRICES BY LOCALITY QUARTER ENDING JUNE 2007

Suburb	Median	% change from previous quarter	% change from same qtr previous year	% change from same qtr 2 years prior
Cygnets	215,000	10.30%	-22.50%	16.20%
Dover	355,000	67.80%	26.80%	82.10%
Geeveston	165,000	-2.90%	-15.10%	11.90%
Huonville	328,500	42.80%	42.80%	77.60%
Ranelagh	260,000	18.20%	20.90%	6.10%

Over the March 2007 to June 2007 quarter 24 properties were sold in Huonville. In the same quarter the median prices of Huonville properties increased by 42.8% and Dover by 67.8%.

Source: Real Estate Institute of Tasmania quarterly market synopsis June 2007

TOP 10 MEDIAN PRICE GROWTH SUBURBS OVER QUARTER ENDING JUNE 2007

Suburb	No. of sales	Median price	% Median change Mar-07 to Jun-07
Zeehan	4	\$180,000	80.0%
Dover	5	\$355,000	67.8%
Roseberry	3	\$119,500	53.2%
Evandale	4	\$351,250	48.2%
Youngtown	11	\$330,000	43.5%
Huonville	24	\$328,500	42.8%
Latrobe	11	\$278,000	42.6%
Orford	5	\$370,000	39.6%
Westbury	6	\$270,000	38.5%
Perth	11	\$310,000	36.3%

Source: Real Estate Institute of Tasmania

Demographic and Economic Profile

TOP 10 MEDIAN PRICE GROWTH SUBURBS OVER YEAR (JUNE 06- JUNE 07)			
Suburb	No. of sales	Median price	% Median change Jun-06 to Jun-07
Orford	5	\$370,000	109.0%
Roseberry	3	\$119,500	95.9%
Latrobe	11	\$278,000	85.3%
Evandale	4	\$351,250	76.6%
Granton	5	\$455,000	75.0%
Huonville	24	\$328,500	42.8%
West Hobart	23	\$449,000	39.2%
Youngtown	11	\$330,000	38.1%
Westbury	6	\$270,000	35.0%
South Arm	5	\$330,000	34.7%

Source: Real Estate Institute of Tasmania

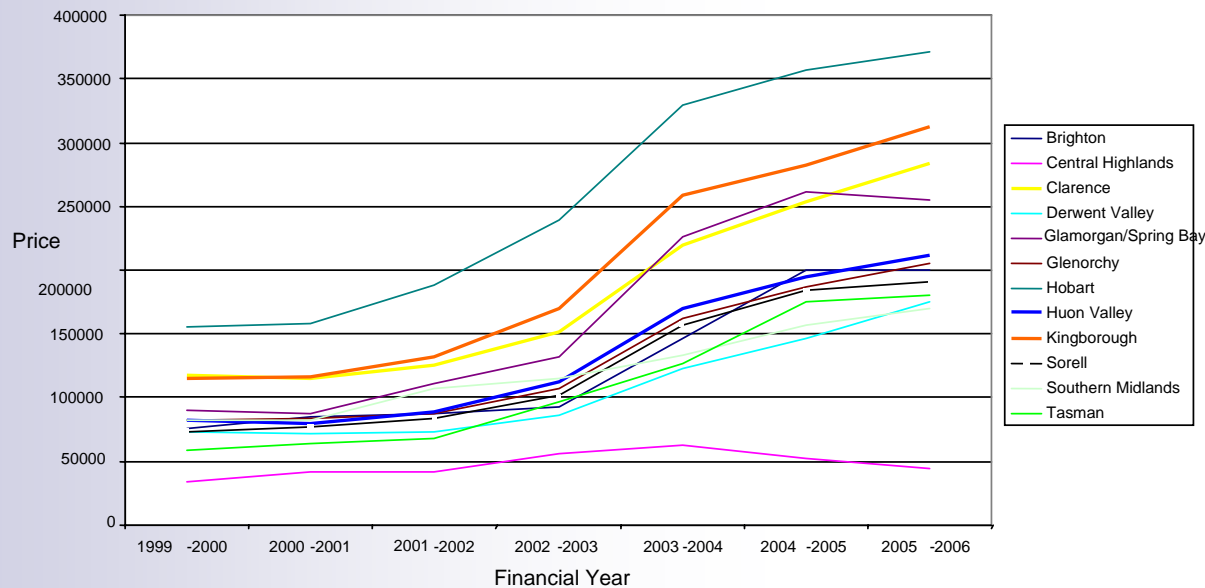


Figure 3: Mean sales prices of residential properties within Southern Tasmanian Municipalities
Source: Fannon, L. (2007). Land Information System Tasmania

Demographic and Economic Profile

6.3 Building approvals

From July 2003 until August 2007 the following building approvals were lodged and completed.

BUILDING APPROVALS TYPE	NUMBER
Residential	635
Commercial	119
Garage/Shed	521
Additions to Residential Building	338

Source: Huon Valley Council

Vacant land property sales and new house building approvals are increasing. Additionally, since the 2000-2001 financial year, property sales have increased by 200% and building approvals have increased by 150%.³⁴

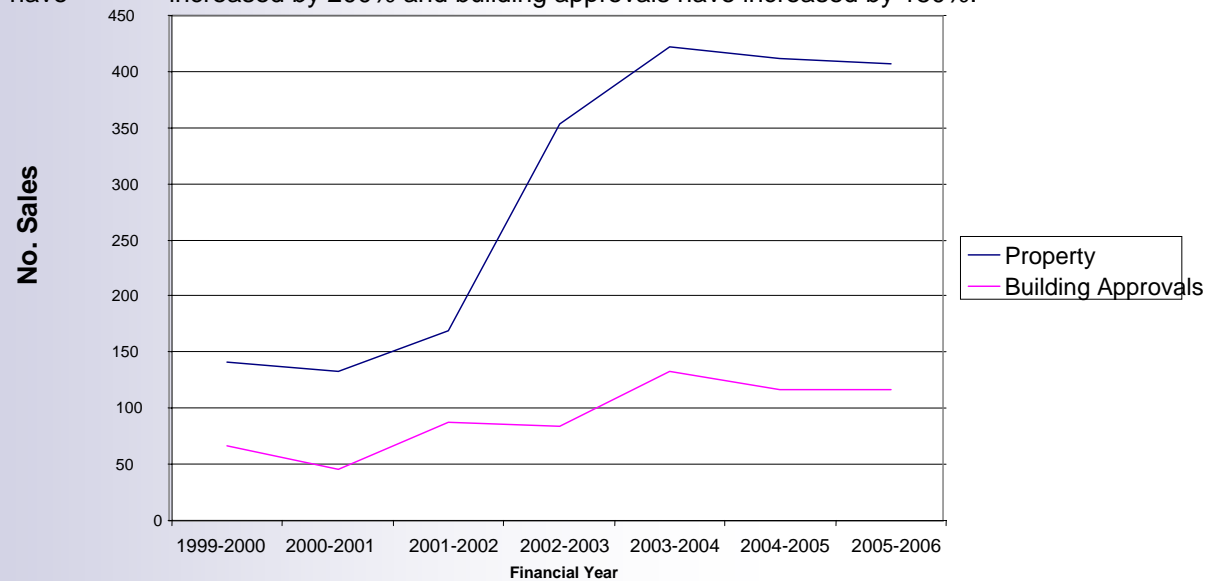


Figure 4: Comparison of vacant residential properties sold within the Huon Valley and building approvals between 1999-2005 financial years

Source: Fannon, L. (2007). Land Information System Tasmania

³⁴ Fannon, L. (2007). Land Information System Tasmania

Demographic and Economic Profile

7.0 Skills Sustainability

7.1 Schools

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS IN THE REGION	
Child care	4
Primary school	6
High school	5 ³⁵

Source: HuonValley.net.au school and day care directory

Tasmanian Polytechnic is the closest post-compulsory college to the Huon Valley.

The Hobart City campus is the closest TAFE campus to the Huon Valley region. Similarly, the closest university campus is situated in Sandy Bay. A bus service does connect Huon Valley residents to the city but is infrequent and results in long travel times and thus long days that are especially felt by college students.

7.2 Non school qualifications

NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS 2001 CENSUS						
Persons aged 15 and over: 2001				% Change 96-01	% of total Huon Valley	% of total Tas (2001)
	1991	1996	2001			
Postgraduate Degree	46	63	96	52.4%	1.0%	2.2%
Grad. Dip. & Grad. Certificate	44	80	91	13.8%	0.9%	2.4%
Bachelor Degree	295	366	517	41.3%	5.2%	1.9%
Advanced Dip & Diploma	360	373	428	14.7%	4.3%	2.4%
Certificate	957	1,133	1,436	26.7%	14.6%	2.6%
Not Stated (b)	942	1,139	1,191	4.6%	12.1%	2.9%
Not Applicable (c)	6,188	6,351	6,098	-4.0%	61.9%	2.9%
Total	8,832	9,505	9,857	3.7%	100.0%	2.8%

Source: Tasmanian Labour Economics Office, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Hobart

³⁵ Approximations as some schools offer primary and secondary schooling and were thus counted twice

Demographic and Economic Profile

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION ATTENDING			
	Males	Females	Persons
Pre-school	77	61	138
Infants/Primary:			
Government	530	476	1,006
Catholic	152	148	300
Other Non Government	56	52	108
<i>Total</i>	738	676	1,414
Secondary:			
Government	306	287	593
Catholic	82	82	164
Other Non Government	68	62	130
<i>Total</i>	456	431	887
Technical or Further Educational Institution (a):			
Full-time student:			
Aged 15-24 years	38	44	82
Aged 25 years and over	19	17	36
Part-time student:			
Aged 15-24 years	45	22	67
Aged 25 years and over	50	77	127
Full/Part-time student status not stated	7	4	11
<i>Total</i>	159	164	323

Demographic and Economic Profile

TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION ATTENDING			
	Males	Females	Persons
University or other Tertiary Institutions:			
Full-time student:			
Aged 15-24 years	31	35	66
Aged 25 years and over	16	27	43
Part-time student:			
Aged 15-24 years	0	8	8
Aged 25 years and over	26	71	97
Full/Part-time student status not stated	4	3	7
<i>Total</i>	77	144	221
Other type of educational institution:			
Full-time student	9	17	26
Part-time student	10	44	54
Full/Part-time student status not stated	3	0	3
<i>Total</i>	22	61	83
Type of educational institution not stated	565	521	1,086
<i>Total</i>	2,094	2,058	4,152

Demographic and Economic Profile

7.2 Community education

Huon LINC

Opened in 2006 the Huon Learning and Information Network Centre (LINC) brings together the Huonville library, Centrelink and other health and community services to give locals access to information services and learning opportunities. Staff and around 37 regular volunteers use the facilities for the delivery of the following services:

Internal training services

Accredited computer courses and a business course are run by TAFE Tasmania in partnership with the Huon LINC. As well as this, free IT course for beginners run on a client demand basis as well as a 10 week “web wise” course.

