

Comments on 37 recommendations from the Future of Local Government Review

Recommendation	Proposed Council Response
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>Define in Tasmania’s new Local Government Act the role of local government consistent with the statement below:</p> <p>The role of local government is to support and improve the wellbeing of Tasmanian communities by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. harnessing and building on the unique strengths and capabilities of local communities; 2. providing infrastructure and services that, to be effective, require local approaches; 3. representing and advocating for the specific needs and interests of local communities in regional, state-wide, and national decision-making; and 4. promoting the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of local communities, including by mitigating and planning for climate change impacts. 	<p>Council supports the recommendation.</p> <p>Subject to the more detailed comments below, Council supports an expanded and clearly defined definition of the role of Local Government. The proposal provides a mandate for local government to focus on local and relevant community expectations.</p> <p>To the extent that this new definition represents an expansion of local government’s role, it is critical that such expansion is adequately resourced.</p> <p>The recommendation remains ambiguous about any return of service responsibilities to the State government, or models for adequately resourcing service responsibilities.</p> <p>Consider further clarification in dot point 3:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. representing and advocating for the specific needs and interests of local communities in regional, state-wide, and national decision-making, <i>including considering the social and economic impacts</i>; and
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government – through subordinate legislation - should implement a Local Government Charter to support the new legislated role for local government.</p> <p>The Charter should be developed in close consultation with the sector and clarify and consolidate councils’ core functions, principles, and responsibilities, as well as the obligations of the Tasmanian Government when dealing</p>	<p>Council supports the recommendation.</p> <p>Council supports the development of a principle-based local government Charter and agree that it should only be developed in close collaboration with the sector. Development of the charter through subordinate regulation should provide for a regular schedule of review and refinement. The charter should provide clarity and direction on the bilateral roles and functions of councils and the Tasmanian Government. It should include specific direction regarding the funding and engagement arrangements with Tasmanian Government. It should be careful not to shift inappropriate or impractical responsibilities onto councils. Further, the sector’s capability range should be considered and provided for within the charter.</p>

<p>with the sector as a partner in delivering community services and support.</p>	<p>The Charter should trigger the setting of clear priorities between the levels of government via a memorandum of understanding or similar agreement.</p> <p>Council looks forward to further updates on how it will be involved in developing the Charter.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>That the Tasmanian Government work with the sector to develop, resource, and implement a renewed Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework that is embedded in a new Local Government Act to support and underpin the role of local government. Under this Framework councils will be required to develop – within the first year of every council election – a four-year strategic plan.</p> <p>The plan would consist of component plans including, at minimum:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a community engagement plan; 2. a workforce development plan; 3. an elected member capability and professional development plan; and 4. a financial and asset sustainability plan. 	<p>Council is generally supportive of a renewed strategic planning and reporting framework. The proposed framework does not drastically change the strategic planning process already utilised by Council. Council retains the option to develop longer term plans over and above any legislated requirements. It is assumed that the proposed framework includes an overarching four-year plan, under which the four component plans sit. Some areas of the proposal require further refinement to ensure successful implementation.</p> <p>In developing new strategic plans on the proposed schedule, it will be important to ensure alignment between Council strategies, for example between the LTFP and the four-year financial and asset sustainability component of the proposed strategic plan.</p> <p>Council supports Elected Member professional development plans (PDPs) for all elected members. PDPs should include at least:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting procedures compliance in accordance with the LG Act • Conflict resolution • Integrity Commission training including Conflicts of Interest and Gifts and Benefits • Community Engagement processes • Local Government Financial management including asset management, disposal of land, etc. • Exercising planning powers • Social media management and ethics <p>In addition to the above PDP package, a local issues paper should also be included. Consideration should be given to requiring regular (6 monthly or annual) legislative compliance updates for Elected Members to ensure awareness of legislative changes is maintained and any governance and ethics updates related to their roles are elevated.</p> <p>Council's Workforce Development Plan details staffing programs which address the core issues facing Council as an employer. Elected members do not have visibility of Council staffing matters as this is currently the remit of the General Manager/CEO. Council does not see any potential gains in</p>

