

Andrew Charles Ricketts

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**FINAL VERSION**

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Office of Local Government.  
Department of Premier and Cabinet  
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By email to: [lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au)

**Submission on Reforms to (Local Government) Councillor Numbers and Allowances**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission and the kind extension of time to this important matter- representation. NB My email address is about to change.

I write as a land owning rate-payer in the Local Government municipal area of Meander Valley in the State of Tasmania.

I have long been interested in and been campaigning for local government reform in Tasmania since 1990, a period of 35 years.

In that time the role of Local Government has been diminished rather than expanded. What that means is that its power to deal with local issues has been reduced and the power to represent and protect local amenity has been reduced.

That said, in the 1990s I considered Tasmania had too many small 'fifedoms' which were otherwise called municipalities. In 1993 numbers of Councils were reduced from something like 47 to 29. This whole business of local government is a vexed one and unlikely to reach a consensus.

The Office of Local Government (LGO), within the Department of Premier and Cabinet asks some questions or rather poses some issues, which I reproduce below. I answer those simply up front and then deal with the more important issue of adequate Councillor representation and the diversity of Councillor decision making.

I comment on the matters raised, including the Office of Local Government proposals, which have been stated as:

- *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.*

I deal with this issue in detail below. But in short, I wish to oppose the detail of the LGO proposal, which is not fairer in any way. The issue has been simplified.

- *Higher allowances: Increasing councillor allowances by 14.25% on average, funded by savings from fewer councillors.*

The discrepancy in payments between small, medium and large Councils is enormous and remains unacceptably so. I strongly support the increases being proposed for small and medium Councils but question the sum increase for large Councils Councillors who already have a more generous remuneration.

There is some ambiguity about the proposed increase and the mooted superannuation benefit, which again I support. In broad terms LG Councillors should be better paid and I have long advocated as such. The discrepancy between Council sizes in pay terms is too large. The attempt to lessen it is welcome.

- *A fairer framework: Aligning councillor numbers and pay to council responsibilities, ensuring equal pay for equal work and consistency across similar councils.*

This claim of this reform achieving a fairer framework is disputed. Fairer for whom?

- *Ongoing reviews: Establishing regular, four-yearly reviews to keep the system up-to-date and responsive to community needs.*

Which system to that you refer? As figure 2, on page 31 of the discussion paper, reforms to Council a numbers and allowances shows, with changes to human population, including areas with population growth and areas with population decline, especially rural decline in certain parts of Tasmania, not only would a regular review be wise, there is a need for a considered strategic review, as long as it is well intentioned and not simply aimed at it a diminution of the power and responsibilities of local government.

- *Additional support: Exploring whether to require councils to pay the 12% superannuation equivalent allowance into councillors' super funds.*

Is the 12% additional to the 14.5%? That is not clear, most unfortunately. In any case I strongly support the payment into Councillors superannuation of the 12% superannuation amount. I'm amazed that in 2025 local government Councillors are not being paid superannuation. That is outrageous. How backward is Tasmania? It is applauded that you are dealing with this now.

I also deal with the 3 questions below which you assert are "key questions" shown on your website:

Key questions you have asked include:

1. *Should we consider any strategies/guidance for council decision making where a quorum cannot be maintained?*
2. *Should councillors' superannuation payments be mandatory?*

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

To Question 1 my answer is: NO. Definitely not.

To Question 2 my answer is: YES, absolutely.

To Question 3 my answer is: Depends on the detail of what you propose.

Further it must be said that there are serious shortcomings in Local Government in Tasmania and from what I can see, considerable disquiet and indeed anger or dismay over Local Government across Tasmania amongst the plethora of local communities.

I would describe that as a lack of confidence.

One of the strengths of Tasmania, and indeed I think there are many, despite its small size, in the face of our non-onslaught of globalism. My position is that globalism is a pox on the planet and is not to be encouraged. This disgraceful idea is causing Tasmania considerable bio-security problems and threats, as well as a range of other impacts.

Many may consider Tasmania to be a backwater, but it is one of the very few places on the planet which has achieved a Net Zero carbon performance and Tasmania has done so by about 2011, we have indeed been world leaders.

