

From: [Yon Kikkert](#)  
To: [Submissions LGBoard](#)  
Subject: Local Government Review Submission  
Date: Wednesday, 17 May 2023 9:24 02 AM  
Attachments: [image.png](#)

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Dear Board,

Thank you for the invitation to make a submission regarding your review of Local Government in Tasmania

In your 'Letter to the Minister for Local Government' in the Stage 2 Interim Report you write: this report "has been prepared as a public document with the expectation it will be released to promote further *targeted discussions*" (page 4 italics and bold mine)

While I could have much to submit regarding this excellent set of reform ideas, for the sake of relative brevity, I will target my comments generally within the framework of the following excerpt extracted from page 15 of your report:

"Our criteria place primacy on community cohesion and connectedness, with operational capability and financial sustainability framed as 'supporting' considerations. We want these maps to act as a catalyst for conversations with and between councils and communities about how we potentially reorganise our local government boundaries at a larger scale to deliver stronger capability, while simultaneously supporting and enhancing community cohesion, voice, and identity."

And to zero in even further, I will target my discussion specifically about " *simultaneously supporting and enhancing community cohesion, voice, and identity.*"

I have lived in a rural locality at Swansea/Dolphin Sands for the last 10 years and have been deeply involved with the local community in that time. I also attended the Local Government Review Bicheno workshop in February.

After extensive reading and thought I have summarised that into the following:

This submission considers place in relation to the towns and surrounds of rural and regional Tasmania. It does not submit anything in relation to Urban experiences of place.

1 I argue that we can have our cake and eat it too. That is, we can simultaneously support and enhance community cohesion, voice, and identity, while at the same time, enjoy the efficiencies garnered from administrative consolidation.

2 This submission proposes that structural reform of Local Government must be in two directions in terms of geographical scale: Outward - into the broader regional scale and; Inward - back to the scale of the immediate proximity of individual towns and surrounding districts. One will balance the other. Without one the other will fail. How so?

3 The proposed broad-scale consolidation of council administrations into Greater Regional Councils makes sense in terms of efficiencies and increasing local government capacity. They are to be commended. However, consolidated administrations are further away - in terms of scale - from the towns they are meant to serve. That risks geographical isolation from decision-making and feelings of disempowerment and resentment in local communities. There would be a profound feeling of lack of a local voice and local representation. That is if there is NOT a concomitant reform at local scale.

4 Reform at local scale where the central importance of place, place-shaping and town identity are put at the centre of local governance, is crucial to the broader acceptance of local government restructuring and will help bestow on them a form of political legitimacy.

5 Therefore, part of the reform and rationalisation process should require statutory devolution of some decision-making power back to towns and their surroundings. Towns would be more autonomous, self-determining, and empowered by local participatory democracy frameworks set up through instruments of delegation enabled by the Local Government Act. Enhancing the frameworks established in the current Section 24 of the Local Government Act 1993 would be an example of where and how this could be done.

6 Each town/district could have an elected voluntary District Citizens Committee who represent the local town and district. The committee members would be on a voluntary basis. At the same time as local government elections for mayors and councillors, there would be a 'down ballot' election for each individual District Citizens Committee. For example, in what is at the moment Glamorgan Spring Bay municipality, there could be an elected District Citizens Committee representing each of the following: Coles Bay district, Bicheno district, Swansea district, Triabunna district, Orford district.

7 District Citizens Committees would be compelled to hold periodic town hall meetings. Where motions can be brought and voted on and/or citizen representations can be presented and discussed.

8 Local government decisions that affect an individual town/district would be a collaboration between the town/district community and the council and not a top-down decision only. In fact, decisions would be a combination of both bottom-up and top-down inputs. Such decisions would then be regarded as carrying legitimacy by the community affected by them because they would have been involved and empowered by deep forms of collaboration with the Greater Regional Council.

6 Moreover, the empowerment of individual towns and communities in such a way harnesses the incredible (at the moment largely latent) community capacity of towns in terms of voluntary time, skills, resources, networks, infrastructure etc. which in turn increases the capacity of local government to deliver community wellbeing. Town agency and empowerment through autonomy and self-determination builds community morale. Community morale in turn builds well-being, cohesion, and resilience - all attributes that will be sorely needed as we head into the challenges of the 21st century.

