

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No. 16 of 2021 House of Assembly

The petitioners ask the House to:

The petition of the undersigned residents and ratepayers of the Glamorgan-Spring Bay Municipality, Tasmania are profoundly disappointed by the Council of Glamorgan-Spring Bay and the lack of transparency, and community consultation, in its activities particularly in regards to the mechanisms employed in the introduction of the rating system for 2021/22. .

Your petitioners, therefore, request the House to call on the Government to establish a Board of Inquiry pursuant to the *Local Government Act 1993* to investigate the financial and administrative affairs of the Glamorgan-Spring Bay Council and that such Board of inquiry:

1. Be required to produce definitive recommendations as to the rectification of such issues as are identified by the inquiry;
2. Conclude its inquiry within four months of its establishment;
3. Report to the Minister for Local Government each month on its progress and recommending appropriate action as deemed appropriate; and
4. The such monthly reports be tabled in the Parliament of Tasmania.

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

RESPONSE:

- The Government is aware that the Glamorgan-Spring Bay Council adopted a change to methodology for calculating residential rates from an Average Area Rate to the Assessed Annual Value methodology in June 2021.
- The Tasmanian Government acknowledges the concerns raised by community members, however as the Minister for Local Government and Planning I am not satisfied that this operational matter of council justifies the establishment of a Board of Inquiry as required by Section 215(1)(b) of the Act.

- The former Minister has spoken with the Mayor of the Council and the Director of Local Government has met with the General Manager and the Council's leadership team. The former Minister for Local Government and Planning also met with concerned residents.
- Local government is, however, an independent sphere of government and councils are accountable to their residents and ratepayers for the decisions they make.
- In February 2020, the then Director of Local Government conducted an audit of the Glamorgan-Spring Bay Council's plans, strategies and policies, including those required under the *Local Government Act 1993*. A significant number of deficiencies were identified.
- In July 2020 a Performance Improvement Direction (PID) was issued by the former Minister for Local Government and Planning in accordance with Part 12B of the *Local Government Act 1993*. The PID required the Council to correct deficiencies with its strategic documents within a specified timeframe.
- The strategic documents provide the Council with a strong understanding of its current budget position as well as the impact current policy settings may have on its financial sustainability and capacity to provide services to the community.
- The Council has advised that all actions required by the PID have been completed.
- To promote community confidence in the Council, the Director of Local Government has instructed the Council to provide ongoing six-monthly reports to the Director and myself on the implementation of their strategic, asset and financial management plans, including how these plans are informing decisions by the Council.
- The reports are also to include advice on strategies and actions to promote community confidence in Council, including consultation.
- These reports are to be made publicly available.



Michael Ferguson MP
Minister for Local Government and Planning

Date:

9/3/22