

# Towards improved local government in southern Tasmania - Community Feedback on Options

2nd September 2011 to 9th September 2011

## Please note

- This document contains the emails that have been sent to the Independent Panel.
- The emails have been edited to delete the names or other text that may identify the individual that has sent the email.
- All edits, other than the deletion of names, are marked by “xxxxxxx”.
- All emails have been formatted into a common font.

# 74

Dear Members of the Panel,  
My preference would be 'Greater Hobart'.  
Sincerely

# 75

Hi

Feedback on the proposed options is as follows:

## Status Quo with Shared Service

Shared services model sounds good, even logical, in theory but in my opinion simply adds another layer of complexity and would result in further inefficiencies and generally poor outcomes. It could also result in a continuous power struggle between council's and regional authorities, with each seeing themselves as the dominant player and neither prepared to work together for the good of the people they serve, (the people of Tasmania). This model relies very much on the goodwill of the power brokers within each organisation, to make it work.

I believe such a model is inappropriate for Tasmania.

## A Single Southern Tasmanian Regional Council

With respect to the comment about two hours travelling time to the seat of power ? one has to wonder how many people actually visit the council office nowadays anyway. With things like direct debit and other technologies there are others ways to stay in touch and/or do business. If similar models were adopted across Tasmania it would result in say 3 councils with a mix of both urban and regional areas

and therefore quite similar. This model does have a tendency to take the 'local' out of local government and would possibly create a council that is unnecessarily large for the range of services it provides (i.e. community programs, roads & bridges, stormwater, land-use planning, building control, environmental health obligations, waste management, etc). Perhaps some of these services could be best provided outside of local government structure. For example, land-use planning by a statewide body specializing in land-use planning; stormwater to the water corporations. As far as this model being a threat to the State Government, who are we trying to look after here ? the State Government or the people of Tasmania. If such a model were to threaten the state government you would have to question whether the state government is working as efficiently and effectively as it possibly could, and is representing the views of a majority of its people or just the outspoken minority.

I think this model could work but would need a lot work to engage regional communities and ensure they had adequate representation, and if considered, options to transfer a small number of services currently provided by local government to others should be explored.

May not be the best model for Tasmania.

#### Greater Hobart

I like the idea of a greater Hobart model but don't believe this model goes far enough ? you still have 9 local government areas in southern Tasmania with duplication of services, inefficiencies, higher than is necessary costs, long-term sustainability issues and other problems which currently exist.

#### Separate Eastern and Western Shores for Hobart & Regional Amalgamations

Sensitivities around eastern versus western shores should not be entertained when exploring options for such an important matter as local government reform. Setting up eastern and western shore areas will only perpetuate any rivalry that currently exists. A decision on local government reform should be made on what is best for the people and making the Derwent River a local government boundary in order to address sensitivities is not the answer. People from both sides of the river frequent the opposite side of the river regularly to shop, work or relax ? don't add to existing rivalry. Also, as with the Greater Hobart, model I don't believe this model goes far enough - you still have 5 local government areas in southern Tasmania with duplication of services, inefficiencies, higher than is necessary costs, long-term sustainability issues and other problems which currently exist.

#### Summary

In summary, I believe 3 to 6 local government areas statewide to be the most appropriate model for Tasmania. This would see maybe 3 local government areas in the south of the state. I propose a combination of the models proposed, as follows:

? Greater Hobart - Hobart, Glenorchy, Brighton, most of Clarence, urban part of Kingborough, urban part of Sorell (similar to Option 3 plus urban part of Sorell)

? Richmond/Coal River Valley area of Clarence, parts of Sorell (but not Midway Point and Sorell which would be in Greater Hobart area), Tasman, Glamorgan Spring Bay and parts of Southern Midlands (similar to Option 4)

? Huon Valley, rural parts of Kingborough, Central Highlands, Derwent Valley and parts of Southern Midlands (similar to Option 4 but combine D?Entrecasteaux / Central Lakes)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on this matter.

# 76

Dear panel,

I have reviewed the information provided and am excited by the opportunity to see increased efficiencies at the local government level. In my view the best option would be one council for the region particularly as this would align with the delivery of other services such as sewer and water. The concerns regarding representation, for rural areas such as Tasman will need to be considered carefully however I am sure can be overcome. In the longer term it is unacceptable to continue seeing rates rises well above CPI. We have also seen little use of regional strategic planning to address what are in many cases are important issues that go unaddressed. Equally councils have had many years to consider sharing services and resources to drive greater efficiencies and to date have had very limited success, with no results discernible to ratepayers.

Many smaller councils have neither in house planners or staff skilled in procurement, the costs to ratepayers are obvious. The average age of planning schemes says it all. The delivery of the regional land use strategies, of which the southern one was the best also highlight that the need for consensus undermined the potential for comprehensive regional benefits. One council will deliver the benefits you have outlined and ensure local government remains relevant in the future.

Regards

# 77

Hi Panel Team, after reviewing some of my e-mails I find this xxxxx opportunity (an extension of 1.5 kilometres to our Hobart International Airport. The reason for this ask is to allow International Direct Flights to Hobart. The cost is projected at \$25 million & would stimulate an estimated 180,000 international visitors per year to our Tassie Island.) . Given you review process, of Local Government, an idea of this scale & broadness, would also require a collective Local Council approach/response, hence the need to be a Regional Council ( 12 Sthn Councils ) under one umbrella.

The need, in our current circumstances, requires projects, that have the capacity to DELIVER in both construction phase & the future. Increased Asian Tourists would be considered a huge future wealth stimulator. Get the CHANGE thinking happening now, we need a prosperous future.

Regards TASMANIA ' Simply the Best '

# 78

Dear Panel

After seeing your 4 suggestions for new council boundaries I wish to comment.

My first choice would definitely be the one big super council option. This would cut down on the insane duplication that now exists in many areas in the current Model.

My next choice would be a maximum of 3 big councils for the South. As long as ALL of Kingborough is included with Hobart City, not just Kingston proper. We do not want to be lumped in with Huon Council and have to deal with regressive "country hick types" . We chose Kingborough to live, partly because we believed it to be a progressive area, with more creative councillors and residents. The mere thought of becoming part of a "rural backwater" style arrangement, is enough to start us thinking about heading North to Melbourne where we came! Then begins the Brain drain again! With cuts to the arts, hospitals, schools, police and many other areas, at the state govt. level, one begins to wonder how liveable Tasmania will be in the near future.

Decisions made at a local Govt level could make or break the quality of living in this state. We believe there is a desperate need for change to local govt.

To say we are over governed, at this level, in Tasmania, is an understatement. Twenty Nine councils for half a million people is laughable! I say break the strangle hold of old ways.

Ofcourse, not one of those 29 councils will want to loose their power base, and not one of the 300 or so councillors will want to de-throne. Let alone 29 general managers, etc etc etc! So, the less councils the better, we feel.

Three big councils would only mean approx. 80,000 people in each council, practical and do able.

Unfortunately, one imagines that the current councils will fight tooth and nail to keep as close to the status quo as possible. And Tas limps along at its normal pace, rusted- on business as usual. Good luck for change guys. My crystal ball sees another talk fest. We are being offered a say in these potential changes, but my guess is, the minds are already made up and what rate payers and residents want means diddly squat!

Thanks

Snug

# 79

My choice of options would be the "Greater Hobart" proposal.

The area would be more compact and therefore more manageable. Existing infrastructure should, I would think, be able to cover this extended area.

I have never been able to understand why several of Hobart's 'surburbs' are called cities especially as those suburbs/cities are relativey small in both area and population.

Developers and builders would have a better understanding of what is required of them with a single council (I have heard some builders say they would rather deal with the Glenorcy council while others disagree and prefer one of the other councils) suggesting that there are differences in either/or both regulations or staff understanding of regulations).

Thank you for the chance to have my say.

