

Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority

Quarterly Report to Members

March 2014



Each Joint Authority is required under Section 36 B of the Local Government Act, 1993 to provide to its members a quarterly report that includes a statement of its general performance and a statement of its financial performance.

This report covers the three-month period ending 31st March 2014. This report with all previous quarterly reports is published on the Authority's website: www.stca.tas.gov.au

The Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority (STCA) commenced on 1st July 2006.

Photo credit: Brenton West

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QUARTERLY REPORT TO MEMBER COUNCILS MARCH 2014

REPORT SUMMARY

The Authority held an Ordinary Meeting on 11th February 2014 in New Norfolk.

1. Standing Committees

a) Infrastructure

The Infrastructure Committee meet on 4th February and a report was present to the Board.

b) Governance and Audit

The Committee endorsed out of session recommendations for the Board on the portfolios proposal as well as the anti fraud policy.

c) Economic Development

The Economic Development Committee met on 5th February 2014, the Committee began to discuss economic development opportunities for the region as well as hearing from DST CEO Ben Targett on the Destination Management Plan Report.

2. 2014 State Election Priority Document Launch

The Board launched its 2014 State Election Priority Document in February 2014

3. Opposition Leader Will Hodgman MP

The Board met with Liberal Party Opposition Leader Will Hodgman MP

4. Portfolios Proposal

The Board considered a portfolios proposal

5. THO South Draft MOU

The Board examined a draft MOU with THO South

6. 2013/14 Revised Annual Plan

The STCA Board endorsed a revised 2013/14 Annual Plan

7. Ferry Public Policy Position

The Board examined a public policy position of ferry transport

8. New Norfolk Board Meeting

The Board met in New Norfolk as part of an ongoing effort to hold more meetings in regional areas

9. Regional Planning update

An update on the Regional Planning project that the STCA and member councils have been working on

10. Infrastructure Committee

The Board considered a report from the STCA Infrastructure Committee

11. Governance and Audit Committee

The Board considered a report from the STCA Governance and Audit Committee

12. Economic Development

The Board considered a report from the STCA Economic Development Committee

13. Employees

14. Finances

THE REPORT

1. Standing Committees

As has been previously reported, the Authority has established a number of Standing Committees.

- a. Infrastructure – Mayor Stuart Slade (Chair).
- b. Governance and Audit – Mayor Doug Chipman (Chair).
- c. Economic Development – Mayor Martyn Evans (Chair).

Committee Chairs as at 31st March 2014

a. Infrastructure

The Infrastructure Committee met and discussed a process for the Committee and the STCA Board to engage better with DIER on the Southern Tasmanian Integrated Transport Plan. The Committee also resolved to recommend to the Board that the STCA endorse the DEC as the home of a Tasmanian NBL team. As well as endorsing a project to add an extra lane at the Hobart International Airport roundabout.

b. Governance and Audit

The Governance and Audit Committee met during the quarter:

The issues discussed were:

- Anti Fraud and Corruption policy
- Portfolios Proposal
- Tabling of the financial reports

c. Economic Development

The Economic Development Committee met during this quarter and began to work on some priorities for the coming year. This also included the development of a regional economic development prospectus. The Committee will also receive an update from DST CEO Ben Target on the Destination Management Plan funded by local government.

2. 2014 State Election Priority Document Launch

At its November meeting the STCA Board endorsed a State Election priority document, highlighting key projects and priorities for the Authority in the lead up to the March 2014 State Election.

Key priorities of the document included:

1. Tasmanian State Infrastructure Fund
2. Infrastructure Tasmania
3. NBN/Free Wireless Hotspots
4. Planning
5. Freight

The Board then utilised its meeting at New Norfolk to launch the 2014 State Election Priority Document. The launch received good publicity with coverage on all three nightly news channels as well as a page three story in the *Mercury*. A range of lobbying with politicians from both sides was also undertaken to support the document.

The Board was pleased that a number of the key priorities identified in the 2014 State Election Document were endorsed by the major parties and included in their election commitments.



Members of the STCA Board launching the 2014 State Election Priority document in New Norfolk.

3. Opposition Leader Will Hodgman MP

In the lead up to the March 2014 State Election the STCA Board resolved to invite a representative from both major parties to meet with the Board and talk about their vision for Tasmania.

