

**2023-07-31 SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING - OPEN COUNCIL ATTACHMENTS**

**5.1 THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW: LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM**

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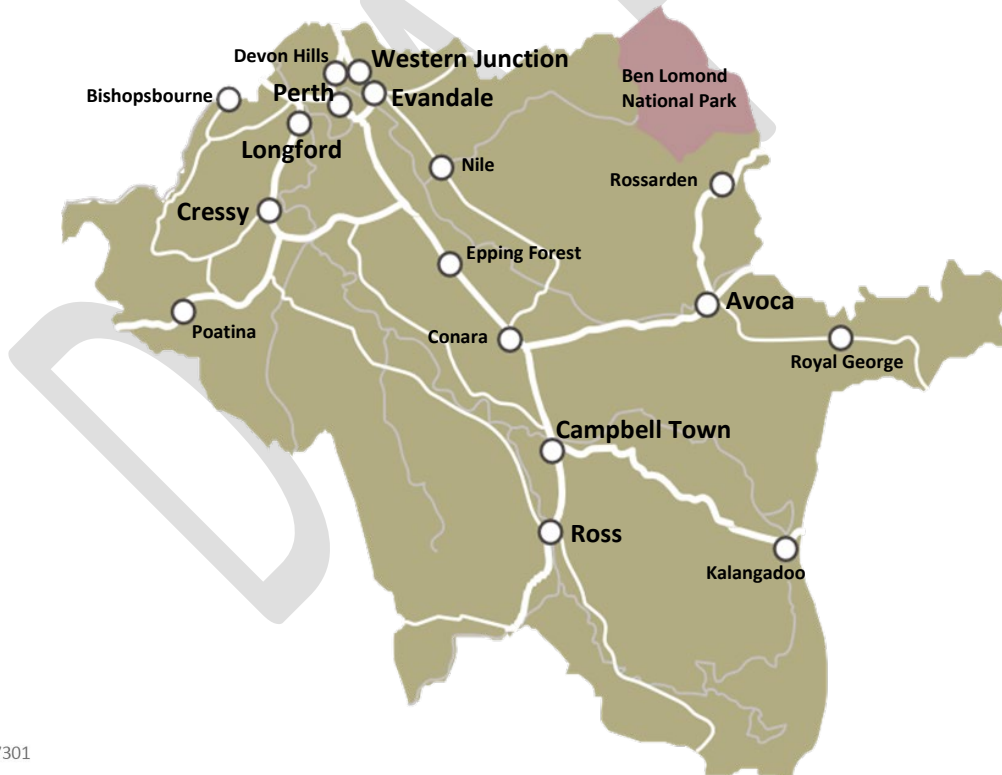


NORTHERN  
MIDLANDS  
COUNCIL

## FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW - STAGE 3

### SUBMISSION TO STATE GOVERNMENT

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD



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JULY 2023

Tasmania's Historic Heart



1 August 2023

The Chairperson  
Local Government Board  
The Future of Local Government Review

Attention: Ms Sue Smith

Via email: [lgboard@dpac.tas.gov.au](mailto:lgboard@dpac.tas.gov.au)

Dear Chairperson

Please find below the Northern Midlands Council (**NMC**) submission in response to the Local Government Board's (**Board**) Future of Local Government Review (**Review**) Stage 2 – Interim Report and the Community Catchment Information Packs.

#### 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. NMC is capable of providing for community needs – presently and into the future. NMC has worked hard to establish and implement NMC's Strategic Plan and associated strategies (including Arts & Culture, Communications & Engagement, Economic Development, Domestic & Family Violence, Youth and Health & Wellbeing). Council is most appreciated in its local communities for its level of trust and public engagement.
2. NMC is impacted by all of the scenarios presented by the Board in the Central and Midlands Community Catchment Information Pack, and one scenario presented by the Board in the Tamar Valley Community Catchment Information Pack.
3. NMC has not supported forced amalgamations or boundary adjustments throughout the reform process. It wishes to retain all aspects of the municipality for existing residents, visitors, and investors.
4. NMC rejects all four scenarios presented by the Board in the Central and Midlands Community Catchment Information Pack as they pertain to changes to existing boundaries of the NMC.
5. NMC rejects all four scenarios presented by the Board in the Tamar Valley Community Catchment Information Pack as they pertain to changes to existing boundaries of the NMC.
6. NMC's position is that NMC boundaries remain as they presently are.
7. NMC is supportive of targeted local government reform, including voluntary amalgamations for council's who mutually agree to the amalgamation occurring. NMC does not currently support any voluntary amalgamation of NMC with any other Tasmanian council(s).
8. NMC is very concerned about the likely negative impact any changes to municipal boundaries would have on smaller, more rural communities located within the municipality if forced boundary adjustments are made.
9. The provision of additional data by the Board which demonstrates the impacts of the proposed reform would have been beneficial to all councils, especially with regard to how economies of scale would deliver costs savings, the financial implications of proposed reforms (including impact on ratepayers) and business case scenarios for proposed reforms.
10. Council and especially Northern Midlands ratepayers must not bear the financial burden arising from any proposed reforms.



## 2 INTRODUCTION

On 16 July 2023, the Minister for Local Government and Premier announced they would not be forcing any amalgamations or boundary changes in response to the Review. Despite the State Government announcement, the NMC will continue to participate in the Review.

All scenarios in the Central and Midlands Community Catchment Information Pack propose changes to NMC's existing municipal boundaries. The proposed scenarios are:

- **Scenario 1-** Establishing two separate councils to the north and south. Council A combines the existing Brighton, Southern Midlands, and Derwent Valley LGAs and a proportion of the Central Highlands including Hamilton, Ouse, and Wayatinah. Council B captures the remainder of the Central Highland LGAs, Meander Valley (minus Hadspen, Carrick, Prospect Vale, and Blackstone Heights) and **Northern Midlands (minus Perth, Evandale and Longford)**.
- **Scenario 2-** Establishing a single Central and Midlands Council. The existing LGAs of Derwent Valley, Brighton, Southern Midlands, Central Highlands, **Northern Midlands**, and Meander Valley, **minus** Carrick, Hadspen, **Perth, Longford, and Evandale**.
- **Scenario 3-** Establishing three councils – a northern council encompassing the Meander Valley (minus Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights) and **Northern Midlands**, a southern council encompassing Brighton and the Southern Midlands, and a western council encompassing the Derwent Valley and the Central Highlands.
- **Scenario 4-** Establishing three councils: a northern council capturing the Meander Valley, **Northern Midlands (minus Perth, Longford and Evandale)**, and the northern Central Plateau region; a south-western council incorporating the Derwent Valley and south-west of the Central Highlands; and a south-eastern council reaching into the Central Highlands.

The Tamar Valley Community Catchment Information Pack proposes:

- Scenario 1- Establishing one council area that incorporates West Tamar, George Town, and Launceston as well as commuting areas of Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights.
- Scenario 2- Establishing one council area that incorporates West Tamar and Launceston but not including Lebrina.
- **Scenario 3-** Establishing **one council** area comprising the existing **West Tamar, George Town, and Launceston** LGAs, extended **to include** the commuting areas of Hadspen, Carrick, **Longford, Perth, Evandale, and immediate surrounds**.
- Scenario 4- Establishing one council area that incorporates West Tamar, George Town, and Launceston and extends west to Meander Valley (minus south-west SA1 around Lake Rowallan) but excludes the southern commuting towns of Evandale, Perth, and Longford.

Of the above Tamar Valley Community Catchment scenarios, it would appear Scenario 3 is the only one directly impacting on NMC present day boundaries, resulting in a loss of Longford, Perth, Evandale, TRANSLink Industrial area at Western Junction and immediate surrounds to the future Tamar Valley LGA.

During initial consultation with the community, it appeared the community had little to no knowledge or understanding of the Review. In July 2023, NMC commenced an extensive information campaign for the municipality which outlined details of the Review, its 26 June 2023 decision and the rationale for that decision. This information campaign included media releases, press conference, talk back radio, media advertising, letter drops, social media saturation and local district community meetings.

NMC also engaged an independent marketing research firm to conduct community feedback surveys. The surveys were conducted between 17 – 29 July 2023. The results of the survey are expected to be received on 4 August 2023 and will be incorporated in NMC's verbal presentation to the Board at the community hearing on 10 August 2023.



### 3 NMC POSITION

On 26 June 2023, elected representatives resolved as follows:

#### MINUTE NO. 23/0206

#### DECISION

*Cr Goss/Cr Brooks*

*That the Northern Midlands Council (NMC) rejects all the scenarios presented in the Local Government Review as they pertain to the existing boundaries of the NMC.*

*Carried Unanimously*

*Voting for the Motion:*

*Mayor Knowles, Deputy Mayor Lambert, Cr Adams, Cr Andrews, Cr Archer, Cr Brooks, Cr Goss, Cr McCullagh and Cr Terrett*

*Voting Against the Motion:*

*Nil*

NMC opposes change to its boundaries or the loss of townships in Longford, Perth, Evandale, Western Junction, TRANSLink Industrial Hub and the surrounding areas. NMC considers these townships identify more strongly with, and perform as service hubs for, their more rural hinterland compared to the metropolitan area of Launceston.

NMC's responses to the Board's structural reform principles are as follows:

1 Be resolutely focused on future community needs (and not just tied to council's existing structures and current priorities)-  
As outlined further below, NMC has been at the forefront planning for and anticipation of future community needs, including a number of capital works projects, disaster recovery plans, strategies and strategic plans which will continue to provide for the needs of the community.

2 Retaining jobs and service presence locally- it is submitted proposed reforms will not impact on this criteria as staff retention is an issue broader than the local government sector. NMC seeks to employ staff locally where possible. Along with elected members, local staff know the local issues. Council has employee benefit expenses of **\$5.8 million**, representing 88 employees (74 full-time equivalent).

The Northern Midlands Business Association (NMBA) also plays a role in retention of jobs and services locally. The NMBA's vision of the Northern Midlands region is to be the most connected, resilient, and innovative business community in Tasmania. NMBA's stated purpose is to use its local knowledge, influence, and connections to the Northern Midlands business community continues to thrive and grow. The NMBA has 600+ registered members who it provides products and initiatives to. NMBA's major objectives are to collaborate with Council to foster economic activity in the Northern Midlands; enhance the environment for economic development in the Northern Midlands; promote collaboration between the NMBA, local businesses, agencies and organisations to facilitate economic development in the Northern Midlands; and to increase the profile of the NMBA.

REMPAN Economy states that in 2023, Northern Midlands supports 5,991 jobs and has an annual economic output of \$2.095 billion. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing are the Northern Midlands' largest employment sectors, supporting an estimated 1,134 jobs, followed by manufacturing which supports 782 jobs, and construction which is estimated to support 630 jobs. Many of the manufacturing and construction jobs are based in the thriving TRANSLink commercial, industrial and logistics precinct adjacent to the Airport at Western Junction.

3 Preserving and enhancing local voice- it is submitted NMC already effectively provides for local voice, including via Local District Committees, and via partnerships, including the Northern Midlands Economic Development Association, NMBA and Heritage Highway Association, as outlined further below.

4 Be supported by fair funding models that smooth financial impacts for communities- Council maintains a differential rating system to smooth valuation shocks in land use categories. Council has stable grant funding levels and has excellent asset condition ratios.

5 Be supported by dedicated and appropriate resourcing for the transition – not applicable as NMC does not support amalgamation.

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*Northern Midlands Council*

*Submission to State Government - Local Government Board Review*

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NMC's responses to the Board's criteria for the Review are as follows:

- 1 **Place and Representation** – NMC's nine elected members have a close connection to the community and all areas are strongly represented across the municipal area.

Northern Midlands has a vast and rich historical heritage, including a large number of heritage listed infrastructure (Ross Bridge), buildings and villages (Ross, Evandale), including two UNESCO World Heritage Convict Sites (Brickendon and Woolmers Estates), in the municipality. NMC nurtures its heritage environment, cherishing and sustaining our landscapes while preserving and protecting our built heritage for the future. Our heritage villages and towns are high value assets. NMC's Heritage Incentive Scheme provides an incentive to improve the streetscape views of properties that are in heritage precincts, or heritage listed; and our Planning Scheme provides protections and instils these values through Local Provision Schedules.

Northern Midlands actively promotes its liveability and strong agricultural and industrial economic benefits to those that wish to live, visit, play, undertake business or just come to enjoy niche retail business and participate in recreational activities such as fishing, cycling, canoeing/kayaking in our pristine natural environment.

- 2 **Future Needs and Priorities** – Council is well equipped to meet the future needs and priorities of its community. Council recognises the increasing importance of climate change on the community, with emphasis being on allocation of funds, or seeking grant funding assistance to further protect the community from flooding, protection of strategic infrastructure assets, as well as incorporating climate change in local planning regulations and assessments.

In the areas of health and wellbeing, NMC is active in providing excellent active and passive recreation facilities, including but not limited to three municipal pools, gym facilities, youth programs, walking/cycling pathways and access to pristine rivers to pursue leisure activities. NMC has also recently completed the Perth Early Learning Centre, having recognised a greater need for childcare in the municipality. Council actively advocates for the health needs of the community, including sourcing a general practitioner for the local residents in the Evandale area. Council is also lobbying for a Northern Midlands Community House at Longford to service those in need within the area.

Volunteers are important to NMC and are supported by working with community organisations to assist Council to be responsive to community needs.

- 3 **Financial Sustainability**- NMC is in a strong financial position to continue to deliver on community assets. NMC has a balanced long-term operating budget, cash to cover commitments/liabilities, and a capital works budget to expand and maintain infrastructure assets into the future. This is further addressed **below**.
- 4 **Operational Capability**- Council has proven over several years that it has the operating capacity to deliver and plan for major projects, such as the improvements to the majority of the recreation grounds in the municipality, development and upgrades to the Longford Recreation Grounds and Sports Centre, establishment of the Ross Village Green, construction of a purpose built multi-purpose regional recreation facility in Campbell Town, the Perth Early Learning Centre, Cressy Memorial Pool upgrades, stormwater planning and implementation in the Sheepwash Creek area and Longford Memorial Hall upgrades.

#### 4 ANALYSIS AND RESPONSE

##### Community Connection and Representation

The Northern Midlands' is an enviable place to visit, work and live. People choose to live and work in the Northern Midlands because of the sense of pride of place and the space for participation in events such as rural shows, village fairs, the Penny Farthing races and New Years Day country race picnics.

There are concerns that if any of the proposed scenarios are implemented by the State Government, this would detrimentally impact on the Northern Midlands community identity.

NMC and the community also hold concerns about local representation being weakened or lost entirely, with the municipality losing its identity if amalgamations were to occur.



Council values and promotes community engagement and participation via NMC's District Forums/Committees across the municipality, including:

- Longford Local District Committee;
- Cressy Local District Committee;
- Evandale Advisory Committee;
- Perth Local District Committee;
- Campbell Town District Forum;
- Ross Local District Committee; and
- Avoca, Royal George and Rossarden Local District Committee.

The Local District Committee's play an important role for NMC, including provision of a focal point for information between the Council and the local community, to identify and prioritise the needs of the local community and to consider and provide feedback to Council in respect of key strategic issues for the local community. The Local District Forums/Committees promote community involvement and participation in Council functions.

NMC's Local District Forums/Committees have expressed concerns that any amalgamations may result in the loss of this important role, along with a loss of the community identity.

#### Infrastructure

Community infrastructure is recognised as the cornerstone of regional prosperity. Infrastructure creates jobs, enables sustainable growth, protects the environment, and fosters a thriving community by bringing people and business together.

Council recognises that too often infrastructure projects are planned and delivered in isolation, leading to unnecessary disruption to the community, inefficient delivery, and overall lack of coordination. To combat this, NMC has developed an Integrated Priority Projects Plan 2021 (**IPPP 2021**), which takes a fresh approach to infrastructure planning, using an integrated method to align with local, regional, state and federal plans. The investments identified in the IPPP 2021 will help to ensure NMC remains an enviable place to live, work and play.

NMC has a demonstrated history of maintaining and improving its infrastructure and assets.

Council's ratios for Buildings, Roads, Bridges, and Drainage have consistently over a four year period been above the established benchmark of 60%, indicating an appropriate level of investment in renewal of these asset classes.

In the past 5 years Council has purchased/constructed \$42 million of new and renewed infrastructure, including community facilities as follows:

- Campbell Town Recreation Ground Complex **\$5m**
- Cressy Swimming Pool & Cressy Recreation Ground upgrades **\$2.7m**
- Evandale Recreation Ground upgrades **\$1.1m**
- Longford Recreation Ground complex and Sports Centre/Gym upgrades **\$5.4m**
- Construction of an Early Learning Centre at Perth **\$4.2m**
- Ross Village Green establishment **\$1.1m**.

NMC's 2023/24 Budget is financially strategic and ensures it has money for the things the municipality needs. NMC's major projects for the next 12 months are:

- Extension and refurbishment of the Longford Memorial Hall **\$4.0m**;
- Commence Main Street Improvement works of Campbell Town, Longford and Perth **\$5.8m**, (in addition to the \$8m commitment of the Labor federal government towards the continued improvement to the Campbell Town and Perth main streets);
- Replacement/upgrade of 3 concrete bridges on Liffey Road, Jones Road and Blackwood Creek Road after October 2022 flood damage **\$1.1m**;
- Reconstruction of sections of Bishopsbourne Road near Toiberry rail crossing, and Ashby Road at Ross **\$1.0m**;
- Development of a new public reserve at the corner of Laycock/Pultney/Wellington Streets at Longford **\$0.5m**;
- Continuation of the urban street footpath program (Campbell Town, Cressy, Longford, Perth & Ross) **\$0.9m**;



- Construction of new amenities at the Longford Caravan Park **\$0.45m**;
- Road reconstruction, kerb and footpath for Youl Main Road, Perth **\$0.35m**;
- Provision of an entrance statement on the Illawarra Road roundabout to Longford **\$0.2m**;
- Playground Equipment upgrades at the Train Park at Perth, Pioneer Park at Evandale, and Bartholomew Park at Cressy **\$0.5m**; and
- Provision of larger street bins and purchase of a small waste compactor vehicle **\$0.3m**.

#### Urban Growth

Northern Midlands enjoys a balanced mix of industrial, business, agricultural, community, environmental and residential zones.

Northern Midlands is growing rapidly and is attractive to residents who want the benefits of a residential/rural lifestyle while still being within commuting distance of a larger urban area.

Northern Midlands has a number of recognised future urban growth areas, including in South and West Perth, South Longford, and North and East Evandale.

The following is a summary of planning and building applications approved, indicative of anticipated future growth in the municipality:

Financial Year	Planning				Building
	Single Residential	Multiple Residential	Subdivisions	New Lots Approved	New Dwellings Approved
2020/21	48	42	27	27	135
2021/22	36	92	37	91	114
2022/23	48	31	34	203	93
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>342</b>

Of the above data, the subdivisions include larger scale developments across a variety of zoning and lot sizes, including but not limited to a 116-lot 19.14ha subdivision on Napoleon Street, West Perth (including a new municipal park and stormwater detention area), a 17-lot 1.23ha subdivision at Laycock Street, Longford (including new municipal park), a 44-lot 6.254ha subdivision on Marlborough Street, South Longford, a 28-lot 1.763ha subdivision on Catherine Street, South Longford and a 26-lot 23.3ha subdivision on Haggerston Road, Perth. The variety of lot-sizes and zoning will cater for a wide variety of residential needs, including first home buyers, family homes, homes in more rural settings with larger lot sizes and downsizers.

Council is also aware of proposed planning applications from developers which are yet to be lodged involving large scale subdivision and development, including a 200-lot subdivision on Logan Road, Evandale, and a 110-lot subdivision at Cambock Lane/Barclay Street, Evandale.

In response to expected growth within the Perth area, consultants were engaged to prepare the Perth Structure Plan, including an Outline Development Plan for two strategic areas of the South Perth emerging community area, being a 60ha large greenfield site located south of Drummond Street, and future urban zoned land within the western part of Perth.

Commercial and industrial growth in Northern Midlands is also projected to expand in the TRANSLink Industrial area of Western Junction. Council has received a funding commitment of \$5million from the Federal Government for the planning process of an Intermodal Facility, with further funding commitment of \$30million for the implementation and delivery of infrastructure for that development. Furthermore, Council has recently approved planning applications for the expansion of the existing Translink Avenue industrial area, including a 41-lot 33.32ha subdivision to the southern end of Translink Avenue, and a 29-lot 13.41ha subdivision joining the northern and southern ends of Translink Avenue.

Furthermore, NMC has a number of renewable energy planning applications including the Northern Midlands Solar Farm and the Great Lakes Battery Projects.





- The Solar Farm is expected to benefit the Northern Midlands by delivering a clean source of energy generation (288MW) and reach Tasmania's renewable energy targets, creation of approximately 300 direct construction jobs and 10-15 direct ongoing jobs, powering approximately 45,000 Tasmanian homes, contributing to reduced electricity prices, continued agricultural use of the land through 'agrisolar' and increase in Council land rates for the solar farm area.
- The Great Lakes Battery Project to be located within the municipality near Poatina is anticipated to benefit the municipality by creating construction jobs over an approximate 18 month period, boosting accommodation needs during the construction period, increased spending in local businesses within the region during the construction period, boosting tourism in the municipality as Tasmania's first utility-scale battery and educational opportunities (e.g. school excursions, presentation) the proponent will be part of. There are financial benefits anticipated to the region.

Northern Midlands has a strong agricultural presence, with irrigation schemes providing for more intensive agricultural production. This is anticipated to expand with a further planning application for the Northern Midlands Irrigation Scheme having recently been approved, which is expected to provide high-surety irrigation water to horticultural, viticultural, orchard and other high value uses in the Macquarie, Barton, Conara, Campbell Town, Ross and Lower Isis Valley areas of Northern Midlands.

NMC is one of seven Council Members of the Northern Tasmania Development Corporation (NTDC). The NTDC seeks to facilitate significant improvement in prosperity in North and North-Eastern Tasmania. There is a commitment to collaborative, innovative and sustainable economic growth in the region, including strategic planning. Council's, facilitated by NTDC, have been key in enabling projects such as the Northern Tasmanian Residential Demand and Supply Study, that will inform the upcoming review of the Northern Regional Land Use Strategy. NMC is committed to this process and improving the strategy and policy basis to facilitate and manage change, growth, and development.

NMC's IPPP 2021 provides for a number of foundation projects and enabling projects covering recreation, community, transport and subdivisions and related infrastructure. These projects are anticipated to provide for and meet anticipated future community needs due to growth. Projects include Perth Sports Precinct and Community Centre, Recreation Ground upgrades (Cressy, Morven Park), shared pathways and road upgrades at Illawarra Road and Evandale Main Road, Sheepwash Creek Corridor for stormwater planning and open spaces, TRANSLink Intermodal Facility and Perth South Esk River Parklands to name a few. This is indicative of Council's capacity to anticipate, plan, fund and to provide for future community needs.

#### Financially Sustainable

NMC has the following:

- Underlying Surplus Ratio **9%** (4.4% calculated by Consolidated Data Collection)
- Operating Revenue **\$22.8 million** – including Rate Revenue \$12 million (7,460 rateable properties)
- Cash & Investments **\$26 million** (Non-interest bearing borrowings \$4.05 million)
- Property, Infrastructure, plant & equipment **\$535 million** (written down value of \$390 million).

NMC has adopted a strategic approach to the renewal and replacement of community assets and infrastructure and has completed many projects by applying for and successfully receiving many external funding grants. For example, recent funding successes include:

- An application to the Federal Government to jointly fund a \$3,732,014 project to improve stormwater infrastructure in western Perth along Sheepwash Creek. Without the Federal Government's grant contribution of \$1,868,500, the community would have needed to fund these vital community infrastructure works in their entirety.
- As stated above, a further success story is the successful lobbying of the Labor Federal Government for a \$5million commitment to commence the planning process for the proposed TRANSLink Intermodal Facility, and the commitment of a further \$30million to deliver enabling infrastructure to the site once the planning work is completed.
- Funding for upgrades to Perth and Campbell Town streetscapes of \$8million.

NMC's demonstrated history in successfully pursuing and receiving external grant funding and delivery of projects is indicative of NMC's ability to foreshadow and provide for the community's needs in a timely manner. NMC holds concerns that if it was required to merge into a larger municipal area, opportunities tied to grant funding may be lost which will ultimately negatively




impact our community. Further, the impact of amalgamations on existing grants already received has not been canvassed and there is a risk of changes to a council’s financial status resulting in a loss of grant funding due to ineligibility.

Response to Proposed Scenarios

TRANSlink Industrial area is a strategically located industrial and business hub servicing many of the North’s multi-million dollar industries, and large source of NMC’s industrial and business sectors. Council’s plans to further enhance this precinct through the proposed multi-million dollar logistics hub at the Intermodal Facility is further evidence of Councils commitment to the commercial and industrial growth of the municipality. The confidence of the business sector is evidenced in the continued demand for commercial space and the continued growth of TRANSlink Industrial area at Western Junction.

Any loss of the TRANSlink Industrial and surrounding Western Junction area is vehemently opposed as it would result in greater financial burden being placed onto rural landowners and residential ratepayers. This area is vital to the financial wellbeing of the municipality, representing a large part of the industrial and business sectors and rates base. NMC has worked hard to develop this area and grow this part of its local economy, with income being allocated to local community. If this area was removed from NMC, the benefits would be lost to a larger entity and may not be reinvested in the local community.

