



City of **HOBART**

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28 October 2025

Office of Local Government
Department of Premier and Cabinet
PO Box 123
HOBART TAS 7000

Via Email: lg.consultation@dpac.tas.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

REFORM TO COUNCILLOR NUMBERS AND ALLOWANCES

The City of Hobart welcomes the opportunity to respond to the discussion paper in relation to reforms to Councillor numbers and allowances and commends the Tasmanian Government's commitment to implementing the changes through amendments to the Local Government Act 1993 before the October 2026 Local Government elections.

The enclosed submission was endorsed by the Council at its meeting held on 27 October 2025 and provides a response to each of the key consultation issues as identified in the discussion paper. It is noted that whilst the proposed allowance increase is welcomed, the City believes a more substantial adjustment is needed to attract and retain skilled candidates.

Once again, I thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important work.

Yours sincerely,


(Michael Stretton)
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Reform rationale	Comments
High number of councillors: Tasmania has one of the highest numbers of councillors per person in Australia, which can lead to inefficiencies and, in some cases, undemocratic election outcomes where candidates win with very few votes.	Agreed. There is little doubt that Tasmania has a high number of Local Government Elected Representatives, which is clearly illustrated by the comparison in the discussion paper. It can be quite reasonably argued that this reform is more of a band-aid solution, when a broader Council reform process is warranted.
Inconsistencies in representation: Historical reviews of numbers targeted at a small number of councils, have left councils of similar size with different numbers of councillors, creating inequitable variations.	Agreed Previous reforms have created inequities, for instance the Cities of Glenorchy and Hobart adjoin each other with similar populations, however, Glenorchy has operated with 10 Elected Representatives for many years
Low pay for councillors: Current allowances do not reflect the growing complexity of councillors' roles, discouraging diverse and talented candidates and indirectly limiting the time some councillors can devote to their duties.	While it is agreed that the low pay for councillors is problematic, it not agreed that the proposed 14.25% average increase is enough of a change. The Council considered that a more substantial increase is needed to achieve the ambition of encouraging more talented candidates to stand for and serve as Councillors.
Outdated system: The current method for setting allowances, based on registered voters and operating revenue, has notable flaws - failing to account for population size or council responsibilities, and is susceptible to volatile changes from grant revenue.	Agreed The current methodology for determining Elected Member numbers and allowances is not sophisticated enough to identify the demands of the role. The proposed methodology includes a broader spectrum of metrics which seem appropriate for determining the complexities and demands of the roles. This includes, population size, total approved development applications, asset values, urbanisation and kilometres of sealed road, to measure representational spread. While this range of parameters appears to be representative of the differing natures of the municipal areas, one would have thought that operational and or capital budgets would be an equally good measure of the complexity and scale of elected Member roles, which should also be considered.

Key Consultation Issues	Comments
Quorum management Should we consider any strategies/guidance for council decision making where a quorum cannot be maintained?	This reform process should include measures to address quorum management issues, as it will be a concern for all Councils with a reduction in Elected Members. There should be two focus areas: 1) Flexible/remote participation should be enabled for Council and Committee meetings, 2) Use of delegation to Council Officers as appropriate; 3) The Council has worked with experienced Local Government Solicitors to implement an innovative flexible quorum management approach for Council Committees, which involves the development of terms of reference which enable appointed members and Nominee members. It is suggested that this approach should be considered more broadly to provide for more flexible management of meeting quorum.
Superannuation Should it be mandatory for councillors' existing superannuation equivalent payments to be directed into a nominated superannuation fund?	It is noted that since 2004, Tasmanian councillors have received a 9% superannuation equivalent payment as part of their allowances (increased to 12% from June 2025). However, there is no requirement for this amount to be paid into a superannuation fund (even though councillors can make voluntary contributions). As with the Local Government Industry, the opinions of Councillors are mixed on this issue, and it is recommended that the Government undertake further targeted engagement with the sector on this issue through the Local Government Association of Tasmania. As it stands the Council sees that there are two options: 1) Retain the status quo whereby a superannuation equivalent payment is

	maintained as part of their allowances, or 2) Determine that Elected Members have a superannuation entitlement, paid in the same way that company directors, at the SGC rate. Such a change could be legislated within the Local Government Act requirements.
Setting the foundation for future reviews Should the methodology and ongoing review framework for councillor allowances and numbers be embedded in legislation?	In order to ensure consistency of approach moving forward it is considered that the review framework for councillor allowances and numbers should be embedded in legislation.