
Local Government Association of Tasmania 21st Century Council Reform Agenda

Sector Engagement Report

Prepared by OurSay - February 2020

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About OurSay

Executive Summary

From September to December 2019, Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) members provided feedback about sector reform. 21 out of 29 member councils participated in the process. Feedback revealed a shared understanding of sector values, beliefs and desired outcomes to inform a reform agenda.

The process guided individual General Managers through a conversation with senior staff and their respective Councillor groups. The focus of the conversation was around two key questions:

1. What outcomes do we need to achieve for the sector?
2. What reforms could or should happen to achieve those outcomes?

The feedback process yielded the following key themes:

Localised democracy

Community proximity to elected members and decision making is a core strength of Local Government (LG). LG's role in emergency management, local employment and local knowledge serve communities well by building social cohesion, responsiveness, resilience and regional advocacy. Strong local democracy is preferred over the mixed results of amalgamations. There appears to be a wariness to reduce council and councillor's direct accountability to the community

Inter-council collaboration

There is a strong desire to focus on effective collaboration and consistency of service levels and operating platforms/processes regionally, through seeking efficiencies of scope rather than scale. There is a need to improve the viability of council service delivery through shared services and resources. The sector is particularly weak on IT/software and attracting and retaining staff in regions. The standardisation of accountability and transparency processes will allow councils to focus on better financial management and engagement with their communities to deliver better services.

Rebalancing obligations

A renewed relationship with the State Government (SG) focused on strategic outcomes, including the amelioration of "burden shifting" by securing funding sources for services handed down to LG. Commentary describes a manifest need to review the performance of the Planning Scheme at the local level.

Climate Change

Responding to and mitigating the impact of climate change dominated local issues of concern across LGAT members. Disaster management associated with changing climate is recognised as a major future cost to LG and without through planning and investment now will become unmanageable burden for the sector.

Feedback generated from this process will help prioritise LGAT's agenda for the next three years. LGAT will work in partnership with key stakeholders and the State Government to define outcomes and how to best achieve them.

Introduction

The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) facilitated a member-driven engagement process to solicit feedback from members about sector reform. The process aimed to establish a shared understanding of sector values, beliefs and desired outcomes to inform a reform agenda.

The process was driven by elected officials and general managers from 21 out of 29 Tasmanian councils.

Engagement Method

“Round Table Conversations” were facilitated by General Managers with elected representatives at each participating Council. Round Table Conversations is a simple and powerful method, helping people discuss what really matters in a comfortable environment. The method involves hosts inviting a small group of people to have conversations based on focused themes. The conversations were guided by starter questions. Discussion notes from each conversation were faithfully captured and submitted to LGAT between September and December 2019.

Starter questions

Starter questions were devised and provided by OurSay, based on the aims of the reform project.

State of the sector

- What does recent history tell us about sector reform?
- Are there any particular issues or concerns you feel strongly about?

Future state

- What strengths does Local Government need to build upon? What weaknesses should we address?
- What future outcomes should we aim for? How would we know we have achieved them?
- What would make for a stronger relationship between community members and elected representatives?

Particular Issues

- Are there particular issues of concern in the region that you feel strongly about?

Level of Sector Involvement

21 out of 29 Tasmanian councils participated in the engagement process. Participating councils included:

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Circular Head | 9. Huon Valley | 16. Break O’Day |
| 2. Kentish | 10. George Town | 17. Central Highlands |
| 3. Latrobe | 11. Launceston | 18. Brighton |
| 4. Burnie | 12. Glenorchy City | 19. Clarence City |
| 5. West Tamar | 13. Glamorgan Spring | 20. Southern Midlands |
| 6. Waratah Wynyard | Bay | 21. King Island |
| 7. Devonport City | 14. Central Coast | |
| 8. Sorell | 15. Kingborough | |

Understanding the context

Local Government in Tasmania is under almost constant pressure to undergo structural reform in order to address existing and upcoming challenges, such as demographic change, technological advancements and financial sustainability. The benefits of local government reform can be grouped into one of three categories:

1. Economies of scale – maximising the use of resources and/or services at the least cost;
2. Economies of scope – creating a wider range/higher quality of services/resources; and,
3. Strategic capacity – having the skills and resources needed to act as high capacity organisations that manage complex and sometimes unexpected change.

Australian municipal reform programs have traditionally focused on amalgamation – the most drastic form of structural change – as the main instrument of reform. Amalgamation involves the combination of two or more councils into a new entity. They can be forced by the State Government or be voluntary, wholesale or selective. The latter is a more contemporary idea which suggests identifying and amalgamating only those council functions that can be performed in common or collectively in order to meet community needs.

Amalgamations involve some complex issues and demand meticulous and careful planning to ensure that service delivery standards are maintained during the process, and employees are treated in a fair and equitable manner during the transition period. Amalgamations cannot be achieved without incurring some significant and contingent costs which need to be identified as part of the implementation planning stage.

Complication?

However, in any reform process, the success or failure will be largely dependent on the commitment and willingness of the employees of the affected local governments to embrace the process. The leadership group responsible for overseeing the amalgamation needs to have strong vision, determination and skills to engineer a seamless and effective transition.

Past Experience

Past experiences in Tasmania show that members of the community and other stakeholders are more likely to lodge complaints about service delivery and other issues during the merger process. The recent failure of the *Sorell Council* and *Tasman Council* merger highlights citizens' fear of losing their voice and their engagement with their local councils. Furthermore, shared service arrangements are seen as a viable alternative that may yield equal if not greater council and community benefits compared to amalgamations.

Shared services occur when two or more councils join together to provide a service in order to meet community needs. For instance, Northern Tasmanian Councils - *Break O'Day*, *Dorset*, *Flinders*, *George Town*, *Launceston*, *Meander Valley*, *Northern Midlands*, and *West Tamar* – opted for investigating shared services opportunities rather than amalgamations in the recent regional studies. Similarly, *Latrobe Council* and *Kentish Council* have undertaken a strategic program of resource sharing to improve the quality of service whilst maintaining local representation and stronger community engagement.

The challenges councils face are many and varied, as are their individual circumstances. This hinders a 'one size fits all' approach to structural reform. Furthermore, cost savings are unlikely to materialise and should not be the primary goal of reform. The goal should be to create a more robust and capable system of Local Government.

Community Satisfaction

Every four years, LGAT conducts a telephone based community satisfaction survey involving around 1,000 randomly selected residents examining the performance of local government in Tasmania.

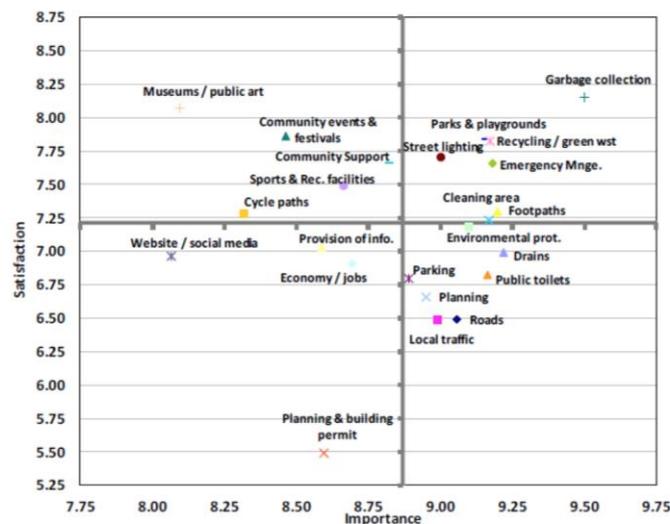
Last year respondents rated their satisfaction with the overall performance of their council at an average of 6.81 out of 10, with a substantial increase in community satisfaction with regards to aspects of governance and leadership compared to 2015, just four years earlier.

The survey also asked respondents to rate 23 services and facilities provided by local government on the basis of satisfaction with that service and also its importance. The top 10 most important services and facilities chosen by respondents were:

1. regular garbage collection services;
2. drains, stormwater maintenance, and repairs;
3. maintenance and cleaning of public areas;
4. emergency and disaster management recovery;
5. provision and maintenance of footpaths/pedestrian areas;
6. regular recycling and green waste recycling services;
7. provision and maintenance of public toilets;
8. provision and maintenance of parks, gardens, and playgrounds;
9. environmental protection; and
10. provision and maintenance of local roads.

The following table provides a cross-tabulation of the average importance and average satisfaction of each of the 23 included council services and facilities.

- **the top right-hand quadrant** represents services and facilities that are *more important than average* and received a *higher satisfaction than average*;
- **the lower right-hand quadrant** represents services and facilities that are *more important than average* and received a *lower satisfaction than average*;
- **the top and lower left-hand side quadrants** represent services and facilities that have *lower than average importance* and are typically services which are considered less critical or are used by only a subset of the community, such as arts and culture.



Source: <https://www.lgat.tas.gov.au/page.aspx?u=929>

Findings from sector engagement

Discussion notes from each Round Table Conversation were compiled into a single record. An independent consultant then reviewed all notes and conducted a discussion analysis. The discussion analysis identified frequent topical threads and themes, which are summarized below.

1. Historic learnings

- 1.1. Frequent reference to the need to “un-do” amalgamations particularly in NSW, QLD and Vic.
- 1.2. Support for shared resources and shared services with some reservations on the impact on staff. Mention of successful shared services from northern councils.
- 1.3. Community education and engagement is crucial to success. Reference to hesitation and wariness within the community and the need to appreciate trade-offs as part of amalgamations. Concerns about loss of identity and the fact that bigger is not necessarily better.
- 1.4. Amalgamations in 1993 were generally thought to have been successful as they were a collaboration between SG and LG. Potentially a good model for future amalgamations. Council led reforms were the most successful. Level of mistrust regarding SG and their motivation behind forced amalgamations.
- 1.5. General support for a common sense approach tailored to specific circumstances rather than a one size fits all approach.
- 1.6. Mention of the need for an independent review and expert body to carry out assessments.

2. Sector issues of concern

- 2.1. Burden shifting between SG and LG (e.g. Heavy Vehicle Road Tax, roads and waste management) without additional resources.
- 2.2. Catchment driven, rather than boundary driven assessment of services and needs.
- 2.3. Vertical integration of government using LG as gateway to other levels of government.
- 2.4. Confirm the role of council in the delivery of services in health and education.
- 2.5. Planning Scheme is one size fits all and does not consider local needs.
- 2.6. Grants commission methodology is flawed.
- 2.7. Reduce duplication and over-regulation.
- 2.8. Standard reporting and early intervention in dysfunctional councils which are tarnishing the reputation of the sector.
- 2.9. Lack of knowledge or experience of elected members. Better benchmarking of councils.
- 2.10. Community education and engagement so they understand the role of LG and participate in the voting process. People are genuinely concerned about potential power shifts. Roadblock to reform is preserving the principle of representation.

