



# Discussion paper

Reforms to Councillor Numbers and Allowances

Office of Local Government  
Department of Premier and Cabinet



# Contents

Contents.....	2
Executive summary .....	3
Introduction .....	6
Reform proposal summary .....	8
Key consultation issues .....	9
Detailed exploration: the case for a new framework.....	12
Detailed methodology: a new framework for determining numbers and allowances	15
Aligning numbers with allowances .....	18
Scoring formula.....	20
Scoring rubric .....	21
Summary of changes to allowance and numbers .....	22
Ongoing sustainability of the framework.....	24
Implementing the framework .....	25
Setting the foundation for future allowance reviews .....	26
Appendix A – Detailed scoring .....	27
Appendix B – Comparative representation and allowance data .....	30

## Executive summary

Tasmania's local government system needs reform to ensure fair representation and adequate pay for councillors while keeping costs manageable for communities. This Discussion Paper proposes changes to the number of councillors and their allowances across Tasmania's 29 councils, aiming to deliver more effective, equitable, and professional local governance. The reforms are designed to be cost-neutral overall, meaning no extra burden on ratepayers, and are open for public feedback until 7 November 2025.

### Why reform is needed

- **High number of councillors:** Tasmania has one of the highest numbers of councillors per person in Australia, which can lead to inefficiencies and, in some cases, undemocratic election outcomes where candidates win with very few votes.
- **Inconsistencies in representation:** Historical reviews of numbers targeted at a small number of councils, have left councils of similar size with different numbers of councillors, creating inequitable variations.
- **Low pay for councillors:** Current allowances do not reflect the growing complexity of councillors' roles, discouraging diverse and talented candidates and indirectly limiting the time some councillors can devote to their duties.
- **Outdated system:** The current method for setting allowances, based on registered voters and operating revenue, has notable flaws - failing to account for population size or council responsibilities, and is susceptible to volatile changes from grant revenue.

### What we propose

The Government proposes a new, fair, and data-driven system to set councillor numbers and allowances, using factors like population, development activity, infrastructure, urbanisation, and road networks. Key changes include:

- **Fewer councillors:** Reducing the total number of councillors from 263 to 203, with councils having 9, 7, or 5 councillors based on their size and complexity.
- **Higher allowances:** Increasing councillor allowances by 14.25% on average, funded by savings from fewer councillors.
- **A fairer framework:** Aligning councillor numbers and pay to council responsibilities, ensuring equal pay for equal work and consistency across similar councils.

- **Ongoing reviews:** Establishing regular, four-yearly reviews to keep the system up-to-date and responsive to community needs.
- **Additional support:** Exploring whether to require councils to pay the 12% superannuation equivalent allowance into councillors' super funds.

## Benefits of the reforms

- **Strengthened governance:** Fewer, better-paid councillors will assist in attracting skilled and diverse candidates, improving decision-making and professionalism.
- **Fairer pay:** Higher allowances reflect councillors' growing responsibilities, supporting their commitment to communities.
- **Fair representation:** The new system ensures councils have the right number of councillors for their size and needs, reducing inconsistencies.
- **No extra cost:** Savings from fewer councillors will fund higher allowances, keeping the reforms cost-neutral for ratepayers overall.
- **Stronger democracy:** Higher election vote thresholds will enhance the legitimacy of elected councillors.
- **Future-proof system:** Regular reviews and stable metrics will keep the system fair and sustainable over time.

## How the reforms will happen

It is proposed the changes will be implemented through amendments to the *Local Government Act 1993* before the October 2026 local government elections. This approach ensures timely delivery and broad support from communities, councils, and Parliament. The reforms complement other improvements, such as councillor education, stronger sanctions for poor behaviour, paid parental leave, and flexible meeting attendance, to make the being a councillor more accessible and appealing.

## Your feedback matters

We want to hear from you to ensure these reforms meet community needs. Key questions include:

- Should we consider any strategies/guidance for council decision making where a quorum cannot be maintained?
- Should it be mandatory for councillors' existing superannuation equivalent payments to be directed into a nominated superannuation fund?
- Should the methodology and ongoing review framework for councillor allowances and numbers be embedded in legislation?

Please share your views by 7 November 2025:

- **Email:** [lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au)
- **Post:** Office of Local Government, PO BOX 123, Hobart, Tasmania 7000

Your input will shape a stronger, fairer, and more effective local government system for Tasmania.

# Introduction

## The need for reform

The Government believes it is timely to reform councillor numbers and allowances across the local government sector. Having the ‘right’ number of councillors in a local government area (LGA) is critical to ensuring effective and efficient governance, representation, and service delivery. There is also a natural relationship between levels of representation and appropriate pay, reflecting the individual circumstances of a council, such as population size, geographic spread, asset value, and development activity. However, evidence suggests that Tasmania’s current system is not delivering the best outcomes for the sector or the broader community, and change is needed to achieve more efficient, effective, and consistent local representation.

## Current challenges

Tasmania has the highest number of local government elected officials per capita (except for the Northern Territory) and, particularly for smaller councils, some of the lowest comparable levels of remuneration. Since the *Local Government Act 1993* established the current 29-council system a small number of ad-hoc reviews of councillor numbers have led to inconsistent representation across municipalities. Similarly, councillor allowance reviews (conducted in 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2018) have been infrequent, with only minor changes since 2004 aside from annual indexation. This has resulted in allowances that do not reflect the increasing complexity of councillors’ roles, community expectations, or statutory responsibilities.

