

Attachment 1: Comment Data from LG Pro – Local Government Reform Survey

Please note data is only roughly sorted

Q6 – What could your council be doing better

Governance

- Less personal political agendas by Elected Members
- Governance
- Setting priorities
- Listening to the majority not the minority
- Governance
- Compliance
- Complaint management
- Skills and experience at councillor level is insufficient. Councils these days are complex businesses. Being elected on a single local issue is insufficient preparation for the complexity and breadth of the issues councillors will be policy makers on.
- Better decision making process in regards to contentious development applications elected members are not qualified o deliberate on development matters
- Managing Elected member's behavior. Working in IT I have been verbally abused many times
- Stop the rot of corruption and dishonesty at the top level, be led by a leader, not someone who got their job through underhand means (supported by those at the top level)
- simplify council meetings
- Councillors need more training and work to do their part of job.
- Leadership with integrity, honesty and professionalism
- Less politics around the council table
- Strategy
- Training & education of Councillors
- Engaging worthy candidates who will better represent needs of community
- Focus on provision of services well, including long term planning
- Making decisions based on evidence, not the latest thought from an elected member.

Engagement and comms

- Consultation
- Listen to their Ratepayers & Communities
- Councillors need to engage with community
- Consulting with community on major matters of importance
- Communications
- Community Engagement
- They "listen" to the public but don't seem to progress with their wants or needs
- Openness and Transparency internally & Externally
- Improving community understanding and 'ownership' of council's roles through involvement and communication
- Better Customer service
- Community engagement
- Being more customer focused

- Communicating more effectively with the community
- More time engaging with community
- Community engagement
- Transparent communication and information sharing with community and staff
- Customer service
- Communicating better
- Community consultation/transparency in relation to major developments
- Engaging with the community
- Liaising with the community
- Customer Service: Some areas avoid talking to customers when they are hear and leave it for customer service - this is being addressed but it puts a lot of strain on the front of house staff
- better community engagement
- Improve building and planning communication to ensure correct information is provided the first time
- Recognise the importance of community members and acknowledge the community should have a say in what council does and delivers
- community engagement
- Consult with the community
- Consulting with the residents and ratepayers community engagement communicating

Finance and Asset

- Financial Management
- renew existing infrastructure
- Providing better stormwater infrastructure
- More timely acting on community complaints/requests about hazards and infrastructure maintenance.
- New/Upgrade asset sustainability (gaining better understanding of financial impacts of new/upgrade infrastructure before building said infrastructure)
- Managing roads and assets (insufficient funding)
- Capital Project Management
- maintain current assets conditions
- More budget allocation to stormwater management, footpath and roads maintenance
- Financial sustainability
- Maintaining local rural roads
- Maintaining existing infrastructure
- long term asset planning

Business Processes

- Streamlining and upgrading work flow through innovation
- A digitised purchase ordering system, less manual reliance on officers
- Centralised common services in Tasmania ie rates, payroll, planning
- Putting more emphasis on updating ageing IT systems and software
- Employing more appropriate staff to reduce the workload.
- Internal management

- Set the annual plan and deliver, too many times extra projects arise without planning and staff are expected to deliver.
- Make decisions quicker
- Incorporating service levels
- Response times, this is usually driven by lack of contractors
- Working collaboratively with other Councils to provide better services to the Region
- improving internal processes
- Alignment of skills, competencies, systems and processes for improved value-add and outcomes.
- Modernising processes through better use of technology
- Speed up council decision making
- Modernise and improve standards of operation
- Digital online services
- more robust strategic planning and direction setting
- Incorporating planning for digital infrastructure into approvals process
- Place-based collaboration - we try but political sensitivities make it harder than it should be
- Internal efficiency (technology and human resource management)
- To have a better suite of regulatory tools
- Flexible and efficient service delivery
- Contemporary systems and process + culture.
- Diversify income sources
- Faster response time for ratepayer issues and concerns.
- shared services
- Consistent technology and communication across the sector
- Working with other Tasmanian councils to avoid duplication
- Reducing bureaucracy and paperwork
- Focus on a manageable number of key priorities rather than focus on everything
- Avoid duplication with state government services
- Be far less reactionary and more proactive in developing digital platforms for stakeholders to engage with Council ie: portal for planning, portal logins for whole rates/invoices etc

Staff

- Employing more people to work at the grassroots level with community members.
- Have less managers and more workers
- Attracting and retaining suitable staff
- workplace culture
- More employees living in the municipality to have a better understanding of the community
- Paying more in wages to staff
- specialist staff recruitment & retainment
- Training and developing staff
- Staff resourcing needs attention
- workforce planning
- Better pay
- More Staff

- Employing better contractors for waste services
- Better work culture
- more job opportunities,
- valuing staff and providing career pathways
- Pay higher wages to reduce staff turnover
- Workforce development and succession planning - key person dependencies exist

Services

- Better protection and utilisation of historical buildings and town history
- Statutory Land Use Planning Development Applications
- Waste management
- Environmental management
- Defining the Council's role in the community services space
- More community engagement - telling the story
- Recognise and value the importance of health and wellbeing to the community.
- Improving recycling and waste management
- Road maintenance
- cat management (with Government support)
- Looking after community
- helping with housing
- Increasing service levels, with subsequent increase in FTE
- Place making and activation
- waste management
- Inter-agency engagement
- care of the environment and the remnant bushland
- Basics eg: roads, rubbish
- Waste Management
- Managing our parks, gardens and recreation areas
- Looking at locals needs rather than a tourism whim.
- The basic function - Rates, Roads and Rubbish
- Managing waste/environment
- Take on more place based services
- Provide state government services in rural areas
- Provide more quality open space that links to areas of greater density development.
- Land use planning
- concentrate on core responsibilities
- Concentrate on core business of Council
- Shaping their communities as great places to live
- shed legacy activities, eg childcare, forest parks
- Economic Development
- Investing in 'health and wellbeing' more - so many part of Council are doing a service to peoples health and wellbeing, but it isn't always recognised.
- Managing biodiversity within it's municipal jurisdiction.

Q7 – One improvement

Structure/legislation

- Re-Align council boundaries to make more sense to the Rate Payer so those using the services are paying for the services.
- Reduce the regulatory burden required to be enforced by local government
- Review LG Act in terms of quality of elected members and the need for more robust screening process for who can stand/credentials. The change of 'all in all out' and allowing community to vote for their Mayor has created significant challenges and further disruption to the ongoing operations of Council.
- Compulsory voting by ratepayers so a better and more accountable process was employed for elected representatives
- amalgamate smaller councils to create critical mass and improve efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery
- Reduce the administrative burden - too much time lost implementing poorly drafted or targetted regulation meaning not enough focus on areas that can make a difference
- Less restrictions on building
- Relieve the pressures of Planning
- Less Councils across the State
- Amalgamations - too many Councils, stop state government taking over Local Government roles
- New LG Act, streamline processes, and reduce barriers to standing for Council
- Reduce the number of Councillors
- Bring back local infrastructure to local Council such as sewage and water. This means to get rid of Taswater and let local government take over it again.
- Resource sharing/amalgamations
- Reduced red tape interface between state and local authorities relating to 'public infrastructure' on 'public lands'
- No aldermen. Politics has no place at the local government level. Public should lobby GM directly.
- Economies of scale is important for sustainability and in delivery quality outcomes for the community (environmental, social and financial). There are however too many small unsustainable Councils without an adequate talent pool to support the complexity and breadth of activities being undertaken (elected and staff).
- Council mergers, or at least shared services
- Uniformity of service delivery.
- Require Councillors to have a certain level of expertise
- Can't narrow it down to one! Reduce the number of councils, strengthen the code of conduct for elected members and formalise LG's role in community wellbeing
- Develop a firmer strategic/legislative framework to ensure local government delivers affordable core functions
- Mandating the appropriate compulsory training of All elected members and implementing an appropriate Cod of Practice/Policy whatever that actually has teeth and makes those elected members accountable.
- Amalgamations
- Give Local Government more power to enforce the laws. We seem to be limited in what we can do. Even the fines that can be handed out are minimal and are not enough to stop

people doing illegal work. Most of the time fines aren't even handed out so the same people continue to do illegal work because they get away with it with no repercussions.

- Remove outdated prescriptive engagement and advertising requirements in the Act.
- A shake up - actions that are supported by strategic planning, not just "because we've always done it like this".
- Less red tape/regulations
- Significantly reduce the number of Councils
- "Amalgamate to reduce political interference
- Rationalise the no. of councils and remove unviable, myopic small councils i.e. Tasman.
- Improve representation of local government at the highest-decision making levels of state and federal governments
- Amalgamation - hard to get qualified people to come to rural areas - amalgamation would provide cost savings
- Fewer Councils
- Resource sharing
- Removing duplication of effort in governance matters (e.g. information management, delegations)
- Include in the Local Government Act 1993 a requirement each Council must provide 'minimum service' levels for prescribed services. This would include statutory functions, provision of waste management and infrastructure, but not include some community services which would be discretionary.
- resource sharing
- Shared resources between councils
- More resource sharing
- Have a centralised governance body that deals specifically with LG issues so you don't have 29 councils seeking individual advice on the same matter - perhaps allow LG to utilise the services of the Crown Solicitor.
- Encourage Councils to seek ethical revenue streams outside of property rating and parking.
- Merge some of the smaller Councils. LGAT or similar organisation create policies, procedures, etc so Council don't re-invent the wheel constantly. Or at least create templates for specific policies, procedures, etc
- "Clearly define and identify what is Council's purpose>
- There is a lot of overlap into State Govt departments, ie DoE, DoPaC, and DoH. So the deliverables can be quite skewed and not clearly defined, communities and business suffer as a result."
- Establish effective, functional centres of excellence that share knowledge and skills allowing common focus upon best-practice tools and techniques while reducing unnecessary duplication of effort.
- Having a better way to communicate with other Councils and learn from each other. I feel that each local council is very individual and processes are vastly different, it could be beneficial to see how others do tasks and then adapt and evolve others processes if they aren't as efficient.
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Councillors/Staff

- Elected Members - their perceived knowledge of matters; need for required experience & training; and overall poor & non-respectful behaviour

