

20 May 2021

Dr Ian Watt
Tasmanian State Service Review
Department of Premier and Cabinet

Via email: StateServiceReview@dpac.tas.gov.au

Dear Dr Ian Watt

Tasmanian State Service Review – Interim Report

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the Tasmanian State Service Review – Interim Report. This submission has been prepared by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) on behalf of the Local Government Sector; all 29 local councils in Tasmania.

LGAT is incorporated under the *Local Government Act 1993* and is the representative body and advocate for local government in Tasmania. Where a council has made a direct submission to this process any omission of specific comments made by that council in this submission should not be viewed as lack of support by LGAT for that specific issue.

LGAT has chosen to make a written response to the Interim Report on selected matters rather than using the online consultation tool as we represent the local government sector and are not a member of the public. Our feedback is focused on the collaboration and shared responsibilities between local government and the Tasmanian State Service (TSS).

Building One State Service

We support the 'One TSS' recommendation as this provides a unified base and approach for the TSS and the Tasmanian Government to work with local government. There is a significant opportunity to leverage the local understanding and capabilities of councils to get the best outcomes for Tasmania. A shared strategic focus between the Tasmanian Government, local government and the TSS creates the platform to efficiently deliver outcomes at the right scale, by those with the greatest capacity and capability.

Working with Others

The first chapter of the Interim Report notes the challenges and opportunities of a relatively small in size State Service that must still deal with all of the complexities of an entire state. It also notes that this challenge means that the TSS must draw upon other resources and partnerships to achieve the best outcomes for the state. Local government is one of the most critical partnerships for the TSS to build to help Tasmania reach its potential. An example is our current partnership with the Department of Health (DoH) on the Local Government Health and Wellbeing Project. This project is building the capacity of councils to improve the health and wellbeing of Tasmanians, supported by evidence and data from the Tasmanian Government. We worked closely with the DoH to co-design the project to make the most of the TSS's resources and local government's capabilities and local presence. The co-design of programs and projects helps to support the achievement of the shared objectives of state and local government, as both local and state-level knowledge is used. This approach is critical for Tasmania to address the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The Interim Report has focused on opportunities of collaboration with the University of Tasmania (UTAS). We would note that there is also a significant collaboration and resource-sharing opportunity with local government across workforce and planning and surge capacity. There are many similarities between roles undertaken within local government and the TSS, such as administration, public health, finance, emergency management, engineering and construction. We would welcome a similar partnership approach with local government as that which is recommended for UTAS.

The welcome focus on partnerships will need to be supported by capacity building within the TSS on the skills and approaches that are needed for collaboration, to activate and nurture partnerships and to co-design programs and projects.

Ways of Working for the Future

The local government sector, through LGAT, has been progressing improvement and self-reform expressed through the '21st Century Councils' project agenda. This work was referenced in the Final Report of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) in discussing opportunities for an improved local government sector. 21st Century Councils highlights the opportunities for shared services within local government. The Interim Report also identifies this area for the TSS. Given the overlap we would welcome the exploration of increased inter-government shared services. For example:

- Councils and Service Tasmania work more closely to provide great customer service for Tasmanians. There are already examples of this happening (noted in Chapter 7) with the services of six councils available through Service Tasmania

and the Service Tasmania branch at the Devonport Paranaple Centre being the first point of contact for many residents of Devonport City.

- There is likely an overlap in skills of Environmental Health Officers, DoH and EPA Tasmania. What are the opportunities for them to more closely work together, share expertise and also to share support services?

Delivering Contemporary Services for Tasmanians

This theme in the report is aligned with our example of Service Tasmania in Ways of Working for Future above. We echo the needs of the side bar on page 64 of the Interim Report that the TSS needs to be: connected to the Tasmanian community, supporting a strong sense of place and accessible to all Tasmanians. This goal is aligned strongly with the positioning of local government as connected and accessible to the community and reinforces the need for collaboration between the TSS and councils. LGAT would welcome the opportunity to help facilitate these collaborations.

Similar to the TSS, local government also faces the challenges of providing contemporary services and the need to transform its digital systems, processes and provide services that residents/customers expect. There is much that the sector and TSS could learn from each other and together, with opportunities for each to leverage investments in backend infrastructure. For example, extending the goal of a single Government Contact Centre (the 'one number for government'), to cover local and state government. This would help to address challenges that are faced within the community. For example, starting a new business where information and permissions may be required at both levels of government.

We congratulate the Tasmanian Government in undertaking this review and offer our support to build greater collaboration between the TSS and local government to provide the services and support that Tasmanians deserve.

If you have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact Ben Morris, Policy Director at ben.morris@lgat.tas.gov.au or via phone on (03) 6146 3743.

Yours sincerely,



Dion Lester
Chief Executive Officer