

OFFICIAL

Reforms to Councillor Numbers and Allowances

Final Reform Position

March 2026

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Introduction

On 12 September 2025, the Tasmanian Government published a [discussion paper](#) proposing reforms to local councillor numbers and allowances. The proposed reforms respond to several issues with Tasmania's current framework. Tasmania has one of the highest numbers of local government elected representatives per head of population of any jurisdiction, and some of the lowest levels of remuneration. There are also significant inconsistencies in levels of representation across similar councils because of a patchwork of historical, opt-in review processes.

Key features of the proposed reform included:

- **Fewer councillors:** Reducing the total number of councillors from 263 to 203, with councils having either nine, seven, or five councillors based on their size and complexity.
- **A fairer framework:** Aligning councillor numbers and allowances to contemporary council responsibilities and ensuring greater 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 per cent superannuation equivalent into councillors' super funds, rather than as part of their take-home allowance.

Public consultation on the proposed reforms occurred over an eight-week period, closing on 7 November 2025. Sectoral engagement was supported by three workshops facilitated by the Office of Local Government (one for general managers and two for councillors).

The reforms attracted significant community interest, and 49 submissions were received during the consultation period, including:

- 24 from councils
- nine from individual councillors
- 13 from members of the public
- three from organisations.

All submissions are published on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's website at www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/local_government

Overall, there was support for the proposed reforms – including from the sector – but there were significant concerns flagged with respect to several elements, particularly the proposal for some councils to have only five elected members.

The government has listened to these concerns and has made a number of adjustments to the reforms it is now proposing to implement.

In summary, the final reform package will see:

- All councils having either nine or seven elected members, unless specified councils formally request that they adopt a five-member model under new statutory provisions to be included in the *Local Government Act 1993*. This will reduce the total number of councillors from 263 to 213.
- Retention of the proposed revised six allowances categories, which are set according to the relative scale and representational responsibilities of councils.
- Inclusion in the council scoring methodology of the total number of rateable properties and total length of council roads (including unsealed roads) to better reflect relative representational need and demands on elected members.
- The reform proposal remaining cost neutral overall. Net savings at the statewide level are estimated at approximately \$85,000.
- No new statutory superannuation or quorum management provisions.
- Legislating the methodology in a schedule of the *Local Government Act 1993* for future numbers and allowances reviews, with a statutory requirement to routinely apply the methodology every four years.
- Creating a head of power for the Governor, by order and on the recommendation of the Minister, to adjust councillor numbers in accordance with future reviews, streamlining the future application of the framework methodology.

Final reform position

Councillor numbers

The Tasmanian Government has determined no **council category will have fewer than seven councillors, unless specified councils formally request that they adopt a five-member model within specified statutory provisions.**

The initial reform proposal was that the following five councils would reduce to five elected members. Under the revised position, these councils will instead have seven councillors (unless they request via a prescribed pathway as noted above to move to five):

- Central Highlands
- Flinders
- King Island
- Tasman
- West Coast

This means there will now only be two main categories of council numbers, rather than three. Tasmania's five largest urban councils will each have nine elected representatives, and the remaining 24 will have seven. Differences in relative complexity and representational demand between councils – as determined by the scoring framework – will still be reflected in the allowances category they sit within.

There was strong consultation feedback in opposition to the proposal for some councils to reduce to five elected members, and the government accepts these concerns.

However, some councils have nonetheless expressed an interest in reducing their numbers to five. In response to this, the State Government will prescribe a legislative pathway for the Minister to recommend to the Governor such a reduction, in response to a formal request supported by a resolution passed by the council.

It is anticipated this will be achieved by empowering the Governor, on recommendation from the Minister, and in response to a request from a council, to issue an order reducing a council's elected representatives to five. Such an order would have the effect of automatically amending the schedule in the Act dealing with councillor numbers, avoiding the need to bring amendments back to the Parliament.

The pathway would also allow for councils which move to five members to later return to seven using the same process. These provisions would, however, be subject to several important guardrails, namely:

- Only the five councils initially recommended to reduce to five members would be able to make a request for a numbers change.
- Such a request would need to be made no later than six months before the notice of election for the next ordinary council election. The requested change would take effect from the next ordinary election of the council.
- Once a request is made and put into force, no further request would be able to be made by the same council within the next two terms of council.

