

Enquiries: Christina Holmdahl  
Phone: 0417 804 210  
Email: [wtc@wtc.tas.gov.au](mailto:wtc@wtc.tas.gov.au)

17 February 2023

Sue Smith  
Chairperson  
Local Government Board  
GPO Box 123  
**HOBART TAS 7001**

Email to: [Submissions.LGBoard@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:Submissions.LGBoard@dpac.tas.gov.au)

Dear Sue

### **Submission to Future of Local Government Review Stage 2 Options Paper**

The West Tamar Council thanks the Local Government Review Board for its work to date with the Future of Local Government Review project. Council welcomes any changes as a result of the review that have the support of our community and have community benefit. Council would be particularly supportive of changes that, maintain and enhance existing service levels, maintain and strengthen financial sustainability, and maintain local representation.

In relation to the 3 potential pathways outlined in your latest report we would like to make the following comments.

#### **1. Significant (mandated) sharing and consolidation of services**

West Tamar Council has always been supportive of sharing services across Council boundaries where these are beneficial. Council currently participates in a number of such arrangements, particularly in the provision of regulatory services.

However, until such time that the type of potential shared services are clearly defined and an opportunity for greater community feedback is provided, Council is not in a position to support the mandatory introduction of shared and consolidated services.

Sharing and consolidation may have some merit in particular circumstances but we are concerned by this pathway option being 'significant' and 'mandated', which are undefined and therefore are not able to be fully comprehended or adequately assessed. Local councils provide many services that are best delivered locally and we are concerned that regional or state bodies or larger councils will not be able to adequately cater for this close relationship.

2. Boundary consolidation to achieve fewer, larger councils.

As stated in our submission dated 24 August 2022 West Tamar Council is strongly opposed to any discussion of amalgamations or boundary adjustments without more widespread consultation and up to date data gathering.

Forced boundary changes and amalgamations should be up to communities to decide and we re-iterate our position that until a comprehensive report based on a detailed investigation is available, this is not a matter that can be properly discussed or considered. It is our expectation that any report about the subject of amalgamations or boundary adjustments should outline all the potential impacts for all stakeholders and any recommendations, whether or not based on a preferred academic or economic viewpoint, must have the support of the majority of the community.

3. A 'hybrid model' combining both targeted sharing of services and targeted boundary consolidation.

Our comments relating to the first 2 pathways are also applicable to the third proposed pathway.

A major question raised by our council is when will access to the business case for the proposals be provided? We are not aware of any detailed economic modelling being done for any of the proposed pathways.

As a final point it has been noted that there appears to have been a very low-level of external participation with far too little community input. There have not even been forums held in each municipal area to facilitate this. This brings into question the buy-in of the communities that should be party to this major review and the representativeness of the feedback received to date.

We thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely



Christina Holmdahl  
**MAYOR**