

Future of Local Government Review Newsletter (issue 9)

March 2023

More information?
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The Tasmanian Government has commissioned the Local Government Board to undertake a broad review into the future of local government in Tasmania. The review will look at the fundamentals of the local government system: the role it should play in supporting communities, the services it should be delivering, and the most effective ways of doing so.

This is the ninth in a series of newsletters which will provide periodic updates on the Local Government Board's [Future of Local Government in Tasmania Review](#). These newsletters also provide updates and information on key engagement opportunities to ensure you understand how to have your say on local government in Tasmania.

IDENTIFYING REFORM OPTIONS

On 14 December 2022, the Board published an [Options Paper](#). This paper, and its associated [Appendix](#) identified 33 specific reform options, based on the key pressure points councils are facing now and in the future. These options included ideas about how councils can better support community wellbeing, improving the skills and conduct of councillors, and ensuring essential services and infrastructure are delivered in a fair and sustainable way.

In this paper, we also identified three main structural reform pathways for building capability across the local government sector (see below). These pathways were informed by what we had heard from stakeholders and the community, and present different approaches for redesigning Tasmania's system of local government, to ensure councils have the necessary scale, resources, capability, and capacity to deliver their critical functions into the future.



Community Meeting in Bothwell

Three reform pathways

1. Significant (mandated) sharing and consolidation of services
2. Significant boundary consolidation to achieve fewer larger councils
3. A 'hybrid' model combining both service and boundary consolidation

TESTING REFORM OPTIONS

To support the release of our Options Paper, the Board provided a nine-week engagement period, inviting written submissions via post, email, and an online survey portal.

We also set out together across the State in February and March, hosting a series of meetings. We held 34 sessions with communities, elected representatives and council staff. These sessions gave attendees the opportunity to discuss the Options Paper, with a particular focus on the structural reform pathways.

During our nine-week engagement program, we heard from or met with 720 Tasmanians and stakeholders.

This process has allowed us to identify potential issues with our options and understand community and stakeholder concerns and sentiments.



Elected Representatives Meeting in Ulverstone

NEXT STEPS – STAGE 3 OF THE REVIEW

In line with the Board's Terms of Reference, we will be presenting an Interim Report to the Minister for Local Government on 31 March 2023, providing detail of all the research and engagement we have undertaken during Stage 2 of the Review.

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The third and final stage of the Review commences in April. We expect, pending the Minister's approval, our Interim Report will be published in April, along with submissions and supporting reports on our various engagement events undertaken in the second half of Stage 2.

Importantly, the Board will be providing further engagement opportunities as we work to refine a final, detailed package of reforms during Stage 3 of the Review. Like all our engagement to date, we will be promoting these opportunities through this newsletter, our website, newspapers, social media and other supporting information.

As we conclude Stage 2, we have now met with or received one or more submissions from over 4000 members of the public, stakeholders, peak bodies and organisations, and members of Tasmania's local government sector.

We want to thank all Tasmanians for the considered ideas and feedback they have provided in Stage 2, and throughout the whole Review. We are confident that the package of options we are bringing forward in Stage 3 of the Review reflects the hopes and aspirations held broadly by Tasmanians, for a high-functioning, sustainable local government sector that will endure into the future.



Council Staff Meeting in Queenstown