External training services

VET in schools program, Adult literacy and Basic Education program, TafeConnect courses, University preparation program and language Literacy and Numeracy Program (LLNP) run by Mission Australia.

The facilities are also utilised by local organizations, businesses and community groups for workshops, conferences and staff training. In the year spanning July 2006 to June 2007, 49,866 patrons utilised the centre. The main demographic of people that go to The LINC are women between the ages of 35-50, most are parents.

The Huon LINC is still very young and still being set up to full operation. Future plans involve going out into the community and working with key industries such as aquaculture and forestry, reaching out not only to workers but families also to conduct literacy and numeracy training.

Demographic and Economic Profile

Steps Employment Tasmania

Southern Training, Employment and Placement Solutions Inc (STEPS) is a community owned, not for profit institution that trains and finds employment for jobseekers in the Huon Valley.

The Huonville Steps branch normally has around 1,000 job seeking clients at any one time. These jobs seeking clients are mainly unskilled as there are almost no unemployed skilled workers in the Huon Valley. The main types of unskilled jobseekers in the Huon Valley are parents re-entering the workforce. Steps find that their greatest demand for training is training to prepare workers for the work force rather than training for any particular industry skill.

Steps in Huonville run a variety of courses to get jobseekers into the workforce:

Driver training courses

Australian Apprenticeships Access Program (AAP) is a commonwealth Government Program that provides disadvantaged jobseekers with pre-vocational training and other forms of assistance to assist them to undertake an Australian Apprenticeship. Steps Huonville exclusively train all Ta Ann Veneer Mill workers that require this qualification.



Issues and Discussion Paper

HUON VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY PREPARATION

DRAFT ISSUES AND DISCUSSION PAPER – MAY 2008

INTRODUCTION

As the first element of preparing an Economic Development Strategy for the Huon Valley, a Demographic and Economic Profile of the area was prepared. This profile was then reviewed by the members of the Huon Valley Council appointed Economic Development Advisory Committee with the following issues identified.

Demographic Changes

The Huon Valley has a current population base of 15,000 and in recent years has grown significantly. In fact the Huon Valley has been recognised as one of the fastest growing Local Government areas within Tasmania.

It is recognised that the demographic profile of the Huon Valley is expected to change over the next fifteen years. Population growth is projected to be greater in the Huon Valley at 5%, compared with a projected increase for Tasmania of only 1.4%. However this increase will come predominantly from the age groups 55 and over, along with a decline in the working age population (15-64 years).

This projected population growth is indicative of the increasing desirability of the Huon Valley for retirees and older people making lifestyle choices on their place of residence. The proximity of the Huon Valley to the commercial/retail centres of Hobart and Kingston is also considered to be a relevant factor here.

A significant number of new residents to the Huon Valley are from interstate, many of whom are moving to the area to take advantage of the natural values of the area and to retire from a busy and hectic lifestyle.

The population of the Huon Valley is rapidly aging, a situation further exacerbated by those retirees relocating from mainland Australia. This demographic shift clearly indicates that care is needed to ensure an appropriate balance of working and income generating residents is maintained in comparison to retirees and those who are not generating an income.

The aging population will also increase the demand for health services, aged care facilities and improved public transport.

Issues and Discussion Paper

Employment Opportunities, Education, Training and Skill Development

Whilst business identifies real difficulties in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce it is still reported that the number of job seekers in the Valley is significant. On the one hand employers are unable to attract people to work for them, whilst on the other hand employment agencies report that they have up to 100 people per day looking for employment.

There is a high level of part-time and/or casual employment. Anecdotally this situation is created as a result of the seasonal work opportunities available, the low skill base of existing employees and the high number of women in the non-skilled workforce. However, this could also be used as a positive force by attracting people wishing to live in the area for lifestyle reasons and taking up casual work to maintain an income stream.

It has been recognised that a low number of residents within the Huon Valley hold professional qualifications. It has also been recognised that there are significant challenges facing young people who, having completed Year 10 are forced to re-locate to Hobart to complete their Year 11 and 12 studies or higher education.

It is also recognised that trainees and apprentices who take advantage of the Government programs that are available also need to travel out of the Huon Valley to gain the formal skill development required.

The Huon LINC is recognised as a significant and very successful facility which provides an opportunity to play a lead and perhaps increasing role in education and training in the Valley.

Identifying education and training opportunities that can be undertaken in the local area will assist in encouraging young people to stay in the Huon Valley. Local industries such as aquaculture and forestry could be encouraged to partner with the Council in identifying training needs and offering courses with real employment outcomes.

Housing Activity

It is noted that property sales in the Valley are particularly active at present and there is a high number of building approvals issued by the Council. It is also recognised that there are severe shortages of rental accommodation available in all towns in the Huon Valley.

There is a significant opportunity for housing density within the established towns of the Huon Valley to increase, to provide space for more private and public housing, as well as to make better use of existing infrastructure.

The Council's recently released Land Use & Development Strategy provides plans for the expansion and development of each of the residential settlements within the Valley. While significant sub-divisional activity is being proposed in a number of major residential settlements, this needs to be managed in a way which matches the Council's ability to serve such developments.

There is a clear appreciation now that settlements should be contained rather than allowing uncontrolled expansion, as councils and local communities cannot afford the additional services required. This also serves to stop urban development on good quality agricultural land adjacent to the towns.

Issues and Discussion Paper

It is noted that the provision of additional housing stock will help attract employees to the Valley, particularly if it is more affordable than housing in the larger cities. This also helps to build a critical mass of residents in each town that can support more retail activity and community services.

At present it is particularly difficult to attract tradesmen to undertake home construction and the bureaucratic and planning processes associated with home approvals are extensive. However, it is expected that with increased interest rates, this situation will change and there will be greater availability in the workforce.

Economic Activity

It is recognised that significant economic activity in the Huon Valley is largely based on the abundant natural resources and high natural values of the region. The major industries are based around the following sectors:-

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Tourism
- Fishing and Aquaculture

It has been identified that these four major industry sectors create wealth to the value of some \$382 million annually.

Each of these industries are reliant on export markets and each can be significantly affected by the global economy and the value of the Australian dollar.

It has also been recognised that the value and employment creation of each of these industries could be further (significantly) enhanced through the provision of additional downstream processing. This will be a key driver for economic growth in the future and the region should seek to capitalise on its natural advantages, particularly to value-add its products.

A number of major developments are being considered for the Huon Valley including fish processing, expansion of aquaculture operations, new tourism ventures and intensification of agricultural activity.

However, each of these industries requires a strong active workforce and with an aging population, a key outcome will be to attract younger people to live and work in the region.

The viability of all these industries is dependent upon using the area's natural resources in a balanced and sustainable manner, so that they continue to offer returns to the community in perpetuity. This also requires that the natural values are protected in such a way that they can provide a high return to the community, particularly with regard to tourism.

The Huon Valley is well located for attracting increased tourism activity being close to Hobart, particularly eco-tourism and lifestyle tourism ventures. Development of attractions should be supported by ensuring there is adequate infrastructure to enhance the tourist experience, such as improved roads, toilets and recreational facilities, quality food and accommodation outlets, and a culture that encourages tourism.

Issues and Discussion Paper

A key driver for tourism development is aligning tourism activity with a recognised brand strategy for the region. The impact of this branding needs to be considered at the broader regional level across southern Tasmania, as well as at the local level within the Huon Valley itself. There are enormous synergies for marketing and awareness that can be advanced through the adoption of a coordinated tourism brand strategy.

There are also a range of niche industries which can be fostered through the growth in tourism, such as heritage touring, eco-touring and rural accommodation.

An urgent shortage of tourist accommodation has been recognised in the Huon Valley and this needs to be addressed to take advantage of a growing tourism industry.

Regional influences also need to be considered in terms of economic development. The continuing growth of Kingston as a major residential and commercial/retail centre provides the Huon valley with the opportunity to leverage off this growth, by offering a truly rural lifestyle close to a major urban centre. This could be marketed as a key advantage for the Huon Valley compared with other areas around Hobart, where commercial centres are not as well developed (i.e. Brighton and Sorell)

Transportation and Access

The road system in the Huon Valley is generally of a good standard for the population it serves. With projected road improvements in Kingston this will also assist people in the Huon valley to access services in Hobart. However, as people seek to make decisions on where to live more from a lifestyle perspective, access to services is a more critical issue.

Access is not just about building new roads, but about how people can obtain important services in a way which is cost effective and easy. This includes non-motorised transport options, public transport and better urban planning to place services close to where people live. Town planning needs to provide for pedestrian and bicycle access as well as vehicles.

Significant issues have been identified in the limitations associated with the provision of public transport throughout the Valley. These limitations mean that it is increasingly difficult for students to access educational opportunities and for employees to have reliable public transport needed to sustain a job. This is also a major constraint to supporting an aging population.

Community-funded bus services could be considered in place of commercial operations to encourage people to live in smaller settlements. This is also ideal for supporting older people who need to gain access to health services.

Tourism is another key user of the road network and there needs to be a clear understanding of the value of touring routes and the need to protect landscape values along such routes. This must be balanced with freight demand and heavy vehicle routes.

Issues and Discussion Paper

Community Services

It has been recognised that economic activity and business development needs people to prosper. Those people (ie the residents) need to be assured that there will be the provision of community services to sustain their needs.

The need for adequate health care, childcare, good quality recreational facilities and educational opportunities for children is paramount. The need for a safe and environmentally sustainable community is also required to ensure a healthy lifestyle.

Each of the major towns within the Huon Valley must seek to be provided with the basic community services so that residents remain in those towns and a sustainable employment base is available for local business.

At the same time, community and health services are employers in their own right, thus a local community can create a critical mass by seeking to provide a good range of services and businesses in a township.

Infrastructure

The need for adequate infrastructure has been recognised as an absolute necessity to ensure business investment and confidence. However, making efficient use of existing services and infrastructure should be a key aim of the Council to reduce the need for further capital inputs.

Opportunities exist to improve the road network within the Valley. This is particularly the case on the highways with significantly increased traffic generated by large numbers of tourists visiting the areas.

A number of traditional industries are reliant on the supply of good quality water. Water is required for both processing and irrigation purposes. The recent approval of funding for the development of the Huon Valley Regional Water Scheme is seen as a major advantage whereby treated good quality water will be available throughout the Valley.

