



26 March 2025

Office of Local Government
Department of Premier & Cabinet
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Dear Sir

DEVONPORT CITY COUNCIL – RESPONSE TO PROPOSED LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL BILL

Devonport City Council (DCC) supports the introduction of a standalone Local Government Electoral Bill and welcomes the opportunity to provide the following comments on the proposed reform items.

Election format: Recognising challenges with the current postal voting system, DCC support changing to an attendance voting model. This is the model used for both State and Federal elections and local government in most other jurisdictions.

A shift to align local government voting in Tasmania to that of the other two tiers of Government would reinforce the importance of councils as an equal part in Australian democracy. Recognising the trend toward early voting in existing attendance models, DCC would support a polling period as opposed to a single day.

Non-Citizens: DCC does not support continuing the current practice of allowing non-citizens to vote in local government elections. Whilst fully supportive of integrating non-citizens into local communities, DCC consider that Australian citizenship should be a mandatory pre-requisite for those having influence on our democratic process, as it is for State and Federal election voting. The alternative of allowing non-citizens with greater than 12 months continuous residency does not address the concern and is also not supported. While DCC is opposed on principle, it should be noted that the administration burden to assess and manage potential non-citizen voters would also add additional cost which ultimately needs to be funded by councils.

Deputy Mayors: DCC considers the role of Deputy Mayor as an important function of Council and does not agree with removing or sharing the position through an acting appointment. A designated Deputy Mayor ensures an agreed and efficient protocol whenever the Mayor is not available to fulfill their duties. It identifies a specific Councillor, with a mandate to support the Mayor as needed, and share in the leadership responsibilities of the Council. Consideration should be given to more clearly recognising and legislating this support as a duty of a Deputy Mayor.

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DCC supports the current practice of popularly electing Deputy Mayors as opposed to moving to an 'around the table' process.

Technical Reforms: DCC notes that generally the 33 proposed technical reforms are largely administrative in nature, several comments are noted on specific items.

Reform 5 – The requirement to obtain 30 signatures on a nomination form is considered excessive and not supported.

Reform 10 – Mandating candidates to complete a pre-nomination training program is not supported.

Reforms 29 to 32 – The reforms regarding proposed caretaker provisions are noted.

Whilst recognising the intent, careful consideration must be given to ensure as far as possible any legislation does not limit the Council in its day-to-day operations, ongoing execution of works in progress or its communication with the community.

As an example, could Council make decision to award a large construction tender during Caretaker Period, based on the project having been included in the annual budget. If not, the 10-week Caretaker Period added to the normal Council meeting cycle could realistically see a period in excess of 3 months where tenders cannot be awarded, at a time when typically, there is a focus on tendering prior to the summer construction months. This pause on awarding tenders could impact significantly on the ability of a council to complete its annual capital works program.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alison Jarman', with a small dot at the end.

Cr Alison Jarman
MAYOR, CITY OF DEVONPORT