

**PREMIER'S
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
COUNCIL**

Monday 8 August 2022, 2:45-3:45pm
Cabinet Room and online, Level 11, Executive Building 15 Murray St Hobart

Meeting Minutes

PLGC Members		
	Jeremy Rockliff MP	Premier (Chair)
	Nic Street MP	Minister for Local Government
	Cr Christina Holmdahl	President, Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) General Management Committee (GMC), Mayor, West Tamar Council
	Cr Mick Tucker	Vice President, LGAT GMC Mayor, Break O'Day Council
Online	Cr Anna Reynolds	Lord Mayor, Hobart City Council
Apology	Cr Danny Gibson	Deputy Mayor, Launceston City Council
Online	Cr Peter Freshney	Mayor, Latrobe Council
Online	Cr Annette Rockliff	Mayor, Devonport City Council
Online	Cr Alex Green	Mayor, Southern Midlands Council
Apology	Ald Bec Thomas	Mayor, Glenorchy City Council
PLGC Officials		
Online	Ian Nelson	General Manager, Clarence City Council
Online	Sandra Ayton	General Manager, Central Coast Council
Apology	Des Jennings	General Manager, Northern Midlands Council
	Dion Lester	Chief Executive Officer, LGAT
	Ben Morris	Policy Director, LGAT
Online	Craig Limkin	Deputy Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC)
	Mat Healey	Executive Director, Local Government, DPAC
	Mel Brown	Assistant Director, Office of Local Government
Secretariat		
	Isaac Dalla Fontana	Principal Policy and Project Officer, Office of Local Government, DPAC

Ministerial support		
	Rick Dunn	Senior Adviser to the Premier
	Melissa Geard	Adviser to Minister Street
	Vince Taskunas	Chief of Staff to Minister Street

Welcome

The Premier welcomed participants to the first Premier's Local Government Council (PLGC) of 2022 and acknowledged the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of country.

The Premier thanked the members for their understanding regarding the late rescheduling of the meeting and acknowledged that as a result some members could not be present or were instead attending online. Apologies from Ald Bec Thomas, Cr Danny Gibson, and Mr Des Jennings were noted.

The Premier noted that it was both his first PLGC as Premier and Minister Street's first as Minister for Local Government. The Premier acknowledged the Tasmanian Government's continuing strong support for local government as the tier of government closest to the community, and as important contributors to wellbeing. The local government sector's contribution during the preceding two-and-a-half years of disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic was noted and observed that present economic conditions were very challenging for all tiers of government.

The Premier acknowledged the service of those present who were retiring at this year's elections; and thanked those choosing to contest again.

Agenda Item 1: PLGC minutes from 15 December 2021

Members resolved to accept the draft minutes as a true and accurate record of that meeting.

The Premier noted that three actions were recorded at that meeting. One action (local government elections) is marked as complete. An update on the potential transition of the Code of Conduct Framework to the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TasCAT) was provided at agenda item 3.2. Public Health was noted as preparing an update on options and changes to regulations to enable more efficient vaccine delivery in regional areas.

Agenda Item 2: Minister's Update

Minister Street noted he has visited 26 councils during the Winter Parliamentary break, with one further meeting held online. The Minister thanked the councillors and general managers for the updates on local and sector issues provided.

The Minister noted the recent release of the Local Government Board's interim report as part of the Future of Local Government Review (the Review), and the request from the Chair and LGAT for an extension of time for stage 2 of the Review. Timing for the Review was also a discussion topic at the Minister's council visits, including the difficulties of engagement overlapping the election voluntary caretaker period.

Agenda Item 4.4: Future of Local Government Review

The Premier reflected on the interim report in the context of wellbeing and the Government's intention to release a Wellbeing Framework discussion paper in the near future. The Premier noted the importance of consulting with local government on the framework.

The Premier expressed the Government's support for extending the Review's stage 2 deadline to March 2023, acknowledging that extended timeframes would allow an opportunity for wider consultation. Noting that the Government would need to make a decision and that the end date of the review would remain the same.

Mayors Holmdahl and Tucker observed that the interim report contained limited detail on some issues and reflected limited input from the Tasmanian community. Mayor Holmdahl expressed hope that subsequent Review stages would feature higher engagement, including with councils. The Minister noted his hope that the subsequent stages of the Review would see increased direct engagement between the Board and individual councils.

