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5 May 2022

Sue Smith
Chairperson
Local Government Review Board
GPO Box 123
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Chairperson,

CITY OF LAUNCESTON SUBMISSION - FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN TASMANIA REVIEW

I write to advise that at its Council meeting on Thursday 5 May 2022, the Council endorsed its submission for the Local Government Board Review.

Please find attached the submission for the Board's consideration.

The City of Launceston appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the review and would request an opportunity to meet with the Board to further outline this submission in due course.

In the meantime, if you would like to discuss our submission further, please don't hesitate to contact Chief Executive Officer, Michael Stretton, on 0419 428 457 or email directly to Michael.Stretton@launceston.tas.gov.au

Yours sincerely

Albert van Zetten
Mayor

CC. Michael Stretton, Chief Executive Officer

Encl. Local Government Board Review Submission: City of Launceston

2022

Local Government Board Review Submission: City of Launceston

City of LAUNCESTON

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Introduction

Local Government in Tasmania is under increasing pressure to undergo structural reform in order to address existing and upcoming challenges (e.g. demographic change, technological advancements, financial sustainability) (LGAT, 2019). Additionally, Councils across Australia continue to experience revenue constraints and the challenges of operating at a small scale within larger metropolitan regions (Butt, Kroen, Steele, and Dühr, 2020 p.8).

In 2021 the Tasmanian State Government announced a Local Government Board Review (the Review) with the objective of creating *'a more robust and capable system of local government that is ready for the challenges and opportunities of the future'*. Under the Terms of Reference for the Review, the Board will consider:

1) the future roles and functions that should be delivered by local government in Tasmania;
2) the organisational features and capabilities necessary to enable local government to effectively and sustainably deliver its future roles and functions;
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;
4) a practical transition plan for implementing the future design of local government in Tasmania, if required; and
5) any other matters the Board considers relevant to the above.

Throughout its history the City of Launceston (CoL) has been shaped by various Council amalgamation and Local Government reform processes. Having been first proclaimed a Municipality in 1852, the Council operated for some 133 years before being combined with the St Leonards and Lilydale Councils to form a new Launceston City Council in 1985. The Council was further altered in 1993 when parts of Prospect and Relbia were included within the Municipal Area. The most recent reform process occurred in 2009 when the Council's water and sewerage employees and assets were transferred to Ben Lomond Water and OnStream (now TasWater) as part of the significant reform of Tasmania's water and sewerage industry. Additionally, later this year it is expected that the ownership of York Park (UTAS Stadium) will transfer to Stadiums Tasmania along with the associated employees and assets.

The CoL last considered its position on Local Government reform in a formal sense in 2015, when the following Notice of Motion by Mayor van Zetten was unanimously passed by the Council:

'That Council:

1) *In light of the process proposed by the Minister for Local Government aiming to initiate a conversation on voluntary amalgamation, the City of Launceston write to the Mayors of adjoining Councils seeking to initiate such discussions; and*
2) *Indicate interest in understanding what benefits voluntary amalgamations could provide for ratepayers.'*

In accordance with this resolution, the Council wrote to all Northern Councils seeking to initiate discussions on voluntary amalgamations, however, the Councils subsequently ruled out amalgamations and engaged KPMG to complete a benchmarking exercise to examine the potential for a shared service model between the eight participating Councils, comprising Break O'Day, Dorset, Flinders, George Town, Launceston, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands and West Tamar. While there have been some examples of the Councils working together since this time, for example, the procurement of legal services, the review of the Greater Launceston Plan and the Regional Sporting infrastructure study (etc), the KPMG Review has not been meaningfully progressed.

Today, the CoL operates as the State's largest Municipal Area with a population of some 68,813 people, employing nearly 500 people, with an annual budget of $115M and an extensive range of physical assets with a replacement value in excess of $2.03 billion. The CoL Municipal Area is bordered by the West Tamar, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands, George Town, Dorset and Break O'Day Municipal Areas. The organisation is structured into four (4) Networks to provide agility and operate as a network of teams within a people-centered culture (Figure 1). The CoL is a modern and contemporary organisation which is ideally placed to 'flex' and change in response to changing organisational and community needs.

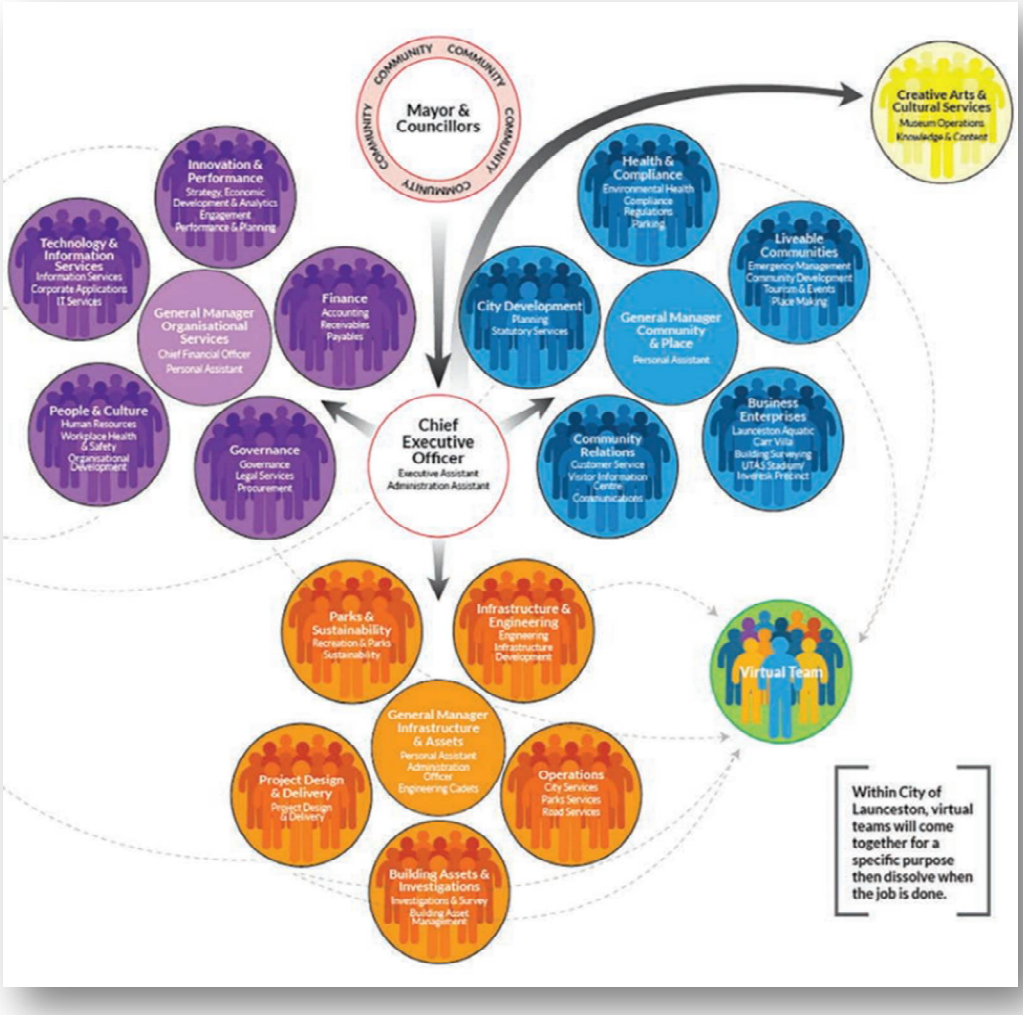


Figure 1: CoL Organisational Structure

This submission considers the Review from the perspective of the CoL and provides:

- analysis and recommendations in respect to the future roles and functions of Local Government;
- organisational features and capabilities necessary to enable Councils to effectively and sustainably deliver their roles and functions; and
- optimal future design for the Tasmanian local government sector, with a specific focus on Launceston and the Northern Tasmanian region.

