



Australian Institute of Architects

Independent Panel
Review of Structural Reform Options
c/- Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority
GPO Box 503
Hobart TAS 7001

Dear Independent Panel

Towards Independent Local Government in southern Tasmania – a review of structural reform options

The Australian Institute of Architects thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the options for southern council structural reform.

We note and commend the overall goal to improve local government in southern Tasmania and the objectives established by the Independent Panel and we unequivocally support the need to change.

We make the following comments in relation to the review:

The Review Panel's recommendations should be considered in the context of current state and national policy reform with respect to

- strategic planning relating to land use planning and infrastructure;
- more liveable, healthy and socially inclusive communities; and
- the sustainability, productivity and liveability of the region.

These objectives are in line with the Council of Australian Government's (COAG's) aspirations for sustainable, liveable and productive cities within the recently introduced 'National Urban Policy,' and are particularly relevant for the metropolitan and greater Hobart region. In addition to these three aspirations, the policy calls for governance that is able to support these objectives through better governance, planning and management. It is important to consider these federal



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objectives because the extent to which the COAG Reform Council's criteria for Capital Cities are met, through the soon to be released Greater Hobart Capital City Plan, will determine the region's access to future federal infrastructure funding. Successful adoption of the Greater Hobart Capital City Plan will rely on integrated decision-making not only at a state agency level, but also at a local council level.

In addition, the recently adopted 'Southern Regional Land Use Strategy' signals a new strategic approach to the management of change, growth and development within southern Tasmania over the next 25 years. It proposes the following set of principles to guide the development of an entity that will be responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the strategy:

- a single structure charged with the responsibility of both the Southern Regional Land Use Strategy and the future Greater Hobart Capital City Plan;
- provides equal input of local and state government, incorporates state agencies into the system and commits major infrastructure providers to the outcomes; and
- provides a regional view of land use policy, strategy and planning scheme amendments.

In the context of the state and federal policies outlined above, we would like to note the following advantages and disadvantages to the proposed models:

Option 1: Status quo with shared services

The greatest potential saving made under a shared service model would, in conjunction with a more integrated land use assessment process, allow a reduced spending associated with new infrastructure and development. The only way that such a reduction is possible is through a democratic, strategic and coordinated land release and planning structure, which may be difficult to achieve if the status quo of 12 separate councils with independent processes and agendas prevails. Furthermore, in order to address the proposed requirements of the Southern Regional Land Use Strategy, an additional regional layer of governance would need to be added, which may actually increase costs and hamper the efficient delivery of decisions regarding development.

Whilst it is recognised the holding entity would be the 'Regional Planning Authority', there is concern with building and plumbing permit applications being managed by existing local



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councils and the inherent inconsistencies of development being managed between two entities.

Option 2: A single southern Tasmanian council

This option allows 'whole of region' management and governance and covers the areas considered within the Southern Regional Land Use Strategy, as well as the Southern Integrated Transport Plan and the 'southern regional plan' to be developed under the recently released Tasmanian Economic Development Plan. However, in order to ensure the sustainable development of the region, particularly in relation to land use, infrastructure spending and transport, a distinction between urban and regional zones within the area would need to be defined and adopted. Such a distinction may address the concerns relating to representation, the distinct needs of local communities and could assist the targeted development of growth in order to reduce infrastructure costs and improve the viability of public transport networks.

Furthermore, strong benefits and efficiencies could be gained with respect to development issues, such as uniform planning, building, and plumbing permit processes across southern Tasmania.

This option recognises the inter-relations that exist between the urban centre (around Hobart) and the regional centres, such as those incorporated in the Southern Regional Land Use Strategy.

It also facilitates the enhancement of the broader landscape's effect on our sense of place, as it alleviates the problem of municipalities making decisions that affect the sense of place of adjoining municipalities.

This option may also encourage a stronger identity with perceived tourism benefits, by facilitating the promotion of a strong Hobart and southern Tasmania brand and recognising the unique areas within southern Tasmania fairly and equitably within this broader umbrella.

