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The Launceston context



The region



The Launceston City Council area is located in the Northern Tasmania region and covers an area of 1415 kilometres. Launceston was founded in 1806 and is Australia's third oldest city.

Northern Tasmania accounts for 30% of Tasmania's land mass and covers 20,700 square kilometres. The region has a population of approximately 133,000, some 28% of Tasmania's population, spread across eight municipal areas.

In 2006 Launceston had an estimated resident population of 64,620 representing growth of 2285 or 0.7% per annum from the 2001 census population of 62,335. Northern Tasmania had an estimated resident population in 2006 of 103,325 up 4799 or 1.0% per annum from the 2001 census figure of 98,526.⁷

Northern Tasmania enjoys a temperate climate. The average annual rainfall at Launceston is 720mm. The district has long summer daylight hours with a maximum day length of 15 hours 10 minutes, and warm summer temperatures with a mean February maximum of 24.6°C. Winters are cool to cold with a mean July minimum of 2.6°C.

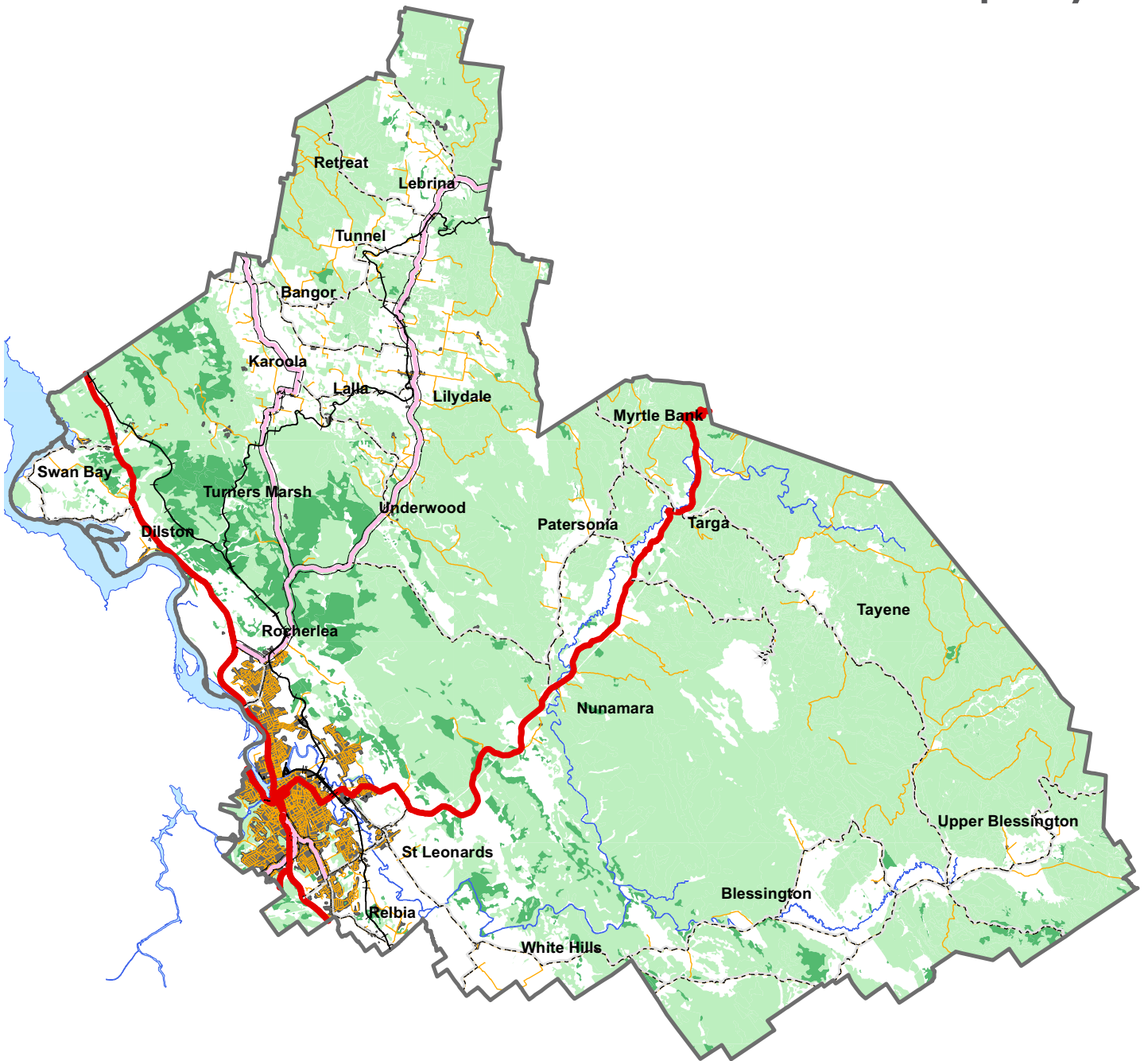
The Launceston Council area encompasses a diverse geography, ranging from the forested mountainous areas to the east towards Mt Arthur and Ben Lomond, the agricultural districts of Blessington and Lilydale, the eastern shore of the Tamar Estuary and the city of Launceston itself. The council area is bordered by the George Town, Dorset, West Tamar, Northern Midlands and Meander Valley council areas.