Water availability should be seen as a major advantage for the Huon Valley in comparison to other parts of Tasmania, and particularly the mainland. There may be opportunities to market the region as a place for “frustrated farmers” to relocate from other States in order to make use of good water supplies, a mild climate and a good standard of service provision.

Similarly, it is recognised that the various wastewater treatment plants operated by the Council need upgrades to meet the growing needs of the area. There is also much greater emphasis on looking for alternative uses for resources such as effluent and stormwater. Opportunities exist to significantly enhance the provision of water for irrigation, whether that be water harvested from the natural waterways or water recycled from wastewater treatment sites.

Information technology is recognised as a significant infrastructure need which can help employees participate effectively in the workforce whilst enjoying the Huon Valley lifestyle. The expansion of broadband and digital technology needs to cover the region to ensure businesses can trade competitively and people can continue to enjoy the benefits of modern society while living in a rural setting.

Issues and Discussion Paper

It is recognised that each of the Huon Valley towns needs to have first class public amenities to ensure that both the visitor experience and the use of those facilities by local residents is of high quality. Particular attention needs to be paid to infrastructure such as quality playground facilities and first class public toilet amenities.

Value of a Special Place

Whilst economic prosperity and growth is required to ensure the future sustainability of the Huon Valley, care is needed to ensure that the growth and development is carried out in a way that is sympathetic to the natural values of the area. Good quality and appropriate development is therefore paramount.

This raises the notion of establishing a population “cap” on future growth of the Huon Valley. Such an approach has been adopted in other states by councils wishing to retain the natural and locational advantages that have made their region popular, while ensuring there is a critical mass which can sustain local businesses and services into the future.

In order to move ahead with confidence the local community should identify what are the values that should be protected and enhanced and what opportunities should be pursued that coincide with those values.

The Future Search Conference held by the Council in late 2007 provides a good first step in identifying those fundamental values that are seen as core to the future prosperity of the region. This should be reviewed and refined to lead community discussion on a desired future for the Huon Valley.

Growing Pains

The Huon Valley is going through a time of significant growth and change. It has been recognised that this is a time when extreme care is required to ensure that a mentality of investment and development “at any cost” is avoided and that the development undertaken does not negatively impact on the very special amenity of the area.

The Land Use and Development Strategy provides a strong base from which the new Planning Scheme can be formed. However it also provides a framework for economic development in terms of addressing protection of the key natural resources required to sustain business activity and providing for better urban planning outcomes.

The economy of the Huon Valley has a number of issues that need to be addressed, such as attracting and retaining an active workforce, providing for an aging population, and making the most of existing opportunities in tourism, aquaculture and agriculture. However these issues should be viewed in a positive sense as they provide a significant opportunity for the Valley to consider how it wants to grow and develop in a sustainable way for the future.

There is a real opportunity for the Huon Valley community to identify its strengths and advantages in a way which makes it easier for business to identify opportunities, for people to feel confident in investing in the area, for families to invest in living in the area and for the Council and government to invest in services and infrastructure.



Part C

“REPORT ON STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION”



Report on Stakeholder and Community Consultation

Huon Valley Council

Draft Economic Development Strategy

Report on Stakeholder and Community Consultation

John Wadsley Planning Consultant
Planning – Heritage – Environment – Consultation – Facilitation

Report on Stakeholder and Community Consultation

Draft Economic Development Strategy Report on Stakeholder and Community Consultation

Prepared for the Huon Valley Council

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Report on Stakeholder and Community Consultation

Executive Summary

This report provides a review of community and stakeholder feedback on the Huon Valley Council *Draft Economic Development Strategy* (December 2008), drawn from group meetings, one-on-one meetings and comments made on feedback forms, as well as other submissions.

The nature and quality of comments provided by the participants at group meetings and through one-on-one discussions was very informative. Through the consultation process, a good appreciation of how key businesses, community organisations and residents view the draft Strategy and their own opinions on economic opportunities for the Huon Valley has been gained.

In general terms, most people found that the structure of the draft Strategy was appropriate, but that it lacked guidance in terms of priorities and timeframes.

Many people could see the benefits of having the Strategy to guide future development and provide a focus for Council in assisting business; however, a number of people were concerned that consultation with the community was limited and not genuine.

The business sector was generally very supportive of what the Council was seeking to achieve in terms of economic development. The aquaculture and fruit industries provided useful and detailed comments on how they saw the opportunities and constraints in their respective areas.

The participants at the focus group meeting, the HCoC meeting and the FPA representatives meeting provided many useful ideas and commentary on the Strategy and, in particular, what they considered were the priority areas.

Input from DIER focussed on public transport services and how these could be made more flexible, while DEDT provided comments on which government programs could be of benefit to local business as well as complementing the Strategy

To progress the draft EDS, a number of recommendations have been made which should be considered by the Economic Development Advisory Committee and Huon Valley Council. These refer to:

- Revision of the draft EDS based on the comments highlighted in this report;
- Identification of priorities for the various strategies and actions and allocate a timeframe for implementation/completion;
- Allocation of appropriate resources to implement the EDS;
- Finalisation of the EDS document and broad distribution through the local community to encourage further discussion and consultation;
- Establishment of forums to take up some of the key ideas raised through this consultation process
- Coordinating the EDS with existing marketing and other government programs;
- Utilising the Township Development Committees to consider the EDS in more detail for their towns; and
- Seeking specific assistance from government agencies in implementing the EDS.

Report on Stakeholder and Community Consultation

1 Introduction

The Huon Valley Council has identified the need to provide a framework for economic development in the municipal area. To that end a draft *Economic Development Strategy* (December 2008) has been prepared to facilitate economic growth, support local business and industry, encourage further investment, guide Council's own activities and ensure greater coordination between all levels of government.

Prior to finalising the Strategy, the Council wanted to give the community the opportunity to make comment on the issues, strategies and actions identified within it.

The draft Strategy was put on public display by the Council during March and April 2009, via newspaper advertisements, the Council website and shop front posters. All members of the community were invited to make submissions on the Strategy as well as nominating to attend a focus group meeting.

1.1 *Scope of Work*

The Council commissioned John Wadsley to undertake consultation on the draft Strategy with key stakeholders and the community. The scope of work involved the following tasks:

- Review the draft Strategy document and other relevant information as a precursor to the consultation phase;
- Establish a list of local businesses, industry organisations, community groups government agencies and other bodies to be consulted through the process;
- Assist Council with the public launch of the draft Strategy, media contact and methods to effectively communicate the document to the local community;
- Advise on the formation of a Focus Group to represent community and business views on the draft Strategy, either through nominations or by invitation;
- Distribution of the draft Strategy (by Council) in hard copy and via the website, with public advertising and displays at key locations around the municipal area;
- Offer a contact point for public feedback or queries on the draft Strategy;
- Meet with identified government agencies to discuss the draft Strategy and obtain their comments, particularly in relation to how the Strategy fits with government policy and support mechanisms;
- Meet with identified peak bodies and key stakeholders to discuss the draft Strategy and obtain their comments;
- Hold a Focus Group meeting towards the end of the public comment period that provides a reasonably balanced cross-section of opinion from across the municipal area; and
- Review all the community and stakeholder feedback received during the consultation period and prepare a report for Council which summarises this into a form which can be used by the Council in deciding on future actions.

Report on Stakeholder and Community Consultation

1.2 Disclosures

John Wadsley was not involved in the preparation of the Strategy.

The identification of people and organisations to attend the focus group meeting and other meetings was based initially on nominations from the general community. To supplement this, the consultant used his professional judgement to make invitations in order to achieve a representative group of participants from across the municipal area.

1.3 Acknowledgements

Thanks to Glenn Doyle and Sue Brezinscak of the Huon Valley Council for the organisation of meeting rooms, materials and refreshments for the various meetings. Thanks also to all those who participated in the various meetings and discussions, as well as the Huonville Chamber of Commerce and Franklin Progress Association for arranging meetings.

A list of all respondents and participants is attached at Appendix A.

Report on Stakeholder and Community Consultation

2 Background

A number of activities preceded the release of the draft Strategy.

At the end of 2007 a Future Search Conference "*Huon 2020 Vision - Plan our Future Together*" was held in Franklin. This involved people from across the municipal area and ranged across all aspects of life, community and business in the Huon Valley. Workshops were conducted following the conference to discuss the findings and bring the outcomes together in a meaningful way.

The Huon Valley Economic Development Advisory Committee was established in early 2008 to consider the preparation of the Strategy. The Committee comprised Council representatives, business operators and local industry representatives.

To aid their deliberations, a *Demographic and Economic Profile* (January 2008) of the municipal area was prepared by Council staff. This document was based upon statistics obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), primarily data derived from the 2006 Census, as well as population trend reports ¹ and visitor statistics ². This profile provided a useful snapshot of the population, labour force and industry mix throughout the Huon Valley.

The Economic Development Advisory Committee prepared an Issues Paper in *May 2008* based upon the profile document and its own discussions at a number of meetings and workshops. The Issues Paper was distributed to the Council for comment.

The draft EDS was submitted to Council in January 2009 seeking approval for release to the community. Given that the Council was also involved in undertaking community meetings on its new Consultation Policy during February and March, as well as a number of other consultative processes with the community, it was decided to delay the public launch of the EDS to avoid any confusion within the general community.

Prior to the release of the EDS, the consultant attended a meeting organised by the Huonville Chamber of Commerce (HCoC) to discuss the current global economic situation and how this could affect local businesses. The consultant, John Wadsley attended this meeting as an observer to gain a greater insight into the concerns and needs of local business.

An outcome of this meeting was that the Council and HCoC invited John Wadsley to facilitate a workshop focussed on carrying out SWOT Analysis of the townships (and more broadly the municipal area's) economic opportunities. As part of this workshop the draft EDS was discussed and how it could support the issues raised through the workshop.

¹ Jackson, N.O. & Felmingham, B. (2004) CEDA/LGAT Population Ageing Project and Jackson, N.O. Tasmania's Population

² Tourism Tasmania Visitor Surveys and HVC data

Report on Stakeholder and Community Consultation

3 Structure of the Economic Development Strategy

The draft *Economic Development Strategy* (December 2008) has been prepared to support local growth in the economy of the Huon Valley, support local business and industry, encourage further investment, guide how Council can work with businesses and ensure greater coordination between all levels of government.

The vision behind the Economic Development Strategy aspires to have *“a vibrant economy with a quality rural lifestyle”*.