One of the main reasons for the general community lack of confidence in local government is the disgraceful and unsustainable planning scheme created by [REDACTED], who was co-opted behind closed doors into a sham planning reform process which sought to and indeed did deliberately and with unbridled malice, wreck community rights and participation in land use planning in Tasmania. But this is not the fault of Local Government.

This Tasmanian Planning Scheme [REDACTED] is strongly criticised by the writer.

The backlash over the sham of land use planning reform has been enormous. Local communities, especially local communities in Tasmania will stand up and defend their amenity and way of life. When Governments attempt to diminish local community pride in their area, well that is certifiable!

As the Federal Liberals saw in the last federal election, the community backlash over the ignore of priorities which the community consider are not negotiable, simply couldn't be overcome. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] want to be able to pull developments out of the planning system and debate them in parliament ignoring the community. This is not a good idea. [REDACTED]. This proposition is roundly rejected. People will come to understand this is not local government but a State Government problem.

The Tasmanian Planning Scheme is mentioned in the context of this Local Government review because it is such an important part of the activity of our local governments.

People find the lack of integration between the State Planning Provisions and the Local Planning Schedule to be confusing and that problem adds to the workload and complexity of local government.

Local government administration has become more complex in the planning sphere [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

As a result Councillors have a far more difficult task with local government planning scheme is which have massively increased in complexity and simply in the sheer number of pages and provisions, convoluted exemptions and ridiculous discretions, all of which require consideration, usually they are given only three or four days to consume vast monthly Agenda documents.

[REDACTED]

This serious problem would be aggravated by a reduction in Councillor numbers.

Of course local government are, despite losing the water and sewerage responsibilities, remain responsible for many issues and matters of considerable importance to our local community. Please stop trying to diminish our local governments.

Unfortunately Local Government is not enshrined in the constitution and yet some formal Federal recognition would assist it greatly. There are those amongst our community who believe local government has no legitimacy, as a result. That is an issue which should be addressed.

Whether State Governments should have a role in tampering and amending Local Government is an issue which continues to be avoided. This issue should be addressed too.

However, clearly at present State Governments do have such a role. It may have limited probity but it is a legal role.

In the section below, I provide my responses to the matters raised by the Office of Local Government below. Italics are the reported issues. Conventional text is my response.

It has been reported by the OLG:

*Tasmania currently has the second-highest proportion of councillors per head of population, with 2,120 people per councillor.*

I consider this statistic to be excellent. My view is the better and more diverse representation is completely desirable. Claiming we are over governed is erroneous and is a separate issue for LG because the laws are created by State Government.

My point is: We are not over represented in LG. This statistic does not represent the large range of representational ratios which are in fact present in the 29 Tasmanian local governments.

*That would reduce to 2,746 people per councillor under the new model, and move Tasmania to third, behind the Northern Territory (1,463 people per councillor) and Western Australia (2,217 people per councillor).*

This statistic does not represent the large range of representational ratios which are in fact present in Tasmanian local government. I do not support the new model.

*Under the proposed model, five of Tasmania's 29 councils — Clarence, Hobart, Launceston, Glenorchy and Kingborough — would have nine councillors, another 19 would have seven, and five — Central Highlands, West Coast, Flinders Island, King Island and Tasman — would be reduced to five councillors.*

This is not agreed by the writer. A detailed explanation including suggestions is set out below. There is nothing the matter with even numbered Councils. They work.

*Central Highlands, West Coast and King Island would have the biggest reductions, all dropping from nine councillors to five.*

Yes! But this does not relate to the ratio of councillors to population. The reduction of Councillors will mean a reduction in diversity and in fresh ideas and in the range of ideas, a reduction in innovation.

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

In that case please read the rest of my submission. You use the word “will”. I do hope you take notice.

Regarding Figure 1, Figure 1 - Average population per councillor – jurisdictional comparison, I can see no reason for basing our governance on that compared with other larger, less remote states. There is a representationally a wide range, if you look at all the other states, all of which are more populous than Tasmania. Just because we are small does not mean we should have deficient representations for our local governments. Tasmania is an intensely parochial place and the Councillors in Local Government are important in retaining such local pride in ones place. This sense of place is outstanding and quite unique in Australia. Tasmania is the opposite of our amorphous cities and that includes Hobart which is more like a large country town.