Regional Context

Northern Tasmania comprises approximately one third of Tasmania's land mass and has an estimated population of around 148,023. It is Tasmania's second largest region, with approximately 28% of the State's population and one third of its economy (domestic product).

The region aligns with the municipal areas of the eight Northern Tasmanian Councils (figure 2).

Figure 2 - Northern Tasmanian Municipal Areas

Launceston is the principal regional city in Northern Tasmania. The greater city area comprising the City of Launceston plus suburbs such as Prospect, Hadspen, Trevallyn

and Riverside currently has an estimated resident population of approximately 107,000 people. "*The city's economy and future prosperity is in large part underpinned by its regional services role. Its regional catchment area defines a broad area of influence that extends well beyond the greater urban area that applies to a wide range of services that encompasses:*

- *retailing (including bulky goods and automotive retailing);*
- *commercial services;*
- *professional services;*
- *government administration;*
- *legal services and justice;*
- *health and community services;*
- *entertainment and the arts;*
- *higher education;*
- *regional sporting facilities;*
- *hospitality and tourism;*
- *transport and distribution.*"

(Launceston Retail Audit and Activity Centre Strategy", Final Report, July 2011, Page xxii, Report prepared for Launceston City Council by Renaissance Planning) (GLP, 2013 p.12).

Regional Settlement, Urban Growth and Land Use

The Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (NRLUS) provides a Regional Settlement Hierarchy (Table 1) which describes the role and functions provided by the different settlement areas that make up the region.

Northern Tasmanian Regional Settlement Hierarchy	
Regional City:	Greater Launceston Urban Area
Description	*Provides the central business district level functions to the region with high levels of administrative, government, business, commercial, financial and retail services. The Regional City is supported by modern and vibrant regional arts, cultural, entertainment and recreational facilities and is set within a strong built cultural heritage and history. Contains regional education, health and allied health facilities to support regional and visitor needs.*
Satellite Settlements - Neighbourhood or Town Centre	Hadspen, Perth, Legana and Evandale
Description	*Provide an extensive urban area independent of the Greater Launceston Urban Area with key local retail, commercial, and community service functions.*
Satellite Settlements - Regional Service Centres	Longford, Deloraine, Campbell Town, George Town (inclusive of Bell Bay and Low Head), Beaconsfield Exeter, St Helens (including Stieglitz and St Helens Point), Scottsdale and Whitemark
Description	*Significant regional settlement areas with an important sub-regional role in terms of access to a wide range of services, education and employment opportunities. Employment*

	within District Centres is strongly related to surrounding productive resources
Rural Towns - Neighbourhood or Town Centre	Lilydale, St Marys, Bridport, Westbury, Beauty Point and Lady Barron
Description	*Larger townships providing lower order administrative and commercial functions with a sub-regional role for other centres in the surrounding district, particularly where distances to major urban areas make regular travel difficult.*
Rural Towns - Local or Minor Centre	Balance of George Town (see District Centre), Ross, Avoca, Cressy, Bracknell, Carrick, Chudleigh, Meander, Mole Creek, Hagley, Fingal, Scamander and Derby
Description	*Predominantly residential settlements with a small often mixed use centre that provides for basic services and daily needs*
Rural Localities	Residential settlements with limited or no services and commercial activity in a defined spatial area, including holiday settlements that have established a more permanent population

Table 1 - Settlement Hierarchy

One of the significant features of the Northern region is that because seven Municipal Areas (excluding Flinders Island) exist within close proximity to each other, much of the region's significant infrastructure, business and industry districts, urban growth areas (etc) are located in different Municipal Areas. The reality of this situation is that it is difficult for the region to engage in integrated infrastructure and land use planning as each Council has a primary focus on their respective Municipal Areas and have no ability to directly influence or control what occurs in neighbouring Municipal Areas. It is abundantly clear that decisions made in one Municipal Area have an ability to directly impact on another, with the clearest example being the impact that residential growth areas in any municipal area have on the broader transport network. This is recognised by Butt et al. (2020 p.3), who observe that:

> *"Urban development and growth in Australia does not adhere with local or state government administrative boundaries, particularly in relation to complex issues such as climate change, urban habitat, transport infrastructure, water and waste management and energy transitions. The interconnected nature and increasing complexity of Australian metropolitan governance raises critical questions about the existing political fragmentation and multiplicity of boundaries, functions and government services that often replicate and compete with one another."*

Residential Growth Areas

Urban Growth Areas in the Northern region comprise land within the developed urban settlement or in areas intended for urban development as identified in a Priority Consolidation Area, Supporting Consolidation Area, Growth Corridor or Future Investigation Area as depicted in the NRLUS Regional Framework Plan Maps (figures 3-5)