The EDS identifies four significant industry drivers that underpin economic activity in the Huon Valley:

- Aquaculture and commercial fishing
- Agriculture (predominantly fruit growing and processing)
- Forestry (harvesting and downstream processing of timber)
- Tourism

While other sectors of the economy are also recognised as important in terms of numbers employed (such as retail and community services), they are largely reliant on the above resource-based sectors in generating demand.

The EDS focussed on identifying key strategic areas that needed to be addressed to enhance the economic wellbeing of the Huon Valley, namely:

- Infrastructure
- Business Building
- Marketing
- Skill Building
- Sustainable Communities

For each of the above areas, the EDS identifies an objective to be achieved, then outlines the results of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats), which leads to the nomination of a number of key issues. For each of these issues, strategies are defined along with nominated actions to address these strategies.

This structure provides an easily understood way of identifying key issues considered to have an impact on economic wellbeing and the actions to address these issues. The SWOT analysis methodology has been used as a procedure to help businesses and organisations for many years. It offers a structured method for identifying the key attributes of an entity (in this case a council area), the customers and markets trading with the entity, the competitors and factors that could be a threat to the entity, and prompts the discussion of ideas or strategies that will improve how an entity can meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

A key aim of the Council was to provide a document which could be used at a broad strategic level by government to consider how their policies and programs could be best employed to assist economic wellbeing in the Huon Valley. At the same time, the Strategy was designed to be a useful framework for existing business and potential investors to see in which direction the Council and its community was heading.

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4 Feedback on the Draft Strategy

4.1 Public Consultation Methodology

To gain community and stakeholder feedback on the draft EDS, the Council and consultant undertook the following:

- John Wadsley and Glenn Doyle from the Huon Valley Council attended a meeting of the Huonville Chamber of Commerce to promote the release of the draft EDS and encourage feedback;
- The draft report was put on public display from 18 March - 30 April 2009;
- Public notices were placed in The Mercury and the Huon News;
- Copies of the draft EDS document were made available at Council offices;
- The Council's website also provided access to the draft EDS, along with a feedback form for the transmissions of comments;
- A workshop was organised by the Huonville Chamber of Commerce and facilitated by John Wadsley to undertake a SWOT Analysis of the township's economic opportunities, at which the draft EDS was discussed;
- A Focus Group Meeting was organised at Huonville on 7 April 2009, attended by people representing various business, industry and community interests across the municipal area;
- A meeting was held with members of the Franklin Progress Association on 29 April 2009;
- A number of key agencies and stakeholders were contacted directly and interviewed, including the following:
 - Department of Economic Development and Tourism
 - Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
 - Department of Primary Industries and Water
 - Fruit Growers Tasmania
 - Tassal Group Ltd
 - Huon Aquaculture
- A number of other industry organisations and businesses were contacted directly via telephone and email and encouraged to respond to the draft Strategy

In all, some 17 submissions were received from individuals, either using a feedback form, by email or by written submission. A list of all respondents and participants is attached at Appendix A.

The following provides a summary of the key issues raised by participants at meetings and workshops as well as comments through individual submissions.

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4.2 Huonville Chamber of Commerce SWOT Workshop

This workshop was organised by the HCoC and advertised through its member base. It was held on 2 March 2009 at the Huon LINC Building in Huonville.

While this workshop was focussed on businesses in the Huonville Township, it became apparent that there were significant connections and interrelationships with the rest of the municipal area and the directions provided in the draft EDS. Some 15 people attended the meeting representing a cross section of businesses in Huonville.

After some general discussion on the advantages and impediments from doing business in Huonville, the group conducted a SWOT analysis focussed on improving business activity. Some of the key points made through the SWOT analysis are summarised in the table below.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Huon River and its foreshore are key assets for Huonville	Poor presentation of many buildings in Huonville	Increase choices in accommodation for families, backpackers and seasonal workers	Competition from larger chain stores forces out local producers
The Huon Valley is more than just the Air walk	Need for greater retail variety in Huonville	Businesses need to work more closely together	Competition from Hobart and Kingston shopping centres
Good variety of B&B accommodation	Lack of a well defined "town centre"	Establish a growers market	Advertising costs are too high
Fruit production and variety is increasing	Lack of accommodation for seasonal workers	Capture day trippers from Hobart and Kingston	Flooding risk may limit development
Good climate and water supplies	Area often promoted as day trip only	Offer better facilities for RV users	Tourism marketing does not promote long stays

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From this a number of opportunities were identified and prioritised by each participant. The “top six” opportunities as voted by participants were:

- Encourage a new overnight accommodation facility in the town
- Encourage new quality antiques/gallery/art and craft outlets
- Support a ‘shop local’ business loyalty/encouragement scheme
- Facilitate an enhanced growers market for local produce
- Facilitate a customer service training program and awards scheme
- Create a ‘real’ destination at Huonville through branding and attractions

A number of short term and long term strategies were suggested to address each of these opportunities. There was general agreement that a number of feasible strategies could be considered for implementation through the business community. It was noted that many of these opportunities had been identified in the draft ED’s document.

The full notes from the workshop are attached at Appendix B.

4.3 Huon Valley Focus Group Meeting

The following people attended the Focus Group meeting that was held on 7 April 2009 at the Huon LINC Building in Huonville:

Tim Tierney, Tierney Law, Huonville	Duncan Garvey, Gardenia Florist, Huonville
Hedley Phillips, Sawmiller, Cairns Bay	Robert Dick, Tassie Pics, Huonville
Aidan Direen, Milk Vendor, Cygnet	John and Jan Drysdale, Drysdale Engineering, Dover
Hugh Griffiths, Dept of Primary Industries & Water	Scott Duffy, Business Enterprise Centre
Rosie Wilson, Baker Wilson Lawyers, Huonville	Belinda Hazell, 3 rd Rock Agriculture, Judbury
Karen Fry, Cambridge House B&B, Geeveston	Keith Presnell, Retired scientist, Cygnet
Ben Greene, Forest and Heritage Centre, Geeveston	

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4.3.1 EDS Structure and Content

It was suggested that the retail sector should have been included as a key industry driver; however, it was pointed out that the retail sector relies heavily on the other four sectors to generate economic activity, albeit that it and the services sector form a significant part of the local economy.

The relevance of the ABS data supporting the Strategy was queried as it is largely based on the 2005-2006 period. With the current economic climate it was suggested that employment data could have changed. It was agreed that change must be expected and that the Strategy would need to be reviewed on a regular basis. It is likely the local economy may be influenced over the coming years by the impact of climate change, demographic change, market trends, increases in oil prices and the global financial situation.

It was suggested that the Huon Valley needs to be flexible in the services and products it can deliver, and that this flexibility will be a key factor in how well the municipal area grows.

The lack of timeframes for completing the various strategies in the draft EDS was seen as an omission which should be corrected in order to give better direction and clarity.

One participant made the comment that the EDS should not be seen as the panacea for economic development, but that it is one tool to help the Council and community work towards achieving an improved economic position for the Huon Valley.

Each Strategic Area identified in the EDS was then discussed in detail.

4.3.2 Strategic Area - Infrastructure

Industrial Land:

- Lack of appropriate land for business
- Increasing trend for pre-existing industrial and agricultural uses to be forced out by inappropriate subdivision for residential land
- Council needs to define appropriate land as "industry ready", especially in Huonville
- Council should own "Industrial park" in Huonville to enable developments to proceed quickly

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Tourism Accommodation:

- Need for a caravan park at Huonville and/or more RV friendly areas - demand seems to be underestimated at present, especially for short-term stays and for campers, but facilities need to be of good quality to attract tourists
- Existing park at Dover is popular as well as the informal RV area at Franklin
- Survey of potential customers is required to establish market demand
- Need to offer a broader range of accommodation including 3-4 star hotels suited to families; B&B accommodation does not always suit all tastes
- Opportunity to develop accommodation that takes advantage of sports grounds and pool at Huonville along with new PCYC facility to offer something for school trips and sports groups
- Need to identify "investment ready" sites for development

Seasonal Workers Accommodation:

- Seasonal workers and backpackers need to be able to access a coordinated network (website based) offering accommodation and public transport. This needs to be supported by fruit growers, farmers, aquaculture and other industries
- Caravan parks should also offer accommodation for backpackers and seasonal workers

Telecommunications and IT:

- The Council needs to support and facilitate developments in this area, but is limited in its capacity to effect real change

Water:

- Will there be savings from installation of water meters?
- Need to investigate the impact of new industries and forestry plantings in upper catchments on water quality and quantity in lower catchments
- Lack of maintenance of existing water schemes and infrastructure

Waterway Infrastructure:

- Need to reduce retape for approval of developments on rivers and foreshore
- Large increase in number of boats at Cygnet should be catered for with improved facilities
- Council needs to identify sites as "investment ready" for tourist developments associated with rivers and Channel

Southern Road Network:

- The key aim for Council is to be the facilitator with regard to road improvements
- Road link to Cockle Creek is very poor. Many tourists use this road during summer and Easter
- Lack of passing lanes on Huon Highway needs to be addressed
- Local investment can be encouraged through road improvements

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4.3.3 Strategic Area - Business Building

Downstream Processing:

- Real opportunity to encourage reinvestment in the dairy and fruit industries and support local processing of some crops, but economies of scale is critical
- Agro-tourism should be seen as a value-adding element that is relatively easy to be taken up by producers, and can be integrated well into existing tourism marketing
- Aquaculture is a key industry to maximise downstream processing in the future
- Archer is a by product that can be used as a fertiliser and for energy production; it is being produced locally

Networking and Communication:

- The Council is well placed to support business networking in the Huon Valley by maintaining up-to-date databases of all local businesses
- Council should continue to support the Business Enterprise Centre
- Promoting the BEC is difficult through the local community as many operators do not communicate with their peers; needs networking between operators to build on synergies in the local business sector

Grow Business Base / Improve Commercial Activity:

- “Buy Local” and customer awards programs should be encouraged
- If we need another supermarket in Huonville it doesn't have to be a major chain, but could be an improved and diversified local business
- Need to have diversity in retail shopping and a willingness to improve service quality
- Support the “economic gardening” concept
- Businesses need incentives to improve look of their shopfronts
- Huonville is not considered attractive to shoppers and visitors - opening hours are too short and little retail choice

Council Involvement in Economic Development / Encourage New Business:

- Council needs to continue lead role with the EDS but acknowledged that Council's role will be limited in relation to actual investment decisions
- Council and BEC can work together in identifying opportunities for local business and identify training and funding programs

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4.3.4 Strategic Area - Marketing

Develop a Brand:

- Council wants to play a key role, but what can it realistically do?
- Do we need/want a “Huon Valley” brand? If so, it requires high level of coordination and control to make it work
- Should a Huon Valley brand be based on food or on the whole range of Huon Valley services?