Both the Northern Territory and Tasmania are very remote and this increases the need for greater local government representation, in my view.

Smaller communities and their Councils and their Councillor numbers deserve to not be squeezed into a rural decline strategy by creating an unviable or diminished representational and decision making model, based on inappropriate comparisons with larger states attempting to drive down Councillor numbers in Tasmania.

The minimum Councillor numbers when combined with the strict and highly limited timeframe requirements of the [REDACTED] Tasmanian Planning Scheme would make it very difficult for 5 member Councils. Solutions for this sort of problem, together with the problem of small

councils being able to afford sufficient planning staff have not been adequately addressed in my view.

The only adequate way to deal with and to assess local government Councillor numbers and the representational aspects is to look at each local government area on an individual basis across Tasmania. The discussion paper attempts to do this but fails to achieve an adequate analysis. Nonetheless I will rely upon the information set out in figure 2, on page 31 of the discussion paper and provide some additional analysis for the Office of Local Government.

The Office of Local Government in Figure 2. Which is titled: 'changes to population per councillor (PPC) figures between 2013 – 2027 (factoring in changes to numbers)'

It is considered by the writer that what The Office of Local Government means by "*factoring in changes to numbers*" is that the table adopts the government's proposals.

In other words the government in its Discussion Paper has failed to give the community a range of options and has failed to express those options and has failed to have a discussion about the different options for the benefit of the community. It hasn't even provided the full salient information, in my view. I wish things were better.

I am basing my analysis below on a Council by Council basis, in the same order as figure 2, especially for the benefit of the office of local government.

The 29 councils listed below, have been in existence since 1993 and despite multiple reviews, remain in place. Importantly it is noted that the largest Council in population terms is Launceston, with 66,576 people and the smallest being Flinders with 871 people. We have two Local Governments which service multiple islands in Bass Strait.

In area terms, again there is a vast range of areas and this is a relevant consideration even though the matter is not fully discussed. I say that because the large sparsely populated rural municipalities, often with very small population numbers, still have a significant range of responsibilities and arguably their challenges are as great as the densely populated urban areas.

The Office of Local Government asserts that the urban municipalities, those municipalities with a large human population are the ones which have far more complex issues. The payment schedule suggest as such.

But is that really true? There is no doubt they have more voters. But they have less representation and as the table below will show, this new proposal by the Office of Local Government does not lessen the discrepancy in representational terms but rather increases it for some unknown or rather undisclosed reason.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In my analysis below I am going to term the Office of Local Government as (OLG).

I claim that the statewide summary figures do not provide an accurate representation of the individual council's circumstances and their representational reality under the proposal in not obvious to the public.

Hence I am dealing with this information on a Council by Council basis. Indeed the discussion paper does delve into this level of detail, at least in some transparent way.

The conclusions drawn unfortunately do not represent the information in the discussion paper. It is when faced with such problems that one uses the 'S' word, spin.

Figure 2, unfortunately does not provide current population data and nor does it provide the current ratio of Councillors to the population. Nor does it provide the percentage change in representation, which I argue is alarming.

**Break O'Day**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new councillor pay would be \$17,888.

In 2013-14 it had a population of 6312 which in 20-2021 had grown to 6,936 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 7179.

The population is growing slowly and without this proposal the councillor per head of population is gradually falling. In 2021 it was 771 per councillor.

Under OLG's proposal there would be a 33% decline in representation for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the municipality would decline by a whopping 33% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Brighton**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new councillor pay would be \$21,404.

In 2013-14 it had a population of 16221 which in 20-2021 had grown to 19263 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 21051.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the municipality would decline by a whopping 41% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Burnie**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new councillor pay would be \$31,491.

In 2013-14 it had a population of 19 565 which in 20-2021 had grown slowly to 20441 and is forecast to grow only a very small amount with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 20500.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the municipality would decline by only 13% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Central Coast**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$31,491.

In 2013-14 it had a population of 21989 which in 20-2021 had grown to 23278 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 23537.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the municipality would decline by only 14% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Central Highlands**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have five Councillors, losing four Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$15,064.

In 2013-14 it had a population of 2239 which in 20-2021 had grown to 2580 and is forecast to grow marginally with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 2610.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the municipality would decline by an enormous 82% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Circular Head**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$21,404.