	Elected Members addressing key staffing issues, as Elected Members are external facing links to the community, not internal management.
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>Formal council amalgamation proposals should be developed for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Coast, Waratah-Wynyard and Circular Head Councils (into two councils). • Kentish and Latrobe Councils. • Break O’Day, Glamorgan-Spring Bay and Sorell Councils (into two councils). • City of Hobart and Glenorchy City Councils. • Kingborough and Huon Valley Councils. <p>The Board acknowledges council interest in and discussions on boundary changes are less advanced in respect of City of Hobart and Glenorchy, and Kingborough and Huon Valley councils, but nonetheless believes that these councils have expressed clear interest in further exploring opportunities.</p> <p>The Board believes there is substantial merit in ensuring that those councils (and their communities) are afforded the opportunity to genuinely explore structural consolidation.</p>	<p>Council remains open to contributing to the Tasmanian Government’s further exploration of the proposed voluntary structural reform relevant to Glenorchy City Council.</p> <p>Council reiterates its previous position that the level of information is currently insufficient to enable Council to take a fully informed position in relation to amalgamation. Strong evidence and a thorough business case is required to understand the economic feasibility and environmental sustainability of any amalgamation project.</p> <p>Council is open to supporting and informing the Tasmanian Government’s development of a business case on the understanding that this work is beyond local government’s resourcing levels and would need to be underwritten by the Tasmanian Government.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>A new Local Government Board should be established to undertake detailed assessment of formal council amalgamation proposals and make recommendations to the Tasmanian Government on specific new council structures.</p>	<p>Council supports the development of a new Local Government Board to undertake detailed assessment of formal council amalgamation proposals and make recommendations to the Tasmanian Government on specific new council structures.</p> <p>The Board will need broad ranging expertise to make well-considered recommendations on local government matters. Prior to recruitment of the new Board Members, a skill matrix should be developed in consultation with the sector. Diversity of skills and experience will be imperative to the new Board’s success. The Board should be enabled to engage topic advisors or create specific working groups as needed.</p>

<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>A Community Working Group (CWG) should be established in each area where formal amalgamation proposals are being prepared.</p> <p>The CWG would identify specific opportunities the Tasmanian Government could support to improve community outcomes.</p>	<p>Council supports the development of Community Working Groups as required. Community Working Groups should be carefully curated to limit politicisation of amalgamation projects and ensure that focus remains on the economic feasibility and environmental sustainability of any amalgamation projects.</p> <p>Further clarity on the terms of reference for CWGs and how the administration of the CWGs will be resourced is required.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>In those areas where amalgamation proposals are being developed, a community vote should be held before any reform proceeds to consider an integrated package of reform that involves both a formal council amalgamation proposal and a funded package of opportunities to improve community outcomes.</p>	<p>Council supports ensuring that all amalgamation projects include strong community engagement.</p> <p>In the event that the business case for amalgamation is strong enough for Council to move ahead with a formal amalgamation process, Council does not support a requirement for a community vote be held.</p> <p>Council respects the Tasmanian Government's position that amalgamation should be preceded by a positive community vote. However, community votes can be expensive, difficult to administer, and run the risk of over politicising the project.</p> <p>Councils should not be required to navigate a community vote and as well as the extensive internal and community change management process that will be required in preparation for amalgamation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>If a successful community-initiated elector poll requests councils to consider amalgamation, the Minister for Local Government should request the Local Government Board to develop a formal amalgamation proposal and put it to a community vote</p>	<p>Council does not support the initiation of amalgamation processes via elector poll.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>The new Local Government Act should provide that the Minister for Local Government can require councils to participate in identified shared service or shared staffing arrangements.</p>	<p>Councils supports shared service arrangements where they are economically feasible and structurally sustainable.</p> <p>Providing the Minister for Local Government the power to require councils to participate in identified shared service or shared staffing arrangements needs to be carefully considered. The</p>