Develop Quality Control Criteria:

- Need to have quality control for local produce being marketed from the area
- Who will be the champion here? Can be costly to maintain a proper quality system

Improve Marketing and Promotion:

- The Huon River is a great resource that is largely untapped
- Huon food trail pamphlet would be a great idea to build on wine trail
- Walking and cycling trail tourism needs to be pursued
- Look at successful models to use as framework -i.e. Macedon/Daylesford in Victoria
- Seasonal workers and backpackers are an important source of publicity which needs to be harnessed
- Already there is close communication between Kingborough and Huon Valley regarding tourism marketing

Encourage Co-ordinated Approach between Operators:

- Need to harness what is happening now in the local area so that we are all going in the same direction
- The fruit industry is looking to improve farm gate sales - this should be coordinated with the wine industry and local attractions to develop an integrated package
- Need better transport - public transport is not adequate so perhaps local farmers and industries could coordinate their own service to help seasonal workers

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4.3.5 Strategic Area - Skills Building

Improved Educational Facilities:

- Huon LINC is a great resource for polytechnic students which needs to be enhanced
- The Huon Valley needs Year 11/12 courses and facilities so students can finish school locally to address drop-out rate
- Currently looking for Commonwealth funding to support establishment of trade centre in Huonville supported by all local high schools

Training Schemes:

- Need to focus on what is the base load of “needed skills” and then look at other what local skills are needed that could support local business
- Young people don’t want to commit to apprenticeships as they are too long and may restrict career/life choices
- Seek input from Tassal and Huon Aquaculture re employment and training needs to support growth in this industry

Resident and Employee Attraction:

- Professionals need to know that a good range of educational and medical services are available locally to attract them into the area

4.3.6 Strategic Area - Sustainable Communities

Population Management:

- Cultural diversity is increasing and this needs to be acknowledged
- Small townships are becoming popular lifestyle locations i.e. Franklin and Cygnet
- Planning for workforce change needs to be part of Council’s role
- Develop round table forums with local industries to discuss employment and skills needs to support long term growth

Medical Services:

- Focus needs to be on Primary Health Care - Council’s rural health strategy has been successful here
- Aged care services also needs to be improved for ageing population

Professional Services:

- Need to improve Council resources in planning for strategic, statutory and social issues, so that professional operators can see there is a coordinated and consistent long term strategy

Climate Change:

- Need to address climate variability and changes in picking seasons so we can provide certainty for seasonal workers who may be looking for work
- Frost and bird protection and water security all needs investment in infrastructure
- Impact of sea temperature rise on aquaculture needs to be better understood
- Diversity in retail and community services is also important but lifestyle is a major determining factor for new people coming to the Valley

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4.3.7 Wrap Up

Overall the Focus Group participants were generally in favour of the draft Strategy but did express concerns over how much could be achieved. There was agreement that the identified Strategic Areas were an appropriate framework for the Council and community to focus their efforts. However, many indicated they would like to see the Strategy amended to address the issues raised at this meeting.

4.4 Franklin Progress Association meeting

At the request of the Franklin Progress Association, John Wadsley attended a meeting with some members to discuss the draft Strategy on 29 April 2009.

4.4.1 Key issues

As a lead-in to the discussion of the Strategic Areas in the Draft EDS, the participants identified a number of issues that are of importance to them, as follows:

- Need to maintain "clean green" environmental focus on future development
- Support more tourism development and help for local businesses to survive
- Create opportunities for local skilled jobs for young people
- Identify social capital in the local area that should be supported
- Heritage values of Franklin need to be protected -need to use Township Development Plan as the guiding document
- Ensure township communities are involved in economic development
- Need to protect the distinct identities of each township; they should complement each other, not compete
- Consultation with the community is critical for implementation of identified strategies. Public release of this report is encouraged

4.4.2 Structure of the EDS

- Some concern that the statistics in the EDS do not necessarily support all the strategies and actions defined in the document
- Would like to see some ordering and priorities for the strategies and actions
- Needs to reflect global financial crisis as a "threat"

4.4.3 Strategic Area - Infrastructure

- Need for more tourist accommodation in Huonville (3-4 star) not just B&Bs
- More public bus services are needed to provide more opportunities for locals. Could make use of existing school buses and aged care services.
- Conference market - need to have a good facility in the Huon Valley to tap into this
- Concern over reference to possible "5 star hotel" for Franklin
- With the identification of any "investment ready" sites, Council needs to be careful before investing public money
- Industrial land needs to be defined in an orderly manner
- Need to ensure that any "marina" developments do not preclude public access and amenity
- Existing upgrade of public jetties by Council and MAST has been a good job
- Good environmental management of new marinas and marine farms will be essential
- Need to finalise the new planning scheme as this is critical to future development

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4.4.4 Strategic Area - Business Building

- Lack of competition is seen as a concern in Huonville, but new supermarket has just opened and a local supermarket is starting to offer more boutique style lines and local growers market is going well
- IT and communications are important if businesses are to grow and develop with new skills, especially for new professionals coming to the area
- Sustainable vegetable production has not been addressed as an opportunity
- Farm gate sales are becoming a more important aspect of orcharding in the Valley which should be supported
- Woodcraft operators need to be marketed in a cooperative manner
- Need to address organic agriculture as a growing part of the market and the Huon Valley is well placed to capitalise on this

4.4.5 Strategic Area - Marketing

- People in Kingborough and Hobart need to be attracted to the valley for day trips and even for shopping
- Huon Trail signage needs updating to show Esperance Road as sealed

4.4.6 Strategic Area - Skills Building

- Wooden Boat School offers significant opportunities to teach skills to young people
- Huon LINC seen as a great model for training and skills building
- Why aren't Year 12 students achieving?? Need to address this by looking at what will work locally to attract young people but also help local businesses build a skills base
- Retraining for forestry workers has not been addressed
- Needs to be better communication between employers and training bodies to show what opportunities exist to take on young people

4.4.7 Strategic Area - Sustainable Communities

- No mention of environmental management. Waste management and recycling are areas that need to be addressed as part of the Strategy, especially promotion of local "tip shop" to take advantage of local connections
- Council is not seen as serious about "green" issues
- Public transport is a key issue - but the Strategy does not offer any answers
- Medical services seen as good and Council applauded for its support of local services
- Recent placement of medical students was well organised by Council and local practices to ensure good integration into the community
- Law and order - lack of police locally to provide better after hours coverage
- Community bank at Geeveston has tapped into enormous support from local people
- Climate change "refugees" - attracting these people offers a good opportunity for the Huon Valley
- Who looks after the quality of the Huon valley and its waterways? Larger issue than just the Council, so perhaps a coordinated approach such as the Derwent Estuary Program may be the answer

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4.4.8 Wrap Up

The FPA members were pleased to have had the opportunity to discuss the draft Strategy. Questions were raised about when it would be adopted by the Council and how this would be communicated with the local community.

There was some concern that the financial crisis may have been overlooked; however, it was acknowledged that the draft Strategy was prepared before the impact of the crisis became known.

Participants were keen to ensure the EDS acknowledged the benefits and strengths of each town and community in the municipal area, but that in moving forward all settlements needed to work together.

4.5 Department of Economic Development and Tourism

A meeting was held with Jane Eldershaw of DEDT to discuss the draft Strategy. The structure of the Strategy and the identification of the four key industry areas were considered appropriate, although the lack of priorities and timeframes was a concern. They referred to the Central Highlands Council *Economic Development Plan* as a useful model to compare with.

4.5.1 Structure and Content of the EDS

- Statistics - concern that statistics contained in the EDS document do not necessarily support the defined strategies and actions, especially with regard to the tourism industry and visitor numbers and the strategy to develop more accommodation.
- Infrastructure - industrial land and land for potential tourism developments needs to be better identified through the Strategy
- Tourist Accommodation - RV friendly sites need to be identified, but also need better demand data to back up strategies
- Waterway Infrastructure - evidence for identified marina sites need to be presented in more detail
- Business Building - potential conflict between forestry and tourism as economic drivers has not been addressed
- Downstream Processing - not dealt with in enough detail in the draft Strategy - there should be discussion of specific strategies in the fruit industry, aquaculture and forestry sectors
- Tourism Marketing - important to continue links with Kingborough Council over developing the tourism experience south of Hobart and through existing tourism marketing strategies
- Seasonal Workers - this is a largely untapped market that should be seen as a 'real' opportunity for the Huon Valley, both in terms as visitors/tourists and also as a workforce. Connections to this group need to be well coordinated through the web
- IT and Telecommunications - highlighted in the Strategy as important, but may be necessary to update it and refer to the latest Broadband Initiatives from the federal Government
- Skills Building - the Strategy needs to be more specific in regard to which skills are lacking, at what level (trade, tertiary etc) and in what areas/sectors of the economy
- Skills Building - aquaculture and forestry sectors not specifically addressed in strategies and actions, why not?

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4.5.2 Government Programs and Initiatives

It was suggested that the Huon Valley Council and local businesses would benefit through considering linkages with the following programs and strategies:

- *Tasmanian Industry Support Scheme (2009)*
The aim of the scheme is to provide a short to medium term loan facility for Tasmanian businesses to:
 - support investment projects and activities for which private sector finance would have been available if not for the volatility in credit markets; or
 - Maintain business operations and employment through temporary downturns in business activity.
- *Tasmanian Skills Strategy 2008-2015*
This Strategy is intended to guide the investment to meet the State's skills needs, increasing participation in education, meeting industry demands and increasing productivity
- *Tasmanian Innovation Strategy*
An Innovations Strategy is being prepared by the Australian innovation Research Centre which will seek to improve productivity through innovation in key sectors of the economy
- *Tasmanian Food and Beverage Strategy 2008-2011*
The Food Industry Council of Tasmania has identified four strategic pillars that are developed through this Strategy: innovative people, branding, sustainability and competitiveness.
- *Impact of Climate Change on Tasmania's Food and Beverage Industry (August 2008)*
This paper prepared by Pitt and Sherry examined the potential impact of climate change and makes a number of recommendations on the need for food producers to adjust their business strategies, undertake risk and opportunity assessments, document their product carbon footprint and consider their market positioning.
- *Industry Development Plan (2005)*
This plan reviews the competitive position of the State's industry and the areas for secure investment to support industry and regional development
- *Division Tasmania 2007-2015: Tasmania's Biotechnology Strategy (June 2007)*
This strategy seeks to support new and emerging biotechnology-based businesses that complement Tasmania's research strengths and natural advantages
- *Demographic Change in Tasmania Strategies Paper (April 2009)*
This paper prepared by the Demographic Change Advisory Council identifies a number of strategies to address population change dealing with sustaining the workforce, improving productivity, the health system, helping older Tasmanians and fiscal sustainability+

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4.6 Department of Infrastructure Energy and Resources

A meeting was held with Sarah Poortenaar (Policy and Planning) and James Verier (Passenger Transport). Discussion focussed on the following topics.