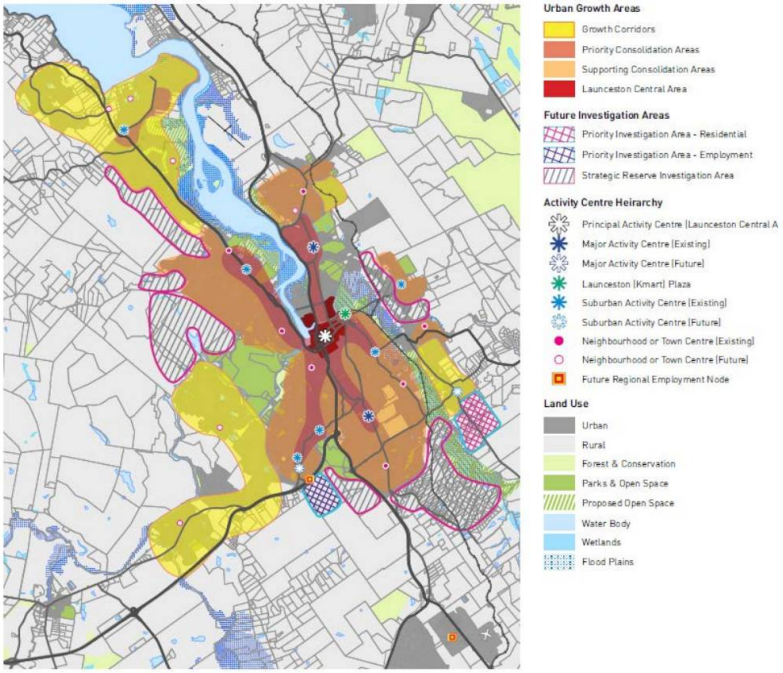


Figure 3 - Regional Framework Plan

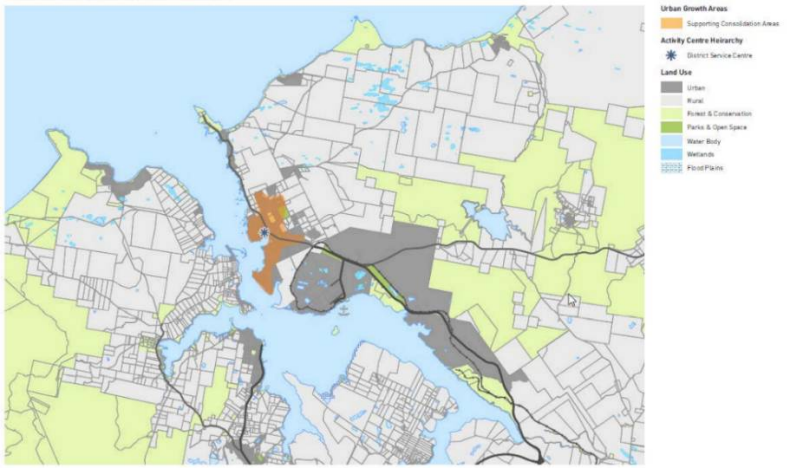


Figure 4 - George Town and Bell Bay

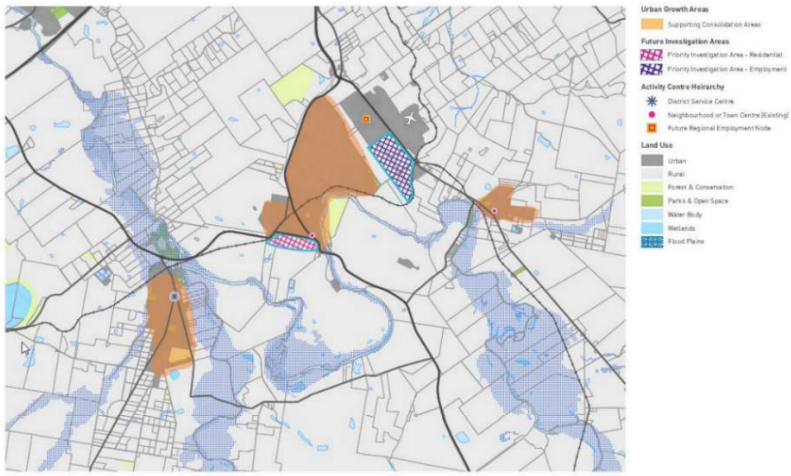


Figure 5 - Longford, Perth & Evandale

City of LAUNCESTON

It is apparent that the urban growth areas are located across each of the current Municipal areas, with significant future urban growth planned to occur in the Legana, Riverside, Prospect, South Prospect Hadspen, St Leonards and Perth areas.

The Greater Launceston Transport Vision (2021) observes that "*the long history and steady growth of Greater Launceston, which for most in early history occurred without any specific urban planning and vision, has led to an urban form that is relatively low density and heavily influenced by the striking geographical features that characterise the city today. The hilly topography and waterways of the Tamar Valley have been a barrier to the uptake of walking, cycling and public transport in the area, and this has resulted in the adoption of car-centric travel behaviour … As Greater Launceston grows and strives to become Australia's most liveable regional city, the existing reliance on cars presents significant challenges to achieving this goal.*"

Similarly, the plans and ambitions of each of the Councils in respect to the promotion and timing of urban growth in their respective areas will also continue to present pressures to achieving the objective of the Greater Launceston Transport Vision, which is "*to enable Launceston to achieve its economic, tourism and investment potential, while retaining and enhancing the existing character and liveability enjoyed by the community*". While the Northern Regional Land Use Strategy has been a positive step in the planning and coordination of urban development in the Northern Region since 2016, it has not eliminated the '*competition*' that occurs between the Councils in respect to urban growth which continues to create issues with land use decision making in one Municipal Area creating infrastructure demands in another Municipal Area. There is currently limited engagement between the Councils in respect to development in their respective Municipal Areas which has, at times, caused Councils to make representations on planned developments in another Municipal Area in order to create an opportunity for the regional infrastructure issues to be considered and discussed. This is not considered to be a desirable situation for regional land use planning into the future.

Regional Infrastructure

Along with the fragmentation of residential growth areas, there are many notable examples of the disparate location of infrastructure, business and industry districts in different Municipal Areas, which also need to be the subject of a consolidated and integrated system of planning. These business and industry districts have evolved over time and as clusters rely heavily on supporting regional networks to function effectively. The major examples of the infrastructure which would be benefited by an integrated system of regional planning are as follows:

Regional Assets The City of Launceston houses and provides the infrastructure (education, hospitals, sport, recreation and entertainment) that enhance the regional economy and lifestyle. This includes regional assets such as: Launceston General Hospital, Calvary Hospital, University of Tasmania; Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery; UTAS Stadium, Princess Theatre, Launceston Leisure & Aquatic Centre, Cataract Gorge, Launceston CBD, Churchill Park, NTCA Ground, St Leonards Sports precinct and the like.
Launceston Airport

The Launceston Airport is situated 15 kilometres south of the Launceston Central Business District, near the towns of Perth and Evandale within the Northern Midlands Municipal Area. It plays a significant role in connecting Tasmania to the mainland, supporting tourism while driving economic growth in the region. It serves as a domestic, regional, and general aviation gateway to Northern Tasmania for commercial aircraft, airfreight and private operators. Located next to the Midland Highway and trunk routes servicing the north, north- west, north-east and south of Tasmania, the airport is well positioned to connect the state.

Pre Covid-19 it was Australia's 12th busiest airport, welcoming approximately 1.4 million passengers. During the pandemic, it proved pivotal in enabling freight movements in and out of the state.

Each year around 90 per cent of visitors arrive in Tasmania by air, highlighting the importance of the airport and its contribution to the state (Australia Pacific Airport Corporation, 2021 p.39).

The airport is jointly owned by Australia Pacific Airport Corporation (90%) and the City of Launceston (10%) and occupies a site of 180 hectares with a single north-west – south-east runway and full-length taxiway. Current facilities available to support aircraft operations include six domestic aircraft stands, three freight stands, and 15 general aviation stands. The three-storey terminal complex includes four dedicated boarding gates, and a temporary border arrivals processing annex. A separate terminal houses Sharp Airlines' maintenance facilities, national reservations centre and departure lounge. The airport continued to facilitate flights for the Royal Flying Doctor Service Tasmania and played a vital role in linking the state's rural areas to the city.

The airport also provides a range of facilities and office accommodation to ancillary non-aviation businesses which are attracted to the benefits of operating in an environment that has excellent connectivity and logistics links. Launceston Airport is the second-busiest airport in Tasmania for passengers and provides the main aviation hub for Northern Tasmania. The airport is a key component of Tasmania's infrastructure providing access to national and international markets for both tourism and business (Australia Pacific Airport Corporation, 2021 p.9)

Translink Industrial Precinct

The Translink precinct is the commercial, industrial and logistics estate which is located within the Northern Midlands Municipal Area

The precinct is located adjacent to Launceston Airport and has grown from a small nucleus of low-key business developments in the late 1980s to a thriving business estate, currently home base for more than 80 businesses employing a total workforce in excess of 1,500 (not including the businesses and workforce at Launceston Airport). These businesses are engaged in a diverse array of activities including freight, transport and couriers; civil construction and contractors; car rentals; food wholesalers and distributors; furniture manufacturers; engineering and related services; and support services such as a cafe and service station.

The precinct covers over 350 hectares of land with 60 hectares of flat, shovel ready, vacant parcels for new commercial and industrial businesses. These range from around 2,500m2 to over 27 hectares enabling a variety of development options. An additional 90 hectares is earmarked for future development and a further 130 hectares are potentially available pending examination of land use and demand requirements.

Valley Central Industrial Precinct - Westbury

The Valley Central Industrial Precinct (the Precinct) is one kilometre north of the township of Westbury in the Meander Valley region. With lot sizes ranging from approximately half a hectare to almost four hectares, the Precinct contains just under 50 lots covering an area of around 127 hectares. Headlining the Precinct's benefits is its central location between the two northern Tasmanian cities of Launceston and Devonport, its proximity to Launceston Airport (30 minutes), and two major Tasmanian ports at Devonport and Bell Bay. Under an hour's drive from the Precinct, these ports are less than 250 nautical miles from the Port of Melbourne.

