



State Budget Priority Statement 2018-19

Local Government delivers the services and infrastructure that shape the daily experiences of every Tasmanian and which are a major determinant of our community members' wellbeing.

Responsible for numerous diverse services and infrastructure, councils are place shapers who drive most people's attachment to, and satisfaction with the area in which they live.

Desirable communities typically have appealing built and natural environments, good transport infrastructure, economic prosperity, social stability and equity, educational opportunity and cultural, recreation and entertainment possibilities.

Councils are essential partners in working to create these environments. They are best placed to know what is possible and what is most likely to be effective at the local level to ensure new liveable places are created and existing places are maintained or improved. Councils are supported in undertaking their diverse roles by the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT). LGAT advocates and negotiates on behalf of the Tasmanian Local Government sector. We represent all Tasmanian councils with 262 elected members, nearly 4000 employees and half a million constituents. One of the key objectives of LGAT is to foster and promote relationships between Tasmanian Local Government with both the Governments of Tasmania and Australia.

As always, the Local Government sector seeks a range of investments that will serve the State well in increasing productivity and securing the wellbeing and viability of all communities.

Local Government suggests that the following investments will meet those criteria.

PLANNING

Over the past few years a significant planning reform agenda has been developed and is in the process of being implemented.

The Budget must ensure there are adequate resources for councils, the Tasmanian Planning Commission and the Planning Policy Unit to complete outstanding work.

TASWATER

TasWater

The Local Government sector in Tasmania remains committed to the current ownership model for TasWater. It is our sector's view that a council owned entity, governed by a skilled board, under the oversight of an independent regulator, is the approach that delivers the best outcomes for customers and local communities. However, there must be joint advocacy for federal funding towards addressing major water and sewerage projects which sit outside TasWater's current forward capital program, with a focus on Launceston's combined storm water and sewerage system.

WASTE

The State Government has indicated it does not support the introduction of a waste levy as a mechanism for investment in waste management, including appropriate infrastructure, in Tasmania. Regardless, there has been acknowledgement that achieving waste outcomes does require a level of



Local Government Association Tasmania

investment in regulation and infrastructure. This is best delivered collaboratively between councils and regions and State and Local Government.

Over the past 12 months there has been insufficient progress on delivering a new State Waste Strategy and progression of this work must be resourced as a priority, including consultation on the draft strategy with key stakeholders.

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Better Coordination

The statutory and administrative processes within State Government can be significant barriers to investment and development.

Local Government continues to seek the resourcing and appointment of an authoritative, case manager style role, to support navigation of significant development (which is below the threshold for major projects) through the range of statutory processes within State Government

Economic Development

LGAT's members have noted that the State Government has significantly reduced the level of regionally based support in recent years and there is increasing reliance on councils and regional bodies to drive the regional development agenda.

Economic development is a relatively new function for councils and so as a minimum, there should be investment in building the capability of councils and we seek the support, through Skills Tasmania, to provide access to appropriate training.

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Tasmanian local councils have been severely financially impacted by natural disasters over the past 5 years. Studies undertaken by councils, as well as learnings from recent events have identified high priority mitigation projects to minimise future financial and social impacts on local communities.

Historically the State Government has relied on funding from the National Partnership Agreement to cover what should be core business for our emergency services.

The State Budget must provide for direct and sustained investment in building emergency management capability, particularly in recovery, mitigation and resilience.

BETTER COMMUNITIES

Local Government is the closest level of government to the community and as such it is the best placed to work cooperatively with many of the State Government and non-governmental bodies, whose mission is to work with communities to promote and encourage improved community outcomes across areas such as education, health and well-being, ageing and social inclusion.

Common amongst partnering bodies is a commitment to evidence based policy and practice. This would be supported by expansion of the Government's commitment to open data to include purchase and provision of a broad range of data useful for demographic, social, health and economic mapping at the local, regional and Statewide levels.