



Local
Government
Association
Tasmania



STATE ELECTION PRIORITY STATEMENT 2024

Tasmania is a state with an abundance of opportunities and is becoming increasingly recognised as a valuable place for people to visit and live. However, challenges also remain. Many and diverse parties share responsibility for how these opportunities and challenges might be addressed – governments, non-government organisations, industry and local communities.

No single body operating alone can effectively influence necessary change. The best way to do this is together, in partnership, with each partner being clear about how they might best contribute to what is agreed as important.

Local government is the closest sphere of government to the community and therefore has enormous potential to help make a positive difference. Our councils deliver the services and infrastructure that shape the daily experiences of every Tasmanian and are a major determinant of our community's wellbeing.

While the specific focus of local government might be local and regional, these geographic areas represent the fundamental building blocks that make our state a great place to be.

Investments into communities through councils are an investment in the wellbeing of every Tasmanian.

We are not a secondary stakeholder.

It is understood that a range of priorities exist specific to local communities, however, some priorities cross all local government areas. This Statement presents the current high-level priorities for our sector in Tasmania.

Local government encourages all political parties and independents to commit to working in true partnership with our sector over the coming years. With that approach, a range of agreed initiatives that serve to benefit Tasmania, including the priorities contained in this Statement, will have the best chance of being delivered.



Founded in 1911, LGAT is the peak body for Tasmania's 29 councils. We advocate, so their voices are heard at all levels of government.

Our **vision** is to build stronger councils.

Our **mission** is to provide leadership, support, representation and advocacy on behalf of Tasmanian councils.

lgat.tas.gov.au

OUR KEY ELECTION PRIORITIES

LGAT urges all Tasmanian political parties, leaders and individual candidates to commit to:



STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHARTER

A local and State Government partnership agreement.



WORKFORCE

A workforce development program across local government.



INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTIONS

Development of an infrastructure contributions framework for Tasmania.



HEAVY VEHICLE MOTOR TAX

A fair share of Heavy Vehicle Motor Tax revenue to support local roads.



PLANNING

Focus on planning, not regulation, to meet our state's housing needs.



INDEPENDENT LIVING UNITS

Amendments to the *Local Government Act* to ensure rates concessions are targeted to those in genuine need.

STATE & LOCAL GOVT CHARTER

A local and State Government partnership agreement.



The Future of Local Government Review has recommended that a Local Government Charter be developed “to support the new legislated role for local government”.

Local government believes that the Charter should include a new partnership agreement between local and State governments.

From experience, we would say that the right leadership and engagement from the State Government improves state-wide local government performance and community outcomes. We also know that when this is inadequate it impedes local government performance.

Unfortunately, different State Government agencies, and even different sections within agencies, work with local government in different ways.

A local and State Government partnership offers an opportunity to define our shared responsibilities for public service outcomes, principles for engagement, and the obligations of each when delivering community services and legislative responsibilities.

A well-constructed partnership agreement will set the conditions for local government success, and as a result, ensure state policy success and positive community outcomes.

WORKFORCE

A workforce development program across local government.



Local government is a major employer in Tasmania, particularly in regional and rural areas, where the council is often the main employer. However, like most other industries councils are experiencing skills shortages, grappling with challenges in relation to recruitment, retention and accessing training opportunities to enhance workforce skills and capability.

This means local government is having difficulty securing enough people and the right mix of skills required to support local service provision. This affects not only local government’s productivity but also the growth of local areas.

We seek a partnership with the State Government to:

- Understand the local skills demand.
- Develop programs, such as traineeships and graduate entry programs, to support local career entry and progression.
- Establish tertiary and vocational programs that support our sector’s changing needs.

State-level skills analyses and workforce development programs do not always capture what matters most locally. Councils are in a much better position to understand, and respond to, the immediate needs of their local areas. They just need the resources to support this work.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTIONS

Development of an infrastructure contributions framework for Tasmania.



In Tasmania, developers face challenges with the financing and delivery of infrastructure for development. This is impacting our state's ability to deliver much needed housing.

