

I have read the FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW, ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES REPORT, JULY 2022, and in particular noted the commentary, by the sector participants, titled "4 - Engagement Findings: LGAT Workshops". With 151 staff and 74 elected members attending a reasonable sample of the sectors view was apparent.

The section headed "Elected representatives and staff " on page 37 highlights an issue prevalent in Local Government within Tasmania.

"Sector participants believed there should be strong leadership and elected representatives should act as a cohesive group. Elected representatives should be politically astute and aware, with clear motivations, passion, commitment, and a willingness to serve the community and work as part of a team towards a common purpose." - quote.

There is a clear misconception within the sector if it believes the democratically elected independent community representors (councillors) should act as a "team etc....". This is clearly wrong as they are elected, by the ratepayers, to represent the views of the ratepayers and must maintain their independence of thinking. If they become a "part" of the council management team they are not fulfilling their roles under the Local Government Act 1993.

It would appear that there are members of various Council management teams/staff that would relish having "control" of the councillors but that mitigates the effectiveness of the elected representation system.

After wading through the many pages of summaries relating to the current review it would appear there are consistent themes becoming apparent. I am hopeful a worthy outcome may prevail however I again raise the issue of the outdated and partially irrelevant Local Government Act 1993. This document is the keystone for Local Government in Tasmania yet it is 29 years old and not being considered (under this review) for a rewrite more suited to this century.

Many of the issues raised, within the current review, could be addressed more easily if the Legislation was appropriate and up to date. We need a Local Government Ombudsman empowered to judge, and act, on breaches of Local Government powers – put an end to the "Local Government is a separate sphere of governance – we (The State) can't get involved" answers and give the community a policeman willing and able to rectify issues from Local Government governance failures to councillor code breaches.

If the review supports Local Government remaining then update the Legislation and empower an independent authority to represent the community when/if issues occur. Alternatively empower the Director of Local Government to adjudicate and “get involved” with Local Government issues.

I find it unfathomable how the current review of Local Government can be impartial when LGAT has members on the review board and ran the sector (Local Government) consultation process - hardly impartial when the bureaucrats are reviewing their own bureaucrats .

LGAT are not likely to support putting their own sector to an end – maybe that is why abolishing local government and installing a modified single State authority (with elected councillors still) was not on the agenda.

Regards Greg Luck, Swansea