4.6.1 Public Transport Services

- Bus contracts - the separation of contracts for school services and general access some years ago has created a problem for the integration of these services today. In general, school children are very well serviced and general passengers are poorly serviced
- All school buses are available for charter outside school scheduled services. Authorisation is available for DIER for general access services if there is no direct competition. Sharing of buses with children and adults also requires DIER approval
- There may also be prejudices of adults not wanting to travel with students and/or parents not wanting adults on school buses
- In some instance changes have occurred where a number of services are now using school buses to provide general transport (e.g. Primrose Sands, Waratah to Burnie)
- Another good example is the Derwent Valley to Hobart general access services sold by Metro to a private school bus operator, who has used his fleet to open up a range of new services on new routes, including express services
- Community buses (e.g. HACC/DHHS services) do provide a good level of service in some areas (12-14 seater buses) and these could provide alternative general access services. In some case there may be restrictions on who can travel on the bus, and private operators may see this as unfair competition
- At Ouse a community bus has been established through local funding which is used for aged care transport as well as general access
- DIER is currently looking at a model where community service providers can provide some form of general access, but they may need larger buses for core routes
- Where there is demand for bus services to help seasonal and shift workers, bus services could be underwritten by employers and industry groups. In the Huon valley, businesses should discuss this with Tassie Link
- Local government should also play a role here to facilitate more flexible service provision and possibly act as a coordination body to help get services established. Park and ride facilities at key locations can also encourage use of buses
- The key to sustaining general access services is that people need to be confident of service regularity, and connections with other core routes. Operators have significant risk in putting services on, so community support is critical

4.6.2 Road Network

- The High Productivity Vehicle (HPV) network extends from Hobart to Geeveston, to Norwood along the Arve Road and also to Cygnet.
- Approved Higher Mass Limits (HML) for freight movement extends as far as Southport
- Forestry freight task is currently being review by DIER

Some relevant sections from the DIER draft Southern Integrated Transport Plan are attached at Appendix C.

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4.7 Fruit Growers Tasmania

A meeting was held with Lucy Gregg, Business Development Manager at Fruit Growers Tasmania. Discussion focussed on the following topics.

4.7.1 Production and Market Trends

- Only about 100 producers left in the Huon Valley whereas in the heyday there would have been over 1200 farmers
- Fruit industry is becoming more “corporatized” as orchards need more investment in infrastructure to provide security and certainty, i.e. establishment costs can be \$70-100,000 per hectare to provide for netting, frost protection, irrigation etc
- Frost protection is a must, especially for cherry producers looking for late production crops to sell globally (mid February to March)
- Downstream processing is a real priority for the Huon Valley to take advantage of increasing production, but existing facilities need upgrade
- Current global economic crisis not affecting industry at all, as global demand for fruit is growing, especially from India/Japan/Middle East (cherries), India/Taiwan (apples), and Middle East/Europe (apricots)
- Some growers looking at greater diversification to survive

4.7.2 Planning and Regulation

- Many orchards now under pressure from subdivision and residential development close by, which may cause restrictions on chemical spraying
- DPIW has proposed buffer zone of 100m for all farming operations from residences which may be the end for small orchards in the Huon Valley.
- Notification requirements may also be too onerous for farmers to achieve close to townships
- Visual impact (netting etc) has been raised in some areas (not yet in Huon Valley)

4.7.3 Climate Change and Water Supply

- Security of water supply is important with change in rainfall (although Huon Valley is probably better off than other areas)
- Cherry production depends on soil temperature which may be a risk
- Frosts are predicted to become more severe in the future, requiring investment in sprinklers etc

4.7.4 Workforce and Skills

- Fruit industry needs a lot of casual workers at key times, but increasingly farmers are realising they have to provide good standard of accommodation and facilities to attract workers
- Attracting and retaining people in horticulture is a major issue. A more cooperative approach across the industry has created opportunities for real career paths especially for professionals
- The industry also realises the importance of offering apprenticeships and good salaries

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4.7.5 Marketing

- Appellation scheme is being considered to improve quality and market across Tasmania. Most growers already have some form of quality assurance system in place
- Tourism recognised as important part of the industry with large increase in farm gate sales through more targeted marketing. Some producers sell up to 50% of their crop at the farm gate. The *Farm Gate Guide* has been a great success with visitors and now many farmers looking to put high quality fruit for sale here
- Also looking to improve coordination of seasonal work opportunities, providing better standard of accommodation for workers and providing transport

4.7.6 Opportunities

- Believed that the Grove Research Station may be sold off by DPIW and possible transfer to TIAR. FGT has offered to take it over and establish a centre for excellence for temperate horticulture. Make use of the laboratories to develop science on climate change and fruit production. Would seek to have training supported through the Polytechnic system. Seeking \$5m to establish this, but at this stage no tangible support from Commonwealth or State governments
- Also looking to include a conference facility (150 seats) and backpacker accommodation at Grove to support seasonal workers and provide a conference site for the Huon Valley
- FGT believes that the industry must be based on good research to survive with global market changes, climate change and the need for efficiency improvements

4.8 Tassal Group Ltd

A meeting was held with Nick Burrows, Company Secretary of the Tassal Group Ltd. Discussion focussed on the following topics.

- Tassal indicated its support for many of the initiatives and objectives canvassed within the draft Strategy, and confirmed it will continue to proactively and sustainably invest in the Huon Valley community in terms of infrastructure and employment generation and remains committed to do so.
- Tassal's operations are very sound and will increase significantly in size over coming years. The company is confident in its position in the Huon Valley with its marine farms, wet processing at Dover, processing and packaging plant at Huonville and the new hatchery on the Huon River
- Tassal believes the future of the aquaculture industry is good in Tasmania, even with the current global economic situation and possible impacts from climate change
- Current workforce is 600 in total, of which approx 350-400 are located in the Huon Valley
- The company has a real focus on environmental management and has employed a sustainability officer to deal with environmental stewardship, carbon trading, water usage, marine pollution, and regulatory compliance

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- Seasonal workers are normally taken on from December to March - 50 extra staff is normally required. Access to labour is occasionally a problem
- Skills Building - Tassal supports scholarship program at UTas as well as VET courses. Keen to support local work experience and other skills initiatives
- IT and communications - critical part of the operation as it has become highly automated using wireless and satellite links
- Road network - generally adequate although roads around Dover need to be sealed
- Business building - Tassal considers it has a good relationship with the Council, Huon Aquaculture and seeks to use local suppliers wherever possible
- Marketing - Tassal has worked hard to develop its own brand and image, but this is strongly based on attributes found in the Huon Valley - "clean and green"
- Growers Market - keen to discuss involvement in this concept

4.9 Huon Aquaculture

A meeting was held with David Morehead, Development Manager of Huon Aquaculture. Discussion focussed on the following topics.

- HA employs over 400 staff across Australia with approx 270 in the Huon Valley. Its main farm leases are in the Channel and Huon River, with Hideaway Bay as its main base. They have a wet processing plant at Port Huon with further processing and packaging done in South Australia. A new hatchery was developed at Judbury last year
- The company has shown growth over 25% in the last four years
- Infrastructure - HA pleased to see commitment to provide untreated water for aquaculture operations. HA also looking to upgrade plant at Port Huon but wastewater volume is a major issue for the Geeveston WWTP
- Water supply - HA wishes to get access to Riley's Creek reservoir and is looking for support from Council to obtain a long term lease. They believe Tassal would also benefit from this project
- Road network - road into Hideaway bay has recently been sealed (Federal grant) which has improved conditions for all workers and transport operators
- IT and communications - operations rely on wireless and satellite links, so would like to see broadband and telecommunications improved
- Business building - HA use local suppliers wherever possible, such as travel agents and also marine equipment. HA is a major user of Yamaha outboard motors and all sourced through local dealer in Dover
- Sustainability - climate change not seen as a significant threat as fish stocks are being bred to withstand higher sea water temperatures. However, prolonged drought has affected fresh water supplies which is of greater concern
- Marketing - HA rebranded last year to specifically include "Huon", and show they are focussed on the region and selling a quality product. They see their brand as closely linked to tourism branding and the image of the Huon Valley
- Workforce - difficult to attract qualified/professional staff to operations so far from Hobart, and have attracted overseas people to fill the gap HA use a lot of backpackers over the summer months which allows local staff to have holidays
- Skills building - sees lack of jobs for skilled people in the Valley as a major concern

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4.10 Other Submissions

A number of submissions/feedback forms were received from individuals. The following is a summary of that issues that were raised regarding the draft Strategy.

4.10.1 Infrastructure

- Bus services need to be improved for tourism as well as local services, particularly services between the main towns, perhaps utilise school buses
- Improved digital phone and digital IT coverage would increase security for people living/working in rural areas
- Development of industrial park in Huonville seen as a good opportunity
- Need to facilitate additional budget tourism accommodation in the Huon Valley, particularly near Huonville. This could help with seasonal workers as well
- Larger accommodation facility supported, but concerned about viability in the off-season
- Develop a caravan park at Huonville
- Improve public toilets, camping areas, disposal points and signage across the region
- Bypasses of Huonville and other towns to divert heavy vehicles
- Improve secondary roads
- Need to examine real costs of installing water meters and whether this will save money
- Less red tape with development planning would be of benefit
- Marinas - existing swing moorings are near saturation so additional facilities are needed
- Sympathetic rebuilding of old jetties and wharves for recreational uses

4.10.2 Downstream processing and value-adding

- Need to better integrate food production and food processing with tourism so that there is a real multiplier for farmers utilising farm gate sales and benefiting from tourism marketing
- Reinvestment in agriculture is needed to take advantage of opportunities from climate change. Huon Valley has access to secure water and this will be important
- Value added timber and agricultural products should be promoted as real opportunities
- Increase downstream processing of local produce so that local businesses can use these products
- Promotion and community education of sustainable timber production opportunities

4.10.3 Business building

- Business building is a valuable concept to grow opportunity based on local strengths
- Continue to enhance township development to foster local pride
- Look at establishing a roster system for food retailers to be open 7 days a week until 8.30pm
- Should look at the micro-economy rather than large traditional industries for future growth