Lenah Valley

# 80

I would strongly support a single southern regional council. My second choice would be a greater Hobart council. The less bureaucracy the better

Regards  
xxxxxxxxx  
Sandy Bay

# 81

Thanks for consulting with us. Rationalising will certainly lead to fewer overheads for governance arrangements as long as it is not too city-centric.

If I had to choose one of the 4 options put up for comment I would be most supportive of **one** Southern Regional Council. One major problem I have identified with this approach is that the larger metropolitan population bases would likely have the greater say over \$\$ spent to the detriment of the rural areas. How can we ensure that the rural areas get their voices heard and their fair share of money allocated for kerbs and guttering, roads etc? Obviously there would need to be careful consideration of the representation from the various existing council regions.

**I would like to propose a 5<sup>th</sup> option:**

- 3 councils with a share of a metropolitan and rural population base
  1. Eastern Shore ( total population 78,195) including
    - Clarence – 52,140
    - Glamorgan Spring Bay – 4,500
    - Sorell – 13,127
    - Southern Midlands – 6,054
    - Tasman – 2,374
  2. Southern (total population 98,485) including
    - Hobart City – 49,887
    - Kingborough – 33,464
    - Huon Valley – 15,134
  3. Derwent ( total population 72,795 ) including
    - Brighton – 15,807
    - Central Highlands – 2324
    - Derwent Valley – 10,036
    - Glenorchy City – 44,628

I welcome the opportunity to comment- we need to get the most equitable, best possible, and most cost effective solution for our communities.

## 82

I would be happy with any option that reduces the interference in our everyday lives by councils.

Councils demand more and more \$\$\$\$ for rates and deliver less and less services. I live in Southern Midlands Council area and they are a useless pack of bastards. The road to my house is full of potholes and the council is inconsistent with its decisions.

I can't even fart without getting an abatement notice, but others can illegally dump industrial waste and get away with it. On one hand a ratepayer has had dozens of restrictions placed on what he can do to build a shed on his own property even down to the colour of the cladding, then another neighbour can do what he likes even use raw zincalume. There is no consistency.

We don't want sewerage connections, we don't want water supplies, just piss off and leave us alone. Otherwise there will be nowhere left to live life cheaply and without "big brother" with his hand up our arses. Sack all the bastards, and lets have one big central council. With any luck they will forget about us poor bastards out here in rural areas and we can just get on with life.

Cheers, Disgruntled Ratepayer.

# 83

Dear Panel,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important conversation. I think that this process has been very valuable and I hope you receive the community input it deserves.

I believe that the best model presented is Option 4. I do not think it is necessarily the perfect final solution but, with further finer scale consideration, a modified version can be found that will be appropriate. I strongly support the concept that there should be a primary metropolitan council that has a strong urban focus and functions as the regional hub, surrounded firstly by a small number of councils that straddle the urban rural domains, including areas of future growth and are of suitable size to reflect appropriate economies of scale for service delivery and secondly an outer area of rural councils that are sufficiently large to provide cost efficient services and retain an effective voice in government decision making processes. I also believe that this process should not just be about a single boundary and governance change action but also seek to introduce a new regular process to repeat this current activity to ensure that we continue to find the best solution for balancing economies of scale with power sharing and community identity as the community grows and changes.

As a recent immigrant from Queensland (late 2008) I am still developing a sound understanding of the situation and I freely concede that my views are as yet not fully formed, in some cases I have asked questions to reflect that.

However, I have provide some more detailed comments below:

1. I agree there are economies of scale that can be realised through amalgamation of councils and that 5-6 councils would be better able to service the southern region. I am not convinced that amalgamation alone is the answer and that the idea of a "bureau" type role for STCA to optimise procurement is part of the solution. In that sense the amalgamated councils will need to accept that some "powers" need to shift to the STCA.

2. Nor am I convinced that the creation of a Metropolitan Hobart Council (which has a lot of merit) needs to incorporate the councils of the eastern shore. The growth that is anticipated to occur to the east that justifies the retention of a centre for local decision making in the Clarence area that, under option 4, would continue to grow. The same reasoning can be applied to the justification for making the southern outlet the boundary between a new metro Hobart and a merged Huon Valley/Kingborough Councils.
3. I am not convinced that the current boundary of the Southern region is necessarily the correct one within which the current amalgamation conversation should be constrained to. This is a major shift for Tasmania as a whole and the other two regions need to be part of the process to ensure that the solution addresses any additional boundary adjustments that are best dealt with within this process. It would not be unreasonable to explore opportunities to find boundaries that also reflect environmental domain (e.g. catchment boundaries) as long as they still make sense in terms of communities. For example, the southern and northern midlands councils may be better placed as a single council rather than being split between two regions?
4. I believe that this process is of great value to debating and resolving this important matter. I also believe that it should be recognised in the eventual solution from the point of view that there is merit in considering that this become a regular evaluation step (say every 5-6 years), out of synch with council elections, using the key criteria that have driven this process as a means to regularly reassess whether there is a need to periodically update local government boundaries to reflect new thinking on council governance (equity, proximity and transparency) and economic optimisation across the region.
5. I have not seen any conversation about other specific aspects of governance and economies of scale that could be part of this, for example Natural Resource Management at a regional level is by a separate body, is that the best model? Another example is the Southern Waste Strategy Authority which (whilst a product of the 12 councils) is also at arm's length. Should this revision of Local Government in Southern Tasmania also explore the benefits of centralisation of these functions with STCA? It could also be asked that if we move to 5 councils, does Tasmania need 3 regional scale local government authorities? Given the leadership shown by STCA in this matter and others my current view would be no, but should be revisited once the chosen model from this process has been in place and can be reviewed.
6. There is merit in considering the best way to deal with the large expanses of State owned and controlled land, particularly in the protected area estate that are currently incorporated into Local government Areas but in reality do not reflect a core focus of local government, for example the Wilderness World Heritage Area and Macquarie Island.
7. In terms of the inevitable merger of Huon Valley Council and Kingborough, I can understand concerns regarding community identity loss and reduction in local leadership. I do not believe that these reflect the momentum of the communities though which, from my perspective, are becoming more connected due to increased municipal services available either in Huonville or

Kingston that are reducing the need to travel to Hobart, except for a vitally important aspect, employment. I feel that the benefits of this particular merger far outweigh the disadvantages.

8. I would like to see more detail beyond discussion on where the boundaries should be set and see what transitional arrangements will be applied to recognise there will be impacts on family's, employees. Also what systems or standards will be created/specified to ensure that the solution does represent the best outcome for the southern region and for Tasmania more broadly. For example, how will this outcome recognise and reflect "Tasmania Together"?

Yours sincerely,

Cygnet

# 84

To whom it concerns: With regards to the options presented as to the configuration of the STCA I would prefer the option of:

'A Single Southern Tasmanian Regional Council'

The main negative that 'big' might be 'too big' with regards to distance travelling I feel could be over come by having representation on the ground in the shape of councillors working from a home office who would form a network across the areas that would be hard to manage from a centralised location. These councillors would have access to a high-speed computer network with access to all the main council systems and be able to take part in meetings via Teleconferencing (nothing new about this). This simple networking would also give the local populations the confidence that they were being considered and not overlooked. Less duplication resulting in better business efficiencies and cost savings should be the preferred approach to take Tasmania forward.

Regards

Hobart.

# 85

Hi  
in regard to the options available I would be in favour of firstly, the Single Southern Tasmanian Regional Council or secondly The Separate Eastern & Western Shores Amalgamation.

I live at Port Arthur xxxxxxxx on a State Highway and get no services whatsoever from our Council, despite this my rates have doubled in the short time I have lived here. the only service we did get from the council was their responsibility to maintain the TV repeater station, which after a year of lies they told me at a meeting that the tower only serviced about 100 people at that they had no intention of maintaining it. WE also have a council inspired speed limit halfway to Hobart that should never have been adopted. I also have a copy of the 2010/11 budget estimate for the council that proves we pay rates out here mainly to keep people in jobs, with ridiculous wages and administration costs to service such a small place, there is no money apart from Gov handouts to spend in the area.