In November 2013, Minister David O’Byrne attended the STCA Board meeting to speak about the Tasmanian State Government’s investment in infrastructure and economic development across southern Tasmania.

As part of this process, the Liberal Opposition Leader Will Hodgman MP and the Shadow Infrastructure Minister, Rene Hidding MP attended the February 2014 STCA Board meeting at New Norfolk.

Together they outlined the Liberal Party's vision for the future of Tasmania and also took questions from the Board. Mr Hodgman praised the STCA for its new vision and heightened level engagement with stakeholders. Mr Hodgman spoke about the Liberal Policy regarding Infrastructure Tasmania, which aligned closely with the policy outlined by the STCA in its 2014 State Election priority document. He said that the Liberal Party agreed with most of the STCA State Election priority document.

Mr Hodgman spoke about planning and assured councils that the significant work already undertaken, as part of the planning reform process would not be scrapped. He reassured councils that the Liberal Party would work closely with local government on their planning reform process and that more state planning policies should be developed. Mr Hodgman also spoke about some resources to undertake a capital city plan and a major integrated infrastructure plan for Tasmania.

He also highlighted the Liberal Party plan for the Department of State Growth and the new Coordinator General position to get a better working relationship across government agencies.

4. Portfolios Proposal

The Board considered whether to adopt the portfolios proposal. This proposal had been originally suggested by the Chair at the November board meeting and subsequently investigated and supported out of session by the Governance and Audit Committee. There were a set of guidelines developed by the Governance and Audit Committee that were presented to the Board (These are listed below) There was a positive discussion on the portfolios proposal and the Board generally felt that it would give all Board members the opportunity to pursue areas of expertise and interest through the STCA. The Board considered the proposal and the guidelines and resolved to endorse the portfolios proposal.

STCA Portfolio Proposal Guidelines

The STCA Board has signalled that it would like to play a greater role in the public policy debate as well as having a greater presence in advocating for particular projects for the southern region.

To help facilitate this process it is important that the Authority has a range of policy positions. Different spokespeople with areas of expertise and interest could be used to promote these policy positions.

If a Mayor has a particular area of interest in public policy or a particular issue that impacts southern Tasmania then they could seek the STCA Board to take a position on this issue.

The Mayor would work with the STCA CEO to draft a policy position of no more than two pages. This policy would highlight the issue, provide some background, potential benefits for the region and finally a suggested position for the STCA.

This policy position would then be presented to the next STCA Board meeting for debate and hopefully endorsement, giving the policy position greater weight by through the endorsement of the regional authority.

No comment should be made on behalf of the Authority until the Board has endorsed the policy position.

The STCA Board may then endorse the Mayor who brought the policy position to the Board to act as the spokesperson for the region on that particular issue.

The STCA CEO would then work with the Mayor to conduct media events on the issue, respond to media enquiries, and highlight the issue through the Authority's newsletter and social media.

This would empower Mayors to bring key issues to STCA Board meetings and have that policy position develop greater weight through endorsement on a regional level.

It would also allow Mayors to pursue areas of interest and expertise, and help promote the Authority by building its profile and delivering results for the region.

5. Tasmanian Health Organisation South – Draft MOU

At the October Board meeting Jane Holden, the CEO of Tasmanian Health Organisation (THO) South and the Royal Hobart Hospital (RHH) provided an update to the Board on the matters of THO South and the RHH redevelopment.

Ms Holden also proposed a joint MOU between the STCA and THO South. The Board resolved for the CEO to work with THO South on a draft MOU before bringing to the STCA Board for endorsement.

The Board discussed the draft MOU document, it was stressed that it was important that the document not represent an opportunity to shift costs or services onto local government and that the document have an associated action plan as part of its implementation.

It was also highlighted that KPAs should be established to ensure that the document was providing benefits to THO South and the STCA member councils.

6. 2014/14 Revised Annual Plan

The Board considered a report on a revised 2013/14 Annual Plan.

Each year, under the requirements of the *Local Government Act* the Authority is required to prepare an Annual Plan.

In July 2013, the Authority appointed its first full-time CEO, the new CEO and the Board, have been undertaking significant work as part of a new direction for the Authority.

To ensure that the Annual Plan was reflective of the goals and vision of the Authority a revised Annual Plan was presented to the Board for endorsement.