Central and Midlands Community Catchment	
<p><b>Scenario 1</b></p> <p><i>Establishing two separate councils to the north and south.</i></p> 	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a larger rate base, with larger urban areas subsidising rural areas more</li> <li>• Emergency/Recovery resources would have greater depth of service and resources</li> <li>• Potential combination of service centres for future efficiencies and consistency of service</li> <li>• Potential to expand and implement shared services which could provide future efficiencies and consistency of service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of Longford, Perth, the TRANSlink Industrial Hub at Western Junction, Evandale and surrounds. This will have a flow on effect from a sustainability perspective for the balance of the existing Northern Midlands municipality in any new Central and Midland council</li> <li>• Communities of NMC are largely opposed to amalgamation with Launceston</li> <li>• Loss of local representation, voice and identity</li> <li>• Lack of recognition of rural communities in a large council area and small communities may receive lower levels of service, or be neglected</li> <li>• Competing priorities between existing councils and how they will be managed in any amalgamation</li> <li>• Increased municipal areas and a loss of council offices and depots may result in additional travel times and loss of efficiency</li> <li>• Council B will have a large geographical area to service and cover, e.g. roads – increase from 960km to 1,914.8km</li> <li>• Council B would have a smaller rates and population base, as well as significant areas of low growth or population decline</li> <li>• Council B will have an older population mostly in smaller towns</li> <li>• Proposed council hubs in “Council B” are in Westbury and Bothwell – what will happen to NMC existing office and depots?</li> </ul>



<b>Central and Midlands Community Catchment</b>	
<p><b>Scenario 1</b></p> <p><i>Establishing two separate councils to the north and south.</i></p>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rates approaches vary in the catchment and would need to be considered in any transition</li> <li>• Impact on rating systems, governance and funding models for the remote and sparsely populated highland communities may be required</li> <li>• Anticipated increase in rates payments and flow on effect, including the need for an equitable and consistent rating approach</li> <li>• Consideration of three existing Enterprise Agreements and the negotiation/creation of a new one for the new council</li> <li>• Consideration of Council's net financial positions including assets and debts to be considered in transitional plan – no data has been provided</li> <li>• Potential loss of staff and corporate knowledge</li> </ul>
<p><b>Are there any adjustments that could be made to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of Northern Midlands townships of Evandale, Perth, Longford, TRANSlInk Industrial Hub and surrounding areas in the Northern Midlands municipality and Meander Valley's areas of Blackstone Heights, Prospect Vale, Carrick and Hadspen areas would not result in a population reduction of approximately 8,000 residents in important industrial and residential areas. The needs of these areas are more commensurate and better provided for by the Northern Midlands than with a metropolitan municipal area proposed in the Tamar Valley.</li> </ul>	
<b>Central and Midlands Community Catchment</b>	
<p><b>Scenario 2</b></p> <p><i>Establishing a single Central and Midlands Council.</i></p>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represents a significant portion of rural Tasmania</li> <li>• Provides a larger rate base, with larger urban areas subsidising rural areas more</li> <li>• Emergency/Recovery resources would have greater depth of service and resources</li> <li>• Potential combination of service centres for future efficiencies and consistency of service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large geographic area and dispersed community to service</li> <li>• Balancing the needs or the fast-growing urban communities in the south of the Catchment with rural communities further north</li> <li>• A need for a clear strategy of retaining jobs and teams across the region to maintain local employment and knowledge and provide community members with ready access to council services</li> <li>• Consider the need for existing regional structures for resources and how to best adapt and integrate systems across six existing councils</li> </ul>



<b>Central and Midlands Community Catchment</b>	
<b>Scenario 2</b>	
<i>Establishing a single Central and Midlands Council.</i>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to expand and implement shared services which could provide future efficiencies and consistency of service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of Longford, Perth, the TRANSlink Industrial Hub at Western Junction, Evandale and surrounds. This will have a flow on effect from a sustainability perspective for the balance of the existing Northern Midlands municipality in any new Central and Midland council</li> <li>• Communities of NMC are largely opposed to amalgamation with Launceston</li> <li>• Loss of local representation, voice and identity</li> <li>• Lack of recognition of rural communities in a large council area and small communities may receive lower levels of service, or be neglected</li> <li>• Competing priorities between existing councils and how they will be managed in any amalgamation</li> <li>• Increased municipal areas and a loss of council offices and depots may result in additional travel times and loss of efficiency</li> <li>• A large geographical area to service and cover, e.g. roads – increase from 960km to 3,394km</li> <li>• Rates approaches vary in the catchment and would need to be considered in any transition</li> <li>• Impact on rating systems, governance and funding models for the remote and sparsely populated highland communities may be required</li> <li>• Anticipated increase in rates payments and flow on effect, including the need for an equitable and consistent rating approach</li> <li>• Consideration of six existing Enterprise Agreements and the negotiation/creation of a new one for the new council</li> <li>• Potential loss of staff and corporate knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Are there any adjustments that could be made to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of Northern Midlands townships of Evandale, Perth, Longford, TRANSlink Industrial Hub and surrounding areas in the Northern Midlands municipality and Meander Valley’s areas of Blackstone Heights, Prospect Vale, Carrick and Hadspen areas would not result in a population reduction of approximately 8,000 residents in important industrial and residential areas. The needs of these areas are more commensurate and better provided for by the Northern Midlands than with a metropolitan municipal area proposed in the Tamar Valley.</li> </ul>	




<b>Central and Midlands Community Catchment</b>	
<p><b>Scenario 3</b></p> <p><i>Establishing three councils – a northern council encompassing the Meander Valley and Northern Midlands, a southern council encompassing Brighton and the Southern Midlands, and a western council encompassing the Derwent Valley and the Central Highlands</i></p>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes the townships of Evandale, Perth, Longford, TRANSlink industrial area and surrounding areas</li> <li>• Provides a larger rate base, with larger urban areas subsidising rural areas more</li> <li>• Emergency/Recovery resources would have greater depth of service and resources</li> <li>• Potential combination of service centres for future efficiencies and consistency of service</li> <li>• Potential to expand and implement shared services which could provide future efficiencies and consistency of service</li> <li>• This scenario involves less change to council structures than other scenarios, the transition costs would be expected to be lower</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of Blackstone Heights and Prospect Vale – key industrial and residential areas for Meander Valley</li> <li>• Loss of local representation, voice and identity</li> <li>• Lack of recognition of rural communities in a large council area and small communities may receive lower levels of service, or be neglected</li> <li>• Competing priorities between existing councils and how they will be managed in any amalgamation</li> <li>• Increased municipal areas and a loss of council offices and depots may result in additional travel times and loss of efficiency</li> <li>• Council A will have a large geographical area to service and cover, e.g. roads – increase from 960km to 1,720.3km</li> <li>• Rates approaches vary in the catchment and would need to be considered in any transition</li> <li>• Impact on rating systems, governance and funding models for the remote and sparsely populated highland communities may be required</li> <li>• Consideration of two existing Enterprise Agreements and the negotiation/creation of a new one for the new councils</li> <li>• Potential loss of staff and corporate knowledge</li> </ul>
<p><b>Are there any adjustments that could be made to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights would not result in a population reduction in important industrial and residential areas. The needs of these areas may be more commensurate and better provided for by inclusion with their existing LGA of Meander Valley than with a metropolitan municipal council of Launceston.</li> </ul>	



Central and Midlands Community Catchment	
<p><b>Scenario 4</b></p> <p><i>Establishing three councils: a northern council capturing the Meander Valley, Northern Midlands and the northern Central Plateau region; a south-western council incorporating the Derwent Valley and south-west of the Central Highlands; and a south-eastern council reaching into the Central Highlands.</i></p>	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a larger rate base, with larger urban areas subsidising rural areas more</li> <li>• Emergency/Recovery resources would have greater depth of service and resources</li> <li>• Potential combination of service centres for future efficiencies</li> <li>• Potential to expand and implement shared services which could provide future efficiencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large population base – estimated at 122,000</li> <li>• Potential difficulty in retaining jobs and teams across the region, including a loss of corporate knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Loss of Longford, Perth, the TRANSlink Industrial Hub at Western Junction, Evandale and surrounds. This will have a flow on effect from a sustainability perspective for the balance of the existing Northern Midlands municipality in any new Central and Midland council</li> <li>• Communities of NMC are largely opposed to amalgamation with Launceston</li> <li>• Loss of local representation, voice and identity</li> <li>• Lack of recognition of rural communities in a large council area and small communities may receive lower levels of service, or be neglected</li> <li>• Competing priorities between existing councils and how they will be managed in any amalgamation</li> <li>• Increased municipal areas and a loss of council offices and depots may result in additional travel times and loss of efficiency</li> <li>• Council A will have a large geographical area to service and cover, e.g. roads – increase from 960km to 1,904.8km</li> <li>• Rates approaches vary in the catchment and would need to be considered in any transition</li> <li>• Anticipated increase in rates payments and flow on effect, including the need for an equitable and consistent rating approach</li> <li>• Impact on rating systems, governance and funding models for the remote and sparsely populated highland communities may be required</li> <li>• Consideration of three existing Enterprise Agreements and the negotiation/creation of a new one for the new council</li> </ul>
<p><b>Are there any adjustments that could be made to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of Northern Midlands townships of Evandale, Perth, Longford, TRANSlink Industrial Hub and surrounding areas in the Northern Midlands municipality and Meander Valley’s areas of Blackstone Heights, Prospect Vale, Carrick and Hadspen areas would not result in a population reduction of approximately 8,000 residents in important industrial and residential areas. The needs of these areas are more commensurate and better provided for by the Northern Midlands than with a metropolitan municipal area proposed in the Tamar Valley.</li> </ul>	



<b>Tamar Valley Community Catchment</b>	
<b>Scenario 3</b>  <i>Establishing one council area comprising the existing West Tamar, George Town and Launceston LGAs, extended to include the commuting areas of Hadspen, Carrick, Longford, Perth, Evandale and immediate surrounds</i>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a larger rate base, with larger urban areas subsidising rural areas more</li> <li>• Emergency/Recovery resources would have greater depth of service and resources</li> <li>• Potential combination of service centres for future efficiencies and consistency of service</li> <li>• Potential to expand and implement shared services which could provide future efficiencies and consistency of service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of Longford, Perth, the TRANSlink Industrial Hub at Western Junction, Evandale and surrounds. This will have a flow on effect from a sustainability perspective for the balance of the existing Northern Midlands municipality in any new Central and Midland council</li> <li>• The impact from a sustainability perspective associated with this scenario and the loss of the above key population areas on any future council in the Central and Midlands, which would include the balance of the Northern Midlands.</li> <li>• Large population base – estimated at 122,000</li> <li>• Anticipated increase in rates payments to those of City of Launceston and the flow on effect, including the need for an equitable and consistent rating approach</li> <li>• Potential difficulty in retaining jobs and teams across the region, including a loss of corporate knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Loss of local voice, representation and engagement due to one large council</li> <li>• Impact on existing service sharing agreements</li> <li>• Communities of NMC are largely opposed to amalgamation with Launceston</li> <li>• Lack of recognition of rural communities in a large council area and small communities may receive lower levels of service, or be neglected if amalgamated</li> <li>• Potential loss of council offices and depots would result in increased travel time and loss of efficiency</li> <li>• What will happen to existing NMC Chambers and Depots?</li> </ul>
<b>Are there any adjustments that could be made to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exclusion of the Northern Midlands townships of Evandale, Perth, Longford, TRANSlink Industrial Hub and surrounding areas in the Northern Midlands municipality and Meander Valley’s areas of Blackstone Heights, Prospect Vale, Carrick and Hadspen areas into the proposed new Tamar Valley council would not result in a population reduction of approximately 8,000 residents in important industrial and residential areas of NMC and Meander Valley. The needs of these areas are more commensurate and better provided for by the Northern Midlands/Meander Valley than with a metropolitan municipal area proposed in the Tamar Valley</li> </ul>	

Concerns

NMC continues to hold concerns regarding the City of Launceston’s proposal to adjust municipal boundaries such that the Airport and surrounding TRANSlink industrial areas are incorporated into any future Tamar Valley council. This is opposed for the preceding reasons.

NMC holds concerns about the lack of information/data and business plans in support of local government reform from the Board. This impacts the ability of all councils to make fully informed decisions for the future of their local government area.



Financial information has not been provided by the Board supporting the need for council amalgamation or demonstrate how economies of scale would positively impact residents and result in costs savings. Furthermore, the Board has not provided councils with information regarding implementation of reform options, including costs estimates for implementation of any reform, advice as to who will bear the financial burden of amalgamations, timeframe for reform implementation, support to be offered throughout that process.

NMC does not support any of the reforms proposed or changes to its municipal boundaries, and does not agree that its residents should in any way bear the financial burden of implementing change.

## 6 ALTERNATE REFORM OPTIONS

If the State Government was to change its position on the announcement of not forcing amalgamations or boundary adjustments throughout this process and forced amalgamations were proposed, NMC's position regarding the proposed scenarios in the Information Packs remains unchanged. However, while not NMC's preferred position, it would consider amalgamation with Meander Valley on the basis both LGAs retain all of their existing municipal areas – that is Longford, Perth, Evandale, TRANSlink, Prospect Vale, Blackstone Heights, Carrick and Hadspen.

This consideration is on the basis of Meander Valley having a similar geography to Northern Midlands (part urban, part rural/agricultural) and similar community of interest. NMC and Meander Valley have a history of shared service arrangements in place. There are continued opportunities for resource sharing across the two councils and, in this way, all the current assets, strategic plans, corporate knowledge, staff and strong financial position would be retained.

Council recognises there is a long-established increasing need to do more with less. Sharing services would enable councils to do this by reducing duplication of effort, resources and expenditure. Shared services are not new and can bring financial benefits to councils while potentially improving customer service.

NMC is open to consideration of shared service arrangements upon additional information being provided from the Board, including but not limited to what services are to be shared, whether that is a statewide or regional arrangement, whether it is voluntary or mandatory, financial implications of any shared services arrangements and the governance arrangements around them.

## 7 CONCLUSION

Northern Midlands elected members and the executive team are of the view that the future of the NMC is prosperous, sustainable and well placed to provide for, and meet the needs of the community now and into the future. There are few benefits identified through proposed amalgamations.

NMC is open to further consideration of shared services models upon receipt of further information being received.

NMC opposes all scenarios proposed by the Board in the Information Packs. It does not support any forced amalgamation or boundary adjustments throughout the Review process. NMC does not support any voluntary merger with other council(s), wishing to protect its boundaries and for the boundaries to remain as they presently are.

Thank you for your consideration of NMC's submission.

Yours sincerely

**MAREE BRICKNELL**  
**ACTING GENERAL MANAGER**

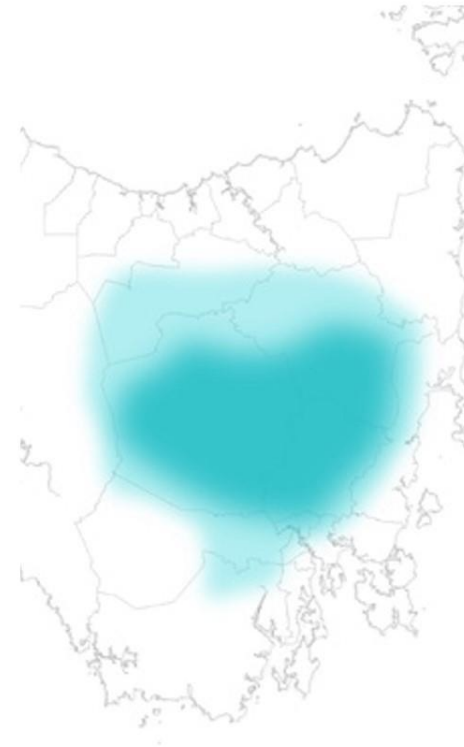


**The future  
of local  
government  
review**

# Central and Midlands Community Catchment Information Pack

Review Stage 3 – May 2023

Let's All Shape the Future  
of Local Government.



This information pack has been prepared by the Local Government Board with the assistance of the Tasmanian Policy Exchange at the University of Tasmania and the Department of State Growth.

It draws on ABS Census, council, and the Office of the Valuer General data.

The Local Government Board has prepared this information pack as a data source and conversation starter for the upcoming Stage 3 consultation.

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## 1. Introduction

During Stage 3 of the Review, the Board will be engaging with communities to look at how we might reshape Tasmania's local councils to increase scale and capability so they can better serve Tasmanian communities. The goal is to design local government in Tasmania in a way that allows all councils to develop and maintain the capability that communities need, while delivering services locally, keeping jobs in local communities, and ensuring that all Tasmanians have a strong voice in decisions being made on their behalf.

This information pack provides detailed insights into the Central and Midlands Community Catchment, outlining four possible structural reform scenarios. **These scenarios are not the only options for reform.** They are options designed to prompt a discussion about some of the possible pathways available to deliver a more capable and sustainable system of local government for the Central and Midlands community.

**Communities and councils may have their own ideas about how local government could be better organised in their catchments. The Board welcomes alternative suggestions as part of the engagement process.**

### Where have these scenarios come from?

Each of the scenarios has been developed using the Board's structural reform principles (see text box on the following page) and the following four criteria.

1. **Place and Representation**
2. **Future Needs and Priorities**
3. **Financial Sustainability**
4. **Operational Capability.**

**Scenario 1** – Establishing two separate councils to the north and south

**Scenario 2** – Establishing a single Central and Midlands Council

**Scenario 3** – Establishing three councils – a northern council encompassing the Meander Valley and Northern Midlands, a southern council encompassing Brighton and the Southern Midlands, and a western council encompassing the Derwent Valley and Central Highlands.

**Scenario 4** – Establishing three councils: a northern council capturing the Meander Valley, Northern Midlands and the northern Central Plateau region; a south-western council incorporating the Derwent Valley and south-west of the Central Highlands; and a south-eastern council reaching into the Central Highlands

The Board – in collaboration with the University of Tasmania – has identified and applied a range of relevant data sets to assess the scenarios individually and in comparison to one another.

By doing this, we want to test how well the different scenarios meet the criteria. This should promote a conversation about various trade-offs and how these might be managed or addressed. For example, scenarios that propose a larger number of smaller councils may be construed as providing higher levels of representation and local connection but would need to be supported by more extensive shared services and partnership arrangements to achieve the operational scale necessary to deliver long-run capability and financial sustainability. On the other hand, scenarios that include council areas taking in much larger areas may require less in the way of service sharing and may be more 'self-sufficient'.

### Structural Reform Principles

1. A Focus on Future Community Needs
2. Retaining Jobs and Service Delivery Locally
3. Preserving and Enhancing Local Voice
4. Smoothing Financial Impacts for Communities
5. Dedicated and Appropriate Resourcing for the Transition

The data and analysis presented in this Information Pack has been sourced from a range of authoritative sources, including councils, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Office of the Valuer General, the Department of State Growth and the University of Tasmania. The Pack also presents the results of modelling undertaken to estimate indicative rates for possible council areas presented in the scenarios. Detailed notes on the methods and assumptions used in this modelling are provided in the Supporting Paper (*Methods and Technical Background*).

The scenarios presented in this Information Pack, and the data and analysis that underpins them, are designed to inform community consultation about the future design of local government in Tasmania and are only one of multiple sources of information the Board will be considering when finalising its reform options.

### What do we want councils and communities to tell us?

For each of the scenarios, we want councils and communities to consider four fundamental questions:

1. **What are the strengths?**
2. **What are the weaknesses or challenges?**

3. **Are there any adjustments that could be made to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses?**
4. **Are there any other entirely different scenarios the Board should consider, which would still deliver against the Board's criteria and structural reform principles?**

Boundary changes are only one part of the equation. We also want councils and communities to think about options for complementary, supporting reforms, such as shared services and partnerships, options to improve local services and keep jobs in local communities, and new models of engagement and representation.

To support this conversation, we have prepared a number of *Supporting Papers*, which present a range of opportunities for councils and communities to consider. The Papers draw on research about new and evolving approaches in local government elsewhere, as well as the ideas that we have heard from talking with councils, state agencies, and the broader community, including from submissions we have received.

These papers focus on:

- **Supporting strong and empowered local communities (protecting and enhancing local voice and local services);**
- **State government partnership opportunities for local government; and**
- **Potential models, options, and key considerations for shared service opportunities in Tasmania.**

We want people to keep these opportunities in mind as they consider how they might work with or support the operation of new council boundaries and new models of service delivery. Some of the opportunities might only make sense or be effective under some scenarios, while others might work across the board.

At this stage, the Board wants to encourage creative thinking about how we build new council structures that are not just more capable, but which can deliver more equitable outcomes and access to services and technology for all of Tasmania, particularly in our rural and regional communities.

The intent here is consistent with the Board's approach to community centred consolidation - to more flexibly and genuinely reflect and support what communities will want and need into the future. Our aim is to look at how future councils can access the benefits of scale yet remain responsive to local needs. A large part of this is to consider how we reorient representation and services around citizens and the people who access services and build administrative structures that can deliver that flexibility.

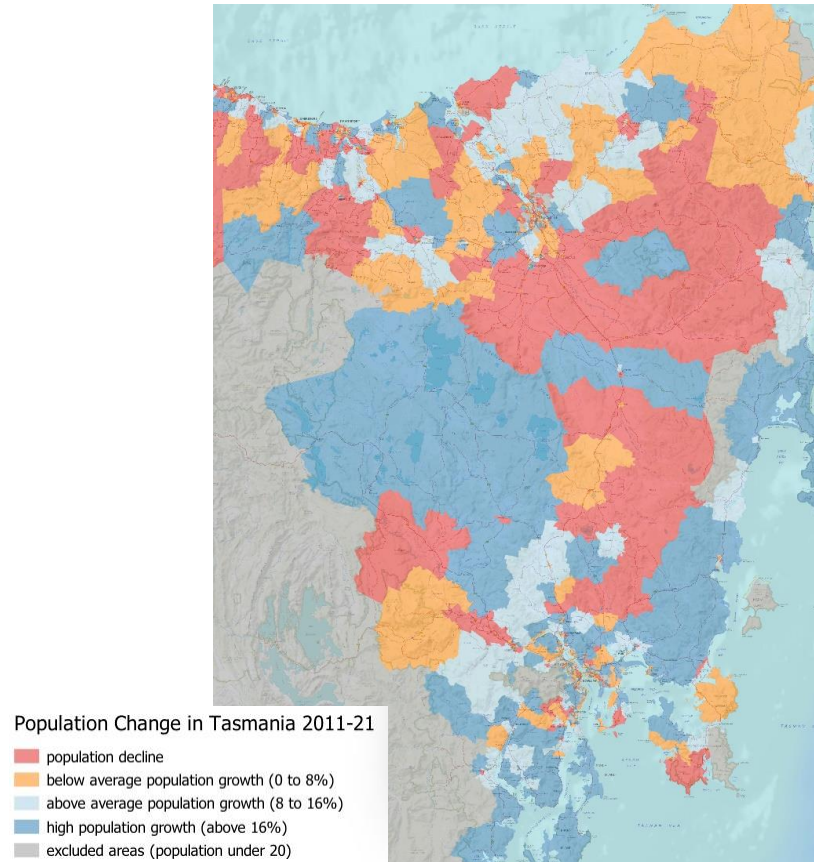
*Please note: The Supporting Papers also include fact sheets which explain key data sets, data definitions and associated methodology.*

### Navigating the Information Pack

The Information Pack is divided into five main sections:

- 1. Introductory information about how to interpret and use the Information Pack (this section);**
- 2. An overview of the Central and Midlands catchment, including key demographic, economic, and geographic features;**
- 3. An explanation and analysis of each of the individual structural reform scenarios against evaluation criteria data;**
- 4. A comparative summary of all the scenarios against the evaluation criteria data; and**
- 5. An appendix, which presents analysis of existing councils within (or partially within) the catchment.**

## 2. An overview of the Central and Midlands Community Catchment



The broader midlands and central plateau area is a large and sparsely populated region. This Catchment area captures the Central Highlands Plateau with its many lakes, the agricultural land of the Midlands to the forested tiers that separate the area from the east coast. The western side largely consists of the mountainous Central Plateau Conservation Area and the eastern section of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. To the south, boundaries are formed by the limits of the existing Derwent Valley and Brighton LGAs. The north is bounded by the urban fringes of Launceston and the Tamar Valley, and Meander Valley’s northern limits.

The region’s economy is largely based on agriculture and tourism and the area also includes a number of hydro storages, wind farms and power stations. As well as their economic and industrial connections, the Midlands and Central Plateau have strong historical, demographic, and cultural similarities represented in physical links such as the ‘Tasmania’s Heartland’ road network and tourist route.

While this grouping contains several geographically distant regional population centres, commuting and employment data indicate that these five current council areas have much stronger commuting links with each other than with any of their neighbours. Both Brighton and New Norfolk LGAs in the South have significant employment and commuting connections to the Central Highlands and Southern Midlands LGAs (as well as to greater Hobart), while Deloraine and Campbell Town are important regional hubs for the Northern Midlands and the upper half of the Central Highlands LGAs.

While parts of the Central Highlands and Northern Midlands LGAs are facing challenges serving ageing populations, other parts of the Catchment are growing relatively strongly. In particular, Meander Valley, Southern

Midlands, and Brighton LGAs have seen population growth above the state average in recent decades.

The main challenge confronting this grouping is that its population growth is concentrated in areas like Brighton, Perth, Evandale, Longford, and Westbury, whose functional economic connections are to Hobart and Launceston rather than to Central Tasmania.

Access to [healthcare](#), education, and transport are also issues. The area includes large [shack communities](#) – over [60% of private dwellings in the Central Highlands LGA were unoccupied on the 2021 census night](#) – with impacts for local governance. Part-time residents are of economic benefit to these communities, but also place stress on infrastructure and amenities during peak periods.

The recent [2022 floods and landslips](#), most notably in the north of the region, demonstrate the area's vulnerability to climate change related impacts, and the need for coordinated, cohesive action. As with other areas of the State, waste also presents challenges for the individual councils of this region, particularly given distances to appropriate landfill sites.

There are also important opportunities for the region, especially in tourism, energy and agriculture. Investment in major irrigation infrastructure and other innovative practices in particular is likely to support continuing growth in the agricultural output across the region making a significant contribution to the Tasmanian Government's goal of increasing the annual value of the sector to \$10 billion by 2050.

In this catchment, the Board is seeking to establish a system of local government that can:

- maximise the community benefit arising from the energy and tourism industries in the region
- deliver to residents and businesses the range of regulatory services expected of all councils
- advocate effectively to State and Commonwealth Governments to play their part in providing infrastructure and to partner on economic development and job opportunities
- provide services to both older and younger residents, given the concentrations of both cohorts
- provide fair and equitable services and representation to the many residents living in remote locations.



### Tasmania's changing community dynamics

Tasmanians are much more mobile than a generation ago and a growing number of residents cross at least one local government boundary every day. One widely accepted way of defining a 'community of interest' that provides insights into the appropriate scale for local government is to identify the areas in which most residents live, work, and use government services (Productivity Commission 2017). Reflecting this approach, the Board has produced a series of maps which illustrate commuting to major employment centres as one possible tool to help inform community discussions around boundary consolidation options.

The Central and Midlands Community Catchment is large and features a diverse range of communities, from remote and relatively isolated rural and highland settlements to significant regional centres. As such, the degree to which the existing LGAs of this catchment are representative of their residents' daily movements varies considerably. On one hand, communities like Brighton, Bridgewater, New Norfolk, Perth, Evandale, and Longford are increasingly becoming 'satellite' outer suburbs of Greater Hobart and Launceston. Even some of the more traditionally regional areas of the Southern Midlands, such as Mangalore, Bagdad, Kempton, and Campania have developed strong commuting connections to Hobart and Clarence in recent years. On the other hand, settlements like Campbelltown, Ross, Bothwell, and Deloraine remain important hubs for their more dispersed and rural communities.

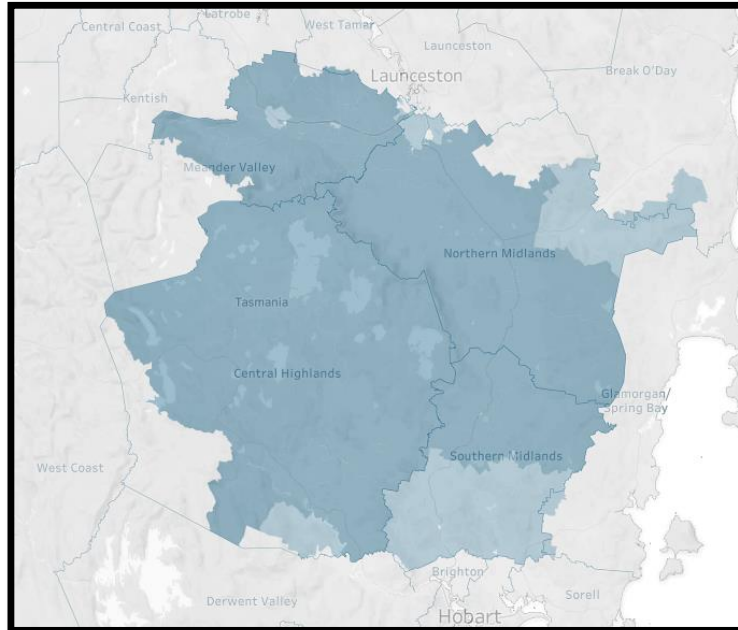
For this reason, special care must be taken to ensure that boundary changes in this Community Catchment accurately reflect the rapidly changing ways its residents live, work, and socialise.

One clear measure of the extent to which potential future council areas align with communities of interest is the proportion of workers in a council

area who also live in that area – the local workforce ratio. As already noted, this area is subject to considerable variability in this regard. Given their strong commuter links to a major urban centre, only a small proportion of the residents of Derwent Valley (34%), the Southern Midlands (29.4%), and Meander Valley (28.5%) both live and work in the same LGA. Central Highlands (49.5%) and Northern Midlands (41.6%) score slightly higher but still remain under 50%. However, the reasonably strong connection of these five areas to each other means that when combined, 62.2% of the catchment's workforce live locally. If the settlements of Perth, Evandale, and Longford were to be consolidated into a potential Tamar Valley council as is contemplated in one of the scenarios in the Tamar Valley Information Pack, this figure would be higher still.

