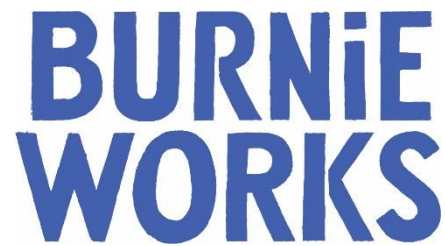


17 February 2023

The Chair  
Local Government Review Board  
Hobart



[Submissions.LGBoard@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:Submissions.LGBoard@dpac.tas.gov.au)

**Response to Options Paper  
The Future of Local Government Review**

We wish to respond to the Options Paper with specific reference to Section 3 – *Future Role for Local Government*, Section 4 – *Reform Outcomes* and Section 5 – *Building Local Government Capability and Capacity Now and for the Future*

By way of introduction, Burnie Works originated within Burnie City Council and is now an independent entity. For the past ten years Burnie Works has supported community members and partners to work together to address local “wicked problems” identified by the Burnie community. An overview of the approach and some of the activities of Burnie Works is **attached**.

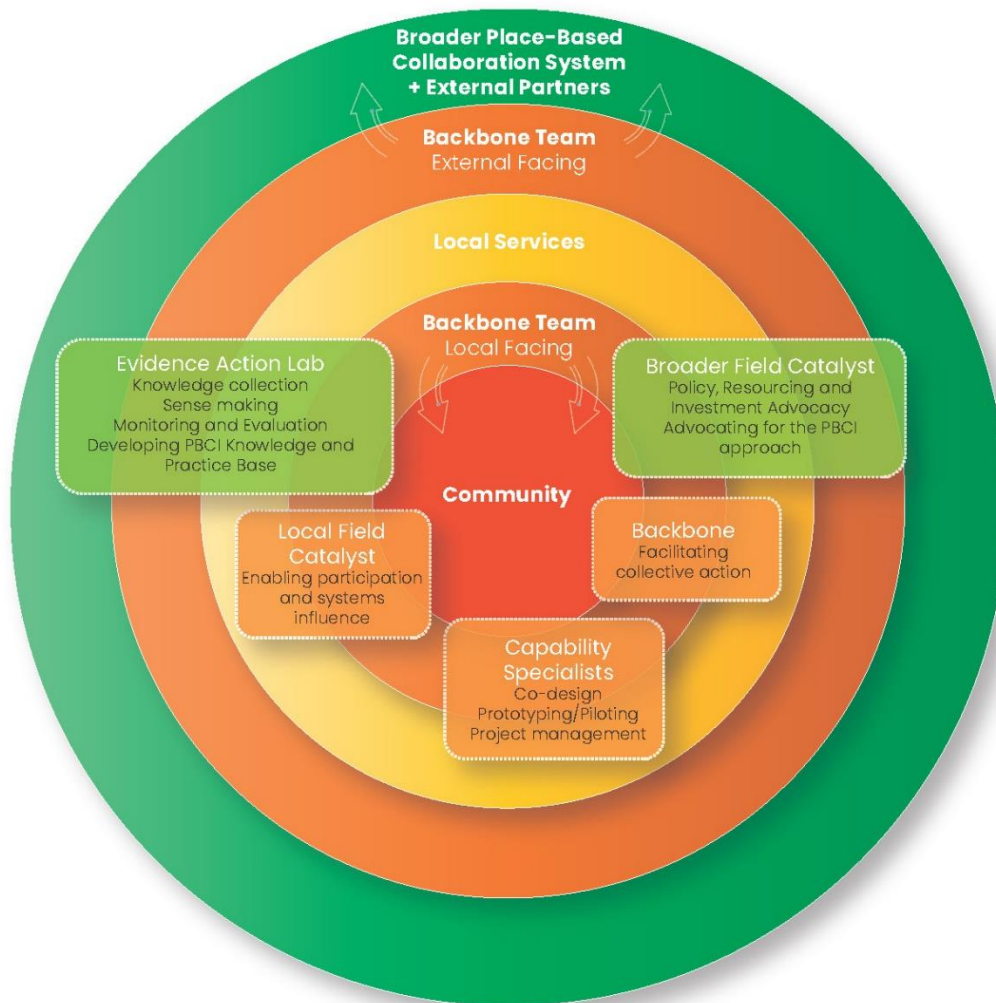
We believe this provides us with a unique perspective on the role of local government in Tasmania in enhancing community well-being outcomes and place-shaping.