7. Ferry Public Policy Position

Public transport and in particular ferry infrastructure and services have long been an issue examined by the Authority. The STCA Board examined a public policy position on a ferry service from Opossum Bay to Hobart.

Whilst the Board felt this was a good route to advocate for given the travel time by car/bus being significantly more than the travel time on a ferry, they also didn't want to preclude other routes around the region being taken up in a public transport trial.

The Board also felt the policy outlined needed to be tightened up and it was resolved that the best course of action would be to send the issue to the infrastructure committee for further examination.

8. New Norfolk Board Meeting

The February STCA Board meeting was held in New Norfolk. This formed part of an ongoing effort by the STCA CEO to ensure that the Board meetings were moved around and held in more regional centres.

Previously, the Board has met in New Norfolk and conducted a media event on regional road funding. Likewise, at the meeting in New Norfolk the Board utilised this opportunity to launch its 2014 State Election Priority document.

The Board is keen to continue to hold meetings across the southern Tasmanian region to ensure that Board members gain an understanding of some of the key issues and priorities in each area.

9. Regional Planning Update

In 2009, the STCA in conjunction with the 12 southern Councils began working on a Southern Regional Planning Project.

This initiative was the result of an agreement between the State Government, the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, (the STCA), and the 12 southern Tasmanian Councils and was designed to deliver:

- A comprehensive regional land use strategy for the region.
- A southern Tasmanian industrial land use study
- The development of coordinated, consistent and contemporary planning schemes for all councils involved, based on the common strategy.

This is an important initiative that will help assist all those who interact with the

planning system and will determine the way the Southern region develops over the next 20 years and beyond.

It will fill a void in the current Tasmanian planning system, as regional strategic land use planning has largely been absent from the system in the past. The benefits of the project can be garnered from a commonly agreed vision and resultant strategies have also not been accrued in the past, and this has been to the collective detriment of the region.

The project has been funded by the State Government and the southern councils and mirrors other projects in the north and northwest.

2013/14 has been a key period in the project with the finalisation of many of the milestones of the project.

- The finalisation, following public consultation, of the revised Southern Regional Model Planning provisions
- The completion of the Southern Tasmanian Industrial Land Study
- The endorsement by the Minister for Planning of the revised Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy 2010 – 2015
- The submission by all of the 12 southern councils of their interim planning schemes to the Minister for Planning
- The continued progression of the Planning Schemes Online project, which will allow the electronic lookup of planning requirements and development applications

It is also worth noting, that whilst the State Government and Opposition have significantly different planning policies, both have made a commitment acknowledging the work of this project and to ensure that it is utilised moving forward.

10. Infrastructure Committee

The Board endorsed a report from the STCA Infrastructure Committee, following its meeting on 4th February 2014.

The Committee discussed the issue of a potential Tasmanian team re-entering the National Basketball League (NBL) and the importance as a region to endorse a potential home for the team in southern Tasmania.

The Hobart Airport was also discussed at the Committee meeting, in particular a project the State Government has done some preliminary work on. That is the addition of an extra lane to the roundabout at Holyman Avenue. With the increased usage of the Hobart Airport and the significant number of motorists coming from the Sorell, Tasman and Glamorgan/Spring Bay municipality it is imperative that this project come to fruition.

The Committee also spoke about the Southern Integrated Transport Plan (SITP) 2010 – 2015 that was developed through a partnership with DIER. As part of the five year action plan contained in the SITP a number of actions were identified to be pursued by relevant organisations. It was envisaged that this action plan would be updated annually, the most recent action list was agreed by the STCA and DIER in 2011/12.

DIER are currently updating the Action Plan with any new relevant information. They would then like to work with the STCA to ensure the action plan is up to date, remains relevant and reflects the priorities of the region.

The Board resolved to support the DEC as the home of any new Tasmanian team in the National Basketball League, support the project to add an additional lane to the Holyman Roundabout at the Hobart International Airport and that the Infrastructure Committee work with DIER on the Southern Integrated Transport Plan and that the update annual action plan be endorsed by the STCA Board.

11. Governance and Audit Committee

The Board considered a report from the Governance and Audit Committee on the development of a Fraud Prevention Policy and the Portfolios Proposal.

