

2006 Progress Report Summary

The 2006 Progress Report provides an opportunity to summarise achievements during the first five years of reporting progress – particularly with respect to the benchmark targets originally set for 2005.

Over the last five years, Tasmania *Together* has reported progress against indicators of our community, culture, democracy, economy and environment.

Our community has seen steady improvements in feelings of safety and a reduction in property crime. At the same time there have been increased incidences of injury and poisonings; and increased reporting of both domestic violence, and of abuse or neglect resulting in children being placed under care or protection.

A greater number of Tasmanians undertake volunteer work, and more people are participating in education and training. Literacy and numeracy rates have improved over the five years but have not always achieved the levels for which targets were set. School retention rates improved for most of the period but have dropped in the last year.

Tasmanians are living longer and there have been modest improvements in our eating and exercise habits. But after an initial decline, smoking rates have recently gone up.

Although the target of matching the national average was not met, Tasmania has made significant progress in addressing long term unemployment. Living costs for low income couples have crept up, but for families the figure has dropped slightly.

Tasmania is a more attractive place for young people, with significantly fewer leaving the state and more being engaged in employment and further education. Young people also have more say on local council issues, but remain poorly represented on government boards and committees.

Tasmanians are better connected through internet access, and we participate and attend more cultural events and activities – including multicultural events. Unfortunately, there have been more claims of discrimination, and little progress toward pay equity for women.

Tasmania's population has grown slightly as has our share of migrants. The gradual movement from rural and regional to urban areas continues; and we have fewer people in the 15-39 age bracket.

Overall, our regional communities are considered less disadvantaged than they were five years ago, and are better serviced in some areas (eg ambulance paramedics), but not in others (eg rural GPs).

Aboriginal culture has been recognised through increased teacher training in schools, increased interpretation at major visitor sites and an increase in land owned or managed by the Aboriginal community. Only limited success has been achieved in relation to the repatriation of cultural property collections held overseas.

Turning to our economy, Tasmania's increasing workforce participation rate matched national increases for most of the period, with more workers in secure employment and earning higher wages. The number of vocational and tertiary graduates employed in the State remains much the same.

Tasmania's business environment has been boosted by upgraded international credit ratings, sustained growth in Gross State Product, increased levels of investment, significant growth in tourism, more value-adding in manufacturing, and relatively high levels of business confidence.

Cultural heritage values are reflected in increased listings of and attendances at heritage sites, more publications and significant cultural items being conserved, and greater participation in cultural heritage courses.

Finally, in relation to our environment, air and water quality measures show improvement, the moratorium on genetically-modified crops has been extended, and native vegetation levels have been maintained. The percentage of land protected has increased and the use of 1080 poison has declined. On the downside, improvement targets for threatened species have not been met, and the proportion of protected land covered by approved management plans is much the same.

Whilst data to report on clear-felling in old growth forests is unavailable, the Community Forests Agreement signed between the State and Federal governments provides for more old growth forests to be protected, and for the area of old growth harvested via clear felling each year on State forests to be no more than 20% by 2010.