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# Redistribution of Legislative Council Boundaries 2016-17

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Submission to Legislative  
Council Redistribution  
Tribunal

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February 2017

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**LAUNCESTON**  
CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE

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*The Voice of Business*

## **OVERVIEW**

### **About us**

The Launceston Chamber of Commerce was the first association of its kind in the southern hemisphere. It was formed at a local meeting in August 1849 "as it was necessary for Launceston traders to meet frequently to confront the increasing trading problems in an efficient and organised manner".

Nothing much has changed in the intervening years.

We proudly champion Launceston as the region of choice for people to live, work, play and invest, because of its sound economy, innovation, and sustainability.

We provide influential representation and strong leadership, and smart solutions that encourage the success of businesses in the Launceston region. Our members and the community see the Chamber as the leading independent voice representing and supporting businesses in northern Tasmania.

### **About the local business environment**

Launceston is the second largest city in Tasmania after Hobart. With a population of almost 90,000, Launceston is the twelfth-largest non-capital city in Australia. It is the only inland city in Tasmania.

Settled by Europeans in 1806, Launceston is one of Australia's oldest cities. Innovation has long been a hallmark of the city. It is home to several firsts such as: the first use of anaesthetic in the Southern Hemisphere, the first Australian city to have underground sewers, the first Australian city to be lit by hydroelectricity.

Our reputation for entrepreneurship and innovation has continued more recently, with many start-up and technology businesses coming to the region as a result of Launceston being one of only a few cities nationally to have the NBN fully connected by fibre-to-the-premise technology.

Launceston has long been recognised as the commercial and service hub for the north of Tasmania and, to a lesser extent, the whole of the state.

There is a strong retail base, and a range of other industries including regional services, manufacturing and construction. The region also has a small mining industry and a specialised advanced manufacturing capacity.

Tourism is becoming an increasingly important focus, with visitor numbers on the increase. The region's mild, cool climate supports high-value production in the agriculture, horticulture and viticulture industries. The city is also home an excellent variety of education and research facilities including two campuses of the University of Tasmania, and the internationally-recognised Australian Maritime College.

The Launceston Chamber of Commerce welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the initial proposal for 2016/17 Redistribution of Legislative Council boundaries.

## **BACKGROUND TO THIS SUBMISSION**

The Legislative Council comprises fifteen members, elected from single member divisions by a preferential voting system. Each member of the Council holds office for a fixed term of six years, with periodic elections of three members held each odd-numbered year, and two each even-numbered year.

Legislative Council divisions contain approximately equal numbers of electors, and this parity is maintained by the periodic redistribution of divisional boundaries.

In accordance with Section 13 of the Legislative Council Boundaries Act 1995, in undertaking these periodic reviews the Redistribution Committee must ensure as far as practicable:

- that the number of electors in each Council division would not, in four and a half years' time, vary more than  $\pm 10\%$  of the average division enrolment (ADE); and
- as a secondary consideration, communities of interest are maintained within each Council division.

After taking into account the priorities specified above, the Redistribution Committee must consider the following matters in the case of each electoral division:

- the means of communication and travel within the division;
- the physical features and area of the division;
- existing electoral boundaries; and
- distinct natural boundaries.

The last major review of boundaries was undertaken in 1998, when the number of seats was reduced from nineteen to fifteen.

For this proposed redistribution, the average divisional enrolment was determined as at 30 September 2016, and has been set at 24,998.

### **The proposed changes**

The 1998 Committee noted “when...new statutory locality boundaries are in place...they will provide a stable ongoing indicator of community of interest which will assist in determining better electoral boundaries.”

Consistent with that view, the current Committee has endeavoured wherever possible to adhere to locality and local government area (LGA) boundaries when altering the boundaries of existing divisions.

The Committee considered various approaches before arriving at the proposed boundaries.

One option was to develop boundaries with the minimal adjustments required to comply with the legislated criteria.

This model made minimal boundary movements in the northwest, which then required Western Tiers to take in new areas south of the current boundaries. While meeting the criteria, the Committee held concerns that these boundaries would only stay within the 10% tolerance levels in the short term.

In examining current regional enrolment numbers, and being mindful of what was seen to be a continued southward flow over the population projections, the Committee formed the view that it was preferable to develop boundaries that enabled a long term consistent association between elector base and their Legislative Council representatives.