3. Strengths

- 3.1. Most democratic tier of government, apolitical with a high level of accountability. Community proximity to elected members and decision making. Building community cohesion and responsiveness. Deliver on community vision through 10-year strategic plans.
- 3.2. Emergency management and disaster management, particularly managing the relief and recovery processes. Building community resilience, especially in times of adversity.

- 3.3. Often one of the largest employers in regional areas. Staff retention, continued professional development and training for staff. Encourage continuous improvement and innovation in staff and embracing modern technology more effectively.
- 3.4. Local knowledge enabling better solutions, regional advocacy particularly to other levels of government.
- 3.5. Economic development and supporting local business.

4. Weaknesses and threats

- 4.1. Strong focus on reliable NBN and IT services, and IT capability. Disparate software systems impede digital integration with community and other councils. General lack of consistency across councils.
- 4.2. Financial limitations, Federal and State government transferring services without funding, grants not providing operating costs for new assets or services. It is becoming increasingly difficult to meet the levels of service communities expect within resource constraints, perhaps need to reset expectations that are realistic and achievable. Medical facilities are a particular problem for regional areas.
- 4.3. Ability to attract and retain staff in regional areas, training for Councillors, youth development within communities. There is general community ignorance on what LG does.

5. Future outcomes

- 5.1. More effective collaboration and consistency between councils in the region including service levels, fees and charges, and common operating platforms that facilitate sharing services and resources.
- 5.2. Standardisation of process/structure regarding elected member accountability, truly transparent financial and asset management.
- 5.3. Efficiencies of scope as opposed to economies of scale.
- 5.4. Systemic values-based leadership that provides responsive, viable and sustainable outcomes.
- 5.5. Build a sense of place and pride in our community.
- 5.6. Continue to build communication and trust between councils and residents. Communities are driving change; council needs to be adaptive and responsive to change.
- 5.7. Pursue better strategic outcomes from SG. Suggestion that the Planning Authority should be removed from LG. Utilise pull levels of reform rather than push.
- 5.8. Prevent further cost shifting from SG to LG and ensure funding sources are secure, on time and indexed when recurrent.
- 5.9. Some would like to see LG driving and leading the way with respect to recycling and sustainability and working closely with the community to address this.
- 5.10. Programs for skills innovation across the sectors, increase resources to support growing populations and encourage younger people to be councillors.

6. Stronger relationship between people and elected representatives

- 6.1. There is a need for pre-election education and training for councillors, so they understand what they are expected to do. Additional post-election training for successful candidates.
- 6.2. Need to build two-way trust between council and councillors. Review council meeting procedures to see if less formality may encourage greater public presence (within legislative requirements). Develop soft skills for elected reps to build/mend relationships. Develop guidelines on appropriate use of social media.

- 6.3. Need to build trust, respect and mutual understanding with the community. The community needs to understand council processes, responsibilities and limitations. Management of community expectations on what is feasible. Being honest and transparent, presenting a plan and providing the facts as they emerge and responding to enquiries.
 - 6.4. Increased opportunities for people to engage with elected reps in a range of formal and informal functions including community consultation, forums, workshops, representation on community committees, community meal events or BBQs. Engage with the younger demographic through schools and youth events. The more things you go to, the more you learn, the more engaged you are.
 - 6.5. There was discussion for and against a ward-based system. It was acknowledged that connection to community is more difficult for larger councils.
 - 6.6. Suggestion of financial package to assist councillors to make the time to connect with the community.
- 7. Local issues of concern**
- 7.1. Major issue is climate change and potential impacts on coastal erosion and natural emergencies. Disaster management will be a huge future cost and could become unmanageable.
 - 7.2. Lack of adequate funding and the need for more resource allocation from SG and FG also featured.
 - 7.3. Community expectations are increasing. Need to educate the community on what can be provided within budget limitations.
 - 7.4. Future of waste management and recycling was seen as critical with mention of lack of housing, protecting rivers and foreshores and access to essential services (education, social services, public transport, childcare).
 - 7.5. Demographic concerns related to the ageing population, low SEIFA index and associated issues such as unemployment, mortgage stress and poverty. There was discussion around the need for a regional approach to economic development in particular but also greater regional cooperation generally.
 - 7.6. Tourism areas cited tensions from ratepayers on council expenditure for tourism facilities.
 - 7.7. There is a need for jobs growth and improved livability to attract businesses, young people and families
 - 7.8. Issues around road network and the need for more strategic traffic/transport studies. There was a general feeling that councils are struggling to keep up with infrastructure for growing communities.
 - 7.9. Mention was made of the need for LG to be supportive of one another and not make derogatory comments. Also, there is a perceived lack of strategic alignment between councils and the inability of LG to get its act together.

Conclusion

The 21st Century Council Engagement process highlights the sectors focus on preserving and enhancing its natural strengths as highlighted, while addressing its key weaknesses.

Members focused on localised democracy as a key strength of the sector with a need to inform and engage local communities about processes, responsibilities, limitations and value of the local government cause.

Success in recent shared services arrangements provide positive templates the sector can build upon and increase the opportunity for more regional collaboration to retain and attract staff. Feedback indicates collaborative partnerships should be built around catchment- rather than boundary-driven assessments of community need.

Members acknowledge changing community expectations on role of LG from property-based service delivery to servicing people and place. The sector is challenged by cost shifting from State government and shows a strong desire to rebalance its relationship with other levels of government for the benefit of local communities.

The sector has a desire to continue and enhance (via new and innovative ways) its leadership role in natural and emergency management, climate change responses, waste management and sustainability; seeking to work closely with the community to address and develop local solutions.

Appendix: Round Table Conversation Notes

What does recent history tell us about sector reform?

Community complains about the service if there is an amalgamation - Bigger ones on mainland have had to de-amalgamate - 29 councils in Tasmania not sustainable with optimal rate payer best between 25 000 and 40 000 people per council - Smaller councils having to amalgamate to sustain the rate base are overly bureaucratic - **Small councils amalgamate with larger councils** – viable progressive councils need to be around figure 15,000 population - Challenge for Tasmania to get sweet spot – 20,000 to 30 000 population - **Structural change** – start with the community - bring them to a point where they understand the tradeoffs - Trust as issue - **Amalgamate or merging may be the underpinning thing** - Tasman and Sorell delivers to Tasman what they want – own mayor, own council and ability to pick up the phone and speak their member - Local connection more important in smaller communities - Believe shared services from northern councils has been beneficial - Allows councils to become better at refined shared services which allows local representation - Local representation but sustainable - Kentish council shared services - the number of representatives in a model like Kentish and Latrobe - the numbers of representatives are necessary for model to work - One large council but with boards - Up to the people from Latrobe say this will work better if we have less councillors - **Latrobe and Kentish good example of what is working** - Debate needs to play out with local communities - community gets to the point where they are prepared to think about (amalgamation) - Comes from all the lobby groups - SA population is 1.2 million with 68 councils, Tasmania has 29 councils so which council should we get rid of ? - **Tasman example is very significant** as the people argued the case for it and made it work - Difference before amalgamation - **community requires education on what works** - arguments about scale and cost plus community - Does the community have the ability to choose the services they receive under the current regime? – 29 councils too many - any options? - Community might understand more if they knew the options - Number of significant failures in previous attempts - **people are over being told what is good for them** - Isn't there some councils which don't know how to do it anyway - Some councils do not function as they should - We know there are failings - Good practice and processes not in place to self-assess - too many councils – more expensive. The cost of running council is 1.5 % of budget - **savings to join two is very small - Amalgamation is about getting rid of staff** - We have too many councils and it costs too much – Councils are running on fine resources. - Set cost to run a Council – doesn't change in 10,000 to 20 000 – set cost way higher - Reduce services? - Some municipal areas have unique instances for example King Island and Fraser Island have needs peculiar to them - **Sharing of equipment** - didn't work – some services we would be able to share but can put pressure on them - List of things we could cover together – only responsible for community interaction and everything else provided off Island - needs a crew on the island but most could be done offshore - Elected members? Still being represented by Fraser Island members - Lord Howe island example – run by SG, people on board and community reps - **LG as community representation** - Someone they can talk to in their own area - Community seek to have their own governance in their own area and want someone they know to address any issues - **Community representation is key** - There's a genuine fear of losing the community power/voice - One council covers a huge area – fear political parties will come in - People in West Tamar lose power, lose happiness, People don't trust their Council - LG is not recognised as a constitutional government - Talk about campaigns by ALGA to get constitutional recognition - SG and FG point of view we are now important - Fear of being unconstitutional - **the government can come in and say you are no longer in power** – shows there are opportunities for West Tamar Council to capitalise on integrated services, meet the demand when it is high, staff opportunities, shared services can be an advantage - What is the outcome amalgamation would provide? - Discussion around common IT platforms would increase efficiency and savings - Lot of it

