

The State Government should not be influenced by comments made by other states on the number of Councils in Tasmania. Tasmania is unique and if they were to look at LG as the conduit between their policies and regulations and how that is delivered on their behalf that would be a positive (Councils are like mini public servants at half the cost and twice the efficiency).

For efficiencies and savings then making LGs bigger doesn't add up. It may work with more dense population area but definitely not in rural settings. Distance to travel is a major element to consider and the correct distance not what Google maps estimates. Any further than an hour return blows out costs and efficiencies as well as available services. Companies/Councils are reluctant to service areas too far from the main Depot/headquarters due to the geographically challenging nature of Tasmania.

From a rural local government area my concerns are that any reform that creates boundary changes will have a detrimental impact on our small rural communities. These communities have weathered many storms and challenges. I can say for the Central Highlands that the forced amalgamations in 1993 took communities within the new boundaries a long time to adjust and feel as one.

Take the 'local out' and that will result in the demise of small rural communities – which are the backbone of rural life.

There aren't any guarantees that services will remain, and the costs associated with delivering the basic services wont escalate.

The Central Highlands LG area is unique and will suffer greatly if adhered to a non-rural LG area.

At the Public Meeting the question was asked what do you see the CH looking like in 20 years. I felt this was a very unfair question as who knows. Things have changed dramatically in the last 20 years with employment moving away from farming to other sectors. Who could have predicted the interest in tourism or the Renewable Energy hub being located in the CH. However the Council and the communities have adapted as required.

A comment made at the public meeting about not being able to rate renewable energy projects was quickly chut down instead of looking at it as a possible revenue option for local government.

Tourism has grown exponentially but once again LG in the CH has stepped up and provided well maintained facilities for visitors with no increase in funds to support this impost to local residents.

Jobs – should there be a reform that changes boundaries with the headquarters out of area then everyone realises that jobs will be lost, which will have a detrimental flow on effect on the local communities. Viability of business will be compromised as families move to urban areas for employment.

The threat and continued discussions around LG reform doesn't help with employee or employer confidence. While this discussion keeps happening potential employees/small business providers are reluctant to make the decision to move to rural areas for work because of the unknow factors and continued discussion around reform/amalgamations.

The number of small Tasmania businesses that rural LG support through purchasing of goods and services is astounding and has a positive impact on employment, social wellbeing and thriving towns.

Skilled staff shortage is an Australia, Tasmania problem and not just at a local government level.

I implore you to think about the current state of the Royal Hobart Hospital and its challenges with capacity, staff and other internal issues – bigger is not always best.

Less rhetoric about reform and more positive comments/support around the value that local government brings to its community would be helpful and its partnership working on behalf of all tiers of government and implanting regulations and acting as a conduit for grants etc shouldn't be overlooked. Why this is so successful in rural LG areas is because of the local knowledge, local connectiveness and local input.

The State government should look at LG for the valuable service it brings to the table and the link it creates for State Government to get its information/message out to its constituents.

For efficiencies and capabilities to improve then start at the top. Elected members should be well qualified and trained/equipped to do the job they are elected for. Performance reviews should be considered. Rate payers shouldn't be penalised for incompetencies and poor decision making at the top if that is the case.

Personally I feel that any major changes to the existing boundaries for local government will result in dismissed services for communities.

It was suggested that the way people shop/travel should be considered. I am totally against this benchmark. People within the CH do have a preferred travel route for sure, this is to obtain items and services that are independent of LG services. If they require services that LG provide then they turn to their local government staff to