In 2013-14 it had a population of 8204 which in 20-2021 had grown to 8335 and is now forecast to decline with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 8304. This is a static level in reality.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the municipality would decline by a significant 28% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Clarence**, currently has 12 councillors, with the OLG's 2025 proposal to have nine Councillors, losing three Councillors. A reduction to 75%. The new counsellor pay would be \$51,366.

In 2013-14 **Clarence** had a population of 54219 which in 20-2021 had grown significantly to 62396 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 65521.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Clarence** municipality would decline by a very substantial and indeed unjustifiable 40% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality. The (Councillor per person) PPC would rise to 1 in 7280 up from 5200 in 20-21.

**Derwent Valley**, currently has eight councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing one Councillors.

In 2013-14 **Derwent Valley** had a population of 10013 which in 20-2021 had grown to 11114 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 11530.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Derwent Valley** municipality would decline by only 19% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Devonport**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$31,491.

In 2013-14 **Devonport** had a population of 25295 which in 20-2021 had grown to 26922 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 27164.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Devonport** municipality would decline by only 14% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality..

**Dorset**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$17,888.

In 2013-14 **Dorset** had a population of 6920 which in 20-2021 had grown a small amount to 6991 and is clearly forecast to decline with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 6915.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Dorset** municipality would declinedby 27% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Flinders**, currently has seven councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have five Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$15,064.

In 2013-14 **Flinders** had a population of 871 which in 20-2021 had grown to 938 and is forecast to decline slightly with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 927.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Flinders** municipality would declined by 38% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**George Town**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$17,888.

In 2013-14 **George Town** had a population of 6854 which in 20-2021 had grown a little to 7213 and is forecast to basically not grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 7320. Indeed the forecast may be optimistic and that a decline is a possibility.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **George Town** municipality would decline by 31% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Glamorgan-Spring Bay**, currently has eight councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing one Councillor. The new counsellor pay would be \$17,888.

In 2013-14 **Glamorgan-Spring Bay** had a population of 4430 which in 20-2021 had grown to 5118 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 5394.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Glamorgan-Spring Bay** municipality would decline by 20% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Glenorchy**, currently has 10 councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have nine Councillors, losing one Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$41,585.

In 2013-14 **Glenorchy** had a population of 46044 which in 20-2021 had grown significantly to 51233 and is forecast to grow further but more slowly with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 52024.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Glenorchy** municipality would decline by only 13% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality. The (Councillor per person) PPC would rise to 1 in 5780 up from 5123 in 20-21.

**Hobart**, currently has 12 councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have nine Councillors, losing three Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$51,366.

In 2013-14 **Hobart** had a population of 51232 which in 20-2021 had grown to 56084 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 57238.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the municipality of the state's capital city, complete with all the complexity which such a jurisdiction must contend would have representational decline by a significant 36% for the rate payers and residents in the **Hobart** municipality. I cannot see this being justifiable. The (Councillor per person) PPC would rise to 1 in 6360 up from 4674 in 20-21.

**Huon Valley**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$21,404.

In 2013-14 **Huon Valley** had a population of 16243 which in 20-2021 had grown to 18809 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 20192.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Huon Valley** municipality would decline by a significant 38 % for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Kentish**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new councillor pay would be \$17,888.

In 2013-14 **Kentish** had a population of 6317 which in 20-2021 had grown to 6778 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 7008.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Kentish** municipality would decline by only 33% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality. Why this one is not a part of an enlarged Latrobe is hard to understand.

**King Island**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have five Councillors, losing four Councillors. The new councillor pay would be \$15,064.

In 2013-14 **King Island** had a population of 1611 which in 20-2021 had grown a little to 1654 and is forecast to decline slightly with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 1649.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **King Island** municipality would decline by 33% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Kingborough**, currently has 10 councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have nine Councillors, losing one Councillor. The new councillor pay would be \$41,585.

