

Media Release – 23 February 2017

Planning scheme locks in weakened protections and locks out the public

Community groups have reacted with dismay and frustration over Planning Minister Peter Gutwein's approval of the final State Planning Provisions (SPP) that lock in weakened protection for urban, environmental and cultural heritage, reduce the capacity for the public to engage in planning decisions and threaten to undermine Tasmania's unique character and identity.

The groups criticised the Minister's lack of transparency in not releasing the Tasmanian Planning Commission's report on the draft State Planning Provisions earlier. While the report was released yesterday with the SPPs, the community now must consider many hundreds of pages of dense information to compare the Commission's recommendations with the Minister's final decision.

"The Government has rolled over to appease developers at the expense of Tasmania's unique identity, its heritage and our community's ability to participate in decisions that shape its future," said Sophie Underwood, convenor of the Freycinet Action Network, who is working with 35 community and environment groups to campaign for strong planning scheme protections.

Key concerns include:

- **Key Urban Issues** – Under the SPPs, neighbourhood amenity and character, privacy and sunlight into your backyard and home will not be adequately protected.
- **Key National Parks & Reserves Issues** - Under the SPPs, there is no guarantee of public comment or rights of appeal on developments in all our National Parks and Reserves.
- **Key Heritage Buildings and Heritage Landscape Issues** – The SPP's fail to protect the built cultural heritage landscape of Tasmania and our renowned heritage towns that make Tasmania unique.
- **Community input and appeal rights:** the SPP's diminish community input into planning decisions. There are fewer opportunities for people to have their say and, if unhappy, appeal.

"This is a gift for developers who now have the green light for all sorts of developments with long-term impacts all over Tasmania. We predict increased levels of conflict between neighbours over developments and their approval. "

"The Minister's decision affects every land title in Tasmania. Not only will the SPPs lead to bad outcomes for natural and cultural heritage protection and urban amenity, the changes will create uncertainty for developers and threaten the quality of life that attract people to Tasmania."

The next phase in the development of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme is the preparation of Local Provisions Schedules. Environment and community groups will be actively working with local councils to try to secure additional protections for neighbourhood character, but fear that local councils' have had their hands tied by the SPPs.

"The SPPs represent another attack on local government by the Minister, locking in uniform development standards that fail to recognise the different character of regions across

Tasmania. The SPPs restrict what local councils can do to protect the special values in their area.” said Sophie Underwood.

The alliance for 35 groups will be meeting in Ross tomorrow to discuss the SPPs and the campaign to come. A media alert to invite media to a segment of this meeting will follow.

For Comment

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