The Minister observed that councils could support expanded engagement with the Review using their communication channels, including social media. Mayor Holmdahl and Mr Lester noted early engagement opportunities had been promoted in that manner, with limited public response. Mayor Green noted limited engagement from councils themselves to date, with sector forums consolidated or cancelled.

Members agreed it is likely that public engagement will be higher in later stages when clearer reform proposals are under consultation; however, despite difficulty in attracting interest and feedback at this early conceptual stage, it is still important to provide opportunities for community engagement.

Agenda Item 4.1: Rating of Independent Living Units (ILUs)

The Premier acknowledged the frustration of the local government sector in seeking resolution to the issue of ILUs and advised PLGC of the Government's intention to consider a discussion paper and public consultation process for the rating of ILUs in the near future.

Agenda Item 3.2: Supporting a Positive Culture in Local Government

The Premier expressed the importance of supporting positive culture in councils and acknowledged a shared responsibility to promote appropriate behaviours and cultural change processes and demonstrate that the sector does not tolerate negative behaviour from its elected members.

Mayor Holmdahl acknowledged the important work of the Office of Local Government and Mr Healey in relation to developing support materials to promote positive culture within the sector and inform prospective and existing councillors about the role and expectations for elected representatives.

Agenda Item 3.1: Local Government Elections

The Minister noted the recent passing of legislation to introduce compulsory voting at the upcoming local government elections and confirmed the Government's intention to improve the community's engagement with and regard for the sector through this measure.

The Minister thanked councils that have adopted voluntary caretaker policies and acknowledged that such endeavours will help to inform the future legislated requirements for all councils. The Minister confirmed his in-principle support for LGAT's request that the Government respect caretaker conventions by not consulting with the sector regarding major policy reforms during this period. The Office of Local Government will work with LGAT to develop a protocol for how engagement with the sector should be undertaken during the relevant period.

The Minister acknowledged the work of the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) Tasmania, and in particular Mayor Rockliff as its President, in supporting women candidates, and noted that the Government was open to further ideas for promoting and encouraging a diverse range of prospective candidates to consider nominating for council.

Mayor Rockliff noted the Government's \$5000 financial commitment to the ALGWA forums was helpful, with one forum held in Hobart, and two more to be held in Longford and Devonport during August.

Mayor Green encouraged Government to pursue reforms to the general manager's roll provisions, suggesting the retention of a property qualification to vote was in conflict with the 'one person, one vote' principle. The Minister noted that work on electoral reforms endorsed through the Local Government Legislation Review was ongoing, and that the difficult position of the general manager in considering applications was a topic of discussion during his council visits around the state.

Agenda Item 4.3 State Planning Reforms

Mayor Holmdahl confirmed that the state planning reforms are welcome but had taken some time to be implemented.

Members agreed that the issue could be brought back for substantive discussion at the next PLGC, and the Premier undertook that the issue would be raised with the Minister for Planning.

Agenda Item 5: Other Business and Meeting Close

No other items of business were identified.

The Premier again thanked those present who were retiring from local government at the next elections.

Meeting closed 4:09 PM

Actions

Agenda Item	Actions From PLGC Meeting 8 Aug 2022	Who	When	Status
3.1	Office of Local Government will work with LGAT to develop an agreed approach to consultation with Local Government by State Agencies during caretaker periods.	OLG and LGAT	ASAP	Ongoing (sectoral feedback to be sought)
4.4	Timeline for stage 2 of the Future of Local Government Review to be extended beyond December 2022.	Minister for Local Government	Early 2023	Complete
4.1	Government to consider a discussion paper to support public consultation on changes to the rating of ILUs	OLG and LGAT	ASAP	To be discussed
4.3	State Planning Reforms to be discussed at December 2022 PLGC meeting. Minister for Planning to be advised.	OLG/SPO	December 2022	Complete (included in November PLGC agenda)
Agenda Item	Actions From PLGC Meeting 15 Dec 2021	Who	When	Status
2	Investigate vaccination options and regulations to facilitate more efficient vaccine delivery in regional areas	Public Health	ASAP	Complete
Agenda Item	Actions From PLGC Meeting 22 Jul 2021	Who	When	Status
3	Consider the merits of TASCAT taking carriage of the Code of Conduct Framework.	Minister's Office, Local Government Division	ASAP	Complete (progressing as part of the CoC review process)