



Media Release

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Cost of living a major driver for local government reform

WITH cost of living continually on the rise, nearly three quarters of the Tasmanian community believe council mergers would see a savings in their rates according to an EMRS telephone survey of 1,000 people throughout the state conducted just last month.

In releasing the figures, Chairwoman of Tasmanians for Reform Mary Massina said she was not surprised that some 73 per cent of Tasmanians believed that Councils would save money if they were to merge.

“When you combine this figure with the fact that 73 per cent of Tasmanians believe there is a need to merge councils you realise that cost of living issues are clearly driving part of the debate around this issue,” Ms Massina said.

“Given that a Deloitte Access Economics report says there could be efficiency gains of up to 35 per cent if local government reform was properly implemented, it is not surprising that the majority of the community has worked out that local government needs to shape up.”

Since Tasmanians for Reform was launched the number of organisations involved has continued to grow, with the peak body for the community sector TasCOSS now adding its weight to the campaign.

CEO Tony Reidy said TasCOSS supports the campaign for reform.

“It is clear that local government mergers present a real opportunity to reduce the burden of ever increasing cost of living on ordinary Tasmanians through a reduction in the cost of delivering services,” Mr Reidy said.

Ms Massina said the reason why there were now some 25 community, professional and business organisations part of Tasmanians for Reform was because in tough economic times, it was clear that all sections of the community needed to do some heavy lifting.

“We are seeing huge budget cuts at a federal and state level, but local government appears to be forgotten,” Ms Massina said.

“Surely if we are to make Tasmania more efficient and competitive so we can create jobs, investment and tackle all cost of livings issues to ensure the generations to come, it is important for local government to pull its weight as well.

“With 73 per cent of the community stating savings can be achieved through local government mergers and just about every peak organisation in Tasmania now part of the reform campaign, the time has come to get on with the job and accept that 281 councillors and 29 councils for a population of just over 500,000 people is ridiculous.”

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