On this basis, the Committee has recommended major changes to the current boundaries, as outlined below.

- Three north-west divisions:
  - Murchison: all of King Island, Circular Head, Waratah-Wynyard, West Coast municipal areas and part of Burnie City municipal area
  - Montgomery: the remainder of Burnie City, all Central Coast and part of Kentish municipal area
  - Mersey: all of Devonport City and Latrobe municipal areas
- Four northern divisions:
  - Rosevears: all of West Tamar municipal area and part of Launceston City municipal area
  - Windermere: all of George Town municipal area and part of Launceston City municipal area
  - Launceston: part of Launceston City and Meander Valley municipal areas
  - McIntyre: all of Flinders, Dorset, Break O’Day municipal areas and part of Kentish, Meander Valley and Northern Midlands municipal areas.
- One central southern division
  - Derwent
- Seven southern divisions
  - Huon
  - Hobart
  - Rumney
  - Elwick
  - Prosser
  - Nelson
  - Pembroke

Under this proposal, two existing northern divisions disappear.

- The division of Western Tiers is redistributed as follows:
  - the Latrobe municipal area is in Mersey
  - the Kentish municipal area is split between Montgomery and McIntyre
  - the Central Highlands municipal area is in Derwent
  - the Northern Midlands municipal area is split between McIntyre and Prosser.
- The division of Apsley is redistributed as follows:
  - the Flinders, Dorset, and Break O’Day municipal areas are in McIntyre
  - the Northern Midlands municipal area surrounding and north of Conara Junction is in McIntyre

- the Northern Midlands municipal area south of Conara Junction is in Prosser
- the Glamorgan-Spring Bay and Southern Midlands municipal areas are in Prosser.

Table 1 shows population distribution by division under the proposed new model.

## DETAILED RESPONSE

### Variation in Divisional Size

The terms of reference for a review of Council boundaries specify that the number of electors in each Council division should not, in four and a half years' time, vary more than  $\pm 10\%$  of the average division enrolment (ADE).

The discussion paper provides information on populations in existing divisions, and also includes forecasts of population trends out to 2021, derived from ABS data.

For ease of comparison in this analysis, variances from the ADE have been conservatively classified as follows:

- outside permitted range: variance greater than  $\pm 10\%$ :
- high-range: variance  $\pm 7.5 - 10\%$
- mid-range: variance  $\pm 5 - 7.5\%$
- low-range: variance  $\pm 2.5 - 5\%$
- marginal-range: variance  $\pm 0 - 2.5\%$

Analysis of the current population distribution across existing divisions shows that, with one exception, all divisions lie well within the  $\pm 10\%$  permitted limit of variance. This information is set out in Table 1 below.

Of the fifteen current divisions:

- one division has a variance slightly outside the permitted range ie 10% above the ADE (Rumney +10.15%)
- no division has a high-range variance above the ADE
- two divisions have a mid-range variance above the ADE (Derwent +6.66%; Huon +5.22%)
- one division has a low-range variance above the ADE (Pembroke +2.77%);
- four divisions have a marginal-range variance above the ADE (Elwick +2.31%; Rosevears +1.75%; Western Tiers +0.34%; Hobart +0.27%)
- no division has a marginal-variance below the permitted range ie 0-2.5% below the ADE.
- four divisions have a low-range variance below the ADE (Mersey -2.85%; Montgomery -2.94%; Murchison -3.08%; Launceston -3.30%)
- three divisions have a medium-range variance below the ADE (Apsley -5.18%; Windermere -5.77%; Nelson -6.05%)
- no division has a high-variance below the permitted range ie 7.5 - 10% below the ADE.
- no division has a variance below the permitted range ie 10% below the ADE.

In other words, nine of the fifteen divisions currently have either marginal or low range variances from the ADE; five have medium variances; and only one division lies outside the permitted range – and that by only a very small amount.

On that basis, it is hard to see that major change is required; and it would be reasonable to assume minor boundary realignments could be designed to better balance variances in population across divisions.

Projected future population growth across the divisions as they now exist shows a similar profile. This information is provided in the discussion paper, with projections out to 2021.

