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In writing   Future of Local Government Review  
            GPO Box 123, HOBART, TASMANIA 7001

**Subject: Strong Opposition to Amalgamation of Councils - Preserving Community Voice and Accountability**

To whom it may concern,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my firm and unwavering opposition to the proposed amalgamation of Huon Valley Council with any other council. While I understand that the intention may be to improve governance efficiency and service delivery, my concerns regarding the potential negative impacts on our community and the risks of reduced accountability and corruption have only been magnified as I delve deeper into the issue.

Firstly, I am genuinely concerned by the prospect of diluting our say as community members. The existing local councils have provided us with a vital platform to actively participate in decision-making processes, ensuring that our voices are heard and that our local needs are addressed with specificity and attentiveness. Amalgamating the councils would create a larger administrative body, where decisions may be made at a distance from those they directly affect, making it increasingly challenging for our concerns to receive the attention they deserve.

Moreover, the risk of reduced accountability within a larger council is alarming. In a smaller council, residents are afforded a more direct and personal connection with councillors, fostering community vigilance and holding them accountable for their actions and decisions. The distance between councillors and residents in the larger catchment might diminish transparency and responsiveness, creating an environment where the potential for corruption or misuse of power increases.

While proponents of amalgamation point to increased efficiency and cost savings, I am wary that these projected benefits might not fully materialize or offset the potential disruptions and financial

challenges during the transitional phase. The initial costs of merging systems, rebranding, and infrastructure adjustments could be substantial, and ongoing financial challenges may arise as the new council seeks to balance budgets and allocate resources across diverse communities effectively.

Additionally, the proposed amalgamation might not address the unique characteristics of our community adequately. I fear that the tailored services and localized decision-making that we currently benefit from could be sacrificed in favour of standardized approaches that do not fully consider our cultural, social, and geographic nuances.

Moreover, the risk of patronage, cronyism, and corruption in a larger council cannot be ignored. The concentration of power and complex bureaucratic processes might provide cover for corrupt activities to go undetected. The potential for misuse of procurement and contracting processes could also be higher, posing significant risks to the efficient and fair allocation of resources.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that the potential negatives and risks of amalgamation far outweigh the projected benefits. Instead of losing our local identity and voice, I urge the Local Government Board to consider strengthening our existing council structures, enhancing collaboration, and fostering better service delivery within the current framework.

As a concerned community member, I am committed to advocating for a more capable and sustainable local government system that empowers residents and ensures transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the unique needs of our community.

Thank you for considering my views. I request that you carefully evaluate the potential consequences of amalgamation and engage in meaningful dialogue with our community to address our concerns. I am open to participating in further discussions and providing any additional information that may be helpful in this process.

Sincerely,

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