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26 February 2024

The Hon Sue Smith AM
Chair
Local Government Board
GPO Box 123
HOBART Tas 7001

Via email: lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au

Dear Sue,

FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW – FINAL REPORT SUBMISSION

I write to make a submission in response to the Final Report into the Future of Local Government Review released by the Local Government Board in October 2023.

Firstly, I offer congratulations to the Board on its very thorough and considered review into the future of local government. It has involved significant stakeholder engagement and followed a well-structured, sequenced approach which is evident from the recommendations it has made.

The Southern Tasmanian Regional Waste Authority (STRWA) has considered the final report and has paid particular attention to the section dealing with the pathway to mandated shared services.

As a joint authority established by all 12 southern councils, it was pleasing to note the Board's recognition of existing examples of shared services within the sector.

STRWA supports the proposal to amend the *Local Government Act* to provide for mandating participation in shared services, where appropriate, as identified in Recommendation 9. While participation in shared services has proven to already occur, in the absence of a power to mandate participation, its full effectiveness is unlikely to be realised.

Similarly, the remaining recommendations relating to shared services (Recommendations 10-13) are also supported. It is important that councils are actively involved to achieve buy-in and commitment, a level of independent oversight through the Board, having sufficient power for the Government to intervene and identifying a range of initial priorities are all sensible mechanisms to lead local government to greater utilisation of shared services.

The critical step, in STRWA's submission, is in relation to the process for identification of possible shared services. The Board has recognised in its report that full cycle waste management services are worthy of further exploration over time, whilst acknowledging that there are already several regional arrangements in place. STRWA remains open to consideration of expanding these arrangements, however is of the view that the process for doing so must be linked to the principles identified by the Board on pages 62 and 63 of its report which indicate greater likelihood of a shared service succeeding. For clarity, these are:

- Address an agreed problem;
- Engage authentically and try and build consensus;
- Focus on areas of common interest and need;
- Aim to build scale and scope incrementally;
- Ensure local accountability and responsiveness to local need;
- Share risks and rewards;
- Incentivise and support the transition;
- Discuss and agree the best governance model.

As the establishment of STRWA is relatively recent it is evident that a number of these principles were present in that process – indicating a level of success in STRWA's operation thus far.

It will be vitally important that any consideration of future opportunities for shared services, or increased scope of existing services, are assessed through the lens of the principles identified to provide the greatest prospect of success.

It has been a valuable experience to participate as a stakeholder in the review and it is recognised that this is a generational opportunity to shape the future of local government. STRWA looks forward to seeing what commitments the Government will make in relation to the future of local government following the conclusion of this consultation period.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Jackson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Paul Jackson
Chief Executive Officer
Southern Tasmanian Regional Waste Authority (STRWA)