

DORSET EDG STRATEGIC PLAN – 2003/04



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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.

(Margaret Mead)



INTRODUCTION

The community of north eastern Tasmania including the Dorset Municipality have a proud history of stable business activity and wealth creation based predominantly on the core industry sectors of mining, agriculture, fishing and timber.

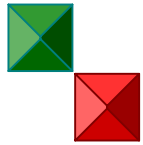
The decline of some traditionally important industry sectors including fishing, mining, manufacturing and services, have to a degree been compensated through the expansion of existing industries or through adapting to new ones, thereby maintaining employment levels that are traditionally higher than the Tasmanian average.

Business and employment circumstances in Northeast Tasmania however have changed over the past two decades. Recent industry and business closures are more serious due to reduced industry diversity, and therefore decreased alternative business and employment opportunities. Ownership and management of the region's larger enterprises has also become more remote, which has resulted in reduced entrepreneurship and missed opportunity due to the failure to recognise and utilise local natural advantage through capital investment.

The establishment of the Dorset Community Economic Development Group Inc (Dorset EDG) is a direct result of the north eastern Tasmanian community acknowledging that they are threatened by further economic and social decline, while also recognising that demonstrable natural advantage and opportunity exists in the region. The community have activated Dorset EDG with the support of local, state and federal government and the broad business community.

It is with this background that Dorset EDG is charged with the responsibility to motivate and facilitate productive change. To create an atmosphere of enthusiastic confidence that is supportable through sound research and service facilitation to deliver sustainable business growth and jobs into the future.

The north eastern region of Tasmania has a motivated and highly skilled population that is knowledgeable about the region's natural qualities. The district is presently one of the most under developed commercial opportunities in Australia due to its untapped natural resources, particularly within the primary industry sector. These advantages combined with honest community ethics and focused determination will stem further decline and prove to be the basis for future economic and social growth.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dorset Community Economic Development Group Inc. (Dorset EDG) was established in November 2002, and formally incorporated in May 2003.

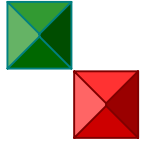
The catalyst for the formation of Dorset EDG was Simplot Australia's decision to close its potato processing plant at Scottsdale in December 2003. The closure will result in the loss of around 110 jobs, and a projected net loss of around \$20m/annum for the small regional economy of Northeast Tasmania.

The Simplot closure will have a significant negative impact on the Dorset economy and is in addition to several other recent local business closures, clearly demonstrating the region's commercial vulnerability. The formation of Dorset EDG is in response to an expressed community need and a distinct lack of appropriate institutional capacity to facilitate base economic development activities in the area. Dorset EDG will enable the community to take some control of its own destiny in relation to economic development.

The Dorset community has determined to take action through Dorset EDG and plan strategically for its future. Simplot has encouraged the community actions and pledged to provide an assistance package to alleviate the effect of their closure. This welcome assistance will contribute to Dorset EDG's initial operational funding, with additional contributions also sourced from the Dorset Council, Launceston City Council, Tasmanian State Government, Commonwealth Regional Funding Programs, local business and resident contributions.

Dorset EDG will conduct its activities within a Community Economic Development framework, and will be managed and overseen by a ten (10) member executive committee elected by the group's members. Membership of Dorset EDG is available to all ratepayers in the Dorset municipality.

The following plan is a summary of the strategic direction Dorset EDG will take over its first year of operation. It sets out a clear and achievable pathway of activities that will contribute to a strengthening of the local economy, a more engaged community with improved awareness and linkage with the wider economic region.



MISSION STATEMENT

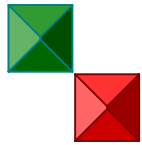
"The Dorset Community Economic Development Group Inc. will facilitate and promote activities leading to sustainable economic development within the Dorset region.

The group will respond to community needs and strengthen the wider regional linkage for business exchange and growth, advancing the economic contribution of Northern Tasmania.






Dorset EDG will work to set in motion necessary 'change management' activities fostering community resilience and capacity to meet the challenges of operating within a rapidly changing local, state and global economy.