<p>Recommendation 10 Give councils the opportunity to design identified shared service arrangements themselves, with a model only being imposed if councils cannot reach consensus.</p>	<p>recommendation's intent appears to be to provide a mechanism for shared services to be robust and unable to be easily untethered. The recommendation does not appear to address the interdependencies of delivering a service, costs and benefits, key performance indicators to be delivered and the costs involved in undertaking a shared service.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11 Before endorsing a particular mandatory shared service arrangement, the Minister for Local Government should seek the advice of the Local Government Board.</p>	<p>The Minister should be provided with power to mediate, as well as mandate. A proportionate enforcement approach should be clearly set out in the Act or guidelines to ensure consistency of approach over time.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12 If councils are unable to reach consensus on a mandatory service sharing agreement, the Minister for Local Government should require councils to participate in a specific model or models the Tasmanian Government has developed.</p>	<p>Recommendation 10 provides a balancing point, giving councils the opportunity to design identified shared service arrangements themselves, with a model only being imposed if councils cannot reach consensus. Councils need to be resourced to meet and analyse current service delivery models in place, seek commonalities of interest and build models to deliver this. This needs to be framed around the clear objectives as detailed in the FOLG report. Politicisation of this change will also need to be effectively managed as it is not a short-term process to undertake.</p> <p>The resourcing, funding, and skills shortages in local government remain regardless of any shared service mandates. Broad mandates may remove the ability to identify and develop catchments of common interests as the basis for any model development, which was the position adopted in the FOLG Reform report.</p> <p>Council remains open to exploration of any efficiencies to be gained through partnership and shared service models. The Report included 3 models, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stand-alone centralised service entity • function specific joint authorities • provider Council (functional leadership) model <p>It is likely that all the above models will suit differing shared services. Careful analysis of the interdependencies in delivering these services and the cost/benefit of change must be undertaken before any mandatory arrangements are considered. The costs of delivering this change also needs to be addressed as it is beyond the scope of current Council budgets. Economies of scale can be diluted through the duplication of common resources, for example administration functions, reporting, financial management, etc.</p>

	<p>Council agrees that the benefits of shared services are more likely to be realised where voluntary cooperative arrangements are in place. Council would like to see local government provided with the tools and resources to enable the voluntary pursuit of shared services where circumstances and environments exists for shared services to succeed. This would enable councils to leverage existing relationships and local knowledge to identify opportunities for shared services and efficiencies without having to start from scratch.</p>
<p>Recommendation 13 The first priorities for developing mandatory shared service arrangements should be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. sharing of key technical staff; 2. sharing of common digital business systems and ICT infrastructure; and 3. sharing of asset management expertise through a centralised, council-owned authority. 	<p>Council partially supports this recommendation.</p> <p><i>Sharing of Key Technical Staff</i></p> <p>Sharing of some local government technical services should be further explored particularly in areas where the service may be uniform across jurisdictions, i.e., council's statutory functions.</p> <p>Priority should be given to initiatives that attract new entrants into professional/technical roles in conjunction with workforce development plans cited in recommendation 36.</p> <p><i>Sharing of Common Digital Business Systems and ICT Infrastructure</i></p> <p><u>Common Digital Business Systems</u></p> <p>In principle, Council supports further exploration of the possibility of adopting common digital business systems, noting particularly the potential benefits for the community and users of a more standard approach.</p> <p>However, it is also noted that there are some challenges to unlocking these benefits which would need to be taken into account in developing the shared service business case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggregation of business systems faces a challenge from a National Competition Policy perspective. The reduction to a single vendor would lessen competition and raises market contestability challenges. This might have the counter-productive effect of creating a thin market for local government business systems solutions over time - resulting in a reduction in systems innovation and leading to lower productivity gains for the sector. • There is also a need to consider scale differences existing in local government, with the business systems required for a larger metropolitan council likely different in complexity to a

small island or rural council. It is acknowledged that it is possible for there to be numerous instances of the same Cloud-based solution to enable an approach that is tailored to local circumstances.

