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LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW TIMELINES

The Tasmanian Government is conducting a major review of the future of Local Government in Tasmania. The review started in 2018 and is still underway.

The below is a broad summary of the review process conducted between 2018 and 2020. Also see a Summary of Phases 1 to 3 '*The Journey so far –Engagement on the Act Review*' [here](#) and below.

2018 – Phase 1

- The Review was announced in June 2018.
- From the 7 December 2018 to the 1 March 2019 the Tasmanian Government released a '[Discussion Paper: Review of Tasmania's Local Government Legislation Framework](#)'.
- The Discussion Paper focused on what principles should underpin 'a contemporary legislative framework for local government'.
- **382 submissions were received. PMAT made a submission.**

2019 – Phase 2

- The Review Reference Group was appointed in February 2019. PMAT asked to be part of the reference group but our application was unsuccessful.
- In July 2019, a '[Reform Directions Paper Phase 2](#)' was released for public comment until 30 September 2019. This Paper outlined 'Major Reform Areas', 'Considerations of other key issues raised'; and 'Out of Scope' issues which included two topics only: 'Councils Role as a Planning Authority' and 'Amalgamations'. **At this stage, as per page 49 of the Directions Paper, 'The Government's position is no forced amalgamations'**.
- The proposed Reform Directions sought to address issues during Phase 1.
- **This consultation period received almost 800 survey responses and 75 written submissions.**
- The submissions and feedback on the proposed Reform Directions was provided to the State Government to inform its legislative drafting process.

2020 Phase 3

- On 22 April 2020 the Government released the [Approved Reforms for the Local Government Legislative Framework Review](#). This included a total of 51 reforms.
- The reforms were developed following extensive consultation during 2018 and 2019 with the local government sector, key stakeholders, and the broader community and generated almost 800 survey responses and 75 submissions. See the Ministers media release [here](#).



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- Only 48 reforms were to be implemented after receiving broad support from the public, councils and stakeholders.
- Only three of the 51 reforms were **strongly opposed** in the consultation feedback and accordingly will not be progressed. These were:
 - changing the way mayors and deputy mayors are elected;
 - introducing a candidate nomination fee; and
 - **establishing Regional Councils.**
- **‘#48 – Introduce the option to create Regional Councils (Not proceeding). This proposal will not proceed. The option to create Regional Councils will not be introduced.’**
- **Note at this point forced amalgamations were not on the table:**
- **‘#51 – Voluntary amalgamations: Voluntary amalgamations of two or more councils will be able to occur, without the need for a Local Government Board review. Councils will need to develop a business case to explore amalgamations but will no longer require a report from the Local Government Board, which is time and resource intensive.’**
- At this point, the Tasmanian Government also announced the creation of two new Bills:
 - a new Local Government Bill
 - Stand-alone Local Government (Elections) Bill
- Timelines for final drafting, exposure bill consultation and progress through the Parliament were impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.



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December 2020

Review of Tasmania's Local Government Legislation Framework

The Journey so far –
Engagement on the
Act Review



Phase 1

- In December 2018, the Government released a Discussion Paper seeking feedback on the principles that should underpin a local government legislative framework. This marked the start of Phase 1 of the Review.
- As part of the consultation process in Phase 1, submissions to the Discussion Paper were called from all interested stakeholders. Submissions were invited via an online survey on the questions outlined in the Discussion Paper, as well as by writing directly to the Project Team. Three hundred and eighty two submissions were received during this consultation period.
- Consultation sessions were also held around the State throughout February 2019, giving the community and interested stakeholders an opportunity to engage with the Project Team and discuss the Review.



Phase 2

- The Reform Directions Paper was released in July 2019, along with short fact sheets outlining the key issues raised in Phase 1 and the Reform Directions for each topic.
- The Reform Directions were informed by research, practices in other Australian jurisdictions, feedback and submissions from Phase 1, as well as discussions and advice from the Review Reference Group.
- Submissions to the Reform Directions Paper closed on Monday 30 September 2019, following a three month consultation period.
- Close to 800 survey responses were received, as well as 76 written submissions.
- Feedback received through submissions and face-to-face consultation sessions held around the State was provided to the Review's Steering Committee, and the Committee submitted its advice to the Government in late 2019.



Phase 3

- On 22 April 2020 the Government announced 48 reforms to Tasmania's Local Government Legislative Framework. The reforms were developed following extensive consultation with the local government sector, key stakeholders, and the broader community and generated almost 800 survey responses and 75 submissions.
- Only three of the 51 reforms were strongly opposed in the consultation feedback and accordingly will not be progressed. These were:
 - changing the way mayors and deputy mayors are elected;
 - introducing a candidate nomination fee; and
 - establishing Regional Councils.
- COVID-19 pandemic emergency impacted legislative drafting and consultation timeframes. However it also provided an opportunity to reflect on the pandemic response experience and consult with councils and the broader community on any COVID-19 related reforms, and any other emerging additional reform areas for inclusion in the final legislative package.
- Legislative drafting is well advanced with a Local Government Exposure Bill due for release in early 2021.



New Local Government Act



Electoral Reforms

- Changes to local government electoral provisions announced as part of the Review will be progressed via a new, stand-alone Local Government Elections Bill. The intention is to streamline those provisions that are used only during elections and ensure the substantive Local Government Act is as concise and user-friendly as possible.
- The elections Bill will be consulted on and introduced into the Parliament following the passage of the main Local Government Bill.