

**From:** Mayor Robert Young  
**Sent:** Friday, 22 July 2022 1:21 PM  
**To:** Local Government Board  
**Subject:** FW: Local Government Reform Interim Report - Councils servicing the needs of their communities

**Categories:** Acknowledged

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The Honourable Sue Smith AM  
Chair Local Government REFORM Board

22/07/2022

Dear Sue,

Thank you for your detailed report  
Minister Street has just finished speaking to our council, and did suggest that we raise with you the issue that we have about funding doctors.

This Council subsidizes doctors to the tune of around \$650,000 this year.

We do it because.

1. Our residents are elderly, (median age 56 and rising)
2. Our residents have a median household income fifth from the bottom of all the 29 Council households.
3. Our residents 60% + of them are on fixed incomes
4. Our municipality has been growing around 3% each year, mainly older residents.

Our residents need it.

We are too far from Hobart or Launceston for the sick to travel to the public hospital emergency department to see a doctor. To get a big city private doctor to see a new patient, let alone bulk bill them, is almost impossible. So we run medical practices to get and keep, doctors in Triabunna, Bicheno, and to regularly visit Coles Bay. We assist the Swansea medical practice as well. Some of the practices bulk bill only. Almost the bottom of the wealth list. The Australian Bureau of Statistics have our residents at the bottom of the pile when it comes to median household wealth.

We are hamstrung because the State Government appears to say that we are wealthy.

Just because people want to move here and buy every house on the market, driving house prices up, because of high prices they appear to say our people can afford to pay more rates.

We are at the limit of rate rises.

If we put the rates up further how can people on fixed incomes pay?

Where will the elderly go if they try to buy down, and release cash? There is no down. Every house on the market is sold at high speed at ever rising prices.

There are no places to long term rent.

Elderly cannot easily move, let alone out of the district away from friends, merely to cart the problem along with them, (no doctors, higher rates).

We need the State to fund all our doctors by a grant regularly given to us to enable us to keep doctors here and functioning, not only to help the elderly, but to keep the pressure off the State hospital system.

We have made representations to Minister for Health, to no effect.

Very few councils run doctors with any, degree of success.

If we merged with another council, or councils; the result is likely to be that rates just because of the merger, will increase, (we seem to be around the lowest of any council), and the new merged council is likely to axe non-core activities; (DOCTOR subsidies and the like), - RESULT - a bigger council head quartered several hours drive away from us all, and, NO doctors.

We work well with SERDA, with Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority. Both are effective and the Mayors competent, dedicated, and easy to get along with people.

Our economies last year cut around \$1,000,000 expenses off our expenditure.

There are no more economies of scale or otherwise, to be had, whether merged or otherwise.

The failure of government to address our financial concerns is to penalize efficiency, and to punish our residents!

Please take these factors into account in your report.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Young  
Mayor  
Glamorgan Spring Bay

P.S.

When our councilors have digested your interim report further we may as a group or individually write to you further