

Dear Ms Smith,

My name is Jennifer Hickey and I work at the City of Hobart. For the past (20 years), I have worked as an Administrative Officer in the Divisions of City Services, Infrastructure Services, Innovation and now City Futures), where I have worked to deliver essential services to our community. As a worker with an intimate understanding of the sector, I write to you today regarding the Tasmanian Government's *Future of Local Government Review*.

I am concerned that the options outlined in the December 2022 update will impact the core business of local government workers like me— supporting our communities. Amalgamating councils and consolidating services alike means losing the specific and localised support which can only be provided at a local government level.

My workplace, the City of Hobart, is part of the 86% of Tasmanian councils currently experiencing skill shortages. Over the past 20 years, I've witnessed many of my colleagues leave local government for the state and private sector, where wages and conditions are stronger. The options put forward by the *Review* do not address these skill shortages, which must be prioritised if local government is to be reformed meaningfully. Meanwhile, the existence of 29 different Enterprise Agreements across Tasmania means workers like me can be left \$10,000 worse off every year.

I was disappointed that attempts made during the *Review* to engage the community were limited in frequency and geographically inaccessible to many Tasmanians. The quality of the proposed options reflect this insufficient level of community engagement.

I support the proposals of my union, the Australian Services Union, to develop local government so it works better for workers like me and all Tasmanians. In particular, I stress that the following changes are made:

1. Consideration should be given to expanding the responsibilities of Tasmanian Councils in line with other states, particularly concerning the delivery of library services.
2. Any use of shared services or consolidation of functions across councils should ensure that workers are in no way worse off and prevent the use of partnership arrangements to diminish wages or conditions for local government staff.
3. The review should consider what mechanisms or support that Government could provide to encourage councils to bring services back in-house. This should include a transparent review of currently contracted out services before contracts are renewed.

I urge you and the Board that any changes made to the local government sector benefit Tasmanians— through the provision of essential services, and the creation of secure jobs.

Regards

Jennifer Hickey
ASU Delegate