		Place of work (SA2)										
		New Norfolk	Deloraine	Central Highlands	Upper Derwent Valley	Southern Midlands	Bridgewater	Brighton	Perth - Evandale	Longford	Greater Hobart	Launceston
Place of usual residence (SA2)	New Norfolk	878	0	39	66	8	123	32	0	0	2405	13
	Deloraine	0	1618	0	0	0	0	0	22	15	11	299
	Central Highlands	54	4	499	44	14	13	11	0	0	222	17
	Upper Derwent Valley	302	0	29	271	4	56	23	0	0	992	4
	Southern Midlands	60	0	23	5	892	153	91	4	0	1336	4
	Bridgewater	69	0	4	9	20	431	45	0	0	1684	11
	Brighton	74	0	8	10	50	266	411	0	0	2389	14
	Perth - Evandale	0	17	0	0	0	0	0	543	126	23	1626
	Longford	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	137	565	28	821
	Local workforce ratio	42%	66.6%	63%	51.5%	71.2%	18.6%	40.2%	20.3%	38.3%	-	-

*Commuting connections in the Central and Midlands region*

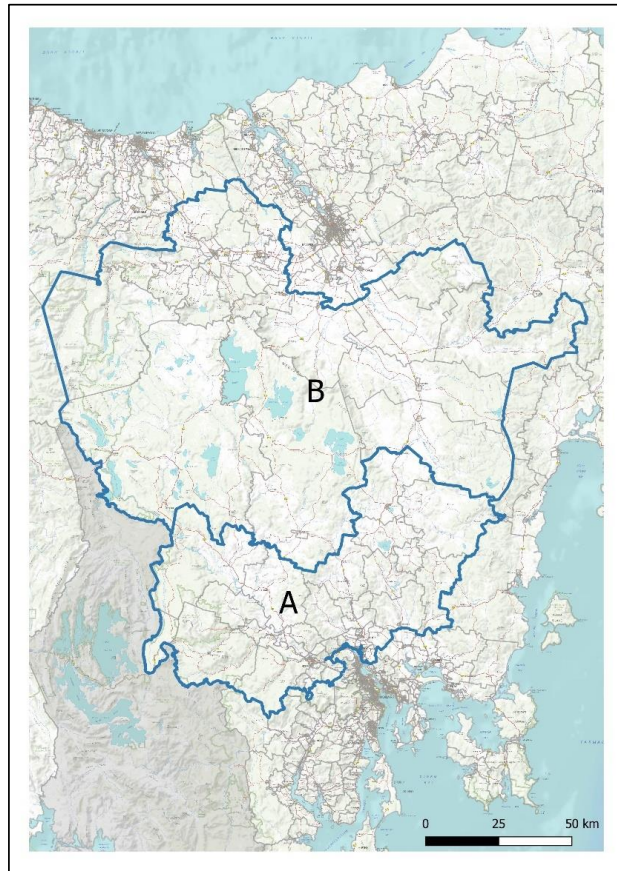


**Key**

- Unshaded** – fewer than 30 workers (less than 13 %) work within the Central and Midlands community catchment
- Light blue** – between 30 and 100 (13%-40%) workers work within the Central and Midlands community catchment
- Dark blue** – more than 100 (40%) workers work within the Central and Midlands community catchment

Central and Midlands Scenario 1

Central and Midlands: Scenario 1



Overview

Scenario 1 establishes two new council areas within the Central and Midlands Community Catchment. The first (A) combines the existing Brighton, Southern Midlands, and Derwent Valley LGAs, and a proportion of the Central Highlands including Hamilton, Ouse and Wayatinah. The second (B) captures the remainder of the Central Highland LGAs, Meander Valley minus Hadspen, Carrick, Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights, and the Northern Midlands (minus Perth, Evandale and Longford).

The two councils have been identified on the basis of communities of interest, demographics and geographic links. Council A has a younger population, many living in the rapidly growing urban areas of Brighton and New Norfolk and working locally or in the Greater Hobart area. Council B has an older population mostly in smaller towns, with more working outside the area.

Under this scenario, the satellite towns around Launceston currently within the Meander Valley and Northern Midlands LGA are incorporated into the Tamar Valley Community Catchment.

There is potential to maintain the customer service centres and works hubs in New Norfolk, Hamilton, Old Beach, Oatlands and Kempton for Council A, and Westbury and Bothwell for Council B. These hypothetical councils may be further supported by shared service arrangements.

Council Area	2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
Area A	37,551	16.7%
Area B	15,439	2.0%

## Central and Midlands Scenario 1

### Rationale and evidence

Scenario 1 would benefit the Central and Midlands region by increasing the scale and capability of the two proposed councils serving these communities, when compared to the existing councils. Council A has an approximate population of 37,500, and Council B 15,500. This scenario would have the potential to deliver better outcomes relative to the reform criteria and the status quo, albeit to differing degrees. The two new councils would have larger workforces, enhancing recruitment offerings and enabling career development and progression.

Under this scenario, there is strong correlation between council boundaries with communities of interest and the geography of the region. Both councils include dispersed rural communities connected with significant regional centres, which should help with operational sustainability. While Brighton and New Norfolk have strong commuter connections to Hobart, these communities have strong historical connections with their rural hinterland.

Communities will also need to consider whether it is appropriate to allocate Perth, Evandale, Carrick, Hadspen, and Longford (combined population of approximately 7,000) to the Tamar Valley Community Catchment, given the impact it has on the population and rate base of Council B.

This scenario would improve the streamlining whole-of-region cooperation and service sharing as well as collaborations with other tiers of government.

### Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

**Focus on future community needs:** Both potential councils include a number of significant regional towns and rural communities. Under this scenario, 96% of residents in Council A would be within a 30-minute drive

of the larger service and administrative hubs of New Norfolk and Brighton, and 74% for Westbury and Bothwell in Council B. Maintaining these services hubs would ensure good access to services in what are geographically large councils while also highlighting the need to invest in digital services and other outreach and engagement strategies (especially in Council B).

Council A has experienced strong urban growth in recent years (16.7% 2011-21) and consolidation would support enhanced scope capabilities in areas such as strategic planning, development and environmental health assessment, and could help manage issues such as urban consolidation and infrastructure planning.

**Retain local jobs and services:** There is scope to retain council administrative and operations hubs in New Norfolk, Hamilton, Old Beach, Oatlands and Kempton, Westbury and Bothwell, thereby maintaining local employment while also supporting local engagement and service delivery. A potential model is provided by Devonport Council and Service Tasmania, which have fully integrated their customer service centres to make it simpler for residents to engage with state and local government services face to face (see Supporting Paper on *State Government Partnership Opportunities*).

Council A's scale would improve the prospects of recruiting and retaining technical and professional staff and improve the capacity to assess complex planning applications and address other technical challenges. There has been a history of service sharing arrangements in the southern part of this community catchment, particularly in regard to development and planning services, which suggests a strong collective capacity in the region. Brighton and Southern Midlands councils have provided services to each other, to Central Highlands Council, and to other councils outside the area. Given its

## Central and Midlands Scenario 1

smaller size, Council B would need to continue to rely on external service sharing arrangements for some of its technical and regulatory services.

The integration of centralised or standardised corporate 'back-office' systems or services for council finance and administration may reduce staff time spent on administrative tasks, allowing them to focus on improving services to council staff and communities (see Supporting Paper on *Shared Services models*). In combination with the increased workforce size of these new entities, this is likely to lead to significant economies of scope.

While consolidated councils could lead to greater sharing of road maintenance teams and equipment, there would still be a need to maintain regional depots across the council area. Larger regulatory services teams should provide greater capacity to manage workloads, allow for business continuity during periods of leave, and help to attract and retain specialist staff – all of which currently present challenges to existing councils in this area.

**Preserve and enhance local voice:** The two new, larger councils would have the capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement to ensure all communities within the larger council areas are heard and represented, particularly those in the rural and remote highlands areas. If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*). Operations hubs could also be used for a program of scheduled regional council meetings in different locations.

**Fair funding models:** Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council areas, their total rates revenue in 2021 dollars would be an estimated \$22m for Council A and \$12.7m for Council B. The areas would have access to rates revenue from a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land, although both Councils would continue to rely on grant income given their scale and the road networks and other infrastructure they would have to manage. A range of approaches to rating are currently applied across the Catchment which would have to be considered in any transition. Brighton uses a flat, two-tier model for residential rates, while both Derwent Valley and Central Highlands Councils apply higher residential rates per capita than the other Councils in the Catchment. One option for enhancing the sustainability of both Councils in the Catchment would be to establish an alternative governance and funding model for the remote and sparsely populated highland communities reflecting the approach adopted in other Australian states. Further information is provided in the Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*.

**Appropriate resourcing for transition:** Transition arrangements for this scenario would need to consider how services provided by the Northern Tasmania Development Corporation and the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, both to member councils and other councils across the broader region, would be undertaken under the new arrangements. Similarly, the future status of the significant number of shared or joint arrangements would need to be considered, including any financial and staff commitments these councils have made to other councils. All of the Councils within the Catchment hold net financial assets which would have to be considered as part of any transition plan.

## Central and Midlands Scenario 1

### Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for hypothetical councils established under Scenario 1. These data have been produced by modelling 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural reform options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will likely be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background* Supporting Paper.

### Summary Data – Scenario 1

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B
Overview	Demographics	Population	37,551	15,439
		Median age	39.1	47.6
		SEIFA <sup>1</sup> (decile)	1	3
	Housing	Total dwellings	13,832	6,140
		No. of single person households	3,376 (24.4%)	1,863 (30.3%)
		% dwellings vacant	8.1	14.8
		Indicator		
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	69.4%	36.8%
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	96%	74%

<sup>1</sup> SEIFA', or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

## Central and Midlands Scenario 1

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	42%	0%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	30.2	30.8
<b>2. Future Needs and Priorities</b>	Population growth	Population change 2011-21	5,384 (16.7%)	303 (2.0%)
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	2,154	113
		% Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	18.4%	1.9%
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	26%	6%
	Older/ageing communities	% Population over 65	12%	19%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	23%	19%
<b>3. Financial Sustainability</b>	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	\$6,644,900,000	\$2,645,200,000
		Value of rateable land - primary production	\$1,648,400,000	\$3,774,400,000
		Value of rateable land - industrial	\$243,200,000	\$76,100,000
		Value of rateable land - commercial	\$286,600,000	\$175,700,000
		Value of rateable land - vacant	\$474,000,000	\$227,000,000
		Value of rateable land - other	\$735,700,000	\$453,500,000
		Value of rateable land - total	\$10,032,926,300	\$7,351,766,000
	Estimation of theoretical rate	Estimated rate revenue - residential	\$15,100,000	\$5,800,000

## Central and Midlands Scenario 1

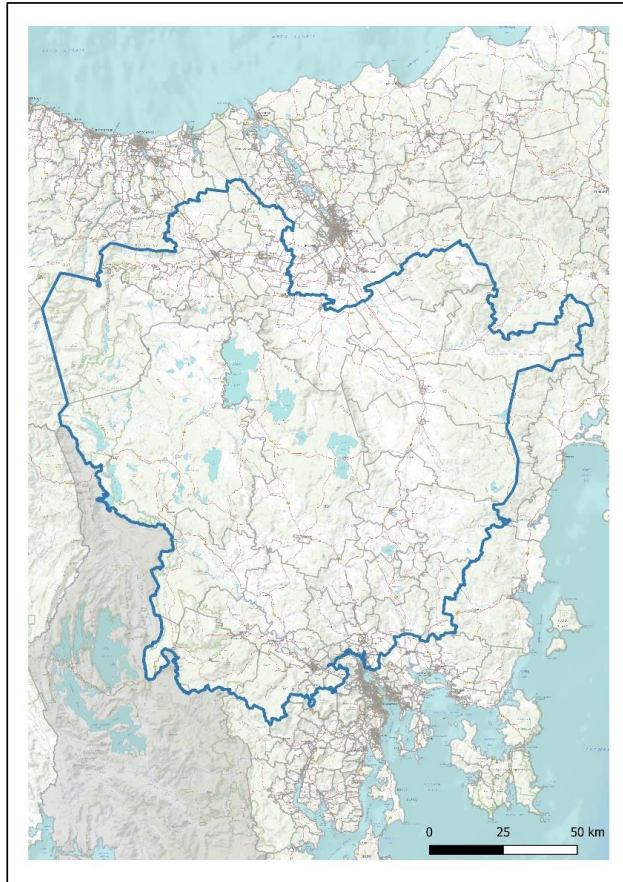
Category		Measure	Council A	Council B
	revenue applying current rates <sup>2</sup>	Estimated rate revenue - commercial	\$1,100,000	\$500,000
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	\$800,000	\$300,000
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	\$3,300,000	\$5,100,000
		Estimated rate revenue - vacant	\$1,300,000	\$700,000
		Estimated rate revenue - other	\$300,000	\$200,000
		Estimated rate revenue - total	\$22,000,000	\$12,700,000
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	935.2	1,014.2
		Km of council roads - sealed	544.0	900.6
<b>4. Operational Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council A would have a relatively large population base and ongoing growth that should give it the capacity to service its community.</li> <li>• Council B would have a smaller rates and population base, as well as significant areas of low growth or population decline. It is more likely to need to rely more on external shared service arrangements for some specialist functions.</li> </ul>			

<sup>2</sup> There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.



# Central and Midlands Scenario 2

## Central and Midlands: Scenario 2



### Overview

Scenario 2 establishes a single council for the Central and Midlands Community Catchment.

Under this scenario, the existing LGAs of Derwent Valley, Brighton, Southern Midlands, Central Highlands, Northern Midlands, and Meander Valley are combined, minus the Launceston satellite commuting towns of Carrick, Hadspen, Perth, Longford, and Evandale.

A single council model would maximise potential scale and capability benefits by incorporating central Tasmania into one consolidated council. The scenario would support higher and more consistent service delivery across central parts of rural Tasmania and would deliver a more financially sustainable model of local government for these communities.

The primary challenge for this model, given the size of the LGA, would be ensuring local voices are heard with equal representation across the entire region.

This scenario would require the continuation of a number of customer service and administration centres with supporting works hubs in other areas to maintain regional employment opportunities.

2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
52,990	14.1%

## Central and Midlands Scenario 2

### Rationale and evidence

Scenario 2 establishes one single council area, combining the current Derwent Valley, Brighton, Southern Midlands, Central Highlands, Northern Midlands and Meander Valley Councils, but without the commuting towns south of Launceston.

The council would be geographically large by Tasmanian standards, but less populous than some other councils in the State, with approximately 53,000 people. It would have a hypothetical revenue of \$34.7m. In addition to creating significant scale, a further rationale for establishing a whole-of-region council is that it would represent a significant portion of rural Tasmania and lessen the need for many regional organisations and structures to promote collaboration across councils.

The challenge for the single council model will be ensuring local representation, employment and service delivery across the entire area, although the consolidated council would have the resources to invest in community engagement and establishing administrative and service delivery hubs across the community. Consideration would also have to be given to balancing the needs of the fast-growing urban communities in the south of the Catchment with rural communities further north.

There are two specific issues that warrant further investigation and consideration by communities and councils under this scenario:

- Given the commuter links between Brighton, New Norfolk and Hobart, are these communities more oriented towards the more urban areas to their south, or do they identify more strongly and perform as service hubs for their rural hinterlands?

- In the north of the catchment, communities similarly should consider the allocation of Perth, Evandale, Carrick, Hadspen, and Longford (also given their commuter links to Launceston) to the Tamar Valley Community Catchment.

### Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

**Focus on future community needs:** The council established under this scenario would have better resources and capabilities to respond to emerging community needs. In terms of accessing services, if existing council offices across the Community Catchment were maintained as a part of a network model, then 85% of residents would be within a 30-minute drive of the major service and administrative hubs. The trade-off which the community will have to consider is whether a single council model is the most effective and sustainable model for providing local representation and services across the Central and Midlands.

As described in the overview of this *Information Pack*, areas of this region are experiencing significant urban growth. Other areas have seen, and will see, major infrastructure projects such as wind farms and irrigation. These changes will require further and increased strategic planning and infrastructure.

Under this model, there would be less of a need for regional shared services arrangements than for the status quo or under other scenarios included under this catchment. The necessity for the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority (STCA) would need to be reconsidered given the capability of the resulting council, although it may have a clear ongoing role in areas not traditionally considered core to local government (e.g. natural resource management). A larger regional council will be well placed to advocate for the Central and Midlands community and rural interests more generally

## Central and Midlands Scenario 2

and enter strategic partnerships with other spheres of government. Likewise, it will be well placed to deliver effective land use and strategic planning.

**Retain local jobs and services:** Establishing a single consolidated council to represent the Central and Midlands region would deliver scale benefits including the ability to attract and retain specialist staff and invest in productivity-enhancing equipment and 'back-office' systems. There would need to be a clear strategy of retaining jobs and teams across the region to maintain local employment and knowledge and provide community members with ready access to council services.

The Southern Midlands Council and Service Tasmania have integrated their customer service centres in Oatlands, making it simpler for residents to engage with state and local government services face to face. There is potential to expand this approach across the Catchment (see Supporting Paper on *State Government Partnership Opportunities*).

While a single council would facilitate greater sharing of road maintenance teams and equipment, there would still be a need to maintain several regional depots across the council area given the Council would be responsible for managing 3,500 km of roads – the most in Tasmania. A larger regulatory services team would likewise provide greater capacity to manage workloads, allow for business continuity during periods of leave, and help to attract and retain specialist staff.

While the new council would have significant scale, capacity and purchasing power, there would be benefits in it centrally sourcing some basic common services, such as cloud-based ICT systems, to support council finance and administration and enable employees to access systems from across this large LGA. (see Supporting Paper on *Shared*

*Services Models*). This would reduce staff time on administrative tasks and system management and help provide consistent and sustainable services across the region.

**Preserve and enhance local voice:** The greatest challenge under this scenario would be ensuring that a single regional council is able not only to preserve but also enhance local voice, representation, and engagement. Despite its increased size, a single consolidated council would, however, have the capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement to ensure all communities within the larger council areas are heard and represented, particularly those in the rural hinterland areas. In a local government area of this size, there would also be merit in considering mechanisms to ensure all areas were afforded localised representation by the new council.

If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*).

**Fair funding models:** Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council area, total rates revenue in 2021 dollars would be an estimated \$34.7m. The consolidated council would have access to a significant rate base drawn from a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land although the new Council would continue to rely on grant income to maintain its large road network and other infrastructure.

As noted in Scenario 1 above, a range of approaches to rating are currently applied across the Catchment which would have to be considered in any transition. Brighton uses a flat, two-tier model for residential rates, while

## Central and Midlands Scenario 2

both Derwent Valley and Central Highlands Councils apply higher residential rates per capita than the other Councils in the Catchment. One option for enhancing the sustainability of this council would be to establish an alternative governance and funding model for the very remote and sparsely populated highland communities reflecting the approach adopted in other Australian states. Further information is provided in the Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*.

**Appropriate resourcing for transition:** As with other scenarios, transition arrangements would need to consider the need for existing regional structures and how best to adapt and integrate the systems across six

existing councils into an integrated framework to meet the future needs of the Central and Midlands community.

Areas of focus for transition would include:

- The ongoing role of the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, particularly the services it provides to other councils in Tasmania;
- treatment of the debts and surpluses held by all councils;
- IT systems, including Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and asset management platforms.

## Central and Midlands Scenario 2

### Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for hypothetical councils established under Scenario 2. These data have been modelled using 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural reform

options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background* Supporting Paper.

### Summary Data - Scenario 2

Category		Measure	Council
Overview	Demographics	Population	52,990
		Median age	41.6
		SEIFA <sup>3</sup> (decile)	2
	Housing	Total dwellings	19,972
		No. of single person households	5,239 (26.2%)
		% dwellings vacant	10.3
		Indicator	
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	51.6%

<sup>3</sup> SEIFA', or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

## Central and Midlands Scenario 2

Category		Measure	Council
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	85%
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	30%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	30.4
<b>2. Future Needs and Priorities</b>	Population growth	Population change 2011-21	6,552 (14.1%)
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	2,644 (15.3%)
		% Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	15.3%
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	21%
	Older/ageing communities	% Population over 65	14%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	22%
<b>3. Financial Sustainability</b>	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	\$9,290,100,000
		Value of rateable land - primary production	\$5,422,800,000

## Central and Midlands Scenario 2

Category		Measure	Council
		Value of rateable land - industrial	\$319,300,000
		Value of rateable land - commercial	\$462,300,000
		Value of rateable land - vacant	\$701,000,000
		Value of rateable land - other	\$1,189,200,000
		Value of rateable land - total	\$17,384,692,300
	Estimation of theoretical rate revenue applying current rates <sup>4</sup>	Estimated rate revenue - residential	\$21,000,000
		Estimated rate revenue - commercial	\$1,700,000
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	\$1,100,000
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	\$8,400,000
		Estimated rate revenue - vacant	\$2,000,000
		Estimated rate revenue - other	\$500,000
		Estimated rate revenue - total	\$34,700,000
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	1,949.4
		Km of council roads - sealed	1,444.6

<sup>4</sup> There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

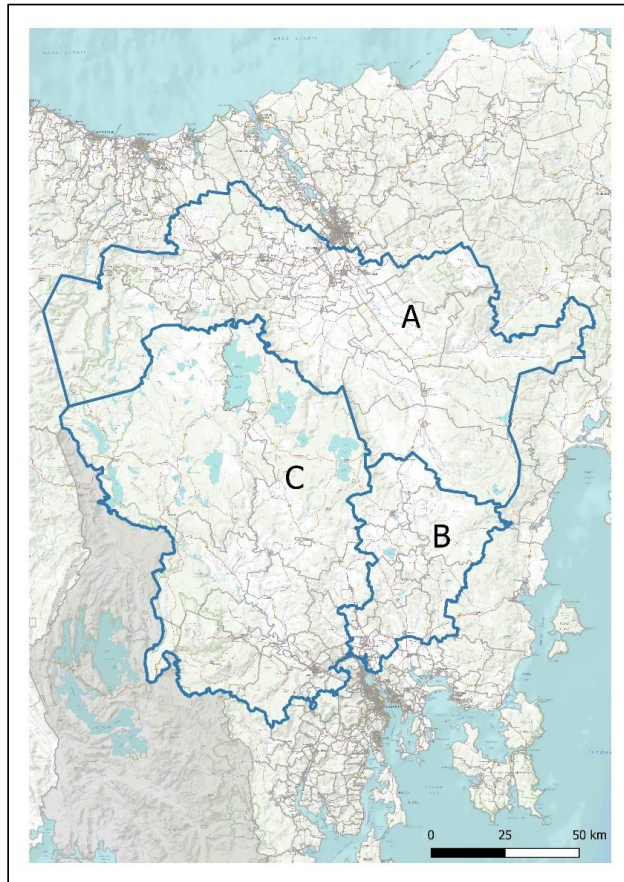
Central and Midlands Scenario 2

Category	Measure	Council
<p><b>4. Operational Sustainability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This council would have a relatively large population base and ongoing growth that should give it the capacity to service its community.</li> <li>• Despite the capability that would come with scale, this council would have a large geographic area and dispersed community to service from different work hubs.</li> <li>• This council would need to invest in robust engagement processes to ensure that it was reflecting community priorities across the council area equitably. It would also need to invest in strong management systems to ensure community priorities were being delivered.</li> </ul>	



## Central and Midlands Scenario 3

### Central and Midlands: Scenario 3



#### Overview

Scenario 3 creates three new council areas for the Central and Midlands Community Catchment. Council A combines the existing Northern Midlands and Meander Valley LGAs, minus the suburbs of Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights. Council B merges Brighton and the Southern Midlands LGAs, and Council C captures Derwent Valley and the Central Highlands LGAs.

This scenario establishes Councils with populations between 15,000 and 28,000 and aligns communities of interest with significant regional towns as important service hubs.

This proposal enhances possible scale capabilities and the scope for cohesive coordination in the region, although not to the same extent as Scenario 1 or 2 of this information pack. This scenario has the potential to host several administration and service centres and works hubs to maintain regional employment opportunities.

Council Area	2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
Area A	27,831	11.3%
Area B	23,688	19.7%
Area C	14,996	12.7%

## Central and Midlands Scenario 3

### Rationale and evidence

The three council areas established under this scenario each combine two existing councils, almost entirely following existing local government boundaries. The exception is Meander Valley's boundary with Launceston, which has been adjusted to incorporate the continuously connected suburbs of Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights into the Tamar Valley Community Catchment.

This scenario would benefit the Central and Midlands community by increasing the scale and capability of the three proposed councils although not to the extent of the first and second reform scenarios outlined in this *Information Pack*. The three new councils would each have larger workforces enhancing recruitment opportunities and enabling career development and progression although would still rely on a range of shared services and partnership arrangements.

Under this Scenario, Longford and Westbury could be retained as administrative, customer service and works hubs to service the communities in Council A.

While a three-council model would require greater regional coordination and cooperation relative to other reform scenarios, it represents an improvement on current council scale (and therefore capability) relative to the status quo. The existing Central Highlands and Southern Midlands communities would benefit from their connection to the fast-growing towns of New Norfolk and Brighton. The model will help coordinate development and services including the implementation of existing strategic planning initiatives, such as the Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS).

### Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

**Focus on future community needs:** The three councils established under this Scenario include at least one significant regional town connected to surrounding rural and highland communities. These towns host important services for their communities (such as healthcare, education, and retail).

In terms of accessing services, if existing council offices across the Community Catchment were maintained as a part of a network model, then between 87 and 97% of residents would be within a 30-minute drive of the major service and administrative hubs. The trade-off which the community will have to consider is whether a three-council model is the most effective and sustainable model for providing local representation and services to the Central and Midlands region.

As described in the other scenarios in this Community Catchment Information Pack, areas of this region are experiencing significant urban growth (most notably Councils A and B). Other areas have seen, and will see, major infrastructure projects such as wind energy and irrigation. These changes will require further and increased strategic planning and infrastructure.

Each of the three councils under the Scenario represent communities with a degree of demographic and economic diversity which should help ensure financial sustainability. However, these councils would likely still need to share services on a local or regional scale. For example, all three councils would have to cooperate to support existing or expanded shared services and regional emergency management committees. The three councils may also need to jointly advocate for their communities to other spheres of government. Likewise, they will need to collaborate to deliver effective land use and strategic planning. The coordination of regional strategy and

## Central and Midlands Scenario 3

economic development, currently undertaken by the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, would be an ongoing need.

**Retain local jobs and services:** There is significant scope to retain multiple existing council administrative centres and operations hubs in the different councils to maintain local employment and to support local engagement and service delivery.

Southern Midlands Council and Service Tasmania have integrated their customer service centres in Oatlands, making it simpler for residents to engage with state and local government services face to face. There is potential to apply this in each council area (see Supporting Paper on *State Government Partnership Opportunities*).

Given the relatively small size of Council C in particular (serving a population of approximately 15 000), there would be an ongoing need to share specialist and technical staff with neighbouring councils at a regional level. Regulatory services (building, environmental health, plumbing) and asset construction and maintenance are prime candidates for this approach.

The integration of centralised or standardised corporate 'back-office' systems or services for council finance and administration may reduce staff time spent on administrative tasks, allowing councils to reallocate resources towards improving the scope and quality of service provision (see Supporting Paper on *Shared Services Models*).

**Preserve and enhance local voice:** The three new, larger councils in this scenario would have enhanced capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement, ensuring that all communities within the larger council areas are heard and represented. If

required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*). Operations hubs could also be used for a program of scheduled regional council meetings in different areas of the municipality.

**Fair funding models:** Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council areas, their total rates revenue in 2021 dollars would be an estimated \$21.7 for Council A, \$12.5m for Council B, and \$11.6m for Council C. Establishing new funding models would be easier under this scenario as the two highest rating councils in the Catchment would be combined in the proposed Council C although all three councils would continue to rely on grant funding for a significant proportion of their revenue. One option for enhancing the sustainability of Council C would be to establish an alternative governance and funding model for the remote and sparsely populated highland communities reflecting the approach adopted in other Australian states. Further information is provided in the Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*.

## Central and Midlands Scenario 3

**Appropriate resourcing for transition:** Given this scenario involves less change to council structures than other scenarios, the transition costs would be expected to be lower. Careful consideration would need to be given to the status of shared services arrangements, including any financial and staff commitments made to other councils (such as the provision of plumbing services by Brighton to the Tasman Council).

Transition arrangements for this scenario would need to consider the role of the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, both in relation to member councils and other councils across the broader region, under the new arrangements. As we have noted, variations in the financial assets held by councils would need to be considered as part of the transition arrangements when establishing new councils.

## Central and Midlands Scenario 3

### Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for hypothetical councils established under Scenario 3. These data have been modelled using 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different

structural reform options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will likely be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper*.

