

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD SUBMISSION

The future of Local Government Review

Stage 3 – Community Catchment Information Packs

Submission by Latrobe & Kentish Councils

28 July 2023



1. Introduction

Kentish and Latrobe Councils again welcome the opportunity to provide a submission in response to the Future of Local Government Reviews Interim Report which follows on from Councils' submission to Phase 1 of the Review.

The two Councils have again agreed to make a single submission and much of the material provided in our original submissions remains highly relevant and has not been repeated here. The Councils agree with the statement made in the Local Government Board Executive summary that the role of Councils is often most highly valued in regional and rural communities such as those that exist in the Latrobe and Kentish areas.

2. Background Information

The Latrobe and Kentish Councils believe that their municipal alliance arrangement which has been in operation since 2010 is the only example in Australian Local Government that has led to the formation of one organisation that manages the resources of two LGA's while maintaining separate Local Government elected representatives.

The two Councils value collaboration and partnerships both within and outside their respective municipalities and the changes implemented over the last 13 years have been built on trust and acknowledgement of the different requirements of the two council areas. There is a long history of the two councils working together and while the Council's initial preference was to continue with the current shared services arrangement, they are prepared to support the coming together of the two councils into one organisation as detailed in Scenario 4 B which recommends the existing Kentish and Latrobe Council LGAs are combined.

3. Executive Summary

- Kentish and Latrobe Councils are disappointed that the scenarios presented are primarily solutions based on boundary adjustments, which are in turn based on commuter movements. The Councils believe travel to work data is not the only information that should be used to determine communities of interest. We believe that where residents live, play sport, socialise, shop and where their children grow up and go to school are also other important aspects of a community identity.
- The international, independent research evidence continues to show that increasing the size of local government is no guarantee of improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and cost reduction; but that local democracy and citizen engagement is more likely to be damaged by the larger local

government because of a detrimental effect on democratic criteria such as:

- public trust in Councillors
 - public trust in officers
 - levels of engagement
 - contact between citizens and Councillors and Council Officers
 - levels of identification or affinity with the Council held by the public.
- The Kentish and Latrobe Councils support scenario 4(B) which combines the existing Kentish and Latrobe Local Government Areas. The Councils value community input into major decisions affecting them and request the State Government fund an elector poll on the suggested merger as part of the decision-making process. This scenario has the least negative impact for Kentish and Latrobe residents and is closest to ensuring that representation for our communities will be maintained. There would be significant efficiencies gained particularly through reducing duplication in the preparation of Strategic Plans, Annual Budgets, Annual Plans, Annual Reports, Long Term Financial Plans and Asset Management Plans. However, prior to efficiencies being realised, there are significant costs in reconfiguring the corporate information technology software and the Councils strongly recommend that the State Government fund these upfront costs as an incentive for Councils to merge.

The two Councils have demonstrated over the last 13 years that they can respond to natural disasters and deliver major capital works programs across the Council areas.

- Kentish and Latrobe Councils suggest that if the two were to merge that for the first four-year term of a new combined Council (scenario 4(B) there be 5 elected representatives from each of the current areas with the Mayor popularly elected across the whole of the area.
- A major issue to be considered in a combined Kentish and Latrobe Council is the potential impact on Grants Commission funding if the grant was reduced because of the boundary changes across Tasmania (could have a significant impact on the viability of the new entity).
- The Councils support the amendment of the Local Government Act to allow “collars” to limit rate reductions to provide more flexibility to smooth financial impacts of boundary changes.
- Scenario 4(A) combines the existing Burnie, Central Coast and Devonport Council areas. La Trobe Council in Victoria was formed in 1994 and has similar characteristics to the proposed new Council (scenario 4(A)). La

Trobe has a population of 77,318 and includes the towns of Traralgon (26,907), Moe (16,812) and Sale (13,673). It has an area of 1422 km² compared to a combined Devonport, Central Coast and Burnie areas of 1655 km² and a population of 70,641. La Trobe is surrounded by large rural Council areas.

4. Kentish and Latrobe Councils Preferred Reform Option – Scenario 4

4.1. Structural Reform Principles

4.1.1. A focus on Future Community Needs

The comments in relation to this area in the Board's Options Paper – Review Stage 2 stated that "Councils will also need the capability to support communities through emergencies and unexpected crises, such as the COVID -19 pandemic and extreme weather events. These challenges will likely be felt most acutely in our more regional and remote communities, many of which have councils with the lowest levels of structural sustainability, capacity, and capability".

The Kentish Council and Latrobe Councils have had several declared disaster events over the last 10 years and have been recognised for their initial response and community recovery programs which were undertaken at the time. There has been an area of expertise built up within the staff and this has enabled a response which has been recognised by the State Government. In addition to the two major flood events in 2016 and 2022, on the weekend of 11-12 June 2022, parts of Kentish experienced a significant weather event. Winds of up to 200km/h were recorded in the area, resulting in thousands of fallen and uprooted trees, kilometres of fences damaged, sheds and water tanks destroyed, dairy infrastructure and homes impacted and most significantly, the loss of one life.

Responding promptly to the situation, the Kentish Council with assistance of Latrobe Council employees took immediate action to clear roads obstructed by fallen trees and debris. Their efforts allowed the roads to be reopened for emergency services, within a short period of time. Council staff prioritised road clearance based on the number of residents affected.

Since the weather event primarily affected localised areas, the involvement of emergency services beyond the initial two-day clean-up was limited. Consequently, the community heavily relied on the support provided by the Council, especially due to

the prolonged power and telecommunication outages that persisted for up to two weeks in some areas. Many calls for assistance were received in the following week from residents who did not know where to turn to for assistance. The Council worked with the Kentish Lions Club to distribute emergency vouchers totaling \$20,000.

