

Michael Mogridge
A/g Executive Director
Office of Local Government

28 February 2024

Via e-mail: lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au

Dear Mike,

Please find below the Local Government Professionals Tasmania (LG Pro) submission in response to the release of The Future of Local Government Review Final Report from the Future of Local Government Review Board (Board).

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of LG Pro to thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Board's Final Report.

Also, thanks to Minister Street for attending the LG Pro Board meeting in December to discuss the Final Report with our Board in December, his time was much appreciated.

We re-iterate that LG Pro is a membership association focussed on professional development of our members and therefore as such represents Local Council officers across Tasmania.

We further re-iterate that last year, the Board of LG Pro conducted four consultations sessions facilitated by Timmins Ray, with each session grouped by professional experience. The four sessions were made up of local government professionals in the following key areas:

- Community Services
- Human Resources/Work Health and Safety
- Risk/Legal and Property
- IT/Corporate and Asset Management

A total of 40 Council officers participated in the consultation and the detailed results of the consultation were provided as attachments to our previous submission.

Key themes that were identified and explored by participants and continue to be explored as part of our consultation include:

- Role Clarification/Recognition
- Consistency of Services

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- Impact on the Community
- Business as usual versus transition (Resourcing)
- Employee Wellbeing
- Communication
- Funding Reform
- Implementation Planning (During Transition)
- Mandated Shared Services
- Service/Financial Harmonisation
- Local Impacts
- Staffing

Since these workshops, once The Future of Local Government Review Final Report was released for comment, LG Pro has engaged with our members by means of newsletter and by individual e mails asking for further input.

It is clear from all of our consultations that Council officers can and do see both opportunities and challenges that come with this proposed reform. Councils officers were also able to articulate both their concerns with the proposed reforms along with sound and constructive suggestions on how any transition should be managed. The latest input is summarised as follows:

Implications for Council officers need to be considered and included; resource implications, workload and the technical and leadership shortage of capable officers. Current training for some work areas was either very limited or not available in Tasmania and shortages of capable officers was an issue across Australia. Some areas were particularly limited including Environmental Health officers as an example.

With regards to shared services Council officers showed some concern that this may be seen mainly as a cost saving mechanism, however consideration should rather be focussed on greater collaboration, achieving consistent reporting and aligned services.

If the Government does pursue shared services, careful consideration should be given to the transitional arrangements for Local Government employees that could be impacted and required to move to a shared arrangement. It is advised that the relevant industry experts be consulted to seek their feedback on any shared services involved and the proposed operational model for these services.

Finally Council officers felt that LG Pro could and should play an important role in the reform process as a key stakeholder in the Local Government Sector. In this regard LG Pro requests, the specific inclusion/addition of LG Pro with regards to professional development in recommendation 36 of the Final Report.

LG Pro has Special Interest Groups (SIG's) focussing on the professional development of Council officers in the key areas of Community Services, Human Resources/ Health and Safety, Risk/Legal and Property and IT/Corporate and Asset Management. LG Pro currently offers twelve one day training sessions per year and have in excess of 240 Council officers attending each year.

LG Pro would thus strongly encourage the use of these SIG's as it's the best place to get sound feedback and assist with any future professional development training requirement.

We request that LG Pro continues to play an active role as a key stakeholder in the Local Government Sector. LG Pro has the ability, industry links, partnerships and resources to assist. Consideration should also be given to an LG Pro Board member with the appropriate skills and capabilities be considered for the new Local Government Board to be established.

LG Pro once again thanks you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Board's Final Report.

Should you wish to discuss the above further, please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED].

Kind Regards



Kristen Desmond

President

LG Professionals Tasmania