Democracy is a good thing But as they say you can have too much of a good thing, and we in this country are paying through the nose for unviable and unaccountable Government, both Local and State the sooner it is thinned out the better.

Regards

Port Arthur 7182

# 86

South Hobart 7004

September 6, 2011

SUBMISSION TO INDEPENDENT PANEL ON STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SOUTHERN TASMANIA

Dear Madam Chairwoman,

I favour the Greater Hobart option out of the four under consideration.

Hobart is fortunate among the capital cities to be small enough to unite its urban administration and planning. Such amalgamation would benefit social cohesion and enrich the city's identity by recognising its different parts. This is almost a bigger benefit, in my view, than the rationalisation of costs that has your review.

Having previously lived on Bruny Island, I support the Channel and Bruny being reallocated to Huon Valley Council. This is a cohesive region, with sporting, family, historical ties, geographical similarities and similar economic and leisure activities.

I am not so sure about Richmond going to Sorell. Richmond would seem to have more affinity with the Southern Midlands, like its neighbour Campania, all being largely agricultural and traditionally grazing areas. Sorell has taken on a more outer suburban character in the past decade.

A better merger with Sorell would be Tasman, as Sorell is the main shopping and service centre for the Peninsula. This is not about identity but regular engagement.

Regarding the lower East Coast, this is outside your remit, but a single East Coast council, stretching from Orford to Eddystone Point has its appeal. The area is almost homogenous in its activities and geography. There is a problem of distance, though. The midway point for a council would involve nearly two hours' drive from the furthest extremities of the coast.

I dislike the idea of a single mega-council very much. Having lived in a small community, I know the importance of identity, approachability, a shared sense of community based on similar pursuits, pleasures and problems. Community engagement is a tangible asset in civic affairs. And while all the points I've made above about particular regions might be said to apply to the whole of southern Tasmania – that we share a strong identity - there is a more intimate sense of identity that works at local government level. It's to do with habitual interaction within a community, perhaps.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

# 87

The proposal to amalgamate councils is an extremist and narrow minded view of the world.

The fact is that amalgamation already has seen degradation of services for remote areas.

For example.

My Father lives in Dover.

Dover is part of the Huon Council.

He lives in xxxxxx and has done so for more than 10 years.

The area he lives in was a paddock that was made into a subdivision like how most new subdivisions are created.

Gravel roads where installed.

Only part of the road is graded regularly by the council.

There is access to two other houses on the ungraded road that runs past his property.

The title to the road is with the Huon Council.

The original people that created the subdivision are old and poor.

The council in its wisdom thinks that they should pay for the subdivisions road to be sealed and gutted.

I repeat this old couple is old and poor and this will never ever be done.

The council has responsibility for the road and refuse to seal it or grade all of it.

My dad pays rates to the council for upkeep of roads. His rates are not discounted due to the fact that the road that runs past his house is not maintained and therefore he subsidises all other rate payers.

With storm water that they want to charge him for runs into a creek and into the sea. There is no council services being provided for in this case.

Councils are there to assist in the maintenance and formation of services to rate payers.

The bigger the council gets the reduction in services that do occur.

Corporations require CEO's that are paid far too much than what they are worth. Most are just into empire building.

The creation of southern water has already proven to be more costly and is raising the cost of living.

People do not provide feedback to yourselves because it is your aim to go about change at all costs. No business case exists that is every complete and takes into account all the possible issues that exist for the services that councils provide.

Tenders will be awarded to single organisations and areas will not be supported.

Another example is the highways in the south compared to the North West of the state.

These are just small examples.

I have given you some feedback. And what you are suggesting is just wrong and ill informed.

# 88

Dear sir I am very much in favour of one southern council, one that would include Southern Water,

- 1 One council would save money
- 2 make better long term decisions
- 3 have some power to stand up to our present weak ineffective state government

4 have a strong voice to stop all the infrastructure monies (roads) going to the North west

PS. other than elected aldermen, council employees, and elected governments, the majority of people would be in favour

1 alderman would lose their status and perks

2 elected governments don't want powerful councils

3 guarantee all council jobs for 10 years

# 89

Having considered all proposed options and discussed the issues with family and friends, I conclude the following:

- . All existing councils should be abolished.
- . State to be divided into four[4] council regions, i.e. South, North, East and North West.
- . Each of the councils to be administered independently
- . Establish uniform planning and building regulations.
- . By-Laws to be established by each individual council to suit local requirements

Obviously there would be many issues and administrative requirements to be processed. This would need to be in compliance with State Government standards and laws.

The cost savings as a result of minimising bureaucratic overload would be quite considerable. In addition this would be a direct path for a more efficient and effective service to ratepayers.

Single southern council is my preference.

Yours sincerely,  
Glenorchy City Council Rate Payer.

# 90

Hello,

Without going too much into justification etc, here is my view on local Tas Councils. I am a ratepayer in the Hobart City Council currently.

Although I am by no means set in stone in this particular view, I would think perhaps 9 or so councils, as follows:

1. Southern Tas
2. Greater Hobart
3. Midlands
4. East Coast
5. West Coast
6. Greater Launceston
7. North West Council
8. King Island
9. Flinders Island

This might even be too many, but would be a vast improvement on the current model. I am currently in Western Australia for 6 months, in the City of Greater Geraldton who have gone through two amalgamations in the past 5 years, and are looking for further amalgamations with neighboring shires. It seems to have been very successful over here and well received.

Thanks,

# 91

I support of the Option 2 concept of one Council to replace the 12 existing councils in Southern Tasmania.

Your web site questions if a single Council would be too big but from my own experience of living in Brisbane for 27 years and also working for several years as an xxxxx with the Brisbane City Council, Brisbane functioned very well well (and delivered a far greater range of essential public services than any existing Tasmanian council currently delivers) with a Council comprising a Mayor and 24 Councillors administering the municipal services for a population of over 2,000,000 which is equivalent to roughly 1 councillor for every 83,500 persons.

For a single Southern Tasmanian Council, I would suggest a Council consisting of 1 Mayor elected by popular vote by all voters and no more than 14 Councillors each representing a division with a population of around 18,500 to 20,000.

The new Council should be required to adopt the existing fair rating system that is used by Brighton Council as well as that Council's efficient business and operation models and their excellent manner in which they deal with the general public on council matters.

I would also suggest that the headquarters of the amalgamated Council be located at the present location of the Brighton Council where there is room to ultimately expand buildings if necessary.

Existing Council offices and depots in the existing 12 Council Areas should be retained wherever possible as long as they can be economically justified to provide work accommodation for various departments of the amalgamated Council, a shopfront point of contact between the Council and local communities, to retain as much as possible local employment and quick response to community needs and as local community centres.

An essential component of the Council amalgamations must be the disbandment of the State Government's disastrous Southern Water Authority experiment and the responsibility for water and wastewater services placed back under the control of the new amalgamated Council where the elected council would be responsible to the ratepayers for the delivery of water and sewerage services instead of the Southern Water Board of faceless bureaucrats that are presently totally out of touch with what consumers want, have created a significant unnecessary cost base with their duplicated administrative and billing systems that is being passed on to consumers in their higher charges, have created a number of disincentives for people to build and develop property and have alienated a large number consumers through their abysmal lack of any proper public relations.

I and many others are becoming heartily fed up with what seems to be never ending thrust by Governments (Federal, State and Local), Government GBE's, and the army of bureaucrats they employ to take away our democratic freedoms, increase their dominance and control of how we live our lives, and dramatically increase charges for essential services at rates that are many times greater than the Government's official rate of inflation to the point where even average middle income families are now struggling to meet those payments and their quality of enjoyment of life is suffering; whilst Pensioners, Self Funded Retirees on fixed or decreasing incomes courtesy of the

GFC, low income families and the disadvantaged people in the community are living in real fear of the next essential services bill that lands in their mail box.

