

07 November 2025

Luke Murphy-Gregory  
A/Director of Local Government  
Office of Local Government  
Sent via email: [lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au)

Dear Luke,

### **Reforms to Councillor Numbers and Allowance**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Reforms to Councillor Numbers and Allowance. This submission has been prepared by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) on behalf of Tasmanian local government in collaboration with our members; all 29 councils.

LGAT is incorporated under the Local Government Act 1993 and is the representative body and advocate for local government in Tasmania. Where a council has made a direct submission to this process, any omission of specific comments made by that council in this submission should not be viewed as lack of support by LGAT for that specific issue.

Earlier this year the Government consulted councils on the remaking of the local government regulations. At that time local government feedback was supportive of the broad direction of the reforms proposed. The one area where there was consistent negative feedback was the proposed change to Schedule 4 of the General Regulations – Allowances for elected members. A proposal for an increase to councillor allowance of 3% was put forward to account for changes to the superannuation guarantee. While this was welcomed, the quantum of increase was not felt to recognise the contemporary expectations or workload required of a councillor.

At the time it was noted that the Government had supported the Future of Local Government Review Final Report Recommendation 34 for a review into councillor numbers and allowances, with an *“Interim review to be conducted in 2025, with broader review in 2027”*.

The Government’s response to these concerns is acknowledged and appreciated through the undertaking of this review and the attempts in this reform to balance limiting costs to the community alongside of ensuring there is an adequate allowance to attract and retain high calibre elected representatives in Tasmania.

## Merit of the Reform

A majority of councils have indicated support or support in principle for the proposed reforms. The intent to improve councillor remuneration to better reflect the growing complexity, workload, and responsibilities associated with serving as an elected member was welcomed. It was also felt that aligning councillor representation and allowance in a consistent and data-driven approach across the State is a positive step forward.

However, a number of individual councils have raised concerns with specific aspects of the methodology that need to be investigated by the Government. It was also felt by many councils that the relatively small increase in allowances was tokenistic, unlikely to sufficiently encourage more candidates to stand and not sufficient to offset the loss in representation or diversity associated with a reduction in councillors.

It was also noted that reducing councillor numbers without deeper reforms is piecemeal and distracts from the more challenging reforms that many believe local government in Tasmania urgently needs.

There were a number of councils that were supportive in principle of the reforms, but had significant concerns over the risk associated with establishing a council with only 5 elected representatives. It was felt that it is likely there will be instances where a quorum will be impacted by councillor absences or conflicts of interest, particularly with the Bass Strait councils.

While the proposed reduction from seven to five councillors is understood within the context of achieving comparable ratios of elected members to voters statewide, it must be recognised that smaller rural municipalities face unique challenges in maintaining effective representation across dispersed communities. There are a range of options that can be explored to resolve these concerns. We request that the Government engages with our sector and in particular the impacted councils on potential solutions.

## Consultation questions

*Should the Government consider any strategies/guidance for council decision making where a quorum cannot be maintained?*

All councils supported the Government considering further strategies and guidance for council decision making where a quorum cannot be maintained. Importantly, it was felt that the suggestions provided in the Discussion Paper were not sufficient and that any further measures should not require an approval process with the Minister or Office of Local Government. The day-to-day operations and functions of councils should not be reliant upon Government approvals.

*Should the Local Government Act 1993 be amended to require councils to pay a 12% superannuation equivalent payment from allowances into a councillor's nominated superannuation fund?*

A majority of councils felt that the Local Government Act should not be amended to require councils to pay a superannuation equivalent payment. It was noted that contribution to

superannuation funds should be a personal financial management choice, as councillors are paid an allowance, not a salary.

It is noted that since 2004, Tasmanian councillors have received a 9% superannuation equivalent payment as part of their allowances (increased to 12% from June 2025). There is no requirement for this amount to be paid into a superannuation fund, with councillors able to make voluntary contributions. However, many councillors were not aware of these arrangements until recently. The recent changes to the General Regulations and this reform have been effective in broadening the understanding of superannuation equivalent payment across the sector.

*Should the methodology and ongoing review framework for councillor allowances and numbers be embedded in legislation to provide certainty and transparency to the sector and community?*

A majority of councils supported the methodology and ongoing review framework being embedded in legislation.

Yours sincerely,



Dion Lester  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**