- Contractual arrangements would need to be carefully explored to ensure definition of the contracted parties, clear lines of vendor accountability, clear performance parameters and maintenance of product integrity over time across industry (to avoid the potential for the loss of the benefits of standardisation as a result of customisation at the individual enterprise level).
- Increasing the number of stakeholder parties involved in any arrangements may require more frequent service reviews to ensure the arrangement remain agile yet are balanced with the increased inertia and overhead the additional parties may bring.
- Because digital business systems shadow corporate processes, structures, delegations and the like, there would need to be extensive investment in business needs analysis and change management over a period of several years to ensure a successful implementation.

Common ICT Infrastructure

Lower maturity organisations typically do not bring a well-developed service centric approach to their ICT delivery. Councils can benefit from large scale contemporary cloud services to reduce ICT risks around cyber security, service availability and restoration times, while providing a better foundation for online 24/7 digital service channels.

Glenorchy City Council's ICT infrastructure consists almost solely of end user devices (laptops, PCs etc.) procured through existing Tasmanian Treasury common use contracts thereby accessing the State government's collective buying power.

Council utilises a state government brokered contract to access 3rd party provided virtual servers infrastructure and therefore does not have a datacentre or own any server assets. Council has an ever-reducing requirement for these virtual servers as it transitions to contemporary cloud services.

	<p>Council are adopting the State Government brokered Network Tasmania arrangements for all site-to-site networking, Internet and networking security over 2024, and therefore will have transitioned from owning networking assets to this aggregated outsourced arrangement.</p> <p>For Microsoft Office 365 licensing and Microsoft cloud services, Council utilise the Local Buy contract arrangement with other Queensland, Northern Territory and Tasmanian Councils. However, Council has no current access to State government’s aggregated pricing arrangements – which would be of benefit.</p> <p>The current opportunity is for an increase in resourcing for further aggregation of other ICT procurements such as common Microsoft licensing and more bespoke council software needs, such as GIS software.</p> <p><i>Sharing of Asset Management Expertise Through a Centralised, Council-Owned Authority</i></p> <p>Council is well advanced in its asset management maturity and therefore doesn’t see this as a priority area. Council’s workforce includes experienced asset managers, and the majority of condition inspections for major asset classes and asset valuations are outsourced. Council is comfortable with the level of scrutiny and independence within the data used to manage its assets. Council is keen to keep control of our asset management system and renewal demand modelling.</p> <p>Council does not support a centralised, council-owned authority to share asset management expertise at this stage. It appears impractical as the operation of asset management is closely linked to different departments within Council, e.g., Finance, Work Centre (Capital and Maintenance) and Property departments. It is unclear how a centralised authority would function across councils without interrupting those internal processes. It may be more practical and efficient for catchment councils to use the same contractors/consultants for condition inspections and valuations at the same time to improve efficiencies and provide consistency. This may also achieve costs advantages through economies of scale to participating councils.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14 Include a statutory requirement for councils to consult with local communities to identify wellbeing priorities,</p>	<p>Council supports this recommendation.</p> <p>Council has a well-established community engagement framework, which it has recently reviewed.</p>

<p>objectives, and outcomes in a new Local Government Act. Once identified, councils would be required to integrate the priorities into their strategic planning, service delivery and decision-making processes.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 15</p> <p>To be eligible to stand for election to council, all candidates must first undertake – within six months prior to nominating – a prescribed, mandatory education session, to ensure all candidates understand the role of councillor and their responsibilities if elected.</p>	<p>Council supports candidate training for new candidates, however rerunning Elected Members should be exempt from this requirement. Training should be developed with a strong focus on accessibility for a broad and diverse range of potential candidates. The requirement for training and information on how to undertake the training should be widely promoted, to avoid creating any unintentional impediment to candidacy.</p>
<p>Recommendation 16</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government and the local government sector should jointly develop and implement a contemporary, best practice learning and ongoing professional development framework for elected members. As part of this framework, under a new Local Government Act:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. all elected members – including both new and returning councillors - should be required to complete a prescribed ‘core’ learning and development program within the first 12 months of being elected; and 2.- councils should be required to prepare, at the beginning of each new term, an elected member learning and capability development plan to support the broader ongoing professional development needs of their elected members. 	<p>Council supports Elected member training - Please see recommendation 3 above.</p> <p>Additionally, Council has developed an induction process and program for Elected Members. This program covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role and duties of Council, Mayor, Councillors and the General Manager; • Receipt of gifts and benefits; • Related party transactions; • Conflicts of interest; • Meeting procedures; • Safety; • Protocols; • Insurance cover provided; • Payments to Councillors; • Use of social media; • Working together; • A facilitated session on what is an effective Council; and • Key issues facing Glenorchy City Council. <p>However, this does not directly address any skills gaps individual Elected Members may have. A mandatory skills framework including financial acumen, effective decision making, community engagement techniques and use of social media would be beneficial.</p>