When it gets to this and the rapidly increasing proportion of financially struggling people in the community see politicians, councillors and bureaucrats receiving \$150,000 plus salary packages and driving luxury new taxpayer or ratepayer funded cars, then it is obvious that there is something very wrong with the system that is called governance and it is time for radical changes and the excesses that have been taken by those who are at the top levels of responsibility must be cut back to something that is more consistent with what the community can afford.

The whole council amalgamation exercise must be designed to deliver efficient essential public services at the lowest possible affordable cost to all ratepayers in Southern Tasmania and to achieve this the cost cutting and increased efficiencies have to start at the top by getting rid of over governance, unnecessary laws and regulations, inefficient bureaucratic procedures, and inefficient management that continues to promote and support unnecessary and inefficient practices.

## 92

I own property in Brighton & Clarence Councils and reside in Howrah. One single southern council is definitely the best option, we have too many councils and associated costs at present with 12 councils for 250000 people.

Regards,

## 93

Dear Ms Munro and fellow panel members,

Having worked for Local Government in a staff role some years ago , I have seen huge amounts of monetary waste in the form of duplication of assets, staff and logistics.

In an area as small as Southern Tasmania with an extremely small population in comparison to some mainland municipalities, I just can not understand why the idea of amalgamating the entire southern Tasmanian local government municipalities into one has not already been done.

I look at vehicles on our roads in the southern area and am quite perplexed as to the high number of council vehicles being used. Surely, the work of some officers is being duplicated under the current system and could be better utilised under the one strong council. Council vehicles and plant could be reduced. Time management needs looking at. Rates will decrease with this as expenses fall.

Secondly, although not a local government issue, I see no reason why the water and sewage utilities can not operate as one, instead of having 3 companies doing one job.

In summary, Yes amalgamate all southern municipalities into one.

Cheers

Old Beach

# 94

To Whom it May Concern

I support the further rationalisation of local government in Tasmania. As I am a resident of West Hobart, I really only feel qualified to comment on the situation locally. First and foremost, I support the amalgamation of the three greater Hobart councils (Glenorchy, Clarence and Hobart) into one large council. At present we have Hobart City Council bearing the brunt of responsibility of looking after important facilities that are iconic to people across the greater Hobart area. In particular I have in mind such resources as the Wellington Park, the Domain Aquatic Centre, Athletics ground and the Botanical Gardens. In addition, there are events like the Taste of Tasmania and Salamanca Markets that provide wide appeal to all those living in greater Hobart, not just Hobart ratepayers. As far as young people are concerned, there is no facility more popular across the Hobart region than the North Hobart Skate Park beside Elizabeth College - nor anything approaching its size and complexity.

It would be far more equitable if the people of greater Hobart bore their share of paying for and looking after these resources and developing more recreational facilities and parks for all of the residents in the area. Each area has its strengths and would benefit by a better rationalisation of services and a capacity to work more cohesively across the greater Hobart area.

Yours sincerely

West Hobart 7000

# 95

One southern council is not an option at all.

The council would be too big and would not be able to address all the needs of the different communities. How would resources be allocated between city and rural? There would be arguments and disagreements and this would not work.

The best option would be to keep all the major city council's who are set up for future sustainability and incorporate the smaller council's and their areas. I believe option three or option four are much more suitable and would achieve cost savings and still benefit the community.

Cheers

# 96

Dear Panel,

I refer to today's (7/9/2011) report in "The Mercury" which indicates (current) majority support for the "single southern Council" option. This, of course, is to be expected as I suspect that equal weighting has been applied to each response - regardless of whether the respondent is from an outer rural or city area.

As the high population density around the city areas will no doubt impact dramatically on the number of responses from those areas relative to the number of responses from the outer rural areas, it is imperative that a weighting relative to area population density needs to be applied based on the respondent's location.

I trust this will be given your due consideration - and perhaps see some "balanced" media reporting on this significant issue.

Regards

MIDWAY POINT 7171

# 97

I suggest one council for the South. I have had experience with Brisbane City Council on 4 different issues over the past 4 yrs.

On every occasion each issue was dealt with co-operatively, with the utmost efficiency, and each matter was resolved commencing with those who staff the main switchboard. I was very impressed.

I can see no reason why this cannot be replicated in this region which has such a smaller population.

# 98

Dear Councils,

I strongly believe that a single council for the southern area would better represent the people of these council areas. After working interstate for government agencies for several years i moved back to Tassie and took up a job with a local council. I was amazed at the inefficiency caused due to the small scale of services.

The benefits of becoming one big council would be huge.

The only reason this has not happened before now is that the only disbenefit would be to the decision makers (redundancies) who would need to approve this amalgamation.

Regards

# 99

RE. Options for future council amalgamations in southern Tasmania:

We wish to express our very strong support for Option 3 (Greater Hobart) for the following reasons:

The long-standing split of the greater city of Hobart into eastern shore and western shore Council components, separated only by the course of the Derwent River, has always represented a very artificial fragmentation of the management of Tasmania's capital city, which surely deserves to be managed as a single entity and would most likely benefit and strengthen from such an approach.

On the other hand, the dominantly urban - capital city environment of greater Hobart (i.e. at least the current council areas of Clarence, Hobart and Glenorchy) is collectively very distinct in current management requirements and infrastructure priorities from areas beyond the outer boundaries of the greater Hobart city area. In most cases there is a very obvious change to an environment closer to semi-rural in the latter areas, with associated significant differences in management and infrastructure priorities compared with an urban environment. A few outlying areas, such as Brighton and the urban part of Kingborough may need careful analysis as to whether they most logically belong in a new Greater Hobart Council area (bearing in mind the concept of an integrated capital city council), or otherwise.

For the above reasons, we also strongly oppose Option 2 (single Southern Tasmanian Regional Council), Option 4 (separate eastern and western shore councils for Hobart, with regional amalgamations), and Option 1 (status quo with shared services).

Thanks for the opportunity to comment,

Lindisfarne, TAS

# 100

Hello I personally support the idea of one council for Southern Tasmania.

Using Tweed shire Council as an example:

From their website:

Tweed Shire covers 1303 square kilometres and adjoins the NSW Local Government Areas of Byron, Lismore and Kyogle, with the NSW/Queensland border to its north where it divides the twin towns of Tweed Heads and Coolangatta.

With 37 kms of natural coastline, the Tweed Shire boasts a unique and diverse environment.

The number of constituents in that area is huge and they still easily manage the area, with far more consultancy and transparency. Souther Tasmania has such a small population there is absolutely no need for so many different Councils.

Thank you,

# 101

Hi,

After reading the report I would like to voice my approval for option 2.

I feel that although this is a large area we have quite a small population, which would be much better served by an amalgamation of resources.

It is time for us all to work together!

Mt Stuart, Tas, 7000

# 102

I think it is ridiculous to have so many councils in Hobart. We have such a small population so I believe there should be only one governing the greater Hobart area.

Taroona

# 103

I favour a combination of the Greater Hobart and Regional Amalgamations - consolidating Hobart, Clarence, Glenorchy and Kingborough.

Perhaps some alternatives for the surrounding municipalities e.g combining Glamorgan - Spring Bay, Lower Midlands, Brighton; Richmond, Sorell and Tasman; Derwent Valley, Central Highlands Channel, Bruny, Huon

Lindisfarne

# 104

Dear Sir/Madam

As a relative newcomer to Tasmania (from WA), I would like to express our continuing concerns about the local council structure in Tasmania.

We live in an older area and feel totally neglected by our local council, which spends most of the ratepayers' money building smart sports centres and skateboard parks for the youngsters (which, within months of completion have been covered with rubbish and graffiti), in the newer and trendier parts of its empire. In the meantime, our local roads and parks are sadly neglected and our twice a year kerbside pick-up has been cancelled.