On that basis,

- one division would have a variance outside the permitted range of 10% above the ADE (Rumney +13.54%)
- one division would have a high-range variance above the ADE (Derwent +8.07%)
- two divisions would have a mid-range variance above the ADE (Huon +6.60%; Pembroke +5.37%)
- one division would have a low-range variance above the ADE (Elwick +2.91%)
- three divisions would have a marginal-range variance above the ADE (Hobart +0.58%; Western Tiers -1.12%; Rumney +1.91%)
- two divisions would have a low-range variance below the ADE (Launceston -2.72%; Mersey -4.2%)
- five divisions would have a medium-range variance below the ADE (Montgomery -5.06%; Nelson -5.72%; Apsley -6.31%; Murchison -6.56%; Windermere -7.31%)
- no division would have a high-variance below the permitted range below the ADE.
- no division would have a variance below the permitted range ie 10% below the ADE.

In this scenario, six divisions would have marginal or low range variances; seven would have medium range variances; one division would have a high range variance; and only one division lies outside the permitted range.

On these projections, it is once again hard to see that major change would be required; and it would be reasonable to assume minor boundary realignments could be designed to better balance variances in population across divisions.

Neither the current or projected divisional population numbers indicate major concerns for imbalance against the ADE. It is clear that there is no need for significant change to ensure the requirements re variance from ADE across divisions is complied with. There can thus be no justification for the radical and disruptive solution proposed.

### **Communities of Interest**

The terms of reference for a review of Council boundaries require communities of interest to be maintained within each Council division.

The Redistribution Committee must also consider the following matters in the case of each electoral division:

- the means of communication and travel within the division;
- the physical features and area of the division;
- existing electoral boundaries; and
- distinct natural boundaries.

The proposed new boundaries disband the current division of Western Tiers. This creates a new L-shaped division of McIntyre which stretched from the far north east of the state to the western edge of the Central Highlands.

The proposal also bisects the seat of Apsley, with the northern half going into the division of McIntyre and the southern half going into an expanded division of Prosser.

In neither case has any attention been paid to communities of interest, physical topography and natural landscape features.

The proposed changes largely ignore existing local government boundaries, and pay little regard to existing, traditional, communities of interest.

In particular, the effects will be particularly disruptive for those electors who live in the Northern Midlands Council area. The proposed model splits the local government area across three divisions: McIntyre, Prosser, and Launceston. This could in fact be four divisions, as the maps provided are not of sufficiently high resolution to determine where areas such as Tunbridge sit in the proposed new distribution.

Northern Midlands is one of the state's prime traditional agricultural regions. It has little in common with the more temperate north and northeast; but there are similarities with some parts of the Central Highlands LGA, which is largely in Derwent division. Perth is a rural village on the eastern edge of the Northern Midlands LGA which has much in common with adjacent Longford. It is currently in Western Tiers, but under this proposal will be divided off from the Northern Midlands and allocated in with the mainly urban and suburban areas in Launceston division where there is only a limited community of interest.

There are some shared communities of interest in the northeast between the remote Flinders Island community and the towns of Scottsdale and the east coast. However, it is difficult to envisage what shared interests there might be between communities in the Central Highlands and those on Flinders Island.

Furthermore, existing and recognised physical landmarks and topography such as the Western Tiers, Blue Tiers and the Eastern Tiers have been ignored.

There can be no doubt that the traditional division of the state into north, northwest, and south regions is at times problematic. However, it reflects reality and longstanding history. This proposed new model has set aside this shared understanding, and instead created a new concept of east and west that has no apparent basis.

In a situation where there is little actual change in population distribution, that's simply not acceptable.

### **Population Estimates**

Tasmania's estimated population as at March 2014 was 514,684.

By June 2062, the state government estimates that Tasmania's population is projected to be almost 589,000 under a medium series assumption set, with an average growth rate of 0.3 per cent per year.

Tasmania's population increases each year over this period until 2058, though at a decreasing rate. For the final four years, Tasmania's population declines marginally under the medium series.

Under the high series, Tasmania's population is projected to be almost 768,000 by June 2062, with an average growth rate of 0.8 per cent per year. Under the low series, Tasmania's population is projected to be 459,000 by June 2062, with an average growth rate of negative 0.2 per cent per year.

Projections for high, medium, and low series are shown in Chart 1. Details of the medium series outcomes across local government areas are included as Table 2.

Obviously, the state figures are not directly comparable, as they show total population rather than voting population. However, having said that, it is not clear what relationship there is between the projections used in the discussion paper and the state estimates.

