

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Future of Local Government Review  
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Dear Members of Parliament, Councillors and Chair of the Local Government Board.

I read the Review Report with much concern, disappointment and frustration at the conclusions drawn and scenarios offered.

My first preference is for the Northern Midlands Council to stay as it is, an efficient, community-engaged LGA with clear democratic representation and accountability. The question needs to be asked: What are we missing out on in our current format? Very little I think. The Council is servicing the community very well with maintenance, improvements and excellent provision of facilities across the municipality.

I am opposed to the recommendations and suggestions of the Review Report for the following reasons:

1. The ratepayers and residents of NMC identify closely within their LGA. There are strong connections between the rural areas and towns, socially, commercially and culturally. We can engage with our councillors quite readily and it is not difficult to access Council staff when required. The Council is responsive, efficient and financially sustainable. It is to be commended for the development of its TRANSLink Industrial Hub at Western Junction and new residential subdivisions. Rates are levied at a very reasonable rate.

2. We do not want to become part of the Launceston City Council. It is bureaucratic, urban focussed and inefficient. Their planning has been deficient, hence their desire to acquire the profitable zones of NMC and Meander Valley Council such as the towns and industrial precincts. Launceston should amalgamate with George Town Council and together improve their own residential and industrial zones in areas where it would benefit employment prospects. I would not be opposed to Prospect and Blackstone Heights becoming part of LCC.

Studies have found that economies of scale are not necessarily evident when it comes to local government, rather U-shaped cost curves become the norm. Loss of democratic representation and accountability can readily become a consequence of council amalgamation. Requiring NMC to be subsumed by Launceston City Council would be like the Federal government demanding Tasmania amalgamate with Victoria.

3. Contrary to what the Review Report states, there is little or no obvious connection between NMC and the Central Highlands apart from a road and an underground hydro pipeline. The orientation of the Central Highlands is southward. The Report's graph comparing place of work with place of residence shows zero commuting northward from the Central Highlands. How the authors of the Review think combining the barely populated areas of the CH with the remnants of NMC and MVC (Scenarios 1,2 and 4) once Launceston gathers up the more profitable areas, is incomprehensible and shows little understanding of the geographical and demographic nature of this area. In Scenario 1 Council B would have a small, ageing population, over 60% working outside the municipality, little growth, a limited income, over 1000 km of gravel roads to maintain and management split between Bothwell and Westbury!!

The Central Plateau warrants having special area status, outside the local government

structure.

4. Rather than boundary adjustment, I see enormous potential for councils like NMC and MVC in particular, and possibly Southern Midlands to share resources such as IT programs and managerial and town planning expertise. They all have a similar town/country mix. with similar issues to deal with.

I have not been persuaded that so-called 'efficiency' arguments should outweigh matters relating to size. Small is often better when it generates community connection, pride and self-identification. This region is renowned for its cultural groups, volunteer efforts and charitable organisations, as well as numerous opportunities to engage within the community through its unifying local shows, sporting and health facilities and tourist-attracting events, all of which are facilitated by the NMC. It deserves to keep its current structure.

Kind regards