	Consideration should be given to how the framework is resourced.
<p>Recommendation 17</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government should further investigate and consider introducing an alternative framework for councils to raise revenue from major commercial operations in their local government areas, where rates based on the improved value of land are not an efficient, effective, or equitable form of taxation.</p>	<p>Council strongly agrees with this recommendation. Increased costs resulting from new commercial developments should be funded by each developer and not subsidised by residential rate payers.</p> <p>A consistent and fair cost framework should be mandated to ensure councils are able to compete on the same footing and developers understand how their costs will be calculated during the planning stage of any new development.</p>
<p>Recommendation 18</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government should work with the sector and the development industry to further investigate and consider introducing a marginal cost-based integrated developer charging regime.</p>	<p>Council strongly agrees with this recommendation.</p> <p>New developments increase traffic loads on local road networks, leading to degradation of the traffic level of service, as well as degradation of the assets themselves. The cost for renewing and upgrading the impacted assets should not be borne by the rate payer. The same issue also applies to the stormwater network, where additional stormwater loads impact of the performance of both the quality and quantity of the stormwater network.</p>
<p>Recommendation 19</p> <p>Introduce additional minimum information requirements for council rates notices to improve public transparency, accountability, and confidence in council rating and financial management decisions.</p>	<p>Council strongly supports this recommendation.</p> <p>Increased transparency would help explain Council function/activity area cost changes from year to year. e.g. Governance, Recreation, Planning, Roads, Waste, etc. This could be displayed effectively via ear on year rate account comparison graph similar to water and electricity accounts.</p>
<p>Recommendation 20</p> <p>Within the context of the national framework, the Tasmanian Government should seek advice from the State Grants Commission on how it will ensure the Financial Assistance Grants methodology:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is transparent and well understood by councils and the community, • assistance is being targeted efficiently, and effectively, and 	<p>Council supports this recommendation.</p> <p>The State Grants Commission continually reviews funding allocation methodology using discussion papers, then assesses feedback from Councils to determine where changes are needed to more accurately allocate grant funding as well as quantifying the financial impact any changes have on each Council. However, reviewing and adjusting FAGs distribution methodology within Tasmania does not address the fundamental issue of local government not getting a fair share of federal tax revenue. Local government should receive at least 1% and be repositioned as a service provider and funded accordingly.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is not acting as a disincentive for councils to pursue structural reform opportunities. 	
<p>Recommendation 21</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government should review the total amount of Heavy Vehicle Motor Tax revenue made available to councils and consider basing this total amount on service usage data.</p>	<p>Council supports this recommendation.</p> <p>Glenorchy City Council has a large industrial area which has very high heavy vehicle usage which damages our road infrastructure. A review of the Heavy Vehicle Motor Tax revenue amount and distribution methodology is welcome</p>
<p>Recommendation 22</p> <p>Introduce a framework for council fees and charges in a new Local Government Act, to support the expanded, equitable and transparent utilisation of fees and charges to fund certain council services.</p>	<p>Council supports this recommendation.</p> <p>In the absence of wholesale federal taxation distribution reform to adequately resource councils as service providers, full cost recovery should be mandated except where particular fees or charges are identified as providing a community service. This would create more transparency regarding how fee amounts are calculated (i.e., fee amounts necessary to cover the actual cost of providing each service).</p> <p>It is also important that a consistent fee calculation framework be mandated so all Councils use the same methodology.</p>
<p>Recommendation 23</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government should review the current rating system under the Local Government Act to make it simpler, more equitable, and more predictable for landowners. The review should only be undertaken following implementation of the Board's other rating and revenue recommendations</p>	<p>Council partially supports this recommendation.</p> <p>The LG Act already contains a wide range of rating options to suit individual Council needs and demographics. Careful consideration should be given to the effect that smoothing the rate calculation may have on council's flexibility. Essentially, rates are a wealth tax and therefore those that can afford to pay more contribute more to fund the services in their local community. The current rating system achieves this outcome. AAV is a simple method, is relatively equitable, and is already reasonably predictable. Any review of the rating system should lean heavily on subject matter expertise from the local government sector, as well as leadership by LGAT.</p>
<p>Recommendation 24</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government should work with the sector to develop, resource, and implement a best practice local government performance monitoring system.</p>	<p>Council supports this recommendation.</p> <p>The administrative burden of any proposed performance monitoring system needs to be factored into the level of detail required with the model. KPI style reporting models in other States may be</p>