In summary:

- **No councils will move to having five elected members, unless they specifically request such a change through a new, prescribed pathway to be established under the Act.**
- **There will be a broad numbers category with 24 councils having seven councillors (with different scale and complexity among these councils being reflected in their varying allowance bands) and five with nine.**
- **The net reduction in councillors statewide will be 50, 10 fewer than the initial proposal – with 213 councillors remaining across the state.**
- **The revised position remains cost neutral at a statewide level, delivering a net saving of approximately \$85,000.**

Councillor allowances

The Tasmanian Government remains of the view that the revised allowances it has proposed fairly reflect and recognise the growing complexity of the role of councillors, are appropriate in the context of a reduction to councillor numbers, and will help support the attraction and retention high quality Tasmanians with diverse backgrounds and skills to local government.

The final proposed allowances for each council and council category under the reforms are outlined in Table 2, below.

In summary:

- **As previously proposed, there will be six allowance bands, based on the current seven allowance categories (the seventh, lowest, category will be removed), but with appropriate adjustments to reflect contemporary council responsibilities, and recognise the reduction in overall councillor numbers.**

Scoring methodology and outcomes

The Government has considered feedback and decided to make some minor changes to the methodology to ensure it fairly reflects the relative representational demands on members across council areas, while still supporting the framework's medium to long term sustainability.

The following adjustments to the scoring rubric have been made:

- Including the total number of rateable properties (as a proxy for representational and service delivery demand for those local government areas with high levels of non-resident and holiday home populations).
- Including total kilometre distance of both sealed and unsealed roads (as a proxy for population dispersal and travel demands for elected members).

To support the framework's sustainability, the scoring for metric 3.1 (urbanisation) has also been changed from a 0.5 to 1.5-point scale to a 1 to 3-point scale, addressing potential distortions that might have occurred from adding the above metrics without any other adjustment.

Including these changes has resulted in three councils moving up an allowance band compared to the original proposal: Break O'Day, Latrobe, and Derwent Valley.

The final scoring formula and rubric is shown in List 1 and Table 2.

List 1: Revised scoring formula

Category 1

Metric: Population size

Benchmark:

- <15000 = 1 point
- 15,000-25,000 = 2 points
- 25,000-35,000 = 3 points
- 35,000-55,000 = 4 points
- 55,000+ = 5 points

Metric: Total number of rateable properties

Benchmark:

- <10000 = 0.5 points
- 10000-19999 = 1 point
- 20000+ = 1.5 points

Category 2

Metric: 5-year average value of approved development applications (\$'000'000)

Benchmark:

- <50 = 1 point
- 50-99 = 2 points
- 100+ = 3 points

Metric: Written down value of infrastructure assets (stormwater, roads and bridges and other plant and equipment) (\$'000'000)

Benchmark:

- <150 = 1 point
- 150-399 = 2 points
- 400+ = 3 points

Category 3

Metric: Urbanisation (simplified ACLG)

Benchmark:

- Rural small = 1 point
- Rural large = 2 points
- Urban = 3 points

Metric: Kilometres of road (urban and rural)

- <100km = 0.5 points
- 100-249km = 1 point
- >250km = 1.5 points

Table 1: Scoring rubric

Category	Councillor numbers	Score	Allowance band	Allowance (\$)	Score
1	9	14-20	1.1	52,951	16-20
			1.2	42,869	14-15.5
2	7	<14	2.1	32,463	11.5-13.5
			2.2	22,064	8.5-11
			2.3	18,440	6.5-8
			2.4	15,529	<6.5

Full details of outcomes for individual councils under the final numbers and allowances reforms are in Table 2.

Table 2: Final outcomes of numbers and allowances

Numbers category	Allowance band	Council	Current councillor numbers	New councillor numbers	Current allowance	New Allowance (\$)
1	1.1	Clarence	12	9	37,522	52,951
		Launceston	12	9	46,347	52,951
		Hobart	12	9	46,347	52,951
	1.2	Kingborough	10	9	37,522	42,869
		Glenorchy	10	9	37,522	42,869
2	2.1	Central Coast	9	7	28,414	32,463
		Burnie	9	7	28,414	32,463
		Devonport	9	7	28,414	32,463
		West Tamar	9	7	28,414	32,463
	2.2	Northern Midlands	9	7	19,312	22,064
		Sorell	9	7	19,312	22,064
		Huon Valley	9	7	19,312	22,064
		Meander Valley	9	7	19,312	22,064
		Circular Head	9	7	16,140	22,064
		Break O'Day	9	7	16,140	22,064
		Waratah-Wynyard	8	7	19,312	22,064