## Stakeholder feedback

During the Future of Local Government Review (FoLGR), the Local Government Board heard strong concerns that existing councillor allowances:

- do not encourage a diverse range of candidates to run for council
- fail to reflect the effort required, given the role’s growing demands
- may deter talented councillors and limit their ability to devote sufficient time to their duties.

A 2021 Australian National University study, cited by councils, found that low remuneration in New South Wales led to dissatisfaction, with 81% of councillors

reporting their role as unrewarding<sup>1</sup>. In Tasmania, several high-profile councillors cited low allowances as a reason for not recontesting the 2022 elections.

## Balancing community needs

While higher councillor pay is widely supported, it must be balanced against community cost-of-living pressures and fiscal constraints to avoid unduly burdening Tasmanians. During FoLGR the Local Government Board noted that “...consideration should be given to how many elected representatives are needed to effectively serve the needs of a particular community, and the merits of having, for example, fewer councillors who are remunerated at a higher level versus a greater number of councillors on relatively lower allowances.” The Board recommended that, following any voluntary amalgamation program, the Tasmanian Government commission an independent review of councillor numbers and allowances to support a structural reset of the sector<sup>2</sup>.

## Government response

In its [Response to the Future of Local Government Review](#), the Government supported this recommendation in principle and committed to:

- Review allowances using the existing methodology for inclusion in the remade *Local Government (General) Regulations* by June 2025.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of councillor numbers and allowances after the October 2026 elections.

However, to ensure reforms support high-quality candidates for the 2026 elections and address strong sectoral advocacy for fairer pay, the Government is now proposing to bring forward its comprehensive review. This decision is driven by:

- the need to attract and retain high-quality candidates for the 2026 elections and beyond
- the current allowance methodology’s failure to deliver meaningful change for most councils
- the progression of the voluntary amalgamation program not precluding a review before the end of 2026
- strong sectoral advocacy for fairer remuneration in the immediate term.

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<sup>1</sup> Local Government NSW 2022. Submission to the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal. February 2022. ([www.lgnsw.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/Submissions/2022/Submission-to-the-Local-Government-Remuneration-Tribunal\\_Feb2022.pdf](http://www.lgnsw.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/Submissions/2022/Submission-to-the-Local-Government-Remuneration-Tribunal_Feb2022.pdf)).

<sup>2</sup> See Recommendation 34 of the [Future of Local Government Review Final Report](#).



## Supporting broader reforms

Through the [Local Government Priority Reform Agenda 2024-26](#), the Government is already making the councillor role more appealing and accessible by:

- introducing compulsory councillor education
- allowing remote meeting attendance in certain circumstances
- providing parental leave for councillors
- increasing the superannuation equivalent component of allowances by 3%, to 12%
- delivering stronger sanctions for serious councillor misconduct.

The proposed reforms to councillor numbers and allowances complement these changes, aiming to deliver better outcomes for councils and communities starting in late 2026.

## Reform proposal summary

This Discussion Paper presents a fair and structured approach to setting councillor numbers and allowances in Tasmania's local government, and we seek your feedback to shape it. The proposal is detailed further in the sections below.

If taken forward, the proposed approach presented would see a reduction in elected members across Tasmania's 29 councils and a fair increase in allowances for all elected members compared to their current remuneration, at no net cost to the Tasmanian community.

The proposal simplifies and aligns councillor numbers and pay based on clear, common factors, delivering consistency and fairness across councils.

In simple terms, the proposal would:

- Assign councils to one of three categories (9, 7, or 5 councillors) using a scoring system based on factors like population, infrastructure, development activity, and geographic size.
- Utilise six allowance categories, with pay levels set using the same scoring system to create fair 'bands' within each councillor category.
- Ensure consistent representation for similar councils, reducing the total number of councillors by 60 to 203 statewide.
- Use savings from fewer councillors to fund a cost-neutral 14.25% increase to all allowance bands (this increase being considered appropriate in the context of fewer councillors, and in recognition of the growing complexity and importance of the role of councillors).



- Create a sustainable model for regular reviews of councillor numbers and allowances every four years.
- Implement the new framework through amendments to the *Local Government Act 1993*, streamlining the process without needing separate reviews.

## Key consultation issues

While the Government is seeking feedback on all aspects of the reform proposal, several issues relating to the operation of a new numbers and allowances framework have been identified where specific input is particularly welcomed.

### Quorum management

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

For councils with five councillors, maintaining quorums may occasionally be challenging if multiple councillors are absent, but proposed reforms like flexible meeting attendance aim to ensure effective decision-making.

While there have been no observable issues in five or six councillor councils in other jurisdictions, a quorum may still be impacted in rare instances where there are a number of absences and/or conflicts of interest which preclude voting on a matter.

It is noted the Government's broader reform agenda seeks to make council attendance more flexible and accessible, which should limit or reduce absences.

However, it is also noted that section 67 of the Victorian *Local Government Act 2020* allows councils to make decisions in an 'alternative manner' where a quorum cannot be maintained due to a number of councillors having a conflict of interest in a matter. This includes:

- resolving to split the matter into 2 or more separate parts, so that a quorum can be maintained for each separate part
- making prior decisions on component parts of the matter at a meeting for which a quorum can be maintained, before deciding the overall matter at a meeting for which a quorum can be maintained.

Feedback is sought on whether a similar provision should be included in Tasmania's Local Government Act, where the broader numbers and allowances reform proposal proceeds.