### Summary Data - Scenario 3

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
Overview	Demographics	Population	27,831	23,688	14,996
		Median age	46	37.1	43.3
		SEIFA <sup>5</sup> (decile)	4	1	2
	Housing	Total dwellings	10,998	8,644	5,662
		No. of single person households	3,074 (28.0%)	1,994 (23.1%)	1,593 (28.1%)
		% dwellings vacant	9.1	7.0	13.0
		Indicator			
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	63.2%	58.4%	70.6%

<sup>5</sup> SEIFA, or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

### Central and Midlands Scenario 3

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	87%	97%	88%
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	0%	67%	0%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	30.4	30.5	29.9
<b>2. Future Needs and Priorities</b>	Population growth	Population change 2011-21	2,819	3,897	1,685
		% population change 2011-21	11.3%	19.7%	12.7%
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	1,291	1,654	566
		% change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	13.3%	23.7%	11.1%
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	14%	31%	18%
	Older/aging communities	% Population over 65	17%	11%	15%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	19%	25%	20%

## Central and Midlands Scenario 3

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
<b>3. Financial Sustainability</b>	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	\$4,943,474,800	\$4,296,673,200	\$2,806,583,700
		Value of rateable land - primary production	\$4,102,701,800	\$831,040,000	\$1,339,792,700
		Value of rateable land - industrial	\$338,533,500	\$166,926,500	\$77,413,400
		Value of rateable land - commercial	\$268,326,100	\$166,486,600	\$153,044,600
		Value of rateable land - vacant	\$350,453,500	\$254,611,700	\$269,237,300
		Value of rateable land - other	\$628,854,100.00	\$387,491,400.00	\$427,792,800.00
		Value of rateable land - total	\$10,632,343,800	\$6,103,229,400	\$5,073,864,500
	Estimation of theoretical rate revenue applying current rates <sup>6</sup>	Estimated rate revenue - residential	\$12,278,171	\$8,770,506	\$7,516,107
		Estimated rate revenue - commercial	\$1,001,420	\$653,779	\$527,983
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	\$1,813,926	\$528,275	\$300,713
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	\$5,531,617	\$1,740,629	\$2,241,614
Estimated rate revenue - vacant		\$841,827	\$604,457	\$893,065	

<sup>6</sup> There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

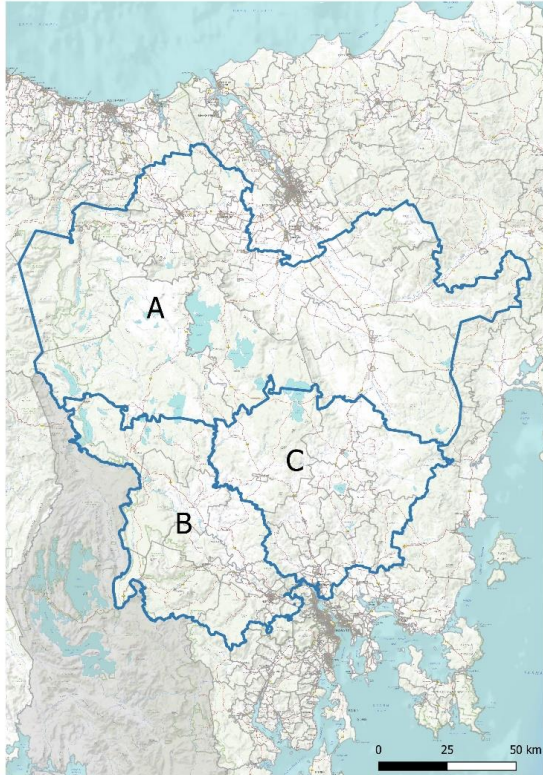
Central and Midlands Scenario 3

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
		Estimated rate revenue - other	\$275,361	\$183,892	\$151,085
		Estimated rate revenue - total	\$21,742,322	\$12,481,538	\$11,630,567
		Estimated rate revenue as a % of area total rateable property value	0.20%	0.20%	0.23%
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	630.0	478.5	884.2
		Km of council roads - sealed	1,090.3	309.3	277.2
<b>4. Operational Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils A and B would have relatively large rates and population bases that should give them the capacity to service their communities.</li> <li>Council C would have a smaller rates and population base, as well as significant areas of low growth or population decline. It is more likely to need to access external shared service arrangements for some specialist functions.</li> </ul>				



Central and Midlands Scenario 4

Central and Midlands: Scenario 4



Overview

Scenario 4 also creates three new council areas, but with different boundaries to Scenario 3. Here, Council A combines: Meander Valley (minus Hadspen and Carrick areas), Northern Midlands (minus Perth, Evandale, and Longford), and Central Highlands, from just north of Derwent Bridge, the Steppes and Interlaken. Council B merges the Derwent Valley with the southwestern portions of the Central Highlands (retaining Derwent Bridge, Bronte Park and Waddamana, but excluding Bothwell and Interlaken). Council C combines Brighton, Southern Midlands and the south-eastern portion of the Central Highlands (Bothwell and Interlaken). The boundary between the three council areas in the Central Highlands is indicative because the proposed boundary doesn't align with ABS SA1 geography.

The three council areas attempt to more closely group communities of interest and regular travel/ mobility patterns. For example, in this scenario Bothwell is included in Council C reflecting the township's commuting links to Brighton and Hobart. Like Scenario 3, it also connects dispersed rural communities with larger regional service hubs. There is also the potential to strengthen existing coordination and shared service arrangements, and to identify a number of service, administrative and works hubs for the individual councils.

Council Area	2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
Area A	15,060	6.9%
Area B	12,400	11.8%
Area C	25,894	20.6%

## Central and Midlands Scenario 4

This scenario is designed to test the view that the community in the northern part of the Central Highlands is more closely connected to the Meander Valley and Northern Midlands regions. This scenario also recognises the commuter and service connections to Greater Hobart from the Southern Midlands and Brighton in Council C, and from the Derwent Valley in Council B.

### Rationale and evidence

This scenario would establish three councils. Although this scenario is more complex than others in this Community Catchment as the proposed councils are largely independent of existing council boundaries, it merits consideration given it is the most tailored to communities of interest.

This model would increase the scale and capabilities of councils serving the Central and Midlands region, with approximate populations of 15 000, 12 500 and 26 000 for Councils A, B, and C respectively.

This scenario would help most closely connect rural communities with regional towns and accommodate the distinctive needs of the rural hinterlands. It recognises the close connections between Perth, Evandale and Longford and Launceston by allocating these towns to the Tamar Catchment. Despite their rural character, each of the proposed council areas has experienced population growth of between 7 and 20 percent over the past decade.

This Scenario would benefit the Central and Midlands community by increasing the scale and capability of the three proposed councils although not to the extent of Scenarios 1 and 2. The three new councils would each have larger workforces enhancing recruitment opportunities and enabling career development and progression.

Under this scenario, most administrative, customer service, administration and works hubs could be maintained to service the Catchment.

While a three-council model would require greater regional coordination and cooperation relative to other reform scenarios, it represents an improvement on current council scale (and therefore capability) relative to the status quo. It would assist in streamlining coordination in the implementation of strategic planning initiatives, such as the Southern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS).

### Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

**Focus on future community needs:** Under this scenario there is strong alignment between council boundaries and communities of interest. It observes the significant interaction and engagement between the urban centres of this region. This consolidation of councils would improve whole-of-region cooperation and service sharing as well as collaborations with other tiers of government.

Under this scenario, 76% of residents would be within a 30-minute drive of key service and administrative hubs for Council A, and 96% and 93% for Councils B and C respectively.

The trade-off which the community will have to consider is whether a three-council model is the most effective and sustainable model for providing local representation and services to the Central and Midlands Catchment.

Urban areas within this region are experiencing significant growth (most notably Councils B and C). Such changes will require further and increased strategic planning and infrastructure.

## Central and Midlands Scenario 4

Under this model all three councils would need to cooperate to support existing or expanded shared services and regional emergency management committees. The coordination of regional strategy and economic development, currently undertaken by the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, would be an ongoing need.

Each of the three councils under the Scenario represent communities with a degree of demographic and economic diversity which should help support financial sustainability.

**Retain local jobs and services:** There is significant scope to retain multiple existing council administrative centres and operations hubs in the different councils to maintain local employment and to support local engagement and service delivery.

Southern Midlands Council and Service Tasmania have integrated their customer service centres in Oatlands, making it simpler for residents to engage with state and local government services face to face. There is potential to apply this in each council area (see Supporting Paper on *State Government Partnership Opportunities*).

There would be advantages in sharing specialist and technical staff with neighbouring councils at a regional level. Regulatory services (building, environmental health, plumbing) and asset construction and maintenance are prime candidates for this approach.

The integration of centralised or standardised corporate 'back-office' systems or services for council finance and administration may reduce staff time spent on repetitive transactional tasks, allowing councils to reallocate resources towards improving the scope and quality of service provision (see Supporting Paper on *Shared Services Models*).

**Preserve and enhance local voice:** The three new, larger councils in this scenario would have enhanced capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement, ensuring that all communities within the larger council areas are heard and represented. If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*). Operations hubs could also be used for a program of scheduled regional council meetings in different areas of the municipality.

**Fair funding models:** Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council areas, their total rates revenue in 2021 dollars would be an estimated \$12.5m for Council A, \$8.5m for Council B, and \$14.5m for Council C. Like Scenario 3, establishing new funding models would be easier under this scenario as the two highest rating councils in the Catchment would be combined in the proposed Council C although all three councils would continue to rely on grant funding for a significant proportion of their revenue. One option for enhancing the sustainability of the council A and B would be to establish an alternative governance and funding model for the remote and sparsely populated communities reflecting the approach adopted in other Australian states. Further information is provided in the Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*.

## Central and Midlands Scenario 4

### **Appropriate resourcing for transition:**

Careful consideration would need to be given to the status of shared services arrangements, including any financial and staff commitments made to other councils (such as the provision of plumbing services by Brighton to the Tasman Council).

Transition arrangements for this scenario would need to consider the role of the Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority, both in relation to member councils and other councils across the broader region, under the new arrangements. As we have noted, variations in the financial assets held by councils would need to be considered as part of the transition arrangements when establishing new councils.

## Central and Midlands Scenario 4

### Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for hypothetical councils established under Scenario 4. These data have been produced by analysing 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural reform

options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will likely be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper*.

### Summary Data – Scenario 4

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
Overview	Demographics	Population	15,060	12,400	25,894
		Median age	47.4	43	37.8
		SEIFA <sup>7</sup> (decile)	3	2	1
	Housing	Total dwellings	5,971	4,666	9,454
		No. of single person households	1,652	1,271	2,212
		% dwellings vacant	11.7	9.6	8.4
		Indicator			

<sup>7</sup> SEIFA, or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

## Central and Midlands Scenario 4

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
<b>1. Place and Representation</b>	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	35.2%	63.0%	58.7%
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	76%	96%	93%
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	0%	0%	61%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	30.7	30.0	30.1
<b>2. Future Needs and Priorities</b>	Population growth	Population change 2011-21	970 (6.9%)	1,309 (11.8%)	4,427 (20.6%)
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	424	457	1,811
		% Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	7.6%	10.9%	23.7%

## Central and Midlands Scenario 4

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	11%	17%	32%
	Older/aging communities	% Population over 65	18%	14%	11%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	19%	21%	24%
<b>3. Financial Sustainability</b>	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	\$2,806,600,000	\$2,108,000,000	\$4,720,200,000
		Value of rateable land - primary production	\$1,339,800,000	\$643,200,000	\$1,378,600,000
		Value of rateable land - industrial	\$77,400,000	\$75,500,000	\$168,300,000
		Value of rateable land - commercial	\$153,000,000	\$111,500,000	\$182,700,000
		Value of rateable land - vacant	\$223,300,000	\$199,000,000	\$296,100,000
		Value of rateable land - other	\$427,800,000	\$318,400,000	\$453,800,000
		Value of rateable land - total	\$5,027,918,000	\$3,455,582,000	\$7,199,806,800
		Estimation of theoretical rate	Estimated rate revenue - residential	\$5,700,000	\$5,800,000

## Central and Midlands Scenario 4

Category		Measure	Council A	Council B	Council C
	revenue applying current rates <sup>8</sup>	Estimated rate revenue - commercial	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$700,000
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$500,000
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	\$5,100,000	\$1,200,000	\$2,500,000
		Estimated rate revenue - vacant	\$700,000	\$600,000	\$700,000
		Estimated rate revenue - other	\$200,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
		Estimated rate revenue - total	\$12,500,000	\$8,500,000	\$14,500,000
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	1,013.5	365.2	795.4
		Km of council roads - sealed	891.3	185.7	396.8
<b>4. Operational Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Councils A and B would have relatively smaller rates and population bases. They are more likely to need to access external shared service arrangements for some specialist functions.</li> <li>Council C would have a relatively large rate and population base that should give it the capacity to service its community.</li> </ul>				

<sup>8</sup> There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.



### 3. Comparison of Scenarios

Criteria and Indicator	Metric								
	Scenario 1 Council A	Scenario 1 Council B	Scenario 2	Scenario 3 Council A	Scenario 3 Council B	Scenario 3 Council C	Scenario 4 Council A	Scenario 4 Council B	Scenario 4 Council C
<b>Place and Representation</b>									
<b>Alignment with local communities of interest % area workforce residing locally</b>	69.4%	36.8%	51.6%	63.2%	58.4%	70.6%	35.2%	62.96%	58.7%
<b>Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s % of population within 30 minutes of administrative hub</b>	96%	74%	85%	87%	97%	88%	76%	96%	93%
<b>Urbanisation % of population in urban settlements</b>	42%	0%	30%	0%	67%	0%	0%	0%	61%
<b>Mobility/Migration % of population who have moved in last 5 years</b>	30.2	30.8	30.4	30.4	30.5	29.9	30.7	30.0	30.1
<b>Future Needs and Priorities</b>									
<b>Population growth 2011-21 % growth and absolute number</b>	5,384 (16.7%)	303 (2%)	6,552 (14.1%)	2,819 (11.3%)	3,897 (19.7%)	1,685 (12.7%)	970 (6.9%)	1,309 (11.8%)	4,427 (20.6%)

Criteria and Indicator	Metric								
	Scenario 1 Council A	Scenario 1 Council B	Scenario 2	Scenario 3 Council A	Scenario 3 Council B	Scenario 3 Council C	Scenario 4 Council A	Scenario 4 Council B	Scenario 4 Council C
<b>Housing supply and infrastructure demand</b>									
<b>Ten-year change (2011-21) in dwelling numbers (absolute and per 1000 pop)</b>	2,154 (57.4 per 1000)	113 (7.3 per 1000)	2,644 (49.9 per 1000)	1,291 (44.8 per 1000)	1,654 (69.8 per 1000)	566 (37.7 per 1000)	424 (28.3 per 1000)	457 (36.9 per 1000)	1,811 (69.9 per 1000)
<b>Employment growth</b>									
<b>% growth in employment since 2011</b>	26%	6%	21%	14%	31%	18%	11%	17%	32%
<b>Older/ ageing communities population aged over 65 years (% of total)</b>	12%	19%	14%	17%	11%	15%	18%	14%	11%
<b>Younger communities population aged under 15 years (% of total)</b>	23%	19%	22%	19%	25%	20%	19%	21%	24%
<b>Financial Sustainability</b>									
<b>Value of rateable land</b>									
<b>Total \$ value within region</b>	\$10,032,926,300	\$7,351,766,000	\$17,384,692,300	\$10,632,343,800	\$6,103,229,400	\$5,073,864,500	\$5,027,918,000	\$3,455,582,000	\$7,199,806,800

Criteria and Indicator	Metric								
	Scenario 1 Council A	Scenario 1 Council B	Scenario 2	Scenario 3 Council A	Scenario 3 Council B	Scenario 3 Council C	Scenario 4 Council A	Scenario 4 Council B	Scenario 4 Council C
<b>Estimated total rate revenue<sup>9</sup></b>	\$21,983,200	\$12,691,300	\$34,674,600	\$21,742,300	\$12,481,500	\$11,630,500	\$12,514,900	\$8,511,400	\$14,463,300
<b>Estimated rates as share land value. Report %</b>	0.22%	0.17%	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	0.23%	0.25%	0.25%	0.20%
<b>Road infrastructure Length and type of council roads in new region</b>									
<i>Kms by type</i>									
<b>Unsealed</b>	935.2	1,014.2	1,949.4	630.0	478.5	884.2	1,013.5	365.2	795.4
<b>Sealed</b>	544.0	900.6	1,444.6	1,090.3	309.3	277.2	891.3	185.7	396.8
<b>Additional Key Metrics</b>									
<b>Population</b>	37551	15439	52990	27831	23688	14996	15060	12400	25894
<b>Median Age</b>	39.1	47.6	41.6	46	37.1	43.3	47.4	43	37.8
<b>SEIFA (decile)</b>	1	3	2	4	1	2	3	2	1

<sup>9</sup>There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

#### 4. Implications for neighbouring Community Catchments

Community Catchments have been presented to facilitate discussions about options for council consolidation at a regional level. We are also mindful that the design of the reforms in one community catchment will have impacts on neighbouring regions and the local government system as a whole. Given this, it is important to note how the design of the Central and Midlands catchment may have implications for neighbouring Community Catchments and councils therein.

Specific observations and implications include:

- The far western and eastern boundaries of this catchment are comparatively clear, being primarily formed by/in national parks to the west and following forested tiers in parallel with the east coast. In comparison, the northern and southern boundaries

produce several implications for the neighbouring catchments, as detailed below.

- Although there are strong commuter links between Brighton, New Norfolk and Hobart, it will need to be established whether these communities are more oriented towards the more urban areas to their south, or whether they identify more strongly and perform as service hubs for/with their rural hinterlands.
- In the north of the Catchment, the relocation of Perth, Evandale, Carrick, Hadspen, and Longford (also given their commuter links to Launceston) to the Tamar Valley Community Catchment should also be considered.

## 5. Appendix

### Analysis of existing Councils within (or partially within) community catchment<sup>10</sup>

Council	Population	No. of employees	Average Residential Rates & Annual Charges per Residential Property (\$)	Current ratio (10 yr average)	Cash Expense Cover Ratio	Own source revenue coverage ratio (10 yr average)	Underlying surplus ratio (10 yr average)	Debt service cover ratio (8 yr average)	Asset sustainability ratio (7 yr average)
Brighton	18995	68.7	1160.47	3.25	3	87%	0%	0.0	91%
Central Highlands	2520	28	821.52	6.93	22	62%	-5%	1.6	91%
Derwent Valley	10942	57.67	Not provided	1.44	3	75%	1%	11.8	137%
Meander Valley	20709	82.15	1094.4	8.54	13	79%	3%	5.0	126%
Northern Midlands	13745	64.5	1141.91	4.71	18	75%	-2%	6.0	101%
Southern Midlands	6662	42.1	918.34	5.35	20	64%	-3%	28.8	86%

<sup>10</sup> Definitions of data items can be found *Existing Council Data Definitions Supporting Paper*.

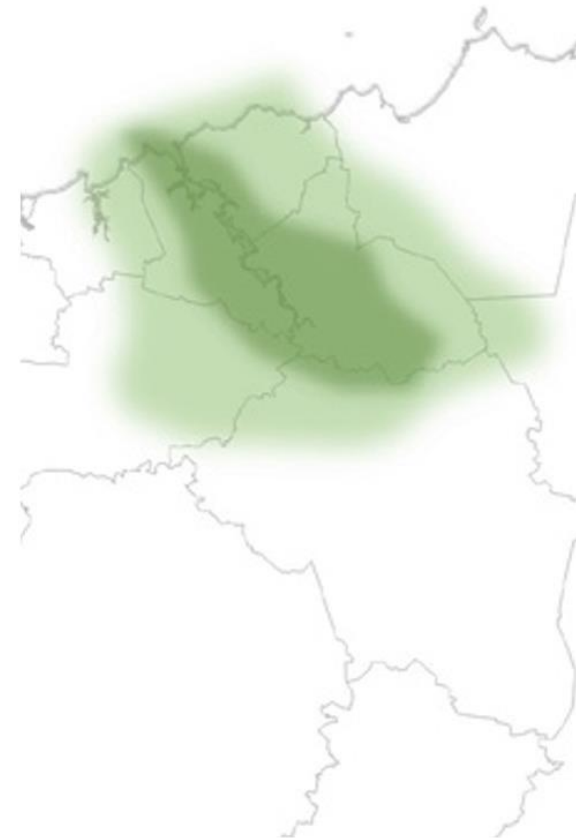
Council	Asset renewal funding ratio (7 yr average)	Asset consumption ratio (7 yr average)	Cash and investments held (\$'000s)	Net Financial Liabilities Ratio (%)	Interest bearing liabilities (\$'000s)	No. of discretionary development applications received	Value of all development approvals (\$)	No. of councillors
Brighton	92%	87%	5,172	32%	720	293	69,389,023	9
Central Highlands	99%	81%	11,145	116%	-	47	5,919,850	9
Derwent Valley	104%	68%	4,853	-62%	3,864	167	298,166,440	8
Meander Valley	91%	79%	24,323	50%	3,600	278	85,081,713	9
Northern Midlands	115%	81%	26,152	5%	9,570	248	59,101,247	9
Southern Midlands	92%	70%	14,636	91%	4,415	124	38,781,622	7

**The future  
of local  
government  
review**

# **Tamar Valley Community Catchment Information Pack**

Review Stage 3 – May 2023

Let's All Shape the Future  
of Local Government.



This information pack has been prepared by the Local Government Board with the assistance of the Tasmanian Policy Exchange at the University of Tasmania and the Department of State Growth.

It draws on ABS Census, council, and the Office of the Valuer General data.

The Local Government Board prepared this information pack as a data source and conversation starter for the upcoming Stage 3 consultation.



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## 1. Introduction

During Stage 3 of the Review, the Board will be engaging with communities to look at how we might reshape Tasmania's local councils to increase scale and capability so they can better serve Tasmanian communities. The goal is to design local government in Tasmania in a way that allows all councils to develop and maintain the capability that communities need, while delivering services locally, keeping local jobs, and ensuring that all Tasmanians have a strong voice in decisions being made on their behalf.

This information pack provides detailed insights into the Tamar Valley Community Catchment, outlining four possible structural reform scenarios. **These scenarios are not the only options for reform.** They are designed to prompt a discussion about some of the possible pathways available to deliver a more capable and sustainable system of local government.

**Communities and councils may have their own ideas about how local government could be better organised in their catchments. The Board welcomes alternative suggestions as part of the engagement process.**

### Where have these scenarios come from?

Each of the scenarios in the information pack has been developed using the Board's structural reform principles (see text box on the following page) and the following four criteria.

1. **Place and Representation**
2. **Future Needs and Priorities**
3. **Financial Sustainability**
4. **Operational Capability.**

**Scenario 1** – Establishing one council area that incorporates West Tamar, George Town, and Launceston as well as commuting areas of Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights.

**Scenario 2** – Establishing one council area capturing West Tamar and Launceston but not including Lebrina.

**Scenario 3** – Establishing one council area comprising the existing West Tamar, George Town, and Launceston LGAs, extended to include the commuting areas of Hadspen, Carrick, Longford, Perth, Evandale and immediate surrounds.

**Scenario 4** – Establishing one council area that incorporates West Tamar, George Town, and Launceston and extends west to Meander Valley (minus south-west SA1 around Lake Rowallan) but excludes the southern commuting towns of Evandale, Perth and Longford.

The Board – in collaboration with the University of Tasmania – has identified and applied a range of relevant data sets to assess the scenarios individually and in comparison to one another.

By doing this, we want to test how well the different scenarios meet the criteria. This should promote a conversation about various trade-offs and how these might be managed or addressed. For example, scenarios that propose a smaller scale council may be construed as providing a higher level of representation and local connection but may need to be supported by more extensive shared services and partnership arrangements to achieve the operational scale necessary to deliver long-run capability and financial sustainability.

On the other hand, scenarios that for larger council areas with larger populations may require less in the way of service sharing and may be more 'self-sufficient'.

#### Structural Reform Principles

1. A Focus on Future Community Needs
2. Retaining Jobs and Service Delivery Locally
3. Preserving and Enhancing Local Voice
4. Smoothing Financial Impacts for Communities
5. Dedicated and Appropriate Resourcing for the Transition

The data and analysis presented in this Information Pack has been sourced from a range of authoritative sources, including councils, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Office of the Valuer General, the Department of State Growth and the University of Tasmania. The Pack also presents the results of modelling undertaken to estimate indicative rates for possible council areas presented in the scenarios. Detailed notes on the methods and assumptions used in this modelling are provided in the Supporting Paper (*Methods and Technical Background*).

The scenarios presented in this Information Pack, and the data and analysis that underpins them, are designed to inform community consultation about the future design of local government in Tasmania and are only one of multiple sources of information the Board will be considering when finalising its reform options.

#### What do we want councils and communities to tell us?

For each of the scenarios, we want councils and communities to consider four fundamental questions:

1. **What are the strengths?**
2. **What are the weaknesses or challenges?**
3. **Are there any adjustments that could be made to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses?**
4. **Are there any other entirely different scenarios the Board should consider, which would still deliver against the Board's criteria and structural reform principles?**

Boundary changes are only one part of the equation. We also want councils and communities to think about options for complementary, supporting reforms, such as shared services and partnerships, options to improve local services and keep jobs in local communities, and new models of engagement and representation.

To support this conversation, we have prepared a number of *Supporting Papers*, which present a range of opportunities for councils and communities to consider. The Papers draw on research about new and evolving approaches in local government elsewhere, as well as the ideas that we have heard from talking with councils, state agencies, and the broader community, including from submissions we have received.

These papers focus on:

- **Supporting strong and empowered local communities (protecting and enhancing local voice and local services);**
- **State government partnership opportunities for local government; and**

- **Potential models, options, and key considerations for shared service opportunities in Tasmania.**

We want people to keep these opportunities in mind as they consider how they might work with or support the operation of new council boundaries and new models of service delivery. Some of the opportunities might only make sense or be effective under some scenarios, while others might work across the board.

At this stage, the Board wants to encourage creative thinking about how we build new council structures that are not just more capable, but which can deliver more equitable outcomes and access to services and technology for all of Tasmania, particularly in our rural and regional communities.

The intent here is consistent with the Board's approach to community centred consolidation - to more flexibly and genuinely reflect and support what communities will want and need into the future. Our aim is to look at how future councils can access the benefits of scale yet remain responsive to local needs. A large part of this is to consider how we reorient representation and services around citizens and the people who access services and build administrative structures that can deliver that flexibility.

*Please note: The Supporting Papers also include fact sheets which explain key data sets, data definitions and associated methodology.*

### **Navigating the Information Pack**

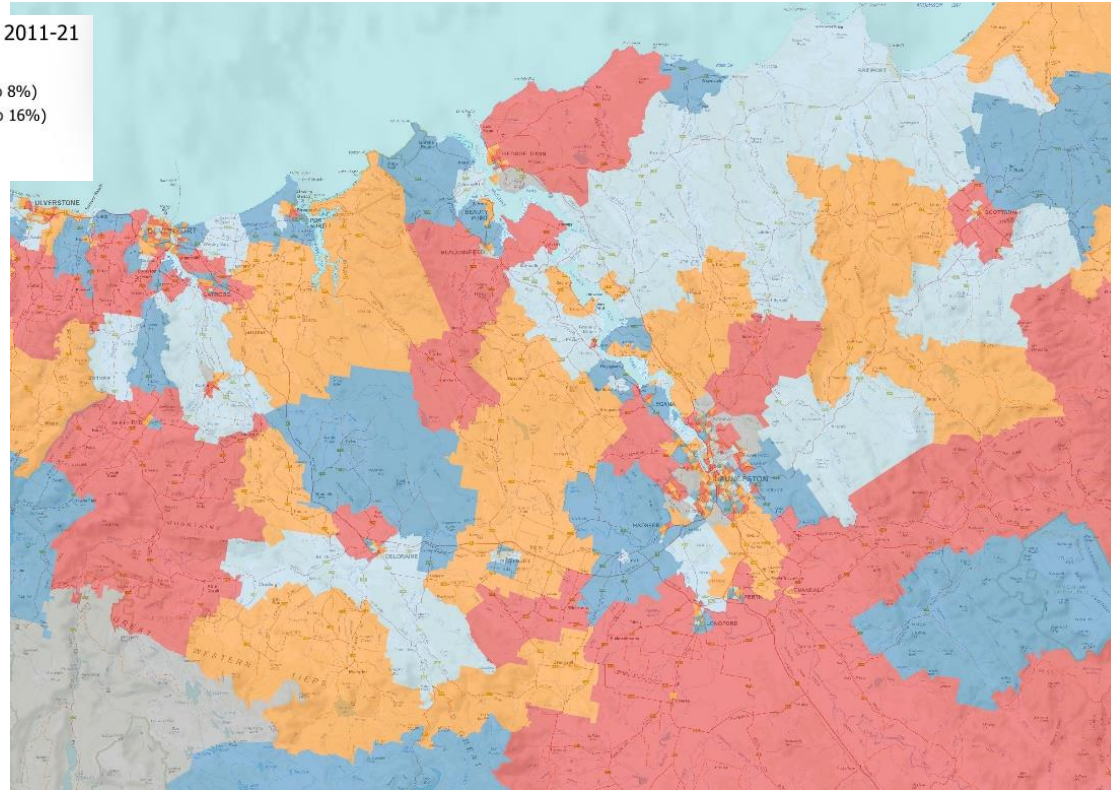
The Information Pack is divided into five main sections:

- 1. Introductory information about how to interpret and use the Information Pack (this section);**
- 2. An overview of the Tamar Valley catchment, including key demographic, economic, and geographic features;**
- 3. An explanation and analysis of each of the individual structural reform scenarios against evaluation criteria data;**
- 4. A comparative summary of all the scenarios against the evaluation criteria data; and**
- 5. An appendix, which presents analysis of existing councils within (or partially within) the catchment.**

## 2. An overview of the Tamar Valley Community Catchment

Population Change in Tasmania 2011-21

- population decline
- below average population growth (0 to 8%)
- above average population growth (8 to 16%)
- high population growth (above 16%)
- excluded areas (population under 20)



This Community Catchment is based on the kanamaluka / Tamar River estuary and its broader catchment zone. It takes in the city of Launceston and the upper reaches of the North and South Esk rivers to the mouth of the estuary, approximately 65km to the north, and its hinterland. Although the Tamar Valley has a reasonably defined geography, there is a

debate to be had about how far this Community Catchment extends into the surrounding farmland to the south and west. The community also needs to consider whether George Town, with its own distinctive industrial base, should be regarded as a separate community of interest and council area (see Scenarios 2 and 3).

