

**Better, Stronger Local Government**  
**The Case for Sustainable Change**  
**November 2012**

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**SURVEY**

**Contact Details**

Please complete fields below. At least one question must be completed.  
*\*Indicates a required field*

Name

Organisation **Tweed Shire Council**

Please select

<input type="radio"/> Mayor	<input type="radio"/> Non-government organisation
<input type="radio"/> Councillor	<input type="radio"/> Professional association
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Council	<input type="radio"/> Business association
<input type="radio"/> Council employee	<input type="radio"/> Individual business
<input type="radio"/> Community organisation	<input type="radio"/> Regional grouping of councils(eg ROC, alliance)
<input type="radio"/> MP or political party	<input type="radio"/> Community member
<input type="radio"/> State agency	
<input type="radio"/> Other (please specify) <input type="text"/>	

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Suburb **MURWILLUMBAH**

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Email Address **tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au**

Your Council **Tweed**

**Note:** All submissions may be made publicly available. If you do not want your name or identifying details released please indicate below.  
Name not for publication?

QUESTIONS

The local government system

1. 'Local government in NSW must change significantly to meet 21st Century challenges'
 

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree
2. The discussion paper 'Better, Stronger Local Government' has identified the main issues that require reform in the NSW local government system.
 

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree
3. Do you agree with the essential elements of an effective local government system (Box 2, page 11)?
 

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree

Are there other essential elements? (please limit to <700 characters)

Council supports the essential elements described in Box 2 on page 11. In particular Council strongly supports the need for reduced State regulation and compliance regimes; remunerating Councillors for high level performance; and professional development programs for the elected members and senior staff such as the company directors course. Council also seeks greater autonomy for local government to set its own performance measures.

Fiscal responsibility

4. 'Keeping rates artificially low and failing to borrow when appropriate can be just as irresponsible as over-spending.'
 

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree
5. NSW needs to implement a new concept of 'fiscal responsibility' for councils, under which asset and financial planning, the level of rates and charges, service standards, expenditure control, performance improvement and audit practices are aligned to promote long term sustainability.
 

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree
6. The distribution of Financial Assistance Grants needs further review in order to direct additional funds to smaller rural-remote councils.
 

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree
7. Councils rates need to increase faster, based on sound long-term financial and asset plans.
 

Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree
8. Please nominate the top 3 aspects of council rating that should be reviewed in priority order?

Priority	Aspects of Council Rating				
Priority 1	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Valuation Base	<input type="radio"/> Categories	<input type="radio"/> Exemptions	<input type="radio"/> Concessions	<input type="radio"/> Other
Priority 2	<input type="radio"/> Valuation Base	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Categories	<input type="radio"/> Exemptions	<input type="radio"/> Concessions	<input type="radio"/> Other
Priority 3	<input type="radio"/> Valuation Base	<input type="radio"/> Categories	<input type="radio"/> Exemptions	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Concessions	<input type="radio"/> Other

Please add any additional comments below (please limit to <700 characters)

The revenue base for Local Government needs to increase and this could include increasing rates faster or establishing additional rate categories. However other forms of revenue should be increased such as a fuel levy allocated towards local roads - the major infrastructure back log facing all levels of government.

**Services and infrastructure**

9. *'Tackling local infrastructure needs and backlogs warrants the highest priority'*  
 Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree

10. Listed below are options to help tackle the infrastructure issue, please nominate the top 3 priorities in order.

Options	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Improved asset and financial planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved productivity and contract management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Special rate levies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased borrowing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Redistribution of Financial Assistance Grants based on infrastructure needs	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negotiating lower service levels with the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. *'Councils need to become more productive, efficient and competitive if they are to be sustainable, valued and effective partners in the state public sector'*  
 Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree

12. *New, stronger models should be implemented for regional shared services, including water utilities.*  
 Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree

13. *Regional collaboration between councils on strategic planning and service delivery should be compulsory*  
 Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Unsure     Agree     Strongly Agree

**Structures and boundaries**

14. There is a case for significant consolidation of local government in Sydney  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

15. There is a case for consolidation of local government in urban areas such as the Lower Hunter, Central Coast and Illawarra  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

16. There is a case for some further consolidation of rural, regional and coastal councils  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

17. Where councils amalgamate, there should be an option to establish elected 'community boards' as in New Zealand.  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

18. Do you agree with the preliminary list of factors informing the Panel's assessment of local government boundaries (Box 6, page 29)?  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

How is your council placed against this list of factors? (please limit to <700 characters)

**Council is well placed to deal with the following factors: Population Growth; Accessibility; Local Identity & Sense of Place; Efficiency & Effectiveness; Strong Centres; and Infrastructure Assets. There is a need for all councils to improve their strategic capacity and attract highly skilled staff and councillors. To achieve the above factors, it may be necessary to make boundary adjustments that do not combine the whole of two or more existing LGAs.**

**Governance**

19. There is a need for better governance and leadership in most councils.  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

20. 'It should be compulsory for Mayors and Councillors to undertake regular professional development.'  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

21. The role and authority of Mayors needs to be strengthened to improve leadership and accountability in councils.  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

22. There is a need for targeted professional development to improve the performance of General Managers.  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

23. There is a need to improve working relationships between Councillors (particularly Mayors) and the General Manager by providing appropriate checks and balances in their respective powers and responsibilities  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

24. There should be a shift from compliance to innovation and improvement, underpinned by better data collection and expanded benchmarking and performance reporting, and supported by upgraded internal and external audit.  
 Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

**A compact for change**

25. State and local government need to formally agree on a package of changes to achieve long-term sustainability of the sector, with give and take on both sides

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

26. The new local government association should play a more effective leadership role in driving change in the sector, and in improving the performance of councils.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

27. The Division of Local Government should play a more effective leadership role in driving change in the sector, and in improving the performance of councils.

Strongly Disagree  Disagree  Unsure  Agree  Strongly Agree

28. Are there any other issues that the Panel should be considering - or research that needs to be undertaken - in developing the final package of change proposals? (please limit to < 700 characters)

**Refer to additional report (via email to [Panel@localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Panel@localgovernmentreview.nsw.gov.au)) which includes comments about the list of essential elements of an effective local government system (Box 2, page 11), the preliminary list of factors informing the Panel's assessment of local government boundaries (Box 6, page 29) and comments on the findings of the Perth Metropolitan Review (Box 5, page 26).**

**CuRSORY**

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