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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

27 July 2023

# **The Future of Local Government Review: Huon Valley Council's submission**

Council has made its position clear on the Future of Local Government Review, outlining its preference for a model that retains Council's current boundaries.

Council approved the submission to be made to the Board of the Review at last night's council meeting.

Council has a preference for 'Scenario 1' of the Board's proposed three options within what is referred to as a 'Southern Shores Community Catchment' area.

Scenario 1 would establish two council areas within the Catchment – one, consisting of the existing Huon Valley municipality area, and the other, the existing Kingborough area, minus Taroona (to be absorbed into Hobart).

In preparation of the submission, Council considered the Board's Structural Reform Principles:

1. A focus on Future Community Needs;
2. Retaining Jobs and Service Delivery Locally;
3. Preserving and Enhancing Local Voice;
4. Smoothing Financial Impacts for Communities; and
5. Dedicated and Appropriate Resourcing for the Transition.

In addition to the assessment against the principles established by the Board, Council believes Scenario 1 presents the best outcomes for the Huon Valley community, because it would:

- Allow for local representation of its dispersed rural population, enhance its local voice and retain the Huon Valley brand;



- Prevent considerable amalgamation costs, disruption and potential job losses;
- Prevent the community's needs being marginalised in the event of amalgamation with an urban municipality;
- Continue Council's significant body of strategic work and community engagement program already underway, including the Community Vision, Strategic Plan and Land Use Development Strategy;
- Retain Council's cash reserves and positive long-term sustainable footing; and
- Retain options for greater cooperation on shared services.

While the Tasmanian Government recently announced it would no longer support forced council amalgamations, Council would also like to note other concerns about the way the Review has been conducted, including:

- The Review has not been community-driven;
- There has been insufficient time for the Council to undertake proper engagement with the community; and
- The Review's Interim Report and Information Pack do not provide any basis or compelling reason to impose structural change and consolidation.

"Huron Valley Council is entirely a rural area," said Huron Valley Mayor Sally Doyle.

"It has strong cash reserves, financial indicators and low debt. A Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) to ensure future financial stability was adopted in June."

"Council is in a strong position to serve our communities."

The Review has raised concerns about the ability of councils to attract and retain suitable workforces, however Council notes the issue is not limited to local government or even Tasmania, and won't be solved by amalgamations.

Council's submission to the Future of Local Government Review is available to view on the [Have Your Say Page](#) of Council's website.

To view the Review's Southern Shores Community Catchment Information Pack, or to make a submission: [Stage 3 | Your Voice Future Local](#)

Submissions are open until 2 August 2023.



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