## Superannuation

**Question** – 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?

Councillors are not regarded as employees for taxation and superannuation purposes. This means councils are not obliged to pay superannuation contributions on behalf of councillors. It is currently an option open to councillors (or indeed councils by resolution) to self-manage any voluntary contributions, should they wish to.

Since 2004, Tasmanian councillors have received a 9% superannuation equivalent payment as part of their allowances (increased to 12% from June 2025). However, there is no requirement for this amount to be paid into a superannuation fund (even though councillors can make voluntary contributions).

This has led to a general misunderstanding that councillors do not receive any allowances in lieu of super, which would be mitigated by the requirement for the equivalent amount to be paid into a fund.

## Setting the foundation for future reviews

**Question** – 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?

There are deficiencies with the current processes for reviewing councillor numbers and allowances - including a lack of structure and transparency around the scope, timing and conduct of regular reviews.

The framework proposed in this paper provides the opportunity to provide certainty around future reviews and transparency into how they are to occur.

The Government is considering changes to the Act to include the methodology and establish a mandatory schedule for regular reviews (for example, once every term of council). This would see the re-application of the methodology to councils on a regular basis, ensuring council numbers and allowances remain fair and equitable on an absolute and relative basis over time in response to demographic and other changes.

Submissions are open for eight weeks until 7 November 2025, and can be made:

- by email to [lq.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:lq.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au)

- in writing to the Office of Local Government, PO BOX 123, Hobart Tasmania 7000.

# Detailed exploration: the case for a new framework

## Overrepresentation on a national scale, and democratic impacts

Tasmania has the second highest proportion (after the Northern Territory) of councillors per head of population in Australia. Tasmania's small, dispersed population contributes to this, but aligning representation with other jurisdictions can enhance fairness and efficiency.

**Figure 1 - Average population per councillor – jurisdictional comparison**

Jurisdiction	Number of councils	Number of councillors <sup>3</sup>	Population (ABS 2021)	Population per councillor
NSW	128	1259	8,072,163	6412
Vic	79	618	6,503,491	10523
QLD	77	600*	5,156,138	8594
WA	139	1200*	2,660,026	2217
SA	68	630	1,781,516	2828
Tas	29	263	557,571	2120
NT	17	159	232,605	1463

While local democratic representation is undoubtedly important, there are democratic and financial impacts associated with overrepresentation. Existing levels of representation in Tasmania, particularly in instances of recounts, can lead to undemocratic outcomes, where candidates can be elected with very few primary votes.

[Appendix B, figure 4](#) shows the deidentified results of all 27 recounts undertaken since 2022 – including the total number of ballots submitted and the number and percentage of first preference votes achieved in the 2022 local government elections. Of the recounts since the 2022 elections there was one candidate being elected to a small council on 17 first preference votes and another in a large urban council who received 0.89% of the total first preference votes in that municipality. This calls into question the democratic mandate and legitimacy of some elected members and suggests benefits of reforming councillor numbers is needed to 'lift the bar' for election to office.

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<sup>3</sup> QLD and WA figures are approximations from respective electoral commission/OLG websites.

## **Representational inconsistencies caused by historic, ad-hoc numbers reviews**

Since the establishment of Tasmania's current system of 29 councils in 1993 there have been several reviews of levels of representation in local government. These have occurred infrequently, have not captured the entire sector, and delivered piecemeal change.

The last of these were a series of councillor number reviews undertaken by the Local Government Board in the early 2010s. These reviews were opt-in and saw a small number (9) of participating councils reduce their number of elected representatives by between 1 and 3. This has created a legacy of inconsistencies in representation, where councils of broadly equivalent size, scale and complexity now have substantially different councillor numbers. For example, Devonport City Council reduced its numbers from 12 to 9 in 2013, having the same number of councillors as King Island despite the obvious discrepancies between their respective populations (26,989 vs 1,662).

Having a consistent framework for establishing an appropriate representational range which is applied to all councils will help, in the first instance, reset these inconsistencies, while in the future create an enduring, equitable and robust model for the democratic representation of Tasmanian communities.

Below shows the councils which reduced their numbers in 2012 and 2013, and by how many:

Central Coast – 12 to 9

Kingborough – 12 to 10

Devonport – 12 to 9

Southern Midlands – 9 to 7

Derwent Valley – 9 to 8

Tasman – 9 to 7

Glamorgan-Spring Bay – 9 to 8

Waratah-Wynyard – 10 to 8

Glenorchy City – 12 to 10

Because of these historical reductions, under the proposed reforms the councils above see only minor representational adjustments, such that they achieve reasonable alignment with comparable councils. These councils will see lower proportional savings following an increase in allowances. However, it is recognised that these councils have incurred community savings over time from their reduced number of councillors since 2012 and 2013.

## **An outdated councillor allowances framework contributes to unfair pay**

Reviews of councillor allowances have occurred relatively infrequently over the past 25 years (2000, 2004, 2008 and 2018), and since the introduction of the existing framework for determining councillor allowances in 2004, there have been only minor changes (annual indexation) to the allowances paid to councillors.