The Mandarins in our local council treat ratepayers with arrogance and disdain, and hide behind rules instead of using common sense. There is a lack of transparency and certainly an unwillingness to accept responsibility. In reply to a recent telephone enquiry, I was advised that I could expect an answer in 'two to three weeks'! And try ringing our local council after 4pm!

Our small Town Council in Perth provided an excellent service to all ratepayers and it was a pleasure to visit the Council Offices because, unlike the office here, staff were pleasant, helpful and positive and seemed to at least understand that their wages had some connection with ratepayers!

It is very true that we get the local councils we deserve and there are many people here who express little interest in voting at council elections, because where we live there are no longer 'wards' so we have no representation.

Given the current concerns expressed by ratepayers who have to fund 12 councils to administer a measly 250,000 people, could we not take this opportunity to have a really thorough look at the problem? We need a single council that is properly and professionally managed/administered in the interests of the ratepayers. And this council should have a small number of local depots to service the outposts of the empire. That is all that can be afforded, or is necessary, for our small population.

Yours,

# 105

Dear Sir/Madam

In response to the suggested change to councils, I would advocate the merger of all councils to form one single southern council. To have 12 councils for a population of 250,000 is a waste of resources. The Gold Coast Shire has a greater population for one council. Having dealt with the Hobart, Clarence and Sorell councils for developing projects, there are different rules regarding planning applications and building applications. One council and one set of rules makes not only common sense but a combination of the other council resources might actually speed up these timely processes.

Regards

# 106

I support the option for a single southern council.

# 107

One council with a flat rates user pays system for the whole of tasmania please.

# 108

Dear Manager, I live in Margate. I think it would be counterproductive to split Kingborough with its urban area going to a large metropolitan council and the residual combined with Huon.

Under Tasmania's hare Clark system of government, amalgamation of whole Municipalities is politically realistic but splitting and regrouping is dicey.

I see real benefit in having a southern regional authority made up of the current 12 (or amalgamated) Councils devoted to regional level planning and decision-making. But I believe local planning and decision-making is better achieved with present municipalities or preferably with some combinations to improve the balance in populations and assist efficiency.

Sorry, but I don't favour nominating any of the four options presented without having detailed cost-benefit analyses done and present for comparison and comment. In my view the general economic and efficiency statements made in the Options Paper are not adequate to make an informed judgment.

Looking at the various figures in Saul Eslake's paper my guess of an option that could be worthwhile examining the feasibility of in detail is as follows:

1. A Southern Region Council (with representation from the individual councils) – mandated for regional planning and decision-making related to e.g. transport, industry, National & State level Policy
2. For local planning and services, the following Municipal Councils:
  - Hobart
  - Clarence
  - Glenorchy
  - Kingborough and Huon amalgamated

- Brighton, Derwent valley, Southern Midlands, and Central Highlands amalgamated
- Sorell, Glamorgan-Spring Bay, and Tasman amalgamated

In addition, I believe there should be a couple of financial equalization schemes for the State Government to operate:

1. A type of State Grants Scheme to provide equalisation funds to Councils taking into account their respective requirements for environmental services, social services and rate bases.
2. A type of sinking fund contributed to by various parties to accumulate funds required for Councils to fight, with immediate action, outbreaks of newly identified pests and diseases. This type of pests and diseases sinking fund would be analogous to bushfire fighting emergency funding, where various parties contribute on a regular basis to accumulate funds needed in emergency wildfire situations. Having such a sinking fund will enable Councils to draw on funds in emergencies to attack outbreaks of pests and diseases when they are small but recognised as potentially devastatingly costly if left to spread without having early action taken.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment. I'd be willing to participate if any further discussion opportunities you decide to arrange.

Margate TAS 7054

# 109

There are a few issues I wish to raise:

1. Costing of the Review and subsequent actions
2. Membership of the new local government body
3. Servicing benchmarks

Firstly, I am a ratepayer in the Glenorchy City Council and in the Tasman Municipal Council and I own both houses, and I would like to make some observations.

I read that only 70 responses had been received recently on this review all focusing on one greater Hobart Council. I agree with a greater Hobart council. This is the body where a new greater Hobart City Council which also comprises Glenorchy, Brighton, most of Clarence and urban Kingston. I particularly like the idea of keeping the rural councils just that. They understand their areas much better than a city council. I would suggest there should be an opportunity to be involved in a greater purchasing power by tagging onto greater Hobart, and perhaps a sharing of other resources ie machinery (less duplication and cost savings as stated).

1. I am always dismayed at the way reviews are undertaken, the timeframes, and the cost to taxpayers for such reviews and payments made to the body undertaking the review. Such costs will invariably be passed on to the ratepayers in new and improved services in the locale! There ultimately is no benefit to the ratepayer. Also under one greater body there is the likelihood of rates being equalised. At present there is a great deal of difference between the greater City Councils Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence and Kingborough. I would not like to see the higher rate level being adopted.

2. Membership should be a varied mix of existing aldermen, no doubt already a topic on the agenda. I would like to see a Chair appointed from within the aldermen ranks - not voted by ratepayers. I also would like to see a high merit entry standard for aldermen - that they must have at least their own home, worked in commercial enterprise (not public servants, or university graduates). I do not relish the thought of 23 year olds having an impact on the rate structure when they have spent most of a sheltered debt free life. Simplistic, yes; logical, yes. The chair of the greater Hobart council should visit at least annually the other councils and sit in on a normal council meeting (and vice versa) to observe and provide advice where appropriate.

3. Rigid benchmarks should be maintained once the amalgamation occurs. More audits be undertaken in all areas and more accountability of grass roots council employees and council themselves. They should be reportable to the State Government minister for Local Government. Yes that is a cost factor but significantly important to ensure such a large body - and even the smaller ones - remain accountable to the ratepayers.

There will be areas where red tape is too strict and others where the tape needs tightening or at least maintained at a constant - this should be one of the overhauls.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to have a voice. I wish the review a good outcome and trust the benefits as stated will actually occur.

# 110

I wish to throw my backing behind the idea of an amalgamated council unit for southern Tasmania. This state is suffering due to over representation and a parochial approach to these types of matters by some of our representatives at local and state level. At the very least a greater Hobart council will get us some of the way if a whole of southern Tasmania idea doesn't get through.

While Tasmanians are considering changes such as these perhaps we can also consider doing away with the ridiculous 3 water corporations we currently suffer through and move to a single Tasmanian water corporation. If Large cities like Sydney and for that matter greater London can get by with 3 or fewer companies then it is an outrage to think that 500,000 people need 3.

# 111

Hi,  
It would be so progressive & visionary to have one local government rather than 12 municipalities for Southern Tasmania. As a small business person, local property investor & resident I am always getting frustrated with the disparities between each municipality. The present situation has been detrimental for long term development for the State.

One local government would not only be cost effective but would allow all resources to be used wisely for a big picture development of Southern Tasmania. It would be very effective to deal with consistent town planning policies that will improve development & as a result increase productivity & employment.

Kind Regards

Copping

# 112

I strongly favour the option which amalgamates the 12 existing bodies into one.

South Hobart  
Tasmania

# 113

Good morning,

Thanks for the opportunity to lodge a few comments. As an ex Victorian I have experienced the council amalgamation program under the Kennet government and whilst naturally a lot of opposition was expressed initially, with the governments political will to proceed with the plan ultimately proved it very successful in achieving a streamlining and modernisation of local government, introduction of massive economies of scale, efficiencies, tidy and efficient administration which in my opinion led to greatly improved services across the board. From a Tasmanian perspective I am staggered that we have some 29 or so councils servicing a population of a little over 500,000. Amalgamation of any sort, even two or three councils would provide significant opportunity for driving down costs of local government and building economies of scale, cost savings for rate payers and better quality services. One could argue that Tasmania only needs two councils, one North and one South but I suspect that that move would be just too radical. I don't think it would be too difficult to adopt a conservative council amalgamation plan that would see the establishment of, say, 4 councils (probably still too many) - North/North West, East Coast, Central (the smallest but could include Brighton) and South. It would go without saying that the economic benefit to Tasmania in adopting such a plan would be significant not to mention the benefit(s) to the people of Tasmania. As a "new" Tasmanian I hope your review has impact and that our government has the political "bottle" to act upon your recommendations. If the state wants to be anything more than a bit player in Australia's economic future, introduction of a council amalgamation program is a great first move.

