

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM SUBMISSION

## The future of Local Government Review

Final Report – October 2023

Submission by Latrobe & Kentish Councils

29 February 2024



## **1. Introduction**

Kentish and Latrobe Councils again welcome the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the Future of Local Government Reviews Final Report which follows on from Councils' submission to Phase 3 of the Review.

The two Councils have again agreed to make a single submission and much of the material provided in our original submissions remains highly relevant and has not been repeated here. The Councils agree with the statement made in the Local Government Board Executive summary that the role of Councils is often most highly valued in regional and rural communities such as those that exist in the Latrobe and Kentish areas.

## **2. Background Information**

The Latrobe and Kentish Councils believe that their municipal alliance arrangement which has been in operation since 2010 is the only example in Australian Local Government that has led to the formation of one organisation that manages the resources of two LGA's while maintaining separate Local Government elected representatives.

The two Councils value collaboration and partnerships both within and outside their respective municipalities and the changes implemented over the last 14 years have been built on trust and acknowledgement of the different requirements of the two council areas. There is a long history of the two councils working together and while the Council's initial preference was to continue with the current shared services arrangement, they support formal Council amalgamation proposals be developed for the Kentish and Latrobe Councils (Recommendation 3).

## **3. Summary – Final Submission to the Local Government Board**

The Councils believe it is worth re-stating a summary of the Councils final submission to the Local Government Board.

- Kentish and Latrobe Councils are disappointed that the scenarios presented are primarily solutions based on boundary adjustments, which are in turn based on commuter movements. The Councils believe travel to work data is not the only information that should be used to determine communities of interest. We believe that where residents live, play sport, socialise, shop and where their children grow up and go to school are also other important aspects of a community identity.
- The international, independent research evidence continues to show that increasing the size of local government is no guarantee of improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and cost reduction; but that local democracy and citizen engagement is more likely to be damaged by the larger local

government because of a detrimental effect on democratic criteria such as:

- public trust in Councillors
  - public trust in officers
  - levels of engagement
  - contact between citizens and Councillors and Council Officers
  - levels of identification or affinity with the Council held by the public.
- The Kentish and Latrobe Councils support scenario 4(B) which combines the existing Kentish and Latrobe Local Government Areas. The Councils value community input into major decisions affecting them and request the State Government fund an elector poll on the suggested merger as part of the decision-making process. This scenario has the least negative impact for Kentish and Latrobe residents and is closest to ensuring that representation for our communities will be maintained. There would be significant efficiencies gained particularly through reducing duplication in the preparation of Strategic Plans, Annual Budgets, Annual Plans, Annual Reports, Long Term Financial Plans and Asset Management Plans. However, prior to efficiencies being realised, there are significant costs in reconfiguring the corporate information technology software and the Councils strongly recommend that the State Government fund these upfront costs as an incentive for Councils to merge.

The two Councils have demonstrated over the last 14 years that they can respond to natural disasters and deliver major capital works programs across the Council areas.

- Kentish and Latrobe Councils suggest that if the two were to merge that for the first four-year term of a new combined Council (scenario 4(B) there be 5 elected representatives from each of the current areas with the Mayor popularly elected across the whole of the area.
- A major issue to be considered in a combined Kentish and Latrobe Council is the potential impact on Grants Commission funding if the grant was reduced because of the boundary changes across Tasmania (could have a significant impact on the viability of the new entity).
- The Councils support the amendment of the Local Government Act to allow “collars” to limit rate reductions to provide more flexibility to smooth financial impacts of boundary changes.

