



21 April 2022

The Hon. Sue Smith AM
Chair
Local Government Review Board
Via Email: lgboard@dpac.tas.gov.au

Dear Chair,

Brighton Council held a workshop on April 12 to discuss the Local Government Reform process and to identify any key matters, especially those where there appears to be a strong or consensus view on Council.

Whilst Council intends to engage more deeply in the process once the Board begins to present the key emerging themes from its fact finding and consultation process and indeed presents some ideas for change, Council nevertheless to make this submission regarding a few key matters.

Finance and Administration

Brighton has a strong and majority view that its approach to rating, namely its 'flat rate' is both appropriate and extremely well-supported by our community. Council does not wish to see this changed.

A majority of councillors would not like to see Council merge or boundaries changed. There is a strong belief that Council is sustainable as is and at almost 20,000 residents and growing fast is no longer a council lacking the appropriate economies of scale to provide the infrastructure and services expected by its community.

Council is open to the idea of reducing the number of councillors but believes that seven would be the minimum for Brighton (currently nine). This would help to ensure diversity and representation from different geographical areas of the municipality. A majority of councillors did not think increasing the councillor allowance would make a difference as it would not be a working wage regardless.

Brighton is conscious over recent years some state functions have been pushed to councils. Council is open to taking on appropriate state functions, and there may be some more that make sense, but appropriate funding models need to be in place.

Community Well-being

There is increasingly a greater expectation from communities for an ever-widening range of community services and infrastructure. There are also arguably increasing gaps in such services provided by state and federal government that are left to local government to fill. Council believes rather than this issue being ignored, it should be recognised, embraced at the place-based level, but funded accordingly from state and federal funds into local government.

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Environment

As with community well-being, there is an increasing expectation (and need) for local government to be moving deeper into environmental management and particularly climate change. Again, Brighton believes this is critical and rather than saying 'councils should stick to roads, rates and rubbish' we need to accept and embrace this, but this means addressing the necessary funding and resourcing required to do so adequately.

Planning and Regulatory Services

A majority of councillors believe statutory planning should stay local and with local councils. There is concern that some of the alternative models discussed would not have adequate local knowledge and context and would be very inefficient. Council is willing to consider specific proposals in more detail though.

All councillors believe strategic planning must be done at the local level and is an absolutely critical role of local government.

Please feel free to contact myself or council's general manager James Dryburgh for clarification on any matters in this submission. We look forward to engaging in subsequent phases of the Local Government Review process.

Yours sincerely,



Leigh Gray
MAYOR