The Region has strong connections to Launceston (SA3 population 87,000), which is Tasmania's second largest city and a commercial and business hub for northern Tasmania. The City of Launceston LGA is, in its current form, Tasmania's most populous, with almost 72,000 residents. The city is an important regional centre for both education and health services, has a major hospital, university campus and other service facilities. While manufacturing has declined in recent decades, Launceston is an important regional centre with growing services and tourism sectors as well as continuing to support surrounding agricultural districts.

Over the past 15 years, it has become increasingly clear that parts of the West Tamar and Northern Midlands LGAs in particular have been evolving into 'satellite' commuter suburbs of Greater Launceston. The combination of the geography of the Tamar estuary with the frequency and scale of interaction between residents of this broader region suggests a strong community of interest.

The historic townships of Evandale, Perth, Longford and Hadspen are increasingly connected to Launceston. Currently, more than 60% residents of Longford, Perth, and Evandale in the workforce commute to Launceston on a daily basis (See table p.13). Westbury has a strong commuter connection with Launceston (673 Westbury residents work in Launceston), but Deloraine does not (299 residents of Deloraine work in Launceston) (see 'Tasmania's changing community dynamics' below).

These patterns highlight the need to discuss whether these settlements should be included in the Tamar Valley Catchment (Scenarios 3 and 4). These commuting connections also do not extend into the current Latrobe, Dorset, Break O'Day, or Central Highlands LGAs.

The township of George Town ([population 4536](#)) sits at the mouth of the kanamaluka / Tamar River, and is a centre for heavy industry and manufacturing based at the neighbouring Bell Precinct including Bell Bay Aluminium and Liberty Bell Bay. The Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone (BBAMZ) is supporting the development of new low emissions industries, including establishing a renewable hydrogen hub to ensure the future of the industrial site.

Geographically, George Town is part of the Tamar consultation group although, owing to its distinctive economic and industrial base, is to a much smaller extent within greater Launceston's commuting zone. 1,434 people both live and work in George Town, while some 730 people, just over 26% of all employed residents, live in George Town but work in Launceston. The Board has been considering the orientation of George Town in terms of functional, commuter and communities of interest. To this end, George Town has also been included in the *North-East Community Catchment* consultation group with a scenario that merges the existing George Town and Dorset LGAs.

The remainder of the Tamar Valley hosts a number of townships with strong and growing connections. The Valley features small scale intensive agriculture (especially grapes) and a growing number of semi-rural lifestyle properties. While the east and west Tamar have traditionally had their own identities, they are connected via both Launceston and the Batman Bridge.

The region is (as the map above depicts) a patchwork of population growth and decline, with notable pockets of substantial growth evident. Opportunities presented by population growth also bring challenges in the form of demands on built and social infrastructure, transport, and housing. Climate change mitigation and responses to extreme weather events are other issues that will benefit from being managed collectively

by council/s with enhanced capabilities. The region also hosts a range of manufacturing industries, tourism ventures, and service and retail businesses, which could be leveraged through the enhanced capability of consolidated council/s.

The existing councils in this region participate in some of the most extensive shared service and partnership arrangements in the State, such as the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce, the Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Group, the Northern Employment and Business Hub, and the Northern Tasmania Sports Facility Plan, amongst others. Many of these arrangements also involve the neighbouring councils of Dorset, Flinders and Break O'Day.

In this catchment, the Board wants to talk to councils and communities about how to best establish a system of local government that can:

- coordinate the residential and commercial development that is occurring in this catchment
- advocate effectively to the State and Commonwealth Governments to play their part in providing infrastructure and to partner on economic development and job opportunities
- provide fair and equitable local government services and representation to both urban and rural residents
- partner with the State and Commonwealth Governments to provide residents across the catchment with access to the full range of government services.

### Tasmania's changing community dynamics

Tasmanians are much more mobile than a generation ago and a growing number of residents cross at least one local government boundary every day. One widely accepted way of defining a 'community of interest' that provides insights into the appropriate scale for local government is to identify the areas in which most residents live, work, and use government services (Productivity Commission 2017). Reflecting this approach, the Board has produced a series of maps and tables which illustrate commuting to major employment centres as one possible tool to help inform community discussions around boundary consolidation options.

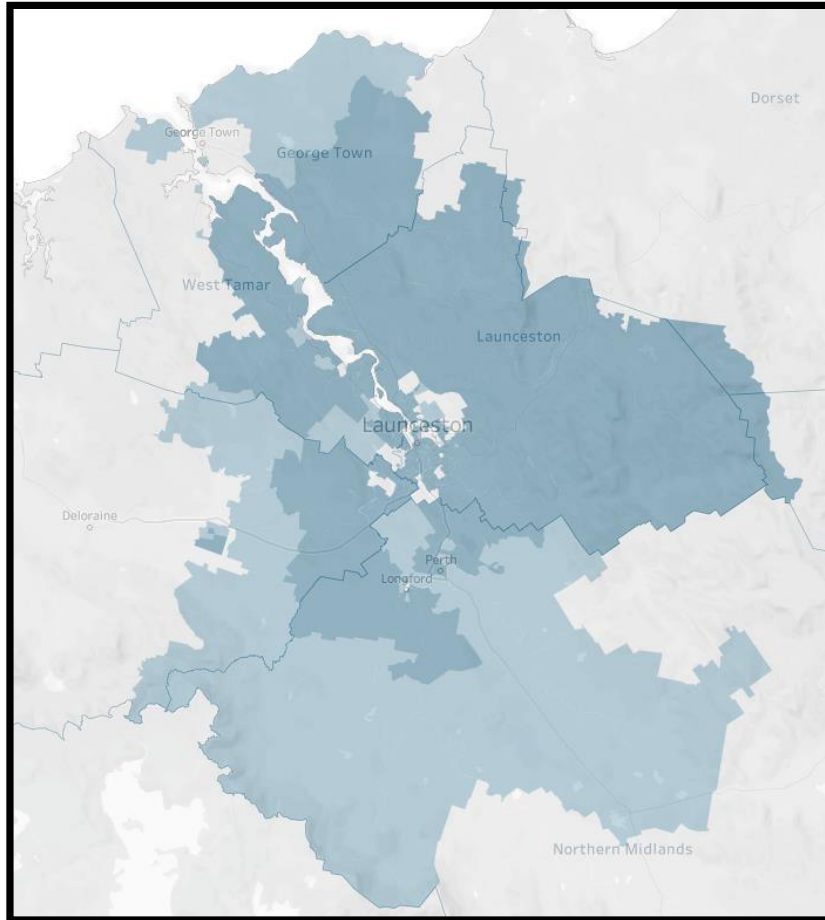
Launceston is a significant regional centre and employment hub with growing numbers of workers living in neighbouring communities and commuting to Launceston on a regular basis.

These commuting dynamics suggest the community of interest associated with Launceston extends beyond the current boundaries of the Launceston LGA inviting discussion about appropriate size and scale of councils in the Tamar Valley Catchment to best meet the future needs of the community.

Launceston's pull as an employment centre takes in much of the Tamar Valley as well as parts of the current Meander Valley LGA (Carrick/Hadspen in particular) and the Northern Midlands (especially Longford and Perth). In fact, the connection of Longford, Perth, and Evandale to Launceston is considerably stronger than the rest of the Northern Midlands' connection to them (which is to say that more people commute from Longford, Perth, and Evandale to Launceston than commute from the rest of the Northern Midlands to Longford, Perth, and Evandale). More people leave these three settlements every day to work in Launceston than stay behind.



*Commuting connections in the Tamar Valley community catchment,  
2021*



**Key**

**Unshaded** – SA1s fewer than 30 workers  
(less than 13 %) work within this area

**Light blue** – between 30 and 100 (13%-40%)  
workers work within this area

**Dark blue** – more than 100 (40%) workers  
work within this area

		Place of work (SA2)										
		Launceston	Legana	Riverside	Prospect	Deloraine	Hadspen - Carrick	Westbury	Longford	Perth - Evandale	Dilston - Lilydale	George Town
Place of usual residence (SA2)	Launceston	22,209	278	426	1,079	169	74	167	317	1,069	113	540
	Legana	1,348	338	109	52	9	7	14	17	69	4	74
	Riverside	2,220	109	431	128	12	10	23	26	103	14	73
	Prospect	3,736	38	64	910	31	27	64	76	222	9	99
	Deloraine	249	3	4	44	1,618	13	114	15	22	4	7
	Hadspen - Carrick	1,047	18	20	124	35	225	51	49	74	9	33
	Westbury	590	14	9	55	214	43	556	69	52	5	12
	Longford	724	15	19	66	16	6	54	565	137	3	13
	Perth - Evandale	1,484	26	24	103	17	11	32	126	543	12	34
	Dilston - Lilydale	1,186	8	15	55	8	3	17	11	56	383	97
	George Town	675	15	9	28	8	4	5	7	36	15	1,434
Local workforce ratio		57.5%	32.2%	34%	32.3%	66.6%	49.1%	45.5%	38.3%	20.3%	61.3%	50.2%

\*The data presented in the table above are from the ABS 2021 *Australian Census of Population and Housing* and are based on SA2 areas. In larger or more populous urban areas (such as Launceston, several SA2s have been combined to reflect established communities as closely as possible.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 1

### Tamar Valley: Scenario 1



#### Overview

Scenario 1 establishes one council for a large proportion of the Tamar Valley Catchment area, capturing the existing West Tamar, George Town, and Launceston LGAs, extending to incorporate Prospect Vale and Blackstone Heights as continuously connected suburbs of Launceston.

This scenario reflects communities of interest and a shared geography, based around the Tamar Valley and its hinterland with Launceston as the service centre.

Launceston would remain the primary administrative and service hub for the council, with the potential to maintain customer service hubs and works hubs in George Town, Beaconsfield, Riverside and Exeter, as discussed further below.

2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
108,835	10.2%

## Tamar Valley Scenario 1

### Rationale and evidence

Scenario 1 would benefit residents within the Tamar Valley Community Catchment by increasing the scale and capability of the council, with an approximate population of 109,000. This could assist with attracting and retaining key skills. The model recognises the strong workforce connections across the area. It would also present benefits in terms of strategic planning for the area, particularly around the West Tamar growth corridor.

A key consideration for this single council model will be ensuring local representation, employment and service delivery across the entire Tamar Valley Community Catchment (particularly for rural communities). Notably, the consolidated council would have additional resources (hypothetical rate revenue of over \$90m) to invest in community engagement and establishing/maintaining administrative and service delivery hubs across the community.

While the council excludes the Launceston commuting areas of Perth, Evandale and Longford, councils and communities may wish to discuss their inclusion given strong and growing connections as per Scenario 3.

### Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

**Focus on future community needs:** Creating a single council along these boundaries would recognise the geography of the Tamar Valley and surrounding catchment. Under this scenario, 94% of residents would be within a 30-minute drive of the major service and administrative hubs of Beaconsfield, Riverside, George Town and Launceston. The latter also hosts key educational and healthcare facilities for the region ensuring access to services and a large and diverse rate base.

Consolidation would support enhanced scope capabilities in areas such as strategic planning, development and environmental health assessment, and could help manage urban development and infrastructure planning. In particular, whole of catchment land-use planning would be supported, although this scenario does not include other commuting satellite areas, such as Hadspen, Perth, Launceston and Evandale. To compensate for this, it would be desirable to continue planning coordination through the Northern Tasmanian Planners Group. Consolidation could also streamline and improve regional economic development and collaborations with key regional organisations such as the NTDC, the Launceston Chamber of Commerce and partnerships such as the Launceston City Deal and the administration of the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce.

**Retain local jobs and services:** Establishing a large council to represent the Tamar Valley region would deliver scale benefits including the ability to attract and retain specialist staff and invest in productivity-enhancing equipment and 'back-office' systems. There is significant scope to retain existing council administrative and operations hubs in Beaconsfield, Exeter, Riverside and George Town, as well as Launceston, to maintain local employment and to support local engagement and service delivery. Strengthening partnerships with Service Tasmania to provide combined customer service centres would also enhance service delivery.

The *Northern Tasmanian Councils Shared Services Study* (KPMG 2017) found that establishing common IT platforms would provide the greatest gains to current councils and would provide a foundation for extending the current resource sharing arrangements. While the new council would have significant capacity, there may be benefits in it participating to some extent in any new, centralised 'back-office' online support system for council finance and administration, particularly cloud-based systems (see Supporting Paper on *Shared Services Models*). This would reduce staff

## Tamar Valley Scenario 1

time on repetitive administrative tasks and system management, allowing them to focus on improving services to council staff and communities.

**Preserve and enhance local voice:** The new, larger council would have the capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement to ensure all communities within the larger council area are heard and represented, particularly those in rural parts of the Tamar Valley. If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budgets (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*). Operations hubs could also be used for a program of scheduled regional council meetings in different areas of the municipality.

**Fair funding models:** Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council area, the total rates revenue in 2021 dollars would be an estimated \$90m. The area would have access to rates revenue from a diverse mix of residential, commercial, industrial land. One challenge would be establishing an equitable and consistent approach to rating across the proposed council given the City of Launceston's relatively low residential rates, partly attributable to its larger scale and commercial centre, relative to West Tamar and George Town. George Town has a relatively complex rating system to differentiate between residential and industrial land, which would also need careful consideration.

**Appropriate resourcing for transition:** Transition arrangements for this scenario would need to consider how services provided by the Northern Tasmanian Development Corporation, both to member councils and other councils across the broader region, would be undertaken under the new arrangements. The three existing councils within the proposal have all

delivered balanced budgets or operating surpluses in recent years with financial assets exceeding liabilities.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 1

### Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for the hypothetical council established under Scenario 1. These data have been produced by analysing 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural

#### Summary Data – Scenario 1

Category		Measure	Council
Overview	Demographics	Population	108,835
		Median age	42
		SEIFA <sup>1</sup> (decile)	4
	Housing	Total dwellings	43,207
		No. of single person households	12,984 (30.0%)
		% dwellings vacant	8.1
		Indicator	
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	82.7%

reform options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will likely be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper*.

<sup>1</sup> SEIFA', or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 1

Category		Measure	Council
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	94%
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	74%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	35.5
<b>2. Future Needs and Priorities</b>	Population growth	Population change 2011-21	10,092 (10.2%)
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	4,531
		% Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	10.5%
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	13%
	Older/aging communities	% Population over 65	16%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	19%
<b>3. Financial Sustainability</b>	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	\$22,126,600,000
		Value of rateable land - primary production	\$1,197,300,000
		Value of rateable land - industrial	\$882,400,000
		Value of rateable land - commercial	\$3,067,100,000
		Value of rateable land - vacant	\$805,500,000
		Value of rateable land - other	\$2,941,800,000

## Tamar Valley Scenario 1

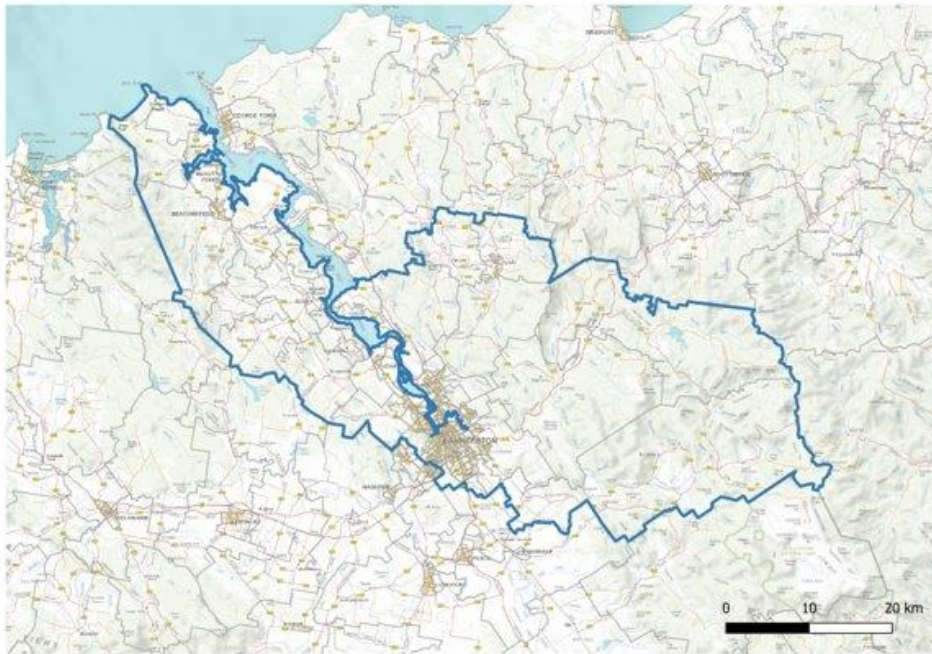
Category	Measure	Council	
	Value of rateable land - total	\$31,020,676,300	
	Estimation of theoretical rate revenue applying current rates <sup>2</sup>	Estimated rate revenue - residential	\$62,900,000
		Estimated rate revenue - commercial	\$13,800,000
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	\$5,300,000
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	\$3,000,000
		Estimated rate revenue - vacant	\$ 2,600,000
		Estimated rate revenue - other	\$2,300,000
		Estimated rate revenue - total	\$90,100,000
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	460.9
		Km of council roads - sealed	1,072.9
<b>4. Operational Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The council would supplement the already significant population base of City of Launceston Council, although it would have a larger area to service. Nevertheless, it should have the capacity to provide high quality services to communities across the council area.</li> <li>While the council would have significant internal capacity, there would be value in it participating in any new centralised service-sharing arrangements for 'back-office' services such as IT systems, accounting, and procurement.</li> <li>While some current service sharing agreements would become unnecessary if this council were established (e.g. Tamar NRM, Northern Workforce Development Program), many others would need to continue as they involve councils outside this area.</li> </ul>		

<sup>2</sup> There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.



## Tamar Valley Scenario 2

### Tamar Valley: Scenario 2



#### Overview

Scenario 2 establishes one council capturing a large proportion of the Tamar Valley catchment area, but with alternate boundaries to Scenario 1. The council would encompass the existing West Tamar and Launceston LGAs but, unlike Scenario 1, does not include George Town.

This scenario reflects communities of interest and commuting data. George Town, with its distinctive economic and industrial base, is less connected greater Launceston. George Town, and a proportion of the current Launceston LGA around Lebrina, have also been included in one scenario under the North-East Community Catchment (Scenario 1).

Launceston would remain the primary administrative and service hub for the council, with the potential to maintain customer service hubs and works hubs in Beaconsfield, Riverside and Exeter, as discussed further below.

2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
94,605	10.7%

## Tamar Valley Scenario 2

### Rationale and evidence

Scenario 2 would benefit residents within the Tamar Valley Community Catchment by increasing the scale and capability of the council, with an approximate population of 94 000, although not quite to the extent of Scenario 1. Increased scale would assist with attracting and retaining council staff and would increase the scope and consistency of services across the region. The model recognises the strong workforce connections in the area and would deliver benefits in terms of strategic planning, particularly around the West Tamar growth corridor.

This scenario reflects George Town’s distinctive economic and industry bases and weaker commuter links to Launceston. As one alternative, it may instead combine with Dorset under the North-East Catchment and incorporate Lebrina, forming a local government area that stretches along the northeast coast and hinterland, encompassing similarly rural, agricultural, and industrial communities.

As with Scenario 1, the challenge for this single council model will be ensuring local representation, employment and service delivery across the entire Tamar Valley Community Catchment (particularly for rural communities), although the consolidated council would have the resources (hypothetical rate revenue of \$78.8m) to invest in additional community engagement and establishing administrative and service delivery hubs across the community.

### Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

**Focus on future community needs:** Creating a single council along these boundaries reflects strong and growing connections between the West Tamar, the southern section of the East Tamar and Launceston. For example, four times as many residents of Legana work in Launceston (1,430) than work locally. It would support integrated planning and service provision along the West Tamar growth corridor. Under this scenario, 95% of residents would be within a 30-minute drive of the major service and administrative hubs of Beaconsfield, Riverside and Launceston, which also hosts key educational and healthcare facilities for the region. This proximity supports access to services and would ensure economic diversity amid the transition from predominately manufacturing to services industries.

Consolidation would support enhanced scope capabilities in areas such as strategic planning, development and environmental health assessment, and could help manage issues such as urban consolidation and infrastructure planning. In particular, whole of catchment land-use planning would be supported, although this scenario does not include other commuting satellite areas, such as Hadspen, Perth, Launceston and Evandale. It would be necessary to continue planning coordination through the Northern Tasmanian Planners Group and a larger council would be better placed to support neighbouring rural councils. Consolidation could also streamline and improve regional economic development and collaborations with key regional organisations such as the Northern Tasmanian Development Corporation (NTDC), and the administration of the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce and the

## Tamar Valley Scenario 2

Launceston City Deal, noting that many of these arrangements also involve other councils outside this scenario. Maintaining and expanding its service offerings should be simpler under consolidated council models.

As noted, George Town is omitted from this Scenario owing to its distinctive economic and industrial base and comparatively weaker connections to Greater Launceston. Roughly 1450 people both live and work in George Town, while some 731 or (16%) of the local population, live in George Town but commute to Launceston.

**Retain local jobs and services:** Establishing a large council to represent the Tamar Valley region would deliver scale benefits including the ability to attract and retain specialist staff and invest in productivity-enhancing equipment and ‘back-office’ systems. There is significant scope to retain existing council administrative and operations hubs in Beaconsfield, Exeter, and Riverside, as well as Launceston, to maintain local employment and to support local engagement and service delivery. Strengthening partnerships with Service Tasmania to provide combined customer service centres would also enhance service delivery.

The *Northern Tasmanian Councils Shared Services Study* (KPMG 2017) found that establishing common IT platforms would provide the greatest gains to current councils, and would provide a foundation for extending the current resource sharing arrangements. While the new council would have significant capacity, there would be benefits from participating in any new centralised ‘back-office’ online support system for council finance and administration, particularly cloud-based systems (see Supporting Paper on Shared Services Models). This would reduce staff time on repetitive administrative tasks and system management, allowing them to focus on improving services to council staff and communities.

Southern boundaries remain the same to ensure neighbouring council areas have greater scale and can be more self-sustaining.

**Preserve and enhance local voice:** The greatest challenge for this scenario would be ensuring that a single council is able to not only preserve but enhance local voice and representation. The new, larger council would have the capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement to ensure all communities within the larger council area are heard and represented, particularly those in the rural West Tamar. If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*). Operations hubs could also be used for a program of scheduled regional council meetings in different areas of the municipality.

**Fair funding models:** Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council area, the total rate revenues in 2021 dollars would be an estimated \$78.8m. The area would have access to rates revenue from a mix of residential, commercial, and agricultural land. There is a reasonably consistent approach to rating across the current councils in the Catchment although the City of Launceston does charge lower residential rates per capita than West Tamar, highlighting both the benefits of scale and the need for carefully designed transitional measures.

**Appropriate resourcing for transition:** Transition arrangements for this Scenario would also need to consider how services provided by the NTDC, both to member councils and other councils across the broader region, would be undertaken under the new arrangements. Similarly, the future

## Tamar Valley Scenario 2

status and role of any partnerships (such as the City Deal) would need to be considered.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 2

### Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for the hypothetical council established under Scenario 2. This data has been produced by analysing 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, this data is indicative and designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural reform

options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board’s recommendations will likely be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper*.

### Summary Data – Scenario 2

Category		Measure	Council
Overview	Demographics	Population	94605
		Median age	41.1
		SEIFA <sup>3</sup> (decile)	4
	Housing	Total dwellings	37344
		No. of single person households	11,189
		% dwellings vacant	7.7
		Indicator	
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	78.7%

<sup>3</sup> SEIFA, or ‘Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas’, is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 2

Category		Measure	Council
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	95%
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	78%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	36.2
<b>2. Future Needs and Priorities</b>	Population growth	Population change 2011-21	9176
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	3841
		% Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	11.5%
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	14%
	Older/aging communities	% Population over 65	16%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	19%
<b>3. Financial Sustainability</b>	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	\$19,168,600,000
		Value of rateable land - primary production	\$826,700,000
		Value of rateable land - industrial	\$739,400,000
		Value of rateable land - commercial	\$2,888,100,000
		Value of rateable land - vacant	\$646,400,000
		Value of rateable land - other	\$2,686,600,000

## Tamar Valley Scenario 2

Category	Measure	Council	
Estimation of theoretical rate revenue applying current rates <sup>4</sup>	Value of rateable land – total	\$26,955,753,200	
	Estimated rate revenue - residential	\$55,800,000	
	Estimated rate revenue - commercial	\$13,100,000	
	Estimated rate revenue - industrial	\$3,700,000	
	Estimated rate revenue - primary production	\$2,100,000	
	Estimated rate revenue - vacant	\$1,800,000	
	Estimated rate revenue - other	\$2,200,000	
	Estimated rate revenue - total	\$78,800,000	
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	339.4
		Km of council roads - sealed	827.2
<b>4. Operational Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This council expands the significant population base of City of Launceston Council, although it would have a larger area to service. Nevertheless, it should have the capacity to provide high quality services to communities across the council area.</li> <li>Perhaps the most significant challenge from a sustainability perspective associated with this scenario would be the implications for George Town if it were to be included in a smaller North-Eastern council.</li> <li>While this council would have significant internal capacity, there may still be value in it participating in any new centralised service-sharing arrangements for ‘back-office’ services such as IT systems, accounting, and procurement.</li> <li>Most current service sharing agreements would need to continue in some form under this scenario as they involve George Town and other councils outside this area.</li> </ul>		

<sup>4</sup> There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 3

### Tamar Valley: Scenario 3



#### Overview

Scenario 3, like the other scenarios in this catchment, creates one council area. It combines the existing West Tamar, George Town and Launceston LGAs with Launceston’s major commuting townships of Hadspen, Carrick, Longford, Perth, Evandale and their immediate surrounds.

This Scenario is primarily informed by commuting and community of interest data and includes all major towns and settlements with connections to Greater Launceston.

There is potential to retain customer service, administration and works hubs in their existing locations, thus supporting continued local employment opportunities.

2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
122,360	10.8%



## Tamar Valley Scenario 3

### Rationale and evidence

Scenario 3 would benefit the Tamar Valley catchment by increasing the scale and capability of the proposed council. With an approximate population of 122,000, this is one of the largest potential councils discussed in the *Information Packs*.

Under this scenario there is strong alignment between council boundaries with communities of interest and the geography of the region. Although George Town's commuter connections to Launceston are not as strong as other areas (as discussed under Scenario 2), geographical and service connections provide other ties to the region. This scenario would streamline cooperation and service sharing in the region, as well as collaboration with other tiers of government. The arrangement would build on many of the service sharing arrangements currently in place in the Catchment.

### Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

**Focus on future community needs:** The consolidated council established under this scenario would have resources and capabilities to respond to emerging community needs. In terms of accessing services, if existing council offices across the Community Catchment were maintained as a part of a network model, then 95% of residents would be within a 30-minute drive of the major service and administrative hubs.

This council would incorporate Carrick, Longford, Perth and Evandale, which were former rural settlements, but are increasingly commuter satellite hubs to Launceston. Approximately 60 per cent of employed residents in these towns now work in Launceston. The rapid growth and development in these areas, and in suburbs such as Legana and St

Leonards, provides compelling evidence that the connection of the wider Tamar Valley area to Launceston will only continue to grow in the coming decades.

Consolidation would support enhanced scope capabilities in areas such as strategic planning, development and environmental health assessment, and could help manage issues such as urban consolidation and infrastructure planning. In particular, whole of catchment land-use planning initiatives, such as the Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS), would be streamlined and supported.