In the aftermath of the event, Council's staff initiated a range of recovery measures to assist affected residents. This included funding to address essential household needs, establishing shower facilities and laundry services, as well as collaborating with external agencies capable of offering additional support and facilities.

Question to be answered - Who is the best placed to capture what is needed in our communities to meet the health and well-being of the residents?

The Kentish and Latrobe Council areas are of a size that the elected members and staff know the communities well and understand local issues. Many residents move to the area as a place to live because of the sense of place and pride taken by residents. Their well-being is enhanced by participating in community groups/events which are supported by the Councils. These include in both Council areas local events such as Steamfest, Muralfest, Chocolate Winterfest, flower shows, and Taste of the North West. Groups and organisations are also supported by the Councils including the U3A at Port Sorell and Sheffield, Latrobe Federal Band, sporting clubs, men's sheds, Mount Roland land care and many others.

The Councils consult with the community as part of the annual budget process and projects identified are each considered for inclusion in the budget or in the 10-year long term financial plans and capital works plans.

There is evidence that increases in the population or geographical scale of local government units can have a detrimental effect on democratic criteria such as:

- public trust in Councillors
- public trust in officers
- levels of engagement
- contact between citizens and Councillors and Council Officers

- levels of identification or affinity with the Council held by the public. (District Councils Network report P5 published 22nd of March 2022 “Bigger is Still Not Better”).

4.1.2. Retaining Jobs and Services Delivery Locally

The Kentish and Latrobe Councils have a similar agricultural economy as detailed in Table 1:

Table 1

Latrobe	Kentish
Total number of Active ABNs in Latrobe = 1974	Total number of Active ABNs in Kentish = 1333
ABN no. in Agriculture Forestry and Fishing Industry Classification = 240	ABN no. in Agriculture Forestry and Fishing Industry Classification = 295
ABN no. by industry sub class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable and fruit growing = 51 • Beef and Sheep grazing = 109 • Crop and grain production = 12 • Dairy = 5 • Other livestock = 17 • Other Ag Forestry and Fisheries = 46 	ABN no. by industry sub class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable and fruit growing = 33 • Beef and Sheep grazing = 143 (23 crop as well) • Crop and grain production = 6 • Dairy = 21 • Other livestock = 24 • Other Ag Forestry and Fisheries = 48
Total Land area used for Agriculture = 16539 ha	Total Land area used for Agriculture = 11870 ha
Area for each major category (ha): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crops = 5708 • Grazing = 10613 • Forestry = 180 • Vegetables (as part of crops) = 2324ha dominated by potato, onions and carrots 	Area for each major category (ha): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crops = 2860 • Grazing = 10187 • Forestry = 862 • Vegetables (as part of crops) = 328ha dominated by potato, beans, herbs and capsicum
<i>Data was sourced from July 2022, Agricultural commodity estimates by 2021 Local Government Areas (LGA) From ABR data on active ABNs</i>	<i>Data was sourced from July 2022, Agricultural commodity estimates by 2021 Local Government Areas (LGA)</i>

While some people believe Latrobe is an extension of the Devonport urban area it does have many rural businesses that provide services to the surrounding areas including the following:

- TTMI Tractor Sales
- Yolla Co-operative
- Midlands Tractors
- TasGrow Irrigation
- Biomar.

Approximately 12 months ago the two councils established The Latrobe and Kentish Independent Business Association (KaLIBA) to provide business benefits and support to make EVERY Kentish and Latrobe business thrive. The following brochure sets out the services provided.



KaLIBA

Kentish and Latrobe

Independent Business Association

Business benefits and support to make EVERY Kentish and Latrobe business thrive!

- Education & networking events
- Local online business directory
- Regular business bulletins
- Promotion & advertising
- Lobbying your issues to government

Expert Advice:

Free one-on-one professional advisors are ready to help by phone or visit you on any business topic including:

- Digital marketing & cyber security
- Staff, hiring & disputes
- Wages, awards & conditions
- Business plans & risk analysis
- Red tape & regulatory issues
- Mental health & resilience

KaLIBA is here for you. Let's Talk.
contactus@KaLIBA.org.au or 0402 636 769



KaLIBA

Kentish and Latrobe

Independent Business Association

KaLIBA supports **EVERY business** across the Kentish and Latrobe municipalities with free and paid memberships– from individual farmers, retailers, trades and new businesses, right up to our largest employers.

Be Successful.

With business support, expert advice, education, promotion, lobbying, networking, development projects, and mentoring

Be Seen. Buy Local. Sell Local.

Promote your business for free in the Kentish and Latrobe online directory

Be Involved.

Attend KaLIBA functions, read the regular news bulletins, and tell us the support programs your business needs

KaLIBA is here for you. Let's Talk.

Contact KaLIBA to arrange a discussion with our executive or a local board member at contactus@KaLIBA.org.au or 0402 636 769

The Association is bringing the businesses from across the two Council areas together and will play an important role in value adding local business opportunities from the \$5 million Wild Mersey Mountain Bike trails network which was an initiative of the two councils and connects the two areas together with over 100 km of world-class trails.



KaLIBA business networking meeting – 19 July 2023

The Latrobe and Kentish Councils have been very active in attracting and working with businesses to set up in the local area. Examples include the establishment of Huon Aquaculture at Parramatta Creek and Biomar at Wesley Vale. The Latrobe Council is working closely with the owners to redevelop the former pulp mill site at Wesley Vale and the Kentish Council is working closely with Hydro Tasmania on preparations for the Pumped Hydro Scheme at Cethana which will have a significant impact on the future growth of the Kentish area.

