

Local Government Board  
Via email: [LGBoard@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:LGBoard@dpac.tas.gov.au)

Dear Local Government Board

## **Review of Local Government – Stage 2 – Interim Report**

Homes Tasmania welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the *Future of Local Government Review – Interim Report*, following the Local Government Board's (the Board) consideration of feedback in relation to the *Options Paper*. As was the case with our previous submission, Homes Tasmania's feedback chiefly focuses on the Board's proposals that are relevant to our organisation's roles and functions. This includes proposals under Reform Outcomes 1, 3, 5 and 6. In addition, we provide comment on the proposed structural reforms. Given the amendment to the Board's Terms of Reference to remove consideration of councils' role in assessing development applications under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*, Homes Tasmania provides no comment on this issue.

Please find our specific feedback on the *Interim Report* below.

### **Reform Option 1.1 – Support**

*Establish a Tasmanian Local Government Charter which summarises councils' role and obligations, and establishes a practical set of decision-making principles for councils.*

Homes Tasmania reiterates its previous position in support of Reform Option 1.1 and agrees with the Board's position in the *Interim Report*, which notes that:

- the Charter will need a practical focus – to clearly align with the governance, performance management, and regulatory compliance frameworks as part of an integrated 'system'
- development of the Charter's finer details should be undertaken in collaboration with the sector and implemented in a way that retains councils' ability to be responsive to local needs and issues.

### **Reform Option 1.2 – Support**

*Embed community wellbeing considerations into key council strategic planning and service delivery processes.*

Homes Tasmania reiterates its previous position in support of Reform Option 1.2 and agrees with the Board's position in the *Interim Report*, which notes that:

- community wellbeing should be embedded as a core design element in the Charter, and this should flow through to councils' strategic planning and community engagement frameworks
- this proposal should align with and support Tasmania's broader wellbeing framework.

### **Reform Option 1.3 – Support in part**

*Require councils to undertake Community Impact Assessments (CIAs) for significant new services.*

Homes Tasmania reiterates its previous position which partly supported Reform Option 1.3, suggesting that a broader, strategic approach to CIAs may be preferable to analysis on an issue-by-issue basis. With this in mind, we support the Board's position in the *Interim* Report, which notes that:

- the CIAs proposal will not proceed to Stage 3 of the Review as a 'standalone' option but will instead be incorporated into the broader design work by the Board around improving the local government performance management and community engagement frameworks.

### **Reform Option 3.1 – Support**

*Require consistent, contemporary community engagement strategies.*

Homes Tasmania reiterates its previous position in support of Reform Option 3.1 and agrees with the Board's position in the *Interim* Report, which notes that:

- it is important that any new statutory requirements related to community engagement strike the right balance between maintaining a minimum, consistent level of engagement across all councils, while providing local flexibility to meet genuine community differences and preferences.

### **Reform Option 3.2 – Support**

*Establish a public-facing performance reporting, monitoring, and management framework.*

Homes Tasmania reiterates its previous position in support of Reform Option 3.2 and agrees with the Board's position in the *Interim* Report, which notes that:

- it is important to build and maintain a comprehensive, contemporary performance monitoring and management framework
- a high-quality performance monitoring and management system will be critical in tracking performance in the context of any major reform process
- it will be important to carefully consider the roles and resourcing of the Office of Local Government, the Tasmanian Audit Office, and council audit panels in overseeing the framework.

### **Reform Options 5.2 and 5.3 – Support**

*Greater transparency and consistency of councils' resourcing and implementation of regulatory functions; and*

*Increase support for the implementation of regulatory processes, including support provided by the State Government.*

Homes Tasmania reiterates its previous position in support of Reform Options 5.2 and 5.3, including our suggestion that these reforms go hand-in-hand and are closely linked to the Board's council consolidation proposals. We agree with the Board's position in the *Interim* Report, which notes that:

- the significant variability in council performance of regulatory functions and concerning levels of non-delivery of critical public health and safety functions are largely a function of structural capacity and capability challenges

- these issues with respect to regulatory functions should be central to the Board's development of structural reform recommendations and a workforce strategy.

### **Reform Option 5.4 – Support**

*Strengthen connections between councils' strategic planning and strategic land-use planning by working with State and Commonwealth Governments.*

Homes Tasmania reiterates its previous position in support of Reform Option 5.4 and agrees with the Board's position in the *Interim* Report, which notes that:

- appropriate models for strategic regional governance on planning and infrastructure matters will need to be developed alongside and in support of the new structural reform of the sector.

### **Reform Option 6.2 – Support**

*Establish stronger, formalised partnerships between State and local government on long-term, regional, place-based wellbeing, and economic development programs.*

Homes Tasmania reiterates its previous position in support of Reform Option 6.2 and agrees with the Board's position in the *Interim* Report, which notes that:

- regional and state-wide collaboration will become more important over time in response to the increasing complexity of the policy and regulatory challenges with which councils need to grapple
- the nature and shape of appropriate collaborative governance arrangements will depend heavily on the structural reform proposals the Board will develop in Stage 3 of the Review
- the overriding focus of the structural reform development process must be on ensuring that any arrangements are well supported and resourced.

### **Structural Reform Pathway 3 – Support**

*Pathway 3 – A 'hybrid' model combining service consolidation with boundary reform.*

Homes Tasmania reiterates its previous position in support of Pathway 3 and agrees with the Board's position in the *Interim* Report, which notes that:

- the hybrid solution is the only structural reform proposal that will proceed to Stage 3 of the Review
- any hybrid solution must:
  - involve significant, mandated changes to existing council boundaries to create a smaller number of larger, more capable councils
  - provide flexibility to provide for different approaches to designing new councils that serve urban and rural communities
  - see the mandating of some shared services, but only for a relatively narrow range of services or functions.
- structural reform should be designed collaboratively but implementation should be mandatory.

Homes Tasmania reiterates its support for the Board's important work to review how our local councils work and make recommendations about the changes needed to ensure our local government system can effectively respond to the growing demands and changing needs of our communities. We welcome further discussion on any of the issues raised in this submission.

Yours sincerely



Eleri Morgan-Thomas  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Homes Tasmania**

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