TASSIC Response to the Tasmanian Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy

Advancing Location Intelligence for a Diversified Tasmanian Economy

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Tasmanian Spatial information council

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Executive Summary

The Tasmanian Spatial Information Council (TASSIC) welcomes the draft Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy. This submission makes a single, evidence-based case: Geospatial information and platforms, as part of a whole-of-government digital infrastructure, are a cross-cutting enabler of each strategic priority.

Leveraging existing Tasmanian investments in spatial and digital infrastructures could add $400 million per year to the Gross State Product.

To strengthen the draft Strategy and unlock this latent economic potential, TASSIC recommends the following:

- Recognise spatial information and the LIST explicitly as critical economic infrastructure that enables a whole-of-economy productivity boost.
- Expand investment in the LIST as the delivery vehicle for Priority 3's "improved access to higher-quality public datasets" initiative, by increasing the data made available, integrating spatial and non-spatial sources, and unlocking latent demand.
- Sustain and grow investment in the LIST as Tasmania's statewide spatial digital twin, building on its forthcoming 3D and enhanced public access capabilities, the City of Hobart's program, Virtual Tas and interstate precedents, so the platform stays ahead of the productivity curve and delivers the Strategy's investment, planning and infrastructure objectives.
- Use the LIST as the evidence foundation for faster, evidence-based decision making across investment attraction, planning and regulation, regional development, infrastructure coordination and climate and community resilience.
- Invest in surveying and geospatial workforce capability, through UTAS, the Tasmanian Skills Plan and VET-level training pathways, to capture the Strategy's emerging economic benefits.
- Engage TASSIC, the ministerially appointed advisory council on geospatial information, as a standing consultation forum, aligning spatial and digital-sector advocacy with the Strategy's economic objectives.[21]

Spatial Information drives the Economy

As a member of TasICT, TASSIC acknowledges TasICT’s separate submission to this strategy, which echoes many of the points raised.

Explicit recognition of geospatial science and technology in the final Strategy will materially improve delivery against its goals of private investment, productivity and regional opportunity.

The economic evidence is well established. Geospatial services contributed $39 billion to Australian GDP and more than 12,000 FTE jobs in 2023-24, projected to reach $90 billion by 2033-34 under a favourable operating environment.[1] Tasmania's sector is expected to double its contribution to Gross State Product over the same period, from $0.6 billion to $1.2 billion, but only under that favourable scenario: business as usual delivers $0.8 billion, a gap of close to $400 million by 2033-34[2]. The deciding factors, data sharing frameworks, foundation geospatial data investment, geospatial digital twins and geospatial workforce availability, all align with this Strategy.[3]

Geospatial information is already embedded in how Tasmania plans, invests and delivers. The Land Information System Tasmania (the LIST) is Tasmania's Spatial Data Infrastructure,[4] and the Independent Review of the Tasmanian State Service identified geospatial platforms as core components of the platform-based functional leadership model this Strategy now proposes to enact.[5] The opportunity is to make that dependency explicit, so geospatial capability is resourced as economic infrastructure rather than assumed as a background utility.

Geospatial information and platforms underpin each strategic priority

Priority 1: Unlocking private investment.

- Investment attraction is fundamentally a location decision: site selection, land readiness, rezoning pathways and approval risk are all spatial questions answered with spatial data.
- Behind each answer stands the surveying profession: cadastral surveying defines the land parcels on which investment certainty rests, and engineering surveying sets out the works that follow. No subdivision is registered, title created or major project constructed without surveyors.
- Western Australia's investment in its Advanced Spatial Digital Twin and Next Generation Spatial Cadastre sits alongside the same Coordinator-General reforms the Strategy benchmarks.[6]
- Tasmania already holds the foundation asset in the LIST; the Strategy should commit to sustaining and maturing it as part of the investment proposition.

Priority 2: Accelerating growth and innovation.

- The Strategy's emerging domains, precision agriculture, autonomous marine systems, provenance technologies and extreme-environment sensing, all rest on positioning, earth observation and spatial analytics.[7]
- Surveying is among the most technology-intensive of these fields: robotic total stations, GNSS machine guidance, UAV photogrammetry and lidar, and increasingly AI-assisted feature extraction are transforming field-to-office workflows.
- Tasmania brings sovereign strengths, including the University of Tasmania's partnership in the UN Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence and essential contributions to the global geodetic network underpinning positioning, navigation and timing.[8] The UN-GGCE has estimated that an outage of just 48 hours in these services would have an impact exceeding $2 billion.[9]
- The state's spatial sector, spanning government custodians, private firms, surveying professionals and research strengths across UTAS, CSIRO and the Antarctic institutions, is a ready-made capability cluster, now formally connected to the wider technology sector through TASSIC's partnership with TasICT.[10]

Priority 3: Lifting productivity.

