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## PMAT & TCT MEDIA RELEASE 19 APRIL 2023

### **Close to one half of all councils are opposed to amalgamation and almost no support from councils for the state government to take over planning**

**Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania (PMAT) and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust (TCT) today called on the state government to respond to the recent Council submissions to the Future of Local Government Review and rule out forced amalgamations and major changes to planning.**

The Minister for Local Government Nick Street today released the Local Government Board's final report on the Future of Local Government Review and announced a period of public comment.

The TCT stated that the Council submissions made in January and February this year to the review (which were not released by the Local Government Board until today but obtained directly from councils by the TCT) show:

- that close to a half of all councils (14) are opposed to amalgamation
- one quarter supportive (8)
- another quarter undecided (7)

TCT CEO Peter McGlone stated that "councils have made it clear that there is strong opposition to amalgamations and the Minister needs to rule out forcing unwanted changes on councils".

"It is the TCT's view that the state government has not made these submissions public before today because they express views on amalgamations and planning that clash with the government's."

**In regard to planning, the submissions reveal that only one council is supportive of planning being taken away from it and done by the state government. With planning the general pattern is to support the status quo with minor changes.**

Sophie Underwood, State Coordinator, Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania said "PMAT believes that planning should stay with Councils. Only one Council out of 29 wants planning taken off them. We don't want to see the State Government takeover of planning and with it the loss of local representation, transparency and integrity in decision making."

The TCT and PMAT have the view that if amalgamations are to take place then it should be voluntary and only occur after a majority of people living in an effected municipality vote in support through a poll undertaken by the Tasmanian Electoral Commission.

PMAT is keen that the community is involved in this final stage of consultation on the future of local government and has organised a series of public meetings to stimulate community awareness and encourage submissions. PMAT has local community meetings planned for Bruny Island, Bothwell,



tasmanian conservation trust inc



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Ouse and more. See PMAT's website for details. PMAT has already held well attended public meetings on Flinders Island and in Clarence.

### **Amalgamations – results based on Council submissions**

The TCT has read all submissions made by councils (27 of the 29 councils have made at least one submission since the review started in early 2022) and determined their position on amalgamations. In conclusion:

- **13 Councils oppose amalgamation:** 8 responded no to amalgamation and 5 responded no-leaning.
- **8 Councils support amalgamation:** 3 responded yes to amalgamation and 5 responded yes-leaning.
- **8 Councils did not state a position on amalgamation:** 6 responded but provided no position and 2 provided no submission.

Note: one council listed above, as having no position, has made its opposition to amalgamations very clear but has not made a submission.

Note: The Local Government Board is now at Stage 3 of the Review: Stage 3 - April to September 2023. This stage will present recommended solutions and the publication of the final report of the Local Government Board. For details visit here: <https://engage.futurelocal.tas.gov.au/>

### **Further comment:**

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