The Kentish Council also lobbied and were instrumental in the development of the Cradle Mountain Masterplan which has been the catalyst for improved visitor infrastructure over recent years.

4.1.3. Preserving and Enhancing Local Voice

As previously stated, there is evidence that increases in the population or geographical scale of local government units can have a detrimental effect on democratic criteria.

The Kentish and Latrobe Councils work very closely with their communities and hold six monthly community meetings across the Council areas to advise and seek input from residents on major projects and initiatives that are planned or underway. These meetings have generally been well attended particularly when items of strong community interest are being discussed.



Port Sorell Community Information Evening – 8 September 2022



Meeting to discuss Local Government Reform held at Sheffield 20 July 2023

There is concern within the community that it will not be practical or feasible to hold these meetings if there is an amalgamation of the Council's such as set out in scenarios 1, 2 and 3.

The Councils value community input into major decisions affecting them and request the State Government fund an

elector poll on the suggested merger of the Kentish and Latrobe Councils as part of the decision-making process.

4.1.4. Smoothing Financial Impacts for Communities

There are some similarities in the way that Kentish and Latrobe Councils currently levy rates but also some differences as shown below.

Rating Component	Kentish	Latrobe
Differential rating categories	✓	✓
Fixed charge per property	✓	✗
Cent per dollar of AAV charge	✓	✓
Minimum rates amount	✗	✓
Rate increase cap used	✓	✓
Discount for early payment	✓	✓

Kentish currently levies a fixed charge per property as well as a cents per dollar of Assessed Annual Value (AAV) charge. **The Local Government Act allows for either a fixed charge per property or a minimum rate but not both at the same time.** A new combined council could replace the Kentish fixed charge with a separate rate in accordance with Division 5 of the Local Government Act for those properties currently in the Kentish municipality.

The two Councils have broadly comparable differential rating categories.

Although some of the cents in the dollar of AAV rates are lower for Kentish than for Latrobe, Kentish rates are generally higher than the corresponding Latrobe rates because of the fixed charge levied to each property on top of the AAV rate (currently \$449). The Kentish rates are generally more expensive than the Latrobe Council rates due to lower population and greater road/bridge infrastructure.

Initially, the Councils should be able to keep rating outcomes similar to those of the existing approaches by;

- Latrobe maintaining its existing approach and using rate increase caps to transition to a new common AAV rate.
- Kentish replacing its fixed charge with a separate rate or charge under Division 5 of the Local Government Act and

using rate increase caps where needed to transition to a new common AAV rate.

Detailed modelling in the future can determine the preferred rating outcomes and strategies for the proposed combined council. **A change in the Local Government Act to allow “collars” to limit rate reductions would potentially provide more flexibility to achieve the desired outcomes.**

A major issue to be considered in a combined Kentish and Latrobe Council is the potential impact on Grants Commission funding.

Based on the 2023/24 budgets, Kentish and Latrobe will receive a combined \$5.77 million in State Grant Commission Financial Assistance Grants. This would be approximately 20% of the recurrent revenue of a combined Council and if the grant was reduced because of the boundary changes across Tasmania, it could have a significant impact on the viability of the new entity.

The Local Government Board and the State Government will need to consider the impact of any potential changes in the amount of Financial Assistance Grants paid to a combined Council.

4.1.5. Dedicated and Appropriate Resourcing for the Transition

The Kentish and Latrobe Councils have worked together over the last 13 years to establish one organisation for the two council areas. The consolidation of the two councils into one is relatively straightforward compared to the other options listed in the scenarios.

The Latrobe Council has 9771 electors compared with the Kentish Council 5137 electors. On a new combined Council with 11 elected members the existing Latrobe Council area on a pro rata basis would have 7 elected representatives and Kentish Council area 3 representatives. The two councils have discussed this issue and are suggesting that for the first four-year term of a new Council there be 5 elected representatives from each of the current areas with the Mayor popularly elected across the whole of the area.

The councils believe this would only be necessary for the first four-year term and after that term expires 9 elected members popularly elected including the Mayor would be sufficient representation for the communities.

4.2. Structural Reform Criteria

4.2.1. Place and Representation

The Kentish and Latrobe councils agree with the views expressed by the Local Government Board in their previous reports that “one size does not fit all” in relation to the question “is there an optimum population size for local authorities?”

The international, independent research evidence continues to show that increasing the size of local government is no guarantee of improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and cost reduction; but that local democracy and citizen engagement is more likely to be damaged, the larger the local government becomes (District Councils Network report P3 published 22nd of March 2022 “Bigger Is Still Not Better”).

The prime consideration in any review of local government structure, including this one, should be the long-term health and sustainability of local government and local democracy. A combined Kentish and Latrobe Council area with 14,908 electors would have 1355 electors per councillor with 11 elected members and 1656 electors per councillor with nine elected members. This compares to the following average representative ratios in a sample of European countries detailed in table 2 below:

Table 2

Country	Population (millions)	Lower tier councils	Average population per council	Total Cllrs ('000s)	Persons per councillor
France	67	36,500	1,800	515	130
Spain	47	8,100	5,800	65	720
Germany	83	12,013	6,900	200	410
Italy	60	8,000	7,500	100	600
Belgium	11.5	581	18,700	13	880
Sweden	10	290	34,400	46	220
The Netherlands	17	390	43,500	10	1,700
Denmark	6	98	61,000	5	1,200
England	56	315	177,700	17	3,300

*Source: Council of Europe Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CLRD) (2008) and CEMR/Dexia 2010, 2012 and 2013 (figures updated and rounded for ease of presentation)***

As detailed elsewhere in this submission the Kentish and Latrobe Councillors believe there is a close connection, built up over a long period of time, with the communities within the combined area and do not believe that local democracy will be diminished to a great extent under scenario 4(B).

