

SUBMISSION TO INTERIM REPORT – THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW -  
2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023

Firstly, I am confident in stating that no one within our community supports mandatory, or more accurately, forced amalgamation of Northern Midlands Council, it is un-democratic and un-Australian.

The Local Government Review should never have been a blanket approach encompassing all councils. Successful, financially stable councils, who are delivering on services to their communities, such as the Northern Midlands, do not need, or wish to be forcefully amalgamated. No data has been provided as evidence that there would be cost savings or better outcomes.

There is no clear roadmap on how the suggested amalgamations would work. Who would wear the cost of forced amalgamations? Where would council offices be located? How would it be decided which council would take the lead role in an amalgamation? Which staff would be retained? The list of unanswered questions goes on and on.

All of these can only be successfully addressed if councils wish to voluntarily amalgamate and work through the process amicably and include their communities in the decision making.

**We are completely against** the blatant pilfering of our assets, and pandering to the will of large city councils who are in debt and indulging of developers.

The communities of Longford, Perth and Evandale **do not want** under any circumstance, to be poached by the City of Launceston. Our towns are rural, history and culturally minded, and enjoy a particular lifestyle. We have no cultural or social link to Launceston. To suggest we have a connectivity because some in our community's work in or visit Launceston is a complete nonsense. We dispute the description of "satellite commuting towns".

Therefore, the suggested Scenarios of 1, 2 and 4 are completely unacceptable.

Being forced to become part of the City of Launceston would most certainly lead to loss of voice in our communities, loss of identity and sense of community, reduction of services, reduced representation, and sizeable increases in rates.

Western Junction, TRANSlink and the airport area, which has received sound economic management by Northern Midlands Council, must remain in the municipality to ensure the council remains economically strong.

Nor do Longford, Perth and Evandale want to be split into different councils, our towns have been inherently linked for over 150 years.

Scenarios 1,2 and 4 are also completely unacceptable as the communities of the Northern Midlands have nothing in common or any link to those on the other side of the Western Tiers, Derwent Valley, Brighton, or Central Highlands. Scenario 2 is completely nonsensical. There is absolutely **no possibility** that one council the size of the area suggested could meet the needs or retain the connectivity and sense of place for these totally diverse communities.

Scenario 3 in the Central and Midlands Community Catchment – for a northern council encompassing the Meander Valley and Northern Midlands Councils, is the only option worth considering. However, this must only be achieved if it is desired, by both councils and their communities, and by voluntary amalgamation only. Retaining **ALL** current towns and assets within both municipalities in their entirety.

In closing, any amalgamations must be voluntary only, by will of councils and their communities.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature block]