- Local Government needs to be less top heavy with Management and instead ensure that more workers are available on the ground to achieve results expected by the community.
- Better informed Councillors with knowledge of the legislation and local policies.
- Removing the 'politics' between elected members, general manager, management team and general staff.
- Greater training for Councillors so that they understand the importance and commitment that is required to be a proactive member of the organisation.
- Work together not against one another
- Councillors need more support to do their job and understanding their role and responsibilities.
- Increase staff numbers
- Development and training opportunities for Permit Authority Staff. There are no courses available and so no staff available when recruiting - it is a real challenge for the sector and unsustainable.
- stronger code of conduct for councillors, more tools for GM and Mayor to discipline destructive behaviour
- Make it more attractive to work at the council, years ago it was the common theme that if you worked at the council you were set for life not like it is now people treat this as a stepping stone to go on their career paths and only in it for what they can get not what they can do for the council and community.
- Substantially remove councilors from planning roles - establish panels of experts to make the decisions councilors currently do. See the SA model which includes limited councilor representation.
- I would improve the remuneration of Councillors, reduce the number of Councillors and make the nomination and Code of Conduct process more robust and practical. If Councillors are paid more and there are less positions that would create more competition and attract candidates that have the basic skills (reading, comprehension and some life experience in the workforce) for them to meaningfully execute their duties. Time and time again I see disengaged Councillors who do not have the cognitive skill to read and understand their duties. Councillors voting when they admit to not bothering to read what they are voting on is not in the public interest.
- "Better working relationships between Councillors and staff. Even in the best functioning Councils, there will always be some rigor in discussion between elected members and staff, and that is acceptable. However, most recently we've heard a lot on the media about the pressures that elected members face, being called outside working hours and exposed to what they have called bullying from the community. I've also heard a number of Councillors who have been interviewed try and 'pass the buck' by insinuating that staff are responsible for the situation that Council's find themselves in.
- Yet, Councillors infer that staff themselves should be available 24 hours a day, respond to outside work calls (and in some cases people knocking on their front door outside hours) and be available at the beck and call of elected members. While doing this, they do not respond to queries from staff, the intent of which is to ensure that Councillors are well informed and able to respond to questions. I can provide two very recent examples -
- A community meeting was being held by a newly formed community group on a weekend. A councillor was the president of that group, who are lobbying the Council to commit to substantial investment of public funds for a project that has yet to undertake a feasibility study. The Councillor involved has not declared an interest at Council. The councillor involved saw a staff member at another unrelated meeting and asked in front of a group of

people why the staff member wasn't attending a weekend meeting of the group and questioned their commitment to their role.

- Councillors have asked for fortnightly workshops where they can ask questions about projects and operations of Council, and be provided with briefings by Council officers. There are a number of Councillors who have indicated that they would prefer the meetings to be outside working hours. To facilitate this the GM pays staff the appropriate penalty rate or Time in Lieu for work outside hours. Councillors object to this. They also indicate that they will be attending a workshop, so staff prepare, change plans and stay back to present to Council, only to find that at the last minute (literally) less than 20% of the elected members attend. When the items that were to be discussed at the workshop appear on the Council agenda, Councillors then complain that they are not well informed.
- As previously noted, there will always be rigor, and that is a good thing, but additional and compulsory training for Councillors in their roles and responsibilities would assist in helping to build stronger and more cohesive working relationships and therefore benefit the community. "
- Grow the pool of professional staff and make it more attractive to work in local government
- Make elected members more accountable for their decisions
- More flexible working hours and working from home so employees can attend more weekday programs within the community family/personal, to build a rapport with community members.
- Managing Elected Members behavior and code of conduct. I have been verbally abused and treated poorly a number of times by repeat offenders. When behavior suggestions get put forward, it makes no sense that the elected members get to vote on their own behavioral improvements. There seems to be little to no repercussion for this type of behavior. And also the behavior in council meetings is appalling.
- More decency, honesty and transparency, less bullying, fraud and corruption
- Implement mandatory training for Councillors so they can make effective decisions when acting as a Planning Authority
- Improved forward planning and communication of direction to all levels of staff.
- Educated councillors?
- Learn to be flexible with the way people work for you in this day and age and be open to different avenues of engagement and communication with stakeholders.
- Establish more mechanisms where staff across Councils can collaborate and work together to provide best outcomes for the community.
- Part of Council should be skills based
- Review all General Manager, Director and Managers and reasons they are there, it seems to be for their own benefit and power
- The roles of councillors and mayors being grounded in the reality of public administration - not party politics or pushing personal agendas. Perhaps self-nomination is a flaw?
- Make it more competitive for recruitment/retaining staff

Funding

- Ensure Councils are funded adequately to achieve core services and are made to operate at a minimum accepted Governance standard.
- Less financial wastage
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Functions Services and processes

- Consistency among service delivery
- Improve community involvement. People are quick to criticise but they do not actively engage, ie by voting or contributing.
- "Do less. The practice of trying to be all things to all people does not and cannot fully work. Why? there are several reasons. Councils are under resourced. We lack the skills to be expert in everything. Management/executive time is spread too thinly across far too many things. Nothing gets the full attention it needs. We do lots of things OK/averagely/moderately well but nothing really well. Because we can't. There's insufficient time, resource and skills.
- Modernise and simplify work systems with cloud based software
- The motivation to not accept the minimum requirements in terms of delivering services and approving Planning Developments. It seems like Developers/Builders in Tassie build to a requirement that would not be accepted on the Mainland.
- Have a centralised hub for technical specialists to meet regularly. one that LGAT organises and enforces. This could provide training and development including interpretation of new regulations as well as ensuring a more consistent approach.
- Adapt the State Planning scheme to enable rural councils to have more control over their future developmental needs, rather than make it suit the major towns/cities
- Provide standardised financial reporting for Assets and depreciation across the sector to ensure Councils are reporting like for like.
- Better housing solutions - currently VERY little is actually being done about our massive housing crisis, because it doesn't benefit them.
- Shift state services to LG for place based delivery
- increased capacity to deliver full range of services
- More funding and interest in community services. More people need to realise the impact of health and wellbeing on our community members, and recognise that positive HWB impact is made by many in Council. E.g. keeping parks and rec grounds up to standard - that's helping the health and wellbeing of community members, safe rubbish disposal - that's helping the health and wellbeing of community members, providing workshop/class opportunities - that's helping the health and wellbeing of community members. And the list goes on. But health and wellbeing itself isn't recognised a lot when it comes to ongoing funding. We need community connectors to be ongoing officer's of Council to work on the health and wellbeing of the community.
- Planning authority - challenging for Councillors who need to advocate for their community on important issues, but can only vote against a planning item when it is contrary to the scheme
- Better waste management - have a pyrolysis plant plus anaerobic digester to convert organic matter to useable bio gas and bio fertilizer. (combining in with other councils)
- Focus on specifically local functions, leave regional/ national etc issues for other government levels
- As all Council's operate in the same environment an overarching body or group that works with each Council running through changes in the regulatory landscape ie: rather than each Council work with the Audit Office and individually attempt to consider all information, overarching body work with Council's on what the changes will impact in Council. At present there are some small working groups but they are all unofficial and run by employees of different Council's on top of their current works.
- Focus on the major objectives roads, rubbish , recreation

- Open Space/NRM officers, planners and Environmental health officers work closely together to ensure the communities needs and the environment is balanced. Local government need to be educators and on the front line to advocate for community/environment/wildlife and not for developers.
- Invest in communications to ensure people are aware of the activities, services and opportunities to contribute.
- provide funding for community health and wellbeing initiatives
- Inter-agency collaboration and communication e.g. between Councils and Crown Services, Parks, State, etc. We're not always on the same page with ideas, there are times with the same agency has similar ideas from two perspectives that could be worked together to complete a purpose. Applications for improvement can take much longer due to lack of communication, lack of services available and lack of understanding between parties. If we had the opportunity and resources or foresight to engage other relevant agencies from the idea phase, then I think getting to a point where that idea become reality would be less time-consuming and have a more seamless transition to completion.
- Remove land use planning function"
- Setting standards across all local government areas
- outsource the physical work of civil work and alot of the outdoor functions
- Common operating platforms
- Change the revenue model to ensure it was not so disadvantageous for remote communities.
- Greater emphasis on advocacy for the local community to other levels of Government, through local government channels. The funding available from the Federal Government and its associated criteria may not be a good match to the priorities for local communities. For example, getting funding for new infrastructure projects instead of being able to use additional funding for existing and renewals, affects depreciation and operating costs and therefore long term sustainability. In some cases it may not be new infrastructure that is needed, but investment in community projects and welfare initiatives.
- As the closest level of government to the community, and with the most influence on how people can live their lives, other levels of government need to acknowledge the importance of local and government. State and Federal government need to work with and not against local government. Local government should take the lead in working in partnership with and collaborating with government, other local governments and stakeholders. So in summary, we need to collaborate more as a sector.

Unsorted/Other

- genuine accountability
- utilise a Service tas style kiosk for local government customer service
- State government to provide more funding
- To have standardised systems and processes across LGAs for core business and community service areas.
- Greater funding to support the high expectations regarding availability to the public.
- Greater advocacy and interaction with communities. Integrating better communication channels for collaboration with community.

