

Dear Ratepayer,

RE: Community Survey on Council Amalgamations – What do you think?

In order to find out what our community thinks about voluntary amalgamations and the preferred options a **community survey** is being undertaken throughout October/November, closing on the 17th November. The aim of the survey is to gauge, in broad terms your thoughts on amalgamations.

In February 2016, Council in partnership with the Department of Premier and Cabinet commenced a South East Councils Feasibility Study of potential voluntary amalgamations and shared services. The purpose of the study was to assist Council in determining whether there is merit in amalgamating with other south east Councils and to establish a baseline of information, data and modelling that can be used for consultation with the community.

The study and the assessment of the options have been guided by the following principles determined by the Minister for Local Government:

- Be in the best interests of ratepayers;
- Improve the level of services for communities;
- Preserve and maintain local representation, and
- Ensure that the financial status of the entities is strengthened.

Community Information Sessions were held in April this year to give residents and ratepayers the opportunity to become informed on the options for amalgamations from the South East Councils Feasibility Study. Please encourage other residents of our municipal area to get online and complete the survey.

An overview of the options is also provided in the enclosed Community Information Sheet. The full report and associated appendices of the study can be viewed on Council's website www.gsbc.tas.gov.au. Please go to *Your Council and Local Government Reform*.

Following this community survey, Council will determine at a Council meeting whether to continue with the process and if so, write to the Minister for Local Government to request a Local Government Board Review incorporating a due diligence assessment and additional community consultation. Council will also be required at this meeting to nominate the preferred option(s). **However, please be advised this will not be the decision to amalgamate. This would only happen after a Local Government Board Review.**

Any further decision by Council after the Local Government Board Review, ('the decision to amalgamate') would be subject to further deliberation between Council and the Minister.

I encourage all residents and ratepayers to complete the short online survey which can be accessed via a link on Council's website at www.gsbc.tas.gov.au The survey will only take a couple of minutes to complete.

Those who would like to complete a hard copy survey please call Council's customer service team on 6256 4777 between 8.00am – 5pm, Monday to Friday and they will mail you a copy with a reply paid envelope in which to return your survey.

I encourage you to speak with your Councillors to share your views or ask questions on the amalgamation options and process. Their contact details can be found on our website. Please go to *Your Council* and *Elected Members*.

Council will continue to communicate with the community as the voluntary amalgamation process evolves. Voluntary amalgamation is a decision that will affect all of us. We encourage you to have your say on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Metcalf', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

David Metcalf
General Manager