comes down to savings. - **amalgamation doesn't work – history of having to “un-do” amalgamations** - reform can happen, but no amalgamation - resource sharing and shared services are a good option, they seem to work better than amalgamation - WWC model seems to be one of the best in LG. Disappointed that the WWC and CH Council resource sharing arrangement was not listed in the LGAT document given it was one of the first arrangements in the State – are LGAT aware of what goes on up here? - Question of what pressure resource sharing and shared services put on staff - SG haven't led from the front: no advice, no direction, too political, won't make a decision - In the last 20 years we have moved away from the 3Rs: Roads, Rates & Rubbish - SG putting more and more onto LG - Service delivery moving to LG without funding to support making role of LG more and more difficult. - **Earlier mergers were done seemingly easier and with more community acceptance around the early 1990's** - Despite increasing focus and discussion on LG reform generally, there is still hesitation and wariness amongst the community to significant reform outcomes like mergers - Community mistrust in government has impacted their appetite to accept a government 'recommendation' - Communities and some Councillors are not properly aware / informed of contemporary financial, asset and governance requirements and practices and how they affect their ability to comprehend the matters - **The decision to reform is difficult to achieve when the affected parties (e.g. Councillors) are required to make decisions.** Need for an independent expert body to carry out assessments - looking back could stop progress - embracing tech is customer service and face to face engagement – **customer service and access to staff as priorities** - Manage resistance to change - Mentioning amalgamation removes chance of success from the start - If not proactive it may be forced on us - The value of community representation and communities' ability to influence - **Need to stay sustainable and adapt** - Larger organisations have more layers of bureaucracy - No science supporting amalgamation is better - No review of outcomes of amalgamations - There have been costly failures in NSW and Qld - Cost shifting is part of what is driving the scale and scope argument - **Community getting scale and scope loses engagement and accessibility** - Why push local rates up to fund costs previously funded by state - Flawed argument to base council size/ viability on population - If you only have 3 councils in Tas, why do you need SG? - OK Statewide level but no one wants it at a local level - Smaller Councils push back - Sorell happy, Tasman not - Previous amalgamations seen as lost local control in local areas e.g. Esperance or Bruny Island - **Smaller Councils lack specialist staff e.g. Huon Valley Council had no media specialist** - Some forced amalgamation Councils have since split on mainland - Amalgamations have been forced where already a problem - **Is there a guide to show the way for Councils to amalgamate?** - Amalgamation needs longer timeframe than election cycle - What is involved in amalgamation - Do communities really understand what amalgamations mean - **Someone should enforce amalgamations** - Think amalgamation with Huon Valley would work - SG should provide \$\$\$ to amalgamate - Boundaries not reflective of modern Tasmania - Metro communities shouldn't be subsidising rural communities- Difficult – too many immediate pressures - Talk about it but continue doing what always done - can't make decision based on fear and uncertainty - **Thrown in with council(s) that doesn't share the same values** - Overpowered by larger council - Most councils happy to amalgamate with a smaller council - If it ain't broke don't fix it - Pride in doing things our way – operations tailored to suit our municipality and residents - More consultative processes – structured - Common sense approach - Not selling reform as good idea so not seen as an option - Not overly equipped to progress change from collaborative sector ideas - **Prefer to wait on Minister direction to effect change** - Investment made by government has not always been sufficient to bring about reform - Amalgamation doesn't necessarily bring efficiencies- cultures do. - Strategic capacity = high levels of skill and efficient systems. - Need to look to the future population increase estimations for strategic capacity. As the community grows the capacity of council needs to increase to cope with demands. - A lot of international companies allow staff to work from home- **need to have the technology and culture to suit this (technology capabilities / cyber security).** - Economies of scope fits with strategic capacity. - Need to review the resources available as staff workloads are very high. - Provide services at the smallest possible cost. - Scope of service = Balance

technology and high-quality service, changing customer base. - Some amalgamations in NSW and VIC have not been successful. - Review the Municipal area footprint in line with where employees live (match their home locations with the ability to share resources – i.e. Huon Valley Council/ Kingborough). - **Employee review of wages if amalgamate (equalise wages)**. - Job losses if amalgamate. - Different demographics. - Going back to a 'Ward' system is based on population to maintain fair representation. - Don't like a 'one size fits all' mentality. - Maintaining the HV Brand. If we join with other Councils it will dilute the local vote. HV has a point of uniqueness and we don't want to lose it. - But boundary adjustments could be considered and would be practical & make common sense. - we can't do it - **Ratepayers don't want to change** (Tasman Sorell poll) - recent Glenorchy poll came back negative - inconsistent data about savings to be made - No problem definition - Last reform we went through every time open paper something had changed. Other councils decided they were going to go for a land grab and weren't part of the MOU. Got very messy. If they are going to do amalgamations, do it properly. - We still don't know why we need to amalgamate. **The most fundamental question is why?** - General perception that with 29 Councils we are over governed. We were 30 something previously. Every town was a shire originally at settlement. - There was an amalgamation in 1997 – Glamorgan and Spring Bay - I don't know enough about the recent history really of what has gone on - my experience is in other states where it has worked well in some and not in others. Not even sure about the economies of scale if actually proven. - **Shocked to see 29 councils for 500,000 people when came back to Tassie**. - How did the amalgamation happen in the 1990s? Why can't there be too many Councils? - Would not have had any power to make sure money was spent equitably. - Happened on mainland where once vibrant area became very powerless. - On the mainland **the amalgamation of bigger urban areas works better**. - Problem is how the proposal is presented. First thing that struck me was what about the other options. Break O'Day standing on the side wanting the money making part of the area i.e. Coles Bay and Bicheno. - There isn't a straightforward way to present a proposal like this. - Came out Sorell was taking a grab for Richmond and Cambridge and people lost respect. - Can be forced, voluntary or can be wholesale but can also be selective to take the cream off the top like Break O'Day did is the sort of mismanagement you have to avoid – improving the efficiencies of financial use. - **Goals should be to create a more robust and capable system** - Would rather have control over our area and developments than saving on rates. - Even if we had wards would only be looking at two people. Very hard to explain the complexities of different communities at the table. - State hate LG as threatens their viability. Papers have been written ad nauseam about the value of state versus local but local wins out every time. State doesn't like the idea of local people wielding the power they do. **State politicians feel very threatened by power of LGs** - We've had two goes at it on the east coast and both have ended up with a no go. - People still complain about Spring Bay /Glamorgan amalgamation from the 1990s. People won't travel, stay in towns and expect the same services in their towns - Tyranny of distance e.g. Break O Day. Long way. - Looked at Sorell amalgamation – 12 months of review and then didn't happen (15 years ago and then again a couple of years ago) - Having come from Qld where amalgamated into super councils have now reverted back as didn't work. - Can be about financial security. - **Transition provides lots of problems** - basically it is about financial bottom line. - Would only do shared resources if you had to. - having an engineer come in a couple of days a week seems to work well (shared service arrangements) - **Shared resourcing is definitely the way to go**. - Overall people still don't really have the stomach for amalgamations. - Council was surprised not to find reference material from the GTC and WTC amalgamation proposal. - Council's view history has proven amalgamations can be polarizing within the community and result in disproportionate representation of former municipal areas and communities. - **Amalgamations take a lot of resources that could be better directed to community benefit**. - Break O'Day, Glamorgan community voted yes and council voted no and similar to recent Tasman and Sorrel proposal. - What happens to the Mayor and the General Manager in an amalgamation? Communities may have their municipal leadership representing them who have been appointed based on the interests of another community. - Government does whatever they feel like - **Needs to be community**

driven - needs to be independently driven – Council too conflicted to drive amalgamations - Review needs to be genuine. - sector reform is an abysmal failure and parochial, individual interests are predominant, everyone is in favour of amalgamation of everyone except for their council. - our political leaders lack the courage to take a stand and make a decision regarding sectoral reform. Geoff Kennett and Pat McNamara transformed Victoria, they took some tough decisions - **Under the current system I don't see either major party having the political will to get on and get the job done.** - Granted there are some small councils that need to be considered and they have a very different look to the way we operate so SG needs to come in and look at the whole state holistically, we need to actually look at making Clarence stronger and work on that rather than looking at the bigger picture situation. - **Voluntary amalgamations don't happen they have never happened since Federation.** We tried to find some precedents or examples, there have never been voluntary amalgamation of councils in Australia. Not one state premier has survived a round of compulsory amalgamations in the last 50 years. - **With respect to shared services it's how councils work together but in the spirit of things,** it is not looking at the strategic purpose of where those councils are going, they are still inner sanctums and they might share planners and some of the building staff etc, but they still go ahead and do what they want and there is no possible change from within. - **People vote for issues so I'm in favour of amalgamation but SG needs to show a bit of strike and determination to do something about it** - We are embarrassingly over-governed, I don't even try to defend it when I talk to people interstate or overseas. - The smaller councils don't have the expertise to meet their legislative responsibilities, they might have a key person dependency if someone goes on leave they can't do what they need to do by legislation - **It does require the political will. It is not up to us as a council but certainly Tasmania could be better governed and have better resources if we had less councils and greater expertise in those councils.** - Anything reduces the cost to the ratepayer unless it's to maintain our essential services only. Reduce the duplication in State, Federal, and between other LG is a good thing - **The 1993 mergers saw us going from 42 councils to 29 and were done with collaboration of SG and LG sector working closely together** and if we are going to achieve anything would be the way to go, re-establish the process. - By 2050, there will be five or six councils - government will force amalgamation - Investigation of boundaries is necessary - As the demographics change, amalgamation will be easier - Important not to reform to the lowest common denominator - Regional employment is important and if salaries are removed then communities can suffer - Municipal workforces with possible amalgamation into the future - Local remote employment - **Govt representatives are not local in remote areas (advocacy)** - More savings rep if Legislative Council put into Assembly - **Loss of identity x 6 - Bigger is not better x 3** - Cradle Coast is our regional area that works ok - Community can feel disenfranchised – There isn't recognition of "sharing" going on - Residents don't always know what Councils do - We are diversely different than our neighbouring councils - **Shared services allows customer service to increase without hurting customer focus** – school/closures/services – important services to rural communities & families - No saving in resources - Sharing of resources is well established in north west - Basic funding thresholds impacted – **land tax and payroll tax impact amalgamation** – A lot of dissent in others councils between Councillors/Mayors/General Managers had to be externally resolved - Why did this dissent occur in the first place and what has been done to prevent future occurrences? **Training, especially in building "effective communication skills".** - A lack of funding from the SG to undertake what is required - Council needs to have the ultimate responsibility of planning - amalgamation would come at a cost and should be considered - stormwater review - no financial saving when we are already resource sharing, work depots would still be required in the same locations to provide the services. - Amalgamation should not be on the agenda – amalgamation covers up problems – paying for poor productivity - Enough capability within LG to deal with issues - Shared services are not being actioned – regional examples of shared services – where Councils are prepared to share a GM works well. - Shared services is complex – both Councillors/GMs have to give a bit to make this work. - There is more than ever a lot of public scrutiny. - Public perception that there are too many council reps, too much governance. -

Media leading on issues and scrutiny. - strong need to be in tune with the community. - No real appetite for change in Brighton – all due to rates system. - Rates at other councils can be inequitable. - Cost of living pressure is important. - **Reform conversation lead by SG, media, lobby groups (not councils).** - Major “council-led” reforms have been more successful than those pushed from outside the sector, eg. Shared services, joint tendering, waste lobbying, etc. - Despite community talking about our situation (Break O’ Day & Glamorgan Spring Bay potential amalgamation) it was actually Councillors who put an end to the ongoing discussions, community members can see a very good reason for, they could see it was genuine, but Councillors decided to end it. Maybe they were talking about their employees as there may have been a feeling amongst their employees some had to go. It wasn’t the community - Total let down of the process in that situation, it was absolutely ridiculous and the community could have been saying those Councillors all had a conflict of interest. - **The community could be in a different space to where the Councillors are.**

Summary

Frequent reference to the need to “un-do” amalgamations particularly in NSW, QLD and Vic. Support for shared resources and shared services with some reservations on the impact on staff. Mention of successful shared services from northern councils.