Dorset EDG shall conduct its activities aimed to motivate outcomes that utilise the regions natural and people attributes in a manner that is ethical and conducive to high operational commercial standards, thereby contributing to Tasmania as a good place to be."





OBJECTIVES

-  *To seek opportunities for economic development which fit with the regions key competitive advantages that have identified positive employment outcomes*
-  *To assist in the growth and maintenance of existing Dorset businesses*
-  *To lobby for infrastructure improvements necessary for industry & community development*
-  *To promote and market the region's competitive advantages and development opportunities*
-  *To encourage new business development through the provision of basic advocacy and support.*

Dorset EDG objectives will be supported by a dedicated executive management committee made effective through the establishment of a comprehensive database, provision of community information, and broad linkage with supporting business and political stakeholders.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2003 – 2004

1. TO SEEK OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHICH FIT WITH THE REGION'S KEY COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES AND HAVE IDENTIFIED EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES					
SCOPING OPPORTUNITIES	OBJECTIVE				
	STRATEGY	ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR AND TIMEFRAME	EXAMPLE (S)	
		<i>Identify competitive advantages and development opportunities.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Economic Opportunities Study (EOS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOS completed by July 2003 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture – seeking further crops to add to rotation and additional value adding opportunities
		<i>Prioritise opportunities based on employment outcomes and probability of bringing projects to fruition.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake selected industry scoping/feasibility studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture/tourism/forestry assessment by Dec 2003 • Aquaculture/Aged Care assessment by June 2004 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar beet production trials (for ethanol) • Forestry – value adding (salvage operations; kiln drying plantation hardwood; furniture/component manufacture)
	<i>Initiate scoping/feasibility studies (including market assessment) and develop business cases.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select high priority projects for detailed assessment /trials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected projects to be managed by Dorset EDG sub-committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for value-adding waste streams from vegetable packing industry • Investigate feasibility of further developing an aged care industry in Dorset • Dorset Biodiversity tourism project • Land-based intensive aquaculture • Further dairy development 	

GROWING EXISTING BUSINESS	2. TO ASSIST IN THE GROWTH AND MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING DORSET BUSINESSES			
	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR AND TIMEFRAME
	<p><i>Identify what the key impediments to business growth in NE Tasmania are.</i></p> <p><i>Identify key business and industry development drivers.</i></p> <p><i>Seek assistance for promising developing businesses.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Economic Opportunities Study • Develop database of existing Dorset business • Undertake selected industry management skills audits • Conduct market assessments in selected industry sectors • Seek assistance for promising developing businesses • Facilitate the provision of focused business development training • Improve awareness of avenues to finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOS completed by July 2003 • Dorset Business database developed and linked to www.dorset.com.au - August 2003 • Management skills audits and market assessments in selected industry sectors - June 2003 ongoing • Seek assistance for promising developing businesses - January 2003 ongoing • Facilitate a variety of business development and training seminars/programs - August 2003 ongoing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profit and Growth program • Seek marketing assistance for Fernmania (treefern and specialty timber salvage business) • Seek business development/marketing assistance for Island Resources (sand mining business) • Business finance seminars • Service training • Collaborate with Scottsdale Education and Training Centre to identify vocational training needs. • Facilitation of a cooperative approach to improved streetscapes and retail hubs - eg: establish 'Scottsdale promotional committee'

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT	OBJECTIVE	3. TO LOBBY FOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS NECESSARY FOR INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT		
	STRATEGY	ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR AND TIMEFRAME	EXAMPLE (S)
	<i>Identify what infrastructure improvements would enhance business development/economic output in Dorset, rank in order of importance/priority, lobby government as appropriate.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Economic Opportunities Study (EOS) • Conduct Economic Development and Business survey • Survey businesses about IT infrastructure and uptake and use of internet technologies • Review all available relevant studies/literature on proposed infrastructure developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EOS completed by July 2003 • Economic Development and Business survey completed - July 2003 • IT capacity survey completed - July 2003 • Available relevant studies/literature reviewed and infrastructure requirements categorised and prioritised - October 2003 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road and Rail Transport capacity/constraints • Water storage for intensive agriculture development • Tourism infrastructure • IT and Telecommunications • Facilitation of improved streetscapes and retail hubs • Community bank