**Retain local jobs and services:** While increasing scale benefits, such as the ability to attract and retain specialist staff and invest in productivity-enhancing equipment and 'back-office' systems, there would have to be a clear strategy of retaining jobs and teams across the region to maintain local employment and knowledge. This could include retaining customer service, works and administration hubs in, for example, George Town, Exeter and Beaconsfield. Strengthening partnerships with Service Tasmania, (as occurs in Beaconsfield) to provide combined customer service centres could also enhance service delivery (see Supporting Paper on *State Government Partnership Opportunities*), although there would be less of a need under this scenario than under others in this catchment.

While the new council would have significant scale, capacity and purchasing power, there may still be benefits in it centrally sourcing some basic common services, such as cloud-based ICT systems, to support council finance and administration (see Supporting Paper on *Shared Services Models*). This would reduce staff time on repetitive administrative tasks and system management, allowing them to focus on improving tailored local services to communities. A council with this capability and

## Tamar Valley Scenario 3

capacity would be well placed to support and share specialist staff with smaller rural councils, potentially acting as a hub for regional or state-wide shared service provision.

**Preserve and enhance local voice:** A challenge under this scenario would be ensuring that a single regional council is able not only to preserve but also enhance local voice, representation, and engagement. Despite its increased size, a single consolidated council would, however, have the capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement to ensure all communities within the larger council areas are heard and represented, including those in the rural hinterland areas and segments of the Launceston community which traditionally haven't engaged with local government. In a local government area of this size, there would also be merit in considering mechanisms to ensure that all areas of the Tamar Valley were afforded localised representation by the new council.

If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see Supporting Paper on *Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*). Operations hubs could also be used for a program of scheduled regional council meetings in different parts of the council area.

**Fair funding models:** Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council area, the total rates revenue in 2021 dollars would be an estimated \$101.2m. The consolidated council would have access to a significant rate base drawn from a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural lands. One challenge would be establishing an

equitable and consistent approach to rating across the proposed council given the City of Launceston's relatively low residential rates, partly attributable to its larger scale and commercial centre, relative to West Tamar and George Town. George Town has a relatively complex rating system to differentiate between residential and industrial land, which would also need careful consideration.

**Appropriate resourcing for transition:** Transition arrangements would need to consider the need for existing regional structures and how best to adapt and integrate the systems across the existing councils into integrated frameworks to meet the future needs of the Tamar Valley Catchment.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 3

### Community data and alignment with reform criteria

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for the hypothetical council established under Scenario 3. These data have been produced by modelling 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural

reform options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will likely be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper*.

### Summary Data – Scenario 3

Category		Measure	Council
Overview	Demographics	Population	122,360
		Median age	42.2
		SEIFA <sup>5</sup> (decile)	4
	Housing	Total dwellings	48,539
		No. of single person households	14,406 (29.7%)
		% dwellings vacant	7.9
		Indicator	
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	92.9%

<sup>5</sup> SEIFA', or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 3

Category		Measure	Council
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	95%
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	66%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	34.9%
<b>2. Future Needs and Priorities</b>	Population growth	Population change 2011-21	11,941 (10.8%)
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	5,398
		% Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	12.5%
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	14%
	Older/aging communities	% Population over 65	21%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	17%
<b>3. Financial Sustainability</b>	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	\$24,883,200,000
		Value of rateable land - primary production	\$2,048,000,000
		Value of rateable land - industrial	\$1,146,000,000

## Tamar Valley Scenario 3

Category	Measure	Council	
	Value of rateable land - commercial	\$3,192,700,000	
	Value of rateable land - vacant	\$978,800,000	
	Value of rateable land - other	\$2,218,000,000	
	Value of rateable land – total	\$34,466,613,900	
	Estimation of theoretical rate revenue applying current rates <sup>6</sup>	Estimated rate revenue - residential	\$70,500,000
		Estimated rate revenue - commercial	\$14,300,000
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	\$6,900,000
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	\$4,000,000
		Estimated rate revenue - vacant	\$3,000,000
		Estimated rate revenue - other	\$2,400,000
		Estimated rate revenue - total	101,200,000
	Road Infrastructure	Km of council roads - unsealed	504.1
		Km of council roads - sealed	1304.9
<b>4. Operational Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This council would expand the significant population base of the City of Launceston LGA, although it would have a larger area to service. Nevertheless, it should have the capacity to provide high quality services to communities across the council area.</li> <li>Perhaps the most significant challenge from a sustainability perspective associated with this scenario would be the implications for any new council in the Central Midlands, given approximately 8,000 residents of Evandale, Perth and Longford would be included in the Tamar Valley council.</li> </ul>		

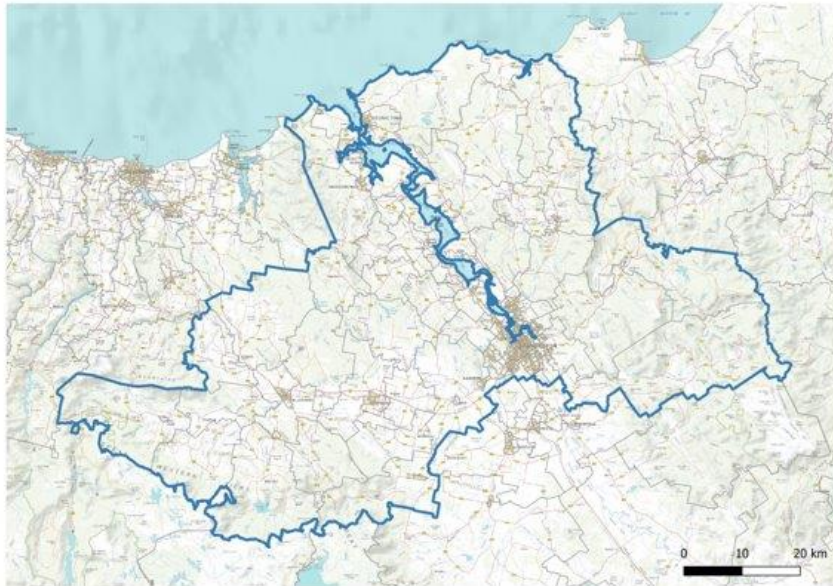
<sup>6</sup> There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 3

Category	Measure	Council
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While the council would have significant internal capacity, there may be value in it participating in any new centralised service-sharing arrangements for 'back-office' services such as IT systems, accounting, and procurement.</li> <li>• Many current service sharing agreements would become unnecessary if this council were established (e.g. Tamar NRM, Northern Workforce Development Program), however some others would need to continue as they involve councils outside this area.</li> </ul>	

## Tamar Valley Scenario 4

### Tamar Valley: Scenario 4



#### Overview

Scenario 4 also creates one new council area combining West Tamar, George Town, and Launceston existing LGA., It also encompasses the agricultural land to the west of the Tamar Valley, including the townships of Westbury and Deloraine.

This scenario recognises that commuter links are more pronounced between areas of the Meander Valley and Launceston than between the Meander Valley and the Cradle Coast. It has been developed to promote a discussion about the most suitable local government arrangements for the western part of the Meander Valley, given the regional significance of Launceston.

Given the scale of the council established under this scenario multiple primary administration and service centres with supporting works and service hubs would be established to support regional representation and service deliver and to maintain regional employment opportunities.

2021 Population	% Growth 2011-21
123,051	10.2%

## Tamar Valley Scenario 4

### Rationale and evidence

Scenario 4 would benefit residents within the Tamar Valley Community Catchment by increasing the scale and capability of the council, with an approximate population of 123 000.

A council of this scale based around a major regional city would be able to attract and retain key professional and technical staff and would have the resources and capability to managing future growth in the region and offer a wide range of community services. The model would also present benefits in terms of strategic planning for the area.

The extent to which western areas of the existing Meander Valley (such as Mole Creek) should be incorporated under this scenario or connected to another catchment should be considered by communities. Perth, Longford, and Evandale have been excluded from this Scenario to consider their place in any future configuration of the Central Midlands Community Catchment. The community may also wish to discuss the possible inclusion of some or all of these towns, as discussed under Scenario 2, in this community catchment.

The challenge for this large single council model would be ensuring local representation, employment, and service delivery across the entire Tamar Valley Community Catchment. This is particularly important for rural communities given the physical size of the area covered by this scenario, which extends from Mole Creek in the west to Beechford in the northeast. The consolidated council would have the resources (hypothetical rate revenue of \$98.4m) to invest in community engagement and establishing administrative and service delivery hubs across the community.

### Alignment with the principles for successful structural reform

#### Focus on future community needs:

This scenario would establish one large council. This model is similar to Scenario 3, although rather than including commuter townships to the south of Launceston, it has been extended further to the west to include most of the existing Meander Valley LGA. The single council reflects strong connections between the West Tamar, upper East Tamar, into the Meander Valley, and Launceston, and the fact that these communities lack their own strong economic base.

It would support integrated planning and service provision along the West Tamar growth corridor and surrounding areas.

Westbury has a strong commuter connection with Launceston (673 Westbury residents, 35% of the employed population, work in Launceston), but Deloraine does not (299 residents of Deloraine, 11% of the employed population, work in Launceston). While Deloraine's commuter connections to Launceston are not as pronounced as other areas, it has a reasonable connection which is stronger than to centres to the north such as Latrobe. Additionally, Meander Valley's involvement in shared service arrangements and regional partnerships tends to be oriented to the northern councils mostly captured under this catchment, with few formal links to the Central Highlands or Cradle Coast regions.

Under this scenario, 92% of residents would be within a 30-minute drive of the service and administrative hubs of Launceston, Westbury, Riverside, and George Town. Launceston hosts key educational and healthcare facilities for the region. This proximity supports access to services and



## Tamar Valley Scenario 4

would ensure economic diversity amid the transition from predominantly manufacturing to services industries.

Consolidation would enhance capabilities in areas such as strategic planning, development and environmental health assessment, and could help manage issues such as urban consolidation and infrastructure planning. In particular, whole of catchment land-use planning would be supported, although this scenario does not include other commuting townships areas, such as Hadspen, Perth and Evandale.

Consolidation could also streamline and improve regional economic development and collaborations with key regional organisations such as the Northern Tasmanian Development Corporation (NTDC), and the administration of the Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce, and the implementation of the Northern Tasmania Regional Land Use Strategy (NTRLUS). Many of these arrangements, however, would need to continue as they involve the current Northern Midlands area to the south as well as other north-east councils outside the area. Maintaining and expanding service offerings should be simpler under consolidated council models, however.

**Retain local jobs and services:** Establishing a large council to represent the entire Tamar Valley region would deliver scale benefits including the ability to attract and retain specialist staff and invest in productivity-enhancing equipment and 'back-office' systems. There is significant scope to retain existing council administrative and operations hubs in Beaconsfield, Exeter, George Town, Westbury, and Launceston, to maintain local employment and to support local engagement and service delivery. Strengthening partnerships with Service Tasmania to provide combined customer service centres would also enhance service delivery.

The *Northern Tasmanian Councils Shared Services Study* (KPMG 2017) found that establishing common IT platforms would provide the greatest gains to current councils and would provide a foundation for extending the current resource sharing arrangements. While the new council would have significant capacity, there may be benefits in it participating in any centralised 'back-office' online support system for council finance and administration, particularly cloud-based systems (see *Supporting Paper on Shared Services Models*). This would reduce staff time on repetitive administrative tasks and system management, allowing them to focus on improving services to council staff and communities. Retaining existing southern boundaries may help provide some scale in neighbouring council areas.

**Preserve and enhance local voice:** The new, larger council would have the capacity to invest in new and more systematic approaches to community engagement to ensure all communities within the larger council area are heard and represented, particularly those in the rural areas, such as the Meander Valley. If required, there would also be scope to introduce community advisory panels regularly consulted by council to ensure constituents enjoy enhanced formal representation and direct influence in the decision-making process, including community budget priorities (see *Supporting Paper on Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities*). Operations hubs could also be used for a program of scheduled regional council meetings in different areas of the municipality.

**Fair funding models:** Applying existing rates and funding models to the new council area, the total revenues in 2021 dollars would be an estimated \$98.4m. The area would have access to rates revenue from a mix of residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural land. There is some variation in rating strategies across the councils, so careful

## Tamar Valley Scenario 4

consideration would need to be given how to establish an equitable and consistent approach across the new council area. Given that sections of five existing councils would be incorporated in the consolidated council careful transition arrangements would have to be implemented.

**Appropriate resourcing for transition:** Transition arrangements for this scenario would need to consider how services provided by the NTDC both

to member councils and other councils across the broader region, would be undertaken under the new arrangements. Similarly, the current status of the joint arrangements and provision of regulatory services, particularly by West Tamar, would need to be considered, including any financial and staff commitments those councils have made to other councils. For example, the legal services shared contract that involves eight north-east councils would need to be considered.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 4

**Community data and alignment with reform criteria**

The table below presents demographic, household, employment and operational council data for the hypothetical council established under Scenario 4. These data have been produced by modelling 2021 ABS Census (SA1 level) and other relevant data sets to align with the hypothetical boundaries of the new areas proposed in each scenario.

As we have indicated, these data are indicative and are designed to inform community discussions about the merits of different structural

reform options. Structural reforms adopted by the Tasmanian Government based on the Board's recommendations will likely be subject to a detailed technical review and implementation plan. While every effort has been made to ensure consistency and accuracy, variation between SA1 and LGA boundaries may mean that some of the figures below may differ slightly from existing council statistics. Detailed methodological notes are presented in the *Methods and Technical Background* Supporting Paper.

**Summary Data – Scenario 4**

Category		Measure	Council
Overview	Demographics	Population	123,051
		Median age	42.4
		SEIFA <sup>7</sup> (decile)	4
	Housing	Total dwellings	48,739
		No. of single person households	14,497 (29.7%)
		% dwellings vacant	8.1
		Indicator	
1. Place and Representation	Alignment with local communities of interest	% area workforce residing locally	86.9

<sup>7</sup> SEIFA', or 'Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas', is an index developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage or disadvantage.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 4

Category		Measure	Council
	Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s	% of population within 30 mins of administrative hub	92%
	Urbanisation	% of population in urban areas of population 10,000 or greater	66%
	Mobility/Migration	% of population living at a different address 5 years ago	34.8
<b>2. Future Needs and Priorities</b>	Population growth	Population change 2011-21	11,422 (10.2%)
	Housing supply and infrastructure demand	Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	5,048
		% Change in total dwelling numbers (2011-21)	11.6%
	Employment growth	Change in labour force 2011-21 by place of residence	13%
	Older/aging communities	% Population over 65	16%
	Younger communities	% Population under 15	19%
<b>3. Financial Sustainability</b>	Value of rateable land	Value of rateable land - residential	\$24,612,400,000
		Value of rateable land - primary production	\$2,918,000,000
		Value of rateable land - industrial	\$947,400,000
		Value of rateable land - commercial	\$3,169,000,000
		Value of rateable land - vacant	\$996,800,000
		Value of rateable land - other	\$3,286,700,000
		Value of rateable land - total	\$35,930,188,200

## Tamar Valley Scenario 4

Category		Measure	Council
Estimation of theoretical rate revenue applying current rates <sup>8</sup>		Estimated rate revenue - residential	\$67,300,000
		Estimated rate revenue - commercial	\$14,200,000
		Estimated rate revenue - industrial	\$5,600,000
		Estimated rate revenue - primary production	\$5,900,000
		Estimated rate revenue - vacant	\$3,000,000
		Estimated rate revenue - other	\$2,500,000
		Estimated rate revenue - total	\$98,400,000
	Road Infrastructure		Km of council roads - unsealed
		Km of council roads - sealed	1,618.1

<sup>8</sup> There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.

## Tamar Valley Scenario 4

Category	Measure	Council
<p><b>4. Operational Sustainability</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council would supplement the already large population base of the City of Launceston LGA, although it would have a larger area to service. Nevertheless, it should have the capacity to provide high quality services to communities across the council area.</li> <li>• While the council would have significant internal capacity, there may nevertheless be value in it participating in any new centralised -wide service-sharing arrangements for 'back-office' services such as IT systems, accounting and procurement.</li> <li>• While some current service sharing agreements would become unnecessary if this council were established (e.g. Tamar NRM, Northern Workforce Development Program), many others would need to continue as they involve councils outside this area.</li> </ul>	

## 3. Comparison of scenarios

Criteria and Indicator	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
<b>Place and Representation</b>				
<b>Alignment with local communities of interest</b> <i>% area workforce residing locally (local workforce ratio)</i>	82.7%	78.7%	92.9%	86.9%
<b>Established administrative, commercial and service hub/s</b> <i>% of population within 30 minutes of administrative hub</i>	94%	95%	95%	92%
<b>Urbanisation</b> <i>% of population in urban settlements</i>	74%	78%	66%	66%
<b>Mobility/Migration</b> <i>% of population who have moved in last 5 years</i>	35.5%	36.2%	34.9%	34.8%
<b>Future Needs and Priorities (Note – population projections are not available at SA1 level)</b>				
<b>Population growth 2011-21</b> <i>% growth and absolute number</i>	10,092 (10.2%)	9,176 (10.7%)	11,941 (10.8%)	11,422 (10.2%)

Criteria and Indicator	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
<b>Housing supply and infrastructure demand</b> <i>Ten-year change (2011-21) in dwelling numbers (absolute and per 1000 pop)</i>	4,531 (41.6 per 1000)	3,841 (40.6 per 1000)	5,398 (44.1 per 1000)	5,048 (41.0 per 1000)
<b>Employment growth</b> <i>% growth in employment since 2011</i>	13%	14%	14%	13%
<b>Older/ aging communities</b> <i>population aged over 65 years (as % of total)</i>	16%	16%	21%	16%
<b>Younger communities</b> <i>population aged under 15 years (as % of total)</i>	19%	19%	17%	19%
<b>Financial Sustainability</b>				
<b>Value of rateable land</b> <i>Total \$ value within region</i>	\$31,020,676,300	\$26,955,753,200	\$34,466,613,900	\$35,930,188,200
<b>Estimated total rate revenue<sup>9</sup></b>	\$90,053,888	\$78,795,006	101,247,397	\$98,446,766

<sup>9</sup>There are limitations involved with this analysis, and it is acknowledged that the modelled revenues underestimate actual council revenues in some instances. The modelled revenues are a superior measure of relative fiscal capacity between council scenarios, and caution is advised for any comparison between modelled revenues for scenarios and existing councils. More information is provided in the Methods and Technical Background Supporting Paper.



<b>Criteria and Indicator</b>	<b>Scenario 1</b>	<b>Scenario 2</b>	<b>Scenario 3</b>	<b>Scenario 4</b>
<b>Estimated rate revenue as a % of area total rateable property value</b>	0.29%	0.29%	0.29%	0.27%
<b>Road infrastructure</b> <i>Length and type of councils roads in new region</i> <i>Km by type</i>				
<b>Km of council roads - unsealed</b>	460.9	339.4	504.1	731.5
<b>Km of council roads - sealed</b>	1,072.9	827.2	1304.9	1,618.1
<b>Additional Key Metrics</b>				
<b>Population</b>	108,835	94,605	122,360	123,051
<b>Median Age</b>	42	41.1	42.2	42.4
<b>SEIFA (decile)</b>	4	4	4	4

#### 4. Implications for neighbouring Community Catchments

Community Catchments have been established to facilitate discussions about options for council consolidation at a regional level. We are also mindful that the design of the reforms in one community catchment will have impacts on neighbouring regions and the local government system as a whole. Given this, it is important to note how the design of the Tamar Valley Catchment may have implications for neighbouring Community Catchments and councils therein.

Launceston and Tamar Valley constitute a clearly defined geographical region. The extent to which neighbouring towns and settlements – specifically those increasingly connected to the City of Launceston – should be included in the Tamar Valley has implications for neighbouring community catchments needs to be carefully considered. Specific issues include:

- Whether the Launceston suburbs of Blackstone Heights and Prospect Vale should be included in the Tamar Valley Catchment given they are part of urban Launceston (Scenario 1).

- Whether George Town should be included in the Tamar Valley or the North-East Catchment (Scenario 2).
- Whether the townships of Perth, Evandale and Longford to Launceston's south should be included in the Tamar Valley or Central and Midlands Catchment (Scenario 3).
- Whether the townships of Westbury and/or Deloraine should be included in the Tamar Valley or in the Central and Midlands Catchment (Scenario 4). And if so, how far into the western end of the existing Meander Valley should the incorporation extend? Further, if areas are excluded, in which other local government area should they be re-located?

These boundary questions will need to be resolved in discussion with relevant communities and councils in the affected areas.

## 5. Appendix

### Analysis of existing Councils within (or partially within) community catchment<sup>10</sup>

Council	Population	No. of employees	Average Residential Rates & Annual Charges per Residential Property (\$)	Current ratio (10 yr average)	Cash Expense Cover Ratio	Own source revenue coverage ratio (10 yr average)	Underlying surplus ratio (10 yr average)	Debt service cover ratio (8 yr average)	Asset sustainability ratio (7 yr average)
Year	2021	2020-21	2020-21	2011-21	2011-21	2011-21	2011-21	2013-21	2014-21
George Town	7033	40	1152.95	3.47	5	83%	0%	22.3	71%
Launceston	70055	433.76	1731.13	3.23	11	92%	-1%	20.2	70%
Meander Valley	20709	82.15	1094.4	8.54	13	79%	3%	5.0	126%
Northern Midlands	13745	64.5	1141.91	4.71	18	75%	-2%	6.0	101%
West Tamar	25145	106	1582.49	4.62	12	93%	6%	22.0	87%

<sup>10</sup> Definitions of data items can be found *Existing Council Data Definitions Supporting Paper*.

<b>Council</b>	<b>Asset renewal funding ratio (7 yr average)</b>	<b>Asset consumption ratio (7 yr average)</b>	<b>Cash and investments held (\$'000s)</b>	<b>Net Financial Liabilities Ratio (%)</b>	<b>Interest bearing liabilities (\$'000s)</b>	<b>No. of discretionary development applications received</b>	<b>Value of all development approvals (\$)</b>	<b>No. of councillors</b>
<b>Year</b>	<b>2014-21</b>	<b>2014-21</b>	<b>30-Jun-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>30-Jun-22</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2018</b>
George Town	91%	84%	8,129	13%	4,346	113	40,326,245	9
Launceston	91%	76%	81,902	13%	26,000	844	393,159,275	12
Meander Valley	91%	79%	24,323	50%	3,600	278	85,081,713	9
Northern Midlands	115%	81%	26,152	5%	9,570	248	59,101,247	9
West Tamar	89%	74%	24,634	61%	2,200	355	93,343,336	9

The future of  
local  
government  
review

# Information Pack – Supporting Paper Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities



Tasmanian  
Government

## Introduction

The discussion about consolidating council boundaries the Board is promoting through its Information Packs will no doubt raise a range of questions about how structural reform might impact on local community voice and representation, jobs, and service presence.

Consistent with its Structural Reform Principles, the purpose of this Paper is to help councils and communities to think about and be open to new ideas in relation to the following:

- potential opportunities for enhancing local community voice and input in council decision making;
- some of the Board's views on maintaining local council jobs and service presence; and
- opportunities for alternative governance arrangements to better support the State's isolated and sparsely populated areas.

## Protecting and enhancing local voice

During the Board's Stage 2 engagement, we heard concerns, particularly from Tasmanians from rural areas, that consolidating council areas could reduce their access to elected representatives and, by extension, local representation. We understand many Tasmanians in smaller, more isolated communities value being able to see and speak to their elected representatives as they go about their daily lives – at a local event, or even at the supermarket or in the street.

On the other hand, we also heard strong sentiment from those under 45 and Aboriginal Tasmanians that their councils do not adequately engage with, consult, or make decisions in line with their needs and interests, and that in general they feel disillusioned with and disconnected from local government. We also heard from a number of peak body representatives that council decision making needs to better reflect and consider the voices of our marginalised and minority communities.

The Board does not think moving to a system of larger, more capable councils needs to come at the cost of local voice and representation. In fact, increased capability could open up new opportunities to *enhance* community representation and governance – by improving the quality and sophistication of council community engagement practices.

### **Wards or electoral districts – one possible pathway?**

Throughout the Review, we have heard through a number of submissions, as well as [general commentary](#), that establishing wards or electoral districts within local government areas as a means of preserving local representation should be considered in any scenario where the state moves to a system of fewer, larger councils.

While provisions exist under the Local Government Act for 'electoral districts' they have not been used since the transition in 1993 from our previous 46 councils to the current 29.

Wards or electoral districts do offer one possible way of ensuring specific areas of an LGA retain representation and the Board remains open to these ideas. However, they are not the only option.

Our research and engagement has also highlighted some significant potential drawbacks of wards, which need to be carefully considered if a compelling case was to be made to rely on them as a central feature of local government in Tasmania in the future. For instance:

- One of the key principles for the Board's case for fewer, larger councils is that our existing council boundaries do not reflect the way our contemporary communities live and work. Implementing wards in new councils could undermine the positive outcomes in establishing councils with more strongly aligned communities of interest and broader, more diverse constituencies.
- We have heard that wards could entrench factionalism and parochialism in councils, which would be particularly damaging at a time when new councils and communities could be building a new shared vision for their community.
- International evidence shows councils that shift from 'at large' to 'ward' elections see a decrease in housing supply and economic activity. Findings show that wards – through decentralising council decision making to 'wardens' – give disproportionate influence to not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) influences over development application assessments<sup>1</sup>.
- Wards, particularly in low population rural areas often fail to attract a broad and diverse range of candidates, potentially creating undemocratic and unrepresentative outcomes. This has led to some recently amalgamated councils in Australia (which had implemented wards to ostensibly preserve 'local voice'), have their residents soon vote to abolish them<sup>2</sup>.

### Opportunity: more consistent, deliberative, and better-resourced engagement practices

During the Review we have identified an increasing acknowledgement, both in Australia and Internationally, of local government's important role in 'place shaping'. This is a trend which has seen councils move toward a more active role in developing and preserving local identity and promoting community wellbeing. This is the case in Tasmania too. In particular, research by the University of Tasmania has identified that effective place shaping requires that councils support and contribute to community networks, and are prepared to engage with or devolve decision making responsibilities to their residents<sup>3</sup>.

We have heard strongly during the Review that to support this important role, Tasmanians have an increasing expectation that their councils continually engage with them, and listen and respond to the issues and challenges they face. Establishing frameworks that enable and empower councils to do this will create better outcomes for the whole State.

<sup>1</sup>Evan Mast; Warding Off Development: Local Control, Housing Supply, and NIMBYs. The Review of Economics and Statistics 2022; doi: [https://doi.org/10.1162/rest\\_a\\_01192](https://doi.org/10.1162/rest_a_01192)

<sup>2</sup>Ben Raue; Mapping the Dubbo referendum. The Tally Room 2021; <https://www.tallyroom.com.au/44528>

<sup>3</sup> Tasmanian Policy Exchange; Place shaping and the future role of local government in Tasmania: evidence and options. 2022; [FoLGR-UTas-Paper-3-Place-shaping-and-the-future-role-of-local-government-in-Tasmania.pdf](https://www.tasmanianpolicyexchange.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/FoLGR-UTas-Paper-3-Place-shaping-and-the-future-role-of-local-government-in-Tasmania.pdf)

Local democracy is not confined to four-yearly council elections. We have observed shifts across Australia's local government landscape to more deliberative and direct community engagement processes, which actively consider and involve citizens in decision making. Examples of these include community panels, citizens juries, deliberative polls and regional town hall meetings.

While there are many positive examples of community engagement within Tasmanian local government, engagement planning and approaches are patchy in their application, and this is reflected in community dissatisfaction with how their councils go about engagement. This is reflected in our state-wide survey of Tasmanians, which found that councils rated poorly on how well their decisions represented the whole of the community<sup>4</sup>.

We believe there is significant scope to enhance how our councils engage with all members of their communities. Community engagement should be at the core of local government's role, and the sector needs to be supported to build capability in capacity in this area.

A key consideration for enhancing how our councils engage with their communities is whether the sector has the capacity and capability to plan and undertake genuine and sophisticated deliberative engagement. We have seen that, under the status quo, there are notable inconsistencies in council approaches to engaging with their communities. Achieving greater scale through larger councils should increase the organisational capability of councils to embed and deliver effective community engagement practices that better support council decision-making.

The Board believes that community engagement plans should be mandated for all councils – underpinned by clear principles for deliberative engagement. That is, councils must plan and engage with their communities in a way which is genuine, informative, and representative. This does not mean that councils need to undertake long, deliberative engagement processes (such as citizen's juries) for every decision they make, but they should ensure people impacted by a decision are genuinely consulted about those impacts.