In 2013-14 **Kingborough** had a population of 30 5723 which in 20-2021 had grown significantly to 40 815 and is forecast to continue to grow significantly with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 43140.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Kingborough** municipality would decline by only 17% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality. **Kingborough**

**Latrobe**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new councillor pay would be \$17,888.

In 2013-14 **Latrobe** had a population of 10 569 which in 20-2021 had grown to 12 705 and is forecast to grow with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 13 841.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Latrobe** municipality would decline by a massive 40% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Launceston**, currently has 12 councillors, with the OLG's proposal to only have nine Councillors, losing three Councillors, despite being significantly larger in population terms. The new councillor pay would be \$51,366.

In 2013-14 **Launceston** had a population of 66576 which in 20-2021 had grown to 71906 and is forecast to grow further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 72940.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Launceston** municipality would decline by a massive 35% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality. The (Councillor per person) PPC would rise to a staggering 1 in 8104 up from 5992 in 20-21.

**Meander Valley**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new councillor pay would be \$21,404.

In 2013-14 **Meander Valley** had a population of 19519 which in 20-2021 had grown slowly to 21153 and is forecast to grow slowly with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 21771.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Meander Valley** municipality would decline by 32% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Northern Midlands**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new councillor pay would be \$21,404.

In 2013-14 **Northern Midlands** had a population of 12819 which in 20-2021 had grown to 14030 and is forecast to grow slowly with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 14422.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Northern Midlands** municipality would decline by 32% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Sorell**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new councillor pay would be \$21,404.

In 2013-14 **Sorell** had a population of 13981 which in 20-2021 had grown significantly to 16975 and is forecast to grow significantly with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 18740.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Sorell** municipality would decline by a very substantial 42% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Southern Midlands**, currently has seven councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, with us not losing any Councillors. This is the only council in Tasmania which does not suffer a reduction in representation. The only one! The new counsellor pay would be \$17,888.

In 2013-14 **Southern Midlands** had a population of 6139 which in 20-2021 had grown slowly to 6838 and is forecast to grow slowly with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 7049.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Southern Midlands** municipality would have a minuscule decline of only 3% but nonetheless a decline in representation for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Tasman**, currently has seven councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have five Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$15,064.

In 2013-14 **Tasman** had a population of 2389 which in 20-2021 had grown to 2643 and is forecast to grow with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 2732.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Tasman** municipality would decline by a very notable 44% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**Waratah-Wynyard**, currently has eight councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing one Councillor. The new counsellor pay would be \$21,404.

In 2013-14 **Waratah-Wynyard** had a population of 14014 which in 20-2021 had grown slowly to 14641 and is forecast to grow slowly with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 14702.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **Waratah-Wynyard** municipality would decline by only 15% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**West Coast**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have five Councillors, losing four Councillors. The new counsellor pay would be \$15,064.

In 2013-14 **West Coast** had a population of 4392 which in 20-2021 had declined to 4373 and is forecast to decline further with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 4285.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **West Coast** municipality would decline by only 17% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

**West Tamar**, currently has nine councillors, with the OLG's proposal to have seven Councillors, losing two Councillors. The new councillor pay would be \$31,491.

In 2013-14 **West Tamar** had a population of 22921 which in 20-2021 had grown to 25747 and is forecast to continue to grow slowly with a 2026-27 Treasury projection of a population of 26842.

Therefore under the OLG's current [REDACTED] proposal to reduce numbers, representation in the **West Tamar** municipality would decline by only 17% for the rate payers and residents in the municipality.

So achieving any sort of evenness was never in anyone's mind, was it?

As stated in the Discussion Paper the proposal is to reduce local government representation in Tasmania by an average amount of approximately one third. Probably so you can pay the Superannuation contribution you should have been paying all along.

Apart from the savings which are proposed to be redistributed, but which actually represent savings which could contribute to an AFL stadium, it would abundantly and irrefutably appear that the people of Tasmania would have less representation.

It is acknowledged there is unevenness in the current rates of representation across the 29 municipalities.

It is observed that the current proposal aims to save the money, rather than to address any representational unevenness in local government representation.

That can be seen from my Council by Council analysis above.

In the summary the Office of Local Government, [REDACTED] is proposing a significant decline in Council representational numbers across Tasmania.

The proposals do address certain inconsistencies and anomalies which have crept into the system but overall there is proposed a consistent pattern of a decline in representation.

The consequences of that decline in representation can be foreshadowed and foreseen and whilst some adjustment is obviously necessary the overall decline is going to have an adverse consequences for the populations within their local government municipalities.