Numbers category	Allowance band	Council	Current councillor numbers	New councillor numbers	Current allowance	New Allowance (\$)
		Brighton	9	7	19,312	22,064
		Derwent Valley	8	7	16,140	22,064
		Latrobe	9	7	16,140	22,064
	2.3	Dorset	9	7	16,140	18,440
		Kentish	9	7	13,592	18,440
		Southern Midlands	7	7	13,592	18,440
		George Town	9	7	16,140	18,440
		Glamorgan -Spring Bay	8	7	13,592	18,440
		Central Highlands	9	7	11,893	15,529
	2.4	Flinders	7	7	11,893	15,529
		King Island	9	7	11,893	15,529
		Tasman	7	7	11,893	15,529

Other reform elements

The discussion paper also sought feedback on three potential reform proposals related to councillor allowances and numbers, namely:

- Mandating the 12 per cent superannuation component be paid to a councillor's nominated superannuation fund, rather than it being included in their take-home allowance.
- Providing enhanced prescription and guidance for quorum management and maintenance (particularly for five-member councils).
- Embedding in legislation a new methodology and process for future review of allowances and numbers.

Employer superannuation contributions for councillors

There was little to no support for the compulsory superannuation contribution proposal, with councils preferring the flexibility of the current system. On this basis, the Government has determined to retain the status quo.

Quorum management strategies

With the decision not to proceed with five-member councils, the government considers quorum maintenance can now be adequately managed under the existing legislative and regulatory framework. This will soon be further augmented by reforms to legislation later this year to enable remote participation in council meetings, and to introduce new provisions to better support councils' proactive management of elected member interests (such as personal interest returns).

Legislating future review processes

As noted in the discussion paper, it will be important that councillor numbers and allowances are subject to regular review into the future to ensure communities are appropriately represented and councillors continue to be fairly and equitably remunerated.

The current review was necessary because of known deficiencies with historical practices and processes for reviewing councillor numbers and allowances. Deficiencies such as a lack of clear structure and transparency around the scope, timing, and conduct of regular reviews lead to inconsistent and inequitable outcomes across the sector.

In response to the support for a more robust, predictable, and transparent model for setting future numbers and allowances, the methodology will be 'hardwired' into a schedule of the Local Government Act. This will also be supported by a requirement to undertake a routine, four-yearly review of allowances and numbers using the methodology, in line with the most up-to-date council data available.

To support timely application of any outcomes from a review (in advance of the notice of election for a general election), a head of power will allow the Governor to adjust councillor numbers, by order and on the recommendation of the Minister, following the application of the methodology. This power would allow for streamlined administration of a new statutory allowances and numbers framework, without the need to undertake a separate Local Government Board process.

This approach provides certainty and transparency in respect of future reviews and retains a level of Parliamentary oversight through endorsement of the methodology and review schedule in the Act.

In summary:

- **The status quo will be maintained in relation to superannuation for councillors, with councillors being free to make voluntary contribution to their super funds from their take-home allowance (which now includes a notional 12 per cent superannuation component). There will no requirement for councils to make super contributions on behalf of their councillors from their existing allowances.**
- **Quorum maintenance will be managed by existing processes and practices, noting legislative enhancements will be introduced later this year with respect to remote meeting participation and improvements to the managing interests framework.**
- **There will be new, formal statutory mechanisms for routine future allowances and numbers reviews using the methodology (in addition to existing Local Government Board provisions).**
- **The legislation will prescribe routine, four-yearly reviews using the new methodology in the Act, with any changes to allowances and numbers being made by the Governor, by order and on recommendation of the Minister.**

Implementation and next steps

Changes to *the Local Government Act 1993* and *Local Government (General) Regulations 2025* are required to implement the reforms. These amendments will be in the forthcoming Local Government Amendment (Targeted Reform) Bill 2026.

The government has recently concluded consultation on an exposure draft of the Bill and is aiming to introduce the final Bill into the Tasmanian Parliament in the autumn 2026 session.

This will enable the changes to take effect in time for the October 2026 local government elections, with elections held for the new number of councillors in each municipal area, and new allowances applying from 1 November 2026 (which would also include the additional annual indexation which applies from this date).