4.2.2. Future Needs and Priorities

The Local Government Board received strong feedback through their community surveys and public hearings that Councils should play a stronger role on the impact of climate change on communities and on the health and well-being of residents.

The state government recently announced \$500,000 in their budget to work with the Local Government Association of Tasmania and Councils to build capacity within local government to reduce emissions and respond to climate change. The local government climate roles and responsibilities have been identified as follows:

- Manage risks and impacts to Council owned and managed assets
- Manage risks and impacts to Councils service delivery
- Contribute appropriate resources to prepare, respond and recover from climatic impacts
- Ensure local planning and development regulations incorporate climate change considerations
- Facilitate community resilience, by providing climate risk information
- Collaborate across Councils and Tasmanian Government to manage risks of regional climate change impacts.

The Kentish and Latrobe Councils are of the opinion they are well-placed to undertake these responsibilities and work with the state government to build capacity within the sector to address climate change issues within their communities.

Kentish and Latrobe Councils play a key role in providing for the health and wellbeing of their communities. The Councils engage with community organisations and service providers to identify immediate and future needs and develop strategies to deliver, partner, facilitate or advocate for the provision of services. As demonstrated by the completion of the Lorinna Road project and receipt of the Resilient Community Award.

The two Councils have built trusted relationships and local networks with service and volunteer organisations to identify service gaps, increase capacity, and empower the community to

respond to emerging issues. Strong local and regional relationships have delivered an increase in allied health programs and workshops such as Women's Health Knit Your Bits, BIGhART When Water Falls, mental health programs, suicide prevention, aged citizen capacity building and legal and domestic violence support.

The Latrobe Council has also, since the 1980's, developed 64 affordable Elderly Persons Units.

The Councils have established local partnerships that provide a deep understanding of local contexts and a focus on building local capacity. These networks provided early knowledge of emerging issues, such as increasing youth disengagement and mental health issues post COVID-19 pandemic. Early identification of this concern allowed the Kentish Council to partner with Kentish House to develop locally led programs to bring positive impact, such as skate:life, the Easter Carnival, the Ginormous Dinosaur Day, Skate Park Jam and a revitalised school holiday program.

The Councils increased footprint in health and wellbeing delivery has received recognition from higher tiered government organisations, attracting involvement in projects such as Access2Health and the development of the Healthy Tasmania grant program. Overall, working with community organisations and service providers has enabled the Councils to be more responsive, inclusive, and effective in addressing community needs.

4.2.3. Financial Sustainability

The Kentish and Latrobe Councils have 10-year Financial Management Plans which confirm that each Council is financially sustainable into the future based on the assumptions detailed in the plans. There will be significant savings based on a combined Kentish and Latrobe Council and these can be used to improve service levels and smooth over time the higher rate levels paid by Kentish residents.

Prior to efficiencies being realised, there are significant costs in reconfiguring the corporate information technology software and the Councils strongly recommend that the State Government fund these upfront costs as any incentive for Councils to merge.

4.2.4. Operational Capability

There would be significant efficiencies gained if the decision was

made to combine the Latrobe and Kentish Councils particularly in the preparation of Strategic Plans, Annual Budgets, Annual Plans, Annual Reports, Long Term Financial Plans and Asset Management Plans.

The two Councils, after 13 years of working together have now almost identical Policies and Formats for the above documents, however there are significant savings across the organisation if only one set of these are required.

The two Councils have proved over recent years that by working together they have the operational capability to deliver major projects including:

- \$15 million Latrobe Flood mitigation Project
- \$5.4 million Banksia facilities redevelopment at Port Sorell
- \$1.5 million new access into Lorinna
- \$1.5 million redevelopment of the Sheffield Arts Centre precinct
- \$5.5 million Wild Mersey Mountain Bike trails network and associated infrastructure

The two Councils have also been able to respond to several major disasters that have impacted the two areas over the last 10-year period and have been able to fund over \$4 million in disaster recovery (in addition to funds provided by the Commonwealth and State governments) without adversely impacting on the rates.

5. Comment On Other Board Scenarios

Kentish and Latrobe Councils are disappointed that the scenarios presented are primarily solutions based on boundary adjustments, which are in turn based on commuter movements. The Councils believe travel to work data is not the only information that should be used to determine communities of interest. We believe that where residents live, play sport, socialize, shop and where their children grow up and go to school are also other important aspects of a community identity.

The Local Government Board is wanting Councils and communities to consider four fundamental questions in relation to the scenarios that they have suggested on the future design of local government in the Cradle Coast Community Catchment. These are:

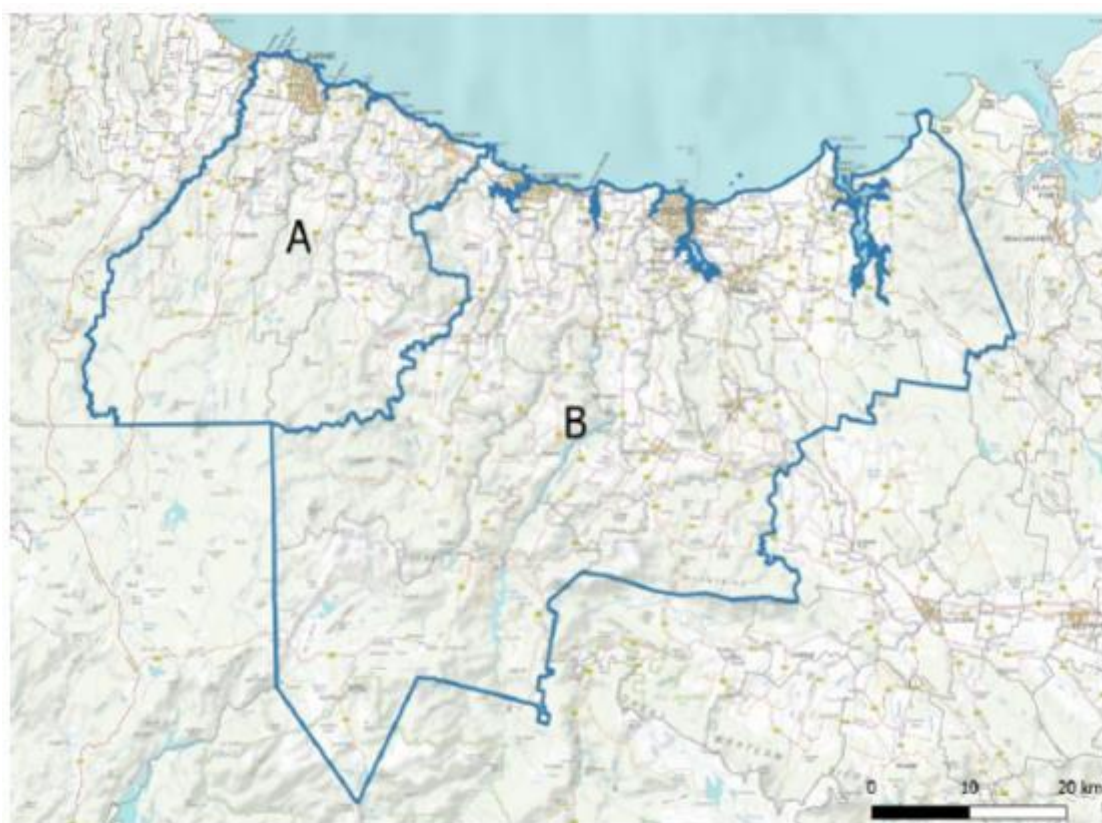
1 What are the strengths?

2 What are the weaknesses or challenges?

- 3 Are there any adjustments that could be made to maximise the strengths and minimise the weaknesses?
- 4 Are there any other entirely different scenarios that the Board should consider, which would still deliver against the Board's criteria and structural reform principles?

The Council's comments in respect of these questions and the 4 scenarios follow.

5.1. Scenario 1



Scenario 1 establishes two new Council areas within the Cradle Coast Community Catchment.

The first (A) combines the existing Burnie LGA with areas of the existing Central Coast Council from west of the Leven River along the Dial Range.

The second (B) combines existing Kentish, Latrobe and Devonport LGAs, and Central Coast Council areas east of Penguin and the Dial Range.

Scenario 1 Strengths

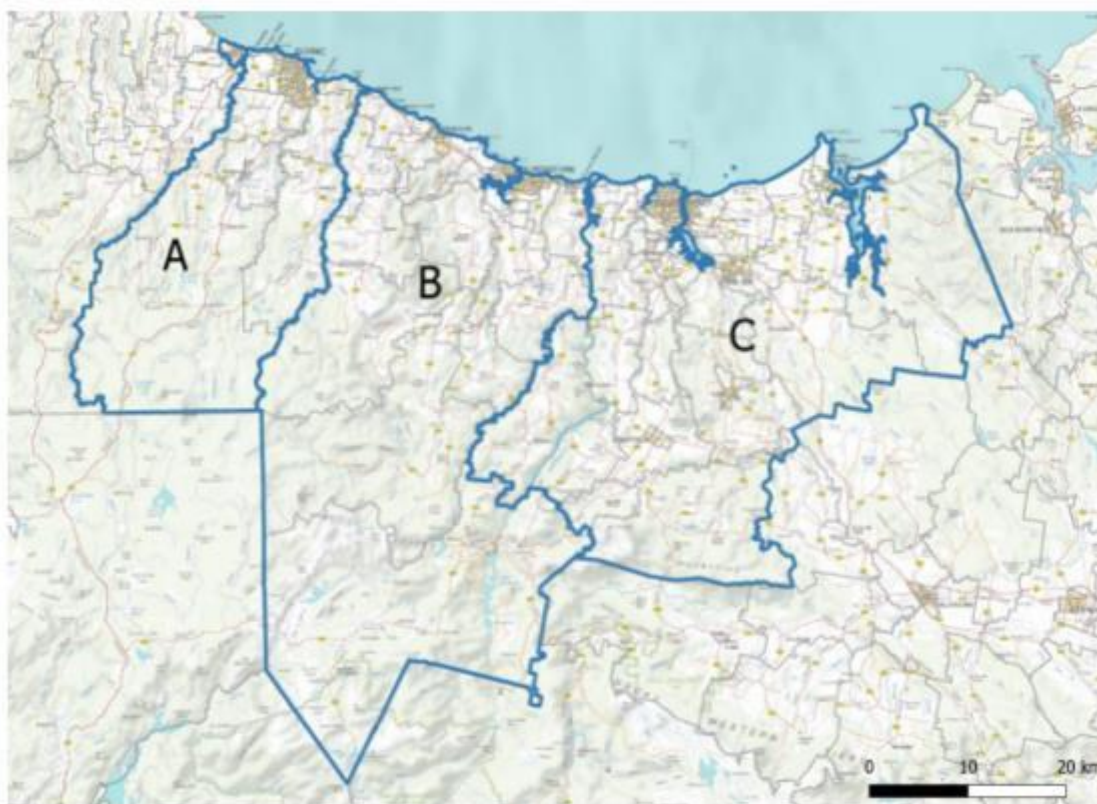
- Adds a little to Burnie to make it a little larger.
- The Wilmot area does have some community of interest with the Ulverstone area.
- Does provide a larger rate base for the two suggested Councils.
- The urban cities and towns could help the rural areas if managed well.
- Positive delivery of primary health with two regional hospitals.
- Emergency services in place so would stay the same.
- There is a greater capacity to manage administration, representation and operations if the structure was soundly designed.