Councils are currently allocated to allowance categories based on a formula of **total voters multiplied by operating revenue divided by 1 million** to derive a score. It is recognised that there are a number of weaknesses with this framework, namely:

- Total voters as a metric does not reflect that councillors represent the interests and make decisions impacting all residents of their municipality. Therefore, the use of total population is considered a better indicator of representational need.
- Operating revenue is impacted by financial assistance and other capital grants paid to councils and is subject to notable year-on-year fluctuations. The five-year average value of approved development applications and written down value of infrastructure assets are more stable indicators of the complexity of a council's role.
- While not applied annually, the framework uses only data for a given financial year, therefore is vulnerable to sizeable fluctuations in operating revenue.
- The formula does not recognise the relationship between levels of representation and pay as indicators of the complexity and workload required on individual councils.

## Detailed methodology: a new framework for determining numbers and allowances

The Office of Local Government has developed a proposed formula to determine appropriate councillor numbers and allowances based on key demographic, financial and geographic metrics and broad alignment with levels of representation in other jurisdictions.

Based on their score against the metrics, councils are allocated to one of three categories, with either nine, seven or five elected representatives.

Importantly, the formula recognises not all factors contribute equally to representational need. It adopts a three-tiered approach, recognising population as the primary determinant of representational need, followed by complexity of role, and geographic factors.

The three tiers – and the metrics and benchmarks that determine a council's score under each – are explained below.

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
1 (scores 1 – 5)	Metric 1.1 – population size	Australian Bureau of Statistics	Population is the primary factor for determining communities' representational needs. While electors influence the outcomes of elections, councillors are responsible for representing the entire population of their LGAs, justifying population (rather than simply voting age population) as the appropriate metric.
2 (scores 1 – 3)	Metric 2.1 – total value of approved development applications (5-year average)	Councils Consolidated Data Collection	The value of development applications approved by a council acts a proxy measure for the complexity of a councillor's role by indicating workload, technical demands, community engagement needs, and strategic oversight required. This figure has been used over the total number of development applications received as the dollar value better reflects complexity, as



Tier	Metric	Source	Rationale
			opposed to workload (e.g. it is a more complex task assessing a smaller number of higher value applications than a higher number of straightforward applications, many of which may in fact be delegated).
	Metric 2.2 – total written down value of infrastructure assets	Councils Consolidated Data Collection	As with development applications, higher infrastructure values signal greater complexity in the role of councillor, indicating a larger asset base to maintain, fund, and plan for. This figure includes property, plant and equipment, roads and bridges, and stormwater infrastructure.
3 (scores 0.5 – 1.5)	Metric 3.1 – urbanisation (based on the Australian Classification of Local Governments)	Australian Classification of Local Governments	Captures the blend of population, density, and geographic factors, while ensuring alignment with the ACLG's focus on population, density, and urban/rural character. By integrating these inputs, the model ensures comparability with other Australian jurisdictions while addressing Tasmania's unique geography and small population.
	Metric 3.2 – kilometre of sealed roads (urban and rural)	Councils Consolidated Data Collection	Provides as an indication of the geographic dispersion of communities within an LGA, contributing to a need for representational 'spread'. Length of sealed roads is used as an indicator for population distribution as opposed to simple land area size, which in some geographically large councils can (and in many cases does) include national park, uninhabited and/or un-serviced land.

Tier	Metric	Source	Rationale
			Sealed roads are used to indicate that populations are predominately clustered along sealed roads. From a complexity perspective, the asset values metric (2.2) includes the value of both sealed and non-sealed roads.

## Ensuring no adverse representational outcomes

It is considered that the number categories capture the appropriate number of elected representatives commensurate to the scale and complexity of their required role and functions. Importantly, these categories ensure Tasmanian councils are broadly aligned with other jurisdictions on a councillor head of population basis and generally consistent with national levels of local representation.

Further, the three categories with odd numbers ensure that there is no risk of tied voting outcomes. This concern has been expressed by the sector, and nationally is considered by the Victorian Electoral Commission in the conduct of their local government representation reviews. All other jurisdictions (except Victoria) have councils with an even number of councillors, however this is generally a minority of councils. For example, only 24 of NSW's 127 councils have an even number of councillors, ranging from eight to twelve.

Nine councillors is a common level of representation for medium sized urban councils like Hobart, Launceston, Clarence, Glenorchy and Kingborough. Almost half of NSW's councils have 9 councillors – 11 of these with populations over 50,000 – including large metropolitan councils such as Camden with 135,000 people and Canada Bay with 91,385 people<sup>4</sup>.

It is also acknowledged there may be concerns around councils with five councillors having a low quorum threshold. The Government is currently delivering reforms to support flexible meeting attendance (the ability to meet remotely) in prescribed circumstances. This should support an overall uplift in attendance at meetings.

Further, the Government has examined whether there are any notable representational issues in five councillor councils in Victoria (there are six – with details of these councils and their population and geographic size in Appendix B, figure 3). Consultation with Victoria has indicated no notable or reported issues with

<sup>4</sup> NSW OLG – comparative council information (<https://olg.nsw.gov.au/public/about-councils/comparative-council-information/your-council-report/>)

the level of representation in these councils – in terms of governance, representation or otherwise. While under the Victorian *Local Government Act 2020*, the Minister for Local Government may appoint municipal monitors to councils experiencing governance issues to report back to observe, provide advice and report back to the Minister on governance issues. No monitors have been appointed to any five councillor councils.

## Aligning numbers with allowances

While historically councils have been allocated to allowance categories based on a formula of **total voters multiplied by operating revenue divided by 1 million** to derive a score, the use of this formula is not required under statute.

Instead, it is proposed that allowance categories be determined based on the same score which determines numbers – creating a robust, cohesive and consistent formula for numbers and allowances. This will better deliver an important driver for the reform: equal pay for equal work.

