

17 February 2023

Future of Local Government Review
GPO Box 123
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Sir / Madam,

My name is Kathy Bradburn and I have worked at the Central Highlands Council for the past 28 years and take pride in delivering essential services to our local community. I commenced my working career through an administrative traineeship with the Central Highlands Council in 1994 and have progressed to a Senior Administrative Officer Position, which I hold today. 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, Central Highlands Council, is part of the 86% of Tasmanian councils currently experiencing skill shortages. Over the past few years, I have seen employees 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 am concerned that many people within the community are not aware of the *Review* and it is disappointing to see that the location of the community sessions being held is very limited and geographically may be inaccessible to many Tasmanians. Due to pressure from the Central Highlands Council a session was held in Bothwell and with Council promoting the meetings, I believe they may have seen the highest numbers attending. This shows the concern of our local community and the support they have the Central Highlands Council and the level of service being provided.

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.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish to discuss any issues further.

Yours faithfully



Kathy Bradburn