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**From:** Mike Willson  
**Sent:** Sunday, 19 February 2023 10:17 AM Local  
**To:** Government Board  
**Subject:** The Future of Local Government Review

To whom it may concern,

We wish to comment on the Tasmanian State Government's review to reshape local government in Tasmania. Yes we're in agreement with restructuring through amalgamation of the existing 29 local councils to provide efficient and more cost effective services. The number of residents in the smaller regional councils eg both Tasman and Central Highlands have populations of less than 2500! In the Tasman for example the planning officer works for Brighton Council yet does contract work for both Tasman, and Glamorgan & Spring Bay Councils - surely this is not efficient in providing the best service?

The removal of planning decisions by local councils knocks out an important tier of decision-making, vital in enabling the local community to have their say in influencing planning decisions directly affecting them. This would be a direct overrule by the State Government in limiting local democracy.

The proposal for the State Government to appoint independent assessment panels would be highly questionable in terms of how the panelists would be chosen (eg the balance & make up of their expertise,) and by whom and even where they would sit. Certainly the 2022 controversy caused by the Attorney General ignoring the recommendations of appointments to a Tribunal and instead making her own personal choices, screeches as to why this proposal is unlikely to be fully independent. The very large Department of State Growth, keen to progress on major development projects in combination with national and international companies, would easily override and steam-roller the concerns of the local community in driving through planning development applications. Access to independent assessment panels would be far harder, and prohibitively expensive, for community representations to make their case for protecting the long term benefit of the natural environment, cultural heritage, lifestyle of local residents. This has been proven a number of times particularly in NSW where planning applications by developers have been approved at high detrimental cost to the natural environment and community uniqueness has been sacrificed.

Surely local councils best serve their local communities not State sponsored planning assessment panels?

Best regards

Alison & Mike Willson