

Legislative Council

HANSARD

Thursday 25th September 2025

Local Government - Reform Recommendations

Ms WEBB question to MINISTER for LOCAL GOVERNMENT, Mr VINCENT

[2.58 p.m.]

Following the release of the government's discussion paper 'Reforms to councillor numbers and allowances' last week, your media release on Monday 15 September stated, and I quote:

The review was a key recommendation of the Future of Local Government Review and will support and complement the Government's broader efforts to strengthen the local government sector.

Is it not a fact that recommendation 34 of the 2023 Future of Local Government Review report states this?

Following the phase 1 voluntary amalgamation program, the Tasmanian Government should commission an independent review into councillor numbers and allowances.

- (1) Has the phase 1 voluntary amalgamation program as recommended by the 2023 review report been undertaken?
- (2) If so, can you detail when and how that was undertaken and the outcomes of that program?
- (3) Can you confirm that the current review into the councillor numbers and allowances is being undertaken by the Office of Local Government within DPAC and not, in fact, an independent reviewer specifically recommended by that 2023 Future of Local Government Review report, and explain why the government deviated from that part of recommendation 34?

ANSWER

Mr President, I will seek some advice.

I thank the member for the question. A lot of the question has been close to my heart for a long time, being an ex-mayor who was involved in a lot of those discussions. It's been a long time since councillor numbers and allowances were addressed. I'm pleased to see we've been able to move ahead with that.

We're introducing the new data-driven approach to set both the number of councillors for each LGA and the allowance those councillors are paid. This work has been built off feedback from the sector and the Future of the Local Government Review in relation to recommendation number 34. I believe you mentioned number 34?

Ms Webb - Yes, but it is not quite in line with that, is it?

Mr VINCENT - Yes. This recognised the work of a councillor while aligning the overall number of representatives. In nearly all cases the allowance increase will have no additional cost to the community. Now, I think your specific question was about the independence of that.

Ms Webb - There were two things. One, has the phase 1 voluntary amalgamation program already been done? That was the first part of the recommendation. In terms of the second part, why isn't this an independent review as per the recommendation?

Mr VINCENT - I would have to take that on notice to get back to you exactly like that, but you are quite right. Part of the review is being done through the Office of Local Government in conjunction a fair bit with the Local Government Association of Tasmania. Also, some of the reference - I may stand to be corrected - but I'm pretty sure it's the Local Government Division of NSW that's doing some work on this nationally.

I will need to fine-tune that -

Ms Webb - May I send it through to you for a further answer?

Mr VINCENT - Yes, please do and I will double-check it for you and get back to you because I'd rather find the specifics of that. Thank you.

Ms Webb - I appreciate it, minister.