Community education and engagement is crucial to success. Reference to hesitation and wariness within the community and the need to appreciate trade-offs required with amalgamations. Concerns about loss of identity and the fact that bigger is not necessarily better.

Amalgamations in 1993 were generally thought to have been successful as they were a collaboration between SG and LG. Potentially a good model for future amalgamations. Council led reforms were the most successful. Level of mistrust with SG and their motivation behind forced amalgamations.

General support for a common sense approach tailored to specific circumstances rather than a one size fits all approach. Mention of the need for an independent review and expert body to carry out assessments .

Are there any particular issues or concerns you feel strongly about?

State taking away funds – e.g. heavy vehicle road tax not passed back to council even though councils now responsible. **Roads are considered high priority.** - **Waste Management top issue** – now the Federal government has to deal with all rubbish in Australia, what impact will this have on LGs (who will most likely end up dealing with it). - LG viability should not be underpinned by existing or historic municipal boundaries but instead on a catchment driven assessment of services and sustainability. What population and rate base is required to fund the requisite range of services across the catchment. - **LG sector will become weaker and less capable of serving their communities and attracting elected reps and staff.** - Further consideration required on those components properly informing strong and sustainable LG governance ie. should this be a matter for the Electoral Commission. Those legislative and regulatory frameworks and levers applying to LG should equally apply to SG. - If there is to be a greater push and demand for community engagement and input, will there be a need for councillors into the future if an improved mechanism is provided to allow community reference groups to feed their expectations and requirements directly into the organisation and management? - We are already well down the track of what they want - **Vertical amalgamation of government – use council as the gateway to other levels of government** - The Latrobe-Kentish arrangements are understated - Greater Hobart does make some sense, but not rural - Have standard reporting and early intervention in dysfunctional Councils – intervene early (structure in LG act) – Allow for

whistle blowers – use KPIs/ ratios - State Grants Commission disadvantages larger Councils - Longer Term planning required but shorter election cycles - Scope of what LG does - **Community expectations VS Community needs** - Council does well on preventative health, SG does an appalling job - **Planning scheme is a one size fits all, not considering local needs** - Recent Code of Conduct Panel decisions poor - Grants Commission methodology favours no growth areas - LG does a better job with preventative health than SG - Concern with statewide Planning Scheme - **Amalgamation needs to be with council(s) of similar values and similar size** - Urban councils cross-subsidising rural councils – nothing in common - If amalgamated and residents are not happy with the local representative, there is less likelihood of being heard or understood if their only choice is to discuss with regional reps - Government underselling Kentish and Latrobe Council resource sharing model – we’re already doing what they want. - Kentish Council prides itself on responsible/careful budget management - larger councils borrowing and spending on a whole other level - **Increasing the size of Council so SG can pass on more responsibilities** - City councils manage and maintain a myriad of large facilities including civic centres, performing arts buildings, galleries etc –would a small rural road in a rural area be a priority over funding of the next ‘new beaut’ museum exhibition. - Number of times Councils will be requested to come up with ideas again and investment in this process to no avail - Road blocker to reform seems to always be preserving the principle of representation, a sector wide response needs to be formed to this if Councils are going to bring about reform - **Need to reinvent the voting population, it appears they want reform but issue is they don’t participate in voting processes** - In higher populated areas there is voting for people they know versus people they don’t know. - Our area could end up being under represented. Councillors are spread over the whole Valley and between them they ensure all communities are engaged with. - Very protective over our small communities. Smaller areas such as Southport & Judbury would be swallowed up. - The areas of significant agriculture in the Huon Valley as compared to Kingborough- not comparing apples with apples. - **Have to remember other Council’s debt would then be combined with our financials.** - The ability to achieve genuine savings and cost efficiencies - It should be democratically led. Should be facilitated by a well-articulated electors’ poll. - We should go out and tell the people but we can’t until we tell them what we want. Chicken and egg. - The university did it well recently with their consultation around the move into the city. Amalgamation would need a very similar process. - Resources and finance tend to focus more on a centralised area e.g. if had amalgamated with Clarence would have been pushed more towards populated areas. - Large councils have resources and funds to put into infrastructure but have to ask if we would get a fair share of the resources. - SG has a lot to answer for are just handing more and more over to Councils e.g. bridges, water testing, roads. - **Previous reports into proposed amalgamations appear to be biased with pre-determined – or preferred outcomes.** - Media hype generated during the Georgetown and West Tamar amalgamation proposal was inaccurate and didn’t provide for a response from GT councillors to defend themselves against false claims. - The process followed for the GTC and WTC amalgamation proposal was flawed. An example was the exclusion of value of GDP from Bell Bay industrial precinct. - **The GTC and WTC amalgamation proposal cost a ridiculous amount of money.** - Representation for our side of the river was a major concern. Council felt GTC and its community would have been underrepresented and suffer identity loss. - Progress Associations from rural areas are concerned their voices would not be heard from a larger Council. - **Consultation needs to occur first** – The GTC and WTC amalgamation proposal went about the wrong way. - The report into the GTC and WTC amalgamation proposal cited improving the Socio-Economic Indexes For Areas rating for Georgetown area without actually addressing the factors contributing to a low socio economic rating. - **WTC felt they were rescuing GTC.** As history has proven GTC was able to affect its own financial sustainability without amalgamation. - The GTC municipal has a strong economy with a strong sense of community. This would be lost in amalgamation. - **Amalgamation feels like a big company acquiring a smaller company for its own competitive advantage and not of the consumer/client base of the smaller company/community.** - The process proposed a saving of a million dollars (which GTC was able to do on its own) but the community

would have been hurt over time. - Any future amalgamations need to consider ward representation for elected members to ensure fair representation. - Any future amalgamations should result in a spill of all elected members requiring a new election process. Any future amalgamations should result in a spill of all of the senior management level positions at each Council with the appointment of new roles to be conducted with newly elected members and an independent panel. - If SG wants fewer Councils, it should do the process themselves. - **Other jurisdictions have resulted in de-amalgamation of Councils proving that one size fits all doesn't work.** - 'Good will' conversation with struggling councils should occur - Are amalgamations needed? For what purpose? History shows communities come out with less and it just doesn't work. - Lack of leadership from either party – Worried about political capital - Concern around requirements for LG strategic planning eg. Financial Management Strategy and Asset Management - Plans with no equivalent for SG – do as I say not as I do - Council expected to be more strategic than SG - We talk about educating new elected members but it's going back to the broader community and somehow or other trying to educate the people in our community we deal with on a daily basis about the processes we are dealing with and how much time takes. - **Reducing duplication and over-regulation and we have got to seriously find a way to slow the process down or reverse it.** - LGs are the laboratories of democracy and if our residents want to pay more for a higher rate of service or pay very little and have not very much service then having those mechanisms to achieve it matters. - **Four main areas: planning reform; waste management; infrastructure challenges and rewarding poor performance** – You only have to look at infrastructure challenges with Taswater. Councils that didn't invest in their infrastructure are now being rewarded by Taswater, works happening there and our ratepayers effectively are being disadvantaged because of the good management of this Council over decades – it's wrong we don't have Taswater moving on beyond Sandford - **Planning and understanding of planning within the community** - If the SG wanted to do something to support councils and get them up to speed then the first thing they should do is centralise these things. This business about councils bidding each other for scarce, planning staff by paying them higher and robbing their poorer neighbours and putting their poorer neighbours into the position where they can't afford to pay for the staff. - **Communication is vital and with improved avenues, amalgamation should prove more beneficial** - eliminate inequities - Lack of leadership in terms of consideration of the State as a whole - each area has specific plans and directions - a lot of money is being spent as councils will not look beyond their own boundaries - Regional disadvantages have not been actioned - There are savings and working together appear to be working at the Northern Midlands - Historic boundaries are an issue and the number of ratepayer distribution provide challenges - **working together rather than amalgamation maybe more effective in the short term** - Easier to scare people rather than to engage with them - Hard for elected reps to affect change once in the position. - Review State level of Government - Benefits of Cradle Coast (Regional) - Benefits of Murchison Plan - Depreciation of Govt Grants for infrastructure - Loss of social license - LGAT -> SG – Upper House - Very amalgamated within a lot of sectors already - **Economies of scale are untested** - Lack of recognition for our resource sharing now with Waratah Wynyard when we were the first councils to do it - We have many plans with other Councils – Murchison Plan, Cradle Coast, Resource Sharing with WWC, Shared Audit Panel, Shared Emergency Management - Community is dissatisfied with State Services – LG is the 'closest to the people' – service delivery by LG can be reflective of community aspirations - TasWater experiment cost value for money - How would population growth work - **Is the Government looking at all areas of reform, not just local Councils** - We make decisions based on local people not away from it, if in a larger council - Poor timelines on - Planning scheme not supporting regional communities - LGAT Motions – road tax - Reorganisation of municipal boundaries - Things being taken away from LG Waste/Water - **It's acceptable, if the cost to retain is prohibitive, if we gain nothing out of it, if it is a political minefield.** - Perception from ratepayers with regard to understanding what councils are about - Roles and responsibilities between Mayor/GM and Councillors - **Lack of knowledge or experience of elected members prior to being elected** - Think O.J.T. or On-the-Job-Training. A senior Councillor, with more than 4