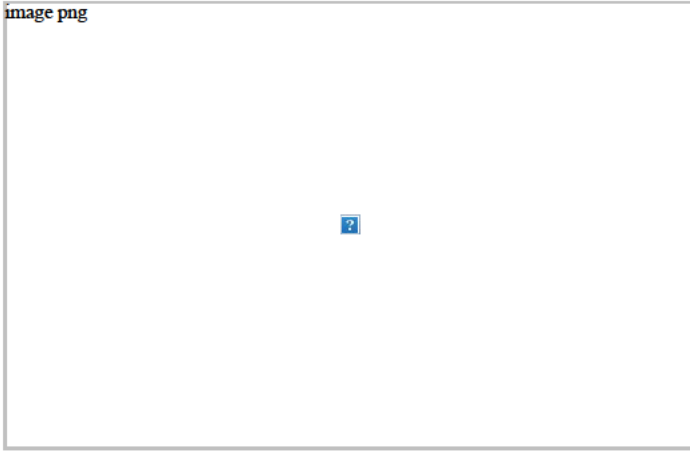
7 As it stands at the moment in local government in Tasmania, this tier of voluntary community capacity is largely untapped. This is most likely due to the lack of capacity of many councils to enable community initiatives at self-empowerment.

8 The efficiencies gained by consolidation of local government administrations into Greater Regional councils will deliver an 'efficiency dividend'.

9 The 'efficiency dividend' could enable deeper collaboration between councils and town/districts. As demonstrated by the following:

10 Below is the global standard flow chart of forms of community involvement in decision making. Generally, at the moment, councils deliver at the lower end of the continuum rather than high end. This is because administrative capacity to deliver at the high end is limited by resource constraints. An efficiency dividend through structural reform could enable high-end town/district collaboration and empowerment.

image.png



Public participation spectrum: [https://iap2.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/IAP2\\_Public\\_Participation\\_Spectrum.pdf](https://iap2.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/IAP2_Public_Participation_Spectrum.pdf)

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission

Kind Regards,



I have a 2012 Bachelors Degree from UTAS majoring in Human Geography and Sociology A HD average I'm happy to be further involved with this review as you see fit Regards, Yon

Further Resources:

Readings and direct quotes:

"Effective place shaping requires that local governments support and contribute to community networks and are prepared to engage with or devolve decision making responsibilities to their residents " FoLGR page 31 [https://www.utas.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1603076/FoLGR-3.pdf](https://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1603076/FoLGR-3.pdf)

"Local democracy is not confined to four-yearly council elections The introduction of community boards, 'people's panels', and other participatory processes such as those outlined in case studies above could lead to considerable improvements in Tasmanian local government representation Engagement and accountability are also enhanced by greater transparency and reporting of local government processes and decision making" page 31 [https://www.utas.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1603076/FoLGR-3.pdf](https://www.utas.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1603076/FoLGR-3.pdf)

"Citizen committees have the potential to enhance the democratic capacity of councils and citizens, but this potential is not realised unless they are clearly integrated into and connected to broader activities in community governance" [https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG\\_Citizen\\_Committees\\_Report\\_pdf](https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG_Citizen_Committees_Report_pdf)

"Today, community governance is a term used frequently in local government The concept is crucial to understanding the potential councils find in developing relationships with their communities and citizens under increasing resource constraints" page 5 [https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG\\_Citizen\\_Committees\\_Report\\_pdf](https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG_Citizen_Committees_Report_pdf)

" Here, the capacity of local citizens to affect their circumstances is central " page 6 [https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG\\_Citizen\\_Committees\\_Report\\_pdf](https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG_Citizen_Committees_Report_pdf)

"Being premised on the notion that local communities have knowledge and capacity, and that tapping into local expertise and experience helps local government deal with the complexities of certain policy issues In some settings, such as NSW's Precinct Committees, citizen committees contribute to the development of agreed planning goals They provide feedback on policies and strategies They have partial or full responsibility for managing public assets (see Pratchett et al 2009, pp 28-47) and for raising funds from the community" page 7 [https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG\\_Citizen\\_Committees\\_Report\\_pdf](https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG_Citizen_Committees_Report_pdf)

"The report 'Evolution in Community Governance, Building on What Works' (McKinlay, Pillora, Tan & Von Tunzelmann 2011) provides detailed background on developments in community governance area in Australia An empirical study by O'Toole and Burdess (2004) focuses on Victoria after the 1994 amalgamations, but is highly applicable to issues facing contemporary local government across Australia Changes have taken place in the ways local governments govern Local government is now as much a facilitator of networks and partnerships as a 'government structure' Its processes are geared to an optimisation of human and financial resources within a networked structure Here, the capacity of local citizens to affect their circumstances is central The notion of communities servicing local needs that would previously have been met by government has been adopted as an ideal Community governance now takes in a wide range of activities and involves both servicing community needs, and representing or advocating for community interests (2004, pp 434-5) This is sometimes referred to as 'social infrastructure ' page 6: [https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG\\_Citizen\\_Committees\\_Report\\_pdf](https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG_Citizen_Committees_Report_pdf)