- The consultation focus on improved access to higher-quality public datasets is, in substance, a spatial data proposition: the highest-value datasets for planning and regulation are location-based, and the ACIL Allen modelling attributes the largest productivity impacts to exactly these channels.[11]
- The State Service Review made the same diagnosis from the government's side, finding the State Service's siloed design "creates duplicated capabilities across agencies that it cannot afford".[12]
- Tasmania has precedent for the dividend: an early TASSIC economic assessment contributed to the $2.9 million Spatial Information Foundations Project that delivered today's LISTmap and LISTdata services,[13] and the Heavy Vehicle Access Management System has made 80 per cent of oversize-overmass vehicle movements permit-free.[14]
- The same logic applies below ground: every excavation relies on utility locating and underground detection and mapping coordinated through Before You Dig Australia,[15] a largely invisible engine room of urban and regional development. Lifting the accuracy, completeness and sharing of underground

asset data is one of the most direct productivity investments available to government.

Priority 4: Activating our regions.

- Functional labour market analysis, improved regional liveability data and a rolling land-supply mechanism are each spatial analysis tasks.[16]
- Defining catchments, modelling drive-time accessibility, mapping land capability and maintaining an authoritative cadastre are established surveying and geospatial methods.
- Regional activation will succeed to the degree that this spatial evidence base is invested in and shared between state government, councils and regional bodies.

Priority 5: Growing our capability.

- Geospatial workforce availability will help determine whether the sector grows at 9 or 5 per cent annually over the coming decade.[17]
- Tasmania has a documented shortage at professional and technical levels, including licensed land surveyors and survey technicians, and VET-level surveying and geospatial training is currently unavailable through TasTAFE.[18]
- The pipeline to land surveyor registration requires a degree plus supervised professional training, so shortfalls take the better part of a decade to correct.
- The professional community is ready to partner: Tasmanian geospatial events attracted more than 360 delegates over the past twelve months, the TASSIC–TasICT partnership extends that readiness across the broader digital workforce, and TASSIC works with the University of Tasmania's Geospatial Science program suite on education pathways.

Priority 6: Strengthening infrastructure.

- Infrastructure sequencing, land and water readiness, connectivity mapping and strategic energy planning are all exercises in spatial coordination, and engineering surveying is the precondition for each: infrastructure is designed, set out, monitored and certified through survey.
- Underground asset detection is equally critical given the concentration of utilities in the corridors where new investment will land.
- Spatial digital twins are the emerging platform for the shared view required across Infrastructure Tasmania, councils and proponents: the City of Hobart's Digital Twin is estimated to deliver benefits of several hundred million dollars

over the next decade, and NSW's school infrastructure digital twin an estimated $202 million in business case savings alone.[19]

- Tasmania already operates proven collaborative models, from the Tasmanian Imagery Program's cost-sharing approach to the LIST-based Common Operating Platform relied on by emergency services.[20]

Closing

The difference between Tasmania's favourable and business-as-usual geospatial futures is worth close to $400 million a year by 2033-34, and the deciding factors sit within this Strategy's remit. The task is not to defend Tasmania's geospatial foundation but to demonstrate its compounding value: every dollar of investment facilitated, every approval accelerated, every excavation made safely and every region activated draws on surveying and geospatial information, science & technology. TASSIC looks forward to working with the government to ensure the final Strategy captures that opportunity.

Footnotes

1. ACIL Allen, *Economic Impact of Geospatial Services in Australia*, report prepared for the Geospatial Council of Australia, 30 October 2024, pp. xiii–xiv (all amounts $A 2023-24).
2. Ibid., Table 4.3, p. 60 ($1,190m favourable less $795m BAU); figures as presented in TASSIC's submission to the Our Digital Future consultation, 2025.
3. ACIL Allen (2024), op. cit., pp. xvii–xviii ("What would shift the dial").
4. Land Information System Tasmania, www.thelist.tas.gov.au.
5. Independent Review of the Tasmanian State Service, Dr Ian Watt AC, July 2021 (DPAC), Recommendation 22 and Figure 20.
6. ACIL Allen (2024), op. cit., case study 32 (Spatial WA); Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy (Consultation Draft), National benchmarking, p. 21.
7. Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy (Consultation Draft), Emerging domains of growth, p. 25.
8. TASSIC, submission to the Our Digital Future consultation, 2025.
9. UN Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (2024), cited in ACIL Allen (2024), op. cit., p. xviii.
10. TASSIC and TasICT, partnership announcement, 2026.
11. Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy (Consultation Draft), Priority 3 consultation focus, p. 28; ACIL Allen (2024), op. cit., Table 4.4, p. 60, and Section 4.3.
12. Independent Review of the Tasmanian State Service (2021), op. cit.
13. TASSIC, *Advancing Location Intelligence: Strategic Plan for Spatial Information in Tasmania 2022–2025*, p. 4.
14. ACIL Allen (2024), op. cit., case study 44.
15. Before You Dig Australia, www.byda.com.au.
16. Economic Diversification and Investment Strategy (Consultation Draft), pp. 31–32.
17. ACIL Allen (2024), op. cit., pp. xiii and xviii.
18. TASSIC, Strategic Plan 2022–2025, pp. 10, 14; TASSIC, Our Digital Future submission, 2025.
19. ACIL Allen (2024), op. cit., case studies 32, 34 and 35.
20. Ibid., case study 6; Tasmanian Imagery Program, nre.tas.gov.au/land-tasmania/aerial-photography/tasmanian-imagery-program.
21. TASSIC Charter

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