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4.10.4 Tourism and marketing

- Need to have consistent branding of the Huon region to enhance business opportunities, this is a priority
- Tourists need to be encouraged to stay longer in the area
- Concerned that set-up costs for caravan parks are prohibitive, but low cost camping and RV friendly sites are far more flexible and should be promoted
- Keep the Huon Valley clean and green
- Look at developing a regional information centre
- Promotion of heritage values of individual towns as part of coordinated marketing
- Focus on 5 star accommodation is misplaced and will not be a major contributor to the economy

4.10.5 Skills building

- Need to create skilled employment opportunities to retain young people in the valley
- School/business partnerships aimed at Year 11/12 retention as well as providing pathways for University and TAFE
- Need to include a strategy on retraining particularly targeting the forestry industry where jobs will be lost in the short term

4.10.6 Sustainable communities

- Promote the Huon Valley as a “Clean Environmental Area” for food production and recreation
- Protect the Huon River from inappropriate development, pollution and visual impacts
- Concerns that any marina developments are appropriate scale and do not destroy natural values of the area, as well need to minimise noise and pollution impacts
- Water resources in the Huon Valley need to be protected and used effectively
- No attempt to explore the issue of accelerating change in society and economy caused by climate change
- Strategy needs to address recycling and waste management across the region
- Need to consider ‘green energy’ generation opportunities
- Encourage installation of water tanks, solar panels and rebates for same
- Medical services after hours need to be improved to retain people in the region
- No references to the importance of Franklin as historic township and the Foreshore Plan as part of proposals for marina and 5 star accommodation developments

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4.10.7 Omissions from the Strategy

- The economic value of commuters and retirees/lifestyle immigrants to the Huon Valley has not been recognised through the Strategy, and therefore the Strategy does not recognise the size of their contribution nor does it recognise the key strategies or action required to retain/attract this group of people
- The global economic recession should be included as a “threat” in the SWOT analysis within the draft Strategy
- “Social capital” should be included as a Key Strategic Area in the Strategy to highlight the value of voluntary work and community participation in key events which contribute to the local economy
- No mention of environmental issues and environmental management in the Strategy which need to be addressed

4.10.8 Consultation and implementation

- The ordering of strategies and actions is confusing and there are no priorities
- Concerned that the Strategy needs to be communicated better with stakeholders, so people don't see it as an “us versus them” approach
- Council needs to improve its communications with residents and local businesses, as there are concerns that there is a level of distrust about Council's motives
- Council needs a cultural change to win the trust of the community
- Council needs to show that it is genuine about public consultation
- A newsletter would be a useful tool to keep people informed on the Strategy and its implementation
- Strategy is ambitious for a small council, so perhaps needs pick out some achievable sections to focus on, with timelines
- Council needs a specific officer to have responsibility for implementing the Strategy
- Council needs to give priority to coordinating the agreed strategies and actions from the Strategy, with specific attention on the timing and content of informing the local community
- Would like to see the summary outputs of the 2007 Search Conference reissued as part of the implementation of this Strategy
- Engage with the community honestly over the Strategy as well as defining a budget and realistic timeframe for the identified strategies/actions
- The challenge for Council is to build effective partnerships with the community to implement the Strategy without destroying the unique character of the region

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5 Conclusions and Recommendations

The nature and quality of comments provided by the participants at group meetings and through one-on-one discussions has been very informative. It is considered that through the consultation process, a good appreciation of how key businesses, community organisations and residents view the draft Strategy and their own opinions on economic opportunities for the Huon Valley has been gained.

In general terms, most people found that the structure of the draft Strategy was appropriate, but that it lacked guidance in terms of priorities and timeframes.

Many people could see the benefits of having the Strategy to guide future development and provide a focus for Council in assisting business; however, a number of people were concerned that consultation with the community was limited and not genuine.

The business sector was generally very supportive of what the Council was seeking to achieve in terms of economic development. The aquaculture and fruit industries provided detailed comments on how they saw the opportunities and constraints in their respective areas.

The participants at the focus group meeting, the Choc meeting and the FPA representatives meeting provided many useful ideas and commentary on the Strategy and, in particular, what they considered were the priority areas.

Input from DIER focussed on public transport services and how these could be made more flexible, while DEDT provided comments on which government programs could be of benefit to local business as well as complementing the Strategy

To progress the draft EDS, this report recommends that the Economic Development Advisory Committee and Council:

- Review the comments highlighted in this report on the various strategies and actions and revise the Strategy accordingly;
- Identify priorities for the various strategies and actions and allocate a timeframe for implementation/completion;
- Allocate a Council officer to oversee the implementation of the EDS;
- Finalise the EDS and release it through a publicity campaign to the local community, including the release of the Summary Outcomes of the 2007 Search Conference;
- Establish a Business Forum with representatives of key industries and schools/training organisations to progress skills building and education initiatives in the Huon Valley;
- Establish a Growers Forum to consider ways of implementing the EDS across the aquaculture, fruit growing and farming sectors, particularly linked to reinforcing the Huon brand and image
- Coordinate the implementation of the EDS with tourism marketing initiatives already underway between Kingborough and Huon Valley Councils;
- Utilise Township Development Committees to consider the implications of the EDS on their towns in more detail; and
- Seek specific and ongoing assistance from DIER and DEDT in identifying government support initiatives to help implement the strategies and action in the EDS.



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Appendix A - List of Respondents and Participants

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Huon Valley Economic Development Strategy

List of Respondents who were involved with meetings, made submissions or completed the feedback form

Nick Burrows	Tassal Group Ltd
Deborah Combes	Resident, Franklin
Rod Coombe	Resident/Agricultural sector worker, Franklin
Robert Dick	Business operator, Huonville
Aidan Dreen	Resident/Business operator, Cygnet
John Drysdale	Business operator, Dover
Jan Drysdale	Business operator, Dover
Scott Duffy	Business Enterprise Centre, Huonville
Jane Eldershaw	Department of Economic Development and Tourism
Karen Fry	Tourism operator, Geeveston
Duncan Garvey	Business Operator, Huonville
Ben Greene	Tourism operator, Geeveston
Lucy Gregg	Fruit Growers Tasmania
Hugh Griffiths	Department of Primary Industries and Water
Lorrie Harrison	Resident, Franklin
Belinda Hazell	Fruit grower, Judbury
Shane Johnson	Resident/Business operator, Franklin
Barry Knowles	Resident, Franklin
Peter Lee	Resident/Orchardist, Franklin
Ray Lyon	Resident, Franklin
David Morehead	Huon Aquaculture Pty Ltd
David Pannell	Resident, Franklin
Sarah Poortenaar	Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
Hedley Phillips	Business operator, Geeveston
Keith Presnell	Resident, Cygnet
Martin Riddle	Resident, Franklin
Tina Thornton	Resident/Business operator, Huonville
Tim Tierney	Business operator, Huonville
James Verrier	Department of Infrastructure, Energy and Resources
Rosie Wilson	Business operator, Huonville
Ruth Young	Resident, Franklin



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Appendix B - HCoC Workshop Notes

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Huonville Chamber of Commerce

Workshop

Theme: To identify key short- and long-term strategies to build business activity for Huonville

LINC building, Monday 2 March 2009

Attendees:

Robert Dick, Tassie Pics	Roger Baker, Baker Wilson Lawyers
Peter & Sue Dykstra, Boat House Cafe	Tina Thornton, Academic Editorial Services
Kevin Rosevear, Southern Carpets	Tim Tierney, Tierney Law
Rosemary Bennett, Home Hill Winery	Daniel Hulme MP, Member for Franklin
Terry Bennett, Bennett's Petroleum	Rosie Wilson, Baker Wilson Lawyers
Nitsa Strafkos, Huon Lotto Cafe	Glenn Doyle, Huon Valley Council
Scott Duffy, Huon Valley Business Enterprise Centre	John Wadsley, Facilitator
Lyndon Stevenson, STEPS Tasmania	

1. Introductions

Rosemary Bennett welcomed participants to the meeting. She highlighted that the idea for this forum had come from the last event organised by the Chamber of Commerce to discuss how businesses were dealing with the economic crisis.

John Wadsley was introduced as the facilitator for the workshop, with Glenn Doyle Deputy General Manager of Huon Valley Council providing support.

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2. Setting the Scene

John Wadsley outlined the format for the workshop. He noted that this workshop would support the process of consultation about to commence on the draft Huon Valley Economic Development Strategy (EDS). While the EDS is an area-wide initiative of the Council, the focus of this forum was just on Huonville.

Participants commenced by introducing themselves and highlight two things - what they saw as a major advantage and what was a major impediment to doing business in Huonville. The responses were recorded as follows (in no particular order of preference):

Advantages

- Quality of the local lifestyle
- Central location of the township
- Huon Highway running through the town links to key destinations
- Small regional area serviced by the town
- Small community
- Opportunities to grow businesses
- A chance to get value for money from local providers
- Proximity of the Huon River and its commercial opportunities
- The local environment and climate
- Gateway to the Huon Valley region
- The town is the central hub on the highway

Impediments

- Not sufficient reasons for people to stop and shop
- Not enough accommodation options (no caravan park or motel)
- A perception of lack of services in the town
- The power of advertising takes people to the larger centres
- The local community is seen as insular
- Not enough car parking (perceived lack of long term parking)
- Not enough retail variety
- A lack of shopper loyalty and knowledge towards the local shops
- Proximity to Hobart - perception of visibility
- Losing trade to Hobart and Kingston
- Parking is difficult to access and is not signed well
- Lack of appreciation by local people for the local services and resources within the town and Huon Valley
- Lack of good public transport to bring people to Huonville from other towns in the region

All participants agreed that the above comments were a useful starting point in identifying how to improve business activity in the town.

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3. Overall impressions of Huonville

There was a general discussion on how people perceived the town at present. There was concern that the town was not inviting to visitors through a number of factors including:

- Uninviting architecture in the main street with many buildings requiring a facelift, painting and improved maintenance (although there was support for the tree planting and landscaping work that had been conceived through the Township Development Committee)
- There is no identifiable town centre and the long main street tends to confuse rather than help visitors
- Car parking is not well signposted and can be difficult to find
- Not enough attractions and variety to make people stop in the town
- A lack of accommodation options in and near the town

On the positive side, people believed that the town was well located next to the river and was clearly the gateway to the southern forests.

4. SWOT Analysis

John Wadsley outlined how the group would work to identify the key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) that would influence the identification of strategies to improve business activity.

SWOT analysis has been used as a procedure to help businesses for many years. It offers a structured method for identifying the key attributes of a business, its customers and competitors and prompts the discussion of ideas or strategies that will improve how a business meets the challenges ahead.

