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To: [Minister Vincent](#)
Cc: [Murphy-Gregory, Luke](#)
Subject: Reforms to Councillor Numbers and Allowances
Date: Tuesday, 28 October 2025 3:01:47 PM
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Dear Minister Vincent

I submit the following response from the Derwent Valley Council to the Discussion Paper - Reforms to Councillor Numbers and Allowances.

Introduction

Derwent Valley Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed reforms to councillor numbers and allowances. We acknowledge the intent to improve fairness, consistency, and sustainability across Tasmania's local government sector and appreciate the Government's consultative approach. Council is **opposed** to the proposed reduction in councillor numbers and the rigid application of the scoring framework.

General Position

Council believes the proposed changes risk undermining local representation, particularly in regional and rural communities. We are concerned that the reforms may reduce democratic engagement, increase governance risks, and fail to reflect the unique needs of individual councils.

Key Concerns

- **Loss of Representation:** Reducing Derwent Valley Council from 8 to 7 councillors may limit community access to elected representatives and reduce diversity in decisionmaking. It was noted that there is a high proportion of candidates from one area within the region.
- **Governance Risks:** Smaller councils may struggle to maintain quorums, especially during periods of absence or conflict of interest.
- **Community Perception:** The combination of fewer councillors and higher pay may be viewed negatively by the public. There is also concern about the tone used throughout the paper, as to the calibre of sitting or future representatives in relation to allowances paid.
- **One-Size-Fits-All Model:** The scoring framework does not adequately account for local context, historical representation, or community expectations.

Alternative Proposals

To address the Government's objectives while preserving local representation, Council proposes the following alternatives:

a. Flexible Representation Bands

- Allow councils to choose between a range of councillor numbers (e.g. 7–9) based on

community consultation and governance needs.

- Use the scoring framework as a guide, not a mandate.

b. Phased Implementation

- Introduce changes gradually over two council terms to allow communities and councils to adapt.
- Pilot the framework with a small number of councils before statewide rollout.

c. Enhanced Allowance Review Without Reducing Numbers

- Increase councillor allowances using the proposed methodology, but retain existing councillor numbers.
- This would still attract skilled candidates without compromising representation.

d. Optional Superannuation Contributions

- Rather than mandating superannuation payments, provide councils with the option to implement direct payments based on councillor preference.

e. Local Representation Review Panels

- Establish regional panels to assess representation needs based on local factors, rather than applying a uniform formula.

Consultation Questions

Quorum Management

Council supports legislative provisions to manage quorum challenges, but believes this issue is exacerbated by reducing the number of councillors.

Superannuation Payments

Council suggests clearer arrangements for superannuation and recommends flexibility in implementation.

Legislative Embedding

Council does not support embedding the methodology in legislation at this stage. A trial period and further sector-wide consultation should precede any legislative commitment.

Conclusion

Derwent Valley Council urges the Government to reconsider the proposed reduction in councillor numbers and to explore alternative approaches that preserve representation while addressing remuneration and governance concerns. We welcome continued dialogue and remain committed to strengthening local government in Tasmania.

Yours sincerely

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We acknowledge and pay respect to the Tasmanian Aboriginal Community as the traditional and original owners and continuing custodians of this land on which we work on, and acknowledge and pay respect to Elders, past, present, and emerging.

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