Scenario 1 Weaknesses/Challenges

- Central Coast Council(CCC) has worked hard for 30 years to include Penguin into CCC. This has now been bedded down and the disruption would start all over again if the area was transferred to a Western Council with very little gain.
- This scenario includes Kentish into a large and complex rural area with huge country road responsibilities and long travel times. The Central Coast roads are basically arranged to and from the coast to the hinterland, with only very little across hinterland roads. Eg From Sheffield to Gunns Plains it is quicker to travel to the coast, along the highway and then down the Gunns Plains Rd. And the need to manage multiple depots would be cumbersome. There is no gain for the rural road network in this proposal.
- The Kentish and Latrobe communities are largely opposed to amalgamation with Devonport. While there may be some areas with high worker travel to Devonport from Kentish and Latrobe, that does not mean those workers wish to live in Devonport. Indeed, they choose to live outside it now. Most Kentish and Latrobe residents express to our Councillors that they wish to remain separate from Devonport.

- Dividing of assets and finances would be complex in this scenario. Debt level across Councils would need to be addressed.
- Lack of recognition of rural and urban communities as they are very unique in their own way. Communities value their sense of place and this would be lost if the focus was on urbanisation.
- People choose where they want to live because of the livability of the area including facilities to enhance life style like sport, recreation, socialisation and community groups. This would be difficult to provide in a bigger Council area. This scenario is not popular and has very little merit.
- Loss of identity for the smaller Councils would create opposition to the merge. Representation of Councillors over the larger area would need to be managed carefully and introduction of wards to continue local representation would be necessary.

5.2. Scenario 2



Scenario 2 would establish three Council areas:

- (A) the existing Burnie LGA incorporating Somerset;
- (B) the existing Central Coast LGA extended to incorporate south of Cethana and Moina (currently in Kentish LGA); and
- (C) the combined existing Latrobe, Devonport, and eastern part of Kentish LGAs (minus the areas south of Gowrie Park).

Scenario 2 Strengths

- This looks like an even distribution of area size and population but considering the urban versus rural demographics, this would not be a preferred option.
- Devonport would retain its position as a major service centre and the combination of Council services would provide future efficiencies.

Scenario 2 Weaknesses/Challenges

- Central Coast assuming responsibility for Cradle Mt area and areas south of Cethana and Moina is confusing and not supported.
- While it is unclear from the maps exactly where the boundary would lie between Council B & C it is apparent that Lorinna would lie in Council B and Wilmot would be in C. Travel from the coast Council centre of B, presumably Ulverstone, to Cradle or Lorinna

Scenario 2 Strengths

- Shared tech services could provide greater levels of support.

Scenario 2 Weaknesses/Challenges

would be through C in Wilmot then back to B. If this scenario were to be chosen it would be more sensible to use the Forth River as a boundary, but it is a poor outcome for the area. There is a century of connection and community of interest between Kentish and Lorinna and Cradle that would be lost in this scenario.

- Smaller areas in this scenario may not receive a suitable form of service level & become totally forgotten.
- Sheffield should remain in the same municipality of the Cradle Mountain - Lake St Clair National Park.

Sheffield is the nearest population centre to the National Park and serves as a gateway town providing a convenient stop for supplies and accommodation to the thousands of visitors that pass through each year.

The recently redeveloped Sheffield Visitor Information Centre serves as an important part of the connection with the National Park, provides visitors with maps, brochures, and advice about the Cradle Mountain-Lake St Clair National Park and valuable information on hiking trails, weather conditions, wildlife, and other attractions in the area, enhancing the visitor experience.

Each year the Visitor Information Centre sells more than 200 National Park Passes to visitors who are travelling to Cradle Mountain.

- Public acceptance of a merge with Devonport and loss of traditional areas of Kentish west of Gowrie Park would create angst within the community. Representation would also be a concern.

Scenario 2 Other Option – Mole Creek, Deloraine could join with Kentish and Latrobe as there would be a focus on tourism, agriculture activity.

5.3. Scenario 3



Scenario 3 creates one new Council area for the Cradle Coast Community Catchment, consisting of the existing Central Coast, Devonport, Kentish, Latrobe and Burnie LGAs.

Scenario 3 Strengths

- It would dilute the input of the 2 cities to enable, hopefully, a wider area range of representatives to reflect the wishes of all the communities, not just the larger areas.
- One Council with one outdoor and one indoor staff with centralised hubs around the coast. Retention of staff would improve as there would not be any competition between other Councils for experienced, qualified staff. Rural and urban areas would have an equal say with clear representation and a

Scenario 3 Weaknesses/Challenges

- Unwieldy to say the least. Amalgamation worst case scenario!
- A Council area should be manageable. This scenario presents a Council area so large that it requires three or more offices, multiple depots, huge travel times as workers 'liaise' with other parts of the community, creates silos, creates extra middle management layers to deal with every type of responsibility of Council. It would create work to coordinate and maintain equity and fairness. Large developments in one area may see community rivalry and claims

Scenario 3 Strengths

voice to identify needs across the area.