Appendix 1: Detailed scoring of individual councils

Council	Population (2025-26 projections)	Rateable properties	5-year average value of approved DAs (\$'000) (2019-20 to 2023-24)	Written down value of infrastructure assets (\$'000) (2023-24) (no land or property)	Council type (simplified ACLG)	All roads (km)	Total score
Clarence	65,014 = 5	28,062 = 1.5	\$277,518 = 3	\$623,212 = 3	Urban = 3	506 = 1.5	17
Launceston	72,701 = 5	32,975 = 1.5	\$293,907 = 3	\$1,394,520 = 3	Urban = 3	745 = 1.5	17
Hobart	56,967 = 5	25,228 = 1.5	\$343,265 = 3	\$897,259 = 3	Urban = 3	305 = 1	16.5
Glenorchy	51,803 = 4	22,682 = 1.5	\$203,151 = 3	\$633,044 = 3	Urban = 3	323 = 1	15.5
Kingborough	42,687 = 4	18,989 = 1	\$169,583 = 3	\$590,758 = 3	Urban = 3	554 = 1.5	15.5
Central Coast	23,490 = 2	11,464 = 1	\$74,595 = 2	\$481,724 = 3	Urban = 3	681 = 1.5	12.5
Burnie	20,774 = 2	10,236 = 1	\$76,003 = 2	\$412,045 = 3	Urban = 3	355 = 1	12
Devonport	27,108 = 3	13,278 = 1	\$76,643 = 2	\$274,691 = 2	Urban = 3	262 = 1	12
West Tamar	26,652 = 3	12,872 = 1	\$78,557 = 2	\$295,030 = 2	Urban = 3	476 = 1	12
Northern Midlands	14,360 = 1	7,572 = 0.5	\$107,694 = 3	\$416,334 = 3	Rural large = 2	962 = 1.5	11
Sorell	18,474 = 2	10,114 = 1	\$116,845 = 3	\$305,566 = 2	Rural large = 2	347 = 1	11
Huon Valley	19,991 = 2	11,287 = 1	\$72,069 = 2	\$253,887 = 2	Rural large = 2	713 = 1.5	10.5
Meander Valley	21,680 = 2	10,789 = 1	\$83,778 = 2	\$231,255 = 2	Rural large = 2	822 = 1.5	10.5
Circular Head	8,313 = 1	5,023 = 0.5	\$355,170 = 3	\$217,497 = 2	Rural large = 2	765 = 1.5	10
Break O'Day	7,143 = 1	6,783 = 0.5	\$55,821 = 2	\$189,924 = 2	Rural large = 2	543 = 1.5	9

Council	Population (2025-26 projections)	Rateable properties	5-year average value of approved DAs (\$'000) (2019-20 to 2023-24)	Written down value of infrastructure assets (\$'000) (2023-24) (no land or property)	Council type (simplified ACLG)	All roads (km)	Total score
Brighton	20,774 = 2	8,440 = 0.5	\$90,510 = 2	\$135,646 = 1	Urban = 3	190 = 0.5	9
Waratah-Wynyard	14,694 = 1	8,071 = 0.5	\$50,232 = 2	\$223,538 = 2	Rural large = 2	544 = 1.5	9
Derwent Valley	11,467 = 1	5,547 = 0.5	\$94,102 = 2	\$153,505 = 2	Rural large = 2	311 = 1	8.5
Latrobe	13,654 = 1	6,871 = 0.5	\$73,029 = 2	\$332,847 = 2	Rural large = 2	301 = 1	8.5
Dorset	6,933 = 1	5,439 = 0.5	\$20,725 = 1	\$187,136 = 2	Rural large = 2	695 = 1.5	8
Kentish	6,965 = 1	3,697 = 0.5	\$27,836 = 1	\$270,974 = 2	Rural large = 2	448 = 1	7.5
Southern Midlands	7,014 = 1	3,874 = 0.5	\$31,358 = 1	\$139,117 = 1	Rural large = 2	814 = 1.5	7
George Town	7,306 = 1	4,752 = 0.5	\$28,002 = 1	\$144,012 = 1	Rural large = 2	283 = 1	6.5
Glamorgan-Spring Bay	5,351 = 1	6,371 = 0.5	\$59,193 = 2	\$120,193 = 1	Rural small = 1	451 = 1	6.5
Central Highlands	2,604 = 1	3,885 = 0.5	\$22,791 = 1	\$92,270 = 1	Rural small = 1	742 = 1.5	6
Flinders	928 = 1	1,499 = 0.5	\$7,640 = 1	\$75,282 = 1	Rural small = 1	356 = 1	5.5
King Island	1,654 = 1	1,760 = 0.5	\$21,917 = 1	\$77,869 = 1	Rural small = 1	432 = 1	5.5
Tasman	2,720 = 1	3,835 = 0.5	\$17,564 = 1	\$63,367 = 1	Rural small = 1	205 = 0.5	5
West Coast	4,296 = 1	4,870 = 0.5	\$26,910 = 1	\$88,229 = 1	Rural small = 1	191 = 0.5	5