Thanks for the chance to have a say

Eaglehawk Neck 7179  
Tasmania

# 114

I am a strong supporter of the idea of a single council for the southern Tasmanian municipalities. Savings made in certain areas of administration can be redirected to carry out other important work.

A similar exercise in New Zealand carried out several decades ago was very successful.

# 115

Hi, I believe this is a very timely discussion. It is unfortunate that it is restricted to just southern councils as it really needs a state wide approach. However, a start needs to be made somewhere. Option 1 has been successful to date in part but is unlikely to achieve the efficiencies sort because it is subject to the discretion of Councillors and Council staff and their competing interests and priorities. It's seems to me difficult to legislate to make it work successfully.

One area of improved co ordination not mentioned is the move to common IT systems for rates, payroll, HR and land information. There are surely economies of scale and efficiencies to be gained in this area, not least improved buying and negotiating power with suppliers.

Option 3 has considerable merit - a Hobart centric Council, but there also needs to be more consolidation of other Councils. Option 2 also has merit, but if half the state (from a population perspective) were under the one Council what is the role of the state government? Option 4 is really more of the same as we currently have but on different boundaries.

The real test of Option 2 and to a lesser extent Option 3 is the question of local representation. There are currently too many Councils but they do provide a high degree of local representation. Any change would have to try to ensue good representation but with a lot less Councillors. I think this is a critical issue. The discussion papers talk about different models such as precincts, place management and community forums but there needs to be funds allocated and protected together with the necessary skills and good will to make them work.

The asset management paper suggests that better planned asset maintenance can be more cost effective than just dealing with problems as they arise. This seems to make good sense but relies on having a good handle on the condition of asset, which I suspect most Councils don't have. The asset replacement issue still seems to be based on an accounting asset replacement model rather than looking at and using asset condition information.

Another important question is what do we expect from our Councils. Hobart for example provides a wide range of community and cultural services, other Councils do not. I'm not sure that this addressed anywhere in the information provided to date.

# 116

Hello,

I would like to propose a model that works on a variation of option 4.

I have worked in local government (Glenorchy Council) for over ten years, plus also in the past worked in state and federal government, private industry and as a contractor.

From what I have see of Council management, the smaller regional Councils have great initiative and connection to their ratepayers, but lack specialist skills and economies of scale that would make strategic management methods achievable. To that end, I would like to see local offices maintained to connect with the people and obviously diverse working crews, but central coordination of Corporate Services roles and Governance. Since the Onstream model has failed, it appears to me that the existing larger Councils can provide these services across a larger area. One of the major issues with Water and Sewer reform, was that the operations and control was taken away from those Councils that were doing a good job and therefore was to the detriment of those ratepayers (as the water rates have raised since then for no improvement in services). The nature of operations between Hobart, Clarence and Glenorchy varies quite a bit for historical, demographic and financial reasons and any restructure involving these large Councils would involve significant disruption. To summarise my model, we would have three STCA Councils managed from Hobart, Clarence and Glenorchy with the following boundaries:

- Hobart, Kingborough, Huon Valley (98,485)
- Clarence, Sorell, Tasman, Glamorgan-Spring Bay (72,141)
- Glenorchy, Brighton, Derwent Valley, Southern Midlands, Central Highlands (78,849)

The key areas managed by the central Councils would be:

- Human Resources (including Training)
- Finance
- Information Management (including Records)
- Information Technology
- Risk Management, Insurance and OH&S
- Purchasing (still devolving minor items)
- Governance
- Customer Service (including call centres)

- Marketing and Publicity
- Fleet
- Tendering
- Physical Security and Monitoring
- Asset Management

Hope you can consider this as an alternative model.

There would also need to be a closer integration between state and local government, to further the economies of scale and prevent the “cowboy” or “reinventing the wheel” view that is linked to free agents within the government system currently. As a more radical change, the greatly reduced number of elected local government members would have a voice in state government as well, helping to avoid the friction between the tiers of government while increasing the diversity of representation and opinion.

Please note that this is my personal opinion and does not reflect the view of Glenorchy City Council in any way.

Thanks for your time.

# 117

We strongly favour Option 2 - 'A Single Southern Council' because it would provide a sufficient financial base to -

1. Develop well argued and documented submissions for council advancement in negotiations with the State Government.
2. Employ highly motivated and qualified planning staff to co-ordinate infrastructure (roads, bridges, parks, cemeteries, water, sewerage) for the whole region
3. Provide a better approach to the management and promotion of entertainment venues (DEC), swimming pools, football/cricket venues etc.
4. Allow the re-entry of the management of water and sewerage to council

5. Permit standardisation of planning and building codes, street lighting, traffic signage and rubbish removal and treatment
6. Promote a unified tourism policy for the region
7. Overcome bickering of existing councils over the allocation of resources.

As well as the positives set out above, amalgamation and success of all the southern councils into one, could be used as an example to amalgamate councils in the north and north west into two councils - which would mean three councils for Tasmanian - in line with the telephone books.

NOTES:

- (a) Fears by smaller councils that they would not have any say/be heard in a larger single council situation would be overcome by the use of a 'ward' system of representation - such as in the UK.
- (b) Reduction of the current number of Tasmanian councils to three (3) could ultimately lead to abolition of the state government - following the UK model - which in Tasmania's economic situation - would lead to substantial financial savings.

# 118

Dear Sir/Madam,

Following your two page advertisement in the Mercury about a fortnight ago, I am submitting my evaluation. (It is nice to be asked!)

Having read all the proposed plans for re-distribution of southern councils, I favour the Greater Hobart model.

It seems really wasteful and inefficient to have so many councils for small populations, (though it will be tough on those who will be made redundant by changes).

MT. RUMNEY 7170 Tas

# 119

LAUDERDALE 7021

Dear Sir/Madam,

I've lived on the Eastern Shore since I arrived in Tasmania 37 years ago. I have always thought that we are over-governed at every level. The whole Tasmanian population is only about the size of a city council in many other parts of the world.

There is merit in the proposal to change since we should be looking to be more efficient with all our resources. I favour the Greater Hobart idea but only because I sense that Tasmania with its entrenched historical thinking would have concerns that people living as far away as Ouse, Southport or Bicheno might feel they were not being heard. Not an insoluble problem but one to be noted. I am not opposed to the larger southern council but then I do live near to Hobart. We would need to be careful that the best current Council practices were utilised and this would, no doubt, take some working through but I think it needs to be done.

Best wishes in your endeavours at reform. Not an easy task but we need to drag ourselves into the 21st Century.

Yours sincerely,

# 120

I like option 3 where there is one "city" based council to deal with the issues that affect a major city. You then have merged regional Councils to deal with the issues that affect country areas.

We do have a lot of Councils for our region and cutting back to one large Council for Southern Tasmania is probably going a bit far but Option 3 allows some identity to stay with regional areas.

There would still be nothing stopping this model of Council amalgamations from still sharing resources.

Regards,

Sorell

# 121

I am an incomer (since March 2003), formerly of Melbourne, and with about 12 years having worked in Hobart in the 1970s and in PNG in the 1980s.

My main attitude to these sorts of mergers is to oppose the One Big Council option on principle that (i) it removes attention to and control over local matters from local people, and that (ii) 'Big' is not necessarily 'Better'.

The guide here is the principle of subsidiarity -

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subsidiarity\\_\(Catholicism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subsidiarity_(Catholicism))-

which, although RC in origin, is not simply a religious principle.

People whose kerbs need repair and whose gutters need cleaning need to have some local official's ear to bend and arm to twist, rather than be fobbed off to some dude in Hobart.