**Section 3 – *Future Role for Local Government***

1. Out of the four roles identified in the report, the role of Facilitator, Partner and Advocate will require more emphasis in future if local government is to meet community expectations. Dealing with complex issues such as climate change; housing and homelessness; jobs, training and educational opportunities; and equality and inclusion as they apply to a local community require a coordination/facilitation/advocacy role which local government is well placed to provide. This is because;
  - local government can ensure community voice is truly representative;
  - it can be a neutral actor to “hold the space” for co-creation of community solutions by community, government agencies and service providers;
  - it has existing relationships with other levels of government, and
  - it has the necessary organisational infrastructure to support this work.
2. If councils have both the resources and capability, functions currently undertaken by intermediary organisations such as Burnie Works (usually referred to as “back bone functions”) could be undertaken by local government. Presently there would be very few councils in Tasmania with the capability to lead this work both at a governance level (elected representatives) or operational level (management and staff). From our experience it would take a minimum of three to five years for local government to grow the capability and embed this type of approach into their governance and operations.

- Councils currently make their largest contribution to community wellbeing through the provision of parks, recreational and cultural infrastructure and programs, supporting local community groups and advocating to other levels of government on local community priorities.

Well-being functions that can be provided by government in the future could be intermediary in nature (see table and diagram below and substitute “Local Government” for “Backbone Team”), supporting collaborative activities in the local community and by advocating for changes in policies, programs and resource flows with external agencies and partners to better meet the community need.



The roles or functions included in the diagram relate to defined functions for intermediaries in the social impact sector.

## Section 4 – Reform Outcomes

As mentioned previously, local government could be well placed to provide an intermediary role to facilitate and partner with others to promote community wellbeing. However, for councils to do this role well, there will need to be an enhanced councillor training framework to assist elected representatives to govern place-shaping and to address complex social issues using a systems approach.

Council management and staff will also need to develop new skills in these areas. As an example, Burnie Works has identified the following core competencies to do place-based work across complex social issues. It is doubtful that most council staff would currently have competencies in many of these areas.

Place-based collective impact backbone team functions	
Functions	Competencies
Systems leadership Guiding, supporting and enabling systems change	Practice self-initiative while putting in place mutual accountability with internal and external partners in across ecosystem Practice adaptive and responsive leadership, integrating sense and meaning making to guide decision making for action with reflection on own action Apply systems thinking and systems change theory Apply understanding of chaos and complexity theory Apply place-based approach, accounting for Burnie and region-specific context Apply understanding of the impact of trauma on systems, organisations and individuals in the ecosystem dynamics
Community participation People engage and become involved	Enable maximum opportunity for community voice and engagement Use a strengths-based approach Build and strengthen existing and new relationships Act with sensitivity, respect and inclusivity to Aboriginal people and those from other cultures Act with awareness of the interaction of power and influence Communicate to enhance participation of all Commitment to communication feedback loops appropriate for all stakeholders
Alignment across partners Commitment to a common vision and agreed ways to get there	Use collaborative practice for coalition and partnership building across sectors Relate with an understanding of organisational and eco-system dynamics, including the role of power between partners Plan strategically for systems change Embed and practice mutual accountability
Designing actions Taking an idea and charting the next best steps	Use knowledge for collective sense and meaning making to lead to decision making Design top down and bottom up Adapt in response to emerging opportunities Implement codesign practice Design using theory of change and program logic
Implementing actions Putting in place what it will take to make the action happen	Draw on implementation science Bring together the most appropriate organisational structures to support action Use program and project management skills and tools
Monitor, evaluate and share learning Pause, consider, assess and demonstrate impact, learn, adjust, share	Collection and analysis of knowledge from a range of sources Use knowledge for sense and meaning making Communicate for action Reflection on action processes Monitor outcomes and processes Demonstrate impact

If local government is to attract the specialist staff with the required competencies to meet community expectations and deliver community well-being outcomes, some level of consolidation or formal collaboration may be required.

**Section 5 – *Building local government capability and capacity now and for the future***

1. We agree that Tasmania’s current council boundaries do not necessarily reflect how contemporary Tasmanians live, work and connect.
2. One of the complexities of place-based approaches is that an individual’s or community’s sense of place can change according to their lived experience. A young person from Circular Head with family and financial resources to be able to compete in sport at a regional or state-based level, will have a very different sense of place than a young person living in a neighbourhood with few socio-economic opportunities. Therefore, the question of size and structure of local government may need to be informed by current community perception of place, community need and desired strategic outcomes.
3. If Tasmania is committed to equality and inclusion, then any “redrawing” of Council boundaries or structures should reflect a commitment to those communities where place-based approaches to community well-being will have the greatest social impact.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss our submission further with the Review Board if appropriate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Chris Lynch', written in a cursive style.

on behalf of Chris Lynch

**Chair, Burnie Works**