	<p>too detailed and are not transferable to the current resources of Tasmanian Councils. Council currently uses the NSW Governance traffic light reporting (developed in 2018) for internal monitoring, but this model may be beyond the capacity of small less resourced Councils.</p>
<p>Recommendation 25</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government should develop clear and consistent set of guidelines for the collection, recording, and publication of datasets that underpin the new performance reporting system to improve overall data consistency and integrity and prescribe data methodologies and protocols via a Ministerial Order or similar mechanism.</p>	<p>Council supports this recommendation.</p> <p>As above. Availability of consistent public dataset would increase Council transparency. Further, the required datasets should ensure they are programmatically achievable, commercial in confidence is not breached, and privacy issues and other constraints from a legal perspective are adequately mitigated.</p> <p>The datasets should be an improvement on the existing processes and should include scope for variation between council types, as council service delivery and community expectations vary widely across Tasmania.</p>
<p>Recommendation 26</p> <p>The new Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework should actively inform and drive education, compliance, and regulatory enforcement activities for the sector, and entities with responsibility for compliance monitoring and management – including the Office of Local Government and council audit panels – should be properly empowered and resourced to effectively deliver their roles.</p> <p>As part of this the Tasmanian Government should consider introducing a requirement for councils to have an internal audit function given their responsibilities for managing significant public assets and resources, and whether this requirement needs to be legislated or otherwise mandated.</p>	<p>Council supports this recommendation.</p> <p>Councils agrees that the Office of Local government should be well resourced from consolidated revenue and play a more active role monitoring and compliance for the sector.</p> <p>Council currently outsources its internal audit function to two contracted service providers. There is a shortage of Internal Auditors in the Tasmanian market. Internal audit does lend itself to a shared services model. However, its role in driving compliance and continuous improvement in Council corporate functions needs to be carefully monitored for effective service delivery. A shared service model may also assist in increasing consistency of approach across regions/local government sector.</p>