Combined with a [REDACTED] land use planning system, which has diminished rights of objection and appeal, reducing rate payer and residents' democratic rights, this further attack on the democratic representational opportunity and rights of the population of Tasmania could never be described as fairer or more reasonable. Indeed I assert it represents the opposite, the exact opposite in fact to what has been claimed by the Office of Local Government [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Taking a personal perspective, our mid-sized Council Meander Valley Council has not been given a Discussion Paper that explains all the facts of the situation in a manner where Councillors can understand that this represents an attack on the representational levels, which in anybody's terms and approximately 30% reduction in Councillors will mean more work for the remaining Councillors in representational terms and for the local population, it would mean less access in representational terms, to our local government institution. I cannot see that this is progress. I cannot see that it could be described as fair.

I do not think it is wise to reduce representation of elected officers, known as Councillors. They do an invaluable job.

History shows that the experiment of ripping into representation, when applied to the lower house of the Parliament of Tasmania, created an unworkable situation, which many years and after much pain, later and indeed fairly recently was reversed. Do you remember? Think about the lessons that can be learnt from that disgraceful pogrom.

[REDACTED]

By the way, if I am right, and I strongly believe I am, then I am appalled and am opposed to a reduction in our Council, Meander Valley's Councillor numbers.

I can see a need to attempt some genuine rationalisation between small and large Councils and their Councillor numbers. Yes, by all means.

I cannot see either the reason or the rationale for paying a Hobart or Launceston councillor \$51,366 per annum, whilst a mid-sized council's Councillor, such as at Meander Valley, would only get paid \$ 21,404 and then a small Council's councillor such as Tasman or indeed the remote islands of Flinders and King Island, those councils' Councillors would only be paid \$15,064 per annum.

I could continue with that criticism because I cannot see any difference whatsoever, for example, between West Tamar Councillors responsibilities, but they would get \$31,491 and Meander Valley Councillors who would only get \$21,404.

The disparity in remuneration between one council and another Council is unacceptable and I cannot find a sufficient logical argument. After all the population of the West Tamar municipality 26842 and Meander Valley 21771.

After all these people are all doing the same sort of job, there might be more pressure on the larger municipalities I do not dispute that but the discrepancy across the 29 councils is simply too great to be fair and reasonable to all those public service minded Councillors.

And regardless of whether I agree with those Councillors philosophy or not, I recognise that it is a difficult job, no 9 AM to 5 PM for a councillor, residents and ratepayers: contact Councillors at all hours of the day or night, so this is a tough job, they are dealing with conflict that are dealing with a revolting land use planning system and a wide range of community issues, trying to keep people safe and happy as well as to consider the public interest of the matter. So whilst I do not like the current scale, I support strongly an increase.

If this is meant to be a system which rewards development and population growth, it cannot be supported. The differences between the large and the small rates of remuneration defy any logical analysis, in my view.

Tasmania, Australia's most isolated state, where local government administers some 335 islands, is a special case. It is not comparable to New South Wales or Victoria in any way whatsoever, yet some of the representational figures for our largest municipalities show alarmingly diminished levels of representation.

Launceston and Hobart are excellent examples where, despite growing populations, these places are proposed to have reduced representation to the tune of 75%. It doesn't make any sense.

This proposal should have sought early independent advice from the Tasmanian branch of the Australian Electoral Commission.

I am not going to spend a lot of time in this submission talking about solutions. I doubt that you would listen to my comprehensive solutions to overhaul local government in Tasmania.

There are things that can be done to reduce the cost of government in general. [REDACTED]

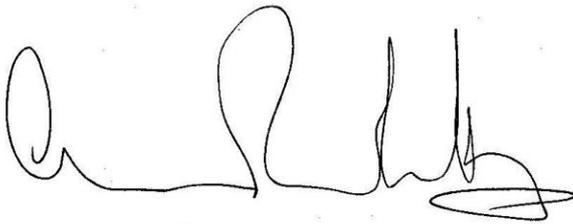
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Again thank you for the opportunity to express my disdain for the current process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Ricketts', with a large, stylized initial 'A' and a circular flourish at the end.

Andrew Ricketts

END