There is no apparent alignment between the growth rates shown and the voting population as a proportion of the total population.

More clarity is needed as to what basis has been used for the modelling; and it would make more sense to ensure the state government figures are used in this exercise. There also needs to be some clear line of sight between this data and the predictions on which the state government is working to achieve their growth target of 650,000 people by 2050.

This will be the fourth redistribution carried out under the Legislative Council Boundaries Act 1995. The first was in 1995/1996; then in 1998/1999, which reduced the size of the Council and resulted in the creation of fifteen new electorates. The most recent redistribution undertaken in 2007/2008 saw only minor alterations to the boundaries.

Reviews are required to look forward 4.5 years; meaning the nine-year time interval between the reviews would reasonably be expected to take into consideration population projections that cover that period of time. Yet this review has only presented information to 2021, even though there are official projections for out years to 2062 which presumably are forming the basis for decision-making across government.

There is nothing apparent in the figures presented that would merit such a significant rearrangement of boundaries. Without further analysis into out years past 2021, there is no basis on which to presume that the assumed trends continue.

If this should prove not to be the case, then variance from the ADE could become even more unbalanced. In those circumstances, it is unlikely that a further major realignment of boundaries would be undertaken in the next review; and any anomalies would remain and continue to disadvantage electors in affected divisions.

### **Logistics of Representation**

The new division of McIntyre has no identifiable community of interest.



It is also physically large, covering areas which are difficult to traverse.

It encompasses a vast area - almost from the lightly populated Cradle Valley in the west, Bridport in the north, Flinders Island in the northeast, Scamander in the east, and what appears on the maps provided to be Epping Forest in the southwest.

It is difficult to envisage how any one Councilor could effectively represent such disparate communities – either physically, or in terms of shared interests.

## **CHAMBER POSITION**

The Launceston Chamber of Commerce objects strongly to these radically changed proposed new boundaries.

No credible argument has been presented as to why incremental boundary changes would not deliver an appropriate outcome.

The abolishment of Western Tiers and the reconfiguration of Apsley will have significant effects on the makeup in the Legislative Council; and on the communities represented in these electorates.

The proposal ignores strong and longstanding communities of interest evident within the state, often aligned with local government boundaries; and provides no explanation as to what shared interests would be evident in the two new divisions. It thus fails the tests set within legislation.

There is nothing apparent in the data presented that would merit such a significant rearrangement of boundaries; and no analysis has been provided to ascertain future trends to see whether there is a case for change of this magnitude.

The discussion paper notes that the Redistribution Panel considered and rejected an option to develop boundaries with the minimal adjustments required to comply with the legislated criteria. This is our preferred option.

The Chamber therefore strongly urges the Tribunal to withdraw this initial redistribution model and come back with a new proposal that meets community expectations.

## **CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT**

The Chamber looks forward to continuing to engage with the Review Tribunal and the state government on the finalisation of this review and the implementation of its findings.

Should further information be required, contact details are provided on the end page to this submission.



