THE PRACTICES OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE:

A TASMANIAN CASE STUDY

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

School of Geography and Environmental Studies
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April 2010
Declarations

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in this thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published on written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright.

Denbeigh Armstrong
April 2010

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This thesis incorporates the outcome of data analyses undertaken in collaboration with Dr Elaine Stratford as part of a research project under her supervision. The collaboration relates to research on local governance and citizen participation in Tasmania and pertains to sections of chapters 6 and 7. The findings of that research have been published in the journal, Transactions of the Institute of British Geography and the journal Local Environment.


Elaine Stratford
April 2010
Acknowledgements

There have been numerous people involved in the production of this thesis, to which I owe a deal of gratitude. In particular, I would like to extend my heart-felt appreciation to the research participants, without whom this work would not have been possible. Thank you for giving up your time and for entrusting me with your knowledge and ideas. To Elaine Stratford, my sincere thanks for your support and persistent and sympathetic supervision of my research. I am also indebted to Rob Anders, who kindly prepared the maps that appear throughout the thesis and Tony Ferrier and Rosemary Sandford, who provided valuable and insightful feedback on Chapter 3. This thesis was finalised while I was working part-time and I would like to extend my appreciation to my work colleagues for their support in the final weeks of writing.

To the two anonymous examiners I extend my sincere appreciation for your thoughtful feedback and suggestions for improvements to this dissertation and any future publications that may arise from the research.

I would like to extend my deepest thank to my family and friends for supporting and encouraging me throughout the duration of this study. In particular, I thank my mother Helen Armstrong for her valuable academic input and for looking after my daughter Madeleine during critical times throughout the production of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my partner Stewart, who not only provided inspiration and loving support throughout (especially in the darkest moments), but also edited the final copy.
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<td>ACIR</td>
<td>Advisory Council for Inter-governmental Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALGA</td>
<td>Australian Local Government Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APM</td>
<td>Australian Paper Manufacturers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COAG</td>
<td>Council of Australian Governments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cr</td>
<td>Councillor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSRG</td>
<td>Geeveston Streetscape Reference Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HVC</td>
<td>Hon Valley Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGAT</td>
<td>Local Government Association of Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGMAT</td>
<td>Local Government Managers Association, Tasmania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUPAA</td>
<td>Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHA</td>
<td>Member of the House of Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCP</td>
<td>National Competition Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOLG</td>
<td>National Office of Local Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RFA</td>
<td>Regional Forest Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMPS</td>
<td>Resource Management and Planning System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPDC</td>
<td>Resource Management and Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCAG</td>
<td>Southwood Community Advisory Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRG</td>
<td>Streetscape Reference Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDC</td>
<td>Town Development Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCAP</td>
<td>United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chronological list of Federal and Tasmanian governments

Numerous references are made throughout the work to government policies and programs implemented over time and a chronological reference of the different Tasmanian and Federal Governments from the early 1970s to the present time is provided here for reference purposes.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Federal party in government</th>
<th>Under the leadership of Prime Minister</th>
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<td>1972-1975</td>
<td>Labor Party</td>
<td>Gough Whitlam</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975-1983</td>
<td>Liberal-National Coalition</td>
<td>Malcolm Fraser</td>
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<td>1983-1991</td>
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<td>Bob Hawke</td>
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<td>Paul Keating</td>
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<tr>
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<td>John Howard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007- to date</td>
<td>Labor Party</td>
<td>Kevin Rudd</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Period in Government</th>
<th>Tasmanian State party in government</th>
<th>Under the leadership of Premier</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982-1989</td>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>Robin Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1998</td>
<td>Liberal Party</td>
<td>Tony Rundle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-2004</td>
<td>Labor Party</td>
<td>Jim Bacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2008</td>
<td>Labor Party</td>
<td>Paul Lennon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-to date</td>
<td>Labor Party</td>
<td>David Bartlett</td>
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Abstract

In this thesis I examine how local government and community actors are managing change in local governing processes. I describe how governing is practised and document the effects of such practices for the rural township of Geeveston in the Huon Valley Council, Tasmania, Australia. The aim of the research is to apprehend the materiality of governing at the local level under neoliberal governmental regimes in order to comprehend what happens and what is at stake when people govern and are governed in particular ways. This project is underpinned by an interest in everyday practices and the particular experiences of individuals in communities of place and interest and grounded in a case study of township revitalisation.

The implementation of neoliberal governmental technologies has changed profoundly governing practices at all levels of government. The term governance is being used as a general reference for these changing conditions of governing. Of concern here are the effects of those changes on local government that occurred in Tasmania, Australia during the 1990s. This period of local government modernisation emphasised managerial and structural changes designed to increase local government efficiency and effectiveness and were accompanied by legislative requirements to enhance citizen participation in local government processes. Determining how to integrate these twin goals has generated significant challenges for local government and community actors as they negotiate what it means to govern and be governed in the new governance environment.

The design for the research is based on a case study approach and draws on qualitative research methods. It assumes great value in working from the particularities of people’s experiences; a position central to the practice of cultural geography. The theoretical framework draws on concepts of government developed in literature on governmentality; a perspective that highlights the regimes of practices of government used in attempts to shape rationally human conduct for particular ends. In its detailed examination of the practices of government, this project addresses a gap identified in the literature calling for more empirical research to explicate theorizations of governmental practices.

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This research builds knowledge about local governance with attention to its constitution through the discursive and material practices of identity, community, representation, citizenship and politics in place. The work links the empirical findings of this research with concepts of the representative claim, agonistic pluralism and governing through community to problematise, respectively, meanings and practices of representation, the role of conflict in democracy and practices of community empowerment.

*Key words*: cultural geography, governmentality, representative claim, agonistic pluralism, local government, representation, participation, citizenship, place-making, Tasmania