- Connect, unify and facilitate ideas both internally and outside the organisation
- Put footpaths in all smaller towns to enable people to safely keep fit
- Recurrent operational funding for programs and projects not just infrastructure
- Better pay
- more efficient roles and meeting quotas
- Better use of working groups and sharing skillsets especially for councils where officers have multiple and varied roles with a highly fluctuating workload
- Streamlined (less) legislated reporting
- Reducing existing duplication of tasks and processes due to large number of Councils
- More consistency across councils in core services
- Have a review of the wage structure for community development/services staff. These departments get paid a lot less than planning or infrastructure and we have degrees, work with budgets and support the community in times of crisis.
- internal transparency, trust and respect
- Aligning systems to better facilitate resource sharing and identify and replicate best practice approaches across the sector
- provide more assistance money for major infrastructure that is desperately needed. Local government is the closest 'to the people' so is best placed to know what the community needs are.
- reduction in doubling up on services
- Mandate collobation/collective impact frameworks
- A better feel of us out in the community. Seems to be more negative than positive press.
- Community consultation on large scale projects that will impact the environment and scenery
- Being more informative outside with community
- Be more informative to the public and address their concerns
- Less bureaucracy. Officers that are more in touch with our community and have the communities best interests at heart. We need staff that have had experience in private business, rather than only having had worked for Local Government, it would provide more "real world" knowledge.
- reduce services to reduce rates
- Engage community and volunteers to assist in making the council area look aesthetically pleasing.
- Improve public perception
- Improve the community perception of LG employees - "we don't just hold the shovel" !
- Improve inter-departmental consultation processes
- Sector needs to stop being the gap filler for things that neither private enterprise nor state government want to do
- Improve efficiencies, reduce duplication or effort. Share knowledge, skills, learnings, resources
- Prioritise community projects based on community needs rather than political motives of the Alderman. Example council seems to spend more funds on a million dollar sports facility which is used by a few members of the community as against a community centre with a broader use
- To advocate and communicate the role of Local Government.
- Resource to enable service deliver to our community

- More of the money allocated to State Government passed directly onto Local Government to cut out the waste of Federal funds. Probably prefer NZ model of government
- Mandate health promotion and well-being plans and programs
- Operationalised strategic plans
- "Local government can be a beast the pressures on local government to maintain its current assets and resources as well as meeting the needs of communities that are changing.
- In my view Community members are the key element in providing a successful Council. If community members are not recognised as assets and one of the most important assets to a successful council that councils need to ensure they invest in just as strongly as they do for roads, rates and rubbish.
- Increase staff levels to ensure services are able to be provided, and to reduce staff turnover due to burnout.
- Fewer constraints on the ability to respond to community needs. Less red tape.
- Asset Management consistency across Councils.
- Introduce robust training regimes for succession planning across all councils
- Stop discussion on amalgamation

Q10 One or 2 key changes – the whys

Structural Reform (For and against)

- Single large entities don't necessarily provide a better outcome but we need to reduce costs by centralising and agreeing on a shared model to support all councils.
- Being in a finance role having multiple entities and systems capable of working together is far too complicated and the systems demand so much man power to run correctly and resource sharing seems to only create divides so you are better off merging into 1 area and only having one operating/finance systems with operational hubs in each area. also then you could have a board of managers as such that represents each area and they discuss the workloads and planning pressures along with daily running of their council area rather than 1 general manager who makes all the decisions and may have conflicting ideas on previous managers and undo all that has been done by previous managers and councillors.
- Councils all offer the same services. They all use the same legislation. Surely there are ways to streamline service provision without reinventing the wheel between each different Council.
- "I don't think structural reform in terms of mergers is necessary. History shows that the superficial savings eg one exec team are quickly gobbled up by lifting the service provision of the merged councils (one council will always have higher standards than the other eg waste collection, standard of parks and reserves) and so the lower standard council has its services lifted to meet the other. Savings gone.
- Need to save money - less managers having private use of council vehicles and less mayors and councillors - Tasmania is a small state probably should only have 6 to 8 areas
- The Act is too vague, not prescriptive enough. Councils should be empowered to find ways to be more commercial/entrepreneurial with their assets, via holding companies and subsidies, creating dividends or subvention payments.
- Council works should be coordinated to maximize efficiency of delivery and have a whole of network view on activities.
- Will create a consistent approach and improve community relations

- May assist with the public reputation and lean some of the services. Additionally we have 4 Councils within very close distance to each other that effectively could provide the same services to the same areas as we all have the same needs in such a small area.
- Smaller scale would enable at call decisions that would have greater impact. Less likely to misinterpret any decisions.
- As it's about the community.
- Diverse needs of the regions all need a different approach.
- Local govt needs to remain local so communities of interest is important to retain as rural needs are very different to urban expectations.
- Too many Councils for one State and better buying power and fit for purpose IT systems if they were common across all Councils
- This approach is more performance based rather than making the incorrect assumption that 'bigger is better'. If a Council is financially viable and provides appropriate services there is no reason to merge.
- "There are examples of other cities/councils that have provided direct benefit to their communities thanks to state government support.
- There is also confusion about boundaries and limited resources available to support the community as a result of smaller councils. If you don't engage with local government you are not aware of these limitations, so it causes many issues that could be easily avoided. "
- Smaller Councils are better connected to community and effective in their response to need. Difficulties are faced with lobbying and the Councillors never wanting to say NO or taking something out of the budget if something else goes in - need for fiscal responsibility.
- Change needs to be more sophisticated than simply adjusting the boundaries.
- "Merging councils has a negative impact on the community, in particular in smaller towns/localities as there is a view that they are left behind in favour of the bigger towns and cities.
- No one knows a local community like those working and living within that community
- people need a local voice - especially in more rural or remote areas - they will be not heard if mergers with large more populated council areas take place
- "The communities in Tasmania are all very different as they have been borne through cultural, historical and generational circumstance. The fabric that intertwines these communities is specific to there narratives and reflects their regions.
- "Place based services (Councils) are important particularly in regional and remote communities but a formal sharing structure and some centralised services would be beneficial. Information and knowledge sharing has begun through the formation of special interest groups.
- "A city council and remote council are different, there function should be different.
- Also it is not fair that community services are funded based on land value it entrenches disadvantage rich areas have councils will more funds and get better services. "
- "Amalgamating is a simplistic response that will see small communities and hamlets overlooked for the larger towns and cities.
- All the noise around Councils in Tasmania is centered on the (mis)behaviour of elected members and their interactions with Council staff just trying to get their jobs done."
- Allows processes to be shared across councils, resources can be pooled and transferred in emergencies
- Councils role is local service delivery, mergers will not bring this. Focus has to be on effective service delivery to communities

- Tasmania is such a diverse state, different areas need different focuses."
- There are efficiencies that can be had, that do not have to come at the cost of local connection and expertise. It is not all or nothing. Local government could trial a hybrid model of efficiency and local knowledge and resources.
- 29 Councils for a state with small population is unproductive
- "Rural communities require different considerations to cities.
- Small like minded councils should be considered as to not lose ones own identity. It is better for smaller communities to be able to have their say rather than been merged with a city based council.
- "resource sharing has proven benefits
- state/local govt disconnect - could write an epistle on. State Govt may need reform!"
- Once council area rather than multiple, in major metropolitan areas."
- Some services can be delivered more cost effectively in larger scale - others not so. Initiatives in this area need to be targeted rather than a general approach."
- Resource sharing provides an immediate pool of qualified and experienced staff to work across a broader area, should enable up skilling and career progression - must be done via separate business structure
- Local Government is extremely important to meeting community needs. Mergers and amalgamations are NOT the answer. Resource sharing works and is a much better solution. Local skills development employs locals and keeps communities alive and well.
- "Too many small councils (in terms of area, population and financial resources) and some should be merged together or incorporated into larger Councils.
- "I think 29 Councils are too many for the state.
- Councils can then form around areas of interest (rural vs remote) without being disadvantaged because they don't have a large population area. More equitable delivery of services no matter where people live.
- Merger smaller Councils with larger Councils is not in the best interests of the smaller Councils. I know this from experience. I lived in Victoria when Kennett merged Councils. There was less service provided and a huge increase in the amount of rates I was expected to pay. Most of the extra revenue seemed to be spent on the street scape of the larger towns and nothing provided to the rural areas
- Some municipalities seem logical for amalgamations.
- "Some smaller Councils aren't really viable and can be too close to their communities.
- 29 Local Government Councils in a state the size of Tasmania is too many. There are far too many duplication of systems, processes and procedures. By merging Councils (but still having regional offices for the day to day operations) there would have to be efficiencies.
- I have worked in Local Government for 45 years, the best thing to happen in that time was the 1993 amalgamations - it didn't save money but it made things more efficient and I think large mergers will once again make it more efficient and not fighting over who should be paying for what !!
- "there are so many councils in tasmania that could possibly merge.
- "More efficient & effective service delivery
- Improved strategic decision making
- Greater equity in funding services"
- Resource Sharing can lead to many inefficiencies and is draining on staff when both councils want five days worth of work. Shared Services is a cost for work - much more efficient

- Better trained employees can better advocate for their needs and the needs of communities.
- "There's ample evidence of periodic disfunction at councilor/ staff interaction levels which adversely impacts officer service delivery to community.
- Scale is needed to provide an appropriate level of service in a sustainable manner. System are lacking in many councils- inefficient . Lack of resource to manage / maintain own systems
- Resource sharing is not effective. Often there is only one staff member covering two councils. What happens when they are on leave, busy or resign? Who covers for them? Mergers need to happen so we have multiple staff available. My Council are not replacing staff when someone leaves to save money, putting more work and pressure on other staff members.
- Resource sharing is good but on a large scale there is an added layer of administration associated with it
- Reason for my answer is that all local Councils should be working together. Some Councils have better ways on doing thing and it would be great to share ideas instead of trying to reinvent the wheel.
- Smaller communities lack appropriate funding and division of resources - in small communities government roles are more of a popularity competition than anything else
- we have 29 councils with a population of 500 000 people, too many General Managers and Alderman that get paid, with wages for the employees are less, which is why there is a big turnover in staff. Councilor's tend to think they are more important than the workers, which can become a toxic place to work in
- All Councils have core duties that can be standardised across the board. This would lead to greater efficiencies and resource sharing. There needs to be improved partnerships with state government as there is significant cross-over between the two levels which is not capitalised on.
- too much time and resource is spent in talking without producing outcomes, rather than doing.
- There is not a one size fits all model that can suit all areas as smaller rural/remote Councils have different levels of interaction with communities etc that the larger City Councils. Therefore moving some boundaries could in itself reduce the number of LG areas but not necessarily straight merger/amalgamation with another whole Council area.
- Resource sharing needs to be legislated to happen otherwise it relies on people and culture to work which is not sustainable. There is some gain there to be had but much greater efficiency can be delivered from mergers or a different delivery model for state and local government services.
- Smaller councils do not have enough staff to manage everything. While ultimately mergers should be the end goal, moving in the direction of more coordinating and sharing would benefit all involved if it can be done with minimal (management) overheads.
- It is impossible to deliver uniformity of service delivery across 29 Councils. Mergers are necessary to achieve a regional focus and consistency.
- Wholesale mergers do not work. For example a merger between GCC and HCC would mean Collinvale is part of a greater Hobart yet Bellerive and Tarooma are not. Councils in Europe and USA are much smaller and much bigger than Tasmania yet reflect an individual city or village. It is clear to see the difference in town pride with this approach.

- "I think the small scale councils lead to a parochial mindset and reduce the professionalism of both the elected members and officers. The number of councils is also very resource heavy. I think there are ways to merge councils whilst still maintaining the valuable place-based and local response - through boroughs/wards or similar mechanisms.
- Local governments appear to work too silo'd. Also with a common planning scheme being rolled out, with some local plans, why not make planning assessments less geographically regulated and have planners working more across councils. Many council areas in Tasmania are small and niche and not necessarily working across a whole region, rather stopping at their boundary.