Another principle is that these sorts of changes have been done elsewhere, and that there are lessons for us - one thing to avoid is another failed instance of "Tasmania leading the Nation / the hemisphere / the World" fiasco. There are probably no new wheels here for us to invent.

Metro-Melbourne and metro-Brisbane (albeit with far bigger populations) offer two opposing models for capital city local government: the former has many LGAs around a CBD city council; the latter has one big metro area council.

In the mid-1990s, the Kennett government reduced Victoria's LGAs from 210 to 78<sup>^</sup>, and metro-area LGAs from 53 to 26, largely because many small ones were claimed to be uneconomical or unsustainable. Quirkily, the Borough of Queenscliffe at the Heads, with a current population of about 3300, survived these changes, although the equally quirky City of Fitzroy - think Squizzy Taylor, Kevin Murray and Mary McKillop - did not. It could be a precedent for preserving local areas so distinct as, say, the Tasman Peninsula (about the same population of Queenscliffe) or Brighton (haven't seen or read a bad word about this LGA).

Victoria also has a number of unincorporated areas, such as coastal islands, which are not part of any local government and which are directly administered by the State - this could be a model for not dumping on local ratepayers that huge area of Tasmania in various reserved and therefore uninhabited areas. It looks as if most of the western areas of the Huon Valley and Derwent Valley LGAs should be unincorporated areas.

Tasmania also has similarities to the US state of Alaska, in that both are separated from their Mainland / 'Lower 48'. Both are largely uninhabited; both have two main areas of development, and both have large areas which are largely uninhabited and / or reserved -

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unorganized\\_Borough](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unorganized_Borough)

Hope that We the People benefit from your deliberations and recommendations.

^ one merged LGA NE of Melbourne has since been split into an urban LGA and a rural LGA.

INVERMAY TAS 7248

# 122

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

I worked in local government, in Tasmania, at senior management levels for almost 40 years. In that time I worked for three councils which have since been amalgamated (St Leonards, Lilydale and Richmond). In addition, I was City Manager of the Glenorchy Council and Town Clerk of Clarence. For 10 years I was Executive Director of the Local Government Association of Tasmania and I can attest to the especially trying times that local government endured during the failed 1998 review of councils. I have been national President of the Local Government Managers Association and am a life member of that organisation as well as the Local Government Association of Tasmania. Drawing on those various experiences, I can only describe that getting local government to agree on any sort of reform is considerably more difficult than herding cats. Indeed, it is all but impossible but I hasten to add that I believe it is unfair to expect councillors to preside what is effectively their potential demise in these sorts of debates.

Looking back over my years in the Launceston region, I have vivid recollections of the acrimony that existed between the Lilydale, St Leonards, Launceston and then Beaconsfield Councils (now West Tamar) on the merits and otherwise of united or amalgamated local government. Arguments were premised on such matters as:-

- Should all communities under a single conurbation share in the cost of providing regional services?
- Would combined services produce better economies of scale?
- Advantages and disadvantages of planning physical and social infrastructure across the wider urban community;
- Would amalgamation of councils result in better services to communities?
- Would a single council achieve better overall land use and planning outcomes?
- And the list went on and on with monotonous acrimony and debate.

Finally, in the mid 1980s reform was achieved. Lilydale, St Leonards and Launceston were amalgamated to form what is now the Launceston Council. The improvements in governance, services, community facilities and planning that have occurred in Launceston since not only exceeded expectations at the time but were unimaginable. Launceston is unquestionably one, if not the best, example of strong and sustainable local government you can find. Regrettably, that 1980s reform stopped short of including the Beaconsfield Council which would have undoubtedly achieved even better outcomes for the Launceston and West Tamar communities. This shortcoming is still a thorn in the side when it comes to achieving optimal structural outcomes for the Launceston region and will always be considered as unfinished business.

Why do I bother raising this with the Panel? The answer is it offers up lessons of a Tasmanian experience that has direct relevance to the structural reform of local government in Southern Tasmania.

Forget about option one. Current boundaries were founded on the premise of how long it took to ride a horse from one community to another in a single day. Governance cost, administrative overheads and inefficiencies are sucking oxygen out of ratepayers and denying communities of service standards to which they are entitled. Resource sharing will only delay the inevitable. We already have a situation in the North West of the State where four councils share two General Managers, but still have normal governance and administrative structures in place. The ratepayers are being taken for bunnies. Why wouldn't these councils bite the bullet and manage their municipalities in the interests of their communities instead of the self interest of councillors? The current structure of local government in Southern Tasmania is redundant – the problem is most people, especially councils, do not realise it.

Undoubtedly, a single regional council produces the greatest savings of governance, executive management and administration costs. It also presents the best possible opportunities for financial efficiencies, better services and exemplary facilities. Infrastructure and land use planning would be optimized. It enables the maximum amount of resources to be applied to putting “rubber on the road” where it counts. So what are the down sides of this model? It all boils down to political imperatives. As much as this model can serve the best

interests of communities and ratepayers, it is inevitable that State politicians will see this model as a threat to their power bases and will therefore compromise the interests of ratepayers and communities for their own. This, regrettably, is a reality.

Next is the greater Hobart model. It is unquestionable that model recommended in the 1997 final report on local government rationalisation (not the “reconsideration report”) was the best option then and is now. The main difference between the 1997 recommendation and the Panel’s model is the inclusion of Kingston in greater Hobart. The 1997 recommendation was premised on Kingston (excluding Tarooma) becoming the hub of a new “Huon Valley and Channel” municipality. This option produces significant financial efficiencies (\$14 million per annum on 1997 values) and offers all the synergies for a cohesive and integrated “Hobart” community. I live in Clarence, but I consider myself a resident of Hobart. Hobart is my community of interest, it is my focus for my cultural, recreational, medical and social interests even though my friends and colleagues live in a number of the suburbs that make up the Hobart metropolitan area. It is important not to leave unfinished business like what has occurred in Launceston.

Finally, there is the Eastern shore verses Western shore option. This is reminiscent of the “The Martins and the Coys” – they was reckless mountain boys of *Western Fame* and never shall the twain meet!! Clarence has always said the Eastern Shore is different, just as successive Premiers and State Governments say that Tasmania is different. Deary me!!! Clarence in the past has not been able to accept that it is part of the broader Hobart community. Whilst Clarence, like any local community, has localised programs and social networks for residents, the hub for social, cultural and recreational opportunities rests within the broader metropolitan community in general and the Hobart CBD in particular. Living in a community is not limited or controlled by territorial boundaries or prejudices: instead it is about opportunities, ambitions and aspirations. The debate should not be about how do we protect and quarantine our local government administration. Instead, it should be how do we build, enhance and expand opportunities and aspirations for our residents. Councils should be arguing empowerment and how can we make life better for our residents.

In conclusion I reflect upon the many statements I have heard over the last 40 years about amalgamations. They are been along the lines of:-

- “Amalgamation is inevitable, but they have not come up with the right model”.
- “You can’t take the local out of local government”.
- “Our communities will not be represented”.
- “All you will get is bigger bureaucracies and additional costs”.
- “You will lose contact with your local representative”.
- “You will have to go into the City to pay your rates”.
- “Your local needs will be neglected”.
- “Who can you ring when something goes wrong”.
- “The community does not want this”.

These types of responses are as predictable as the sun coming up in the morning.

Councils are not known to pose questions like:-

- “How can we achieve integrated infrastructure planning and services provision for our metropolitan community at an affordable cost?”
- “How can we leverage off current communications to improve services to our communities?”
- “How can we optimize communication with our constituents?”
- “How can we reduce the cost of governance?”
- “How can we achieve better financial efficiencies and reduce rates?”
- “How can we be part of the metropolitan community in which we find ourselves situated?”
- “How can we lessen the financial load on our ratepayers?”

