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## Communiqué

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### Premier's Local Government Council – 2 October 2009

The Premier's Local Government Council (PLGC) held its 30<sup>th</sup> meeting on 2 October 2009, in Launceston, Tasmania.

The Chair of the Local Government Board, Mr Brent Armstrong, updated the Council on the review of the potential merger of the Break O'Day and Glamorgan-Spring Bay Councils, and the development of guiding principles for future voluntary mergers. Mr Armstrong informed the Council that it was the Board's opinion that the likelihood of a potential merger rested largely on the financial viability of the merged entity, but it would also take into account the economic, community and governance impacts on the community. He also advised that the Board considered that future voluntary mergers should only be considered based on a business case put forward by the relevant councils and following extensive community consultation.

The PLGC resolved that the focus of its 2010 work program would be on local government sustainability incorporating:

- the continuation of the *Stronger Councils, Better Services* initiative and other programs that encourage and assist councils to work collaboratively
- the implementation of long-term financial and asset management planning frameworks
- the development of sustainability objectives and indicators for the local government sector.

The PLGC noted that the State was well placed to attract Commonwealth funding under the \$25 million Local Government Reform Fund given the work that the State Government and the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) had already undertaken on the development of long-term asset and financial management planning frameworks. The Council noted, however, that consideration would need to be given to projects promoting collaboration to maximise the opportunities that the fund presented.

The Council reviewed the success of the first year of the Women**Can** campaign that aimed to attract more women to stand in the 2009 local government elections. Noting that two councils were not going to elections in October, and noting that more than 50 per cent of female councillors were not up for re-election in 2009:

- there had been an increase in the number of women standing for deputy mayor from 22 per cent to 29 per cent
- there had been a small increase (to 26.5 per cent) in the number of women standing for election as councillors/aldermen
- the number of women standing for election as mayor had decreased by two per cent.

Members acknowledged that the 2010 Year of Women in Local Government would likely have an impact on the number of women standing in the 2011 elections.

The Minister for Local Government, Jim Cox MP, confirmed that the State Government would undertake a review of valuation and rating. He said that a group was being established to set up the terms of reference for a review, and noted that LGAT and the valuer-general would be represented on that group. The Minister said that he was hopeful that the review would commence within two months, and that he did not want the review to drag out over a long time. He noted, however, that it was unlikely that changes would be in effect in time for the next rating year.

The Council also discussed the impact of recent rains on local government road maintenance programs, the establishment of an integrity commission, the progress of the water and sewerage reforms, progress under the statewide partnership agreement on climate change, and the roll-out of the National Broadband Network.

The next meeting of the PLGC is scheduled for 16 December 2009, in Hobart.