## 4. Specific Reform Recommendations

### 4.1. A Future Vision for Local Government – Building Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Local Communities

#### *The role of Councils in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tasmania*

#### *The role statement – A future vision for Local Government in Tasmania*

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
1	<p>Define in Tasmania's new Local Government Act the role of local government consistent with the statement below: The role of local government is to support and improve the wellbeing of Tasmanian communities by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. harnessing and building on the unique strengths and capabilities of local communities;</li><li>2. providing infrastructure and services that, to be effective, require local approaches;</li><li>3. representing and advocating for the specific needs and interests of local communities in regional, state-wide, and national decision-making; and</li><li>4. promoting the social, economic, and environmental sustainability of local communities, by mitigating and planning for climate change impacts.</li></ol>	<p>Supported.</p> <p>This role better reflects councils broader policy functions than what is currently captured in the Local Government Act</p>

#### *Local Government Charter*

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
2	<p>The Tasmanian Government – through subordinate legislation – should implement a Local Government Charter to support the new legislated role for local government. The Charter should be developed in close consultation with the sector and clarify and consolidate in a single document councils' core functions, principles, and responsibilities, as well</p>	<p>Supported in principle.</p> <p>The Local Government Charter offers an opportunity to define local and State Governments shared responsibilities for public service outcomes, principles for engagement, and the obligations of each when</p>

as the obligations of the Tasmanian Government when dealing with the sector as a partner in delivering community services and support.	delivering community services and legislative responsibilities
--	--

### ***Putting the role into practice***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
3	<p>The Tasmanian Government should 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. The plan would consist of component plans including, at minimum, a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community engagement plan;</li> <li>• workforce development plan;</li> <li>• elected member capability and professional development plan; and</li> <li>• financial and asset sustainability plan.</li> </ul>	Supported on the basis that the State Government does work with the sector on the details of the proposed plans.

## **4.2. Recommendations: Structural Reform and Mandated Shared Capability**

### ***Voluntary Structural Reform***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
4	<p>Formal council amalgamation proposals should be developed for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• West Coast, Waratah-Wynyard and Circular Head Councils (into 2 councils);</li> <li>• Kentish and Latrobe Councils;</li> <li>• Break O'Day, Glamorgan-Spring Bay and Sorell Councils (into 2 councils);</li> <li>• City of Hobart and Glenorchy City Councils;</li> </ul>	Support the proposed amalgamation of the Kentish and Latrobe councils on the condition that an independent review is undertaken on the Latrobe and Kentish Councils financial capacity to meet the challenges of the future including Financial Management Strategies and Long Term Financial Plans and the financial capability of a combined entity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kingborough and Huon Valley Councils.</li> </ul> <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. The Board believes there is substantial merit in ensuring that those councils (and their communities) are afforded the opportunity to genuinely explore structural consolidation proposals in greater detail.</p>	
--	--	--

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
5	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.	Supported.  Membership of the Board and resourcing within the Office of Local Government will be critical to the success of the next stages of the reform process.

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
6	A Community Working Group (CWG) should be established in each area where formal amalgamation proposals are being prepared. The CWG would identify specific opportunities the Tasmanian Government could support to improve community outcomes.	Supported.  The Terms of Reference of the Community Working Group (CWG) is critical.

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
7	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.	Supported.  It is important that the funded package of opportunities to improve community outcomes is finalised before a community vote is taken.

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
8	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.	Only supported where the two or more councils to be amalgamated have successful community-initiated elector polls. If this is not the case the recommendation invites potential conflict in situations where one Council area votes for amalgamation when their neighbour/s either hasn't voted or does not support it.

### ***The pathway to mandated shared services***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
9	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>The vision of the shared service arrangement would need to be defined in order to appreciate whether such power would be beneficial or detrimental to council operations. A shared service arrangement needs to be completely supported and underpinned by a sound and robust set of management, process and data driven guidelines in order for councils to be able to adhere to such an arrangement.</p> <p>So far councils operate independently, and as such, there are significant differences from one council to the next in terms of the above process, management and data activities that make a shared resource structure a significant hurdle to overcome.</p> <p>Forcing councils to participate ultimately leads to better and more streamlined services between councils (especially if considering all councils across the state), as the practices ultimately become adopted</p>

		<p>over greater region but that still presents a disparate approach from a statewide perspective.</p> <p>Having a centralized government body that councils utilise for specific parts of council operations makes more sense whereby a statewide set of rules, data models, software, and processes can be standardized and thus ultimately lead to shared resourcing (people) becoming viable.</p>
--	--	--