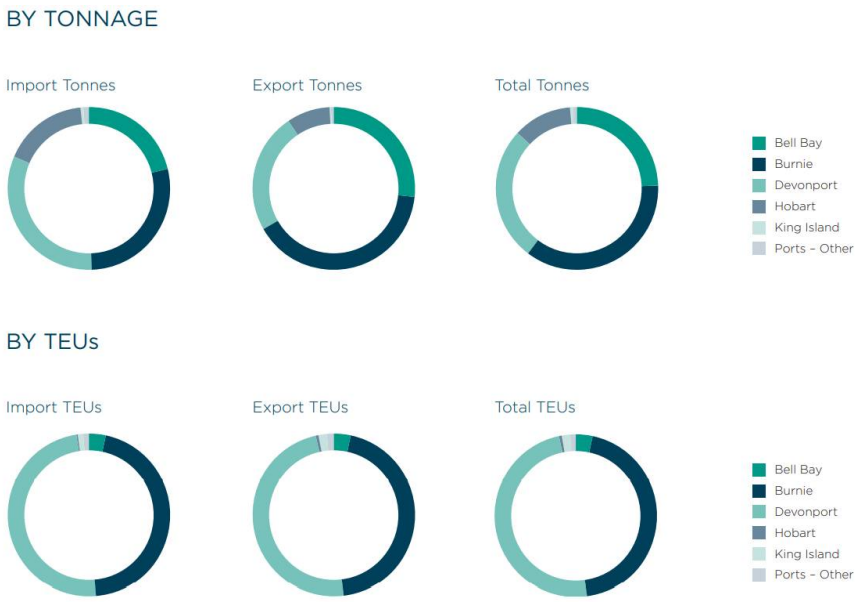
The Precinct is a result of sustained research, intentional planning and purposeful design. Recognising that Westbury is a well-established economic centre, strategically positioned between two of Tasmania's cities, the Meander Valley Council undertook extensive research to determine the best site for the industrial precinct. A significant focus of the research involved identifying the type of business activities that would be ideally suited to the Precinct, based on the location and the eco-agricultural attributes of the region.

As a result, the Precinct was developed to create a sustainable logistics-based industrial precinct capable of 24/7 operations. The Precinct leverages the growing agricultural and forestry related heavy vehicle traffic volumes of the nearby transport infrastructure, including the Bass Highway and Birralee Main Road. Identified activities that may benefit from the Precinct's competitive advantages include agricultural processing, manufacturing, transport, storage and logistics. Accommodating a number of established businesses already, the credentials of the Precinct are further enhanced by the presence of narcotic raw material manufacturer, Tasmanian Alkaloids. Recognised as the largest exporter of thebaine and oripavine in the world, the company employs over 200 Tasmanians including scientists, engineers, technicians, functional specialists, administrative support, operators and tradespersons.

Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone

The Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone is Tasmania's premier centre of manufacturing with 59% of all Tasmania's manufactured exports being produced in the Bell Bay area. Occupying 2,500 hectares, it is Tasmania's largest industrial precinct and is located some 48KM North of Launceston in the George Town Municipal Area. The precinct has been identified as a preferred site to harness Tasmania's unique opportunity to lead the global transition for the manufacture of green hydrogen and ammonia as green hydrogen and ammonia is made from renewable 'green' energy such as hydro, wind and solar and combined with a sustainable supply of fresh water (Background (bbamz.com.au), accessed 5/01/2022).

The precinct includes the port of Bell Bay, with its deep water access and laydown areas is a major port for domestic and international bulk goods as well as container services. The port has direct rail access and significant infrastructure capable of handling bulk and container freight movements. The port is accessible and navigable, with draft of up to 11.5 metres and an average tidal variation of 2.3 metres (Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone - Port (bbamz.com.au), accessed 5/01/2022). In 2020/21 the Bell Bay Port processed over 3.5 Million import and export tonnes, which represented 26.9% of the State's total import/export tonnage. Notably however, it handled 40% of the State's export tonnage (Tasports, 2021) - Refer below.



Tasmanian Freight Volumes 2020/2021 (TasPorts, 2021)

Table 2 - Regional Infrastructure

Regional Collaboration

The Councils of the Northern Region do engage in a significant level of regional collaboration, particularly in the areas of Land Use Planning, waste management, natural resource management, tourism, community planning and economic development. However, participation in these arrangements is based on voluntary agreements and there is always an element of self-interest at play, which at times, limits the effectiveness of these regional bodies. This reality was identified by Butt, *et al.* (2020; P.54), who stated that "*Critics doubt the relevance of cooperative arrangements and argue that parochial attitudes and competition are stronger than the advantages of cooperation (Fürst 2005; Wheeler 2002; Norris 2001a). Others believe that voluntary cooperation will focus on non-controversial rather than divisive (or decisive) issues (Norris 2001a)*".

These voluntary regional organisations offer opportunities for protecting local autonomy and minimise the risks of state intervention (Butt, *et al.* 2020) and have had some success in Northern Tasmania. However, their potential particularly in the land use planning and economic development space is limited by the underlying structural fragmentation in

responsibility. The need for a steering regional authority is acknowledged to ensure that regional-scale problems are addressed within networks of cooperation, which implies a role for government rather than its disappearance (Fürst 2003; Savitch and Vogel 2000) (Butt, *et al.* 2020 p.53).

Spill-Over Effect

According to Butt, *et al.* (2020), spill-over effects have been cited widely as a crucial reason for the establishment of metropolitan local government areas. These effects occur, for example, when the central municipality provides certain services that are used by residents from surrounding municipalities as well, without contributing to their costs. Examples of this are higher-order cultural facilities, such as theatres and museums, as well as public transport, and the externalities associated with job and income generation. Social welfare payments are also often unequally distributed, leading to higher costs for some municipalities and lower costs for others.

The spill-over effect exists within Northern Tasmania as the CoL currently provides the region with a range of infrastructure (Table 3) in addition to housing regional services such as Hospitals, University and schools.

Facility	Description
Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery	QVMAG is Australia's largest regional gallery and services northern Tasmania.
Princess Theatre and Earl Arts Centre	The Princess Theatre and Earl Arts Centre provides regional performance space for a diverse range of local shows and interstate/international performances.
Launceston Leisure and Aquatic Centre	Large recreational swimming and gym services are offered which are enjoyed by residents from the greater Launceston area. The Centre hosts regional and state level swimming championships and events for the Northern region.
Cataract Gorge Reserve	An iconic northern location which has been enjoyed by residents of the northern region for decades. Because of its regional importance it compels the Council to maintain a high level of infrastructure such as the 50m outdoor pool. The Council simply does not have an ability to reduce its level of service in the gorge as the community would not accept it.
Car Villa Cemetery and Crematorium	Occupying 50 hectares of land between Kings Meadows and Norwood in the cities South-East, Carr Villa is a regional Cemetery and Crematorium. The site offers memorials, placement of ashes and monumental and lawn cemeteries, and includes an on-site crematorium
City Park	Similarly to the Cataract Gorge, the Council maintains the City Park for the northern region and offers attractions such as the monkey exhibit which has entertained Tasmanian children for decades. There is little ability to reduce levels of service due to community expectation.
Riverbend Park	Riverbend Park is a regional all-abilities playground which will provide the highest level of play facilities and grounds within the

	norther Region. There are limited all abilities playground in the Northern region and therefore, this park services an important regional need.
Churchill Park	The Churchill Park Recreational facility accommodates the junior soccer needs of the norther region with well over 1000 people being accommodated in the facility each weekend. The facility also provides for high level softball competition and is the only facility of its type in the northern region.
Regional Netball Centre (Hobblers Bridge)	A regional netball centre servicing the northern region.
Regional Athletics track, BMX Track and Hockey facility	The only facilities of their type in the Northern region, this centre is clearly servicing the broader northern region as the only similar level of facilities are provided in Hobart and on the North West Coast.
Central Business District	Launceston is the only Central Business District zoned land in the Northern region under the interim Planning Scheme. The Launceston CBD is required to provide for higher order commercial and business needs of the region which results in a higher level of cost to maintain than other business areas in the Northern region.