This approach also recognises and resolves the following weaknesses with the existing data inputs:

- Total voters as a metric does not reflect that councillors represent the views of all residents of their municipality, therefore the use of total population is considered a better indicator of representational need.
- Operating revenue is impacted by financial assistance and other capital grants paid to councils, and is subject to notable year-on-year fluctuations. The five-year average value of approved development applications and written down value of infrastructure assets are more stable indicators of the complexity of a council's role.

To ensure a smooth transition and maintain fairness, the proposal utilises six allowance categories, aligning them as 'bands' within the new councillor number categories. This approach links allowances to council responsibilities, encouraging sustainable growth in metrics like population and infrastructure, which reflect community strength and development.

In addition to this:

- Councillor allowances in each band will increase by 14.25%, funded by savings from reducing councillor numbers, to better recognise the growing complexity of elected representative roles. The reform would be implemented immediately after the October 2026 elections.
- To support small rural councils facing a reduction from nine to five councillors under the new formula, the proposal eliminates the smallest current allowance

category (category 7) and moves these councils to the next category (category 6). This ensures councillors receive a fairer, higher allowance that better reflects their increased scale of responsibilities, while savings from fewer councillors deliver value to communities.

The detailed scoring formula and rubric for determining numbers and allowances is as follows.

## Scoring formula

Tier	Metric	Scoring Benchmark (low to high)				
1	Population size	<15000	15,000–25,000	25,000-35,000	35,000-55,000	55,000+
		1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	5 points
2	5-year average value of approved development applications (\$'000'000)	<50	50-100	100+		
		1 point	2 points	3 points		
	Written down value of infrastructure assets (\$'000'000)	<150	150-399	400+		
		1 point	2 points	3 points		
3	Urbanisation (Simplified ACLG)	Rural Small	Rural Large	Urban		
		0.5 points	1 point	1.5 points		
	Km of sealed road (Urban and Rural)	<100km	100–249km	>250km		
		0.5 points	1 point	1.5 points		

## Scoring rubric

New Category	Councillor numbers	Score	Allowance band	Allowance (\$) <sup>5</sup>	Score
1	9	12+	1.1	51366	14+
			1.2	41585	12– 13.5
2	7	5 – 12	2.1	31491	10 – 11.5
			2.2	21404	7.5 – 9.5
			2.3	17888	5 – 7
3	5	<5	3.1	15064	<5

**Importantly** the allowance for each band does not materially change from the existing allowance categories, (just the formula for determining council's allocation) and is aligned as follows:

Proposed allowance band	Equivalent current allowance category (in the General Regulations)	Allowance (\$) (reflecting the 14.25% increase)
1.1	1	51366
1.2	2	41585
2.1	3	31491
2.2	4	21404
2.3	5	17888
3.1	6	15064

<sup>5</sup> Please note that allowances are adjusted by an inflationary factor on 1 November each year, and the calculations in this paper will be subject to that minor adjustment.

## Summary of changes to allowance and numbers

Below shows the proposed councillor numbers and allowances based on the formula. This approach would see a net reduction in councillors across the sector by 60, from 263 to 203. **(Appendix A contains detailed scoring):**

Numbers category	Allowance band	Council	Score	Current number of crs	New number of crs	Cr change	New cr allowance rate (\$)
1	1.1	Clarence	14.0	12	9	-3	51,366
		Hobart	14.0	12	9	-3	51,366
		Launceston	14.0	12	9	-3	51,366
	1.2	Glenorchy	13.0	10	9	-1	41,585
		Kingborough	13.0	10	9	-1	41,585
2	2.1	Burnie	10.0	9	7	-2	31,491
		Central Coast	10.0	9	7	-2	31,491
		Devonport	10.0	9	7	-2	31,491
		West Tamar	10.0	9	7	-2	31,491
	2.2	Northern Midlands	9.5	9	7	-2	21,404
		Sorell	9.0	9	7	-2	21,404
		Circular Head	8.5	9	7	-2	21,404
		Meander Valley	8.5	9	7	-2	21,404
		Huon Valley	8.0	9	7	-2	21,404
		Brighton	7.5	9	7	-2	21,404
		Waratah-Wynyard	7.5	8	7	-1	21,404
	2.3	Break O'Day	7.0	9	7	-2	17,888
		Derwent Valley	7.0	8	7	-1	17,888



Numbers category	Allowance band	Council	Score	Current number of crs	New number of crs	Cr change	New cr allowance rate (\$)
		Latrobe	7.0	9	7	-2	17,888
		Dorset	6.5	9	7	-2	17,888
		Kentish	6.5	9	7	-2	17,888
		Glamorgan-Spring Bay	5.5	8	7	-1	17,888
		George Town	5.0	9	7	-2	17,888
		Southern Midlands	5.0	7	7	0	17,888
3	3.1	Central Highlands	4.5	9	5	-4	15,064
		West Coast	4.5	9	5	-4	15,064
		Flinders	4.0	7	5	-2	15,064
		King Island	4.0	9	5	-4	15,064
		Tasman	4.0	7	5	-2	15,064

As noted previously, a flat **14.25%** increase to all allowance categories delivers a true cost-neutral increase, with only seven councils bearing costs due to allowance band progression or historical reductions necessitating a smaller proportional reduction of councillors. Individual costs and savings are as follows:

Council <sup>6</sup>	Costs/savings (\$)	Cr allowance increase (including any category)
Clarence	-50671	41.12%
Hobart	77217	14.25%
Launceston	77217	14.25%
Glenorchy	-10282	14.25%
Kingborough	-10282	14.25%
Burnie	27632	14.25%
Central Coast	27632	14.25%
Devonport	27632	14.25%

<sup>6</sup> Councils highlighted in green move up a band, receiving the 14.25% base councillor increase as well as new allowance band costs for councillors, Mayor and Deputy Mayor allowances.

