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Dear PESRAC

Citizen Submission to PESRAC Consultation

Thanks to the fortitude of Australian Premiers, Australia along with some of its pacific neighbors, has become the envy of the world in terms of Covid impacts. Premiers of all colours, rightly focusing on the survival and wellbeing of citizens, have also preserved the foundations for economic recovery. Any recovery will be tested by two things: the threat of Covid from international travel, and rising pressures created by concerns about the manifestations of climate change.

The PESRAC is looking for ideas to help Tasmanians, their businesses and communities, “to build their own future on the pathway to recovery.” Lots of great ideas have already been provided in the submissions received. Tasmania, as an island state already known for its strong clean and green brand is well positioned to thrive post-covid, as long as the conditions for environmental and social wellbeing are maintained. This submission therefore focuses on these two areas: strong quarantine and environmental stewardship

With Australia’s oldest population, lowest incomes and high rates of chronic disease, Tasmania is particularly vulnerable to future waves of Covid and indeed future pandemics of other kinds. It is important to recognize that Covid will not be the last pandemic so investments in long term responses to secure Tasmania’s safety and position in the post Covid world are well justified. Foremost in this endeavour will be making sure that a deadly pandemic does not take hold in the community and that Tasmania becomes a haven of free-living creativity that continues to attract visitors and new residents from around the world.

Quarantine has been the single most successful weapon in the armory of the public health response to Covid. Managing our international borders, again, left predominantly to state premiers, has been the lynchpin of quarantine, supported by strong internal borders. Tasmania has an opportunity to become the preferred quarantine destination for travelers from Australia and around the world.

While the world awaits an effective vaccine, appropriate quarantine must continue to be the front-line defense and Tasmania **must not allow weakening** of this. Given that even when available, the vaccines are unlikely to be 100% effective, a combination of approaches will be required, with quarantine remaining a core component. Tasmania should invest in enviable quarantine approaches now to position itself to advantage. With advances in testing and tracing technology, the duration of quarantine will be able to be reduced through the application of risk-based approaches but a world class user pays resort style quarantine would quickly garner world attention and put Tasmania on the map. An ecologically sensitive facility that could accommodate large numbers of people in independent units (eco pods?) with outdoor recreation connected to Tasmania’s natural heritage would protect Tasmanians whilst also allowing for the stimulation of population growth. Networks of Covid safe Airbnb home quarantine options could support those on lower risk thresholds (domestic travelers for example).

The post-Covid tourism model needs to change. Cruise ship visits of short duration where the local community is flooded with large numbers of potential carriers is **manifestly unsafe**. Cruise ships should not be reintroduced in the short to medium term. An approach that focuses on long term

stays and relocations will be more profitable in the longer term given the potential for quarantine to be an ongoing part of travel logistics. As more and more people are able to work remotely, and concerns about climate change escalate, Tasmania is likely to become more popular with 'creatives' and intellectuals seeking refuge from around the world. Consideration could be given to incentives to attract artists, musicians and intellectuals that will help create a vibrant and resilient social atmosphere. The first step in enabling such migration is a well run and attractive quarantine. Let's get people excited about quarantining in beautiful Tasmania! People from around the world will be looking for ultra-safe destinations that are safe enough to offer a free-living lifestyle (post-quarantine). Tasmania has potential to be first pick.

None of this will be successful in the longer term, however, if Tasmania loses its environmental stewardship credentials. Our physical health and social wellbeing rests on a thriving ecology, and secondly, the economic advantage conferred by our clean green brand will be destroyed by actions that threaten vulnerable ecosystems such as old growth forests. Tasmania's natural capital is a publicly owned asset that needs to be preserved in such a way as to continue to deliver health benefits to current and future Tasmanians. Not only are our ecosystem assets intrinsically valuable but they pay dividends in terms of a brand that will dramatically appreciate in value as other regions decline. Government has a fiduciary duty with regard to this stock of natural capital. It is Tasmania's future.

The provision of additional income support through the jobseeker supplement and jobkeeper payments were also central to the successful pandemic response. Although there were those who did not benefit, the cumulative effect of relative income security (and enhanced security for welfare recipients) has delivered dividends in terms of social order and community resilience that helped Tasmanians weather the lockdowns.

As the Australian Government withdraws this support, the Tasmanian Government should consider measures to preserve social resilience and income security. Programs of civic employment through local councils, including youth apprenticeships would be a great idea. There are many other good ideas in others' submissions so I won't expand further other than to say that any payroll tax reductions should be linked to permanent good-paying jobs and not more casual minimum wage jobs that keep our young people financially insecure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to PESRAC, I hope you are able to consider my suggestions.

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