

8 OFFICERS' REPORT REQUIRING A DECISION

8.1 Local Government Reform

Author: General Manager (Greg Ingham)

Responsible Officer: General Manager (Greg Ingham)

ATTACHMENT/S

Nil

PURPOSE

To provide Council with a recommendation on a way forward in regards to the Local Government Reform taking into account the Premier's announcement on the 14th July 2023.

BACKGROUND/OVERVIEW

Council has been invited to provide a submission to the Minister for Local Government on the boundary and reform proposals provided through the Reform Board and any other models that may be devised and agreed by councils.

Councillors, community and officers have participated, to a degree, in the consultation mechanisms provided by the reform Board. The perception of those attending sessions is that the level of consultation has not been well attended, particularly at community level and that the level of acceptance of the proposed models is not high.

Tasman Council has resolved that it does not support amalgamation and as a result the principles stated by the Premier and Minister for Local Government cannot be met in the two scenarios presented in the Reform information packs for the southeast of the municipality.

"Communities and councils will decide their own future."

Local Government Minister, Nic Street said "different communities have different needs", and the Government's process will ensure they have the final say.

"Today, I want to provide some comfort to Tasmanians by outlining the pathway that we will follow when the Board hands down its final report on October 31," Mr Street said.

"Each council will be invited to review the final report and make a submission to Government, about what they want.

"Any plans agreed by councils will be taken to the community for a vote, to ensure it has community support to go ahead."

There will be no changes unless both the council and community want them, the Minister said.

Source: https://insidelocalgovernment.com.au/tasmanian-premier-declares-there-will-be-no-forced-amalgamations/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Inside-Local-Government-17072023&utm_content=insidelocalgovernment.com.au%2Ftasmanian-premier-declares-there-will-be-no-forced-amalgamations%2F&utm_source=email.jslmedia.com.au

The established principles determined by the Minister for Local Government Tasmania are that outcomes should always:

- Be in the best interest of the community.
- Reserve and maintain local representation.
- Ensure financial sustainability of Local Government organisations.
- Improve the level of service for communities.

Council is supportive of Tasmanian Local Government reform, recognising the need for Local Government to adapt to an ongoing rapidly changing environment. The world is changing, technology is changing. Importantly, Council also recognises the increasing expectations and needs of our community. However, GSBC does have concerns about the most recent reform process to date.

Previous reports investigating options have not identified viable paths forward.

- Break O Day and GSBC potential merger - October 2009
- KPMG South East Councils Feasibility Study - March 2017
- GSBC Community survey - October 2017
- Premier's Economic and Social Recovery Advisory Council (PESRAC) - March 2021

Work has been done on the reform process presently underway and articulated in the reports below:

- Future of Local Government Review (FOLGR) Interim Report - June 2022.
- FOLGR Stage 2 Options Paper – December 2022
- FOLGR Stage 2 Interim Report March 2023
- LGAT Future Scenarios Feedback Report – July 2023
- GSBC Community survey – July 2023

There are questions about the accuracy of some of the information used to propose scenarios where Consolidated Data Collection (CDC) reports has been used. These reports use summary information in some cases which skew the comparisons. Also, the reports provided to date do not identify specifically how the proposals will meet the key principles of reform required.

Officers recognise the challenges in delivering services in rural and remote areas and councillors recognise the need for close connection into the community. Council as an organisation is committed to working with the community and reform process to identify opportunities to meet the four key principles of Local Government reform.

It may be that alternative scenarios yet to be identified could deliver improved outcomes in one or another of the reform principles.

Were the community in support of a northern sector of the municipality attaching to Break-O-Day, the viability of GSB could only be secured with at least a compensating population in the south. In reality, that would mean ongoing discussions with Sorrell and potential amalgamation in the southeast.

To gather information about community willingness to engage in reform and or boundary adjustment Council has a survey circulating within the municipality. At the time of writing twice the number of respondents support amalgamation as those who do not support amalgamation, with an equal number of undecided respondents as those who have voted no.

The survey closes on the 26th July, the live data set gathered indicates as follows:

[Future of Local Government Review – Community Survey Data](#)

STRATEGIC PLAN REFERENCE

Guiding Principles

7. Communicate and explain Council's decisions and reasons in an open and timely manner.

Key Foundations

1. Our Governance and Finance

What we plan to do

- Advocate and lobby effectively on behalf of the community.

STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Further consultation within operational budget parameters and as resources permit. Indications from government are that financial assistance would be provided.

RISK CONSIDERATION/S

Risk	Likelihood	Consequence	Rating	Risk Mitigation Treatment
Adopt the recommendation				N/A
Keeping the channels of communication open for the community				
Do not adopt the recommendation				Council continues to engage with all stakeholders
Restricting opportunity for the community to have a say in their future. Missed opportunities for government collaboration on regional development	Possible	Moderate	Moderate	

OFFICER'S COMMENTS

While a compelling argument for reform has not yet been identified, council remains open to discussion with State Government and other Council's, and investigation of potential options to deliver the best outcome for our communities.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The General Manager provides a further report on the completed community survey at the next Council meeting.

and;

2. Council continues to engage with the State Government and neighbouring Councils to identify reforms that will meet the principles of Local Government reform.

DECISION 157/23

Moved Clr Rob Churchill, seconded Clr Robert Young:

That:

1. The General Manager provides a further report on the completed community survey at the next Council meeting.

and;

2. Considering the complexity that Glamorgan Spring Bay Council has with options that include a possible North/South split, that a stage 2 response to the Local Government Review Board (due August 2, 2023) will be necessarily brief.

and;

3. The response will indicate that GSBC will be willing to continue to engage with the Tasmanian Government and neighbouring Councils to identify reforms that will meet the principles of the Local Government review and be to the benefit of the communities concerned.

and;

4. That the Tasmanian Government be requested to fund and model any potential Local Government reform identified in point 3 above for consideration by Council and community before any final decisions are made.

THE MOTION WAS PUT AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 8/0

For: Mayor Cheryl Arnol, Deputy Mayor Michael Symons, Clr Rob Churchill, Clr Neil Edwards, Clr Greg Luck, Clr Carole McQueeney, Clr Jenny Woods and Clr Robert Young

Against: Nil