



Tasmanian Greens Party Policy 2014

Local Government

[RATIFIED: 18 JAN 2014 - VERSION: 14.1.0]

The Tasmanian Greens are committed to participatory democracy and recognise that local council activities impact on all citizens. Many people are unaware of its operations and of their rights and responsibilities, and the Greens would work to increase community awareness of, and involvement in, local government and encourage greater voter participation. When councils operate without appropriate community input, Local Government becomes unrepresentative and remains open to the influence of powerful groups or individuals at the expense of participatory democracy.

The Greens insist on the right of local councils to protect the genuine interests of their communities and resist any inappropriate incursion by the state on that right, while ensuring that activities of councils do not adversely affect the legitimate interests of the rest of the state.

While some councils operate well, Tasmanian Local Government has a number of deficiencies. The Greens would redress the imbalance between development interests and the more broadly representative concerns of the community. We would amend deficiencies in the Local Government Act 1993, which give local authorities minimal power over the development of rural land.

We would require councils to exhibit sufficient openness, accountability, cooperation and consultation while considering the collective environmental, social and economic impact of a decision. The protection and conservation of the local environment as well as a development's impact on the global environment should be essential considerations during the approval process.

Adequate attention to the maintenance of roads, recreation areas, water, sewerage, the natural environment and public open space is essential to quality of life. There must be co-ordination and co-operation between local and state governments in managing infrastructure for health and education, with support for employment, housing, and community development.

Management plans should interrelate with State and Federal Government plans, providing comprehensive regional planning which reflects the social and cultural needs of the community. More concern should be given to whole catchment and other biotic boundaries.

Measures

The Environment

The Tasmanian Greens will work to:

1. ensure that environmental management is a basic principle of Local Government;
2. require all councils to establish and implement programs that conserve and protect landscape, high value vegetation, wildlife and recreational amenities;
3. instigate extensive community consultation on integrated catchment management;
4. amend the Local Government Act 1993 to expand local government's role in environmental management and conservation by requiring full justification of land subdivision.

Democratic Process

The Tasmanian Greens will work to:

5. introduce compulsory voting for local councils;
6. maintain Hare-Clark voting in all elections;

7. ensure that delegation of State and Federal Government responsibilities to councils is accompanied by adequate resourcing;
8. ensure that each elector has only one vote in any one municipality;
9. retain postal voting for local elections;
10. require each council to have in its Strategic Plan a program to inform the public about the procedures of Local Government and the community's rights within those procedures;
11. support council meetings at times suitable for community involvement, integrate community participation into meeting procedures, and set procedures for questions on notice from the community.

Community Wellbeing

The Tasmanian Greens will work to:

12. boost Local Government's capacity to provide recycling services, community waste-minimisation programs, green-waste mulching, and greenhouse gas reduction strategies;
13. ensure that Local Governments provide progressive management of cats and dogs, weed and vermin control;
14. ensure that Local Governments have energy conservation strategies and comprehensive environmental standards for new commercial and residential buildings.

Social Development

The Tasmanian Greens will work to:

15. ensure co-operation between State and Local Government to provide programs for housing, childcare, youth services and assistance for families with special needs;
16. require councils to employ qualified staff to assess and coordinate cultural and resource management.

Education

The Tasmanian Greens will work to:

17. make programs explaining Local Government freely available to all ratepayers, and mandatory for election candidates.

Services

The Tasmanian Greens will work to:

18. introduce strategies for resource sharing between councils to reduce duplication of services and machinery that results in plant and equipment being under-utilised;
19. support open boundaries of Local Government areas.

Heritage

The Tasmanian Greens will work to:

20. strengthen Local Government powers under state regulations to protect landscapes, buildings and sites that have significant cultural and historic value.

Development

The Tasmanian Greens will work to:

21. bring all development issues, including forestry and marine farming activities under Local Government scrutiny;

22. require developers to provide an environmental impact assessment from independent consultants for new subdivisions, at the developer's expense;
23. ensure developers are liable for infrastructure costs.

Pecuniary Interests

The Tasmanian Greens will work to:

24. establish an independent tribunal to determine salaries;
25. ensure elected councillors be ineligible to hold or enter into contracts with Local Government in excess of \$20 000 per annum;
26. require all mayors to sit on all major committees, with an ordinary vote but not a casting vote;
27. mandate the declaration of vested personal or family interests in Local Government programs.