Launceston is the business and social centre of Northern Tasmania, is the centre of the regional road and rail network, and contains important regional educational and cultural facilities. The Launceston airport is located at the southern approach to the city.












⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006

Launceston municipality



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|------------------------|
|  | Woodland and other forest cover |  | National/State highway |
|  | Forest |  | Major arterial road |
|  | Built-up area |  | Arterial road |
|  | Launceston boundary |  | LCC road network |
|  | River/natural waterbody |  | Railway |

0 1 2 3 4 5
kilometres



Regional governance



Local councils

There are eight councils in the northern region: Break O'Day, Dorset, Flinders Island, George Town, West Tamar, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands and Launceston. The Launceston urban area is governed by four councils: West Tamar, encompassing parts of Trevallyn and Riverside; Meander Valley covering Prospect Vale; Northern Midlands having the southern approaches and the airport; and Launceston City incorporating the remaining areas.

Each council has its own planning scheme, plans and strategies. It is essential in planning for land use that adjoining councils take into account each other's plans and intentions and coordinate land use planning to achieve the best results for the city as a whole. Cooperation and coordination are particularly important in infrastructure planning, traffic planning, housing development, recreational planning and economic development.

To ensure its ability to achieve its strategic goals for Launceston, Council should actively monitor land use strategy and planning schemes in the northern region.

Northern Tasmania Development

Northern Tasmania Development (NTD) is a regional governance body created to advance the mutual interests of the northern region council areas. NTD has a role in developing and implementing strategies across a number of key areas, including tourism development and promotion, economic development and investment attraction.

It also has a role in regional coordination, along with advocacy and lobbying to promote the interests of Northern Tasmania.

Issue 1: Acknowledging the governance context

The Launceston Planning Scheme must acknowledge the regional governance context in which it operates. The scheme must consider existing regional and local-level strategies, plans and adopted regional hierarchies, and support and complement these wherever possible. Council should monitor the land use strategies and planning schemes of northern region councils to ensure that issues impacting on Launceston can be identified and responded to.

Key sector overview



Transport infrastructure

Launceston is the region's transport hub, with national highway access to Hobart, the North-West Coast and Bell Bay (the Port of Launceston). Northern Tasmania is served by north-south freight rail, connecting Bell Bay with Hobart via Launceston, with branch lines running east to Scottsdale, south-east to Fingal and west/north-west to Deloraine, Devonport and Burnie.

The Port of Launceston at Bell Bay is the major port in the northern region. Approximately 500 vessels of up to 55,000 tonnes use the port each year. The major commodities exported from the Port of Launceston are the products of agriculture and resource processing. The major imports are ores for processing in the region, along with petroleum and general cargo.

The Launceston Airport carries the largest air freight operation in Tasmania, and provides daily direct passenger links with Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Due to its central location Launceston is the preferred entry point for the majority of visitors to Tasmania.

The Launceston region has broadband access and full ADSL coverage. It is connected to the state's recently installed natural gas network.

Retailing

The northern region has an established retail hierarchy with Launceston being the major retail centre for most of the north of the state. The Launceston CBD is the dominant centre for non-food retailing with some 75% of the average retail market share of the surrounding council areas.