Systems/Resource Sharing

- If all Councils had common systems and processes, it will be easier to provide improvements and support to business processes especially mobile workers using the latest in IT technology. Also would have better procurement and influence with vendors together as one entity then as separate Council's.
- "Sharing of common systems & processes will provide a constant, standard approach which will give ratepayers confidence of fairness being applied right across the State.
- The processes and the IT systems that support them don't need to be different. The challenge is resourcing the changes.
- Common systems would aid productivity. Smaller councils provide the same services as larger ones but don't have the critical mass and resources esp in the IT space. "
- "Sharing resources in a well organised manner allows purchase of more and better equipment, specialist skills, etc.
- Resource sharing would allow for economies of scale and less overhead costs."
- Resource sharing where there is the ability to do so take the financial pressure off of a single Council to employ a particular service all of the time whether it needs to be fully resourced or not. Conversely, where a Council does not have the need of a full-time employee, resource sharing could provide the opportunity of full-time employment to community members where they may only have had that part-time or casual available. It allows the resource to go where needed and feel that they are providing an important service.
- Many ways of working are outdated and slow, ad hoc filing and paper based systems need improvement"
- Efficiency gains and access to larger fleet of vehicles and plant. Access to professional engineers and designers
- Every Council seems to be on a different page on common issues. Some Councils have taken the initiative on upgrading software, while others have not started. A consistent approach on common software (documentation) would be good start.
- Common IT systems will support resource sharing and provide greater efficiencies when staff relocate from one council to another. By providing greater training to staff, it will led to better advice and outcomes for the community
- Firstly, the systems and processes for all councils need to be as common as possible. This makes two things simpler, it makes it easier for staff to transition from one council to another, and it makes merging councils a lot easier. Resource sharing within Councils increases the burden on staff and is not as efficient as a complete merger in my opinion, for

example the same staff preparing for two sets of reports for two different councils with similar deadlines increases pressure on staff, apportioning costs and cross billing adds additional administration overhead and having staff at one council or the other can lead to subsidisation of one council over another. In addition there is the complexity of different enterprise agreements across councils which causes tensions between staff and issues for payroll when you are sharing staff across multiple councils.

- Roles in local government are now more diverse and there are many emerging technologies that can help improve council services and the value they provide for the community. To take full advantage of these staff need professional development and effective performance reviews.
- As more services/forms/payments are completed online or remotely by community members, alignment of common operating systems/processes and formal resource sharing for operational areas would allow cost savings over multiple LGAs. Those funds could then be used to deliver other local community services or benefits.
- I think there needs to be more consistency throughout Local Government
- This will improve service delivery to the customer. The customer can have confidence that processes are consistent across Councils.
- By having common systems, it would be easier to resource share people when required, alleviating the need to employ casual employees.
- Common systems and process would reduce duplicated effort within the sector bringing some economies of scale without creating a centralised bureaucracy. Skill development will increase capability in the sector.
- there is significant duplication of effort and inconsistent approaches across councils
- "1) systems should be standardised across Council's; opportunity to share the cost equally but also critical that whatever systems are chosen, are the best they can be in terms of usability and functionality
- If IT systems were uniform across the State it would make job share and resource sharing more efficient and streamlined
- "Common systems would provide improved efficiencies for all Councils, with the most impact being on smaller Councils who sometimes struggle to access the professional services required to help create these systems. A centralised system would allow for centralised servicing of systems, and even with a cost involved would also provide efficiencies in time and to Council officers. It would also provide for easier sharing of information and the community could be reassured that processes between councils, or when moving from one LGA to another would be similar if not the same.
- All Councils should have the same systems and process including IT systems which would make resource sharing easier for everyone."
- Common systems and processes would allow for greater resource sharing and centralised services, staff skill development and transferability across Councils when needed
- We need to start having consistent system/processes across Councils, so that Council's can support each other, learn from each other and reduce expenditure across Councils.
- By allowing resource sharing and, in addition, having common systems such as IT, would allow for greater economic efficiencies thereby improving levels of service and potential increased organisational strategic development capacity.
- IT is a common issue across the board it seems.
- Re common systems and processes including common IT systems, the bigger councils can afford better systems but the smaller councils can't afford them as easily. Which means the

smaller councils with less people resources waste valuable time using inefficient systems, but can't afford the cost or time to upgrade to improve efficiency - it's a Catch-22 type situation."

- My role is formally and informally resource-shared between two councils. It allows both councils to stay functional and be representative of our two quite different municipalities.
- Even at a large Council there are significant issues with IT systems etc. due to cost implications - this impacts on the ability of staff to undertake their roles. This could be more effective if managed and resourced across Councils. There is very little engagement on a program delivery level with State Government, there does not seem to be the recognition of the value of local government and their access to community.
- Common systems between Councils would be beneficial for many, many reasons. Information sharing, resource sharing, connectivity between Councils as well as service provisions. Imagine if you wanted a statewide informational, historical, hiking, knowledge and/or food trail - Councils with a common information system could provide detailed information, that is not contradictory, across regions with a little digital innovation by simply being on the same platform sharing information. "
- "The role of Local Government doesn't change between municipalities. So it would be the logical step to consult with local governments to create a single IT solution. Don't try and create a product like PlanBuild and expect Council's to accept it.
- having worked as a shared resource at 2 separate council entities all of my 7 year local government career, I have found that resource sharing councils are more productive. However, the risk of overloading employees is something that management need to be aware of and monitor.
- "Efficiency of cloud delivery allowing focus on local services.
- "Common IT systems would lead to better systems and training as well cost savings.
- with a common IT it would make sharing resources far more efficient
- State wide systems can support common non-localized systems, allow Councils to focus on supporting local infrastructure and livability
- "Common systems, currently each Council approaches common legislative landscape differently. Example, 337 and 132 process each Council does (regardless of how many Councils) the same number of requests would be processed. This is a large manual process with no centralised system that could electronically deliver this requirement (think online portal for each Council). Can centralised data repositories be created ie: annual financial statements whilst prepared for Council presentation, the data is entered into an online portal, this ensure TAO have the same format of the data to audit, ensures LGAT can use the same format data (no manual intervention) for reporting, could be expanded to collect additional data for CDCS reports etc.
- LG can be very inefficient. We all broadly do the same types of activities we could learn and share knowledge and ideas to help deliver our services efficiently and consistently
- It is well know that large scale council mergers would not necessarily reduce the costs to the the community (in the form of rates). However smaller councils can merge with bigger councils around them or two or three smaller councils which are based in rural areas can merge into a single council. Having common systems and processes between councils will result in interoperability between councils.
- More streamlined training to make training new workers that can be switched between Councils. And making IT the same this is also handy for interchanging.
- "Resource sharing will in turn help the local community

- Common IT with centralised support would allow consistent service provision, provide for resource sharing opportunities and remove the IT burden and associated risks from individual Councils."
- There are policies and processes that are the same at all councils, these should be rolled out and maintained on a group basis rather than every council doing it differently.
- Council's do not collaborate enough, there is a tendency for duplicating work rather than sharing resources, skills, projects, comms, designs, policies and procedures. Developing programs, facilities etc for small and larger communities, families, children, business, disadvantaged, women, men etc...are pretty rudimentary they require customisation for the specific communities."
- Needless to say, we are all delivering the same or similar services to communities just the scale of deliver is different. There are variances, and some things are regionally and community specific.
- "Systems should be streamlined across the state to hopefully reach the most operational standard/to speed up delivery of services or processing applications.
- "Common systems would be more cost effective in the long term and provide for shared services and resource sharing of staff that some positions are hard to attract, particularly for smaller councils.
- Functions need to understand and suit the local needs and utilise local strengths. Resources can then be shared across areas based on specialisation/opportunity cost etc
- Councils could work better together if we used the same stuff, would make it easier for end users as well. Council doesn't seem to have a strong connection to the state gov.

Services and Functions

- Some things we deal with shouldn't be Council's concern and there are some really small Councils who duplicate services and are inefficient.
- Stop trying to be all things to all people - and thus constantly adding to the cost base.
- I would also like to see the formalisation of Council's role in community wellbeing with strong State Gov collaboration and funding to maximise the health promotion benefits and improve the social determinants of health in a highly localised and responsive way."
- "Working in partnership with stakeholders is essential for the social and economic wellbeing of the community.
- Remove planning function as it becomes a political decision rather than regulatory. Merge to reduce political interference.
- What we do and how we do it is pivotal to an ever changing customer demographic
- Remove planning function as it becomes a political decision rather than regulatory. Merge to reduce political interference.
- What we do and how we do it is pivotal to an ever changing customer demographic
- Have a better partnership with State Government as it is too common for varying State Departments to hand ball matters onto local government who may not necessarily have the subject matter experts that already exist within the respective State Departments."
- "Local Government is continuing to be loaded with responsibilities from other tiers of government whilst the funding remains static. We are a collector of government charges

that we have no involvement in the provision of that service, not perhaps capacity either so not asking for that function to transfer to Local Government.