Engagement plans may also need to contemplate how smaller communities within councils are more effectively represented. This could be through a range of activities, including local community plans, and leveraging improved State Government partnerships and technology to hold more face-to-face regional council meetings in different townships, and otherwise providing digital hubs which councils could utilise for more effective community engagement, connectivity and service delivery.

As evidenced where deliberative community engagement is deployed at a local government level, outcomes for communities are better - council decisions reflect local values more closely and are more widely accepted and supported. Additionally, citizens who are given the opportunity to participate in deliberative engagement processes feel stronger connections to their communities, and their representatives. This will also enhance the capability of our councillors, by actively elevating the importance of their role in decision making to a more strategic level – to genuinely consider and represent all relevant community voices.

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<sup>4</sup> The University of Newcastle; The Future of Local Government Review Tasmanian Residents State-wide Phone Survey Report, 2023; <https://www.futurelocal.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Report-Tasmania-wide-phone-survey-v2.pdf>



### Opportunity – Enhanced community-based engagement and decision-making mechanisms

There are opportunities for larger, more capable councils to enable greater local democratic participation through establishing citizen committees/panels. Councils could engage with these panels on issues related to particular towns or communities within an LGA, recognising the importance of local knowledge and networks, and providing greater self-determination and input into council's decision-making processes.

It is also recognised that citizens panels can support councils in dealing with complex local policy issues, by allowing them to tap into local knowledge and expertise.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, our research commissioned by UTAS found that the introduction of community boards, 'people's panels' and other participatory models could lead to considerable improvements in Tasmanian local government representation.<sup>6</sup> The Board wants to continue to explore the benefits for both council and communities, in having citizen committees as a formal feature of our system of local government.

### Opportunity – Provide more transparent and accessible information about council performance

So that councils can understand how to continually respond to and improve service delivery and local representation, we are developing specific reform recommendations aimed at ensuring our local government sector is underpinned by a transparent system of performance reporting and ongoing improvement. Communities' confidence in their councils can be built by ensuring appropriate visibility of, and accountability for, performance. Transparent performance reporting can serve as a foundation for informing communities on the challenges council's face in balancing finances and services, which can further support meaningful engagement with councils and ensure communities better understand decision-making.

Earlier in the Future of Local Government Review process, the Board released two data dashboards which collate and present publicly available data on Tasmanian councils with the purpose of helping to inform the public's knowledge of what councils do, and to support engagement with the Review. These dashboards were well received by the sector and public, and could serve as a platform for a future public performance reporting framework.

### Opportunity – Provide more ways to access and engage with council processes

There is significant scope for local government in Tasmania to further modernise and provide equitable access to council meetings for communities. In particular, there is an opportunity for all council meetings to be livestreamed, with recordings published to council websites alongside agendas, meeting papers and minutes. Currently, all councils must publish their meeting agendas, meeting papers and minutes under the *Local Government Act 1993*, but only a few councils livestream and publish the recordings of their meetings. We think that recording and publishing meetings would allow greater accessibility to council meetings for all Tasmanians.

Additionally, there are opportunities for councils to better utilise online tools and content to support engagement with and participation from a broader range of their residents. Importantly,

<sup>5</sup> Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government; *The Role and Future of Citizen Committees in Australian Local Government*, 2013; [https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG\\_Citizen\\_Committees\\_Report\\_.pdf](https://opus.lib.uts.edu.au/bitstream/10453/42125/3/ACELG_Citizen_Committees_Report_.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Tasmanian Policy Exchange; *Place shaping and the future role of local government in Tasmania: evidence and options*. 2022; [FoLGR-UTas-Paper-3-Place-shaping-and-the-future-role-of-local-government-in-Tasmania.pdf](https://www.tasmanianpolicyexchange.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/FoLGR-UTas-Paper-3-Place-shaping-and-the-future-role-of-local-government-in-Tasmania.pdf)

this doesn't mean that councils should be exclusively using online tools to engage and inform their communities, but utilising both modern engagement approaches with traditional methods such as face-to-face meetings, print media and paper-based surveys. This would ensure that councils are more accessible and inclusive of all their community members.

As part of the broader shift to deliberative engagement as a defining feature of the design of local government in Tasmania, there are further opportunities for new, larger councils to host meetings across different townships through their LGAs. This initiative is seen at both State and Federal level with regional Cabinet meetings, and would allow bigger councils to have a more active presence across all their townships and communities.

### Maintaining local service presence and jobs

We have heard contrasting views from council staff in relation to the potential impacts of structural change on local government employment. Some staff view structural change more positively - particularly from a career and workload standpoint - where they believe a larger council would provide better opportunities for professional development, workload management and career progression, as well as increased workforce scale and more supported teams. Alternatively, some staff are concerned that council consolidation will lead to the centralisation of services, which will equate to job losses in regional communities and the reduction of services.

In our Stage 2 Interim Report we highlighted the importance of local government as a major employer, particularly in small, rural communities, and the benefits this has for the strength and prosperity of our regions – now and into the future. We also looked to the 1993 local government reforms where, instead of the 'mass job losses' some had predicted, what was actually delivered was increased capacity through employment of a greater range of staff.

Underpinning any transition process towards larger councils, mechanisms and systems need to be established to support the retention of local government employees, particularly in rural areas. Importantly, the potential council models defined in our information packs identify existing council administrative and operations hubs which can and should be maintained – to allow existing staff to remain in their local areas.

As we have noted in our Interim Report for Stage 2, the Board is being guided by a number of relevant foundations for structural reform that concern the workforce. The foundations are informing the way we explore structural reform scenarios, and the way we will consider any alternative proposals:

- High-functioning rural local governments can and do operate successfully with regional or dispersed workforces and workforce hubs.
- Appropriately dispersed regional workforces supporting an equitable level of localised service delivery, responsiveness and community wellbeing.
- The size and distribution of the outdoor workforce is determined principally by the quantity, quality, and distribution of infrastructure assets, and not the location or scale of the administrative centre.

- Irrespective of any structural change, as local government services become increasingly complex and professionalised, future workforces should continue to leverage technologies and new work practices in order to ensure access to scarce professional and technical workers and the services they provide to regional communities.

#### **Opportunity: decentralised remote working opportunities underpinned by better digital technology**

Tasmania has changed significantly since 1993. Our population has grown and is dispersed differently. Our roads are better, our vehicles are more efficient, our technology enables us to communicate and work remotely. The suggestion that building scale through boundary consolidation will naturally come at the cost of local jobs and communities does not stack up – depots and shop fronts do not need to close or relocate to a central location, and staff can (and want to) utilise flexible working arrangements to suit their needs.

A key lesson from COVID 19 is that teams can be formed from people working remotely. This trend continues despite the reduced risks from COVID-19. Understanding *how* remote and flexible working arrangements can improve employment (particularly regional employment) is a key area of our enquiry and we are expecting councils and staff to provide important insights during consultation in Stage 3.

In particular, we have heard from some council staff that they believe working for a larger, more capable council would provide better platforms and structures for them to utilise flexible working arrangements (amongst other benefits), and see this as a key opportunity stemming from our program of structural reform.

#### **Opportunity: establishing accountabilities for councils to retain local staff and service hubs**

So that council staff are supported through any transition process, there need to be accountabilities in place that ensure local jobs and service hubs or depots are retained to the greatest possible extent.

Options to support this, such as making new councils report on the location of their workforces/FTEs and service centres as part of their broader workforce planning, would provide transparency on maintaining their local jobs and services. This would also ensure councils are considering community needs and interests first and foremost.

### **Exploring alternative governance arrangements**

#### **King and Flinders Islands**

The Board notes that, while there are connections to neighbouring councils and communities, the Bass Strait Islands (the islands) are very different to the rest of Tasmania's LGAs, and the State in general – geographically, economically and socially. As a result, their councils face a unique set of challenges across community issues, revenue generation, and functional service delivery and costs. Due to the geographically isolated nature of the islands, changes to community identity and composition over the last 30 years are arguably less tangible than the rest of the State. We believe this may warrant consideration of unique governance arrangements to support these councils and ensure regional equity in the event of any state-wide structural reform program.

During our Stage 2 community workshops on the islands, we heard suggestions from participants that supporting models of governance are needed for the islands. We were made aware of several alternative governance models which are a feature of islands in other Jurisdictions, which could better support the councils in supporting their communities, and providing efficient services and infrastructure.

#### *Case Study - Kangaroo Island (South Australia)*

An Island Commissioner for Kangaroo Island is a Statutory Office established under Legislation in South Australia. This role was established through recognition of the unique governance challenges faced on Kangaroo Island, and the need for better integration of on-island plans and services across levels of government. The Commissioner has an office in both Adelaide and on Kangaroo Island. Under the *Commissioner for Kangaroo Island Act 2014* the key functions of the commissioner are:

- to improve the management, co-ordination and delivery of infrastructure and services provided by government agencies on the Island;
- to provide appropriate assistance to residents and businesses on Kangaroo Island in dealing with government agencies (with a view to ensuring co-ordinated delivery of infrastructure and services to such residents and businesses);
- to assist with improving the local economy on Kangaroo Island;
- to prepare, and keep under review, management plans on infrastructure provision, service delivery and community engagement.

We think there is merit in exploring the commissioner model further, and we want to discuss this opportunity during consultation with councils. The establishment of a commissioner's office (or coordinator) would effectively work to overcome geographic barriers and create a more formal and active link between the council, State and Federal Governments and service providers. This would help the island councils address challenges in skills shortages and service delivery, and also support them to maintain a greater focus on their roles in place shaping and supporting community wellbeing.

Importantly, in exploring this model further the Board would like insights on how it could be ensured that this approach (or similar) could provide tangible and meaningful benefits for the islands.

#### *Case Study - Lord Howe Island (New South Wales)*

Unlike Kangaroo Island, Lord Howe Island does not have a municipal council. Instead, there is a Lord Howe Island Board – a statutory authority established under the provisions of the *Lord Howe Island Act 1953*.

The Lord Howe Island Board is responsible to the NSW Minister for the Environment and comprises four Islanders elected by the local community and three members appointed by the Minister (to represent the interests of business, tourism and conservation). It is charged with the care, control, and management of the Island and the affairs and trade of the Island. It is also responsible for the care, improvement, and welfare of the Island residents.

While we have included this model here for discussion, the population of Lord Howe Island is notably smaller than both King and Flinders Islands.

## Unincorporated areas

Across New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia (and the territories), there are regions which are not governed by councils – in most cases due to their sparse populations. These unincorporated areas are usually directly administered and managed by State Government bodies or statutory authorities. We think there is merit in exploring similar governance arrangements for Tasmania's sparsely populated areas – such as areas surrounding national parks and World Heritage Areas.

Our national parks and World Heritage Areas in particular, are already managed by The Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) – however there is potential for the State to support isolated, rural councils by taking a greater role in managing and maintaining core infrastructure such as roads and provision of core municipal services. This could be done through purchasing agreements with councils, which still support local employment and services.

### Summary of Unincorporated Areas in Australia<sup>7</sup>

#### New South Wales

- The far west and north of New South Wales constitutes the Unincorporated Far West Region – managed by the Crown Land Department.
- Lord Howe Island managed by a Board (see above)

#### Victoria

- Victoria has 10 small unincorporated areas, which are either small islands directly administered by the state, or ski resorts administered by state-appointed management boards.

#### South Australia

- Approximately 60% of the state belongs to the Pastoral Unincorporated Area.
- The Outback Communities Authority (OCA), established under the *Outback Communities (Administration and Management) Act 2009*.
- The OCA manages public services and facilities, promotes improvements in service and facility provision, and advocates for views and interests of communities.
- OCA is managed by a seven-person board, appointed by the Governor of SA (three-year terms) – four are members of different outback communities.
- OCA has some rating powers under local government act through 'asset sustainability levies', and 'community contributions'. Amounts are fixed by the Minister for Local Government.
- Funded jointly by the State and Federal Government (state grants commission funds are provided). Roughly 50/50. Annual budget of around \$5m, with about \$1.5m from community contributions and other revenues.

<sup>7</sup> (Queensland, Tasmania and WA are all portioned entirely into LGAs)

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# Information Pack – Supporting Paper State Government partnership opportunities for Local Government



## Introduction

Local government exercises many functions on behalf of State Government. It does this under statute (e.g. regulatory functions under the *Building Act 2016*) or under agreement (e.g. Break O'Day Community Wellbeing Pilot Project).

The Board has received a range of submissions suggesting that there is a need for, and a potential benefit from, local government receiving stronger and more targeted support from State Government. The kinds of support suggested includes regulatory guidelines, decision support tools, staff exchanges, shared facilities, staff training and funding.

The Board has identified a number of specific opportunities for establishing new or enhanced partnerships with State Government that could be pursued in conjunction with structural reforms to councils. These partnerships could enhance the quality, range and accessibility of services provided by councils to the community, and also reduce the cost of providing those services.

By enabling the community's access to government services at a range of locations, including at home through online and phone services, stronger State Government partnerships could support two of the core guiding principles discussed in the Stage 2 Interim Report:

1. Retain jobs and service presence locally
2. Preserve and enhance local voice.

These opportunities are outlined in more detail below and include greater potential customer-centred services partnership, alignment, or integration with a substantial number of State agencies, including Service Tasmania, Health, Justice and Parks and Wildlife.

## Leveraging the Tasmanian Government Services Division

The Government Services division within the Department of Premier and Cabinet has a focus on developing improved operational and financial approaches for Government Services, including incorporating digital services for the public and across agencies. They support the development of the workforce, and the tools and systems they use, to provide the best possible customer service to Tasmanians. The Government Services Division includes *Service Tasmania* and *Digital Strategy and Services (DSS)*.

## Partnerships with Service Tasmania

*A strengthened council partnership with Service Tasmania could see more 'one-stop' government service hubs co-located with councils, providing in-person services to more Tasmanians, as well as greater access to a wider range of council services online and by phone.*

Service Tasmania (ST) provides convenient access to a wide range of government services:

- over-the-counter at ST's 27 service centres;
- over-the-telephone through the Government Contact Centre; and
- online at [www.service.tas.gov.au](http://www.service.tas.gov.au).

Customers can access approximately 600 services over the counter and in excess of 500 services over the phone. Additionally, ST offers electronic bill payment functionality, online and by phone.

Service Centre Locations



The future of local government review

ST currently provides council services for 6 of Tasmania's 29 councils, meaning residents can enter any ST location to undertake a range of local government transactions. Council services provided include:

- Rates Payment/enquiry
- General invoice/statement payments
- Council Enquiries – General
- Parking Infringement Payment/Enquiry
- Dog Registration – Establish/renew
- Dog Health & Kennel licencing
- Pensioner Parking Permit



- Pensioner rates remission application
- Planning/Building/
- Venue/miscellaneous item hire applications
- Dog nuisance complaints
- General application receipt/payment
- Event RSVP
- Make council officer appointment
- Receipt documents
- Service delivery complaint

### Opportunity: Integrated Face-to-Face, Phone and Digital Service Delivery with Service Tasmania

Integrating services across the State and Local Government offers opportunities to make life simpler for Tasmanians and unlock economies of scale.

During life's key events, information that people need is often distributed across layers of government, and indeed non-government sources. Collaboration and service alignment around the individual, rather than government silos, means people can find support more easily and do not need to tell their story time and again. An example would be someone moving home, who requires information from both local government and multiple state entities.

To deliver these outcomes, both State and Local Government need to sustain common service delivery capabilities, such as face-to-face, phone and digital services. Sharing costs of these not only helps optimise the customer experience but also helps make them more sustainable and comprehensive.

#### Face-to-face services

Three ST service centres are currently physically co-located alongside council staff in their premises (Beaconsfield, Oatlands, Currie). One council agreement (Devonport City Council) is more developed, where Service Tasmania now acts as the first point of contact for the majority of council customers physically visiting co-located premises. Many of these transactions can be resolved at this first point of contact. ST charges councils for services provided on a per transaction basis. Additionally, ST also provides services for the Commonwealth, particularly Services Australia.

Co-location offers convenience for the public in accessing multiple government services, and in many instances furthers the 'no wrong door' principle where people need not know which layers of government they should be interacting with. It is often financially advantageous to share rent and outgoing costs with a partner organisation. Staff from the various organisations are able to share knowledge and ideas, and in some instances share certain tasks and activities.

Based on experience with Devonport City Council, the approach of service integration seems to offer the most comprehensive advantages of any current co-location model. Under this approach ST can utilise existing systems to process basic transactional activity on behalf of councils (under a negotiated financial agreement). This is not a significant additional overhead but would otherwise be an additional workload for council staff.

Where councils have service agreements in place with ST, residents benefit from being able to access local services at *any* of the 27 service locations, as well as by phone and online at [www.service.tas.gov.au](http://www.service.tas.gov.au). Analysis has demonstrated that a significant number of these rate payers transact outside of their LGA, indicating people find the option of multiple payment points to be convenient.



### Contact Centres

The Government Contact Centre (GCC) currently handles a wide variety of service enquiries, and opportunities exist for local government to leverage this capability. This could contribute to decreased community costs and has the capability to smooth financial impacts across the State

Integrating local government enquiries into a shared contact centre capability would provide access to efficient and effective operating practices, best in class technology and support, along with economies of scale. Councils may often experience surges in demand such around rates notice periods and emergencies, and so leveraging a more scalable capability can assist at these times.

The GCC operated a 'distributed' model meaning operators can work from anywhere in the state, so local staff can be retained, handling those enquiries remotely under the centralised highly skilled GCC management team.

With both face-to-face and contact centre services, Councils may find that a service agreement with ST also proves to be financially attractive compared to the cost-to-serve with lower customer volumes themselves. Councils need not, of course, stop providing such a service themselves, but may find that over time they can re-prioritise staffing resource to other service areas of need if customer volumes fall.

### Digital

In late 2023/early 2024, ST will launch a digital services portal, providing Tasmanians with a secure and easy-to-use access point for Government services, accessed through a single login. Stage 1 will allow Tasmanians to create a secure account to access their digital services. Over time, the portal will provide foundational tools that could potentially assist councils to enhance the range of services that can be offered online. Examples of these tools include e-forms, a central customer relationship management platform and a systems integration capability.

Benefits of councils leveraging myServiceTas would likely include:

- Ability to leverage a central, robust model for complex, resource intensive and higher risk activities such as cyber security.
- Potential to link into existing infrastructure where councils have already made investments in systems and tools.
- Significantly reduced need to invest in other foundational requirements to hold and secure information such as digital identity through investing in a common platform and solutions.
- Reduced public confusion by offering a common entry point to state and local government services, allowing many services to be presented side-by side (e.g. care registration and rates notices).

## Improving Digital Inclusion and Cyber Security (through DSS)

*A strengthened council partnership with DSS could build councils' digital capability and increase the community's access to secure digital services, particularly in remote areas.*

DPAC Digital Strategy and Services Division (DSS) supports key actions associated with the State Government's digital transformation initiatives. Through collaboration and engagement, DSS partners with agencies and contracted suppliers to remain at the forefront of emerging technology and digital trends. DSS works within the broader scope of the Government's strategy for digital transformation – *Our Digital Future* – which establishes the Government's vision, priorities, principles and objectives for the foundational phase of digital transformation.

The Board sees great potential for the work of DSS being broadened to include local councils, and the benefits of the opportunities in this area are likely to be enhanced by appropriate structural reform. The Board notes that the three principles of Our Digital Future are equally relevant to communities being served by local councils:

- Accessibility: more equitable coverage and connectivity
- Ability: inclusive strategies for digital literacy, knowledge and skills
- Affordability: digitally-delivered essential services within reach of all.

Building on these principles, a DSS partnership with local government could aim to achieve:

- Better service delivery to regional areas (improving local service delivery)
- Improved capability within councils to provide a wider range of digital services
- Improved remote work outcomes for Tasmanians (i.e. maintaining local employment through improved connectivity)
- Better equality in access to digital services (improved digital literacy outcomes)
- Investment in rural communities
- Affordability of digital services through local access solutions
- Consolidating government services into a one-stop-shop.

The Board considers that the following opportunities are worth exploring in the context of structural reform of local government.

#### **Opportunity: Improving connectivity to regions and accessibility**

DSS provides Data and Internet services that connect government sites (Including some council sites today), even in very remote areas. These data and Internet services for remote sites are improving all the time, for example, it is working with technology partners to develop access to a secure satellite-based broadband service using Starlink. Where needed, this could be extended to allow councils to better serve remote locations.

Improved connectivity would enable Digital hubs to be established in regional areas, with well supported digital access and a range of council and community facilities, such as service shopfronts, conferencing facilities and meeting rooms. By focussing State Government and council investment in this way, such premises could be available for council 'regional' meetings, community engagement sessions and regional online attendance to improve community representation. To build capability to support these things locally, there is also scope for the State Government's emerging Digital Workforce Capability program to be leveraged for local council staff – the program will focus on three areas: digital skills and workforce planning, digital careers development and digital talent pipelines.

The WA Government has established a Digital Inclusion Accord - a shared commitment between a variety of organisations and entities, with varying expertise and capabilities, from industry, community service, WA communities and Government, to improve digital inclusion outcomes in WA. Through the Accord, members identify opportunities where resources, capabilities and expertise could be combined to support digital inclusion outcomes.

Such an Accord applied in Tasmania could build on *Our Digital Future* by providing a mechanism for collaboration between State agencies, local councils and other public and private sector participants to invest in infrastructure and service uplift. The Department of StateGrowth also attracts investment in digital infrastructure to the state and may also play a role in such an Accord and these opportunities more broadly.

#### **Opportunity: Support the shared procurement of cloud-based core service business systems**

With improved connectivity the opportunities to leverage cloud base services increases. Councils could purchase cloud-based services (such as Software as a Service and Public Cloud Infrastructure) The

State's enterprise agreements could be expanded as part of future procurements to include a broader range of cloud services and eligibility for councils to participate. This could allow for more integrated and adaptable service provision by councils in partnership with State Government. It would also support continued regionalisation of jobs by allowing for Councils to establish regionally distributed corporate teams with greater accessibility and flexibility in performing their work.

A number of councils are already supported by DSS when procuring data and internet services. This relationship could be expanded in the future to include cloud-based services. By drawing on the consolidated expertise of DSS in procuring whole-of-government digital capabilities, councils would be able to reduce their risks when working in this complex area.

### Opportunity: Cyber security support for Tasmanian councils

DSS is delivering the Tasmanian Government Cyber Security Program. The objective of the program is to improve the Government's ability to protect Tasmanians' data and minimise the potential for disruption of government services from cyber security threats. Key initiatives established under the Program include: Building cyber security incident response capacity and capability; Supporting Tasmanians who have been affected by identity theft; Increasing cyber security awareness across government to ensure staff understand their role in reducing cyber security risks; Implementing role specific cyber security training for staff that will enable them to recognise cyber security threats and to respond appropriately; and Upskilling cyber security professionals across government with the latest techniques.

A number of councils have already experienced costly and disruptive cyber security incidents. Bringing councils under the umbrella of the State Government's cyber security arrangements would reduce costs to councils and reduce cyber risks to all Tasmanians.

### Partnerships with Consumer, Building and Occupational Services

*A strengthened council partnership with CBOS could build council capacity in building and plumbing regulation.*

Councils are responsible for issuing building and plumbing permits under the *Building Act 2016* and ensuring compliance with Tasmania's Building Regulatory Framework. Skills and resourcing shortages mean that councils are having trouble fulfilling all their responsibilities under this Act. Consumer, Building and Occupational Services (CBOS) is responsible for the *Building Act 2016* at the State level, educating consumers and people in the building industry about the state's building legislation and national standards, licensing building service providers, and enforcing and also ensuring compliance with building laws.

## Delivering better services through shared systems

### Case Study: PlanBuild

The PlanBuild Tasmania 'Enquiry Service' currently allows councils and the community to identify planning, building and plumbing rules that may apply to a proposed project.

Phase 2 of the PlanBuild Tasmania portal, 'Application Services' will give councils the facility to receive development applications online and carry out related transactions and referrals. Members of the public will be able to submit applications, pay fees, purchase certificates of title, track applications, receive notifications and permits.

PlanBuild Tasmania is a clear example of how systems can be aligned to develop both a common access point for community and a more consistent service infrastructure for councils.

Since launching in February 2022, use of the PlanBuild Tasmania Enquiry Service has received positive feedback, with over 41500 enquiries being undertaken.

### Opportunity: Increased support for the implementation of *Building Act 2000* regulatory processes

Councils' skills shortage in building and plumbing matters could be partially alleviated through greater engagement with CBOS who in turn can provide greater support to council staff. This support could take the form of professional training for council staff, improved guidelines, templates and decision-making support tools and potentially a professional support hotline. A support program designed through collaboration between CBOS, and councils would have the greatest chance of success. The Board understands CBOS is committed to exploring possible options with the local government sector to ensure a strong co-regulatory approach to Tasmania's building framework.

### Partnerships with Department of Health

*A strengthened council partnership with the Department of Health could drive the implementation of the workforce development strategic plan for Environmental Health Officers.*

Councils have a range of public health responsibilities, including under both the Food Act 2003 and the Public Health Act 1997. This includes monitoring food business compliance with food safety requirements and responding to food safety incidents. The role of Councils under the Public Health Act is important in protecting communities for threats to public health and includes running school immunisation programs, regulatory management of public health risk activities such as tattooing and piercing, monitoring and reporting on recreational water quality, and regulatory management of private drinking water supplies. Councils have reported ongoing difficulties recruiting and retaining Environmental Health Officers, leading to failures to monitor and report on food safety and other public health risks.

### Opportunity: Implement some considerations in the Environmental Health Officer workforce development strategic plan

In 2020, a workforce development strategic plan for Environmental Health (*Strengthening the front-line health protection and environmental management workforce in Tasmania*) was developed through collaboration between UTAS, LGAT, the Department of Health, the EPA, and the Environmental Health Association (Tas) (EHA). While the issues and opportunities for the Environmental Health workforce have evolved considerably since the publication of this plan, some of the high priority recommendations from that report involved collaboration between the Department of Health, the local government sector and others.

The Board believes that a collaborative implementation group should be established to explore how the current workforce challenges may best be resolved in the broader context of reforms contemplated in the Future of Local Government Review. The Board sees great benefit in an early focus on developing EHO local government workforce solutions that can deliver on the particular needs of the workforce, provide greater capacity and equity in service delivery and compliment broader structural considerations for the sector.

Other opportunities in this space may exist to leverage common systems and services to support and streamline staff tasks, including utilising PlanBuild as a common point to capture water quality tests results or register food businesses.

### Opportunity: Clarify and support councils' role in preventative health

The *Healthy Tasmania Five-Year Strategic Plan* recognised that local government is playing a key role in supporting community health and wellbeing. The Plan gave an undertaking to clarify the role of local government in the preventative health system, to strengthen the partnership between the Department of Health and local government, and to consider resourcing local government for local health and wellbeing action plans. The Board believes this could be an important partnership that would help councils make the best use of their local knowledge and relationships.

Preventative health is one aspect of the broader concept of community wellbeing, which the Board is considering as part of the proposed Local Government Charter. The Department of Premier and Cabinet is developing the state's broader wellbeing framework, and it will be important to align councils' role in preventative health with that framework.

### Partnerships with Parks and Wildlife Service

*A strengthened council partnership with NRE could streamline the development approval process.*

For a significant portion of Crown Land, The Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) represents the Crown as the owner of Crown land, and controls the management, use and development of that land in accordance with the *Crown Lands Act 1976* and the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*. Crown land can include public reserves, school and hospital sites, verges of roads, reserved roads, land along riverbanks and coastal areas, sporting grounds, parks and picnic facilities. Councils manage significant areas of Crown land on behalf of the State Government and can interact with PWS and other State Agencies as they undertake management actions.

### Opportunity: Streamline the treatment of development applications on Crown Land

Most Development applications (DA) impacting upon Crown and Reserved land require Crown consent from the Minister (or delegate) administering the relevant land before a DA can be lodged. This additional step in the DA process can cause complications for proponents, councils and Government agencies managing the relevant Crown land. The Board believes there is an opportunity for the State Government and councils to work together to better understand each arm of government's requirements and constraints, and to streamline this approval process. The next phase of the PlanBuild Tasmania portal will allow enquirers to identify if the property is Crown or Reserved land and future functionality will allow for the enquirer to request advice from the Crown Land Authority directly, before lodging an application. Additional functionality will allow councils to more simply refer applications to other agencies. There may be further opportunities to build on this facility to both streamline the referral process, as well as the documentation and approval requirements through a collaborative exercise between both State and local government.