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
10	Give councils the opportunity to design identified shared service arrangements themselves, with a model only being imposed if councils cannot reach consensus.	<p>Support in principle but again this seems to shirk the role that state government can play to help guide all councils in a similar direction. Two or more councils can devise a shared service model between them for specific functions.</p> <p>However if they don't agree on such an arrangement, then at least a standardised model would be imposed on them (based on the advice from the established Local Government Board), but again, this only addresses the shared service arrangement in isolation between those councils involved and still doesn't address the more underlying issue of the siloed operational nature of each of the councils.</p> <p>Ultimately however, councils that are committed to share resources voluntarily and collaboratively including any wins and losses are much more likely to succeed than councils that are forced into the same room and are not</p>



		fully supportive and may seek to gain leverage or take advantage of the arrangement.
--	--	--

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
11	Before endorsing a particular mandatory shared service arrangement, the Minister for Local Government should seek the advice of the Local Government Board.	<p>Support in principle.</p> <p>Expand what the Local Government Board's role should entail.</p> <p>Utilise whole of state purchasing power for software, provide a set of whole of state data structures and models, work towards whole of state EAM systems etc. At the moment, councils are doing this independently which means software providers of these systems have arrangements that are reflective of just a single body (and thus are more costly). Significant monetary savings and data sharing (which then leads to more robust service sharing) would be more feasible if all councils were operating from the same set of guide notes, implementing software that is structured and able to communicate in the same way to its neighbours and following similar processes to undertake their operations. The Local Government Board could take on that responsibility from a whole of state approach.</p>

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
12	If councils are unable to reach consensus on a mandatory service sharing agreement, the Minister for Local Government should have the power to require councils to participate in a specific model or	<p>Support in principle.</p> <p>See Recommendation 9. Noting this is a 'Stick' approach rather than a 'Carrot' but doesn't necessarily resolve underlying individual council operation</p>

models the Tasmanian Government has developed.	issues. There are potentially other compelling issues that would be present if this clause was enacted. Rather than using the 'Stick', investigate and help work towards a resolution to address those issues in the first step. If this clause had to be used, then a number of steps to assist the councils achieve a shared mutually beneficial outcome was not taken into account prior to that.
--	--

### ***Early priorities for mandated shared services***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
13	<p>The first priorities for developing mandatory shared service arrangements should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sharing of key technical staff;</li> <li>• sharing of common digital business systems and ICT infrastructure; and</li> <li>• sharing of asset management expertise through a centralised, council-owned authority.</li> </ul>	<p>Supported.</p> <p>The hope would be this expertise would help those councils that are partaking in the shared service arrangement, that practices do actually merge and become systematic in nature. But just being cautious that although the knowledge sharing base grows, the silo between neighbouring shared services councils still is present. Look towards using common software, common practices, and common data structures for councils across the whole of state to find efficiencies for all involved.</p> <p>The role of the asset manager, their capabilities, and the scope of practice should have a clearer function to know how such a service could be shared and where the expertise can be utilised, So far it is established that many 'fall into' the role and the knowledge and qualifications almost become a learned, onsite experience, but this</p>

	<p>obviously then means there is little consistency in practices between councils. Defining this skill set and how the resources can be shared and can lead to growth opportunities and an aspirational work choice goal for many passionate in this field and a more systemic approach to service delivery.</p> <p>If shared service arrangement (assuming state level or at least regional level) was treated as a pool where councils could utilise the resource set, then there is potential for the role to be treated as a knowledge hub with reporting to champions within the council itself and provide a broader range of scope (geographical) over multiple municipalities.</p> <p>The pool of technical staff is limited and impacts the ability for sharing. More work is required to train and attract technical staff to the Local Government sector.</p> <p>The move to common digital business systems would be a long term, costly and highly disruptive process and funding and resourcing from the State Government would be required.</p>
--	--

### 4.3. Specific Reform Recommendations

#### **Community Outcome 1: Support healthy and sustainable local communities:**

*By being clear on the role of Councils' and elected representatives, and ensuring they have the resources and support they need to deliver that role.*

***A clearer wellbeing role for local government, guiding strategic decision-making and continuous performance improvement***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
14	Include a statutory requirement for councils to consult with local communities to identify wellbeing priorities, 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.	Supported in principle.  It is important that well-being is defined. It is important that the State Government provide additional funding if councils are expected to expand their role in this area.