"During the post-amalgamation period, the coalition government used delegated citizen committees to boost local community morale and to deal with the growing challenge of managing local assets ^ This was particularly successful in rural areas, where communities have historically built and managed local infrastructures, such as halls, memorials Schools of Art and so on, through localised arrangements " page 579 file:///C:/Users/Owner/Desktop/Localism%20and%20the%20paradox.pdf

," most of the members in the place-based committees are motivated by a passion for the region and long-standing sense of connection to 'place " page 584 file:///C:/Users/Owner/Desktop/Localism%20and%20the%20paradox.pdf

"Many public administrators we spoke with are committed to making the best use of delegated citizen committees, because they offer both local input, as well as cost-savings Indeed, given their value to local governments, it is unlikely that citizen committees will be removed in the near future" page 587 file:///C:/Users/Owner/Desktop/Localism%20and%20the%20paradox.pdf

"Specific reform proposals will deliver the best possible outcomes where they are developed and implemented in the context of a fundamental sector re-design aimed at lifting Tasmanian councils' overall capacity, capability, and sustainability" page 64 [https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-yourvoice-files/s3/ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1916/8186/6120/TLG\\_Reforms\\_stage\\_2\\_interim\\_REP\\_FIN.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-yourvoice-files/s3/ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1916/8186/6120/TLG_Reforms_stage_2_interim_REP_FIN.pdf)

"In parallel, specific supporting components aimed at improving local representation, governance, transparency, " page 64 [https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-yourvoice-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1916/8186/6120/TLG\\_Reforms\\_stage\\_2\\_interim\\_REP\\_FIN.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-yourvoice-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1916/8186/6120/TLG_Reforms_stage_2_interim_REP_FIN.pdf)

" while at the same time providing local flexibility to meet genuine community differences and preferences In Stage 3, the Board will develop a position on what that balance looks like in practice, and how community engagement processes and practices will align with the proposed new Charter and other key elements of councils' governance and performance management frameworks The Board will also consider further how any benchmarks established under the new framework should be used to inform regulatory and service performance oversight and/or interventions" page 67 [https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-yourvoice-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1916/8186/6120/TLG\\_Reforms\\_stage\\_2\\_interim\\_REP\\_FIN.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-yourvoice-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1916/8186/6120/TLG_Reforms_stage_2_interim_REP_FIN.pdf)

"One thing that is clear to us as we enter Stage 3 of the Review is there is broad consensus across the State that the status quo is not an optimal or sustainable model for the sector in the years ahead, and therefore some form of consolidation is necessary to deliver greater economies of scale page 5 Letter to the Minister

" which are better conceptualised as sub-components of the new performance monitoring and management framework and/or proposed mandated community engagement mechanisms Accordingly, those options will be further developed and refined in that broader context " Reform Outcome 8 page 75 [https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-yourvoice-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1916/8186/6120/TLG\\_Reforms\\_stage\\_2\\_interim\\_REP\\_FIN.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-yourvoice-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1916/8186/6120/TLG_Reforms_stage_2_interim_REP_FIN.pdf)

" A major part of that conversation is how we – as a state – ensure that councils supporting our economically crucial regional and rural communities have sufficient funding to provide adequate service levels to their communities " page 74 [https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-yourvoice-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1916/8186/6120/TLG\\_Reforms\\_stage\\_2\\_interim\\_REP\\_FIN.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-tas-yourvoice-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/1916/8186/6120/TLG_Reforms_stage_2_interim_REP_FIN.pdf)

page 52 -54 : <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#drafts?compose=GTvVlcSMTSGgtGFSCVgnXqZrfvwMPwktStdTvcJhKvjdqjmbwLbWcTmWplbHgTwpfitNHVKrbHJJ>

Community engagement protocol: page 1 [https://ehq-production-australia.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/d51c21e638e3027a6324b1dbf343b8f37522d4c4/documents/attachments/000/141/871/original/Community\\_Engagement\\_Strategy\\_-\\_Precinct\\_System\\_Review\\_lr.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA4KKNQAKIOR7VAOP4%2F20230429%2Fap-southeast-2%2Fs3%2Faws4\\_request&X-Amz-Date=20230429T203449Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=773589621790538aed97cf20f249fe8c16556329f10ab6c80d57939ad835ef34](https://ehq-production-australia.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/d51c21e638e3027a6324b1dbf343b8f37522d4c4/documents/attachments/000/141/871/original/Community_Engagement_Strategy_-_Precinct_System_Review_lr.pdf?X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIA4KKNQAKIOR7VAOP4%2F20230429%2Fap-southeast-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20230429T203449Z&X-Amz-Expires=300&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=773589621790538aed97cf20f249fe8c16556329f10ab6c80d57939ad835ef34)