Regards and best wishes

ROSNY PARK

# 123

Dear Panel,

I don't think that any of the options put forward are suitable, my support would go to something along these lines -  
4 Southern councils

Amalgamate Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence and the part of Kingborough to the North of Kingston or thereabouts.

Amalgamate Kingborough (the part including Kingston and to the south of Kingston) and the Huon Valley.

Adding The Derwent Valley to this council as seems to be suggested in option 4 does not make sense as there is a geographical barrier between the two areas making it difficult to traverse between them.

Unless I am wrong most people wanting to travel between Huonville and New Norfolk would travel by Hobart. Amalgamating these areas would make it difficult to administer.

Amalgamate Sorell, Tasman and Spring Bay/Glamorgan

Amalgamate Derwent Valley, Southern Midlands, Central Highlands, rural Brighton.

At the time of forced council amalgamations in Victoria under Kennett there was a lot of dissatisfaction but it all worked out in the end and services improved, at least where I lived. Although I don't recall the rates being reduced.

# 124

I strongly support the move to a single southern council for greater Hobart and environs. Having worked in government and as a consultant advising councils, I'm reasonably well informed on the levels of duplication, mismanagement of resources and assets and skills paucity in management areas.

Greater consistency and more equitable funding of public/community facilities are key outcomes I'd value. In particular, I'd like to see a more even approach to public landscapes/urbanscapes for shopping precincts, public recreation/cultural areas. For example, cp Lower Sandy Bay remake to Howrah/Bellerive and Cornelian Bay.

Regards

# 125

We are over governed in Tasmania in all levels of government when one considers the total population is just over 500,000 and a large percentage of this is an aging population.

It is ridiculous that there are 12 councils in the south of Tasmania for 250,000 people particularly when one considers most properties would have at least 2 occupants or more so this is a false representation of the actual number of rate payers in each municipality and as a result the amount of revenue raised from rates.

A large municipality in Melbourne or Sydney has approx 400,000 - 500,000 residents with only one Council and they manage to govern successfully therefore I find it hard to believe 1 council could not manage to govern the south of the state, actually 1 mega council for the entire state would be ideal and hopefully it would then cut out this ridiculous north/south rivalry, which I might add is encouraged by members of state parliament by way of pork barreling in their respective electorates.

I am 69 years of age & have lived in Tasmania for 21 years and it is sad to see how some things never seem to change, this will never happen until there is a population of 1million with enough people coming into the state with a new way of thinking. One has only to look at Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada for a comparison. 30 years ago when I first visited the island it had the same population and industries as Tasmania. Now it is a vibrant thriving island with a population of just over 1m and no longer solely dependant on the old industries of timber, fish farming and mining.

Yours faithfully

Mountain River, 7109

# 126

Dear Panel Members,

Given that the local councils themselves initiated this review it would, to my mind represent a wasted opportunity (particularly with all the financial pressures business' and ratepayers are under) not take this moment and select the option that provides the greatest financial as well as planning benefits - that is " A Single Southern Tasmanian Regional Council.

Should this be a step to far for most, then in my view the "Greater Hobart" option is the most attractive second option. I do not believe having separate eastern and western shore representations is an appropriate way forward - it would simply duplicate the current north versus south mentality we have in this wonderful state.

Sincerely,



Hi Panel members.

Southern Tasmania is over governed. There is wastage, unnecessary duplication and too many elected representatives. Amalgamations are essential.

I thank the panel for their efforts and encourage them to see their efforts through to a more sensible and workable system of local government for Southern Tasmania.

The amalgamations to create Launceston City Council were difficult and parochialism reigned. However, I don't know of one Launcestonian who now thinks the amalgamations didn't improve the management, efficiency and the lobbying power of Launceston. To many it now seems natural and some wonder why the Northern Midlands Council was not included. This example may be useful to persuade some rural landowners with strong influence over their local council who may react to amalgamations between rural and urban areas.

I thoroughly support Option 2 with a single Southern Council. It will produce the greatest improvement in:

- efficient council operations for both service provision and administration,
- integrated planning and approvals system,
- reduced bureaucracy;
- improved efficiency for business when dealing with council matters;
- reduced number of unnecessary elected representatives; and
- improved lobbying power for the region.

Please keep up the good work. If improvements do not happen this time then the opportunity may never happen again in our lives.

Dear Independent Panel,

First, congratulations on your work to date and the challenge in presenting these four options. With the stated objective of improving effectiveness and efficiency of Local Government in the southern part of Tasmania, and the need to create a stronger voice in the national debate on issues affecting our region, Option One is unacceptable due to the lack of significant change. With 82% of the Southern Tasmanian population residing in the Hobart metropolitan area, there is a need to capture this as one local government entity to achieve the objectives stated above. The challenge is how to do that and retain the local decision-making on local issues.

Option 3 creates a Greater Hobart and this would improve the advocacy and the effectiveness and efficiency; but will leave a number of under resourced small councils who will be much worse off in the shadow of a more powerful and focused “Greater Hobart”. Even though they will have a local voice in the small council areas, they will not have the resources to address local or regional issues.

Option 4 does not address the greater metropolitan Hobart area by splitting the Eastern and Western shores. This will not provide the strength in advocacy needed on the national level. And, while creating some larger rural councils, their own sustainability still comes into question. Hobart metropolitan area needs to be one council.

Option 2 addresses all the concerns and objectives as stated by the panel. While one large council may be big; other large councils (Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, and Gold Coast, for example) are able to provide structure, processes and resources that address local issues through a collaborative effort in their local communities. Council offices and online access provide excellent means for working responsively with a large council, and the impact of 7th largest council in Australia would add tremendous strength to the regional challenges faced in areas like tourism, forestry, infrastructure, community service and asset maintenance. The advocacy would be the strongest in this model, and I believe that a large organisation can be developed to be responsive to local interests and not just retain a regional or metropolitan focus. Local representation on local issues would be one of the key objectives in creating a singular council.

Another option could be to take Option 3 with a Greater Hobart Council and then have a singular large rural council covering the 18% of the population in the surrounding areas. However, the challenge with this option is similar to Option 2 as the rural council would not have the resources to provide the services across such a large and disparate geographic area. So, considering the need for the development of a metropolitan Hobart Council, the rural communities would be better served by a single larger council as proposed in Option 2.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the options presented. The lack of strong regional organisations will also be addressed by finding an alternative structure to the current 12 Councils.

Sincerely,

# 129

My name is xxxxxxxx and I reside in Nubeena on the Tasman Peninsula.

I have read with great interest the panels views on the restructure of the Southern Councils and have discussed the issue with friends. We all feel that Option 2 appears to be the best way forward as the upside benefits out weigh the downside. We have no problem with the seat of power being in Hobart City. There could be a small regional office to allow local services to be operated.

The problem we have with our Tasman Council is that it is totally under resourced with part time contractors (1 day/week), large administration eating up most of the revenue from rate payers etc etc etc. I also believe that Southern Water should be part of the new Southern Tasmanian Regional Council (STRC) thus making further savings for the greater community. Let it happen ASAP.

I thank you for a well thought-out report and wish you well.

Best Regards

# 130

Whilst we believe that one large council is preferable, we suggest that the option of reducing 12 Councils to five is a more realistic option and one that may be accepted more easily by all concerned. We wish you well.

Many thanks,

# 131

Dear Sir/Madam,

I came from Wellington New Zealand in which we have only one city council with half million populations on. Therefore my personal opinion is Tasmania is too small to have so many city councils that rates are too high and the current arrangement is ineffective and inefficient too. Tasmania should not have one single city council in a ideal world, but we should not have no more than two city councils (North and South) to be fair to all ratepayers. In this case, we can save a lot of money on the elimination of city council board expenditures, and city council administration and managerial staff cost.

Please try your best to see whether you can save some money by merges as many city councils as you could, but you will be facing a lot of oppositions from those small to medium size city councils as their staff would like to protect their own jobs.

Good luck and please call me if you require any further information or clarification.

Yours faithfully

Mt Stuart, Hobart TAS 7000