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**From:** David Hudson | Hudson Consulting  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 3 January 2023 3:50 PM  
**To:** Local Government Board  
**Subject:** Review - Feedback

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the Review – and for the opportunity to provide a few comments on the Stage 2 documents/outcomes etc.

In general, I am very supportive of the work done so far and the conclusions reached. The following comments may not be in a particular order (apologies).

The wide range of aspects/characteristics/demographics/performance/capabilities does mean that the results of the review must be broad and all encompassing. They must also be without political influence – hard to achieve I know, but the public release of the Review will make it necessary to explain any differences between recommendations and actual implementation.

The idea of a Role Statement is significant – however it must be conducive to councils being aware of and understanding their current and, even more importantly, their long term projections and desired outcomes for all their constituents. This will require involvement with the community and the elected representatives responding to those longer term issues (not just what happens before the next election).

The capability of councils depends on the capabilities of the staff, councillors and third party providers. As mentioned in the Report, these issues are all to be addressed.

To utilise these capabilities in an optimal manner, data/information/services must be available to understand the current status of the council and its constituents and also the longer term targets for those matters. That requires data sources – the proposed local gov't performance reporting, Auditor-General and financial data, ABS data, information from other government (from all 3 levels) bodies (such as the State Grants Commission\*). An understanding of and responsiveness to this data is essential. Its not just about "Know your Council" – its also about the "Council knowing Us".

A delineation of the expected roles and services provided by councils is important, however there must be an acceptance by other levels of government, or the private sector, and the community that "the provider of last resort" is not the ultimate outcome. Whether its medical services, irrigation schemes, old age care or airports, there must be a clear and proven need for that activity to be included in the role statement.

Asset planning and management has always appeared to be a "burden" for councils. Often these matters are beyond the understanding of councils and, if expenditure is required, outside the financial capacity of the council. So again, some clear asset management goals and performance targets are required, but so is some understanding about the best ways to manage those assets over a longer period. This also applies to forward planning by councils, whereby the provision and maintenance of assets is not just about for now, but for the future (eg. road and storm water infrastructure).

Structural reform – I agree with the 3 pathways – and I would fully support pathway 3 as a mix of changing council areas and the provision of third party/shared resources. I would strongly suggest however that the reform take place in 3 steps (1) firstly determine the area/boundaries of each local government area having regard for characteristics, demographics, commonalities, geographics and the like to ensure that the area is one which makes the tasks of each local government less diverse (2) Then, based on (1), come to decisions about what services would be beneficial if shared, as those services will depend on the range of responsibilities of each council and (3) then determine the form of the shared service (a statewide body, a regional body, a council providing services to others, or a third party provider).

\*I would mention the SGC again – just to emphasise that understanding of and input into its models/calculations has always been encouraged and provided. As mentioned above, the results of the modelling would provide councils with a significant insight into how each council's activities compare with other councils (and in particular the "standard/average" Tasmanian council).

Thank you again for the opportunity to have input. I look forward to the next stage.

Regards

David Hudson