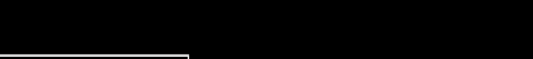
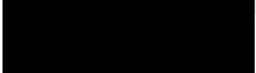


LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW SUBMISSION

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

I am a  Ratepayer who has lived in the  Local Government area for over 50 years. I was extremely disappointed when I heard the recent announcement by the Minister for Local Government that there would be no compulsory council amalgamation because I believe, as quoted in the Interim Report, and repeated here:

“Tasmania’s system of local government works in the future – simply cannot be achieved on an ‘opt-in’ or voluntary basis.”

I was so disillusioned and disappointed with the announcement I was actually on the point of ceasing preparation of this submission, such as it is, however I have no doubt local government reform and council amalgamation is essential and as such decided to continue.

COUNCIL AMALGAMATION; for or against?

IN principle I totally support Council Amalgamation, compulsory or otherwise.

PLANNING (5.1b Page116)

Although in principle I strongly support Council Amalgamation equally firmly I believe ‘Planning’ should remain with local Councillors who are properly elected

representatives of the community and therefore represent a voice of the community.

While a Development Application may well meet with all the appropriate rules, regulations and requirements the project itself may not, for a variety of reasons, meet with the approval of the local community; ... in other words it does not have a 'social licence'.

In such situations local councils may well act as a barrier or buffer to what the community see as inappropriate development.

TAMAR VALLEY CATCHMENT?

I refer you to the article written by Professor David Adams published in *The Examiner* on 17th June in which he reviews the 'proposed four scenarios for council mergers based around the idea of a Tamar Vally Catchment'

Of the four proposed scenarios Prof. Adams supports 'Scenario 3' (incorporating West Tamar, George Town, Launceston, Hadspen, Carrick, Longford, Perth and Evandale and I totally agree with this; though I believe it should also include Dorset and Meander.

Prof Adams point out that 'The optimistic Australian Government Centre for Population' estimates of regional growth indicates that within 20 years the urban spread of Launceston will have enveloped much of the Northern Midlands, West Tamar, George Town and Meander Valley peri-urban areas, such as in the corridors out to Longford or out to Deloraine.'

He also says;

'With the rapid growth of Legana and the subsequent traffic problems on the West Tamar highway, we can see

the challenges of not being prepared to manage rapid growth.'

As a long term resident of [REDACTED] I can confirm that rapid expansion is taking place with new homes and developments virtually leaping out of the ground however supporting infrastructure such as roads and recreational facilities, though improving, is not what it should be.

The urban spread of Launceston that Prof Adams refers to is very real and it seems absolutely ludicrous, to me, that the major population areas of Riverside and Trevallyn, plus other areas on the eastern side of the Tamar, are currently actually included in the Local Government Areas of West Tamar or George Town while the residents more than likely work or play within Launceston City.

This is not purely restricted to Riverside and Trevallyn as, as the Interim Report clearly points out, significant percentages of Launceston's surrounding districts work and play in that city, or as it says in the Report:

Great Launceston is now a major service and employment centre for its broader region, and a large percentage of the residents of its surrounding LGA's travel there regularly, if not daily. (P52)

Prof Adams is a much more knowledgeable, and credible, person than myself in respect of Local Government, however what he has said in the referred to article is exactly what I have been saying for years in respect of a single 'Tamar Valley Council' and I have no hesitation, or embarrassment, in consistently referring to the aforementioned article; ...I recommend it to the Review Board.

Although I have no personal or local knowledge in respect of other LGA's or parts of Tasmania I have no doubt other local government areas throughout the state could be equally merged as indicated in the 'Interim Report' apart from:-

KING & FLINDERS ISLANDS (including Cape Barren Island)

Given the unique locations of both of these Islands it would not seem unreasonable for them, subject to community agreement, to retain their current individual identities and for them, with their obviously minute financial supporter base, to receive sufficient state funding for them to function independently.

Structural reform is essential to build local government capability and capacity for the future

I make no apology for quoting the following direct from the Interim Report, ...I believe firmly the words speak for themselves as well as my own view and opinion:

1. The status quo is **not** an optimal or sustainable model for the sector as a whole, given growing demands, complexity, and sustainability challenges; (P10 Stage 2 Interim)

Mandating change: Why major structural reform cannot happen voluntarily

"Irrespective of the recommendations we will make at the conclusion of this Review, there is no doubt genuine political leadership, at all levels, will be required to deliver

the changes necessary to ensure we have a highly capable sector that is able to support the State's future prosperity and wellbeing."

(Stage 1 Interim Report).

While the Board has heard a range of concerns about both 'forced amalgamations' and 'mandated shared services', it firmly believes that substantive structural reform - the sort needed to deliver significant improvements to how Tasmania's system of local government works in the future - simply cannot be achieved on an 'opt-in' or voluntary basis. We know this because previous attempts at voluntary local government reform in Tasmania have been ineffective. This was the view of the Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council when it recommended the establishment of a wholesale local government reform process, which ultimately led to this Review.

In 2016 and 2017 the Tasmanian Government and councils funded a suite of voluntary amalgamation and shared services studies which demonstrated a range of substantial potential financial and strategic benefits to councils and communities of greater planning and services consolidation, coordination and/or integration, relative to the status quo. Despite this, only limited progress has been made to take up the opportunities identified by the studies.

It is clear to the Board that State Government leadership and support is needed to deliver successful structural reform. This aligns with our core principle above which highlights the critical role of dedicated resourcing and expert management for any transition.

Structural reform must be designed collaboratively but, once settled, its implementation must be mandated. The sector itself broadly agrees that this is the only way to elevate the reform discussion, so that we can focus on how

we achieve what needs to be done to build a successful future local government sector for all Tasmanians.

Page 11 Stage 2 Interim Report

FUTURE COUNCIL COMPOSITION?

There has been no mention, that I can find in the 126 page report, of the type of composition of councils that would be adopted in the event of any future amalgamations.

The historical 'Ward System' appeared to function quite well in its day and I assume this is what would be adopted however it should be clarified.

MAJORITY SUPPORT AMALGAMATION

IN a recent survey conducted by 'The Examiner' some 64% of respondents supported council amalgamation (The Examiner, 23rd July 2023).

THANK YOU for providing me with the opportunity to express my views on this important subject.

[REDACTED]
of
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date 2nd August 2003