- Smarter delivery of functions and services will lead to better outcomes for the community.
- I think that local government is the place to provide the communities needs and have knowledge on planning to provide better urban developments. The local planner must have the ability to reach out to academic urban designers and worlds best practice to then change a developers greedy sub division and inappropriate sub divisions in poorly chosen areas. It is disgusting what is happening in Tasmania statewide at the moment. We should be nurturing Tasmania's uniqueness. Its wildlife is unique to THE WORLD. Cities are boring but the WILDLIFE and WILDERNESS is world class. It must be able to flourish and populate. Stop the extinction rate. Reduce rubbish and increase Council's ability to reduce waste at a household level. Have a moratorium on the planning scheme and ensure wildlife is factored in. There is no Tasmania if it has nothing to offer that is unique. Stop allowing investors to buy everything and force local tasmanians into unaffordable rental slums. So much is wrong at the moment. The health and education system. Tasmania has a world-class college system and the government is destroying it. The need to educate the whole community is extremely important and to provide
- Different functions, State Government could relinquish some local services and pay Council to provide the service ie: Service Tasmania. Where there is a local Council office there is a Service Tasmania branch. By paying Council to provide the service the State will save on fixed building costs, possibly wages as Council will have staff and may only require minimal additional employees, provides a one stop shop for local residents to engage with common services. Overall this could reduce the cost to State Government and provide local Council's additional revenue stream with minimal additional overheads."
- LG sector when it works well beats all others for results, it works best in the areas it does routinely like roads and stormwater, less well in one-offs like major projects, complicated advance planning, it is also affected by the low quality of some elected candidates
- No one knows a local community like those working and living within that community
- people need a local voice - especially in more rural or remote areas - they will be not heard if mergers with large more populated council areas take place
- "The communities in Tasmania are all very different as they have been borne through cultural, historical and generational circumstance. The fabric that intertwines these communities is specific to there narratives and reflects their regions.
- "Place based services (Councils) are important particularly in regional and remote communities but a formal sharing structure and some centralised services would be beneficial. Information and knowledge sharing has begun through the formation of special interest groups.
- Councils all offer the same services. They all use the same legislation. Surely there are ways to streamline service provision without reinventing the wheel between each different Council.
- "I don't think structural reform in terms of mergers is necessary. History shows that the superficial savings eg one exec team are quickly gobbled up by lifting the service provision of the merged councils (one council will always have higher standards than the other eg waste collection, standard of parks and reserves) and so the lower standard council has its services lifted to meet the other. Savings gone.
- "A city council and remote council are different, there function should be different.

- Also it is not fair that community services are funded based on land value it entrenches disadvantage rich areas have councils will more funds and get better services. "
- "Amalgamating is a simplistic response that will see small communities and hamlets overlooked for the larger towns and cities.
- All the noise around Councils in Tasmania is centered on the (mis)behaviour of elected members and their interactions with Council staff just trying to get their jobs done."
- Allows processes to be shared across councils, resources can be pooled and transferred in emergencies
- Councils role is local service delivery, mergers will not bring this. Focus has to be on effective service delivery to communities
- Tasmania is such a diverse state, different areas need different focuses."
- There are efficiencies that can be had, that do not have to come at the cost of local connection and expertise. It is not all or nothing. Local government could trial a hybrid model of efficiency and local knowledge and resources.

Staff and Skills

- Adequate skills and training are key to ensuring Councils operate effectively as a sustainable business whilst managing the complications of cashflow, politics and legal requirements.
- I don't have the answer but some means to require councillors to have skill sets. Maybe its as simple as increasing the councillor remuneration to make more attractive to more people.
- Better professional development and informal resource sharing will provide the greater consistency across communities (knowledge and decisions) without removing the local element.
- Council conflicted - staff cant get pay rises as rates need to be kept low and community dont accept decent wages."
- Staff are under immense pressure from the public and subjected to regular abuse and are not able to respond which gives the complainant the impression that they are right when, in fact, they are not. Better communication strategies are required to nip such commentary in the bud from the get go rather than be reactive."
- Economies of scale, all do the same thing. Have a centralised team of specialists supporting regional councils.
- Some small Councils do not have the staff or resources to make them viable
- Some positions are challenging to fill yet typically represent fundamental roles (environmental health; health and safety; planners; engineers etc). As an industry the LG sector needs to address this as a priority
- some councils struggle to fund adequate staffing and systems
- Local Government needs to promote career path opportunities to Schools as often as possible to attract youth entry. Local Government provides amazing career options that are unknown."
- the skill development and training pathways for Permit Authority staff, do not exist. Planning is ok and EHO has improved now that it is offered at UTas again.
- Addressing the above would provide a network of skilled resources that are more able to focus upon value-add and less time upon administration. While resources may float, there would likely be greater coverage and common IT systems would reduce the time taken for

employees to integrate into a new role. Information could be better shared and value extracted including benchmarking of performance. Communities, contractors etc would benefit from better availability of information and services through common platforms and gateways making for simpler, more efficient interactions.

- Having less permanent qualified and essential workers creates a less inviting atmosphere in the work place internally & Externally. Also results in work load of existing staff is increased to unmanageable levels.
- Smaller councils have limited to no 'depth' in terms of staffing redundancy and are susceptible more than ever to skill shortages
- Better skills development & training pathways would result in greater Customer Service
- Better trained employees can better advocate for their needs and the needs of communities.
- Improvements in councillor/officer relations is key for the success of LG in Tasmania in future: too much 'politics', small town 'favours' where everyone knows everyones business = lack of transparency between deals behind closed doors and staff cop it from community and media."
- "The staff at smaller councils have to be incredible generalists to cover the wide range of services we deliver. This tends to be inefficient as you can never be good (and efficient) at everything. It is also increasingly hard to find the right people and all Councils compete for the same few great leaders who could lead a bigger group more efficiently.
- Finding, keeping and covering specialist skills is difficult for small teams, would be easier and better improvement if a rotation of staff between council's was formalised
- Many advertised training options are outside current department training budgets. Skills development/training is only supported by some managers. Positions/Position descriptions vary between councils especially in the Community sector.
- Clear roles within local government/council will give individuals a much higher chance of success for their communities"
- Some current services don't require local knowledge ie waste management, road asset management or should be regionalised."
- It enables us to leverage skills and to benefit from synergies across council
- We need to be competitive with private businesses to attract talent but need the revenue to be able to achieve this

Funding

- Improve economic viability of smaller Councils through mergers, along with greater sharing of select services
- Training in pivotal areas such as Local Government finance, planning and building, environmental health, should be supported.
- Financial sustainability is a critical issue and there are limited methods in which local government is permitted, or resourced, to generate additional revenue outside of rates and parking. In regards to common IT systems, it would stand to reason that Councils all perform the same basic tasks so one IT system could be utilised, and cost-shared, by all Councils. This would also aide in information sharing, sharable skills and moving between Councils.

- It would save a tremendous amount of money to have common systems and processes in place for all councils. Support needs to be provided for Council Officers to ensure skills are maintained and supported.
- without solid revenue streams, councils cant afford to do the rest
- "Local Government tender agreements with suppliers to negotiate cheaper prices on goods.
- IT is a perfect example to obtain cheaper running costs. Those supplies that are needed to be purchased through interstate suppliers. I think local options are very important so perhaps northern, southern may need to be separated to ensure local suppliers are not missing out. "
- It is silly for Councils to be solely reliant on property rating and parking fees, more revenue streams = greater value for ratepayers
- Small regional councils miss out on a lot of funding, if you merge they would miss out even more.
- It is quite obvious that the Tasmanian government is cutting it's own service delivery by pushing much service provision onto local government without adequately providing financial resources (quantum and time).
- Compared to other councils we do not have the budget for expensive IT software upgrades compared to large urban councils leaving us stuck with slow and impractical programs
- The cost of materials has far exceeded the CPI so Councils are trying to achieve the same amount of maintenance with the same budget which is not feasible. Dedicated resource sharing would take the pressure off certain councils doing this and help those rural councils that are unable to attract the same workforce.
- Money is limited so efficiencies need to be found to meet the ever growing expectations of the community
- Council mergers are a lazy political solution and does not necessarily deliver the best for communities. The often pairing of urban and rural areas sees those rural areas left behind in preference for where the major vote base is. A proper structure for Local Government can ensure viability into the future. The PESRAC recommendation nails it.
- "So many double-ups in regional areas that could be streamlined via resource sharing, e.g. IT
- Local Government in rural areas could provide state government services to rural communities if they were provide additional funding
- Funding is wasted in the sector in our inability to effectively manage elected members who request that time be spent drafting reports or undertaking feasibility studies for impractical projects and repeatedly interfere in operational matters. It is very difficult for the General Manager, who is responsible for managing Councillor behaviour, to manage those by whom he is employed.

Councillors

- In regard to legislative improvements including around councillor and officer relations, I believe that I have provided substantial information in my response to question 7. In addition, my observations over the last 11 years in two Councils in Tasmania would show that the elected members who take the role seriously are in the minority. There are few who take the time to attend non-compulsory training, understand and abide by Council policy, or even understand the concept of 'declaring an interest'. I have been told by past and present Councillors that they are my employer, and in the past have been threatened by

a Councillor because I refused to do something that was illegal. I have more recently been asked by a Councillor to meet them out of hours to discuss work matters, which I refused. "

- "Many Elected Representatives see a seat on Council as a stepping stone to a political career and don't focus on the immediate needs of the community.
- "Councillors need more training to undertake the duties, most do not understand Acts and Legislations and often don't read the agenda.
- Our council has been negatively impacted by Councillor decisions, choices and the way they communicate with the community. Having changes in place to stop this and build a stronger working relationship with the staff, councillors and community is needed.
- Allowing all elected members to be standing at the same time every four years, creates significant disruption as you no longer have continuity of work and knowledge around the table. Plus the community have ability to vote a first time elected member to be Mayor - without any experience, knowledge or understanding for the role, or the responsibilities required for the position. They also have no understanding for the relationship between elected members and staff. Formal resource sharing in the way of centralised planning application and enquiry process, but assessments responsibility should remain in local area as they have closer understanding of the local needs/impacts
- Smaller councils suffer budgetary restrictions to eg staffing which inhibits delivery of community expectations. As those expectations shift due to change in demographics, it is difficult to respond appropriately without impinging other areas of service delivery. Councillors need to comprehend these day to day difficulties as part of their brief.
-) The existing code of conduct for Councillors is a toothless tiger; there needs to be tighter controls/rigour around this so Councillors have a deterrent from mis-conduct of any kind and the boundaries between Officer and Councillor engagement needs to be set and respected. Councillors should never have direct influence on Council's business procurement activities, that's a recipe for disaster. E.G: elected members should never engage in the direct procurement of consultants or contractors for Council's projects."
- Lack of experienced candidates with technical local government experience to fill critical positions within LG, formal resource sharing would be one way of addressing this.
- Stricter, enforceable rules for Council misconduct. Checks and balances that are not discouraged/unfeasible for officers to action.
- "There's ample evidence of periodic disfunction at councilor/ staff interaction levels which adversely impacts officer service delivery to community.
- There is currently little trust in Councils (just check the recent articles in the news). If Councils were more inclusive and transparent with the community there would be a better sense of cooperation and connection within the community as a whole.

Q12 How do you think we should address changing demographics and the impact of digital transformation in the way we deliver services and engage with our communities?

- By Council's having access to common modern ICT systems and processes, they may be willing to embrace new ways of looking at community engagement and analysing available data to determine patterns of behaviour. This then should allow for good decision making based on known facts and information.