year experience, should be assigned to newly elected Councillors, as their mentor, to educate them about the position, the LG Act, Meeting Procedures, difference between Strategic and Operational, etc. Most effective. Because it's targeted to the particular Council. Each of the 29 are different. - 1 Council 1 vote when it comes to grant funding - the criteria need to have guidelines tailored more for rural areas. - **Strongly agree on no amalgamations.** - How do we know if we are efficient – **measurement and evaluation is poor** - Better benchmarking of Councils - Performance benchmarking against the private sector - Too many regulations and red tape. - Conveying, or straddling, the tension between what ratepayers think we should be doing versus the remit of what the local council actually is – It's not clear what the role of LG is. We continually dabble in state issues, in federal issues, eg health. We each got a letter about rehab beds at the north west hospital. - **Amalgamation will never happen unless the government takes a lead. Half a million people, 29 councils, it's absurd.** The amount of money being spent. Concern for the economic benefits Tasmania could derive if it consolidated LG. - But if you remove senior management and councillors, you still need all the other staff – it's not much of a saving. - **Sometimes we get caught up in discussions regarding amalgamation without really understanding what we're trying to achieve in amalgamations. Yes, cost savings, but we consistently compare with mainland councils, but they can have 1000 people.** - Becoming regional hubs and sharing those facilities. - But people in Wynyard like their stadium – they want easy access to it. I'm not sure the ideology we'll save more money outweighs the level of service. - There has to be a whole lot of adaptive change. - Maybe a main facility and smaller facilities. - **If councils amalgamate, the power shifts.** People are genuinely concerned about power shift. - Greater rate base is another thing to consider, and it's a regional approach to looking at their things. Instead of looking at their problems, we are looking at our problems. - Duplication of public infrastructure is a problem. - Maybe someone higher up should say 5% goes to major infrastructure and directs . - Would the population be prepared to give it up? Community being told they can't have something because the next suburb will have it. - A good example is the Mersey Hospital - If we always do what we've always done, we'll always get what we've always got. – As councils amalgamate, some people will lose their jobs in the region. - **The need to stay 'local'. Accessibility to council/councillors. People clearly value it.** - SG continually passes burden of responsibility in many areas, without providing any additional resources. - Public perceptions of councils is at risk. - Poorly performing and unstable councils are bringing the reputation of the whole sector down. - More joint branding, PR, for the sector would be of value. - Concerns about people like TCCI both Launceston, Hobart, Leon Compton, ABC where they say 29 councils in Tasmania is not sustainable without providing evidence to back it up – it is quite possible but each of those communities may appreciate their local rep and how much cost for achieving it – some believe local rep is more important than it actually is – concern is the stuff put out there as facts without the evidence to back it up - Grants are our share of taxation revenue – they are not a gift – they are a share as we are a level of government - Originally, **the role of council was around infrastructure, now we have to look after elements of education, health, etc without getting the funding for it** – If the money was to come we could deliver a far better service – people are having a greater expectation on LG but not having the funding to provide the extra services – **SG and Federal Government (FG) need to look at the role of LG and decide what role they should play and provide funding to provide services** - Moving forward the whole issue over jurisdiction, we have no credibility and more authority to act and more funding - Need to be holistic with the SG.

Summary

Burden shifting between State and LG (eg Heavy Vehicle Road Tax, roads and waste management) without additional resources. Catchment driven, rather than boundary driven assessment of services and needs. Vertical integration of government using LG as gateway to other levels of government. Confirm the role of council in the delivery of services in health and education.

Planning Scheme is one size fits all, not considering local needs. Grants commission methodology is flawed. Reduce duplication and over-regulation. Standard reporting and early intervention in dysfunctional councils which are tarnishing the reputation of the sector. Lack of knowledge or experience of elected members. Better benchmarking of councils.

Community education and engagement so they understand the role of LG and participate in the voting process. People are genuinely concerned about potential power shift. Roadblock to reform is preserving the principle of representation.

What strengths does LG need to build upon?

Closest level of government to the people – Able to address issues that are important to health and wellbeing of the local community. - Providing community assistance in all areas, sports and recreation, community programs, community facilities. - Community responsiveness - **Community Engagement improving and need to take a leading role in ensuring information available for people to connect in the community e.g. community calendars – events, clubs, markets, services, etc.** - Getting stuff done – Ability to consider, plan and implement. - Accessibility to Councillors and Councillors understanding of their communities. - Leadership capability and capacity – Elected members and management. - Regional advocacy. – **Influence LG reporting to Stage Government** - Council knows the locals and the residents are comfortable dealing and talking to their elected members - Economic development – Several projects in place and completed are making a difference - **Build up support which seems to be easier to achieve in rural/regional areas as opposed to City Councils** - Looking at the services small vs larger Councils provides and determines what is value adding and what is not - Continue to work on advocacy at a State and Federal level as in regional areas it has provided success - Look to build a profile around wilderness and environmental protection given the amount of unseen work carried out in this area - Consider capacity (skills and time) to continue support provided to community activities, committees need to be self sustaining - **Shared services is positive and could be built upon and rolled out in all areas.** - Waste management - We build things reasonably well. We do our core business well. The ability to find efficiencies and divert money into those core strengths. Eg. if we find \$500k savings, is there a pressure to divert funding to more peripheral issues? - Improve services, develop business - **Appropriate Financial Assistance Grants funding** - LG is doing a pretty good job. Generally liked more than SG. Get the basics done. - One of strengths is our connection to community, we go to and do Community Connect, we don't send out a survey, we go out to the community and they can tell us to our face. We go and ask the people. In Community Connect, we can go and ask community directly what can't be done in Council meetings. - One of the few councils doing the live streaming in Tasmania. - Need to get better at community consultation. - **Regular workshops and meaningful workshops to engage Council on matters of importance.** - Access to elected members - Not dominated by political parties. - A statewide planning scheme, a universal scheme that we needed to have and we need to give it a chance to work. - Emergency management and disaster management will reduce available resources - Councils have changed but hangover phrases - roads, rates and rubbish still remain - More is expected but cost increase is frowned upon - **Embracing modern technology more effectively - meetings, etc.** - Traditional management styles and adoption of a private sector mentality to deliver services - Increased population - Innovation to retain local youth - Research at the farm gate - Community events & festivals – Show, Twilight on the Duck - More volunteers - Facility management - **Community proximity to elected members & decision making** - Resilience, especially in times of adversity - The private sector could probably do garbage - Sporting facilities,

parks. - LG is expected to do more now with no more cost. - The community feel they can lobby us because we are influencers of what can happen with all manner of issues, incredible capacity for local governance - Most scrutinized level of government in Australia – Whole set of KPIs in compliance and delivery - Consistent across all areas - Used to have KPIs we had to report to - Education around planning (HV has a mentality of ‘do it and ask for forgiveness later’). - Development and Planning is an issue for HV and needs to be improved. - **Staff is our strength** - Continual professional development and decent training is crucial (need to review training budgets). - Staff is resilient and needs to know the workplace is a safe place. - Retention of staff.

Encourage staff to ‘be brave’ and speak out for continuous improvement and encourage innovation (reward initiatives). - Succession planning is vital. More money for Natural Resource Management - **East coast tourism is the strength we need to build upon.** - Disaster and emergency management is important and Councils are best placed to manage relief and recovery efforts. - Councils are a-political and not follow party lines. - **Communities are most interested in the basic stuff being done right. They want beautiful clean streets, amenities, parks, gardens and facilities and Councils do this best!** - Being involved in the conversation as it evolves is a key strength of council as is the accessibility community has to its Councillors. - More credibility; more genuine leadership. - Councils are the most democratic tier of government, public question time and meeting procedures/voting is an example of this. - Ability to be more resourceful with limited financial resources. - **Councils have the ability to manage projects more closely reducing risks of cost overruns and inferior project outcomes.** - Councils have a high level of accountability and share a collective responsibility for project outcomes. - Councils deliver on community vision through 10 year strategic plans. - Councils are typically one of the largest employers in their municipalities. - **Staff is not just close the community, they are the community** – Kids go to school, members of progress association, etc. - The best way to be close to the Rate Base is to keep Rates low, live within those means - Ability of ratepayers to contact someone in the area - Diversity of regional areas (rural and urban) - Delivering our services well, provide support when required - **Local knowledge enabling better solutions (cost effective)** – LG is very good at gathering information from the community - Connecting with other agencies and bringing issues to their attention – Influences, etc. - We do vaccinations well.

Summary

Most democratic tier of government, a-political with a high level of accountability. Community proximity to elected members and decision making. Building community cohesion and responsiveness. Deliver on community vision through 10-year strategic plans.

Emergency management and disaster management particularly managing the relief and recovery processes. Building community resilience, especially in times of adversity.

Often one of the largest employers in regional areas. Staff retention, continued professional development and training for staff. Encourage continuous improvement and innovation in staff and embracing modern technology more effectively.

Local knowledge enabling better solutions, regional advocacy particularly to other levels of government. Economic development and supporting local business.

What weaknesses should we address?

IT capability – Councils need to be on same software, need to be able to integrate electronically with the community and other councils. Need high end IT to take full advantage of on-line communication methods. - Building reform has not improved – Too many inconsistencies across councils. - Credibility of survey results included, how many people who responded to questionnaire actually know what LG does? - **Financial limitations**. - Big city councils become highly politicized - Perceived regional boundaries - Low socioeconomic area - **Aging and decreasing population** - Require reliable NBN and IT services - Ongoing requirement to do more but with less, need to reset expectations for realistic and achievable - Scale of operations needed to achieve compliance at affordable cost - Time and cost of developing the internal infrastructure (people, IT, services) to fulfil current and future needs and wants for ratepayers - **Ability to attract staff in rural and regional areas** - We may do things better than other tiers because we're closer to the ground. - **Planning and building permits**. Planning strikes below in satisfaction. Working from a low budget base - Mentorship and leadership to be more streamlined - Voice in advocacy could be stronger – Better representation of LG at state and federal levels. - Youth development needs greater resourcing - **Councils could do more and have greater impact in the areas of safety, health and well-being with more resources**. - Too much reliance on grants to build new assets or upgrade existing assets. Grants do not provide for operating costs associated with new assets or services. - Ability to raise rates to meet service requirements i.e. imbalance i.e. roads - Community expectations are growing. It can be difficult to meet the levels of service communities want with resource constraints. - Perception that councils receive inflated costs when tendering for services or capital works. Perception that councils are not employing best practice. - Councils are not skills-based - Review of local area provisions and put it more in sync with what is happening within their respective areas - In terms of amalgamation and rationalisation, ensure there's connection, whether it's through a ward system or something that maintains community engagement. - **Thinking of a planning scheme to suit the community and figuring out what we want from a planning scheme before we actually make it**. - Council staff do not live in the area they are employed in - Employment of external services and providers. - We do not get our fair share of taxes, eg. Heavy vehicle - Promotion of the activities of Councils - Ability to generate additional income streams - We don't sell ourselves very well - so expensive to keep up with maintenance/rehabilitation with available income – SG's rules and regulations i.e. planning etc. constrained LG from income producing opportunities - State/Federal Governments don't compensate Councils fairly for cost shifting - Social media - Agreement mayors and deputy mayors should be elected around the table (and this would have stopped some of the problems councils have faced in recent years.) - **Non-compulsory voting is a good thing**. - Social media is the big challenge - Social services we provide are often the hardest to measure - We shouldn't fund public art - Roads is our weakness, State and Local - Metro service to us is poor - LG gets the blame for lack of SG's action - **When elected members are sitting as a 'Planning Authority' they are crucified. This has been very difficult for new Councillors to get their heads around**. - Perception of the LG structure - Provide a "Family Tree" on Council website and literature. - Isolations, transport, communication, health - Our current bus service is not helpful, especially to one individual who is homeless and has medical issues requiring blood tests and surgery - Maintaining infrastructure for Doctors and Medical Facilities, especially in rural Tasmania must be considered "Critical Infrastructure" - Compliance is a real issue by itself but also in relation to communication – Got to be focused on what is right for the individual - We are perceived as communicating planning/building regulations back poorly – Perception – People get very confused in this area, some people listen through a screen as to what they want to hear - Younger people don't know what council does because we don't sell ourselves well - **Training for councillors – need more/better training to be able to undertake council functions – ongoing is vital – instils in residents confidence if they know the councillors are being trained**.