Often where there is land available for housing, we have the 'first mover problem', where developers do not want to be the first to invest in things like a new sewerage pump station or stormwater upgrades. Instead, they wait, hoping another developer will be the 'first to move' and bear the full costs for the necessary upgrades that others will also benefit from.

We can't deliver housing without this essential infrastructure, and we can't deliver the infrastructure without the right financing.

A framework that evenly spreads the costs across those that will benefit would greatly assist.

These schemes, which every other state has, provide certainty in cost and delivery for everyone. Without this we have stand-offs that halt development, as no one wants to go first and bear the full cost of the infrastructure.

All we want is a system that shares the costs across all those that benefit from it. This will make sure that we can deliver the right infrastructure in the right place at the right time.

HEAVY VEHICLE MOTOR TAX

A fair share of Heavy Vehicle Motor Tax revenue to support local roads.



Heavy vehicles are the backbone of Tasmania's economy, transporting produce and products around the state. Providing safe access for them across our road network is critical.

Heavier vehicles, that have a big impact on roads, pay a Heavy Vehicle Motor Tax to the State Government to cover the costs of maintaining the roads they use.

The amount of Heavy Vehicle Motor Tax collected is around \$29 million per year. However, the State Government provides only \$1.5 million to councils, even though they manage 80 per cent of Tasmania's road network, some 14,400 km.

And while heavy vehicle use and the revenue collected by the State Government has been steadily increasing, the amount provided to councils hasn't changed for 27 years. Not even for CPI, not by a single cent.

Imagine not having a pay rise for over a quarter of a century!

At the same time, the State Government's share has more than doubled.

This means local government has to subsidise the maintenance of these roads from your rates.

We're asking for a fairer share for local roads – which means distributing the Heavy Vehicle Motor Tax revenue among all road managers on the same basis it is charged – on-road use.

Simple, logical and fair.

PLANNING

Focus on planning, not regulation, to meet our state's housing needs.



The identification of land suitable for housing development is the first step in the development process. Housing supply must be well-located and well-serviced in areas where infrastructure can provide for and attract new residents, with supporting jobs, social and community infrastructure and public transport. In Tasmania however, there has been limited action in planning for and locating new housing supply.

This is because Tasmania's planning system is incomplete. The Planning Policies are missing, the Regional Land Use Strategies are outdated, and there is little supporting information to assist applicants through the system.

While some of the improvements are finally commencing, progress is just too slow. More resources are needed to deliver the frameworks we need today.

The incoming Government can demonstrate its commitment to delivering more housing by investing in accelerating the delivery of key planning reforms.

This includes the Tasmanian Planning Policies, Regional Land Use Strategies and a full suite of helpful planning information, including design guidelines, process flowcharts and applicant checklists.

Local government is keen to work more closely with the State Government to develop the tools and framework we need to enable liveable communities and better manage our growth.

Now is the time to move on from tweaking the edges of our regulatory system, and instead invest in the important task of planning for our future housing needs.

INDEPENDENT LIVING UNITS

Amendments to the Local Government Act to ensure rates concessions are targeted to those in genuine need.



The Local Government Act prevents Tasmanian councils from applying rates to Independent Living Units (ILUs) operated commercially by not-for-profit providers.

What this means is that a retired person living in their family home must pay rates while a person of similar circumstances, who has sold their house to move into an ILU owned by a not-for-profit, does not pay rates.

The typical ILU resident is not a person or couple requiring charitable assistance. Residents usually have substantial assets and do not qualify for the full age pension.

People living in ILUs still enjoy all the same council services as ordinary ratepayers. This includes council roads, walking and cycling trails, parks and reserves, events and activities, and stormwater management. They just don't pay for them.

Instead, other ratepayers, including retired people living in their family home, subsidise the ILU residents, who receive a 100 per cent concession on their rates, irrespective of their financial situation.

Like those living in their family home, a remission in rates should only apply to residents in ILUs who require charitable assistance.



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