



HUON VALLEY COUNCIL

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Our Ref: 17/74

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Future of Local Government Review
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To the Project Team,

Consultation on The Future of Local Government Review Interim Report

I refer to the opportunity to comment on the Interim Report.

Please find enclosed a submission on behalf of the Huon Valley Council.

I trust that these comments will be considered in the review and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Yours faithfully

MATT GRIMSEY
DIRECTOR LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE SERVICES

Enc.



HUON VALLEY COUNCIL

HUON VALLEY COUNCIL SUBMISSION

State Planning Provisions Review – Scoping Paper

Introduction

The Council has considered the Interim Report and notes that it is a high-level document that is generally supported.

The few comments that the Council have are set out as follows in line with the questions asked in the Interim Report.

The future role for local government

1. Do you agree with the Role Statement?

- Yes
 No

2. Does it make sense? Are there any gaps?

It is not necessarily that the Role Statements are wrong it is just not possible to definitively agree with them as they are very high level and abstract.

The move of local government from core business to supporting connectedness and wellbeing of local communities is a significant change in direction which requires much greater consideration before role statements can be completed.

The proposed move also brings with it the potential for a significant disconnect between what a Council can deliver to support its newly defined role.

A Council no longer focusing on core services will be restricted in delivering on any strategy as there is simply no control or guarantee that any (potentially regional) authority will be supportive of an individual Council's approach to connectedness and wellbeing of their community.

Local representation would also be unable to deliver on the needs for the community.

A Council may be seen to have failed to deliver on its role to the community at that point and may have little, if any, relevance which could potentially be lost with service consolidation.

Whilst the Role Statements may be able to be supported in principle, without tying these to actual examples it is difficult to provide any response to suggest that they make sense or whether or not they provide any particular gaps that cannot be filled by a less empowered Council.

3. What services do you think benefit most from 'local' design and delivery? Why? When it comes to those services, how local is 'local enough' to deliver for the community?

Whilst many services may be able to be delivered on a regional level rather than at a local level, they can all be said to benefit from 'local' design and delivery to ensure that the services deliver for each particular community.

The Interim Report has identified some activities from both infrastructure and service delivery which could be on a regional or local basis will benefit from further investigation by the Board but this needs to be considered in the context of whether removal from a Council would limit their ability to achieve the role for the connectedness and wellbeing of the community.

4. What do you think about the idea of a 'charter' for local government?

There are no issues of a charter as proposed to include a comprehensive role statement for local government, define the roles of mayors and Councillors and set out supporting decision-making principles and practice that Councils need to apply when representing and acting on behalf of their communities.

A Charter would benefit the most where it can be used as a guide as to what level of Government should be responsible for which functions and services and the alternative service models through which they could deliver.

With respect to role statements and decision making though this must, at a minimum, be recognised in the local government legislative framework. In this context it is unclear why there is a need for a need for the Board to develop a separate charter for these matters as opposed to simply identify these as part of its report.

If we develop a charter, should it be included in the Local Government Act 1993?

- Yes
- No

Capability for the Future

1. What do you think about the Capability and Outcome Aspiration Statements? Are they useful?

There are no issues with the Capability and Outcome Aspiration Statements. These are useful to guide the next stages of the review.

2. Do you agree with what they say?

- Yes
- No

3. Is anything missing?

- Yes
- No

4. Would you like to comment on any of the capability and aspiration statements?

- Role Clarity and Strategic Coordination - No
- Strategic and Technical Capability - No
- Financial Capacity – No

- Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Equity – Yes

The only comment in relation to this statement is the reference “...but which also reflects communities’ willingness ... to pay.”

The concept of Willingness to pay is not necessarily relevant to efficiency, effectiveness, or equity.

Willingness to pay is also transient in the sense of what a community may be willing to pay for at one point in time may be substantially different at a later point simply because the focus of the community changes

This may well lead to uncertainty in the services being delivered compromising the intended outcomes under the review.

“Willingness to pay” should not be a key component of the statement.

- Good Governance - No

Opportunities, Issues and Challenges

What future visions would you like to comment on?

- Community wellbeing - No

- Governance – Yes

It is essential that, as a basic tenet of good governance, risk management is recognised as a good demonstrator that the vision is being met.

- Environment – Yes

Whilst there are no issues with the Future Vision as proposed it is unclear how “feral animal control” is a statutory or other obligation and responsibility of a Council. Through biosecurity and other legislation this is clearly a State Government responsibility which a Council may optionally choose to participate. It should be disregarded as an example of success of the future vision statement.

- Economic development and promotion - No

- Planning and other regulatory services - No

- Finance and administration - No

- Infrastructure provision and management - No

Do you think the Future Visions capture what ‘success’ would look like if all our councils were working well? Is there anything you would add or remove?

Yes, the future visions capture what success would look like for a working well Council.

There would not be anything else to add or remove at this time. Working through Stages 2 and 3 will make it clearer what the success will look like.

Thinking about the Future Visions and how we might achieve them, are there any other opportunities, issues, and challenges under the Review Themes that you think the Board might have missed?

No.

Priority Reform Areas for Stage 2

Looking at the 'things we will do' in Stage 2 under each of our Priority Reform Areas, are there other issues that you think we should be trying to better understand?

- Yes
- No

Thinking ahead to reform options, do you have any specific ideas or suggestions about changes we could make to local government in Tasmania that you think would lead to better outcomes across multiple Reform Areas?

- Yes
- No

Did you also want to comment on a specific Priority Reform?

- Defining Councils' Role in the 21st Century - No
- Local Representation and Good Governance - No
- Strategic and Regional Capability - No
- Efficient and Effective Infrastructure and Service Delivery - No
- Sound and Consistent Planning and Regulatory Services - No
- Operational Sustainability - No