**Table 1: State-wide population distribution by existing divisions**

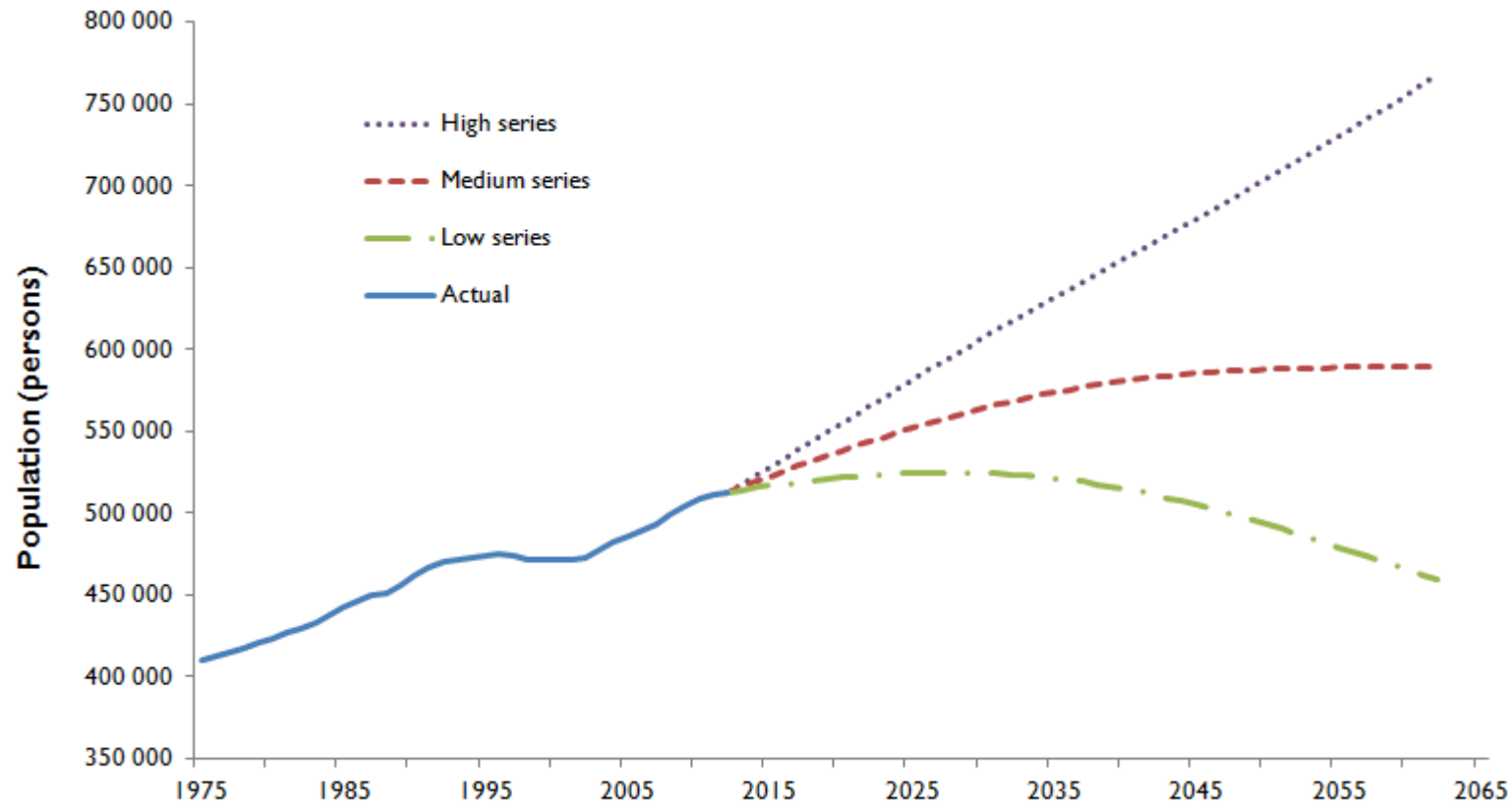
<b>Division</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2021</b>
Apsley	22,665	23,702	24,010
Derwent	23,391	26,664	27,696
Elwick	25,010	25,576	26,373
Hobart	23,448	25,066	25,776
Huon	22,354	26,302	27,318
Launceston	23,012	24,174	24,931
Mersey	22,918	24,285	24,551
Montgomery	23,581	24,262	24,329
Murchison	23,798	24,228	23,496
Nelson	21,706	23,845	24,161
Pembroke	24,321	25,690	27,003
Rosevears	23,183	25,423	26,117
Rumney	23,316	27,535	29,097
Western Tiers	22,147	24,914	25,340
Windermere	22,892	23,651	23,754
<i>Total</i>	<b>347,742</b>	<b>375,317</b>	<b>383,952</b>



**Table 2: State-wide population distribution by proposed new divisions**

<b>Division</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2021</b>
Apsley	22,665	23,702	24,010
Derwent	23,391	26,664	27,696
Elwick	25,010	25,576	26,373
Hobart	23,448	25,066	25,776
Huon	22,354	26,302	27,318
Launceston	23,012	24,174	24,931
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Western Tiers	22,147	24,914	25,340
Windermere	22,892	23,651	23,754
<i>Total</i>	347,742	375,317	383,952

**Chart 1: Tasmanian Population, Actual and Projected, 1975 to 2062**



Source: <https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/domino/df/df.nsf/v-ecopol/397D0680E5DCC583CA257CEC0005F727>

