



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

7 June 2012

Tasmanians for Reform Miss the Mark Again

“In releasing its guideline principles for Local Government Reform, this self-appointed group has again determined that it knows what is best for everybody in Tasmania and purports to speak on their behalf,” President of the Local Government Association of Tasmania, Mayor Barry Easter said today.

“Local Government is the government of the people and councils respond to the needs of their communities. Councils bust their backs in seeking to deliver services and infrastructure that their communities both need and want. They don’t want to put rates up but this group forgets that just like business, the cost of wages and materials goes up each year. If councils are to deliver the same level of service as the preceding year, then the chances are that rates will go up.”

“The assertions contained in the guideline principles are outlandish”, Mayor Easter said. “The group acknowledges that infrastructure funding needs to be increased but seems to think that just by putting councils together, this will solve the problem. Clearly these people have never availed themselves of the opportunity to understand the business of council,” he said.

“Councils are already subject to oversight by the Minister for Local Government, the Director of Public Health, the Auditor General, the Environment Protection Authority and a host of other statutory bodies, yet there are calls for transparency! All councils publish detailed annual reports and are required to provide a host of statistics on human resources, expenses, assets and service delivery to the Director of Local Government each year to allow full scrutiny of both individual council activity and cross-council comparisons to be made,” Mayor Easter said.

“The suggestion that councils do not already discharge their responsibilities with integrity, transparency and full accountability to ratepayers is scurrilous, and typical of the sensationalism of this self-appointed posse.”

“The Property Council was the major protagonist for water and sewerage reform and now that it is in place, is suggesting that councils are not entitled to the revenues that formed the basis of the reform. The communities that funded those assets in the first place are entitled to expect a reasonable return from their use, that can be reinvested back into community infrastructure and service provision.”

“Mayor Easter said if the principals of Tasmanians for Reform and the organisations they represent ever took the time to sit down with those they are so quick to criticise and judge, they would gain an understanding of the differences across communities, the varying priorities and the true meaning of supporting a community.

“This group doesn’t care that when a community is unable to attract a doctor, or a dentist to the area and turns to the council for help, then the council is often compelled to step in and fund these services. It’s easy to make black and white observations on the basis of simple numbers on a page but it is not until these people, supposedly speaking on behalf of all Tasmanians, actually sit down with councils and their communities, that they will truly understand”.

“Unfortunately this self-appointed vigilante group has only self-interest at heart. Councillors are elected by the people in the community and work for the people in the community. They don’t just represent the members of Tasmanians for Reform, but all Tasmanians. They listen, they understand and they deliver,” he said.

Ends...

**For media enquiries, contact LGAT CEO Allan Garcia on 0419 123 201, or
President Barry Easter on 0408 334 936.**