

NTDC LTD Quarterly Organisation Progress Report to Council Members – August 2017

Welcome to the newly incorporated NTDC!

As of March 2017 the new NTDC Ltd formed. The organisation has made a few changes to streamline the business, lower overheads and align ourselves with the business and entrepreneurial sector. We have moved into a collective work space, “Co-Work Launceston” at 93 York St Launceston and interact with other small business and innovators that supports economic development.

1. NTDC’s Role in the Launceston City Deal – Working to Gain the Benefit for the Whole Region!

The Northern Tasmania Development Corporation Ltd (NTDC) has been appointed as the lead agency to develop and be the custodian of a Regional Economic Development Plan (The Plan) as outlined in the City Deal of April 2017, with completion due in 2018.

The Plan will provide a shared understanding of where future economic and jobs growth will come from. This strategic outlook will help coordinate future government investments, encourage new private sector investment, improve planning and provide support for ongoing regulatory reform. The Plan will be action orientated and will cover the three financial years FY2019 – FY2021. Although we are aware that Council Members would not consider a new ‘plan’ to be a priority for NTDC – it was considered that by 2018 (when the Plan is due to be released) the new Plan will be a natural revision of the 2015 Northern Regional Futures Plan.

NTDC will work closely with Council Members in planning the consultation phase, to ensure we are adding-value and coordinated in our approach.

2. Resources for NTDC

To assist NTDC with the development of the plan and our approach to engage with Council Members the business community and the sectors where appropriate – the Tasmanian Government have allocated NTDC Ltd \$140,000 for 2017-18. It is envisaged that some of these funds will be allocated to consultancy support and the remainder to appoint a Project Officer to coordinate the consultation and develop an Opportunities Database (and document impediments and issues) as part of The Plan.

3. Regional Prioritisation of Projects

NTDC tabled a methodology for prioritising projects at a regional level at the May Council Members meeting in Launceston. After some agreed changes and fine-tuning from that meeting, NTDC now has a methodology to prioritise the top regional projects i.e. Tier 1 projects (>\$50M) and Tier 2 projects (<\$50M), in the lead up to State and Federal elections. NTDC will be requesting each LGA’s projects for consideration in August.

4. Working with Council Members

The Chair, the CEO and various NTDC Directors have met with all seven (7) councils to provide an overview on NTDC Ltd organisational progress and plans. These sessions were also an opportunity to hear from councillors on their priority issues on both local government and economic development issues within their municipalities.

NTDC has provided the following support to Councils:

a) Valley Central Industrial Estate - Meander Valley Council

NTDC has been working with Meander Valley Council to assist them with a ‘road block’ with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that could impact up to \$500 million worth of industrial development on the Valley Central Industrial Estate. Other Council Members have also registered their concern regarding the EPA’s process.

After meeting, discussions and correspondence the EPA are undertaking a review of their processes and have committed to consulting with Council Members to gather specific information.

NTDC has also provided advice and support to Meander Valley Council to escalate issues in TasNetworks and provided some advice on the Bio-Energy Project feasibility work.

b) b. Flinders Council – Home Loans and Banking

John Pitt and Maree Tetlow met twice with representatives of Bendigo Bank (the new bank branch on FI) to discuss the need for equity of access of home loans on Flinders similar to that of the rest of the State. It appears that there has been some improvements over the past few months, but the availability of Loan Mortgage Insurance (LMI) for loans over 80% of the value of the home continues to be a problem. Also the cost of gaining home valuations is an issue, as potential home loan applicants must pay high costs of Valuers travelling to the island to provide this service. NTDC is working to overcome these barriers.

Congratulations to Flinders Council for their win in securing \$11 million for upgrading mobile and communications infrastructure – what a great outcome for future development on the island!

c) c. Launceston Gateway Project (Translink) – Northern Midlands Council (NMC)

NTDC has supported NMC with their efforts to continue to develop the Launceston Gateway Project out at the Launceston Airport Precinct. The interest and feasibility of the project has been renewed with the advice by Toll of their intended investment in their Boland Street Launceston depot, and the community concerns with the trucks traversing the City and especially with the announced plans for a more pedestrianised City as a result of the UTASS Transformation Project and the City Heart Project.

Discussions have been held between some of the parties to gain their level of interest and agreed next step is to produce a concept design of how the Launceston Gateway site will operate to table with interested logistics companies.

d) d. Review of Forest Areas – Break O’Day Council (BODC)

BODC have engaged with NTDC on the future use of some of their forestry reserves post plantation maturity. This is a very early stage project and NTDC has participated in some of the early testing of the concepts and provided some technical expertise at this stage.

Congratulations also to BODC on the grant announced for the Mountain Biking Project – Stage 2.

5. Other NTDC Activities

a) Agri-tourism Day – Northern Midlands

In July NTDC (through Chris Griffin of TNT and Greg Bott) worked to encourage farmers, initially in the NMC area, to consider extending their operations to consider hosting visitors.

Advocacy work has also been underway by NTDC to escalate the lamb processing issues and investigate the opportunity around a ‘Lamb Tasmania’ collaborative effort to increase supply and branding of quality Tasmanian Lamb.

b) Food Cluster Development

The NTDC Board have approved the allocation of \$20,000 of NTDC’s budget to develop a Food Cluster in the North and North East. The purpose of a Food Cluster is to support the development of new food businesses, and expand those already in business – with an emphasis on interstate and international exporting. The key KPI’s will be about growing business revenues, new jobs and new private-sector investments.

NTDC has also had initial discussions with Cradle Coast Authority to secure some funds to ensure that our food businesses work across the two regional areas. Dr Tom Lewis will be appointed to develop the cluster and seek matching funding from appropriate Commonwealth agencies. Once the funding is secured Tom Lewis and NTDC will be in touch with all Council Members about potential participants. The Food Cluster participants will decide what priority skills, projects are needed to achieve the purpose.

c) Forestry and Bio-Energy

NTDC's Chair, John Pitt, has been working to bring together the forestry players to understand the future value-adding projects that could be developed in parallel with further investment (announced as part of City Deal) into the UTAS R&D in Wood Science and Forestry areas. John is keen to ensure we have a coordinated approach in our region to ensure we maximise our forestry resources and value add into areas such as bio-energy plants, bio-compounds (from wood), new wood construction products etc.

6. Changes to Key Council Personnel

a) Farewell Robert Dobrzynski and Welcome (back) Michael Stretton, City of Launceston

Robert continues to work on the Launceston City Deal and contribute at the City Deal Executive Board level. Thank you Robert for your guidance on how we maximise the opportunities of the City Deal for the Northern Region.

Robert departs in October and Michael Stretton, GM of Waratah Wynyard (and ex Director of Development Services in Launceston) commences around the same time. We look forward to welcoming Michael back to Launceston!

b) Welcome Justine Brooks-Bedelph, General Manager of George Town Council

Justine has been appointed internally from managing the Development Services area to General Manager of George Town Council. Justine commenced on 31 July, congratulations Justine!

Raoul Harper has finished his consultancy role supporting George Town Council through the GM appointment process, and has advised he is about to take a month's leave surfing on a remote Indonesian island. He looks forward to working in the region when he returns. Raoul can be contacted via email at: bayoffires@mac.com

If you would like more information on any of these subjects – or you would like to share your views on an opportunity or impediment – don't hesitate to contact us – details below:

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