* York Park (UTAS Stadium) has not been included on this list as the Council is currently in the process of transferring ownership to Stadiums Tasmania.

Table 3 - Regional Infrastructure provided by the CoL

While much of CoL capital spending to develop these regional facilities has been funded with assistance from State and Australian Governments, the ongoing operation, maintenance, and renewal costs are fully funded by the Council.

It is clear that the spill-over effect is impacting the urban area in Northern Tasmania with Launceston being at a financial disadvantage relative to other Councils. As it currently stands, Launceston is required to provide and maintain regional level infrastructure, which is not required to be provided by surrounding Councils. In fact, the costs borne by CoL ratepayers and avoided by the residents of other municipal areas are in excess of $4.2m annually.

If the region is to compete on the national stage for residents, investors and visitors then it is critical that there is a focal point for this activity which provides regional services and facilities, however, there needs to be a more equitable means of funding the maintenance and renewal of these assets.

Council Comparisons

Table 4 provides an overview of operational benchmarks for the Northern Councils utilising data from their 2020/21 Annual Reports.

	City of Launceston	*Northern Midlands*	*West Tamar*	*Meander Valley*	*George Town*	*Dorset*	*Break O'Day*
Population (ABS 2020)	68,813	13,598	24,423	20,037	7,117	6,685	6,346
Local Government Area (km^2)	1,411	5,130	709	3,821	649	3,231	3,809
Rateable Valuations (1/7/20)	32,077	7,218	12,000	10,391	4,395	5,341	6,386
Total recurrent revenue ($'000)	$111,000	$19,609	$27,227	$20,079	$12,118	$13,235	$14,868
Total expenses ($'000)	$114,109	$19,894	$27,015	$20,612	$11,862	$13,105	$15,251
Underlying result ($'000)	($3,109)	($285)	$212	($533)	$256	$130	($383)
Rates Revenue ($'000)	$71,777	$11,671	$19,448	$13,106	$8,742	$7,613	$9,770
Fee revenue ($'000)	$26,512	$2,423	$3,164	$1,408	$755	$1,335	$1,313
Operating Gov Grants ($'000)	$8,535	$5,826	$3,838	$4,342	$2,778	$4,272	$3,378
Capital Grants (Non-Operating Revenue) ($'000)	$5,945	$5,163	$6,841	$3,837	$3,515	$4,350	$5,573
Total Revenue (Excl CAP Grants) ($'000)	$111,233	$21,552	$27,150	$20,229	$12,919	$13,867	$14,868
Rates as % of Total Revenue (Excl. Capital Grants)	64.53%	54.15%	71.63%	64.79%	67.67%	54.90%	65.71%
Fees as % of Total Revenue (Excl. Capital Grants)	23.83%	11.24%	11.65%	6.96%	5.84%	9.63%	8.83%
OPEX Grants as % of Total Revenue (Excl. Capital Grants)	7.67%	27.03%	14.14%	21.46%	21.50%	30.81%	22.72%
Non-Current Assets ($'000)	$1,912,886	$405,953	$369,534	$300,064	$145,361	$198,706	$194,211
Annual Depreciation ($'000)	$23,359	$6,355	$5,921	$5,083	$3,004	$4,260	$3,802
Annual Dep. As % of asset value	1.22%	1.57%	1.60%	1.69%	2.07%	2.14%	1.96%
Annual Dep. As % of total expenses	20.47%	31.94%	21.92%	24.66%	25.32%	32.51%	24.93%
Assets base per capita ($'000)	$27.80	$29.85	$15.13	$14.98	$20.42	$29.72	$30.60
Rates per rateable property	$2,238	$1,617	$1,621	$1,261	$1,989	$1,425	$1,530
Rates per capita	$1,043	$858	$796	$654	$1,228	$1,139	$1,540
Operating Grants per rateable property	$266	$807	$320	$418	$632	$800	$529
Operating Grants per capita	$124	$428	$157	$217	$390	$639	$532
Operating cost per rateable property	$3,557	$2,756	$2,251	$1,984	$2,699	$2,454	$2,388
Total OPEX per capita	$1,658	$1,463	$1,106	$1,029	$1,667	$1,960	$2,403
Total OPEX less depreciation per capita	$1,319	$996	$864	$775	$1,245	$1,323	$1,804
Employee Resources (FTE)	460	68	108	82	42	64.9	55
Total Employee Expense ($'000)	$42,855	$5,727	$9,983	$7,260	$3,729	$4,123	$5,073
Employee cost as a % of OPEX	37.6%	28.8%	37.0%	35.2%	31.4%	31.5%	33.3%
Population per FTE	150	200	226	244	169	103	115
Average cost per FTE ($'000)	$93	$84	$92	$89	$89	$64	$92

Table 4: Council Benchmark Comparison

From a Local Government perspective, the Northern Tasmania region is unique in that the CoL includes nearly half of the regional population (46.8% excluding Flinders Island) and over half of the region's assets (54.2%). Further, if we look only at the urban areas of CoL, West Tamar and Meander Valley, it shows that the CoL provides 74.1% of the combined Assets but only has 60.7% of the combined population of the three municipalities. Notably, and as demonstrated earlier in the discussion of the spill-over effect, the CoL provides a significant range of regional level assets for the Northern community.

These assets are all necessary for the region to maintain its liveability to attract and retain residents, however, they come at a cost to maintain and this cost is being borne only by the residents of the CoL.

This issue is most apparent when you examine the assets of the three (3) largest urban Councils with the CoL providing $1.9B in assets to the region while the West Tamar Council and Meander Valley Councils' provide $369M and $300M in assets respectively. While it is clear that the residents of these Council areas live close together and are most benefited by the regional assets provided by the CoL, they are not providing any funding for their maintenance aside from fees and charges for use of these assets where it is applicable.

The result of the current local government structure is that CoL residents are required to pay significantly higher rates than the residents of the neighbouring Councils because of the inequitable provision of assets. This is apparent when you compare the rates per rateable properties which illustrate that Launceston properties pay $2,238 per annum, while properties in West Tamar ($1,621) and Meander Valley ($1,261) pay significantly less. This inequality is further exacerbated by the level of funding provided by Federal and State Government operating grants, which sees Launceston receive only $266 per property in operational grants while West Tamar ($320) and Meander Valley ($418) receive significantly more grant revenue.

The CoL percentage of 7.67% for operational grants as a % of total revenue *(Ex Capital Grants)* shown in Table 4 is much lower than for West Tamar (14.14%) and Meander Valley (21.46%) which clearly shows the extent these two councils depend on operational grant funding, particularly the Relative Needs component of the Financial Assistance Base Grant calculated by the State Grants Commission. In 2020/21 the CoL continued to receive no funding for this part of the Base Grant, whereas West Tamar and Meander Valley were recommended to receive a combined amount of $3.259m for the Relative Needs component. A new model could alleviate the need for such levels of operational grant support funded by the Relative Needs component of the Financial Assistance Base Grant to these two councils in particular and instead the funds could be allocated to a larger council providing these services for the larger area utilising the economy of scale.

Operationally, the CoL maintains employee expenses at around 37.6% of its operational expenditure, which is similar to both West Tamar (37%) and Meander Valley (35.2%), while the average annual cost of employees (FTEs) is within $4,000 of each other. However, the CoL's total operational expenditure of $1,658 per capita, is higher than both West Tamar ($1,106) and Meander Valley ($1,029) largely because of the operational costs which are required to maintain the regional assets. For instance, the operation of QVMAG alone costs $78 per capita each year.