Option 3: Greater Hobart

This model supports the notion of separating the urban and regional zoning of the region, as discussed above, and is the governance model most aligned with the notion of a Greater Hobart Urban Growth Boundary as proposed by the Southern Regional Land Use Strategy. It is also the



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only strategy that separates the governance of the urban metropolitan area from the southern region, which would provide a model of governance, planning and management in line with the requirements of the Greater Hobart Capital City Plan.

Having a single "urban" council would facilitate sustainable urban development.

This option, resulting in the Greater Hobart Council being ranked as only the 26th largest local government in Australia, whilst encompassing a comparatively large land area under the umbrella of 'urban,' indicates the low-density settlement pattern and thus large fringe regions with the surrounding regional councils. Delineating these fringe boundaries and the mechanism for review/adjustment needs further consideration.

Option 4: Separate Eastern and Western Shore Councils & Rural Mergers

The advantages and disadvantages associated with this option, in relation to the Southern Regional Land Use Strategy and the COAG Capital City reforms, are similar to the status quo model in that the objectives required for each would be difficult to achieve. In particular, conflicting land use and development agendas between the proposed 'Western Shore Council' responsible for the metropolitan area and the adjacent 'Eastern Shore', 'South East Coast/Tasman' and 'D'Entrecasteaux' councils would not address the current land use development issues that reduce the viability of public transport networks, increase infrastructure costs and reduce incentive for inner city development.

It is important to note that Hobart (and its surrounds) is a settlement within the Derwent River valley and thus future change should respect this and not use the river to delineate local governments.

An Alternative Approach

In considering the proposed options against the current and proposed regional, state and federal policies, particularly in relation to the sustainable development of southern Tasmania, we suggest that an alternative approach of creating just 4 councils, with a Greater Hobart City Council (Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence, urban Kingborough), and 3 regional amalgamated councils, 'Southern Midlands' with New Norfolk / Brighton being the main urban hub, 'South



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East Coast / Tasman' with Sorell being the main urban hub and 'Huon/Channel' with Huonville being the main urban hub. This arrangement of three satellite hubs around the Hobart metropolitan area aligns with the Southern Regional Land Use Strategy. We believe this would achieve the benefits of Option 3 (a new Greater Hobart Council) and 4 (creating the new local government areas identified as Eastern Coast or Tasman, D'Entrecasteaux and Central Lakes) with less potential downside such as the separation of Eastern and Western Shores for Hobart proposed in Option 4, enabling a shift towards a more efficient and effective model of governance. In order to ensure the resilience and productivity of the region, we strongly agree with the sentiment of the report that the adopted model will need to include a governance model that enables simultaneous consideration of the local and regional context in all future development decision-making processes.

The Institute would be pleased to amplify these comments and to meet with the Independent Panel, and would like to be kept informed in relation to this initiative.

Once again we would like to commend the Independent Panel for their report and thank the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority for their invitation to contribute to this important review.

Yours sincerely

Karen Davis FRAIA
Tasmanian President
25/09/2011

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STAN TAYLOR COUNCIL AUTHORITY
G.P.O. BOX 503 HOBART, T001

AMALGAMATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

THE ENCLOSURE WAS SENT TO THE MURRAY IN 1998 AND THEY DECIDED TO PUBLISH IT. IT WAS RE-TYPED AND SENT TO THE NOW DEFUNCT SOUTHERN STAR WHO PRINTED IT.

ALL ROUND GLENORCHY AND CLARENCE, AT THE TIME, PRINCIPAL STREETS HAD SIGNS "VOTE NO TO THE SUPER CITY". IT IS SURPRISING THAT GLENORCHY COUNCIL COULD CONCEIVE AND DISTRIBUTE A MESSAGE LIKE THE SUBJECT PROPAGANDA. IT IS EVEN MORE SURPRISING THAT 70% OF RESPONDENTS DID VOTE NO.

ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO I CHANCED TO MEET A PHARMACIST, DEPUTY MAYOR OF DEVONPORT, AND PROPOSED THAT TASMANIA SHOULD HAVE ONLY THREE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. HIS REPLY "WELL THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE FOUR BECAUSE DEVONPORT IS SO DIFFERENT FROM BURNIE".

MY EXPERIENCE DURING 20 YEARS ON THE GLENORCHY COUNCIL, 1962-65, 1967-75 AND 1985-94 INCLUDED MUCH DISCUSSION ON THE MUNICIPAL COMMISSION REPORT OF 1965 AND OTHER PROPOSALS FOR AMALGAMATION. GLENORCHY ALDERMEN WERE AGAINST JOINING HOISTON BUT WANTED TO 'TAKE OVER' BILICHTON.

UNFORTUNATELY YOU WILL BE UP AGAINST PAROCHIALISM, SELF INTEREST AND, NOW THAT THEY ARE BEING PAID, GREED.

I WISH YOU WELL IN YOUR ENDEAVOURS.

itor,
mercury

Glenorchy Council has distributed an 8 page missive, presumably at rate
expense, opposing the creation of a greater Hobart. I deleted all
emotionally charged words and phrases such as Glenorchy being under threat,
eliminated, scrapped, under attack, done away with, wiped out and made
disappear (how can Glenorchy disappear?). Next I deleted the bits about
city base being destroyed, our local voice being silenced or at least
lost forever, the government tricking and deceiving us, a strange and
that 100 000 people are losing their democratic rights, that a plot
hatched by the government, the democratic process being overridden or
"Super City" being forced upon a reluctant community. I also deleted the
unnecessary repeated reference to the government being Liberal to ~~stir up~~^{PROVOKE}
voters like me and the reference to the Premier being from the North
Coast (parochialism at its worst). Only a few years ago Glenorchy had
people who did not live in Glenorchy and ~~then (and now)~~^{Some} many of the top sta
ff (~~dent~~) either.

After these deletions I was left with four main concerns:

1. Amalgamation will distance and disenfranchise ratepayers and not lead
to improvement in their services that matches any worthwhile savings in rate
mercury July 10 Page 11 Huon Council increases rates by 1.4% compared
with Glenorchy 3.1%, Hobart 2.5% and Kingborough 2% and the Huon Council has red
uced rates by 4% since amalgamation) Amalgamation seems to be working there
2. Greater Hobart would take the "local" out of local government and make
services less accessible. (The model the council is pushing is for Glenorchy
and Kingborough to expand into surrounding rural areas with Huon
Council, Esperance and Dover going into Kingborough. How will Dover residents
after being administered from Geeveston a few years ago, Huonville at
Kingston in future?. Is this putting the "local" back in?.)

3. "Super City" is too big and unwieldy and out of scale with the rest of
Tasmanian Local Government. (Amalgamation is taking place in all states and
the size of those created is much larger than the present "Greater Hobart"
4. Continue to think small we will always be small.)

5. Large city politics would support CBD issues in preference to regional
issues and local community shopping centres. (There are certainly business
centres in Moonah, which was dominant 30 to 40 years ago, and possibly in
Hobart who feel that the Glenorchy Council have already done that by the
creation of the Glenorchy CBD in the past. Moonah now has a building height
limit of 10m while that at Glenorchy is 20m.)

6. It was also stated in the missive that none of the affected councils want

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in view is that most of our residents dont mind from where they are
sistered as long as they receive good service at the lowest possible co
to use talking about Hobart as if its on the other side of Bass Strait.
get away from parochialism and put the ratepayers first. The governmer
stated that savings made in the large areas will be redistributed to t
viable rural areas. Amalgamation should save Glenorchy ratepayers mone
ly, from my experience with the Mayor of Glenorchy I cannot believe the
as the Author of the Miserve but merely the signatory.

MOONAH

MOONAH.