

4 April 2023

Hon Nic Street MP
Minister for Local Government
GPO Box 123
HOBART TAS 7000

Issued by email only

Dear Minister Street

Proposed reforms to the *Local Government Act 1993*

Thank you for your letter dated 17 March 2023 drawing our attention to the work being undertaken in regard to proposed reforms to the *Local Government Act 1993* (LGA).

I note that the discussion paper, *Merit-based recruitment in councils*, outlines a proposed reform program that is intended to enhance the capability of the system of local government in Tasmania and respond to the recommendations in the Report of the Auditor-General No.2 of 2021-22: Council general manager recruitment, appointment and performance assessment (the report).

The report drew out concerns that councils were not using contemporary human resources practices when recruiting general managers including the application of the merit principle, training for elected members involved in recruitment, management of conflicts of interest and performance assessment. The report made 4 recommendations to address these concerns.

Under the *Audit Act 2008* the Tasmanian Audit Office provides reports of its audits and recommendations to Parliament. The specifics of how the recommendations are best addressed are beyond our scope.

Broadly however, I note that the discussion paper proposes to reintroduce the merit principle to the LGA, mandate the advertising of general manager appointments and provide a set of principles for general manager recruitment and performance assessment. These measures appear consistent with contemporary human resources practice and if implemented appropriately have the potential to address the concerns raised.

Thank you for the invitation to comment.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Wassell
Acting Auditor-General

Copy for: Office of Local Government