

14 November 2025

Hon. Kerry Vincent MP
Minister for Local Government
Office of Local Government

By email: lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au

RE: Local Government (Targeted Reform) Bill 2025

Local Government Professionals Tasmania (**LG Pro Tas**) thanks you for your letter dated 6 October inviting feedback on the Local Government Amendment (Targeted Reform) Bill 2025 Exposure Draft which the Government released on 6 October 2025.

As President I appreciate the opportunity to provide you with feedback from our members. There are some mixed views on the reforms with some members believing that the amendments are about the State Government asserting further control over how Local Government operates, whilst others see the reforms as a real attempt to better support Local Government.

There is a level of support for Ministerial Orders being more widely used in the *Local Government Act* however there is a level of concern that they may be used to take away independence of decisions and processes of Local Government.

There are some concerns that including climate change as a legislated responsibility is liability and cost shifting by the State Government. LG Pro Tas members are concerned that there could be some unintended legal and insurance liability consequences for councils should this change be included.

LG Pro Tas members would like to see the Workforce Strategy be a responsibility of the Office of Local Government. Councils can and do plan for their workforces, however there are bigger workforce issues that should be dealt with at a whole of sector level.

Mandatory training for councillors is supported as long as there is a penalty for not completing the required training. If there is no penalty for non-completion of training, then making it mandatory achieves nothing. This can be seen by experiences of other States who have mandatory training and no penalty for non-completion. The responsibility for any consequences of non-compliance with mandatory training by Councillors should be the responsibility of the Office of Local Government as it is our members' view that it is inappropriate for a council's General Manager/Chief Executive Officer to manage their own employers for non-compliance.

Whilst supportive of consistent strategic performance reporting – it is critical that the data being published for each council compares “apples with apples”. Members are concerned about the

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capacity of small councils to fund the required reporting on the same level as a larger council would be able to manage. Without consistent, manageable levels of reporting across the board for all councils, it would be impossible to have objective comparisons of the data across the State.

Generally, LG Pro Tas members are supportive of the temporary advisors and internal audit reforms. Members are also generally supportive of remote access to meetings if the Government is serious about imposing penalties to those Councillors who do not maintain confidentiality.

Members are supportive of a Local Government Charter but would like to see it in the *Local Government Act*. There are some concerns that if it is not legislated that the Charter may be changed to suit the Minister of the day. Members believe that the Charter should be principle based and broad enough not to interfere with councils' ability to innovate.

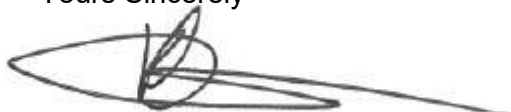
An overarching concern of LG Pro Tas members is that the legislation does not adequately take into consideration the financial and operational impacts these reforms will have on smaller councils – particularly small regional councils. The practical reality is that some councils, even if shared services is an option, will not be able to afford the costs that come with many of the changes – for example the operational costs involved in more information being added to rates notices and the data required for strategic performance reporting. It is likely that some councils may have to upgrade or change software to enable compliance with these types of changes and, as such, incur new ongoing operational costs. Capacity of and cost to smaller councils are significant concerns held by LG Pro Tas members.

Finally, LG Pro Tas members are concerned that an unintended (or intended) impact of the changes to legislation will be forced amalgamations as smaller regional councils will not be able to comply with the new reforms. Timing of the reforms being enacted will be a factor that will impact councils' ability to implement the required operational changes in a way that meets the councils' operational lead times.

As such we request that, if the legislation is passed, or in preparation for the legislation being passed, any technical working groups convened to prepare for or to implement changes include a member of LG Pro Tas nominated by the LG Pro Tas Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on these important draft amendments. Should you wish to discuss the above further, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0448 037 064.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kristen Desmond', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kristen Desmond
President
LG Professionals Tasmania