Following a presentation from the CEO regarding the Auditor General's report into *Fraud Control in Local Government*. The committee resolved to develop a fraud prevention policy for inclusion in the Authority's policy manual. A fraud prevention policy was developed and considered by the Committee.

STCA Fraud Prevention Policy

All employees are expected to play a role in supporting high standards of professional conduct and honest and ethical business practices.

The STCA has a zero tolerance towards fraud and corruption and is committed to effectively preventing, detecting and dealing with incidents of fraud and corruption.

The Authority defines fraud as dishonest activity causing actual or potential financial loss. Fraud usually involves the deliberate deception to help or conceal the misappropriation of assets. Corruption is dishonest activity in which an employee acts against the interests of the Authority and abuses their position of trust in order to achieve some personal gain or advantage.

All employees are expected to be alert to the possibility of fraud and corruption. They are expected to immediately report suspected fraud or corruption and maintain a strict confidentiality of any suspected fraud or corruption matter of which they have knowledge.

The STCA CEO is also required to present, quarterly, to the Governance and Audit Committee the Authority's accounts and financial position.

Fraud should be reported to one of the following

- The STCA Chairperson
- The STCA CEO
- The STCA accountant

This suspicion of fraud can be reported either face to face, via email or via the telephone.

STCA employees shouldn't be afraid to raise their concerns, shouldn't try and investigate the matter themselves, shouldn't convey their suspicions to someone other than those with proper authority and they shouldn't do nothing.

All reports of suspected fraud or corruption will be investigated.

If incidents of fraud or corruption are found then appropriate action will be taken.

The Committee also endorsed the Portfolios Proposal. Given the significance of this proposal it was considered under a separate item by the Board.

12. Economic Development Committee

The Board endorsed a report from the STCA Economic Development Committee meeting that took place on 5th February 2014.

The Committee discussed how the southern Tasmanian region could better work together to facilitate economic development and use the strengths of each region to attract visitors and investment.

The Committee focused on a range of key priorities areas including mountain bike trails, golf courses, the airport upgrade, the three capes track, whisky, cider, the development of marinas across the region, shellfish industry, increased accommodation across the region, and capitalising on our agricultural and farming land. It was resolved that the Committee should do further work on developing strategies to ensure that these areas could be developed further.

Ben Targett from Destination Southern Tasmania also addressed the Committee on work that had been undertaken to develop a Destination Management Plan for the south. This project was funded by councils and represents important work on maximising the opportunities presented by tourism. Ben is in the process of meeting with all councils to explain the document.

The Committee also discussed with Ben the possibility of developing a regional relationship with a region in China to help facilitate economic investment, tourism and lead to a trade show, which would showcase the best produce and attractions from each municipality across the southern region.

13. Employees

Mr Brenton West, took up the role of full time Chief Executive Officer of the Authority on 1 July 2013. The Authority has previously employed other staff as government grant funding is obtained. It is intended that this process will continue.

14. Finance

A summary of financial performance for the third quarter of the 2013/14 financial year follows:

SOUTHERN TASMANIAN COUNCILS AUTHORITY Financial Report as at 31st March 2014

	Actual at 31/3/14	Budget Year to Date	Budget 2013/14
	\$	\$	\$
Revenue plus opening balances			
STCA Consolidated Account	277,763	225,018.66	300,024.87
NRM Southern Weeds Strategy	8,429	6,321.75	8,429
Weeds of National Significance	3,035	2,276.25	3,035
Regional GIS Project	77,614	54,498	72,664
Regional Planning	95,070	93,802.5	125,070
Water and Sewerage Owners Representatives	1,231	923.25	1,231
Climate Change adaptation project	21,135	15,851.25	21,135
Climate Change communication project	30,965	23,223.75	30,965
Regional Visioning	2,505	1,878.75	2,505
Local Government Structures Project	5,587	4,190.25	5,587
Tourism	10,460	7,851	10,460
Industrial Land use Study	4,972	3,729	4,972
SMART form	26,000	24,000	32,000
TOTAL REVENUE	569,838	468,327.65	624,436.87
Expenditure			
STCA Consolidated Account	(128,381)	(165,086.25)	(220,115)
NRM Southern Weeds Strategy (July-Dec. 2011)	0	0	0
Weeds of National Significance	(499)	(100)	(200)
Regional GIS Project	(4,950)	(37,500)	(50,000)
Regional Planning	(68,161)	(93,802.5)	(125,070)
Water and Sewerage Owners Representatives	0	0	0
Climate Change adaptation project	(4,243)	(15,750)	(21,000)
Climate Change communication project	(975)	(22,500)	(30,000)
Regional Visioning	0	0	0
Local Government Structures Project	0	0	0
Tourism	0	(2,500)	(5,000)
Industrial Land use Study	0	(2,486)	(4,972)
SMART form	0	(16,000)	(32,000)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	(236,572)	(366,267.75)	(488,357)
Closing Balances			
STCA Consolidated Account	149,382	59,932.41	79,909.87
NRM Southern Weeds Strategy (July-Dec. 2011)	0	0	0
Weeds of National Significance	2,536	0	0
Regional GIS Project	72,664	16,998	22,664
Regional Planning	26,909	0	0
Water and Sewerage Owners Representatives	1,231	923	1,231