This said however, the data also demonstrates that the operational costs of the CoL are not excessive in comparison to the other Councils with proportionately high asset bases. The CoL's assets are valued at $27.80 per capita, while many of the rural Councils have proportionately high asset bases namely Northern Midlands ($29.85 per capita), George Town ($20.42 per capita), Dorset ($29.72 per capita) and Break O'Day ($30.60 per capita). However, the CoL's operational costs per capita of $1,658 is commensurate with each of these Councils, namely, Northern Midlands ($1,463); George Town ($1,667); Dorset ($1,960) and Break O'Day ($2,403). Accordingly, this demonstrates that the CoL is being operated in a cost effective manner.

Another comparison which needs to be considered is the level of rates charged across the City Councils in Tasmania as this is more similar in terms of the level of services delivered as well as the provision of assets to the community. The figures for the 2020/21 financial year provided in Table 5 demonstrate that the CoL is collected $2,232 per rateable property, which is less than the City of Hobart ($3,668), Devonport ($2,258) and Burnie ($2,330) and $202 per property more than Clarence City. This demonstrates that the level of rates collected by the CoL is comparable to other Tasmanian cities with higher value asset bases and, is actually considerably less than the rates collected for the City of Hobart, although it noted that Hobart maintains an asset base of around $545m greater than CoL.

	City of Launceston	*City of Hobart*	*City of Devonport*	*City of Burnie*	*City of Clarence*
Population	68,813	55,250	25,747	19,701	58,729
Area (km^2)	1,411	78	111	611	378
Rateable Valuations	32,163	24,806	12,872	9,842	26,387
Rates Revenue ($'000)	$71,777	$90,064	$29,064	$22,927	$53,559
Non-Current Assets ($'000)	$1,914,886	$2,459,832	$642,847	$429,155	$868,865
Rates per rateable property	$2,232	$3,668	$2,258	$2,330	$2,030
Rates per capita	$1,043	$1,647	$1,129	$1,164	$912

Table 5 - Tasmanian City Comparisons

Therefore, the key points from the data are as follows:

- The CoL provides over half of the region's assets (54.2%), with less than half of the region's population (46.8%);
- The larger urban Councils of Meander Valley and West Tamar are not contributing (on a per capita basis) as much as others in the region in terms of assets, as a result of the spill-over effect of the CoL;

- Launceston property owners pay $2,238 per annum in rates, while property owners in West Tamar ($1,621) and Meander Valley ($1,261) pay significantly less due to the disproportionate provision of regional assets;

- The level of rates collected by the CoL is comparable to other Tasmanian cities with higher value asset bases and, is actually considerably less than the rates collected by the City of Hobart; and

- The operational costs of the CoL are not excessive in comparison to the other Northern Councils in the region with proportionately high asset bases.

Local Government Roles and Functions

Local Councils are closer to the specific contexts of their communities and the culture, geography, demography and preferences of their respective jurisdictions than higher tiers of government. They also have access to a more accurate understanding of local preferences and conditions with different demands for types and levels of public service (Oates 1972; Oates 1999) (Butt, *et al.* 2020 p.13).

In 2021 Pricewaterhouse Cooper (PwC, 2021) completed a useful study of Local Government chief executives and leaders across Victoria to explore how Councils are dealing with the pressures that are being presented by challenges such as the global pandemic and state elections, as well as their priorities for the future. While this study was conducted in Victoria many of its findings are relevant to the Tasmanian context and the main themes are unpacked below.

This study found that the needs and expectations of local Councils are growing, driven by rapid technology advances seen in other sectors and industries, and exacerbated by the pandemic. Local government authorities must continue to focus on understanding the needs of their community more than ever.

As time progresses, local government services will need to evolve to serve their whole community, and new technology, organisational structures and ways of working will be crucial to enabling this change.

Local Government reform processes from around Australia have emphasised goals of efficiency and there has been a trend towards removing land use planning powers and shifting power towards state Governments (Butt, *et al.* 2020). However, from a Council perspective it is considered vital that local government retain its ability to make strategic and statutory land use planning decisions to enable authentic, placed-based planning to occur within communities. Reform efforts need to be focused on addressing the economies of scope and scale as well as the strategic capacities of the councils, rather than on removing land use planning functions.

It is clear that citizens are seeking greater support and service excellence from councils, while financial pressures continue to grow. However, alongside growing pressures, new opportunities are emerging that local councils will need to embrace to continue the positive trends seen during the pandemic, such as:

- *Accelerated change in technology, digital and data is overdue*: transforming processes and recasting the relationship between citizens and services is now more possible than ever and is an opportunity seized by many councils. However, many continue to lag behind and will struggle to meet growing citizen and staff expectations without immediate action. A data revolution will underpin this transformation, inspiring more informed decision-making, and delivering added personalised services that are 'smarter'.

- *Local government should continue to lead local responses to some of the biggest challenges facing society:* whether responding to bushfires, the pandemic, flooding or drought, repeatedly in recent years, local governments have shown that they are closest to local communities and so can make some of the most effective decisions and actions to help manage a crisis. Local leaders must embrace recent difficulties and continue to be a leading voice for their residents.

- *There is a unique opportunity for new infrastructure projects, however they must be considered with long-term sustainability and growth in mind:* the COVID-19 pandemic and increases in capital grant funding are creating new opportunities to invest in infrastructure. These will improve the lives of citizens, promote better ways of working in council facilities, and effect a truly once-in-a-generation change in service delivery to meet all citizens' needs. However, a growing environmental and social agenda will require councils to think sustainably, making sure that decisions consider effects on the environment and future generations. New infrastructure projects must not be at the expense of long-term sustainability, and councils will need to carefully consider their large asset base and real estate portfolios to remain effective.

- *Collaboration and working together:* placing local government at the centre of local public services and outcomes will require public sector bodies, local businesses and different councils to continue to work together and collaborate. Those who have done so already have benefited from such an arrangement, providing them with increased bargaining power and a greater ability to focus on results (PwC, 2021).

Data analytics and business intelligence are now critical for councils as they translate new priorities into smarter choices, interventions and ways of working. Making smarter business choices relies on supporting strategic intentions with data and insight to prioritise government decisions to the greatest effect. When planning and delivering result-focused initiatives, particularly given the challenging financial context faced by local governments, councils need to be sure that they are investing in areas that achieve the best return. Increasingly, evidence will be required to measure and manage the overall impact of such decisions, showing the relationship between inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact (PwC, 2021).

Unsurprisingly, upskilling existing staff with new capabilities is an attractive option to many council leaders. Change management and training, therefore, are likely to be critical future skill sets and will enable the wider transformation of the workforce over the coming years. Councils looking to transform with existing staff members will need to invest in significant change management and training programs, learning from other industries and sectors who may have a head start in this space, either in the form of new recruits or by

giving existing change management staff the resources they need to deliver such a major change (PwC, 2021).

Additionally, the pandemic has demonstrated that the traditional physical office space with a stationary computer will soon be obsolete. Fifty-two per cent of companies are embracing new ways of working – they plan to make remote work a permanent option for roles that allow it. Physical face-to-face proximity that was once seen as a requirement to get work done or serve customers and residents is being reimagined and enabled through digital collaboration platforms and tools.

Many commented on concerns of meeting heightened staff expectations in a financially constrained environment. Leaders were also aware that tough decisions would likely be needed on funding allocation, as modernisation will come at a cost, which unless carefully planned could easily affect other ongoing or planned projects, especially infrastructure and capital project works.

Despite rising pressures on local governments, citizens are clearly demanding more of their local Councils. In line with our theme of growing community expectations, 51% of survey respondents said they believe local governments should offer more services to their communities, with the themes of increased community engagement, small business development and infrastructure related services are highly in demand. In contrast, others believe councils should offer fewer services to the community, particularly in service areas where there are now private providers who can offer a similar or improved service to the community for the same or lower price (PwC, 2021).