### Opportunity: Enhance understanding of the role and responsibilities of PWS and State Agencies as landowners.

The Crown manages Crown land and reviews applications as a landowner and the custodian of public land, not as a regulator. The Crown can be considered as a party to any development and must consider a range of additional matters over and above specific planning concerns, such as the longer-term strategic use of a site, whether a lease can adequately protect the Crown's interests, whether or not the Crown will be left with legacy issues if infrastructure (such as a sea wall) fails etc. Therefore PWS attempts to make threshold determinations prior to providing Crown landowner consent. The PWS's role in considering landowner can often be misunderstood, including by Councils. In exploring opportunities to streamline the treatment of DAs, there is also opportunity to improve collaboration,

education and communication between councils, PWS and State Agencies through an enhanced understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Crown.

### Broader Government Opportunities: Improve spatial information service offerings to councils

All councils deal with spatial information for planning, land management and asset management. The State Government also maintains mature spatial mapping capabilities in both the Department of State Growth and the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment.

Stronger partnerships with State Agencies and improved digital systems could support the ongoing development of a mature capability for the benefit of Local Government and the State Government.

### Other partnership opportunities

The Board is interested in understanding how other partnership opportunities might be further enhanced or enabled through the structural reforms being discussed in the Information Packs. We are asking you to think about these opportunities as you contemplate the scenarios discussed in the Information Packs.

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# Information Pack – Supporting Paper

## Shared Services Models



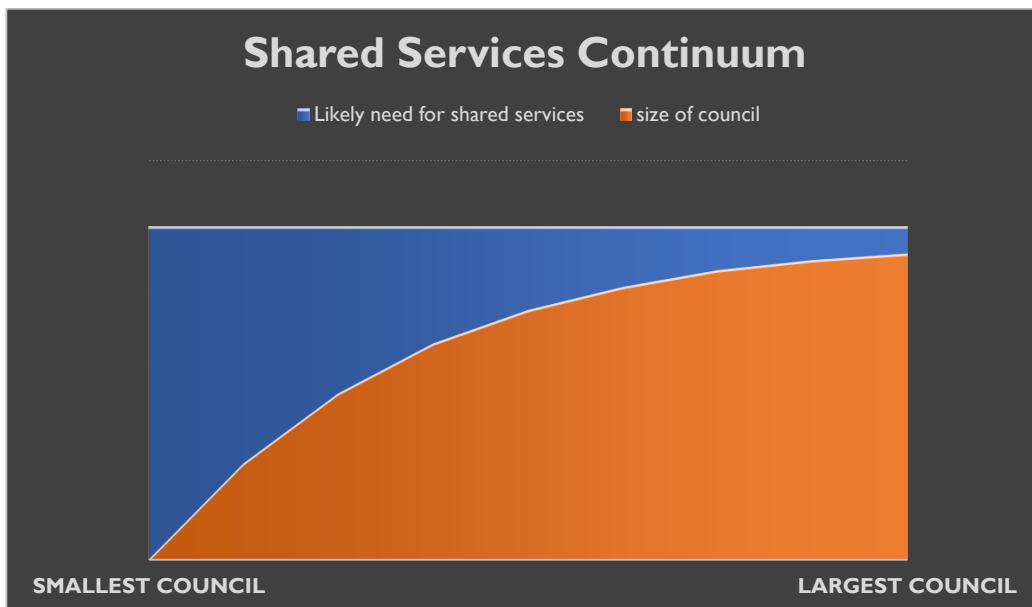
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## Introduction

Alongside the discussion about the scenarios for potential new council boundaries and structures for each of the community catchments, the Board wants councils and communities to consider how both existing and potential shared service arrangements<sup>1</sup> could support all councils and the workforce in delivering a consistently higher quality of services to Tasmanian communities.

The question of where shared services might 'fit' and the role they might play in the overall structural reform discussion is inherently linked to potential future council boundary scenarios. This is because the Board believes the nature and extent of shared service arrangements in any future local government design will depend to a significant extent on both the standalone and relative size, scale, and capability of our councils (see diagram 1, below).



*The above table is for illustrative purposes only - there may be a range of other factors that influence the need for shared services.*

In its Stage 2 Interim Report, the Board identified two main instances where shared services will form part of an overall structural change proposal:

- 1) state-wide or regional service sharing opportunities where there is broad consensus on benefits and opportunities, irrespective of any boundary consolidation ('boundary reform agnostic'); and

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this paper, shared service arrangements are taken to encompass a broad range of forms such as fee for service arrangements, sharing of resources (both informal and formal), funding or establishing entities that perform certain functions on behalf of member councils.

- 2) other service sharing opportunities where benefits may be contingent on boundary adjustments, existing regional characteristics, or specific council service delivery models. This approach may help ensure that regional councils have access to and can tailor capability to meet the future needs of their communities.

For example, scenarios that propose a larger number of smaller, individual council areas may need to be supported by more extensive shared services arrangements to achieve the operational scale necessary to deliver long-run capability and financial sustainability. On the other hand, scenarios that include council areas taking in much larger areas may require less in the way of service sharing and may be more 'self-sufficient'. For catchment scenarios that include a larger urban council and one or more smaller rural councils, it may make sense or be necessary for the smaller councils to share services with their larger neighbour.

The Board is also aware that Tasmanian councils are already engaged in a range of existing shared services models and cooperative arrangements of varying formality and complexity across multiple functions, services, and strategic planning activities. The Board requested advice from councils on the current suite of service sharing arrangements they currently have in place, and this information is summarised in **Appendix A**.

As we consider potential future boundary scenarios, careful thought will need to be given to how these arrangements might continue, adapt, or evolve to support new consolidated council administrative structures. It is also the case that some arrangements may become unnecessary or redundant in future local government design because of a reduction in the number and complexity of inter-council relationships that need to be maintained.

The Information Packs talk about the potential role of both existing and new shared services models in the context of the boundary scenarios for each catchment. The purpose of this Paper is to provide some background information on the Board's overall thinking and approach to considering shared services models as part of the overall structural reform 'mix'.

As with potential boundary consolidation scenarios, consideration needs to be given to the Board's principles for structural change, in particular, that shared services:

- can support councils in focusing on current and future community needs;
- are compatible with retention of local jobs and services; and
- receive appropriate resourcing for transition.

## Drivers, Success Factors, and Barriers

Shared services arrangements are not an end in themselves and are not always necessary or appropriate. They should only be pursued where there are clear drivers, needs and benefits to all the councils involved, over a single council delivery model.

Drivers for shared services vary depending on local circumstances. However, common drivers of shared services, identified through the Board's engagement and research, are to:

- Meet **skill shortages** and provide a means for attracting locally based resources in regional areas.
- Increase **organisational capacity** to meet service standards and, potentially, capacity to provide higher level and/or additional services.
- **Achieve efficiencies** in service delivery through economies of scale, helping to improve financial sustainability, and reduced duplication of effort and resources.
- Improve **risk management** due to sharing of risks and improved ability to comply with legislation due to increased capacity and resources.

The success factors for shared services in local government are articulated in the UTAS paper *Options for sharing services in Tasmanian Local Government* as being:

- Identified, realistic, and measurable benefits.
- Transparent, accountable governance arrangements and formalised agreement.
- Role clarity.
- Support from council staff.
- Equitable distribution of resources, cost, and risk.
- Systems and infrastructure compatible with service or resource sharing.

Alongside the success factors sit barriers which UTAS identifies as being mainly as:

- Inappropriate rationale for adoption.
- Lack of data or inadequacy of monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.
- Resistance on the part of councillors or council staff.
- Perceived loss of control or autonomy.

## Shared Services Models: Three Factors to Consider

In broad terms, there are **three interrelated factors** to consider when discussing future shared services models:

- Firstly, the **functions or services** that are delivered by way of a shared service arrangement;

- Secondly, the **scale** at which those services are delivered – for example, sub-regional, regional or statewide; and
- Thirdly, the **governance, funding, and service delivery model** that is applied to the relevant functions or services.

Each of these factors is explained briefly below.

### *1. Services*

In Stage 2 of the Review, the Board commissioned the University of Tasmania Policy Exchange to identify and develop a set of criteria that could be used for assessing the identification of, and viability of potential candidates for mandated shared services. UTAS found that to be viable candidates, services should meet at least one of the following criteria:

- High capital intensity
- Require high levels of specific technical expertise; and
- Are delivered in a relatively uniform or homogenous way across many council areas (i.e. there is not a high level of necessary local specialisation.)

And **both** of the following criteria:

- Benefits can be clearly identified and achieved relative to single-council delivery models –in terms of the efficiency, range, or quality of service offerings.
- Transition costs to establish sharing arrangements are acceptable when considering the long-run benefits.

Applying these criteria, in our Stage 2 Interim Report we identified a range of internal corporate or 'back-office' activities as some of the strongest candidates for service sharing, including:

- Finance systems
- Rates, charges and permit payments
- ICT
- Legal services
- Human resource management
- Procurement.

We have also identified four other candidate service categories, which would be contingent on the scale of councils resulting from reform, as well as local conditions and existing shared service successes. These include:

- Full cycle waste management
- Regulatory services
- Asset construction and maintenance
- Regional strategies and promotion

*The Board is keen to hear from councils and communities about the functions and services where greater sharing and cooperation could deliver better outcomes for communities in the context of broader structural reform.*

## 2. Scale

The second key factor to consider when looking at shared services models is the optimal **scale** for delivering the service. This will depend largely on the extent to which local tailoring and specialisation is important to deliver overall service quality and local responsiveness, as well as the likely size and significance of any marginal benefits such as service efficiency that could be delivered by 'scaling up'.

As councils and communities discuss the various catchment scenarios, the Board believes there are three main levels or 'scale options' at which service sharing can occur:

- **Sub-regional** (i.e. within a catchment, including potentially up to all councils within a catchment)
- **Regional** (i.e. sharing occurs beyond the level of identified catchments, including entities providing services to multiple catchments)
- **Statewide** (a single, centralised model providing services to all councils).

## 3. Governance, funding, and delivery

As the [UTAS paper](#) identified, 'shared services' captures a highly diverse range of models for council cooperation. The broad suite of arrangements Tasmanian councils have told the Board they are currently engaged in (Appendix A), also bears this out.

The Board believes in a future local government design scenario with fewer, larger councils organised around better serving identified community catchments, there are three main governance models for shared services which might have a potential role to play:

- I. **A new, stand-alone centralised service entity (or entities)** - this model involves the establishment of a new entity or organisation to deliver a suite of core local government services to all participating councils. This model would likely operate at either a statewide or regional level. An example of this kind of model would be a statewide service entity delivering a range of common, back office corporate functions for councils, such as IT, legal

advice, procurement, human resources, and finance and payroll. Such an entity might also have the capacity to expand offerings over time into highly technical and specialised professional services, such as statutory planning or civil engineering.

2. **Function-specific joint authorities** - this model involves the creation of an entity or entities focused on the delivery of a specific 'customer facing' service offering to participating councils. This model would most likely apply at either a regional or catchment-wide scale. An example of this type of model would be a regional waste management entity, such as Dulverton Waste.
3. **Provider council (functional leadership) model** – this model involves a council taking on a lead role in a specific key function(s) or service(s), and establishing, investing in, and developing the capability to provide those services to other councils, on a fee-for-service basis. This type of model would most likely operate at the catchment or regional level. Provider councils in this model would need to be of sufficient scale and capability to take on and maintain a functional leadership role, and there may be some smaller councils that operate as 'clients' only in this arrangement. An example of this kind of model would be the largest council within a catchment providing digital services to smaller rural councils in the catchment.

A version of the 'functional leadership' model exists currently, where one council provides specific services (such as statutory planning) to another under a fee-for-service model. A more systematic and extensive application of the functional leadership model would likely require more formalised governance and funding arrangements.

Both centralised service entity and joint authority models would need to be established and operate as commercial corporate bodies. They would operate under the direction of a Board and have the ability to raise funds, employ staff, and contract with others such as providers of goods and services and host councils to be able to provide services to other councils.

The aim would be for the entities to generate sufficient revenue through charges for shared services to meet its costs and, ideally, produce a small annual surplus which could either be returned to councils as a dividend or allocated to an agreed capacity building purpose. There would need to be an equitable and transparent framework for setting and reviewing service fees under all the above models, and this may require the price-setting oversight of an entity such as the Tasmanian Economic Regulator.

A new centralised statewide service provider may need to be supported by new, special purpose legislation, while the *Local Government Act 1993* already provides for the establishment of joint authorities.

All the above models would require seed funding of some type, as they would be unable to generate income until at least partly operational. A carefully planned approach would also be required for the transition to manage issues such as existing shared service arrangements, contracts, changes in staffing arrangements and training to meet customer service and operational needs and managing legacy issues such as existing legal action.

Appendix I – Current shared service arrangements in local government in Tasmania (green councils responded to survey)

Name of Body delivering service	Shared Service Model	Service being delivered	Operational status	End date of current commitment to sharing arrangement	Break O'Day	Brighton	Burnie	Central Coast	Central Highlands	Circular Head	Clarence	Derwent Valley	Devonport	Dorset	Flinders	George Town	Glamorgan-Spring Bay	Glenorchy	Hobart	Huon Valley	Kentish	King Island	Kingborough	Latrobe	Launceston	Meander Valley	Northern Midlands	Sorell	Southern Midlands	Tasman	Waratah-Wynyard	West Coast	West Tamar
Northern Tasmanian Development Corporation	Jointly funded by seven (7) member Councils	Regional economic development	Operational	Current Member Agreement 2023-2026	1										1	1								1	1	1							1
Northern Tasmanian Planners Group	Jointly funded by eight (8) member Councils + State Government	Regional Planning, including review of Northern Region Land Use Strategy	Operational	No specified end date	1									1	1	1								1	1	1							1
Visit Northern Tasmania	Jointly funded by seven (7) member Councils and State Government	Regional tourism organisation	Operational	Current Funding Agreement 2024/25										1	1	1								1	1	1							1
East Coast Tasmania Tourism	Jointly funded by two (2) member Councils and State Government	Regional tourism organisation	Operational	Current Funding Agreement expires 30/6/23	1												1																
Northern Tasmanian Waste Management Group	Jointly funded by seven (7) member Councils	Implements regional projects and programs in waste and recycling services.	Operational	Current Agreement 2022-2027	1									1	1	1								1	1	1							1
Northern Regional Emergency Management Committee	Eight (8) Northern Councils + range of organisations	Role defined by Emergency Management Act	Operational	No specified end date	1									1	1	1								1	1	1							1
Tamar Estuary Management Taskforce	Established under the Launceston City Deal	The Taskforce is an advisory body, which seeks to explore and provide options and advice to the Tasmanian Government on how to develop and manage the kanamaluka/ Tamar Estuary. Members include a range of state agencies and other organisations.	Operational	No specified end date												1								1	1	1							1
Northern Tasmania Sports Facility Plan	Jointly funded by five (5) member Councils	The plan presents future directions for sport and active recreation infrastructure across the region	Draft	Plan to be completed in 2023, with no specified end date for implementation												1								1	1	1							1



Name of Body delivering service	Shared Service Model	Service being delivered	Operational status	End date of current commitment to sharing arrangement	Break O'Day	Brighton	Burnie	Central Coast	Central Highlands	Circular Head	Clarence	Derwent Valley	Devonport	Dorset	Flinders	George Town	Glamorgan-Spring Bay	Glenorchy	Hobart	Huon Valley	Kentish	King Island	Kingborough	Latrobe	Launceston	Meander Valley	Northern Midlands	Sorell	Southern Midlands	Tasman	Waratah-Wynyard	West Coast	West Tamar	
Northern Region Climate Change Action Program	Jointly funded by eight (8) member Councils	Partnership to support and manage the Northern Tasmanian Climate Change Action Plan	Operational	Current Agreement 2022-2025	1									1	1	1									1	1	1							1
Bell Bay Advanced Manufacturing Zone	Membership based model	An industry based economic development group working in collaboration with government and community to support growth, investment and business diversification in the Bell Bay, and Tamar Valley regions	Operational	No specified end date												1								1									1	
Northern Workforce Development Program (Closing the Gap)	Membership based model	Provides outreach services job seekers and is continually working directly with business to understand their requirements and to match local jobs with local people.	Operational	Current Agreement 2023/24												1								1									1	
City of Gastronomy	Membership based model under the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) which includes seven (7) Councils	Collaborating through gastronomy to address issues of economic, social and environmental sustainability within the broader Launceston region food plays a vital role in culture, creativity, social exchange and mental wellbeing	Operational	Current Agreement 2022/23	1									1		1								1	1	1							1	
Tamar NRM	Jointly funded by three (3) member Councils	Delivery of education, extension and the practical natural Resource management tools to be more sustainable	Operational	Current Agreement 2023/24												1								1									1	
NRM North	Joint agreement involving participating Councils	NRM North works with industry and the community to care for natural resources across northern Tasmania.	Operational	No specified end date	1									1	1	1								1	1	1							1	
Tamar Estuary and Esk Rivers Program	Jointly funded by five (5) member Councils + other non-local government members	The improvement of scientific understanding of the issues impacting the health of the kanamaluka/Tamar estuary. Members include Hydro Tasmania and TasWater.	Operational	Current Agreement 2023/24												1								1	1	1							1	

Name of Body delivering service	Shared Service Model	Service being delivered	Operational status	End date of current commitment to sharing arrangement	Break O'Day	Brighton	Burnie	Central Coast	Central Highlands	Circular Head	Clarence	Derwent Valley	Devonport	Dorset	Flinders	George Town	Glamorgan-Spring Bay	Glenorchy	Hobart	Huon Valley	Kentish	King Island	Kingborough	Latrobe	Launceston	Meander Valley	Northern Midlands	Sorell	Southern Midlands	Tasman	Waratah-Wynyard	West Coast	West Tamar
Greater Launceston Plan	Current GLP Review is being jointly funded by five (5) Councils	The Greater Launceston Plan (GLP) is a community vision and evidence-based framework for the sustainable development of Launceston and its surrounds over the next 20 years and beyond.	Operational	No specified end date												1									1	1	1						1
Launceston City Deal (Community and Business Advisory Group)	Participation by five (5) Councils + other non-local government members	Provides input and advice to the Launceston City Deal Board	Operational	2027												1									1	1	1						1
Simmons Wolfhagen Legal Services Shared Contract	Joint agreement involving participating Councils	Legal services to participating Councils which includes, sharing of advice, Legal advice toolbox, discounted charging rates, and professional development activities commenced 24/9/2019	Operational	Aug-23	1									1	1	1									1	1	1						1
Regional General Managers Group	Collaborative arrangement with admin support by Break O'Day Council.	Facilitation, development and delivery of regional and sub-regional projects, activities and services benefiting northern region Councils	Operational	No specified end date	1									1	1	1									1	1	1						1
Plumbing Inspection Shared Services Arrangements MVC and Nth Midlands	Established under MOU	Regulatory services relating to plumbing, shared 1 FTE.	Operational	Under review																						1	1						
Brighton Council	Fee for service with contractual agreements, generally 12 month contracts.	Brighton Council provides plumbing assessments and inspections to Tasman and occasionally Southern Midlands	Operational			1																							1	1			
Southern Midlands Council - plumbing	Resource Sharing Agreement – Fee for service	Provides relief plumbing surveying services to Brighton Council	Operational			1																							1				

Name of Body delivering service	Shared Service Model	Service being delivered	Operational status	End date of current commitment to sharing arrangement	Break O'Day	Brighton	Burnie	Central Coast	Central Highlands	Circular Head	Clarence	Derwent Valley	Devonport	Dorset	Flinders	George Town	Glamorgan-Spring Bay	Glenorchy	Hobart	Huon Valley	Kentish	King Island	Kingborough	Latrobe	Launceston	Meander Valley	Northern Midlands	Sorell	Southern Midlands	Tasman	Waratah-Wynyard	West Coast	West Tamar		
Brighton Council - Development Engineering	Fee for service with contractual agreements, generally 12 month contracts.	Brighton Council provides development engineering services to Central Highlands and Southern Midlands	Operational			1			1																										
Brighton Council - Rates	Ad hoc fee for service	Brighton Council provides rates services to Tasman Council on an ad hoc basis.	Operational			1																													
Southcentral Workforce Network Regional Jobs Hub	Brighton employs 5 staff and manages the state-funded Regional Jobs hub on behalf of the the four South-Central Subregion councils.	This regional Jobs hub was established with seed co-funding from the Tas Community Fund.	Operational			1			1			1																							
Southern Tasmanian Councils Authority	Joint authority under the Local Governmet Act 1993, with Brighton Council providing the municipal emissions modelling for the 12 southern councils as an in-kind contribution. Brighton and Sorell GMs lead regional planning actions.	A regional organisation of councils created to facilitate cooperative working partnerships and to improve the ability of councils to take joint action to address regional development issues and progress sustainable economic, environmental and social outcomes for Southern Tasmania, its local communities and the State. Key issues include climate change, economic development, planning, Clty Deal and advocacy in the context of the State election	Operational																																
South Central Sub-region	Partnership	Brighton administers and leads this sub-regional partnership and the projects that come from it.	Operational			1			1			1																							

Name of Body delivering service	Shared Service Model	Service being delivered	Operational status	End date of current commitment to sharing arrangement	Break O'Day	Brighton	Burnie	Central Coast	Central Highlands	Circular Head	Clarence	Derwent Valley	Devonport	Dorset	Flinders	George Town	Glamorgan-Spring Bay	Glenorchy	Hobart	Huon Valley	Kentish	King Island	Kingborough	Latrobe	Launceston	Meander Valley	Northern Midlands	Sorell	Southern Midlands	Tasman	Waratah-Wynyard	West Coast	West Tamar
Southern Midlands Council - Compliance and Building Support	Fee for service with contractual agreements	Southern Midlands Council provides compliance and building support services to Brighton Council.	Operational			1																							1				
Circular Head and Waratah-Wynyard Councils	Resource Sharing Agreement	Progressing integrated back office services with Waratah-Wynyard, involving: IT and digital transformation; Risk & business continuity planning; Asset planning and management; Aspects of development and strategic planning. Other joint projects include: shared plant and equipment; shared procurement and contract management; shared policies and procedures; shared meeting attendance and joint committee representation; shared training, integrated strategic and operational planning. 13 positions shared to varying degrees across the two councils.	Operational						1																					1			
Dulverton Regional Waste Management Authority	Joint Authority of Central Coast, Devonport City, Kentish and Latrobe Councils established under <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> .	Provides landfill and organics recycling services, plus waste advisory and technical consulting services	Operational				1						1								1		1										

Name of Body delivering service	Shared Service Model	Service being delivered	Operational status	End date of current commitment to sharing arrangement	Break O'Day	Brighton	Burnie	Central Coast	Central Highlands	Circular Head	Clarence	Derwent Valley	Devonport	Dorset	Flinders	George Town	Glamorgan-Spring Bay	Glenorchy	Hobart	Huon Valley	Kentish	King Island	Kingborough	Latrobe	Launceston	Meander Valley	Northern Midlands	Sorell	Southern Midlands	Tasman	Waratah-Wynyard	West Coast	West Tamar		
Shared Emergency Management Committee	Emergency Management Committee established under Emergency Management Act 2006		Operational				1			1																								1	
Mersey-Leven Emergency Management Committee	Regional Emergency Management Committee established under Emergency Management Act 2006	To maintain the Mersey-Leven Emergency Management Plan (MLEMP) to guide the management of risks to the community arising from emergencies in the combined Mersey-Leven municipal area.	Operational					1					1								1		1												
Cradle Coast Authority	Joint Authority	Regional economic development, natural resource management and strategic services	Operational				1	1		1			1								1	1		1								1	1		
Greater Hobart Strategic Partnership		Collaboration to implement the <i>Greater Hobart Act 2019</i> Work Plan and to deliver the Hobart City Deal projects.	Operational								1								1	1			1												
Southern Waste Solutions	Joint owned/controlled service provision involving Clarence City, Sorell, Tasman, and Kingborough Councils.	Operates a waste management facility network servicing 50% of Tasmania's population, including the Copping landfill, Copping C-Cell and Lutana waste transfer station.	Operational		1	1					1						1	1	1	1			1						1	1	1				
Kentish-Latrobe resource sharing agreement	Shared services agreement between Kentish and Latrobe Councils	Shared workforce across both councils, provides planning and environmental health services to West Coast Council	Operational																		1			1									1		
Southern Midlands Council - Animal control services	Fee for service	Provides animal control services to Central Highlands Council	Operational						1																				1						

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Southern Midlands Council - land use planning	Fee for service	Provides land use planning services to Central Highlands Council and Tasman Council	Operational						1																					1	1			
Southern Midlands Council - heritage	Fee for service	Provides heritage project management services to Derwent Valley and Central Highlands	Operational						1			1																		1				
Southern Midlands Council - development		Provides development services to Tasman council	Operational																											1	1			
West Tamar - regulatory services	Fee for service	Provision of regulatory services to Flinders, George Town, Meander Valley and Dorset	Operational											1	1	1									1									1
West Tamar - planning, building and plumbing		Provision of planning, building and plumbing services to Flinders	Operational											1																				1
Cradle Coast Waste Management Group		Provides region-wide resource recovery, landfill diversion and recycling programs, including school education programs. The programs are managed by Cradle Coast Waste Services (part of Dulverton Waste Management), who also support the Group with administration, financial and communications services.	Operational										1											1										1
Southern Tasmania Regional Waste Authority	Jointly funded, owned and controlled by twelve(12) member Councils	Waste management, landfill diversion, and resource recovery projects.	Operational			1			1		1	1					1	1	1	1			1					1	1	1				

Name of Body delivering service	Shared Service Model	Service being delivered	Operational status	End date of current commitment to sharing arrangement	Break O'Day	Brighton	Burnie	Central Coast	Central Highlands	Circular Head	Clarence	Derwent Valley	Devonport	Dorset	Flinders	George Town	Glamorgan-Spring Bay	Glenorchy	Hobart	Huon Valley	Kentish	King Island	Kingborough	Latrobe	Launceston	Meander Valley	Northern Midlands	Sorell	Southern Midlands	Tasman	Waratah-Wynyard	West Coast	West Tamar	
Business and Employment Southeast Tasmania (previously SERDA)	Jointly funded by Southeast regional Council group	The program facilitates regional collaboration and consistency in waste and recycling services and to implement regional projects	Operational	Ongoing annual subscription							1						1											1		1				
Southern Regional Emergency Management Committee	Twelve (12) Councils + range of organisations	Role defined by Emergency Management Act with re-appointment of municipal emergency coordinator.	Operational	No specified end date		1			1	1	1	1					1	1	1	1			1					1	1	1				
TBC		SE Region Youth Initiative	In Development								1						1											1		1				
Regional Climate Change Adaptation Planning	Contract arrangement	Southern Midlands Council provides services to Southern Tasmania Councils Authority				1			1			1					1	1	1	1			1					1	1	1				
Southern Midlands Council - natural values assessment	Fee for service	Southern Midlands Council provides natural values assessment services to Brighton Council				1																							1					
Western Emergency Management Committee	Regional Committee	Emergency planning					1		1																					1				
Burnie City Council - immunisations	Fee for service	School immunisations					1																							1				
Burnie City Council - IT	Contract arrangement	Hosting of data and provision of internet	Concluding	Ends 30 June 2023			1																							1				
Shared Audit Panel		Shared Audit Panel services Circular Head, King Island and Waratah-Wynyard								1												1								1				
West by North-West Tourism	Regional Partnership between councils, local tourism bodies and industry.	Provides advocacy and leadership, industry support, product development and marketing services for tourism in the region.					1	1	1			1									1	1	1							1	1			
Blue Derby Mountain Bike Trails	Joint owned	Dorset and Break O'Day Councils are joint owners			1									1																				

Name of Body delivering service	Shared Service Model	Service being delivered	Operational status	End date of current commitment to sharing arrangement	Break O'Day	Brighton	Burnie	Central Coast	Central Highlands	Circular Head	Clarence	Derwent Valley	Devonport	Dorset	Flinders	George Town	Glamorgan-Spring Bay	Glenorchy	Hobart	Huon Valley	Kentish	King Island	Kingborough	Latrobe	Launceston	Meander Valley	Northern Midlands	Sorell	Southern Midlands	Tasman	Waratah-Wynyard	West Coast	West Tamar	
		of the three trails in the Blue Derby Network.																																
State Growth road maintenance		Road maintenance work on behalf of State Growth													1																			
TasWater infrastructure emergency response and connection service		Infrastructure emergency response and connection service on behalf of TasWater.													1																			