Climate Change adaptation project	16,893	101.25	135
Climate Change communication project	29,990	723.75	965
Regional Visioning	2,505	1,878.75	2,505
Local Government Structures Project	5,587	4,190.25	5,587
Tourism	10,460	4,095	5,460
Industrial Land use Study	4,972	0	0
SMART form	(3,091)	0	0
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	333,266	88,844.25	118,459

It is to be noted that there are thirteen separate accounts.

1. STCA consolidated account.

This account commenced this financial year with a balance of \$87,620. Currently the account has a balance of \$149,382.

2. NRM Southern Weeds Strategy.

This project was funded until 31st December 2011 with the Project Manager ending in this position on that date. The balance of this account held quarantined financial contributions from stakeholders that have been used for specific weed control programs during 2012/13. A small financial adjustment has been made that has resulted in a zero balance at the end of the financial year.

3. Weeds of National Significance Project (WONS).

This project for the longer-term eradication of weeds of national significance was funded by an Australian Government grant. This project finished on 30 June 2013.

4. Regional GIS Project.

NRM South made a financial contribution towards achievement of the Regional GIS initiative up to 30th June 2009.

In addition, member Councils agreed to contribute \$7,000 each in 2008/09 and \$10,000 each in 2009/10. There was a carryover of \$224,790 at the commencement of the year, which included a contribution of \$67,500 made in 2010/11 by Southern Water to cover 50% of the cost of aerial photography. The first round of aerial photography was completed during 2010/11 in spite of unfavourable flying conditions.

The aerial photography has now been paid for which has reduced the balance in the account to \$77,614. The Board has agreed to set aside \$50,000 from this account for further LiDAR mapping of southern Tasmania.

5. Regional Planning.

The Regional Planning Project continues to be funded on short term ad hoc funding agreements between the State Government and the 12 Councils through the STCA. The State Government will provide an additional \$30,000 for the 2013/14 financial year.

6. Water and Sewerage Owners Representatives.

An allocation of \$1,231 was brought forward for the 2013/14

7. Climate Change Adaptation Project.

The project was due for completion in Feb 2012, but has been extended with 21,135 available for completion.

8. Climate Change Communication Project.

Contributions of \$35,000 in total (Clarence, \$10,000, Hobart \$20,000 and Kingborough \$5,000) have been carried over to undertake the project now that the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Plan has been completed. This project is progressing throughout the year.

9. Regional visioning.

This project is funded by a contribution by Hobart City Council of \$5,000 carried over from 2009/10 and an allocation from the STCA Consolidated Account. This work has now been undertaken through the project team involved in the state economic development plan and was used as a basis for this work.

10. Local Government Structures Project.

Approval for a project under the Local Government Reform fund was given in December 2010. The total Australian Government grant of \$150,000, has been received and an independent evaluation study has been completed.

11. Tourism.

A total of \$10,460 has been brought forward for this financial year.

12. Industrial Land Use Study.

The Industrial Land Use study is an adjunct to the Regional Strategic Land Use Plan and has been jointly funded by a number of member councils and the Department of economic Development. The project has been finalised and endorsed by the Board.

13. SMART Forms

The STCA Board has endorsed a variation to the grant deed for this project to allow for the funds to be used to further develop the online planning system. Those funds have been used to pay for a contribution for this software, the final ten per cent of grant funds are now due to be paid to the STCA to return this account to a balance of \$0.