



Australian Institute of Architects

MEDIA RELEASE

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Cities report opens up opportunities for Tasmania

The State of Australian Cities 2014–15 report, released last week, gives Tasmania the opportunity to capitalise on its differences with the rest of Australia, according to the Tasmanian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects (the Institute).

“While the report paints a picture of a significant spatial divide between areas of highly productive jobs and the areas of population-based services, Tasmania is in a unique position to think outside the box and shape our city in a positive and functional way,” said the Tasmanian President of the Institute, Mr Brad Wheeler.

The report highlights two distinct trends; a rise in inner-city density, alongside continuing low-density growth outwards, making commute times longer and leaving urban fringe-dwellers more and more distant from employment, education and health opportunities.

“Tasmania’s relatively small population, along with its growing proportion of people aged over 65, means the state faces different challenges from those likely to affect mainland cities,” Mr Wheeler said.

“While we have much shorter distances to travel than residents of outer Sydney and Melbourne, the dispersed nature of Hobart and Launceston, mainly due to geographical factors, means we are still dealing with increased development on our urban fringes. This creates similar disadvantages for people who settle there as in Australia’s larger cities.

“Without the population density to support a rail system in Tasmania, bus services are the only public transport option available and this is an inefficient transport system for our low-density sprawled city layouts. So while the scale is different, the problems are still comparable.

“Poor urban policy and design will only exacerbate these problems. What we need from here is to ensure positive liveability, affordability, productivity, sustainability and health outcomes for our community, through best practice planning and delivery.

“With our smaller cities and through the current process of creating a single, statewide planning scheme, we have the opportunity to ensure our cities are designed to be more sustainable, both environmentally and socially.



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“We are in the fortunate position in Tasmania of living in one of the most beautiful and liveable places in the world. What we must do now is to ensure we as a community protect this liveability, while maximising our employment, education and health opportunities for all.”

Mr Wheeler has also supported a call by the Australian Sustainable Built Environment Council for the federal government to create a Minister for Cities, saying the country’s rapidly growing cities require a coordinated and urgent response.

For further information or to organise an interview, please contact Brad Wheeler on 0408 662 695 or Jennifer Nichols on 6214 1500.

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