***Better pre-election education for candidates***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
15	To be eligible to stand for election to council, all candidates should 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.	Candidates should be encouraged to participate in education sessions prior to election but if they do not that should not prevent their nomination.  The Latrobe and Kentish councils support mandatory completion of a prescribed education session within six months of councillors election.

***Minimum prescribed learning and development modules for elected members***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
16	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>councils should be required to prepare, at the beginning of</li> </ul>	Supported.  Work on this is well underway with the Learning and Development Framework. The Review of the Local Government Act included the development of core competencies and an "induction plan" following each election.  Recommendation 16 now makes completion of the program compulsory.

	each new term, an elected member learning and capability development plan to support the broader ongoing professional development needs of their elected members.	
--	---	--

### ***Improving rating outcomes for electricity generation and mining***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
17	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>Supported.</p> <p>The method of valuing large industrial or commercial operations needs to be reviewed as the capital value does not reflect the plant and equipment located at the site or the turnover of the business.</p> <p>These businesses are often in old buildings with a continued written down value of the capital asset and subsequently a reduction in their rates.</p>

### ***More consistent and efficient infrastructure charging***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
18	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>Supported.</p> <p>Increases in Developer Contributions will be recovered in some way by the end user. This in theory should fund social infrastructure for a region. This is important as population growth then places a greater burden on other infrastructure requirements (beyond simply roads and stormwater). The increased revenue from a greater ratepayer pool helps future strategic planning for public infrastructure.</p>

### ***Increased transparency of rates information to the community***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
19	Introduce additional minimum information requirements for council rates notices to improve public transparency, accountability, and confidence in council rating and financial management decisions.	Supported.  This is to ensure consistency and comparability in rates notices, presented in a plain English format.

### ***Efficient and effective distribution of Australian Government Financial Assistance Grants***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
20	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• is transparent and well understood by councils and the community,</li><li>• that assistance is being targeted efficiently and effectively, and</li><li>• is not acting as a disincentive for councils to pursue structural reform opportunities.</li></ul>	Supported.  This is a major issue that could have a significant impact on the decision of the councils and the communities to amalgamate.  It is understood that the State Grants Commission can only guarantee funding levels for four years following any amalgamation of councils.

### ***Clear and equitable road funding***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
21	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.	Supported.  It is a disgrace that the local government's contribution from the Heavy Vehicle Motor Tax has not been increased for nearly 20 years.

### ***Better and more consistent user fees and charges***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
22	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.	Supported in principle.  Councils should always have the discretion to subsidise Council fees and charges if they believe services such as in the "well-being" area are

		not viable on a cost recovery basis.
--	--	--------------------------------------

### ***Potential future improvements to our broader rating system***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
23	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.	Supported.  The current rating of Independent Living Units is inequitable and unfair.

### **Community Outcome 2: Deliver better services locally:**

*By helping Councils build the systems they need to deliver better government services in their community, including through partnerships with other tiers of government.*

### ***Enhanced performance monitoring that supports the continuous improvement of Councils***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
24	The Tasmanian Government should work with the sector to develop, resource, and implement a best practice local government performance monitoring system.	Supported.  This underpins the shared service recommendations around shared service arrangements. If there is a consistent framework that councils are able to work towards that is considered 'best practice' for the region then this allows a much easier ability to share, compare and support our neighbours to continually improve to the communities benefit.