- By having a centralised entry point to all services much like the State Government has with serviceTas.
- We shouldn't be scared of moving more things online but need to still provide opportunities to connect in person.
- Optimise all available technology and ensure legislation keeps pace to all the use of such technology.
- By listening to local needs and requirements will help Council address changing demographics eg. investment in recreational needs. Digital transformation is more difficult in remote regional areas - expectations of having mobile network everywhere is currently not possible but it is in urban regions. Therefore, how can the same service level be provided in each region?
- This is complicated and time consuming as there are so many vehicles communication and folks are only interested in being communicated with when it is in their interest.
- Resource and embrace the change where it will not adversely impact core functions
- Remove any legislative barriers to adopting more digital service delivery. Common systems in LG would make digital delivery more scaleable. Also need to still provide for those across the digital divide.
- Need to transfer to a more online environment. Forms should be web based and not have to be printed and handfilled. Advertising in newspaper print is becoming a thing of the past.
- Rural communities often don't have the digital knowhow or access to digital infrastructure so this must be considered.
- Just do it, make it a priority. No worker from the private sector wants to work with outdated (10 year old) software. I personally (Gen Y) would choose an area to live in based on how modern the Council's customer service system is.
- Community engagement has always been limited. If people want to be involved, they will be. The information age is just that. People now have more opportunity to access data than ever before. The digital transformation should not be seen as a revolution but, rather, embraced as a tool to better communicate. I understand that most Councils have embraced the digital age and just need to refine online services.
- Not all customers have access to technology, not all have the ability nor the want to use technology. It is important that these customers are not left out and there are sufficient provisions in place to support them
- With ageing populations a range of engagement opportunities are needed to ensure widespread consultation
- Consistent approach to implementation of digital services across the state.
- This is obviously an ongoing process and may need some financial assistance from the state government.
- The community want to interact / do business with council in the same way as the commercial sector- we need to provide that flexibility. But maintaining an ability to directly connect on issues is very important
- Consult with the community as to their preferred methods of engagement and be mindful that not one size fits all
- Automate everything possible. Liberate information. Pioneer the adoption of new technology.
- The area I work for is one of the oldest demographics in Tasmania and it is very clear that digital engagement is very challenging for a lot of our residents.

- By turning off the comments. information provision and feedback is absolutely important, but if it results simply in short term political response at the expense of longer term strategy, then we will all suffer. (Whether at national, state, local or community level.
- Need to ensure that there is IT coverage across the entire state so this could even be a possibility however through COVID a lot of people have learnt to live and work remotely and remain in contact with family and friends during isolation/lock down periods
- "Digital transformation is unfortunately not as simple as identifying a cost-effective software solution and deploying it across the organisation. Technology investment must also include an investment in people and processes. Councils historically has pursued ""new systems"" without a corresponding investment in its people and business processes. As a result, Councils are generally heavily invested in software, but the capability of the software is underutilised. Due to the complexity of Council activities, most Councils have multiple systems. For regional Councils in particular, the lack of standardised processes and governance means that the organisations are too consumed by business as usual to focus on improving the business and servicing its customers (internal and external).
- The scope of the required remediation activity extends beyond the replacement and upgrading of software systems. A systems-led approach is critical to not repeat the mistakes of the past. IT Teams that are small and have limited capacity and not the right mix of skills to deliver digital innovation in line with the needs and community expectations."
- "More council services need to be online and self service.
- Work with NBNCo to fast track improved services into regional areas.
- Support businesses getting out of the CBD by having more commercial/industrial zoned land closer to where people live."
- The older generation will embrace digital technology if they are not given the choice of hanging onto outdated modes of engagement.
- Councils are and will continue to adopt digital reform. This is not an issue.
- Councils have the opportunity to be much more innovative and responsive in our engagement mechanisms, using tech and community partners to engage diverse community members directly in city design, services and programs. Growing polarisation and urbanisation demand a more strategic and regional approach to ensuring equity of access to services for all across Tasmania whilst allowing for positive growth.
- Although the demographics of the community are changing we need to ensure that people have a choice in how they receive services and how we engage with them. We can't move everything on-line and leave people behind. We also need to make greater efforts to hear from all sectors of the community. We seem to hear from a core of people and the squeaky wheels, more effort needs to be made to engage with young people, people from diverse backgrounds and people who have recently arrived in the area.
- Get on with it. Local government is operating in the dark ages. We can't leave the older and/or less tech savvy behind, but there are enormous opportunities for efficiency gains if we transformed digitally.
- much research has been done around this
- Definitely 24h online customer service and opportunities to pay online.
- Better mobile coverage in rural areas
- Investment in common operating systems to take advantage of digital transformation benefits, along with up-skilling staff (and paying them better!) to allow Council's to keep pace with changing demands from communities.

- There needs to be greater availability to do things or find information online and digitally. Many of the enquiries we receive could be solved by providing simple fact sheets.
- It is great to go digital to adapt with the world, however we still need to have the capability to not be fully digital as the older people still like the old way.
- Grow to be more appealing to the newer generations - a 23 year old does not want the same engagement as a 73 year old. Creating affordable living and opportunities to work will keep a community from being majority pensioners and allowing for a more diverse working environment
- we are now in a digital world, we need to have all correspondence digital so it is quicker to access, and more compliant to the modern world.
- While digital transformation may be a major consideration in cities and larger places, there are still many examples of areas in Tasmania where this is not happening, either due to the inability to access digital resources (because of poor connectivity) or because of the costs involved to low socioeconomic communities. While it is essential to provide digital access for those that have it, there is still a need to ensure that the 'human touch' is not lost in communities where digital access is limited. In regard to the question about demographics, I'm unable to provide a comprehensive response because the question is not clearly worded. We live in a State that has an older and aging demographic, perhaps the principles that are applied at a State level can be transposed to a more local level.
- As a public entity it is our responsibility to deliver services in the most cost effective way, but we also need to balance that with value.
- Greater investment and empowerment of communications officers and networks, to provide multiple channels of two-way communications between local governments and their constituents. People have higher expectations of advocacy and freedom of information, Councils that only deliver a few online services, or merely provide information rather than seek feedback, put themselves at a distance from the people they serve and perpetuate stereotypes of being out-of-touch.
- People are becoming used to doing business from their devices. Placing information online gives ready access to information which otherwise would require a trip to the office. Council can process claims, applications etc more efficiently which provides ratepayer satisfaction
- Need to cater for those in the community that are not able to utilise digital delivery of services and Local Council Offices can and do assist with this
- Customers without the ability to use digital services would suffer - No reception, physical disability, person beliefs in using technology
- Keep local councils in small towns so people can access information if they don't have digital access
- Better collaboration and shared services
- Most legislative requirements are pre digital transformation - without legislative change there will be little impact
- need to consider literacy and demographics, people in our community that do not have mobiles, computers or elderly that don't trust online services, education may help, consulting in community with user groups etc.
- We still need to support people in our communities that don't engage digitally, but moving forward we need to look at digital communication for more cost effective delivery of services
- The community will expect better and more effective digital engagement in the future, and this will require larger councils or regional IT infrastructure to achieve

- Try and educate those that are capable and willing to embrace the technological changes. Offer roving (eg drop in sessions) as a face to face alternative for others.
- Digitised systems have a role to play; so too do face to face interactions and transactions. One does not replace the other. We need to harness from digitised applications and make them work for us, not the other way round.
- CPD around community engagement. Audit tool for community engagement to assist councils to benchmark their use of different methodologies with a view to challenging different and innovative solutions.
- By resource sharing and thereby freeing up available funding for demographically appropriate responses.
- The majority of Councils are well behind where they should be in relation to use of technology. Digital transformation needs to be led from a centralised or regionalised model as each Council will not get there alone
- Be more open to accepting and embracing the changes that are happening around us
- Council's need to embrace the technology that is available however they often struggle to have adequate resources and capacity to deliver innovation or change/respond quickly. Community demand change, however due to these complexities we are too slow to respond and meet their expectations.
- Focus on the basics - Get reliable networks in place which will enable councils to develop the right technology to support all demographics
- Look for multiple options for engaging the community, including new digital technologies, word of mouth and community engagement sessions.
- Provide targeted, expert support for adoption and roll-out of common tools and processes allowing councils to focus upon deriving benefit rather than managing selection, evaluation and implementation of disparate systems that limit effectiveness and add unnecessary complexity for stakeholders within a geographically small state.
- Must continue to have local service centers as well as digital platforms for citizen engagement
- Digital is the future for integrations that's for sure but you must keep the older generation into consideration as they can't work with tech
- More online forms (for those who want to use them), social media as a way to communicate changes to the local area and upcoming events.
- "centralise financial functions where possible
- hire people who are good communicators, have a strong work ethic and care about the community they work in. you want do-ers, not just people who show up to get paid."
- Plan carefully, take a long term view use data and invest in technology.
- Some Councils are no longer viable due to rural depopulation, and they have to compete for skilled labour (eg tech specialists) that are increasingly necessary as ratepayers want more specialised and modern hi-tech services for the same money.
- More work needs to be done to promote online communication with the ratepayers. A lot of organisations are forcing people into the digital world and i think this is lagging.
- Enhance digital literacy by creating digital navigator roles. Invest in supported online access.
- We need to be mindful that literacy issues will exist, especially in remote communities.
- Embrace the changes
- provide the scale to be able to deliver digital services and deal with changing, more mobile, communities