Community engagement will be critical for leaders to determine what services matter most to residents, and where exiting from delivering council services is likely to have a disproportionate effect on the community. As financial pressures are set to increase, there will be very difficult decisions required to determine what the service mix needs to be, especially as many citizens feel that the current level of servicing is about right.

While there are no easy answers to many of these questions, what is clear is that a ‘one size fits all’ approach will not work, and significant community engagement will be required to work out the best approach for individual councils. What is common across all authorities, is that a long-term, sustainable view of how local authorities are funded is needed. Councils must be cautious about over-relying on grants and individual funding pots, moving towards a sustainable funding model that helps local government to make strategic investments for the best value for money and overall benefit to their local communities (PwC, 2021).

The CoL is certainly experiencing much of the change which is occurring throughout the Local Government sector in Victoria and Australia more broadly.

Like our community, the CoL is ageing and it will be necessary to attract and recruit new people into the organisation, while continuing to develop and advance current employees. This has led to an increasing focus on employing more trainees and apprentices and developing a comprehensive people strategy in recent years.

Initiative such as the Smart Cities program, which has been championed by the Launceston City Deal, have pushed the Council faster into the data analytics and smart

technology space and this is an area which will only continue to grow. Accordingly, a Innovation and Data Analytics team has been established within our organisation to develop capability and generate connections to our GIS and economic development capabilities.

The way we work as an organisation has continues to change and grow and so too has the demand on our Human Resource (HR) and Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) resources to move with and manage these changes. For instance, increases in mobility, remote working, and flexible working styles have all created new and emerging pressures on our already stretched HR and WHS resources.

The CoL has also identified the need to deliver more leadership across our organisation provide operational leadership, communication and more timely decision making.

Accordingly, the findings of the PwC Study reinforce the view of the CoL that the reform process should not seek to significantly change to the roles and functions of Local Government within Tasmania, rather it should seek to identify and implement strategies to address these emerging needs and trends and simply must achieve a clear understanding of the levels of service required to sustainably service the Tasmanian community. The services that are currently delivered by the CoL (appendix 1) reflect the Council's existing strategic direction and are anchored by the Council's Corporate Planning Framework to drive what we do and why we do it. These services are also the basis of the Council's Long Term Finance Plan. In order to change this it is absolutely critical that significant community engagement occurs to understand what is needed by our community. The CoL has long planned to engage in a level of service process and is currently recruiting a Level of Service Officer to coordinate this work. It is considered absolutely necessary that this work is completed prior to any consideration of Councils taking on more, or alternative services. It is the Council's view that this Service Level approach should extend to the entire sector.

Local Government Reform

Good local governance is not just about providing services but also the conditions of liveability for residents, including creating space for democratic participation and civic dialogue and in supporting sustainable development and outcomes (Broadway and Shah 2009). Despite this, tendencies in local government reform in Australia remain heavily focussed on increasing fiscal efficiencies (see e.g. Dollery 2002 for a review of fiscal imbalance in Australian federalism) (Butt, *et al.* 202o).

However, the significant body of literature that has been undertaken in the field of local government reform can be distilled into three key messages:

1. Cost savings are unlikely to materialise and should not be the primary goal of reform. The goal should be to create a more robust and capable system of local government;
2. Problems caused by a lack of sufficient funding and/or defects in the funding process are unlikely to be solved as a result of structural reform. These problems raise questions about the equitability of local government funding, not structure; and

3. The challenges local governments face are many and varied, as are their individual circumstances. This dictates against 'one size fits all' approaches to structural reform (LGAT, 2019).

According to the LGAT (2019), the suite of benefits associated with local government reform are many and varied. They include greater financial strength and stability, the equitable distribution of goods, costs, and risks, increased capacity to offer a wider range and higher quality of services, efficiency gains, reduced administrative costs, and the greater use of all available resources (Aulich et al., 2011; Ryan & Hunting, 2016). These benefits have been broadly grouped into one of three categories: economies of scale, economies of scope, and strategic capacity:

Economies of Scale

The purpose of local government reform has traditionally centred on the benefits of economies of scale (Aulich, Sansom, & McKinlay, 2014). Synonymous with efficiency, economies of scale are achieved through maximising the use of resources and/or services at the least cost (Dollery & Fleming, 2005). Thus, economies of scale are represented in terms of cost savings (LGAT, 2019).

The degree to which services are characterised by economies of scale varies; whereas capital-intensive services (e.g. sewage disposal and water supply) tend to generate significant economies of scale, labour-intensive and customer-oriented services (e.g. health and customer service officers) do not (Dollery & Fleming, 2005). This information has important implications in that it allows councils to appropriately target reform arrangements so as to achieve economies of scale (LGAT, 2019).

Economies of Scope

Local government reform, through consolidation and joint activity, has enabled councils to produce a wider range and higher quality of services and resources (Aulich et al., 2014). The latter occurrence, known as achieving economies of scope, has received limited attention in the literature and reform processes to date.

Potential sources of scope economies include (see, generally, Dollery & Fleming, 2005):

- Diminishing returns to inputs – where related activities handled by separate departments are devolved onto a single individual or division (e.g. GIS mapping support for engineering and planning departments).
- Jointness in inputs – where a single input can be used in the production of multiple outputs (e.g. underutilised machinery employed on a fee for service basis).
- Jointness in outputs – interconnected outputs are produced from a set of similar inputs (e.g. where staff who are employed to gather waste also transfer recyclables).
- Interactions between service provision or goods production – interaction processes that generate independent informational and/or physical outputs (e.g. community development staff informed of issues by operators of a

council youth drop in centre or flood easements to remove excess water and enhance amenity) (LGAT, 2019).

The benefits associated with economies of scope will be strongest in councils with low levels of resources and with limited capacity to provide a breadth of services (e.g. small councils; Access Economics, 2011) (LGAT, 2019).

Strategic Capacity

The purpose of local government reform has slowly shifted from the benefits of economies of scale towards strategic capacity which can be seen as building on economies of scope (LGNSW, 2015). Strategic capacity is less about being financially robust and is more about councils having the skills and resources needed to act as high capacity organisations. Importantly, strategic capacity allows councils to respond to the diverse needs of different communities, as well as to manage complex and sometimes unexpected change (Aulich et al., 2014). Strategic capacity is therefore the most important outcome for councils to consider in examining modes of consolidation and local government reform. (LGAT, 2019).

Shared Services

Municipal structural reform programs in the past have traditionally focused on amalgamation as the main instrument of reform, however, shared services are an alternative method that occurs when two or more councils collaborate to provide a service in order to meet community or council needs. Consideration needs to be given to the idea that local government reform is not an 'either-or' (amalgamation or shared services) situation. What is not often considered, is that these options could be used in conjunction (e.g. amalgamated councils pursuing greater consolidation and advantages through shared services as well; Aulich et al., (2014) (LGAT, 2019).

In 2017 KPMG completed a study to examine the opportunities that existed for the Northern Councils to share resources and identified that the CoL stands out from the seven Councils in the region, with a population and staffing level that is almost that of the other seven councils combined, creating a lesser need for that Council to engage in resource sharing to deliver services. It also identified that the Councils all possess much in common in terms of vision, guiding principles and services, but have each adopted various approaches to the delivery of those services in terms of staffing levels, information systems and business processes. These fundamental differences create many challenges in moving to some of the 'whole-of-region' shared service options contemplated by this study. To date, these challenges have proven a bridge too far for the Councils to engage in the meaningful sharing of resources. For instance, the study identified an immediate opportunity for the Councils to move to a common technology platform (specifically networks, infrastructure and applications) in order to fully leverage the combined scale of the Councils. However, because each of the Councils have invested significantly in their respective systems and are at different stages in respect to life-cycle of their systems, it has proven to be too difficult to implement a common technology platform, despite the fact that there has been a genuine desire to do so.