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
25	The Tasmanian Government should develop a 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	Supported.  This ties into the theme that a state government led body is able to guide all councils on a similar reporting journey. The benefits to being able to share consistent data pools across councils should be seen as an efficiency gain. There are



protocols via a Ministerial Order or similar mechanism.	<p>drawbacks where the requirements may be overburdensome however. As such, appropriate datasets and data models would need to be defined and not seen as an additional body of work. The prescription of data methodologies and protocols is important in this context as it drives the implementation and configuration of enterprise asset management systems.</p> <p>There is potential for 'experts' developing such requirements to go beyond best practice outcomes due to their highly theoretical and non-practitioner status, when in reality expectations and activities need simplifying and not expanding.</p>
---	---

### ***Enhancing regulatory oversight and support for the sector***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
26	<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. 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. Consideration should also be given to resourcing internal audit via service</p>	<p>Supported in principle.</p> <p>The funding of an internal audit for smaller councils can be cost prohibitive and other options such as shared services or funding allocations made to the Audit Panel by the Council to undertake independent investigations must be considered.</p>



	sharing or pooling arrangements, particularly for smaller councils.	
--	---	--

### ***Co-regulation for better outcomes***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
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.	Supported.  The new Charter for Local Government could capture this co-regulatory approach

### ***Strengthening partnerships for better customer-facing services***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
28	The Tasmanian Government should work with the local government sector to pursue opportunities for strengthened partnerships between local government and Service Tasmania.	Supported.  The Latrobe Council is interested in having a shared Service Tasmania Centre at the Council office. The Sheffield Service Tasmania Centre already provides Council services such as payment of rates.

### ***Common systems for Council digital business systems***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
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).	Supported in principle.  In order for the transition of councils to move to common business systems, there will need to be a primary digital platform that is agreed to be the standard. If this is the case, the central body would have purchasing power to reduce costs for councils as it then becomes a larger customer base with which to leverage off.  It is important to note that there may be long term contracts in place with councils utilizing current IT and

		<p>EAM systems. Transition to a common digital provision services may take a number of years to accommodate for these contract agreements over existing hardware/software services to expire.</p> <p>If such a transition was to take place, wholesale process changes would need to take place across all councils to move towards a common set of practices (but such a change would be encouraged rather than resisted).</p> <p>This recommendation has the potential to make one of the biggest positive change impacts across the sector if appropriately supported at all levels. It also allows access to a higher level of internal local government knowledge and be less reliant on external consultancy.</p>
--	--	---

### **Community Outcome 3: Build and maintain future-ready community assets:**

*By setting clearer standards for the way Councils manage assets and holding them to those standards.*

#### ***Simplifying and streamlining statutory requirements for strategic financial and asset management planning***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
30	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>Supported.</p> <p>Long Term Strategic Asset Management Plan (LTSAMP) and Long Term Financial Management Plan (LTFMP) should be a driver for strategic asset and financial decision making and is a direct result of serving the community.</p> <p>The challenge is in support throughout the organisation</p>

		<p>and providing adequate resourcing to ensure these plans drive the council forward. If the plans are an afterthought, then there is no 'buy in' and no ownership of what they stand for.</p> <p>It is worth determining whether the existing framework and statutory requirements are 'broken' due to such a low adoption and/or compliance as there could be other issues at play that indicate why the adoption is low.</p> <p>Support to develop the generalised framework and consistency in certain aspects throughout the regions would be seen as a beneficial step towards greater adoption.</p>
--	--	--

### ***Improving consistency and transparency of asset lives***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
31	The Tasmanian Government – in consultation with the sector – should investigate the viability of, and seek to implement wherever possible, standardised useful asset life ranges for all major asset classes.	<p>Supported.</p> <p>Standardisation across the sector for asset classes across the sector will also assist when comparing like for like and working with other councils to learn and adopt good working practices. A common set of asset unit rates, useful lives and other financial variables will potentially expose some large variances between current methodology and the proposed adopted methodology along with financial implications that it may have. In general though, this would help for consistency in reporting. Revaluations over multiple years becomes more consistent and less time by each council should be</p>

		needed to generate such reports.
--	--	----------------------------------

#### **Community Outcome 4: Ensure Local Government represents you and your community:**

*By requiring Councils to listen to the whole community when setting priorities and be more open and accountable for the decisions they make.*

##### ***Strengthening Councils' community engagement obligations and practices***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
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.	Supported.  The review of the Local Government Act included this reform.

