
From: Maria Riedl
Sent: Friday, 17 February 2023 5:01 PM
To: Submissions LGBoard
Subject: My submission: NO forced amalgamations and NO removing Planning decisions for Local Councils please!!!

Tasmanian Government's consultation process over reforms to Local Government, citing the scale of changes (forced amalgamations and removing planning decisions from local councils) hasn't been rigorous enough and we really should have more time to understand the proposed alterations.

Major proposals such as removing planning decisions from local councils and replacing them with State Government appointed 'independent assessment panels' are buried in the appendix of the consultation document; meetings have been convened in only eight of Tasmania's 29 Local Government areas and consultation commenced 11 days before Christmas, a notoriously poor time to engage community on large scale change.

I am deeply concerned about the openness, transparency and timing of the current round of public consultation into the future of local government. Why are highly contentious options buried in the documentation and not declared openly for all to consider?

"Forced amalgamations and Government-appointed assessment panels are deeply divisive reforms that have been long discussed and rejected. In 2020 Government explicitly ruled out forced amalgamations and the creation of regional Councils, and now they are back on the table.

I accept amalgamation of some Councils may be advantageous - but am particularly concerned with forced amalgamations. Interstate experience demonstrates this can have poor outcomes for people and democracy with local representation being lost.

Recent advice I have read also indicates that the proposed changes, despite their scale and significant impact on the way development decisions are made in Tasmania and the future of Local Government, may not be required to pass both houses of Parliament, further diminishing scrutiny and the integrity of this reform process.

"The proposed changes are profound and evidence from mainland Australia indicates they will lead to poor planning decisions and increased costs and conflict in the community and They're unpopular so it's no surprise people are increasingly questioning this process, how it is being rolled out and the direction it is heading.

I disagree with moving councils role as the Planning Authority and therefore I state they MUST retain their role as a Planning Authority and make decisions on local development proposals. We have access to local councils and this must stay. It makes absolutely no sense to remove this vital role from Local councils as they know the areas and are able to be scrutinised and decisions questioned. Transparency and fair access to decision making is a must in all decision making. Surely we live in a democracy where we have transparency, right to information, access to justice!

Regards

Maria IE Riedl

'When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe.' John Muir