It is incumbent upon Council to ensure the regional community continues to have ready access to a full range of retail services and facilities in Launceston.

The regional hierarchy and the centrality of Launceston's retailing serve to protect investment by business and Council in the Launceston CBD.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing remains a key sector in the northern region. There is a high degree of diversity including primary product processing, in particular of timber and food, and manufacturing of a range of complex products.

The main industrial hubs in the region are Bell Bay, the regional centre for heavy industry, and Translink, a rapidly expanding light industrial and distribution centre adjacent to Launceston Airport.

Tourism

Launceston and Northern Tasmania offer a good diversity of tourist facilities and attractions, the main drawcards being Launceston's Cataract Gorge, the Tamar Valley wine region, Country Club Resort and Casino, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, and the region's appealing and accessible mountain, forest and coastal areas.

Launceston is the hub of the northern region's touring routes and a main centre for state routes, as well as a key entry point for air travellers to the state.

Health and community services

As the largest city in Northern Tasmania, Launceston is the key centre for human services. The Launceston General Hospital provides a wide range of specialist services, supported by tertiary teaching facilities. There are two private hospitals in Launceston and a number of retirement villages and aged care homes.

A broad range of lower-level health and community services operate at the local community level.

Education

The education and training capabilities of Northern Tasmania are one of the region's most valuable assets, attracting diverse groups of students from around the state, and from mainland Australia and overseas. Launceston is regarded as one of the best-equipped regional centres for learning in Australia.

Key facilities include the northern campuses of the University of Tasmania, the Australian Maritime College, a number of TAFE Tasmania campuses, a number of private schools, and the Australian Technical College.

The university has around 5000 students at the Newnham campus, and at the Academy of the Arts and the School of Architecture at Inveresk. The Maritime College is the national centre for maritime education, training and research.

Agriculture

Northern Tasmanian agriculture, including plantation forestry, represents 37% of the state's economy. The region produces almost 50% of the state's total crops, and 52% of its wool.

The relatively new viticulture industry is dynamic and valuable, also contributing to the food and beverage, hospitality and tourism industries. The region produces 75% of the state's grapes.

Natural resource management

The diversity of landscapes, soils and sub-climates in Northern Tasmania is reflected in the region's biodiversity. The region hosts a wide variety of terrestrial, freshwater, estuarine, coastal and marine habitats and ecosystems, each containing important flora and fauna species.

Established under the *Tasmanian Natural Resource Management Act 2002*, Natural Resource Management (North) is a regional body whose role it is to plan, foster and coordinate natural resource management among landowners, communities and local councils. NRM is also a vehicle for distribution of Australian Government grants.

Local councils, or groups of councils, are responsible for implementation of the Act at local level. Along with the West Tamar and George Town councils, Launceston City Council is part of Tamar NRM⁸ a regional division of NRM North.

Arts, sport and recreation

The Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery is the largest regional museum and art gallery in Australia. It has significant natural history and art collections, and celebrates and interprets the former industrial use of its Inveresk campus. It is a significant regional tourism and cultural resource.

Launceston is the location of the Princess Theatre, the largest regional theatre outside of Hobart; and is home to many community-based arts and performance groups that use a number of smaller venues such as the Annex Theatre and the Earl Arts Centre.

Launceston has a number of regional sporting facilities including

- the Silverdome sport and recreation centre (netball, cycling)
- Churchill Park (football and softball)
- NTCA ground (cricket)
- Aurora stadium at York Park (AFL)
- Elphin Sports Centre (indoor sports)
- St Leonards Sports Centre (athletics and hockey)
- Regional Aquatic Centre (swimming).

Issue 2: Recognising Launceston as the regional centre

The new Launceston Planning Scheme must recognise that Launceston is the largest settlement and the major service centre for Northern Tasmania. Planning for all aspects of the city's life – its environment; education, health and social service facilities; retail functions; cultural, recreational and entertainment facilities; transport and other infrastructure – must recognise the wider regional context in which the city operates, and ensure optimal access and delivery for the people of the region.

⁸ www.tamar-nrm.org.au

Councils in the northern region



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