

1 August 2023

Future of Local Government Review  
GPO Box 123  
Hobart TAS 7001  
Submissions.LGBoard@dpac.tas.gov.au

Dear Local Government Board,

I write to provide the Meander Valley Council (Council) submission in response to the future of local government review currently being undertaken. We have taken our response to the review seriously and although we were only provided with a short period of time to collate our submission, have broadly engaged with relevant stakeholders to inform our position. Council has undertaken a phone survey, online survey, two public meetings, meeting with all employees, Facebook posts, media advertising, individual meetings with community members and attended numerous information sessions. From the feedback received, Council has formed a position based on fourteen principles, each could be elaborated further in its own right given the considerable time and energy undertaken to form our position.

Meander Valley Council's position on the future of local government review is as follows:

1. Meander Valley Council works hard to achieve a sustainable business model and responsible decision making that ensures appropriate services are available in our community now and for future generations.
2. We are calling on the State Government to complete their current Local Government reform agenda with no forced alterations to Tasmanian council boundary areas unless a Council agrees to accept changes to their current boundary areas.
3. The Meander Valley community does not support forced amalgamation of the current council areas.
4. We have received insufficient evidence to justify the significant changes to the current council boundaries proposed by the State Government's Local Government Board.
5. The Meander Valley community is concerned about the likely negative economic impact on smaller townships if forced amalgamations of Tasmanian councils is undertaken by the State Government.

6. We request information to be provided that clearly demonstrates how economies of scale will deliver real cost savings to the Meander Valley Council property owners as a result of amalgamation of Tasmanian councils by the State Government.
7. We support greater use of agreed key performance indicators to be used as a guide of performance for Tasmanian councils, which will demonstrate whether, like Meander Valley, councils are delivering sustainable services to their community.
8. We support councils that wish to progress voluntary amalgamations to do so with the support of their communities and the State Government. Our community does not support voluntary amalgamation of the Meander Valley Council area with any other Tasmanian councils.
9. We support the investigation of greater use of shared services for Tasmanian councils, including investigation of future legislated shared services, for services that Tasmanian councils currently deliver and can be better delivered on a regional or statewide basis. This would be with the support and approval of Tasmanian councils. Examples of potential shared services include Information Technology, procurement tendering and assessment, policy development.
10. We do not support any of the four Tamar Valley proposed amalgamation scenarios.
11. We do not support any of the four Central & Midlands proposed amalgamation scenarios.
12. We do not support the Meander Valley community being required to pay for any new council areas created by the State Government.
13. We will continue to work with all other Tasmanian councils to improve the local government sector.
14. We believe that Local Government is well placed to continue our active role in planning for our community.

Regards



Wayne Johnston  
**Mayor**