- There needs to be clear, plain language information provided for communities. Easy to read and easy to navigate websites.
- Councils have to move with the times. More involvement with youth who are the future of our Councils. Social media is the way of the world and we have to have the resources to address that.
- Most small Council's don't have the capacity to engage in Digital transformation and service efficiency. Demographic change is not a unique challenge to Tasmanian Councils - community disadvantage is a bigger challenge.
- We need to keep in mind that there are quite a few people (including the younger generation) who do not have access/capability of accessing digital information. We need to make it easier for them to engage with Council.
- We are embracing digital transformation to provide improved customer service. Online services provide flexibility for customers and allows staff mobility and options around location of work.
- Centralised systems sound like a good idea until you have to deal with the delays and inadequate infrastructure. Rural areas suffer due to the topography.
- We should be asking our community how they want to engage with us and developing our technology in this way. Instead of 29 Councils doing this there is economy of scale and efficiency in doing this as a sector.
- Continue with digital media and other digital avenues
- There will always be a disconnect for some members of the community that struggle or do not have access to digital services. All methods of engagement will still be required to ensure community members feel included.
- All possible services should be available online. Give the option to go digital instead of paper based.
- Difficult, smaller communities seem less driven to engage in digital technologies and this is also influenced by financial capacity. Regional areas have poorer internet reception and therefore discount the importance of digital technologies and resources (online payments, bank accounts, emailing accounts). It does put a level of pressure on these communities as we move to a paperless and digitally interactive economy.
- "Digital service delivery and communication is an important way to connect for people in remote communities however it can not replace personal face to face connection.
- Reliance on digital engagement can lead to a lack of connection and sense of belonging.
- Many communities do not have access to data or poor service in outlying areas. If we wish to use digital communication we need to supply free WIFI and potentially digital hubs in more isolated communities "
- That matter should be addressed with evenness, intelligence and based on robust consultation rather than at the whim of party driven politicians or narrow focussed bureaucrats considering their own welfare.
- you need to provide a services for all aged persons, what is needed to meet the changing needs.
- By making all services available via media, face to face contact, contact details readily available by contact numbers out of hours.
- We do need to engage with our communities more. It needs to be done in a variety of ways to make sure we are listening to all of the community not just some - ie community meetings/forums, social media, print media, electronically etc.
- sub committees

- COVID has had an impact on the way customer engage with communities. Less face to face, more internet and posting forms where older population does not have internet/printers/email. Forms could be available at Service Tas and Libraries for the older population that doesn't have internet if council not longer have face to face in smaller regions.
- Community training. Digital hubs that communities can access.
- This remains difficult as there is still a significant percentage of people that are not using digital solutions. Any new technology introductions need to ensure some groups are not left out and are still able to participate. This is a big reason that LG still remains relevant.
- We should provide support to the smaller council areas that have less capability to implement digital change.
- Some people, the older generation do not take to kindly to this type of change, I believe we should have multiple options available.
- unsure
- Have a good mix of both in person services mixed with digital technologies so you can cater to a wide range of people
- In smaller communities, face to face preferable.
- I've no idea
- Ask the community what they want and how they see things moving forward - and include them in the solution so that a) not all the onus is on Councils to fix everything b) help the community feel empowered and capable
- "I am a supporter of digital access and 24/7 online self service. I recognise that internet access in some areas is still not optimum and I know that even digital natives can get technology fatigue with the constant change of platforms and access to online services.
- Elderly people can successfully access digital services, issues often arise when the access processes constantly change."
- The demographics in Tasmania is an older population. A digital transformation should not be complicated so that it can be well received.
- Make sure the community is digitally literate and/or have alternative engagement policies
- I think local government needs to maintain the option of person to person access, while also moving forward to capture real time data etc create improved services that are cost effective and create better efficiencies.
- Individual Councils are still using their own systems for basic services eg bill payments (rates), monthly fees (car park rental). These should be administered by a state wide system. Changing communities due to demographic changes needs to be understood and responded to regionally
- Online digital platforms. A service which does not require people to sign up for something else ie: facebook first. Online portal to log in, see all accounts, previous bills etc. Think to your online portal for a telephone account, but include building/planning, a communications/messages. Call it "Internet Banking for Local Government". That level of digital interaction.
- ensure no one is left behind or there is an alternative available for those that need it
- we no longer require everyone to be goign to the same l;ocation at the same time. covid has been a major disruption and the positives should be encouraged such as working from home or blending technology where employees have flexibility. This reduces the need for road widening. And it creates small hubs in the regional areas to work from and congregate. The city is dying and maybe the univeristy is a good replacement. Young people are needed to

make any place lively and welcoming. But so does ART and bohemians. Character and uniqueness is what is required for Tasmanian towns. Not same same

- Engagement with the West Coast community is always difficult. A wide range of mediums is required. Social media, radio, flyers to households.
- We should be optimistic and open to the possibilities, but careful not to leave anyone behind. Digital transformation needs to be approached with inclusivity as a focus, so that it's never the only way service delivery is done.
- We should continue to transform to incorporate more on-line and digital services rather than face-to-face services. Most residents are becoming more familiar with digital services.
- It is hard as many models need to be available at the moment, this should reduce in time. Having good support that is available using various methods is ideal - hands on workshops, one-on-one sessions, information sheets.
- Upskilling of community is essential if wishing to move people solely to digital. The demographics of some communities are older and will not change no matter how much support is there to assist in their transition. This needs to be accepted. People are just sick and tired of being barriered, which is why they are lashing out. They want the satisfaction of talking to the powers that be, to discuss their issue, find a solution and have it happen in a timely way. Digital it not always the best platform to achieve this. Accessibility is.
- Place based community education is required.
- Much more online self-serve services to streamline requests and engagement. Even older citizens now have access to technology and are probably much more challenged by having to physically access Council and fill in a badly designed paper form than getting assistance to engage online at home.
- "Demographics are only marginally changing, its not like every one has suddenly aged and is in need of a wheel chair. Therefore, this is not so much of an issue. This should not be a driving factor for any government reform. Council currently addressing this though levels of service in assets, community and, planning.
- Technological advances are currently being integrated at all levels of local government in Tasmania from new management systems to mobile capabilities with outdoor work force. Current trends show this is a continuing element."
- centralised data base
- I think that embracing digital innovation is key to future work. However, we're at a bit of a tipping point where there remain those who are either from the old school, are not tech-savvy or refuse to change/learn new things. While it is everyone's right to not want to embrace that change, a Council's job is to get the right information out to people however necessary. Providing options at this stage is crucial. Allow people to opt into paperless and more digitised services. Work more with QR codes but continue to pride a phone or walk-in option to services. Over the next five-ten years, some of these paper-based options will be able to be phased out as some are being phased out now. We need to provide a balance so that the majority of people feel they are being heard in a way that is relatively easy for them.
- Common approach to avoid confusion or difficulty accessing services
- I think the most practical thing to do would look at the the land use codes are for each municipal area and match like with like. Have rural councils and urban councils. Councils with common interests.
- Use of technology means we need less councils

- Multi channel communications with assurance that local face to face or phone opportunities remain
- By collecting and analysing more data will allow us to create bespoke solutions for our distinct communities. Current approach is top-down, not from the grassroots marrying up with top-down.
- I think we need to keep highly aware of maintaining a positive and proactive customer focused relationship and if digital services can be delivered in a humanistic style that is always intuitive and easier to use it will be embraced.
- Embrace it! Investigate integrated, user friendly IT options that can be recommended to all Councils. Apps for community, easy payment options, form submission etc
- "Councils need to be able to adapt to the needs of the community - this includes generating income or having funding available to support the transformations that need to occur.
- The community strongly expect higher levels of engagement - this comes at a cost where council officers need to go to the people. "
- "I don't know, but if the perceived idea that Tasmania's population is generally getting older as retirees come from the mainland and younger people go to the mainland is true, then the use of digital transformation type solutions will be made more difficult.
- Older people also tend to have more time to comment/complain about Council services, and therefore I expect the resources needed to deal with these discussions will go up."
- We need to be very mindful that our websites and social media platforms are not accessible to everyone. There is developing a big issue of only sharing information and options to engage through that methodology because it is easier and no cost. There is still a requirement to produce paper based options and easy read documents so that all of our community can be included and have a voice.
- There is a role for local government to facilitate support for areas of disadvantage together with government and NFPs.
- Make sure the physical infrastructure is in place to support both. The social aspect - eg. engaging with elderly communities to teach them about social media - is a human-based exercise and quite easily accessible already. Having adequate network coverage to make these things accessible in the first place is not.
- By using all avenues of media available; both digital and 'old school'.
- It is important to remember that despite growing numbers of digitally literate communities, there is still a proportion of aged, disconnected and vulnerable people who must not be left behind in our communications and service delivery
- Be representative and agile through proper funding and grass-roots research to ensure the right services get to the right people
- This is difficult - we need both to move with technology advances, but be willing to use traditional methods for community members who do not have technology available
- More online services, more online meetings
- Slowly
- Standardising systems & processes using portals for all LGA's for the provision of local government services
- More on line customer services - paying and booking services
- Consider efficiencies and modernisation and trends, but retain understanding of the local demographic, and have traditional options available, if needed. Modernise and move with the times, but not at the cost of the marginalised, such as those living with disability, with low socio-economic connection, ageing etc

- Move with the trends towards digital service delivery.
- clear and concise communication
- make things easier for people to use on-line services. If they travel into the Council, is there a self service kiosk for people to use, Customer service would be better used assisting people that way than lining up to pay your rates which you could do at other agencies.
- How can we engage with our COmmunity when we have a Community Service Manager that hates community really????????????? Find the right people for the positions not job or the boys
- No one solution fits all. However, wasting resources printing materials for the 25% of Tasmanians without access to the internet is a furphy - how many of those people are actually reading and engaged with such materials? Consider, how do other organisations get their messages across to these people?
- Embrace digital transformation. Use concierges and kiosks to help people engage digitally in customer service areas

Q13: Final Comments on Reform

Issues reform should address

- Reform doesn't need to happen overnight but something needs to change. It can be done in a way that still provides local outcomes with a consistent approach.
- Local govt and councils needs an image makeover. There must be something we can do.
- The possibility of a two tier model of government should also be considered. For example - New Zealand. If substantial benefits could be realised, this would provide a strong reason for local council amalgamations to take place as a first step. First, amalgamate local councils to larger councils operating at regional levels. Second, support increased capacity and responsibility of regional councils. Third, downsize responsibilities of state government.
- "The Local Government Act and guidance provided to councils by the State government are lacking when compared to other States. State government in other States provide integrated planning and reporting frameworks (Victoria, WA and NSW) which provide consistency of approach across councils and reporting. Currently we only have part 7 of the LGA as a guide to our integrated planning which is applied differently by each council.
- Also, the behaviour of elected members reflects poorly on the sector. The benefits received by elected members need to be reviewed and conflicts of interest."
- I think a real crunch is coming due to unavailability of good recruits and a failure of LG to keep pace with pay and conditions of the private sector in engineering, trades and other areas.
- I have worked in shared services projects and really enjoyed mixing with workers at other councils, is difficult to get priorities to align at the same time for resourcing though.
- The role of Local and State Government with regard to funding needs to be better defined for the provision of common services. State and Federal politicians need to be more aware of the impacts of their promises on Local Government and should be proactive in working with and for Local Government Councils in order to serve their local communities - this is a broader awareness issue for other levels of government which could assist Local Government to perform their role better.

