

Submission in Relation to Voluntary Amalgamation of Tasman and Sorell Councils.

Background

I was a permanent resident of the Tasman Peninsula from 1987-91. I returned in 2000 and have since been a permanent resident. I worked in Education and retired as Principal of Tasman District School in 2011. I am currently Chair of Tasman Community Financial Services Board which oversees the management of the Nubeena Tasman Bendigo Community Bank. I am also involved in community groups.

Comments

I have read the documentation regarding the arguments for and against amalgamation and wish to make the following points:

Firstly, I am concerned with the process being used to continue to address voluntary amalgamation.

301 responses from 2372 Tasman ratepayers to a feasibility survey equates to 12.68%.

It is claimed in the consultation paper that 74% voted in favour of voluntary amalgamation. This means that 223 of 301 respondents favoured voluntary amalgamation. This equates to 9.4% of ratepayers.

The figures of 12.68% and 9.4% demonstrate the process is flawed and such a statistical low base cannot justify the conclusion that the Feasibility Survey indicates a majority of Tasman ratepayers are in favour of voluntary amalgamation.

The same conclusion can be drawn from the figures re Sorell ratepayers with an even lower statistical base.

Might I suggest that a written survey form with a stamp addressed envelope would have been a fairer process? Indeed, I would argue the existing results may be unrepresentative of Tasman ratepayers and it is mischievous of some of our elected representatives to use this statistically irrelevant information as a reason to continue the process.

Therefore, the guiding principle of 'be in the interest of ratepayers' is certainly questionable. Are we inferring the majority of ratepayers?

Secondly, I don't pretend to know in detail the 'level of service for communities' and there are some vague comments in the documentation. I note that parking is not provided for in the Tasman municipality and is in Sorell!

In general terms, I am very happy with the service the Tasman Council provides currently to ratepayers. If I, or any of the organisations I am involved in, have any issues they are

responded to in a timely manner. I know Councillors and most Staff personally and I believe this to be a significant positive in maintaining our existing arrangements.

I am certainly concerned that over time, Tasman will lose this valuable local representation.

The documentation highlights the current arrangement of resource sharing with other Councils. This has evolved as Councils practise using resources wisely. This practice should continue and grow and will mean that local representation will be preserved in a financially sensible environment.

Finally, in terms of the future of the Tasman Municipality, one only has to look back. Over the past 18 years, industry has continued to develop and grow on the Peninsula. Business growth is palpable.

Financial modelling for Tasman is positive.

The future is bright and the existing Tasman Council structure with resource sharing should continue. I am strongly opposed to voluntary amalgamation with Sorell Council.

Steve Bowes