

6 November 2025

The Honourable Kerry Vincent MLC
Minister for local Government
GPO Box 123
Hobart TAS 7001

Via email only: lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au

Dear Minister,

Feedback on Reforms to Councillor Numbers and Allowances Discussion Paper

I write in response to your letter 15 September 2025 outlining the State Government's review of Councillor numbers and allowances. The Meander Valley Council deliberated the discussion paper at our Workshop on 23 September 2025, the topics were well debated and consensus was not achieved on all matters. Our Councillors determined that they would provide their individual feedback to the consultation process and that I would provide feedback with my own views, which is as follows.

General comments relating to the discussion paper:

- I have made previous representations to the previous representatives former Minister Nic Street, former Director Mike Mogridge and current Acting Director Luke Murphy-Gregory that the allowances provide to Councillors at Meander Valley Council are too low and do not provide sufficient reimbursement to our Councillors for the time and effort required to undertake the role. This will be further intensified if additional requirements such as the mandatory learning and development framework is introduced. My opinion is that our Councillor allowances need to be increased, regardless of the number of Councillors that will be elected in October 2026.
- Our Council currently has 9 Councillors and is delivering high quality governance to our Local Government area. It is my personal opinion that if our Councillor numbers were to reduce from 9 Councillors to 7 Councillors, that the high level of governance would continue and not diminish the local democracy. I do acknowledge that some stakeholders are of the opinion that a decrease in the number of Councillors could be detrimental.

1. Should we consider any strategies/guidance for council decision making where a quorum cannot be maintained?

Yes, this is the main concern that has been raised with me during this consultation period. There is concern in the sector that where there are unplanned absences, combined with Councillor declaration of interests and a Councillor decides to leave the Council Meeting, there would need to be provisions to maintain a quorum of the Meeting. This point was believed to be a greater concern for those councils proposed to be reduced to 5 Councillors, and for decisions where Council is acting as a planning authority and decisions need to be made within legislative timeframes. I believe that a greater level of detail would also need to be provided to all elected members about declarations of interest, to reduce the prevalence of Councillors withdrawing from decisions.

2. Should it be mandatory for councillors' existing superannuation equivalent payments to be directed into a nominated superannuation fund?

Many Councillors were not aware that the Councillors allowances had any relevance to Superannuation. I believe that as Councillors are not employees, paying superannuation is beginning to blur these lines. The only way that I think it would be appropriate for superannuation to be paid is if it were in addition to the current Councillor Allowances and there is no corresponding reduction in Councillor Allowances to fund this amount.

3. Should the methodology and ongoing review framework for councillor allowances and numbers be embedded in legislation?

I am supportive of the revised matrix for determining Councillor Allowances, this is seen as an improvement from the current system and should be introduced as proposed.

If you require any additional information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me directly on (03) 6393 5337 or by email jonathan.harmey@mvc.tas.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Harmey
General Manager