<p>Consideration should also be given to resourcing internal audit via service sharing or pooling arrangements, particularly for smaller councils.</p>	
<p>Recommendation 27 The Tasmanian Government should collaborate with the local government sector to support a genuine, co-regulatory approach to councils' regulatory responsibilities, with State agencies providing ongoing professional support to council staff and involving councils in all stages of regulatory design and implementation.</p>	<p>Council supports the recommendation.</p> <p>Increased collaboration between the Tasmanian Government and the local government sector in all areas, including regulation, is strongly supported.</p> <p>A major barrier Council faces in efficiently and effectively fulfilling its regulatory obligations is working with inadequate, ambiguous, or flawed legislation. When reviewing and drafting legislation, Council is keen to work closely with the State Government to provide information and experience that can ensure that the legislation that Council administers or enforces is operationally practical. Further, Council would welcome further clarity on the Tasmanian Government's plan to audit and report on improvements to the coregulation process.</p>
<p>Recommendation 28 The Tasmanian Government should work with the local government sector to pursue opportunities for strengthened partnerships between local government and Service Tasmania.</p>	<p>Council is open to explore this recommendation further. A business case process would be required to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • problem statement • goals of a partnership • costings for implementation and ongoing delivery • predicted benefits for the community
<p>Recommendation 29 Councils should migrate over time to common digital business systems and ICT infrastructure that meet their needs for digital business services, with support from the Department of Premier and Cabinet's Digital Strategy and Services (DSS).</p>	<p>Council does not support this recommendation.</p> <p><u>Common Digital Business Systems</u></p> <p>In principle, Council supports further exploration of the possibility of adopting common digital business systems, noting particularly the potential benefits for the community and users of a more standard approach.</p> <p>However, it is also noted that there are some challenges to unlocking these benefits which would need to be taken into account in developing the shared service business case:</p>

- Aggregation of business systems faces a challenge from a National Competition Policy perspective. The reduction to a single vendor would lessen competition and raises market contestability challenges. This might have the counter-productive effect of creating a thin market for local government business systems solutions over time - resulting in a reduction in systems innovation and leading to lower productivity gains for the sector.
- There is also a need to consider scale differences existing in local government, with the business systems required for a larger metropolitan council likely different in complexity to a small island or rural council. It is acknowledged that it is possible for there to be numerous instances of the same Cloud-based solution to enable an approach that is tailored to local circumstances.
- Contractual arrangements would need to be carefully explored to ensure definition of the contracted parties, clear lines of vendor accountability, clear performance parameters and maintenance of product integrity over time across industry (to avoid the potential for the loss of the benefits of standardisation as a result of customisation at the individual enterprise level).
- Increasing the number of stakeholder parties involved in any arrangements may require more frequent service reviews to ensure the arrangement remain agile yet are balanced with the increased inertia and overhead the additional parties may bring.
- Because digital business systems shadow corporate processes, structures, delegations and the like, there would need to be extensive investment in business needs analysis and change management over a period of several years to ensure a successful implementation.

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	<p>Glenorchy City Council's ICT infrastructure consists almost solely of end user devices (laptops, PCs etc.) procured through existing Tasmanian Treasury common use contracts thereby accessing the State government's collective buying power.</p> <p>Council utilises a state government brokered contract to access 3rd party provided virtual servers infrastructure and therefore does not have a datacentre or own any server assets. Council has an ever-reducing requirement for these virtual servers as it transitions to contemporary cloud services.</p> <p>Council are adopting the State Government brokered Network Tasmania arrangements for all site-to-site networking, Internet and networking security over 2024, and therefore will have transitioned from owning networking assets to this aggregated outsourced arrangement.</p> <p>For Microsoft Office 365 licensing and Microsoft cloud services, Council utilise the Local Buy contract arrangement with other Queensland, Northern Territory and Tasmanian Councils. However, Council has no current access to State government's aggregated pricing arrangements – which would be of benefit.</p> <p>The current opportunity is for an increase in resourcing for further aggregation of other ICT procurements such as common Microsoft licensing and more bespoke council software needs, such as GIS software.</p>
<p>Recommendation 30</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government – in consultation with the sector – should review the current legislative requirements on councils for strategic financial and asset management planning documentation to simplify and streamline the requirements and support more consistent and transparent compliance.</p>	<p>Council supports a review that focuses on simplifying and streamlining the requirements and for asset management planning documentation, including standardisation of asset useful lives. There have been significant advances in technology in recent years resulting in a shift away from paper-based asset management plans. Instead, many organisations are now using online dashboards to display their asset management data. The legislation should be updated to reflect this change. There is also duplication with Asset Management Strategies and Strategic Asset Management Plans (SAMP). These two documents should be combined.</p>
<p>Recommendation 31</p> <p>The Tasmanian Government – in consultation with the sector – should investigate the viability of, and seek to</p>	