**Table 2: Total population for age range 18 to 85+ (Medium Series projection)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Break O'Day	5 286	5 347	5 382	5 440	5 483	5 526	5 558	5 573	5 597	5 607	5 624	5 654
Brighton	11 636	11 886	12 132	12 388	12 644	12 920	13 111	13 330	13 528	13 741	13 969	14 186
Burnie	15 443	15 496	15 545	15 617	15 692	15 753	15 777	15 812	15 838	15 859	15 915	15 962
Central Coast	17 619	17 778	17 881	18 026	18 166	18 260	18 375	18 489	18 617	18 733	18 856	18 971
Central Highlands	1 898	1 898	1 898	1 901	1 902	1 909	1 899	1 892	1 883	1 869	1 859	1 852
Circular Head	6 090	6 096	6 091	6 093	6 088	6 099	6 089	6 056	6 052	6 036	6 026	6 028
Clarence	42 025	42 384	42 756	43 112	43 486	43 850	44 197	44 551	44 872	45 238	45 586	45 980
Derwent Valley	7 616	7 661	7 703	7 742	7 770	7 812	7 830	7 857	7 870	7 882	7 921	7 952
Devonport	19 988	20 070	20 162	20 311	20 407	20 517	20 619	20 688	20 757	20 825	20 932	21 047
Dorset	5 512	5 524	5 531	5 522	5 523	5 502	5 507	5 475	5 449	5 425	5 401	5 393
Flinders	674	661	661	665	660	672	668	670	662	663	668	666
George Town	5 159	5 171	5 176	5 203	5 213	5 200	5 202	5 203	5 200	5 196	5 195	5 188
Glamorgan / Spring Bay	3 737	3 754	3 768	3 777	3 796	3 807	3 822	3 838	3 850	3 850	3 849	3 851
Glenorchy	35 608	35 815	36 036	36 276	36 490	36 705	36 930	37 131	37 318	37 549	37 809	38 030
Hobart	41 669	41 846	41 996	42 180	42 360	42 549	42 766	42 983	43 178	43 398	43 594	43 757
Huon Valley	12 708	12 954	13 173	13 397	13 616	13 819	14 031	14 199	14 387	14 600	14 790	15 000
Kentish	5 020	5 084	5 150	5 223	5 288	5 333	5 384	5 421	5 448	5 492	5 525	5 569
King Island	1 282	1 279	1 269	1 265	1 256	1 251	1 244	1 232	1 227	1 217	1 207	1 196
Kingborough	27 519	27 948	28 418	28 912	29 371	29 864	30 370	30 875	31 392	31 944	32 472	33 013
Latrobe	8 625	8 856	9 049	9 243	9 431	9 632	9 839	10 024	10 238	10 461	10 656	10 861
Launceston	52 994	53 382	53 667	53 966	54 289	54 562	54 890	55 171	55 444	55 706	56 045	56 366
Meander Valley	15 432	15 546	15 667	15 780	15 889	15 980	16 043	16 104	16 172	16 216	16 262	16 312
Northern Midlands	9 962	10 015	10 049	10 105	10 157	10 182	10 212	10 247	10 264	10 275	10 294	10 299
Sorell	10 702	10 897	11 101	11 301	11 494	11 688	11 874	12 050	12 219	12 385	12 575	12 766
Southern Midlands	4 914	4 993	5 070	5 126	5 184	5 249	5 321	5 385	5 441	5 495	5 558	5 647
Tasman	1 986	1 993	2 016	2 033	2 047	2 072	2 088	2 101	2 124	2 146	2 171	2 187
Waratah-Wynyard	11 210	11 300	11 379	11 456	11 503	11 551	11 579	11 585	11 605	11 638	11 647	11 665
West Coast	3 536	3 496	3 447	3 414	3 354	3 314	3 278	3 250	3 215	3 186	3 158	3 140
West Tamar	17 907	18 056	18 242	18 427	18 608	18 785	18 908	19 058	19 178	19 327	19 478	19 618
<b>Tasmania</b>	<b>403 758</b>	<b>407 191</b>	<b>410 410</b>	<b>413 866</b>	<b>417 165</b>	<b>420 349</b>	<b>423 402</b>	<b>426 253</b>	<b>429 013</b>	<b>431 960</b>	<b>435 062</b>	<b>438 154</b>

Source: <https://www.treasury.tas.gov.au/domino/df/df.nsf/v-ecopol/397D0680E5DCC583CA257CEC0005F727>



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*The Voice of Business*

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