##### ***Improving community engagement on major or novel service and infrastructure decisions***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
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.	Supported in principle.  Councillors are elected to make decisions for the community and some services which are needed by the community but are not cost-effective may not be implemented if cost becomes the determining factor. The reopening of the Hydrotherapy pool at Latrobe is an example of a service that may not have been supported by most residents due to cost involved if extensive consultation had taken place.

##### ***Ensuring fair and appropriate Councillor remuneration***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
34	Following the phase 1 voluntary amalgamation program, the Tasmanian Government should commission an independent review into councillor numbers and allowances.	Supported in principle.  Concern is expressed how fewer Councillors would adequately represent a large rural area. Having fewer Councillors and paying them greater allowances does not

		guarantee a higher calibre of candidates standing for election.
--	--	---

### ***Improving standards of Councillor conduct and performance***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
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.	Supported.  There should also be compassionate grounds for unique circumstances.

### **Community Outcome 5: Enhance local job opportunities in Councils:**

*By developing a Local Government workforce strategy that provides training and jobs to local people.*

### ***Addressing Local Government workforce challenges***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
36	<p>The Tasmanian Government should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• support councils to update their workforce plans at the time of any consolidation;</li> <li>• support LGAT to lead the development and implementation of a state-wide approach to workforce development for key technical staff, beginning with environmental health officers, planners, engineers and building inspectors;</li> <li>• recognise in statute that workforce development is an ongoing responsibility of council general managers and is included as part of the new</li> </ul>	<p>Supported in principle.</p> <p>While acknowledging LGAT's stance, we would like to express our agreement with the proposed emphasis on collaboration with education and training institutions for effective workforce development.</p> <p>Additionally, we propose exploring the possibility of establishing a unified job posting platform for all local governments. Much like the state government's common platform for job postings, this new platform, administered by LGAT with annual administrative fees from participating councils, could streamline and centralize job advertisements for enhanced efficiency.</p>

	<p>Strategic Planning and Reporting Framework; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>include simple indicators of each council's workforce profile in the proposed council performance dashboard.</li> </ul>	
--	---	--

***Improving Councils' emergency response and climate change capability***

#	Recommendation Headline	Councils Response
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.	<p>It is suggested that an alternative Recommendation Headline could be:</p> <p><b>'The Tasmanian Government fully review and potentially amend emergency management legislation and expectations following assessment of the practicality, benefit, cost, capacity and capability of local government to fully comply with the resources and skill sets available at the local level; and to partner with, and better support, councils to build capacity and capability to plan for and respond to climate change impacts'.</b></p> <p>Local government and staff are typically 'general practitioners' brought into this highly critical, skilled and professional career field as a side role.</p> <p>There is a real concern that recommendation 37 will result in further expectations to attend training and information sessions which will simply highlight shortcomings and deficiencies and frustrate staff that have EM as a non-primary role with ongoing daily demands and limited resources to draw on. It is perhaps shortsighted to expect each LGA to be in a</p>

position to maintain a considerable skillset and compliance in this area. It is one thing to understand the expectations and an entirely different one to have everything in place, compliant and ready for deployment, especially when Local Government are a support agency and the lead response agency will 'lead' with little reference or commitment to documentation developed by Council.

There is currently significant responsibility placed on local government with respect to emergency management including maintaining emergency management plans, maintaining risk registers and the like.

It is acknowledged it will take discussions and support at high level to implement change. However, we remain hopeful in the meantime that the LG EM Audit, the DRF funding and the DSG RecFIT Climate Risk Assessment will assist local government to meet some of their obligations in the short term.

There should perhaps be only two key roles for local government: a) preparedness and restoration of its own assets including climate change implications and; b) a conduit and support (eg evacuation centre) with its constituents and as a link to other specialised regional or state resources.

Further to this there are two combined area municipal

		<p>emergency management committees on the NW coast and it would seem an opportune time to assess the overlap and inefficiencies between both regional and municipal meetings.</p> <p>Additionally Local Government funding and involvement in the volunteer SES unit needs reviewing and a centralised model and budget / purchasing system required.</p> <p>Climate change impacts need to be better understood and planned for across all functions including emergency management.</p>
--	--	---