

MEDIA RELEASE | Friday 11 August 2023

Funding and Transparency Needed for Tasmania's Long-Overdue State of the Environment Report

Leading organisations have warned that Tasmania's first *State of the Environment* report in 15 years will not be fit for purpose without an immediate funding boost and increased transparency.

The Tasmanian Government and the Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC) have failed to publish the vital State of the Environment (SOE) Report since 2009. They have committed to do so by 30 June 2024 following concerted efforts by the Australia Institute Tasmania, the Environmental Defenders Office, and the Tasmanian community.

A new report published today, *"Get Your Skates On: Tasmania's next State of the Environment Report"* calls for a substantial investment in funding, among other recommendations, to make up for the long-standing lack of comprehensive environmental analysis and reporting.

Key Recommendations:

1. The Tasmanian Government should allocate additional and ongoing funding of at least \$1.1 million to adequately resource production of the state's long-overdue SOE Report.
2. The TPC should release its plans for the SOE Report and clearly outline what the report will cover, including the methodology and indicators it will use.
3. The TPC should modernise and standardise its reporting framework and adopt best practice for Tasmania's next SOE Report. This includes reporting on human wellbeing, United Nations frameworks, climate change impacts and Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples' rights and knowledge throughout its assessments.
4. Tasmania's SOE Report should include a range of illustrative case studies.
5. The TPC should be supported to provide regular, interim reporting on trends and changes in the condition of Tasmania's environment, in line with the practices of other states.

"With a delay of a decade, Tasmania has fallen significantly behind the rest of Australia in terms of environmental reporting. Tasmania should look to other jurisdictions and establish a contemporary, standardised reporting framework that can contribute to the national reporting framework," said **Eloise Carr, Executive Director of the Australia Institute Tasmania.**

"This lack of transparency not only affects our environmental stewardship but also hinders our ability to make informed, responsible decisions that would ensure a sustainable future for all Tasmanians," said Ms Carr.

"There are less than 12 months until the overdue report should be delivered, and almost 15 years of environmental data to be considered. Significant additional funding is needed to deliver a report that meets modern standards and gives our state's environment the respect it deserves." said Ms Carr.

“The SOE Report is a vital tool for understanding our vulnerabilities, evaluating our practices, and ensuring effective protection and sustainability in the future. The stakes are high. Tasmanians deserve to know what the next State of the Environment Report will deliver.” said Ms Carr.

“You can’t manage what you don’t measure, and for the past decade, the Tasmanian Government has simply not been measuring the trends in the health of Tasmania’s most precious resources including our air, waterways, land, and cultural heritage,” said **Claire Bookless, Managing Lawyer of the Environmental Defenders Office.**

“Meanwhile, the Tasmanian Government has changed many planning and environmental laws without first knowing what condition our environment is in or the impact those changes would have. This means we've been flying blind, and the consequences could be serious,” said Ms Bookless.

“A safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is a human right recognised by the UN, and free access to information about the health and trends in our environment is critical to upholding that right. This is why the SOE Report is so important,” said Ms Bookless.

“In addition to reporting on the trends and changes in Tasmania’s environmental health, the 2024 SOE Report must provide clear recommendations for future action to realise the rights of all Tasmanians to a healthy environment,” said Ms Bookless.

“The State of the Environment report is long overdue, and we are lagging behind other states in terms of this type of reporting,” said **Dr Jennifer Sanger from the Tasmanian Independent Science Council.**

“There is inadequate funding for this report, and the lack of transparency around what the report will cover deeply concerns me. It is like the Tasmanian Government is setting up the process to fail.” said Dr Sanger.

“Additional funding needs to be allocated, we need better transparency on what the report will cover, and it needs to be given greater urgency and detail. Tasmania’s environment is our most important asset, and we must take care of it,” said Dr Sanger.

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"Get Your Skates On: Tasmania's next State of the Environment Report" provides a review of Tasmania's environmental reporting and presents recommendations for it to ensure it meets standardised reporting frameworks.

The report has been prepared by The Australia Institute Tasmania, Environmental Defenders Office, and the Tasmanian Independent Science Council