<b>Council<sup>6</sup></b>	<b>Costs/savings (\$)</b>	<b>Cr allowance increase (including any category)</b>
West Tamar	27632	14.25%
Brighton	18781	14.25%
Circular Head	-19407	36.69%
Huon Valley	18781	14.25%
Meander Valley	18781	14.25%
Northern Midlands	18781	14.25%
Sorell	18781	14.25%
Waratah-Wynyard	47	14.25%
Break O'Day	15696	14.25%
Derwent Valley	39	14.25%
Dorset	15696	14.25%
George Town	15696	14.25%
Glamorgan-Spring Bay	-27792	35.67%
Kentish	-14607	35.67%
Latrobe	15696	14.25%
Southern Midlands	-40977	35.67%
Central Highlands	27578	30.57%
Flinders	4504	30.57%
King Island	27578	30.57%
Tasman	4504	30.57%
West Coast	43346	14.25%
<b>Total savings</b>	<b>355226</b>	

## Ongoing sustainability of the framework

It is important the framework is robust and provides a fair and objective assessment of the complexity of a councillor's role at any given time without susceptibility to year-to-year volatility swings caused by short-term data anomalies or outliers.

The data metrics and scoring thresholds have been developed with this in mind, so that councils do not experience huge movements or fluctuations in their scoring (and therefore councillor numbers and allowances) due to outlying results.

Population, value of infrastructure assets, and length of sealed roads are indicators of financial health and sustainability of an LGA, which are expected for most councils to grow at a sustainable pace over time. This ensures councils can move between numbers categories and allowance bands over time where there is demonstrated growth and development within their municipality.

The value of development applications is susceptible to sizeable fluctuations, however the impacts of this are mitigated both by the highest score (3) being capped at \$100 million, and by using a five-year average figure. For example, the Robbins

Island wind farm development means Circular Head Council's value of approved DAs for the 2022-23 financial year was at \$1.3 billion, with a five-year average of \$355 million. The points allocated to Circular Head under the model are capped at 3, mitigating any adverse distortion to the scoring framework (including regression when this figure drops off the five-year period).

Similarly, the use of urbanisation as a metric stabilises councils on the lower end of the scoring spectrum from unnecessarily fluctuating between five and seven councillors. For example, an urban large council which achieves the lowest score will always have seven councillors – reflecting this is an appropriate base level of representation for a council of this nature.

The framework has been rigorously tested against population trends and economic scenarios, ensuring councils maintain stable representation and fair allowances over time, supporting sustainable community governance.

## Implementing the framework

Minor legislative amendments will be required to Schedule 3 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and Schedule 4 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2025* to implement changes to councillor numbers and allowances resulting from this framework.

Under the Local Government Act, the Minister is permitted to recommend the Governor make changes to councillor numbers by Order in response to a report from the Local Government Board. Similarly, historical reviews of councillor allowances have been undertaken by a Board of Inquiry, with recommendations provided to the Minister for actioning at their discretion.

However, it is intended the implementation of the framework – including those to allowances and numbers – will be delivered by an amendment Bill. The key reasons for this approach are:

- it will ensure shared buy-in and support for the framework is received across the local government sector, communities and Parliament
- the reform has desired outcomes and objectives from its inception (including implementation of the detailed methodology), which can be better retained through a Government led, targeted review
- the review is unencumbered by the costly and time-consuming statutory burdens faced by a Local Government Board. This ensures the review can be delivered before the 2026 local government elections

- the review contemplates other statutory reforms, including quorum management and superannuation provisions, which would need to be delivered through primary legislation anyways.

A few councils, due to prior voluntary reductions or allowance band adjustments, may face small cost increases under the new framework. These costs are minimal and can be flexibly managed by councils under existing legislation, ensuring fairer allowances while maintaining value for communities. This may include voluntarily determining not to implement this increase immediately or otherwise stagger the transition to these allowance rates.

## **Setting the foundation for future allowance reviews**

Following implementation of these reforms, it will be important that councillor numbers and allowances are subject to regular review into the future, to ensure communities are both adequately represented, and that councillors continue to be fairly and equitably remunerated.

Deficiencies with the current processes for reviewing councillor numbers and allowances – including a lack of clear structure and transparency around the scope, timing and conduct of regular reviews – has led to inconsistent and inequitable outcomes across the sector.

The framework proposed in this paper provides the opportunity to provide increased certainty around future reviews and improved transparency into how they are to occur

The Government is considering legislative changes to establish a mandatory schedule for regular reviews (for example, once every term of council). The technical details of these provisions would need to be further developed, but the Government is keen in the first instance to test with the sector and the community, support for the concept of legislating for routine, regular allowances and number reviews conducted in accordance with the methodology outlined in this paper.

We believe this proposal has merit, as it would see the re-application of the methodology to councils on a regular basis, ensuring council numbers and allowances remain fair and equitable on an absolute and relative basis over time, in response to demographic and other changes.