- A larger Council would have the resources to be resilient in cleaning up after natural disasters, attracting skilled workers within one Council and overall good governance across the whole area. More resources and capabilities to respond to current and emerging community needs including climate change mitigation.
- Opportunities to lobby State and Federal Governments to partner together on issues like health and infrastructure.

Scenario 3 Weaknesses/Challenges

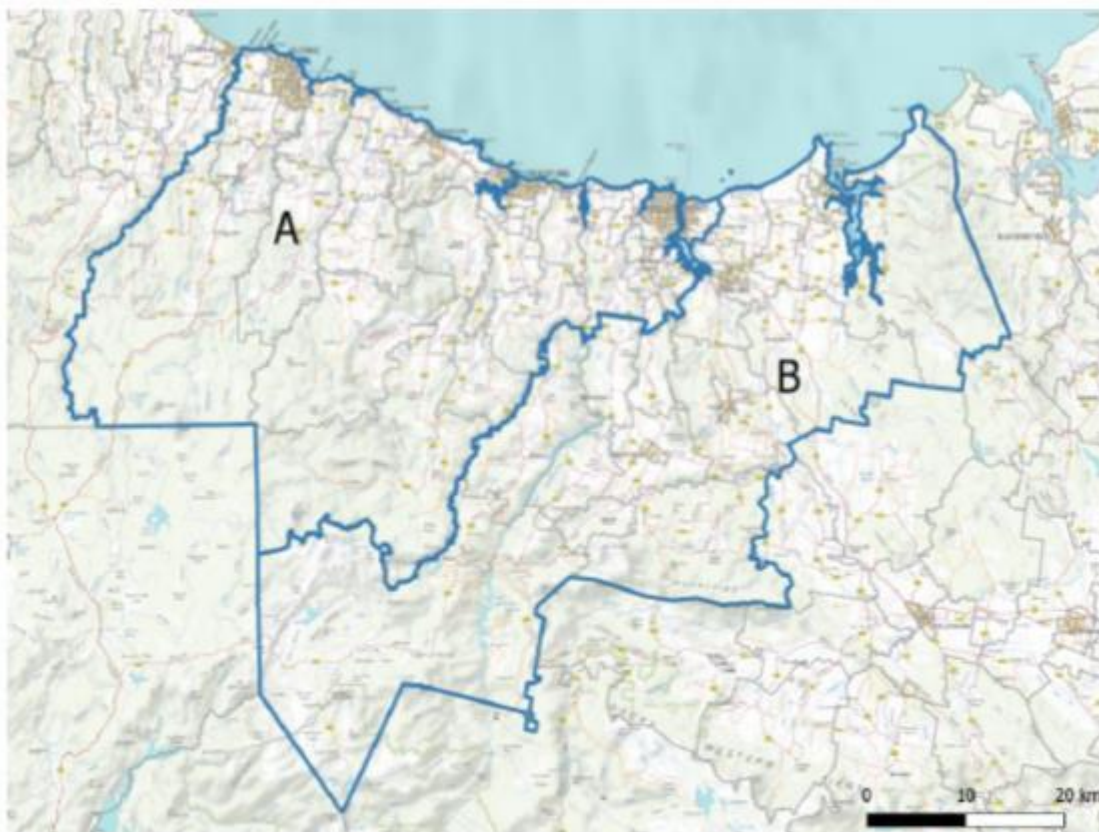
that the Council was favouring that town over this one.

- There is a danger that over time the towns would assume sameness, whereas it is the difference between towns that makes Tasmania interesting and vibrant. Every area is different and it would be difficult or impossible to have a vision for every area that brings the development that the residents of each area would feel part of. The present system of 5 Councils dedicated to the betterment of their communities, with their own budgets and self-determination is far better in the long run.
- Furthermore, in a Council this size Councillors may not be too interested in affairs in areas distant from where they live, and it would only be the big issues that would get any focus, not what happens in Railton or Wilmot. ie Councillors want to work for their own patch, close to home. How can they really care about what happens 100 kilometres away as much as what happens in their local area? And to be fair Councillors are only human. Their time would be spread very thinly across every area in this scenario proposal.
- Too big and distance would be a hindrance to meeting locals and servicing the needs including roads and bridges which cities are not used to dealing with.

Rural areas could get ignored due to the high demand of services in the larger towns. Greater differences across the catchment causing a problem when establishing an equitable and consistent approach to rating.

- The largest disadvantage is the geography of the area. Comments around the size of the population being in line with other larger city areas is negated through the connectivity available in the proposal. Administration and Councillor representation would be areas that would take many years to solve effectively, and future benefits would most probably be lost through the process. It would become a target for de-amalgamation from day 1.

5.4. Scenario 4



Scenario 4 creates two new Council areas:

- (A) the existing LGAs of Burnie, Central Coast and Devonport are combined; and
- (B) existing Kentish and Latrobe LGAs are combined.

Scenario 4 Strengths

- This scenario is the least impactful for Kentish and Latrobe residents and is closest to ensuring that representation for our communities will be maintained. As relatively small Councils, Kentish and Latrobe have driven many projects to the benefit of our communities. It is because we have a deep understanding of our area that we can continually drive a vision that benefits the community even further. With larger Councils the focus and the will to make improvements will

Scenario 4 Weaknesses/Challenges

- The three larger cities and towns across the coast are operating individually now and could sustain this model for some time to come. However, to combine these three areas would put huge demands on the three Councils and the transition period would be enormous and very costly.

tend to go to the biggest and squeakiest wheels, leaving the small country areas unimproved. The public have expressed to Councillors that they wish to remain as is, and definitely do not wish to amalgamate with Devonport.