Summary

Strong focus on reliable NBN and IT services, and IT capability. Disparate software systems impede integration electronically with community and other councils. General lack of consistency across councils.

Financial limitations, FG/SG transferring services without funding, grants not providing operating costs for new assets or services. It is becoming increasingly difficult to meet the levels of service communities expect within resource constraints, perhaps need to reset expectations that are realistic and achievable. Medical facilities are a particular problem for regional areas.

Ability to attract and retain staff in regional areas, training for Councillors, youth development within communities. There is general community ignorance on what LG does.

What future outcomes should we aim for? How would we know we have achieved them?

What the community wants us to do – Basic services - Find out the Stakeholders for what the average person wants - Properties, business people, the average person - Most people averagely happy - **Different people would need different things** - What is LG role in the changing community - Providing the changing infrastructure and lifestyle needs of the community - Privatisation of amenities - Listen to the community - Bigger councils where politics is playing a part and this is not what THEY WANTED FROM THEIR COUNCILLORS - Each community will have different expectations from their council over any given time - Some want change, some don't want change – Pleasing ALL THE people - **More effective collaboration between councils in the region**. - Service Levels / fees and charges need to be consistent across municipal areas. - Systemic values based leadership – An organisation not being dependent on one or two key personnel. - **Standardisation of process/structure regarding elected member accountability, truly transparent financial and asset management establishing actual sustainability**. - Elected member education and support to attract succession of younger participants. - Better performed councils, less controversy in council - Responsive, viable, sustainable – KPIs benchmarking to standards - Greater use of social media - Climate Change, need support to mitigate it - Pursue better strategic outcomes from SG - Automate our internal processes - Address tourism impacts - **Increase our resources to support growing population** - Sustainability of the current Kentish/Latrobe resource sharing arrangement achieved through continued improvement of the model and consolidation of indoor/outdoor staff. - Continue to grow the population with improved infrastructure - Continue to build the level of communication and level of trust between Council and residents through regular community meetings - Sense of place – Pride in our community - Sustainability in all aspects of how Councils operate - Regularly assessing the relevance of Councils to the government landscape - Recognising that achieving customer satisfaction will be difficult - **Aim to reset expectations and guide to what is achievable and manageable** - Look to benchmark within Councils but do so on a relative basis of size, service offering, locality - Remove Planning Authority from the realm of local Councils. Need to look at the future for planning & SG's role. - **Standardisation of fees and charges (structures) - e.g. building / plumbing, documentation, commonality & consistency** (practices and information = plain English). - Some more affluent Councils can afford the best systems and technology and some are paper-based. Some Council are then disadvantaged. Need mechanisms for everyone to operate from similar platforms = equality. - **Customer Satisfaction Survey**. - Communities (especially young people) are driving change. - Council needs to be adaptive with their Strategies and be responsive to change. - Predict changes in trends. - Literacy improvements - Defining our role in the health space - Preventative health care. - Depreciation load on Council services and programs. - Adapting to our changing community -

Role of Councillors in the community – Is it now a professional role? - Survival. - Compliance, policies, procedures, strategies and plans up to date. - More positive comments back. - Politicians should set a good example. - Would like to see LG really driving and leading the way around recycling and sustainability and working with our communities to fix it. Multitude of solutions. - **Improving how we work across agencies, e.g. emergency services is a really good example of the good collaboration.** - Because of ageing population need to look at how we are going to look after our elderly. - Legislation to provide greater flexibility to enable councils to more agile in their endeavour to create vibrant and prosperous communities enjoying high standards of living and health. - **Funding sources are secure, provided on time and indexed when recurrent.** - More flexibility in budget arrangements – how we spend the money. - Local communities are rewarded where councils have demonstrated efficiencies and innovation in service delivery. - Greater ability for councils to create commercial enterprise with profits funding local community initiatives and services. - Remove planning from LG - Eliminate NIMBY effect - **Housing - Coastal erosion - Supporting food security - Supporting emergency relief** - Economy/job (dual income type jobs) - Live where you work - Tax on production, not employment - Trade training – Liveability - Aged care for long term residents (not on means testing) - Circular Head should aim to be the capital of agriculture - **Aim to have no unemployment** - Aim to be successful in seeing immigration increase - Should aim to have safer and better roads - Sharing services enhancing citizen engagement from efficient ‘back of house’ processes - Local representation maintained - Money should help mentor/consult councils rather than reform (currently not a LEAN process audits – fix what is broken, not fix the problem) - **No amalgamation** - Ability to increase service levels including planning and building permits - Improve economy & local jobs to attract new families to the region - Increased hub (retail) in Smithton - More pull levels of reform, rather than push – legislative (big stick) - Programs for skills innovation across the sectors / upskilling - Local knowledge builds relationships and breaks down barriers - Less parochialism - Audited integrated planning - Set a rate at Consumer Price Index - **Setting up centres of excellence in the delivery of different services**, eg. Dulverton - Managed budgets – Fiscal responsibility. - Avoid the decline of our city. - Shouldn’t the private sector make the city thrive? If shops are closing every day it might have an influence on rates, but there are ways as council we can influence. - I’m not sure the CBD is a measure of growth. Population could be a measure of growth. - **Empty shops is a sign of decline.** - Better liveability, health. - More prosperous. - More sustainable and resilient across the board. - Preventing further cost shifting to LG from SG and FG. - Stability and strong culture. - Need a very clear relationship with Parks and Wildlife Service. – they control such a big proportion of our municipality, get sick of being told we can’t do something because it is Park and Wildlife Services - The state is hindrance to infrastructure moving forward and the form and function of state is a hindrance – most of the red tape thrown at us now is coming from the SG – If there were only 2 tiers of government the expectations wouldn’t be on LG as they are now - Tasmania has a great reputation for work in the shared services arena – If this was continue to be worked on and keep sussing out opportunities for working together a lot in HR, accounting, etc, you wouldn’t have 9 councillors, you would have 5 paid double what they are now but do more work, not wards but someone responsible for communicating with different areas - **SG, Parks and Wildlife Service, etc, all need to be tidied up so we know roles in LG and if significant funding was given we could be in control and get more things done** - The states being scrapped - Efficiencies of scope as opposed to economies of scale – Bigger councils get much better outcomes than smaller councils - The next generation won’t care what we think they will make up their own mind - SG working on the State Planning Scheme and they rewrote the Building Act and they didn’t get right creating a gap – **Officers spend more time explaining the processes rather than providing good service** – People got very angry with these processes - Attracting younger people to become councillors.

Summary

More effective collaboration and consistency between councils in the region including service levels, fees and charges, and common operating platforms that facilitate sharing services and resources.

Standardisation of process/structure regarding elected member accountability, truly transparent financial and asset management.

Efficiencies of scope as opposed to economies of scale. Systemic values based leadership providing responsive, viable and sustainable outcomes. Build a sense of place and pride in our community.

Continue to build the level of communication and trust between councils and residents. Communities are driving change, council needs to be adaptive and responsive to change.

Pursue better strategic outcomes from SG. Suggestion the Planning Authority should be removed from LG. Utilise pull levels of reform rather than push. Prevent further cost shifting from SG to LG and ensure funding sources are secure, on time and indexed when recurrent.

Some would like to see LG driving and leading the way with respect to recycling and sustainability and working closely with the community to address this. Programs for skills innovation across the sectors, increase resources to support growing populations and encourage younger people to be councillors.

What would make for a stronger relationship between people and elected representatives?

Smaller the council area the better the relationship, some have no idea who to go to talk to about an issue.

- Even in Launceston, you feel you don't know who to go to – Northern ratepayers think they don't get as many representatives - Is the best representative concerning who is the best person to address your query? Potential areas of interest - Don't want a Ward system - Lobbied by people in your street, area – how do people get in contact with you? Go to the website and find out who you are - We never hear from our councilors until election time - State politicians get the same - Relationship to talk to are strong with the community - **People like you turn up and follow up** - Organized we cover the bases - strongest point of community engagement \ Positive feedback from local event - good to give ratepayers the opportunity to talk to Govt from all levels - Trust in the relationship with their local councilors - **It requires a two way trust between council and councilor** - Are we reflecting the reality of what this should could look like. - We would like you to identify 2 things you would like to see happen in the next 12 months - 2 mill into LG in the next 12/12 to achieve some of the outcomes have been collectively identified - Can we advance the way things are identified and then addressed – **Are we working together? People are looking for positive examples** - Community workshops – opportunity for community to talk to elected representatives about what matters to them. - Ongoing pursuit of transparency – need to rebuild trust. Next survey needs to talk about soft skills – these are what we need to know to build/mend good relationships. - **Look at council meeting procedures – do they need to be so formal, better process would encourage more to attend**. - Greater availability of time – balancing demands on elected reps to their availability and accessibility to the public. - Resources for elected reps – both physical and financial with smaller Councils. - Ratio of elected reps to population, geographic spread and expectations with non-metro Councils. - Use of plain English and visual representation. - Greater accessibility - Community consultation opportunities (maintain if doing well) - Engage with younger demographic - Relate with school kids engage through schools (early) - **Have engagement when working people can attend** – Relatability - Perception councilors are not everyday ratepayers - Transparency, response, openness – treat questions as an opportunity - Checks and balances