- Retainment of people in local government is difficult. Greater funding is needed to keep people in the sector and to prevent burn out of those that remain.
- Councils very quickly become a popularity competition which to a degree is necessary but creates toxic environments similar to high school dramas. Not every one gets along but listening to work place gossip and exclusionary behaviour gets old quickly. If a reform happens these sort of behaviours should be addressed. It does not encourage an inclusive environment and will cause members of diverse groups to leave and inform others of the negative work place and community \
- "Make depreciation applicable to only the portion of assets paid for by Council.
- Unfortunately, structural change is often simply ruled out rather than considered in detail. The negatives of structural change are generally over inflated and in most cases can be mitigated to reduce the impact.
- Please look at the cost to implement a compulsory voting system at the local government level in Tasmania; the cost for not doing so, results in reduced accountability of those putting their hands up to represent their constituents. Reduced accountability can lead to misrepresentation and most certainly, under-representation across the municipal rate base.
- Planning is a hiding to nothing. Give it to the experts. Doesn't matter how much you train councilors they veer away from the narrow decision making parameters they have and the community pays. Also, council cops enough flack now and doesn't need this sideshow.
- Geographical boundary adjustments may better align administrative centers with 'like' type communities eg exclude rural areas of city boundaries
- I feel that general managers should have limits/contracts in place for maximum terms of tenure so that a council can not get dragged down if the 1 person in charge cannot accept other ideas i.e keeps living in the past or if they overrule a staff members who has a specific skillset/ experience or have degrees in that area.
- We are overdue for an overhaul and its obvious some councils need to go. Ive worked in all levels of government. The urban LG sector at least is producing the runs though inefficiently. I think our least efficient arm of government is the State, get rid of that. I reject the notion that State control fixes the other issues in the LG sector, I thing thats just dumbing down those services to the lowest common denominator, the faceless disconnected State office thats remote from where you live.
- It is time for change! Our Councillors do not have the expertise, qualifications or experience to be making some of the large scale decisions they are required too.
- legislate local government as a legitimate tier of government
- There needs to be a better process to address corruption - ie when someone at the top gets a job through unfair means (because his partner was the recruitment agency and the mayor and some councillors engaged in shifty dealings to get this through) - the community is upset, staff is upset, and yet this can continue without any repercussion, apart from a tiny slap on the wrist and some 'training'. This does not help the people who are actually committed to work hard for and with the community.
- Consideration of reform for state government processes. Streamlining thinks like use of Crown Land, in particular where LG already has a lease. The timeliness of responses area slow.
- Structural reform would ideally enshrine support for LGs to improve efficiency without losing community representation and the 'grassroots' engagement councils have with their

community. Council's need to be evidence-based in their program planning and there is a greater need for support for this.

- There are too many Councils now - but we need to be careful not to have too few so we can appropriately meet community needs. There is a happy medium.
- I love local government but I think we need to modernise, work within our legislated roles, and focus on what we can do well and what rather than get involved in issues that are within the remit of other organisations or levels of government
- Many people only touch Councils through paying bills - rates, dog registration, parking, waste collection, etc. If these functions were moved to a statewide system Council could instead invest in specifically local improvement eg beautification and better street furniture/ amenities to make communities more inviting and safer
- Councils that struggle financially should look at amalgamating with larger urban councils. This will help councils to afford better services and a higher standard of professional staff etc
- Thanks for the opportunity to comment, my main point is that reform of local government should focus on achieving better outcomes and not change for the sake of it. I've worked in local government for over 30 years and have been involved in amalgamations discussion a number of times. Councils historically haven't embraced amalgamations for a range of reasons. Reform must focus on achieving better outcomes.
- I enjoy working for Council but there is a lot of inefficiencies that can't be resolved quickly due to the burden of work. If we can pause to really identify the best way to complete a task with the customer/rate payer/member of the public, that would be amazing! We can learn a lot from the private sector in how to be customer or client focused.
- LGAs are often a mixture of demographics, culture and urban/rural areas. Is there any thought to abolishing local government? Would still need localised services and good SLA definitions. Would also need an independent anti-corruption unit if a single tier of government.
- Council mergers are a messy affair, State Government need to perhaps look at resource sharing alternatives and merging smaller rural councils with other rural councils. Merging city councils with rural councils will not be conducive to further progress. As rural areas will not get the required representations through elected members. Asset expenditure, particularly on Roads, is significantly higher in rural areas. City councils will see a considerable shift in urban to rural spending in the assets and operational works space.
- Legislative improvements in areas which have been highlighted already as troublesome or open to interpretation, will provide a stronger working framework for elected members and LG Officers. The rules of engagement being very clear!"

No need for structural change

- Bigger is not always better. As long as a Council is financially sustainable, provides adequate service levels across all asset classes and does not over committ ratepayers to long-term debt, keeps rate increases within inflation & external cost pressures, then they are being responsible for their community.
- No need to reduce councils - respect the knowledge of workers and pay them more to do their jobs
- I think the current number of councils is not an issue, there just needs to be implementation of standard ways in which they all operate and sharing of resources.

- Customers enjoy coming into the local council office, for some on them, this can be a large part of their social contact
- There are other dimensions of Local Government that have not even been touched upon in my diatribe, such as the support offered to the community, particularly in small regional areas, by LG. In these areas, where services are decentralised, LG takes on a very different and hands on role, where as in larger and metropolitan areas, there is a degree of separation from the community as there are other service providers who step into this role. We, in the more remote areas do not have that level of service provision, and while that is to be expected, there is very little acknowledgement that in addition to the roads, rates and rubbish of the traditional council, rural and regional councils take on that additional role. If changes in LG do not take this into account we have the potential to end up with a more fragmented community and an even bigger gap between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' or the city and the country mice.
- I just dont think that we should lose the 'Local' side of Government. Local Government does let people be heard that normally do not have a voice.
- I can't see mergers benefitting anyone other than the already large urban council communities.
- An Inclusive and empowered communities are an LGAs biggest asset.
- I have a fear that the smaller councils will not be fully considered if there are mergers with larger councils, regardless of proximity.
- "Merging some Councils or Council services makes sense but I firmly believe remote, isolated communities will suffer without place based services in particular local government. Many other services and service providers come and go depending on funding, local government is uniquely placed to understand the communities needs.
- Local elected members are important in advocating for improvements to roads, rubbish, environment and services"
- Local Government does not save money by becoming bigger they end up with larger number of employees and a whole heap of team leaders and managers that get paid a larger wage than the people that actually do the work. Less services are delivered because organisation becomes top heavy

Risks of reform

- Don't let this be an excuse for cost shifting of services and responsibility from the State to Councils
- There are many examples around Australia where there have been forced amalgamations, organisations that are Not based in that municipal area have come in as contractors to undertake services and the revenue generated by that organisation is not spent in that local area, leaves that local area which means that that local economy (and the residents/population) is worse off than it originally was."
- I've worked in LG for over 30 years on the mainland and in Tas, and have experienced amalgamations that worked and didn't work. I have also held resource shared positions and managed staff in resource shared roles. I generally found these to be less than desirable, as neither organisation generally was generally fully committed to make them work. They were simply half pregnant, meaning the roles where more akin to having two part time jobs with different employers, than having one job across two employers. There is no magic solutions,

but having clear direction and competent management is paramount to efficient and effective delivery of services, whatever they are.

- Good luck to any political entity that tries to rush through amalgamations without intelligent consultation. They should not be undertaken without good reason and without consideration to the requirement of smaller communities as well as larger ones. The political backlash from any communities that are wiped from the local decision making process by poor strategic decisions made for self gratification will cost a lot of seats.
- I do believe the perception that creating new LGA's or mergers to save financially is a fanciful dream. Roads regardless require a cost to upkeep, so do parks and reserves. Centralising functions can make areas such as Community Development not work as geographically it can be impossible to be directly interacting with intended participants. Concern with reform is "Who pays?". The costs to either migrate systems or start from scratch have upfront costs with potentially no benefit (or even work the other way). Additionally there may be some savings from reduced number of General Managers and Councillors, but that would only represent fractions of cents in the dollar savings. I do believe reform should look at how to do better rather than just change because!
- Removing professionals with local knowledge into a centralized area will have a negative impact on decision making, particularly on Planning and Regulatory matters.

Process Issues

- Firstly about this process, which has been ill defined and caused concern in local communities and within Councils. While accepting that the State has a mandate to review local government, the question remains whether 'reform' is a colloquialism for 'amalgamation' and that this is just dressing up the process. I note that the Local Government Review Board is well represented by business and other organisations, yet there is no room on the board for officer input, that is input from those people who actually deliver services and know what happens at the coal face of local government. Looking at LG from the outside is very different from experiencing the services and ad-hoc support provided on a day to day basis. In addition, the 'consultation' available to officers is of such a limited nature as to be a 'tick box' only. I note that the nearest face to face session that I can attend is over 80km away - and while I will be attending it, that will impact on my work schedule.
- There has been little information available to the public on this process, leaving Councils in a position of seeming to be uninformed.
- The vexatious question of vested interests has not been addressed - both those of Councillors and staff who are employed in the industry.
- When and how will the community have an opportunity for real input, not just the loudest voices being heard. And in addition, the process which was started many months ago, now seems to be being rushed to a foregone conclusion.
- Measurement of outcomes is important but can be difficult where subjective. Are there measurements clearly showing what is broken and what KPIs need to be improved. How will success be defined for this review?
- There needs to be more balance in the current debate around LG reforms - we too quickly move to all the reasons why reform can't happen. There needs to be example models, systems of community representation, and more examples of the long-term benefits of structural reform.

- Reform is a negative defensive word. In local government we are always embracing changes . Could we rename the project to Local Government Transformation for our Communities. Future.

Concern for LG workers

- Please consider impact on general staff when making major decisions around LG reform, not just in the interests of the elected members!
- if you want progress then a salary review is needed, as people are leaving as wages are very low compared to state government etc, and the work load is growing to the stage workers are getting burnt out.
- Resource sharing is incredibly difficult on staff and made more difficult through lack of shared technologies between Councils, different corporate structures and competing demands for time. There are some corporate functions that could be centralised that would work more effectively and provide a more supportive workplace and career options for professionals within the local government sector (planning comes to mind, accounting and financial services, some customer service functions for example).
- I love working in local government because of the impact I believe I can have on the running of my community, and I wish the community had greater respect for the sector.