

[REDACTED]

1 August 2023

[REDACTED]

The Future of Local Government Review
Submission on the Stage 2 Interim Report and Community Catchment Information Packs

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to make a written submission on Stage 2.

We live and farm in [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] producing prime lamb and irrigated crops such as beans, broccoli, carrot seed, grass seed, onions, peas, poppies, pyrethrum and wheat. Our produce is sold in both the domestic and international market.

We identify strongly as being part of the Northern Midlands community, and we consider that the current Northern Midlands Council services our community well. We **do not support** any of the four scenarios proposed for the reallocation of our municipal boundaries.

Bishopsbourne-Toiberry is a Significant Rural District

“The Bishopsbourne-Toiberry district is a significant rural district containing prime agricultural land and two proclaimed irrigation districts. It should be governed from a rural municipality to ensure agriculture is enabled, not stymied.”

Prime Ag Land: the primary land use in the Bishopsbourne-Toiberry district and its surrounds is agricultural production. The soils of the district have been surveyed and mapped as part of the Meander Report (DPI 1993)¹ and South Esk Report (DPIF 1996)². This mapping shows that the Bishopsbourne-Toiberry District contains a substantial area of Class 3 Land. Class 3 land is, of course, listed as Prime Agricultural Land in the State Policy on the Protection of Agricultural Land 2009, and under that policy it is to be protected from conversion to non-agricultural uses. It should also be noted that the rest of the land in that area is primarily mapped as Class 4 Land – and with contemporary agricultural practice and the high level of skill and education of our local farmers, this Class 4 land is also very significant for agricultural production, and it too should have its agricultural values protected. Governance should be from a rural municipality to protect the agricultural values.

Irrigation Districts: the Bishopsbourne/Toiberry district is covered by two proclaimed irrigation districts – the Cressy Longford Irrigation Scheme (CLIS) and the Whitemore Irrigation scheme. It is our understanding that agricultural land within irrigation districts is to be protected from conversion to non-agricultural use. Governance should be from a rural

municipality to protect the investment that has been made in irrigation by the community and the government.

Enable Agriculture, Don't Stymie It: it is imperative that the Bishopsbourne-Toiberry district is retained in a rural municipality. There is a significant risk that placing the district under the governance of a municipality with an urban-centric focus, will result in a governance that does not properly understand the issues and needs unique to intensive agricultural areas. There is also the risk that placing the district under the governance of a municipality with an urban-centric focus, will create the impression that the district is available for urban and residential development – when it is not available for any land use other than agriculture. Administrative boundaries should reflect and enable State legislation, and should empower agricultural businesses to do the job society needs them to do – produce quality food and product in a sustainable manner. Administrative boundaries and processes should give agricultural businesses the confidence to make the investments necessary for the sustainable production of quality food and product.

And it's not just about farm businesses – other rural businesses need governance to be appropriate and of a high standard, so that they too have the confidence to invest - whether that be in food processing, the provision of rural supplies, and so forth.

Governance from a rural municipality is more appropriate for enabling agriculture.

Longford is a Rural Hub

“Longford should not be governed from an urban-centric municipality; Longford is a significant rural hub and most residents (>80%) do not work in Launceston.”

An important Rural Service Hub: Longford is an important service hub for a significant rural area; however, this fact seems to have been ignored in the scenarios presented for consideration. There are a substantial number of specialist rural businesses in Longford, including:

- Midlands Tractors (farm machinery and servicing);
- TTMI Tasmania (farm machinery and servicing);
- Gaffney Machinery (farm machinery and servicing);
- Nutrien Ag Solutions (farm supplies and advice);
- Incitec Pivot Fertilisers (fertiliser supplies);
- Serve-Ag (farm supplies and advice);
- Water Dynamics (irrigation equipment design and supplies);
- JBS Swift (abattoir); and
- Impact Fertiliser (fertiliser supplies) within coo-ee of the town.

Several other businesses located in the town boundary also have a significant proportion of their business involved in agriculture, including:

- Des Chugg Tyres (tyre supplies and repairs for farm vehicles, machinery and plant)
- Connection Electrical (provision of electrical services)
- Koppers Wood Products (provision of timber supplies such as fence posts).

The significance of Longford as a rural hub has been highlighted recently by the decision of the peak agricultural representative body in Tasmania – the Tasmanian Farmers and Graziers Association – to move its headquarters from Launceston to Longford. This move will enhance its accessibility to its wide ranging rural membership.

It is appropriate that a rural hub of the significance of Longford be located in a rural-centric municipality.

Longford Is Not A Satellite Commuting Town to Launceston: how can it be claimed that Longford is a satellite commuting town for Launceston, when only 19% of the 2021 population that lives in Longford, works in Launceston (ABS 2021 data - 821 Longford residents claim to work in Launceston, of a Longford population of 4,268³)? These statistics reveal that over 80% of the Longford population **are not commuting to Launceston** for work. Longford is not a satellite commuting town for Launceston and does not belong in a municipality governed from Launceston.

In Closing

In closing, we consider the current Northern Midlands Council municipality is a better option for us and our business than any of the four scenarios presented for consideration. Our district requires governance from a rural perspective, and our local service centre of [REDACTED] also requires governance from a rural perspective as befits its status a major rural hub.

Thank you for considering our submission.

Yours sincerely,

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References

2: Grose, C.J. & Moreton, R.M. (1996) South Esk Report – Land Capability Survey of Tasmania, Department of Primary Industry and Fisheries, and the accompanying South Esk 1:100 000 Land Capability Survey of Tasmania

1: Noble, K.E. (1993) Meander Report – Land Capability Survey of Tasmania, and accompanying 1:100000 scale map, Department of Primary Industry Tasmania

3: Australian Bureau of Statistics Longford (Tas) 2021 Census All persons QuickStats. [2021 Longford \(Tas.\), Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](#)

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