implement wherever possible, standardised useful asset life ranges for all major asset classes.	
Recommendation 32 All Tasmanian councils should be required under a new Local Government Act to develop and adopt community engagement strategies – underpinned by clear deliberative engagement principles.	Council supports this recommendation. As noted earlier, Council has a community engagement framework which it recently reviewed.
Recommendation 33 A new Local Government Act should require councils, when developing and adopting their community engagement strategies, to clearly set out how they will consult on, assess, and communicate the community impact of all significant new services or infrastructure.	Council supports this recommendation. This recommendation should also include the discontinuation or material change to the availability of significant service delivery, except in the case of an emergency. Standard criteria for defining a significant services or infrastructure will be required to ensure consistency across the sector.
Recommendation 34 Following the phase 1 voluntary amalgamation program, the Tasmanian Government should commission an independent review into councillor numbers and allowances.	Council partially supports this recommendation. The review should be undertaken before voluntary amalgamations are finalised. It would be counter-productive to elect a new amalgamated Council and then change the number of candidates elected. The matter of Elected Member superannuation needs to be readdressed in the review. The lack of mechanism for super contributions (voluntary or mandatory) may create a barrier to candidacy and may limit existing Elected Members’ ability to contribute additional time to their roles.
Recommendation 35 The Tasmanian Government should expedite reforms already agreed and/or in train in respect of statutory sanctions available to deal with councillor misconduct or poor performance.	Council supports this recommendation.

Recommendation 36

The Tasmanian Government should:

- support the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) to develop and implement – in consultation with councils and their staff – a workforce development toolkit tailored to the sector and aligned with the Tasmanian Government’s workforce development system;
- support councils to update their workforce plans at the time of any consolidation;
- support LGAT to lead the development and implementation of state-wide approach to workforce development for key technical staff, beginning with environmental health officers, planners, engineers and building inspectors;
- recognise in statute that workforce development is an ongoing responsibility of council general managers – and that it be included as part of the new Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework; and
- include simple indicators of each council’s workforce profile in the proposed council performance dashboard.

Council supports this recommendation.

Council supports LGAT leading the development of a statewide plan for workforce development, funded by the Tasmanian Government. Key industry stakeholders and professional associations should also be included/consulted.

Council agrees that it is difficult to recruit experienced technical staff to local government. Council is often investing in training graduates, only for them to leave within 2-3 years. The labour pool is small, and councils are needing to poach technical staff from other councils, which is of no benefit to the sector. Lack of experienced technical staff is a key impediment to delivering effective or efficient services.

Workforce shortage is included in Council’s Workforce Development Plan. However, labour market constraints including a lack of technical expertise indicate a capacity deficit in this area. The proposed plan should include:

- a strategy for increasing the availability of technically skilled workers to benefit the sector long term
- direct funding from the Tasmanian Government to encourage to encourage higher education in these areas
- adequate resourcing arrangements to attract new trainees into relevant professions

The review appears to favour resource sharing as a solution to various workforce and efficiency issues. Council supports organic and practical resource sharing. However, mandated resource sharing either assumes that current staffing levels are sufficient and underemployed, or Councils are using these scarce resources ineffectively. Council does not have any evidence to support these assumptions.

Recommendation 37

The Tasmanian Government should partner with, and better support councils to build capacity and capability to plan for and respond to emergency events and climate change impacts.

Council supports this recommendation.

Emergency management arrangements currently function well in the Glenorchy municipality. This function may lend itself to a shared service model based on common interests. Emergency management is a wide-ranging function and outcomes are impacted by factors beyond individual

	<p>Council control – such as climate change and large-scale asset management coordination. Modelling for impacts of climate change is at least regional and needs to be managed accordingly.</p> <p>Similarly, Climate change is a multi-agency issue that needs an overall coordinated approach such as where are the best places to place EV chargers, solar panel farms that can input power into the power grid, and emergency evacuation centres on a regional level.</p>
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