



North West Municipal Coordinators Liaison Group

Local Government Reform
GPO Box 123
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Sir / Madam,

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD SUBMISSION THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW FINAL REPORT – OCTOBER 2023

The North West Municipal Coordinators Liaison Group (NWECLG) agreed at their meeting held on 14 February 2024 to make a joint submission in relation to Recommendation 37 from above report, being *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*. I have been tasked with this action item based on the discussion at that meeting, yet recognising Councils may make submissions that could vary from this.

Recommendation 37 appears to result primarily from a section relating to climate change yet becomes considerably expanded in relation to emergency management within the recommendation.

To provide some background, the NWECLG is primarily made up of municipal emergency management coordinators, deputy municipal emergency management coordinators, municipal recovery coordinators and deputy municipal recovery coordinators from the Burnie City Council, Central Coast Council, Circular Head Council, Devonport City Council, Kentish Council, King Island Council, Latrobe Council, Waratah Wynyard Council, and the West Coast Council.

The group discussion supported an alternative recommendation as follows:

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.

There is significant responsibility placed on local government with respect to emergency management including maintaining emergency management plans, maintaining risk registers and the like. Local government and staff are typically 'general practitioners' brought into this highly critical, skilled, and professional career field as a side role. 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 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 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 emergency management committees on the NW coast and it would seem opportune to review the overlap and inefficiencies between both regional and municipal meetings.

Climate change impacts need to be better understood and planned for across all functions including emergency management.

It is acknowledged any change will take discussions and support at high level to implement.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Magor', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jonathan Magor

**LATROBE AND KENTISH COUNCILS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR
AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NORTH WEST MUNICIPAL COORDINATORS LIAISON GROUP**