

## **Introduction**

Mr Simon Overland has provided the Board with a submission in relation to Local Government Reform in Tasmania dated 10 May 2022.

Mr Overland has provided this response in his personal capacity, and has cited that the views expressed are his own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Burnie City Council.

While the Burnie City Council has past motions in support of local government reform, the current Council do not have a formally adopted position on this matter.

The vast majority of the Council however, in their individual capacity as elected members, support wholeheartedly the views and opinions expressed by Mr Overland in his submission.

To that end, the elected member's party to this correspondence wish for the Review Board to be aware that the content and representations made by Mr Overland should be also considered as their own.

Additionally there are a number of views and sentiments that the councillors who are party to this correspondence wish to convey to the Board. These are expressed under the thematic groups detailed in the terms of reference 1-3 of the Local Government Board Review – the Future of Local Government in Tasmania.

### **1. The future roles and functions that should be delivered by local government in Tasmania;**

- It is felt that the functions and powers included at section 20 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) need to be considered in the context of a councils ability to provide or influence some of the existing functions.

For example section 20(1)(a) states that a council is responsible for providing for the health, safety and welfare of the community. While it is acknowledged that a council has a role to play in the health of its community through certain activities such as environmental health, it is not responsible nor does a council have the capacity to delivery and provide health and welfare services more broadly. This is of course a state government responsibility.

**2. The organisational features and capabilities necessary to enable local government to effectively and sustainably deliver its future roles and functions;**

- Current local boundaries create sub optimal outcomes not only in land-use planning but also in the provision of engineering, development services (delivery of own council developments), human resource outcomes, information technology and many other aspects of administration.
- There needs to be a more effective and comprehensive way in which to monitor the comparable performance of councils across the state. Current methods of undertaking this are not reflective of the differences that exist between many councils in Tasmania, yet this data drives decision making, resulting in poorly informed policy and strategy.
- Training for elected members needs to be delivered consistently across all local government authorities. Previous training conducted has been inadequate and ineffective largely centred on restatement of the principles of roles and functions of a council. Simply developing a training package and then expecting councils to conduct the training, does not achieve the level of understanding or consistency required.
- There is a lack of opportunity within local government for career advancement for younger people when senior staff sometimes occupy positions for long periods of time. This supports the position of having larger, more sustainable Council's where opportunities are more widely available. If these career advancement opportunities are not provided, it will result in younger professionals moving away from the local government sector.
- The legislated timeframes for strategic plans and long term financial management strategies needs review. They are currently challenging given local government election cycles, which warrants consideration of shorter more agile plans. Yet strategically a ten year horizon may not be sufficient when considering the long term needs of the community, particularly where assets are concerned.
- Shared resourcing models which are often suggested as part of local government reform are not successful and will be superficial into the future. To be successful in this area would require each participating council to agree on having the same systems and processes – something that there is no incentive to do presently, and which comes at a cost that many councils are unable to bear.

**3. The optimal future design for the Tasmanian local government sector to support the delivery of local government's proposed roles, functions, features and**

**capabilities, individually and collectively, across representative and administrative roles and functions.**

- There is nothing further to add on this category, in addition to the submission provided.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback into what is an important consideration around local government reform in Tasmania.

Mayor, Councillor Steve Kons

Councillor David Pease

Councillor Themba Bulle

Councillor Ken Dorsey

Councillor Teeny Brumby

Councillor Chris Lynch

Councillor Alwyn Boyd

Councillor Amina Keygan