Metropolitan Governance

One of the key considerations for local government reform in Northern Tasmania must be that of metropolitan governance. One of the main reasons for considering the establishment of metropolitan based governance is the potential efficiency gains, through providing consolidated services, utilising economies of scale, and avoiding wasteful competition. This particularly applies to services where economies of scale can be achieved, uncoordinated policies produce high costs and that have a 'naturally' regional characteristic, such as sewage disposal, waste management, transport and land use planning, and environmental policies (Zimmermann 2014; Cheyne 2018). (Butt, *et al.* 2020 p.17).

One of the few examples of major local government reform that established a metropolitan government is the Auckland Regional Council in New Zealand. It was established in 2010 through the amalgamation of eight territorial authorities to better coordinate strategic planning. The resulting large urban unitary council has been described as a 'unique experiment' in New Zealand (Cheyne 2018: 123) (Butt, *et al.* 2020 p.47).

Another example is the City of Toronto, which had for many years a strong metropolitan government, but the city region continued to grow beyond the government's boundaries, leading to the same problems as in other fragmented metropolitan areas. It was suggested to extend the boundaries to cover the functional area again, but in the end, this did not occur due to the resistance of the suburbs and towns that would have been added to the government area and the prospect of a powerful metropolitan government (Frisken 2007). In the end, the local councils in the metropolitan area were amalgamated to form one large City of Toronto and the councils outside the boundaries of the metropolitan government area were left untouched. However, once again this produces the problem that there is no single governance structure for the metropolitan area (Horak and Doyon 2018; Savitch and Vogel 2009). (Butt, *et al.* 2020 p.19).

The submission has identified that one of the features of the Northern region is that because seven Municipal Areas exist within close proximity to each other, much of the region's significant infrastructure, business and industry districts, urban growth areas (etc) are located in different Municipal Areas. The reality of this situation is that it is difficult for the region to engage in integrated infrastructure and land use planning as each Council has a primary focus on their respective Municipal Areas and have no ability to directly influence or control what occurs in neighbouring Municipal Areas.

There are significant residential growth areas in each Municipal area, together with major infrastructure such as the Launceston CBD, Launceston Airport, Port of Bell Bay and major industrial estates all in different, but adjoining Municipal Areas. While there is regional collaboration occurring between the Councils, it is done so on a voluntary basis and, at times, is informed by parochial and competitive attitudes between Councils. The implementation of a metropolitan based Council in greater Launceston would facilitate more effective integrated planning which can better address the regional-scale problems.

Conclusion - City of Launceston Perspective

The purpose of this paper is to consider the Review from the perspective of the CoL and provide analysis and recommendations in respect to the future roles and functions of Local Government, the organisational features and capabilities necessary to enable Councils to effectively and sustainably deliver their roles and functions and the optimal future design for the Tasmanian local government sector, with a specific focus on Launceston and the Northern Tasmanian region.

The Council believes that the Review must be focused on achieving economies of scope and scale, addressing spill-over effects and improving the strategic capacity of Councils to plan and manage their regions. These are outlined below:

- In terms of the sector's role and functions, it is the Council's clear preference that the review focus on the need for service level planning. Over time it is clear that local government services will need to continue to evolve to serve their whole community and new technology, organisational structures and ways of working will be crucial to creating change in the way that Council's deliver services to the community. However, the Council does not believe that the reform process should not seek to significantly change the roles and functions of Local Government within Tasmania, rather it should seek to identify and implement strategies to address these emerging needs and trends and undertake significant community engagement to achieve a clear understanding of the levels of service required to sustainably service the Tasmanian community.

- The City of Launceston's position in the Northern region is unique in Tasmania, as it is impacted by the spill-over effect more than any other Tasmanian City. As it currently stands, the CoL is required to provide and maintain regional level infrastructure, which is not required to be provided by surrounding Councils, yet are used by their residents. In fact, the costs borne by CoL ratepayers and avoided by the residents of other municipal areas are in excess of $4.2m annually. It is clear from the financial analysis of Councils provided in this submission that the operational costs of the CoL are comparable to the other Councils in the Northern region with proportionately high asset bases. However, it is equally clear that the larger urban Councils of Meander valley and West Tamar are not contributing as much as others in the region in terms of assets as a result of the spill-over effect of the CoL. This is leading to a disparity in the level of rates required to be paid by CoL residents being significantly more than is required by the West Tamar and Meander Valley residents. It would be more appropriate for a metropolitan Council model to be adopted in the Northern region whereby the cost of regional assets could be more equitably dispersed across the urban areas which receive the most direct benefits.

- Not only would a metropolitan-based council address the spill-over effects which are apparent in Northern Tasmania, it would also enable more effective integrated planning across the region, which can better address the regional-scale problems. It has been established that there are significant residential growth areas in each Municipal area, together with major infrastructure such as the Launceston CBD, Launceston Airport, Port of Bell Bay and major industrial estates all in different, but

adjoining Municipal Areas and that the voluntary regional collaboration that occurs is not the most appropriate means of effectively planning for the future.

- The CoL would urge the Board to explore the creation of a Metropolitan Council in the greater Launceston area which would include the important regional infrastructure outlined in the submission. Clearly this would still necessitate the maintenance of more rurally based Council areas to include the North-east, western and southern reaches of the region and it is suggested that the review would be an opportune time to imbed resource sharing between a Metropolitan Council and the rural Councils to ensure that they are able to sustainably deliver services to their communities into the future.

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Appendix 1: City Of Launceston Current Service Categories

Council services are those activities which are undertaken to meet the community's needs. It is all the activities undertaken by all employees, whether it's the maintenance of roads, collection of waste, assessment of development applications, engaging with our community, or any of our support services. It is what we do to ensure that Launceston remains liveable for our residents and attractive to its visitors. These activities may happen daily, weekly or monthly, but they remain pivotal to our city's success. These activities are reflected in the Council's Service Categories which are included in the following table.

CURRENT SERVICE CATAGORIES		
OFFICE OF THE CEO	Food Safety	Project design and delivery
Corporate Communications	Public Health	Capital Works
Community Planning	Regulatory & Compliance	**ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES**
Regional Collaboration	Emergency management	Economic Development
Government relations	Recovery	Community engagement
Advocating/ lobbying	Accessibility	Corporate Planning
COMMUNITY & PLACE	**INFRASTRUCTURE & ASSETS**	Elected member support
Animal Management	Parks & Facilities Management	Civic engagement program
Customer Relations	Bushland Management	Sister Cities
Communications	City Cleansing	LG election support
Visitor Information	Public Toilet management	Internal legal service
Tourism Services	Management of road, footpaths, bridges and street lights	Employee support
Youth development	Traffic Network Planning	Risk Management
Event Sponsorship	Traffic Network Management	Procurement of goods and services
Community Grants	Asset Condition assessment	Governance
Arts & Cultural Services	Management of Stormwater assets	Tender management
Community Development	Management of flood protection assets	Lease/ licence management
Leisure & Aquatic Centre	Infrastructure Investigations	Information Technology
Water education & safety	Asset Management	Financial Services
Burial & Crematorium	Fleet & machinery	Payroll
Building Surveying	Emergency response	Business continuity
Parking management	survey, drone services and asset data capture	People and culture
Building Permit Applications	Waste and Recycling	Workplace Health & Safety
Plumbing Permit Applications	Sustainability	**CREATIVE ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES**
Development Applications	Environmental management	Museum and Art Gallery