- The larger city identity of Devonport, Central Coast and Burnie would attract a greater level of Government support due to size.
- La Trobe Council in Victoria was formed in 1994 and has similar characteristics to a new Council which would include Devonport, Central Coast and Burnie areas. La Trobe has a population of 77,318 and includes the towns of Traralgon (26,907), Moe (16,812) and Sale (13,673). It has an area of 1422 km² compared to a combined Devonport, Central Coast and Burnie areas of 1655 km² and a population of 70,641. La Trobe is surrounded by large rural Council areas.
- Thanks to the resource sharing between Kentish and Latrobe an amalgamation of the two would cause least disruption for our residents and might be an easy 'win' for the FOLG review.
- The other 'win' for this scenario is the opportunity for continuing resource sharing of Planning, EHO and other services to the West Coast Council in the event of Scenario 1 or 2 for that

catchment. A new Council based on the Devonport, Central Coast and Burnie areas would also be of sufficient size to provide some fee for services, such as information technology, to the smaller adjoining Councils.

- Proven viable & sustainable relationship between the 2 Councils.
- Kentish and Latrobe Councils have proven that resource sharing is very productive. The responsibility and accountability to our communities is paramount and together projects can be developed across the two municipalities with financial credibility. Local access to services and representation would remain with Latrobe and Kentish working as one.
- KaLIBA Business Association is working hard to develop a strong network across all businesses and to be an advocate to lobby the State and Federal Governments for extra funding for larger projects and improved services. This is a significant initiative to enhance economic development across the two municipalities.
- Distance is manageable for staff to engage with the local community. Local representation is maximised and services are adequate. There are more opportunities to employ local

residents to stimulate the economy.

- The IT system of Tech One has at times been challenging during the implementation of this service but the overall benefits far outweigh the difficulties faced during the setting up of this system.

Scenario 4 Other Option – The consideration of adding some parts of existing Meander Valley to Kentish Latrobe should also be considered. The western end of Meander Valley (Deloraine, Mole Creek and Kimberley, Elizabeth Town) has been given little option but to travel huge distances to services in both catchments for that Council area (Central and Midlands catchment and Tamar Valley catchment), despite Kentish and Latrobe sharing the boundary right next door. Both Councils have strong connection to the Hydro developments in the Mersey Forth scheme, National Parks and reserves, rural tourism and upcoming Renewable Energy Zone developments. ie there IS already a community of interest between Kentish and Meander Valley Councils.

6. Comment On The Boards Information Packs – Supporting Papers

6.1. Supporting Strong and Empowered Local Communities

The Kentish and Latrobe Councils support the statement that “irrespective of any structural change, as local government services become increasingly complex and professionalised, future workforces should continue to leverage technologies and new work practices in order to ensure access to scarce professional and technical workers and the services they provide to regional communities”.

The Latrobe and Kentish Councils have invested heavily in technology to allow the above to occur and the benefits to the community will eventuate as the new processes are implemented and bedded down.

A combined Kentish and Latrobe Council area is still of a population and geographical scale not to diminish local democracy and citizen engagement.

6.2. Shared Services Models

The Kentish and Latrobe Councils have detailed in their previous submissions the learning from their Municipal Alliance which has been operating for 13 years and has developed where the two Councils now operate under one organisation structure.

The Councils believe whatever is the outcome of the future of local government review discussions should be held with neighbouring Councils to discuss shared services opportunities around the provision of Information Technology, Asset Management Systems, Regulatory services, and Procurement.

6.3. State Government Partnership Opportunities for Local Government

The Kentish and Latrobe Councils support the initiatives detailed in the Supporting Paper on State Government partnership opportunities for Local Government.

The Latrobe area is one of the fastest-growing population centres in the state and the Latrobe Council believes there is opportunity to co-locate a Service Tasmania centre at the Council office.

The Councils would also appreciate a strengthened partnership with the Parks and Wildlife Service to streamline the treatment of development applications on Crown Land and issues associated with Crown Land leases et cetera.

There are also opportunities to work together on cyber security and spatial information systems including a state government led software, spatial and data enterprise approach. There are potential financial savings to be made at a local level by leveraging on a state government contract for software providers. One administrative body negotiating for a software system used throughout the state in a consistent manner is significantly more cost, time and data efficient than individual Councils negotiating with vendors for their own municipal needs.

It allows Councils that might not have the resources to purchase and maintain such systems to now potentially have a lower barrier of entry to get started.

In further establishing consistent software, this also naturally extends to consistent conventions in data capture. The benefits of this approach are significant as data then becomes interchangeable and shareable.

Such an approach would make any amalgamation in the future significantly less burdensome as underlying data is then able to be more easily adopted into new Councils.

Examples of Spatial and asset information system benefits include same software, same file format, same feature representation for an asset (or other spatial representation) regardless of Council.

A standard Asset Information system includes a classification structure. If the structure for how a road asset for instance is represented and the fields are consistent, then the data is much more easily reportable and transferable.

The model is scalable from minimum required reportable information to a data rich approach depending on Council size and resourcing. Councils, through the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) could work with a lead agency to develop these consistent guidelines, systems and approaches, and a voluntary adoption has incentives through large enterprise purchasing power and consistent information interchangeability.

This also makes neighbouring Council resource sharing a lot easier as well.