## Appendix A – Detailed scoring

Council	Population (2025-26 projections)		Council type - simplified ACLG		Sealed Roads - urban and rural (km)		5 year (19-20 to 23-24) average value of approved DAs \$'000		Written down value of infrastructure assets \$'000 (2023-24)		Total Score
Clarence	65,014	5	Urban	1.5	465	1.5	\$277,518	3	\$623,212	3	14.0
Hobart	56,967	5	Urban	1.5	299	1.5	\$343,265	3	\$897,259	3	14.0
Launceston	72,701	5	Urban	1.5	543	1.5	\$293,907	3	\$1,394,520	3	14.0
Glenorchy	51,803	4	Urban	1.5	303	1.5	\$203,151	3	\$633,044	3	13.0
Kingborough	42,687	4	Urban	1.5	294	1.5	\$169,583	3	\$590,758	3	13.0
Burnie	20,774	2	Urban	1.5	309	1.5	\$76,003	2	\$412,045	3	10.0
Central Coast	23,490	2	Urban	1.5	560	1.5	\$74,595	2	\$481,724	3	10.0
Devonport	27,108	3	Urban	1.5	250	1.5	\$76,643	2	\$274,691	2	10.0
West Tamar	26,652	3	Urban	1.5	324	1.5	\$78,557	2	\$295,030	2	10.0
Northern Midlands	14,360	1	Rural Large	1.0	577	1.5	\$107,694	3	\$416,334	3	9.5
Sorell	18,474	2	Rural Large	1.0	217	1.0	\$116,845	3	\$305,566	2	9.0
Circular Head	8,313	1	Rural Large	1.0	303	1.5	\$355,170	3	\$217,497	2	8.5

Council	Population (2025-26 projections)		Council type - simplified ACLG		Sealed Roads - urban and rural (km)		5 year (19-20 to 23-24) average value of approved DAs \$'000		Written down value of infrastructure assets \$'000 (2023-24)		Total Score
Meander Valley	21,680	2	Rural Large	1.0	561	1.5	\$83,778	2	\$231,255	2	8.5
Huon Valley	19,991	2	Rural Large	1.0	196	1.0	\$72,069	2	\$253,887	2	8.0
Brighton	20,774	2	Urban	1.5	163	1.0	\$90,510	2	\$135,646	1	7.5
Waratah-Wynyard	14,694	1	Rural Large	1.0	295	1.5	\$50,232	2	\$223,538	2	7.5
Break O'Day	7,143	1	Rural Large	1.0	230	1.0	\$55,821	2	\$189,924	2	7.0
Derwent Valley	11,467	1	Rural Large	1.0	123	1.0	\$94,102	2	\$153,505	2	7.0
Latrobe	13,654	1	Rural Large	1.0	242	1.0	\$73,029	2	\$332,847	2	7.0
Dorset	6,933	1	Rural Large	1.0	252	1.5	\$20,725	1	\$187,136	2	6.5
Kentish	6,965	1	Rural Large	1.0	262	1.5	\$27,836	1	\$270,974	2	6.5
Glamorgan-Spring Bay	5,351	1	Rural Small	0.5	179	1.0	\$59,193	2	\$120,193	1	5.5
George Town	7,306	1	Rural Large	1.0	198	1.0	\$28,002	1	\$144,012	1	5.0

<b>Council</b>	<b>Population (2025-26 projections)</b>		<b>Council type - simplified ACLG</b>		<b>Sealed Roads - urban and rural (km)</b>		<b>5 year (19-20 to 23-24) average value of approved DAs \$'000</b>		<b>Written down value of infrastructure assets \$'000 (2023-24)</b>		<b>Total Score</b>
Southern Midlands	7,014	1	Rural Large	1.0	217	1.0	\$31,358	1	\$139,117	1	5.0
Central Highlands	2,604	1	Rural Small	0.5	135	1.0	\$22,791	1	\$92,270	1	4.5
West Coast	4,296	1	Rural Small	0.5	124	1.0	\$26,910	1	\$88,229	1	4.5
Flinders	928	1	Rural Small	0.5	97	0.5	\$7,640	1	\$75,282	1	4.0
King Island	1,654	1	Rural Small	0.5	92	0.5	\$21,917	1	\$77,869	1	4.0
Tasman	2,720	1	Rural Small	0.5	80	0.5	\$17,564	1	\$63,367	1	4.0



## Appendix B – Comparative representation and allowance data

Figure 1 - Average population per councillor – jurisdictional comparison

Jurisdiction	Number of councils	Number of councillors <sup>7</sup>	Population (ABS 2021)	Population per councillor
NSW	128	1259	8,072,163	6412
Vic	79	618	6,503,491	10523
QLD	77	600*	5,156,138	8594
WA	139	1200*	2,660,026	2217
SA	68	630	1,781,516	2828
Tas	29	263	557,571	2120
NT	17	159	232,605	1463
<b>Tas (proposed)</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>557,571</b>	<b>2694</b>

- The proposed changes to numbers would see Tasmania have the third lowest proportion of people per councillor (above Northern Territory and Western Australia). We would have representational parity with South Australia.
- Importantly, this demonstrates there would be no adverse dilution of local representation compared to other jurisdictions.

<sup>7</sup> QLD and WA figures are approximations from respective electoral commission/OLG websites.