For this forum, each participant was asked to think about Huonville as a whole, while relating to their own individual experiences. The follow is a summary of the points made during the SWOT analysis process (in no particular order of preference):

Strengths

- There is more to Huonville and the Huon Valley than just the 'Airwalk'
- Good variety of bed and breakfast accommodation
- The fruit season is becoming more prominent in terms of increased production (cherries apples and stone fruit) and more attractive to visitors
- The existing volume of traffic passing through the town
- The foreshore area of the river is a key asset
- Good climate (although there was some debate about the fog!)

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Weaknesses

- Availability of a skilled local workforce is a major problem especially for the remote towns and services
- Lack of motel type accommodation for visitors
- Lack of accommodation options for itinerant/seasonal workers, especially those working as fruit pickers
- Lack of public transport for seasonal workers
- Need for greater retail variety in Huonville, particularly the lack of a second major supermarket and a quality grocery/deli
- Poor presentation of many buildings in Huonville, with facades needing painting and mixed quality of stock
- Lack of a 'town centre'
- Location of some existing businesses does not support focus on river and tourist trade
- Existing coach tours do not come to the region for extended stays
- Many shops are not open 7 days a week or after hours
- Inability for many shops to buy local produce locally

Opportunities

- Attract new overnight accommodation facility (approx 30-40 rooms) to service coach traffic and visitors who do not want B&B style. Need to offer accommodation options that are attractive to families
- Businesses should work together more closely to encourage 'on-shoppers' - those who are passed on to other businesses
- Develop a 'shop local' loyalty/encouragement scheme that involves all businesses in Huonville
- Development of a PCYC facility may bring increased participation and visitation
- Rowing camps should be encouraged to the best natural rowing course in Tasmania (and in Australia?) [located at nearby Franklin](#) - they need better accommodation options and support facilities to suit large groups
- Offer better accommodation and services to seasonal workers such as 'rent a room' scheme from local residents, through more co-ordinated organisation
- Increase backpackers accommodation to suit broadening range of independent travellers
- Establish a Growers Market for local produce with emphasis on quality (perhaps collocated with existing midweek stock market)
- Production of Service Directory that offers a 'one-stop' guide for locals to encourage greater awareness and use of local resources
- Attract a second supermarket chain store to Huonville
- Attract a quality grocery store/deli
- Capture day trippers as a key market /capture day shoppers from Kingston and Hobart
- Promote Huonville as being RV friendly through appropriate stopping /lay-by areas, discharge points, adequate parking, information and signage
- Attract businesses that service weekend visitors/identify key times to be open for maximum trade
- Need to have all business operators working together
- Develop more visitors attractions closer to Huonville
- Attract quality antiques/gallery /art and craft outlet(s) based on artisan co-operative structure
- Provide improved interpretation signage/displays in Huonville
- Provide more visible parking signage to encourage visitors to stop/ specific signage for RV parking

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- Develop long term structure plan for Huonville to guide development
- Produce a directory of attractions to inform visitors (perhaps roadside lay-by with information booth /service directory and map?)
- Develop long term car parking strategy for Huonville
- Institute a customer service training program and awards nominations scheme
- Create a 'real' destination at Huonville that makes people want to come and stop

Threats

- The Huon Valley is promoted consistently as a day trip destination by tourism officers which reduces the opportunities to encourage people to stay overnight
- Competition from larger chain stores means food and other local produce cannot be sourced by smaller local shops
- Flooding risk may limit development along river
- Development of Kingborough as major shopping centre is drawing locals to shop away from Huonville
- Advertising and marketing costs are too high to compete with major shops and retail centres

5. Identification of Priorities

The participants were then asked to prioritise the opportunities that had been recorded on butchers paper.

Each person was given four coloured 'dots' and asked to place them against the opportunities they regarded as most important to implement. The results of this process were as follows:

- Attract new overnight accommodation facility (9 votes)
- Attract quality antiques/gallery /art and craft outlet(s) based on artisan co-operative structure (6 votes)
- Develop a 'shop local' loyalty/encouragement schemes that involves all businesses in Huonville (5 votes)
- Establish a Growers Market for local produce with emphasis on quality (perhaps collocated with existing midweek stock market) (5 votes)
- Institute a customer service training program and awards nominations scheme (5 votes)
- Create a 'real' destination at Huonville that makes people want to come and stop (5 votes)
- Need to have all business operators working together (2 votes)
- Develop more visitors attractions closer to Huonville/ Produce a directory of attractions to inform visitors (2 votes)
- Develop long term structure plan for Huonville to guide development (1 vote)
- Attract a quality grocery store/deli (1 vote)
- Capture day trippers as a key market /capture day shoppers from Kingston and Hobart (1 vote)
- Promote Huonville as being RV friendly through appropriate stopping /lay-by areas, discharge points, adequate parking, information and signage (1 vote)
- Attract businesses that service weekend visitors/identify key times to be open for maximum trade (1 vote)
- Rowing camps should be encouraged with better accommodation options and support facilities to suit large groups (1 vote)
- Increase backpackers accommodation to suit broadening range of independent travellers (1 vote)
- Production of Service Directory that offers a 'one-stop' guide for locals to encourage greater awareness and use of local resources (1 vote)

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6. Identification of Short- and Long-term Strategies

It was agreed that the group would focus on developing strategies for the top six opportunities as voted by participants (those with 5 votes or more).

Opportunity	Short-term strategies	Long-term strategies
New overnight accommodation facility	Improve existing pub accommodation	Investigate the possibility to sub-lease of existing pub accommodation to run as separate business
		Identify site for new motel and encourage new operator to establish in town
		Establish new backpackers facility that also caters for seasonal workers
	Develop 'RV friendly' infrastructure to encourage informal overnight stays	Identify site for caravan park and encourage new operator to be RV friendly
	Improve websites to offer a coordinated approach between existing operators	Develop online/telephone booking system shared with all local operators
	Quality antiques/gallery/art and craft outlet(s)	HCoC to contact New Norfolk CoC to investigate their success with antiques/galleries
Advertise for Expression of Interest from local artisans/collectors		Seek seed funding to establish co-operative business

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Opportunity	Short-term strategies	Long-term strategies
'Shop local' loyalty/ business encouragement schemes	Encourage cross promotion of local shops through collective marketing program	Develop 'brand' for Huonville commercial centre for external marketing
	Produce local shop/service directory	Develop community based and administered loyalty scheme
Growers market for local produce	Approach existing organisers of local markets to establish shared approach (service clubs etc)	Develop connections with school farm and other training programs
	Appoint co-ordinator to run market	Build resources to ensure ongoing market
	Investigate opportunities to collocate with Ranelagh livestock market	Build brand image of quality local produce
Customer service training program and awards nominations scheme	Use existing local training providers to develop 'friendly Huonville' course	Build 'friendly Huonville' image through ongoing training
	Encourage increased promotion of existing awards scheme operated by local service clubs	Establish awards program to reward improved shop presentation
Create a 'real' destination at Huonville	Investigate other Tasmanian towns to identify how they developed their brand (i.e. Oatlands, New Norfolk,	Co-ordinate development of Huonville brand with regional tourism branding
	Improve networking between operators to achieve consistency in marketing	Build business community 'ownership' of the Huonville brand

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7. Conclusions

There was general agreement that the process used through this workshop had identified a number of feasible strategies that could be considered for implementation through the business community.

It was also agreed that people needed to be realistic about how much could be achieved in the short-term depending on the level of resources applied to undertaking the strategies.

John Wadsley reminded participants that the outcomes of this workshop would assist in the consultation process over the draft Huon Valley EDS. He encouraged the group to review the EDS and make a contribution to the consultation process which would be commencing shortly.

Glenn Doyle noted that the identified opportunities were an excellent platform that could now be used by the HCoC and the HVC to explore ways to improve business activity in Huonville. He confirmed that the Council is shortly to be locating new parking signs in Huonville to assist visitors as well as examining a range of measures to make the town more RV friendly.

Rosemary Bennett closed the workshop and thanked the Huon Valley Council for its ongoing support.



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Appendix C - DIER draft Southern Integrated Transport Plan

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Extract from draft Southern Integrated Transport Plan (DIER)

<p>Provide a consistent, safe road environment on strategic transport routes from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional centres to Hobart • Rural centres to regional centres 	<p>Ensure at least one appropriate, well maintained road link between major population, industrial and commercial centres.</p> <p>Improve the safety and consistency of key regional roads including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midland Highway • Huon Highway • Channel Highway • Lyell Highway • Tasman Highway (Swansea to Sorell) • Lakes Secondary Road (Bothwell to Midlands Highway) • Arthur Highway
<p>Improved accessibility in rural areas and for transport disadvantaged</p> <div data-bbox="418 1070 893 1238" style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Consider options of better utilisation of school buses to meet broader community needs in rural areas.</p> </div>	<p>Develop a process for State and local Government to identify public passenger transport service needs and responses for communities of need.</p> <p>Better understand the complexities of community transport provision, by working with community transport providers and funding organisations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve integration of community transport with other transport modes • Better coordinate efficiencies between providers • Improve information and communication of service availability <p>Assist people in rural areas to meet their basic service needs through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of regular bus services for general community needs • Working with relevant organisation to improve service delivery methods such as access to ICT, community transport, ride sharing and innovative sustainable transport options. <p>Facilitate access to a range of transport options, particularly for young people through the development of education and work travel plans.</p>

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<p>Improve freight efficiency on strategic regional freight routes</p>	<p>Ensure appropriate road standards to support higher productivity vehicles on key freight routes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brooker Highway • Domain Highway • Midland Highway • Tasman Highway • Huon Highway (Geeveston to Kingston) • Lyell Highway (New Norfolk to Granton) • Tea Tree/Fingerpost Road <p>Use of non-infrastructure solutions to increase freight efficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITS solutions to support improved flexibility for freight operators over the longer term to carry higher masses and to optimise freight efficiency within urban areas • Limit local access points to strategic freight routes
<p>Maximise freight efficiency on existing routes</p>	<p>Continue to work with industry to introduce vehicles that are more productive, safer and have less impacts on road infrastructure.</p> <p>Match the location of freight generating industries to strategic freight routes.</p>
<p>Enhanced ability to respond to an increasing freight task.</p>	<p>Manage the forestry freight task through improved analysis to inform future network responses based on changing forestry freight patterns.</p> <p>Investigate the impact of forestry freight on local and State Government road infrastructure in terms of asset life and maintenance costs.</p> <p>Identify preferred routes for freight to limit impacts on local communities and minimise interaction with other road users.</p>