MARKETING AND PROMOTION	OBJECTIVE	4. TO PROMOTE AND MARKET THE REGION'S COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGES AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES		
	STRATEGY	ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR AND TIMEFRAME	EXAMPLE (S)
	<i>Improve the profile of the Dorset region through focused promotional activities based around areas of key opportunity and strategic advantage.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop website (www.dorset.com.au) as the main vehicle for promoting the region • Facilitate the establishment of a 'Dorset Development Opportunity Register' in collaboration with local real estate firms, council, State Government and vendors • Develop promotional strategy around several identified areas of competitive advantage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website created - July/August 2003 • Development opportunities section of www.dorset.com.au commenced - August 2003 • 'Dorset Development Opportunity Register' created and linked to www.dorset.com.au – May 2004 • Dorset tourism promotional material developed - November 2003 • Dorset Agriculture promotional material developed - November 2003 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote opportunities for vegetable production and processing complementary to existing industry • Niche branding and marketing of genetically superior and/or organic Dorset milk • Tourism development opportunities • Aquaculture opportunities - eg: abalone • Promote agriculture opportunities associated with water development projects eg: Waterhouse

NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	OBJECTIVE	5. TO ENCOURAGE NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE PROVISION OF BASIC ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT		
	STRATEGY	ACTION	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR AND TIMEFRAME	EXAMPLE (S)
	<p><i>Develop an appropriate business advice/information network between Dorset EDG and outside agencies to ensure feasible new business opportunities are given a maximum chance of success, and that appropriate advice and support can be readily accessed.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish best methodology to ensure the whole Northeast is appropriately serviced in regard to Business Development by creating a collaborative framework with the Department of Economic Development, Business and Employment Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment and relevant Commonwealth Departments (DoTaRS, Ausindustry, Austrade, AFFA) Investigate activities in other regions of Tasmania and the mainland to find the appropriate model Apply to Department of Economic Development to be considered for Business Enterprise Centre status Initiate local business mentor program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ascertain whether a Business Enterprise Centre is an appropriate model for Dorset, and if so lodge an application with Department of Economic Development by September 2003 Local Business Mentoring program initiated – by May 2004 	<p><u>Other Business Enterprise Centres in Tasmania:</u></p> <p>Bellerive – Business East Burnie – Braddon Business Centre Deloraine – Meander Valley Business Enterprise Centre Devonport – Business and Employment Hobart – Business and Employment Hobart Huonville – Huon Valley Business Enterprise Centre Kingston – Kingborough Community Enterprise Centre Launceston – Business and Employment Launceston New Norfolk – Derwent Valley Business Enterprise Centre Queenstown – Tasmanian West Coast Business Employment Smithton – Circular Head Business Enterprise Centre St Helens – Break O’Day Business Enterprise Board</p>

DISCLAIMER:

The Dorset community is aware of serious business viability and employment threats caused through business contraction and closures occurring in recent years.

The north eastern Tasmanian community in response, has recently formally established the Dorset Community Economic Development Group Inc. to seek stabilisation and economic development opportunity. The organisation is structured to operate through an elected Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee charged with the responsibility of exploring all options for economic stabilisation and development throughout the region has reviewed preliminary data and community suggestion to formulate its initial one year strategic plan.

Whilst every effort has been made to confirm the fundamentals on which this plan has been based, and numerous informal and executive meetings have ensured diligent component research with endorsed plan development, no information or outcome warranty is given or implied.

This 'Strategic Plan 2003-04' is sincerely endorsed and presented by the Executive Committee as the initial working document outlining the operational aims of Dorset EDG.

The Executive Committee

John Carswell
Chairman



Nic van den Bosch
Secretary



20 June 2003