**Figure 2 – changes to population per councillor (PPC) figures between 2013 – 2027 (factoring in changes to numbers)**

	<b>2013-14 (ABS)</b>		<b>2020-2021 (ABS)</b>		<b>2026-27 (Treasury projections - medium)</b>	
<b>Council</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>PPC</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>PPC</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>PPC (proposed model)</b>
Break O'Day	6312	701	6936	771	7179	1026
Brighton	16221	1802	19263	2140	21051	3007
Burnie	19565	2174	20441	2271	20500	2563
Central Coast	21989	2443	23278	2586	23537	2942
Central Highlands	2239	249	2580	287	2610	522
Circular Head	8204	912	8335	926	8304	1186
Clarence	54219	4518	62396	5200	65521	7280
Derwent Valley	10013	1252	11114	1389	11530	1647
Devonport	25295	2811	26922	2991	27164	3396
Dorset	6920	769	6991	777	6915	988
Flinders	871	124	938	134	927	185
George Town	6854	762	7213	801	7320	1046
Glamorgan-Spring Bay	4430	554	5118	640	5394	771
Glenorchy	46044	4604	51233	5123	52024	5780
Hobart	51232	4269	56084	4674	57238	6360
Huon Valley	16243	1805	18809	2090	20192	2885
Kentish	6317	702	6778	753	7008	1001
King Island	1611	179	1654	184	1649	330
Kingborough	35723	3572	40815	4082	43140	4793
Latrobe	10569	1174	12705	1412	13841	1977
Launceston	66576	5548	71906	5992	72940	8104
Meander Valley	19519	2169	21153	2350	21771	3110
Northern Midlands	12819	1424	14030	1559	14422	2060
Sorell	13981	1553	16975	1886	18740	2677
Southern Midlands	6139	877	6838	977	7049	1007
Tasman	2389	341	2643	378	2732	546
Waratah-Wynyard	14014	1752	14641	1830	14702	2100
West Coast	4392	488	4373	486	4285	857
West Tamar	22921	2547	25747	2861	26842	3355

**Figure 3 – Jurisdictional administrative and democratic comparison of 5-councillor LGAs**

- Victoria is the only Australian Jurisdiction with five-councillor councils (although all others have six-councillor councils).
- These Victorian councils are rural, cover significantly broader areas on average (except Borough of Queenscliffe) and all have higher populations than Tasman, Central Highlands, King Island and Flinders councils.

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>5-councillor councils</b>	<b>Population (ABS 2021)</b>	<b>Area size (km<sup>2</sup>)</b>
Victoria	Mansfield Shire Council	10,178	3843.9
	Loddon Shire Council	7,759	6696.4
	Pyrenees Shire Council	7,671	3434.6
	Towong Shire Council	6,223	6675.2
	West Wimmera Shire Council	4,006	9108.7
	Borough of Queenscliffe Council	3,276	8.6
Tasmania	West Coast	4,373	9583.5
	Tasman Council	2,643	660.4
	Central Highlands Council	2,580	7982.4
	King Island	1,654	1095.7
	Flinders Council	938	1996.6

**Figure 4 – Democratic outcomes with current councillor numbers - results of 30 recounts undertaken since 2022 (and first preference votes received by successful candidate in 2022) (DEIDENTIFIED)**

<b>First preference votes received in 2022</b>	<b>Total formal votes received by council in 2022 election</b>	<b>First preference vote % received in 2022</b>
608	11,867	5.12%
44	2,012	2.19%
209	6,414	3.26%
208	4,590	4.53%
56		1.22%
93		2.03%
105		2.29%
157		3.42%
17	702	2.42%
128	3,784	3.38%
112		2.96%
227	25,506	0.89%
803		3.15%
687		2.69%
428	30,708	1.39%
486		1.58%
179	11,386	1.57%
285		2.50%
648		5.69%
158	12,793	1.24%
310		2.42%
634		4.96%
458		3.58%
124	10,231	1.21%

First preference votes received in 2022	Total formal votes received by council in 2022 election	First preference vote % received in 2022
351	4,033	8.70%
103	2,188	4.71%
65		2.97%
406	15,530	2.61%
624	37,578	1.66%
503		1.34%

**Figure 5 – Jurisdictional councillor allowance rates (and categories for determining allowances)**

	<b>Victoria</b>	<b>Councillor allowance</b>
Category	1	61,153
	2	40,769
	3	34,028
	4	27,291

	<b>Queensland</b>	<b>Councillor allowance</b>
Category	F2	166,653
	E2	153,141
	D3	135,123
	D2	117,109
	C3	100,052
	C2	99,090
	C1	78,814
	B3	77,876
	B2	77,688
	B1	60,270
	A3	60,270
	A2	59,695
	A1	59,695

	<b>Western Australia</b>	<b>Councillor allowance (maximum payable)</b>
Category	1	34,278
	2	25,137
	3	17,711
	4	10,286
	regional councils	11,430

	<b>South Australia</b>	<b>Councillor allowance</b>
Category	1A	25,838
	1B	22,828
	2	19,110
	3	15,381
	4	10,955
	5	7,192

	<b>New South Wales</b>	<b>Councillor allowance (maximum payable)</b>
Category	Principal CBD	45,070
	Major CBD	37,960
	Metropolitan Major	35,890
	Metropolitan Large	33,810
	Metropolitan Medium	28,690
	Metropolitan Small	22,540
	Major Regional City	35,620
	Major Strategic Area	35,620
	Regional Strategic Area	33,810
	Regional Centre	27,050
	Regional Rural	22,540
	Rural Large	18,340
	Rural	13,520