within council – don't let one person dominate agenda - Skills mix within Councillors – Reporting - Don't have things come out of the blue to councilors - Allocate Councillors to areas to assist in gathering community feedback - Educating population on the role of the planning authority - Recent Code of Conduct decision will limit what we can say - Introduce Victorian model of wards - Don't introduce Victorian model of wards - Compulsory training for Councillors - Educate the community the Mayor only gets one vote. - Relationship inhibited by recent poor Code of Conduct Panel decisions - Connecting with young people - Continued community meetings - **Being available, open and transparent** - Use media to inform community on council activities including local newsletter, Facebook, website and Mayor's Message - Greater accountability and clarity of roles for Elected Members v Council Officers - **A better understanding of people running for Council to be aware of capacity to deliver on elected promise and broader community understanding of the role of Elected Member in casting vote** - Training prior to running for Council and after becoming elected - Providing the community with confidence the Minister and Division have appropriate powers to hold Council and Elected Members to account - Review of the LG Act to ensure it is relevant and provides the community with the outcomes it needs and wants, at the same time remove the many grey areas - Aim to have as much communication as possible face to face. Engagement and connection with people is vital (facetime). - Maintain personal contact - Obtain and source information from many different sources. - Ask the right questions= target communications. - Communication contacts - **More interaction - If the people had reasonable expectations** - Asking us to answer these questions without due consideration - or knowing the background. - Truth, telling the truth, being honest, coming up with a plan - No point in pointing fingers at the past. - Community will put up with a lot if know the facts - Continuation of connecting with communities and being out in communities on a regular basis. - Listening to them berate you about something they may or may not have grasp of. - Building trust so community will come to us rather than jump in and write something in local newsletter. Feel community can come and talk to the Councillors prior to doing. We are not a read and noted type of Council. - Some people don't like the answer will go and agitate, we can't change - Comes back to communication and letting people know what is happening in the Council and selling it to the people rather than trying to micromanage. - **Elected members making it clear to the community what is operational versus in their realm of influence.** - Happens in small areas elected member is so accessible to community. - Councils are typically better at this than other levels of government, however this could be strengthened through greater visibility. - Champion local causes in the local area. - Trust - Greater transparency - Education – greater understanding of Council processes and responsibilities - If you look at the matrix in the bottom left corner it is low importance and low satisfaction, should probably be getting about 20% of our effort. On the other side you've got high importance but low satisfaction but if anything ever gave you a clue as to where you should be focussing your efforts if you wanted to improve your relationship with the community then we should be chucking about 80% of our efforts into environment protection, drains, parks and public toilets, planning, roads and local traffic. - Areas of high importance also equate to high satisfaction and is the performance indicator we should be looking at. - It doesn't bode well for museums and public art, does it logic? - What it says because of the high satisfaction even if it is low importance at least we are doing it well but if you're talking about where do we need to put more effort and where do we need to put more focus, how do we build a stronger relationship with the community, then it's those areas. - **The reality there is not an opportunity for the community to get to know their representatives, provision of forums** - Something like a barbeque where Councillors attend would provide an avenue for interaction - Community has access to elected representatives in smaller communities - Representation on community committees - precinct based community committees with appropriate resources - providing an opportunity for communities to engage with elected representatives - Being involved, being seen and being part of the community - We currently do it well - Survey satisfaction - Community feedback - Successful population increase to maintain living standards - Have a close to no unemployment - People from the mainland or overseas coming here to work and live -

Less accidents and stress free drivers - Strong local representation - Robust sharing of services - **Consistent efficient processes for core functions across a number of councils** - Retain current identity, services, education/schooling offerings - Independent resilient communities - Skills are growing/services sustainable, quality - Financially sustainable councils as we are - Set a Rates at consumer pricing index - Transparency. - Communities understating of councillors role - Monthly contact (articles) - Consultation with the community. - Build respect - Community expectations of councils participation in community events (funding) - **Continued advocacy on behalf of the local community through the mayor** - Better communication - Different types of community engagement - Gain community trust and mutual understanding – Listening - Community forums. - Attending events. - The more things you go to the more you learn, the more engaged you are. - They will not come to us, we have to go to them. - I get a message a day. - I don't agree – they come to us. - Social media is an issue and can lead to worse communication and relationships between councillors/council and the community. - Better community understanding of councillors roles, responsibilities and limitations. - If councillors were paid a larger allowance or a salary think it is very hard for councillors who are working to make those really strong ties in the community but if there was some kind of packaged attached to make people be able to give them more of their time to the role - **Need to make sure the community feels they are coming along with us** – we need to make sure the smaller communities don't feel disconnected - Having the chance and the skills to develop a meaningful relationship with members of the community, have the time to do it and communicate back to the community through newsletters, etc – it builds good will right through - We need to sell our successes – we doing something really good in the community we don't just leave it we tell them what we have achieved - The drop in sessions we have been holding – we may not get heaps of people and the councillors turn up – it is noted by the people councillors are there it is something little but it is improving the relationships and they think they are being heard and is really important to them - The Eating with Friends at Fingal is the opportunity to sit down at a table and have a meal with them they feel like they are being valued as a community - **Maybe we should go back to having township committees or community bbqs** – something simple - The community are the future – they are the ones will tell us - Not everyone reads social media, newsletters, etc - Update – this is pertinent – if people know something is going to be built or changed and then nothing happens for a period of time - Continue with what is working and not changing everything - Compulsory voting happen.

Summary

There are a couple of focus areas here. First of all there is a need for education and training for councillors, pre election so they understand what they are expected to do and post election for successful candidates. Need to build two way trust between council and councillors. Review council meeting procedures to see if less formality may encourage greater public presence (within legislative requirements). Develop soft skills for elected reps to build/mend relationships. Appropriate use of social media.

Need to build trust, respect and mutual understanding with the community. The community needs to understand council processes, responsibilities and limitations. Management of community expectations on what is feasible. Being honest and transparent, presenting a plan and providing the facts as they emerge and responding to enquiries.

Increased opportunities for people to engage with elected reps in a range of formal and informal functions including community consultation, forums, workshops, representation on community committees, community meal events or bbqs. Engage with the younger demographic through schools and youth events. The more things you go to, the more you learn, the more engaged you are.

There was discussion for and against a ward based system. It was acknowledged that connection to community is more difficult for larger councils. Suggestion of financial package to assist councillors to make the time to connect with the community.

Are there particular issues of concern in the region you feel strongly about?

Transport study plus some action cleaning up the Tamar - Move around the region effectively - **A lack of regional thinking in decision making** - Why is Bunnings where it is – things like - Hobart is choking in traffic so strategic planning - Sewerage is inadequate. - Clean up the river - Don't focus all business development in Hobart - Why won't SG bring a large Govt entity to Launceston - NTD need Govt assistance to keep people in this region and employed – happy - The way we advertise Tas, They think Hobart is the centre of the State not a cultural vision for Northern Tas - **Inability for the LG to actually get its act together** - taken a long time for change in this aspect. - Private sector is not - Call centres didn't work – they are footloose - Issues of concern for the region – we ought to celebrate more things – music and cultural things – high level - If you want to a place is alive culturally, then we need to have a proper hall? Despite it is still happening. - Jobs growth, people move to places because they are attractive places to live, Livability are the reasons people move. - Suburbs where people still need to be employed. - Not everyone is employable - Diff between those are employed and aren't is a bigger gap now. - Years ago we didn't have the extremes. What can we do about – don't know - City Deal – all the councils should be more involved – not just the City but the region reality this is already happening but not in name. - Councils are talking about facilities - basketball, tennis, we are talking about together - The SG not committing to mitigate current coastal erosion issues - Coastal Pathway. - The SG not mitigating or preparing known future risk is going to occur from coastal erosion – need to put funding aside and make plans now. - **Condition of Bass Highway – Burnie to Marrawah. Needs urgent works. No passing lanes.** - Need to ensure quality of highway works is better than it has been. - The future of recycling in the state. Major issue which needs to be addressed urgently. - WWC doing very well in the resource sharing and shared services and this should be acknowledged. Disappointed not listed or acknowledged in information package. - Fragmentation of industries and distribution of rate revenue. - Poverty and mortgage stress. - **Access to high quality education, social services, public transport and child care.** - Community expectations increasing both with residents and non-resident property owners. - Impacts of high growth – residential and tourism. - Increasing awareness of climate change impacts and natural emergencies. - Need willingness to work together - Understand region is greater - We aren't just leaders of community but leaders in region - shouldn't be tied exclusively to one region - limit parochialism and disrespectful comments about other councils - LG becoming more political every day understand what we are here to do – not about getting your own wins (ego? – doing things are seen as popular, but not about the community) – worrying about Councillors image, how they are looked at and perceived - Mayors supporting Devonport Mayor could be augmented – can be valuable to speak outside of your own council area – get advice and brainstorm - Mayors meet informally. - Support groups - A good thing about LG is how members mix and help each other - It is frustrating the amount of time it takes to get things done when dealing with State Departments – for example foreshore erosion and weed management issues at Port Sorrel - Traffic in travel to Hobart - Planning scheme - Political grant spend on political whim not on electoral need - Coastal policy - Recycling & waste management – Infrastructure - **Not enough money to do what we want** - Growing Councils incur significant costs before new rate revenue come in - Bring back developer contributions - Ability to put more requirements on developers, e.g. requiring development of suitable road access – Heritage - We are struggling to keep up with infrastructure for our growing community. - **We need to do massive stormwater upgrades** - More funding needed from State and Federal Governments for LG -

Socioeconomic demographic - Economic stimulus - Instances where one council makes derogatory comment about another council – need to be supportive of each other - Accessing state and federal funding – process needs to be easier - **Public perception of council’s role when acting as a planning authority – residents become frustrated with the planning process** - Regional cooperation through regional bodies – Cradle Coast Authority a good ‘tool’. - Little improvement in unemployment - Reducing health services - Need for Minister to mandate some level of reform to deliver on community expectations - Too much competition between government service providers, needs to be collaborative and supportive - Empower people to solve their own problems. - Community should be able to raise funds to do things in their community. - Groups being formed in the community gives them a voice (shouldn’t stack them with Councillors or Council staff). - If people get involved they will have the feeling of being heard and putting in value to their community. They will take ownership and contribute and also look after the end results. - Encourage independent, resilient communities. - Harnessing the social capital from the community - Volunteering is the backbone of our small communities. - **Managing and communicating the expectation of what Council should provide versus the budget we have.** Council role to support and nurture but not do everything or fund everything. - Education- knowing where to look for answers or support (encourage and assist people to become independent). - Make other levels of Govt hear our community by advocating for them at State or Federal levels. - Single parents struggle to know what to do as parents- coaching and education will stop issues into the future will consume resources. - Partnerships with support agencies. Low socio-economic issues from low income families or unemployed. - Education is hugely important. - Ingrain children have a voice. - Conditions of road network – need improved infrastructure. Feels like we get overlooked for funding in this area. - Increased development is putting pressure on existing narrow gravel roads. Need to focus on longer term financial plans and asset management plans. - Urban growth boundaries to move to allow for more development. - **Disaster management will be a huge future cost and will become unmanageable.** - Relocation of towns out of flood prone areas. - Climate change impacts on towns in some areas (ie coastlines, riverbanks). - Recycling - Waste management - The role of Council and planning - The Federal Government’s contribution to Councils - Our economic development and socio-economic factors e.g. levels of education, substance abuse, homelessness - The recycling issue has been coming at us like a train wreck and LGAT have been seriously slow in its response as our representative body. Difficult to raise other issues unless they are nimble and on the ball. The process of bringing issues forward is very bureaucratic and LGAT is not adequately resourced to deal with these risk issues proactively as they arise. - Water supply - Tourism - **Issue is not tourism but issue is finding how we are going to deal with it given our current infrastructure problems.** - Freycinet Master Plan has been received by Council but Parks just would not look at capping tourist numbers and if is the case, how are we going to deal with tourist numbers and there will be other issues that will crop up. - Coastal erosion and climate change comes in over the top of all of . - Infrastructure inefficiencies - Waste management - Housing/lack of housing - Attracting businesses here are going to bring young people and families to the coast - Lots of old retired people like me here, big issue here - **Oldest median age in Australian.** - Coastal hazards – most pressing is erosion of Raspins Beach and undermining of the Tasman Hwy at Orford. No access to northern region. - Concerns with people in positions of power and crossing boundaries and lack of respect as elected members. - Impacts on health and well-being for everyone but are not considered workers so no major repercussions. - Emergency management in general with climate change. - Need to promote employment/attract bigger employers. - **Lack of understanding of the importance of the visitor economy to our region’s well-being and economic success.** - Whole economic performance is dependent on our natural resources. - Continual upgrade of infrastructure and fair resourcing/funding across all levels of government. - Housing as an issue, particularly in the context of large construction projects and staff working in the tourism industry. - Tradespeople shortage. - **Improving SEIFA index and standard of living for the community.** - Reducing the number of roads Council is responsible for (handing some back to the state). - Improved Crown land management by state agencies:

Weed eradication, fire prevention, slashing along road reserves - Better management of foreshore and river - State roads to be more receptive to infrastructure upgrades to accommodate growth in council approved subdivisions - Greater State and federal assistance in ensuring strong economies for local communities. - Aging and stagnant populations is a concern. - Utilities in Tasmania need greater competition. - Waste management – **recycling becoming an issue cost to council increasing a push for the fed and state to create some industry**. - Climate change – ie. Low Head raising water levels and inadequate stormwater infrastructure. - FOGO collection – requirement to get economy of scale to offer such a service. Should be able to address issues as a whole State and not have to wait to implement.

Bass Strait connection – advocate with SG around Freight Equalisation Retail Sector - our biggest role is to create a physical environment that makes us healthy and makes us want to get out and engage and be socially connected and doing stuff - The expectations on us from a lot of people are no different than if you were a federal or state MP. - set up for first time members so you can have sort of an alumni group you can go through with and bounce some ideas off and formalise a bit - Clarence should be leading the charge and is we have the intestinal fortitude to basically put up a motion to move towards amalgamation and merger of councils and we may have the numbers around the table now to do . - The last council's term, pretty much the whole bulk and focus of the time and treasure was around a merger process it was systemic it was forensic it went through whole thing, to just sort of throw off the cart as if we it didn't go through is wrong and I'd like to know which Council others might believe did a better job through process. - But the survey was verbose. - we live in a world 's changing very quickly as far as LG's concerned there needs to be some degree of flexibility now in the world we live in, we need to be able to move and make decisions and do things in a lot more streamlined process looking towards the future than we have done looking back. - **Lack of strategic alignment between councils - eg. transport issues, especially when councils show a lack of cooperation and alignment** - Regional sports facilities -Transport planning is important - Lack of contact with SG members - Election promises not through Council - Lack of community contribution by multinational companies, eg. Woolworths, Reject shop, Fonterra - No local Chamber of Commerce - Lack of community input into consultation processes affecting CBD - Cost shifting - Sustainable jobs leading us into the next two decades as automation takes control of our agricultural/forestry sector - Business development - **Skills to be able to bring community on side for population growth** - Mental illness reduction locally – what we can do in our region? ... this is the question - SG lack of collaboration with LG - Complete lack of leadership from SG on matters of coastal erosion - Govt spending money (or promising) on issues we have not been spoken to - Having our young people understand the role of LG (knowledge) – Planning - Impact of depreciation of grant funds - Expectations of LG to deliver with limited funding sources - Governments giving money to groups without telling Council - Retail Group vision – continued closing stores - Health services irregularity - Increased heavy haulage - Separation of decision making from the grass roots – locals through a focus on bigger is better – smaller is often smarter - Embodiment of LEAN in LG - Keeping identity - CHC at the end of the road, therefore an amalgamation would kill the community - **Fairness to all Ratepayers, Transparency of government processes, effective communications within Council**, keep taxation (Rates) affordable, to the most disadvantaged household in the municipality, guaranteeing public transport and medical practice, have emergency shelter provision for those whom are made homeless, whether from natural disaster or personal -without judgment. Councillors should only accept gifts from the public, a Rate Payer, a lobby or special interest group in accordance with their Council's policy. Once professional ethics are compromised, public trust will be -and remain so. - Reduction of services - Education / Transport / Doctors / telecommunications - Funding on pro-rata regarding population affects smaller rural councils - Heavy Vehicle registrations funding declining - Council functions being transferred to the regional bodies (waste management / stormwater) should be LG. Council retains its current functions - Community expectation council get involved in social issues - Provision of GPs, homelessness – Lobbyists - Environmental zones changing which is decreasing rates revenue - Conflict of roles with the changing of property zones, land use, heritage. -

Councillors being aware of their roles and responsibilities as a Councillor and distinguishing between role and their personal views as a community member. - **Need to ensure we look at economic development regionally** – some things cross boundaries i.e. shared coastal pathways - Things cross council boundaries – how do we address it. - Climate change – SG refusal to engage with coastal councils - Tasrail – rail corridor – too risk averse to allow progress - Underemployment, poverty, exploding work opportunities, aged care - Green energy, IT – Parochialism - Mental health - Population.

Ageing population. What is the concern about declining population – is it because you assume the economy is declining? - If you have a declining population you can't afford the same facilities, because they are spread over a smaller population. - difference between declining rate base and declining population. - There must be a critical number one might look for in a city. If you reduce population, you reduce the number of people active in the economy. - Affects retail, schools, sporting clubs, the critical base is lessened. - We don't need rapid growth, but we need to maintain, small growth. - I don't agree with though – if declining population – economies of scale become smaller and more efficient. - Educational attainment In what ways? - Apparent retention - Would council be involved in training or education space? - We are now – local enabling group - Its for aspirational motivation, rather than providing education. - **We should be facilitating job creation How can we do ?**

We have a relationship with Tasport authority. What arrangements do we have to ensure they stay here so they can retain jobs here. We are involved through the CCA, council has a role to work with other agencies. - I'd like to see in the future at LG level the ability to have more economic development powers. Eg if LGs or regional bodies had abilities to influence or provide payroll tax incentives. - How do you get power if you don't have the revenue. - The power is important – maybe there should be more powers to local councils - We're very hamstrung in what we can do. - But to be honest we have a department of economic development, but we have very little legislative power over what we can do there. But it is an expectation of council to work in this area. - We can advocate, can control rates. - We are lacking big industry. - We measure all this stuff somewhere along the line it would be nice to say people are pretty happy with things. - Do we measure how people feel? - We only look at the quantifiable stuff, but it would be lovely to measure the social stuff. - The MB2030 has a lot of measures in its community profile indicators. - **Climate change and associated risks** - City v the rest (eg. 4 Hobart metro councils) - Rural issues v urban issues. - Light rail (must come to Brighton, must be in bridge design). - Brighton needs to be better involved/informed of Greater Hobart deal/act issues. - Long term thinking and planning from - State and Federal governments is practically non-existent. - Need to provide inter-generational infrastructure. - PWS – the biggest strength is our natural attractions and accessibility and this is our of our control and pushed down by SG and other departments interference or lack of ability we are losing access to these areas - **Tension between ratepayers and what they feel like they are getting for the rate in the dollar and tourists** – we pay our rates and what are we getting for our rates – perception lot of money going towards tourists and little towards them as ratepayers - Believe our economy is very strongly tourism based into the future – therefore we need to control our visitation and the effects on our budgets into the future – tracks aren't developed at the moment but need to be – how we can accommodate and control

Employment - Development - Aging population and the number of those people who would want part time work - Education – is the TTC a regional facility or council area

Housing – beyond Council but influx of workers into our area during the high season the housing is not there to accommodate the people coming into the area to work – where do they go if it is seasonal - Roads – a lot of money spent on main roads down the middle but still dragging their chain on the side roads – parochialism still exists in our municipality and this is continuous - **If sea levels rise it will potentially change the shape of our coastline** – the way it looks could be totally different – impact of climate change/global warming – affects everything we do moving forward - How do you hear and listen to what the average ratepayer is saying when you have one or two extremely noisy individuals who try to influence Council in

particular and seem to get away with it – so how are they all treated fairly - **Don't think we do enough for aging population in regards to infrastructure for them into the future** – we need to plan for the future – only have medea park and there is not enough room there for everyone - Environment – making sure the region has a similar approach.

Summary

Major issue is climate change and potential impacts on coastal erosion and natural emergencies. Disaster management will be a huge future cost and could become unmanageable. Lack of adequate funding and the need for more resource allocation from SG and FG also featured. Community expectations are increasing, and we need to educate what can be provided within budget limitations.

Future of waste management and recycling was seen as critical with mention of lack of housing, protecting rivers and foreshores and access to essential services (education, social services, public transport, child care).

Demographic concerns related to the ageing population, low SEIFA index and associated issues such as unemployment, mortgage stress and poverty. There was discussion around the need for a regional approach to economic development in particular but also greater regional cooperation generally. Tourism areas cited tensions from ratepayers on council expenditure for tourism facilities. There is a need for jobs growth and improved livability to attract businesses, young people and families

Issues around road network and the need for more strategic traffic/transport studies. There was a general feeling that councils are struggling to keep up with infrastructure for growing communities.

Mention was made of the need for LG to be supportive of one another and not make derogatory comments. Also there is perceived a lack of strategic alignment between councils and the inability of LG to get its act together.

About OurSay

Gone are the days of the conventional online community engagement site. Public sector performance demands the cutting-edge with the added potency of deep human insight. At the heart of our people-first technology are specialist advisors fully focused on delivering full circle outcomes.

Our company was founded in 2010 to improve the way governments engage with their communities on decisions that affect them. At the core of our service is an **online participation platform born to perform**. The platform is supported by ancillary consulting and advisory services supporting policy, strategic planning, toolkit development, evaluation training and education outcomes for the public sector.

Today, our solutions are being utilised by a wide range of Local Government and Water Authorities across New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania who appreciate the need to understand and engage with community stakeholders.

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