PLANNING REFORM – AN OVERVIEW

*The Government is undertaking planning reform to provide a fairer, faster, cheaper and simpler planning system for Tasmania.*

*The first set of reforms were delivered in 2014 with the passage of changes to the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 to streamline the processes for finalising interim schemes and amending planning schemes, and a range of other measures to improve the planning system.*

*In late 2015, further amendments commenced that provide for a statewide planning scheme to be introduced. This is a significant reform to deliver greater consistency in the planning rules across the State, providing greater certainty to investors and the community.*

*The Planning Reform Taskforce established in 2014 and reporting to the Minister for Planning and Local Government has provided advice to Government on planning reform, particularly on the delivery of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.*

*New state planning policies will be prepared to give strategic guidance to the planning system on a range of matters.*

*The Government intends to introduce further legislation to deliver on its remaining reforms for major projects including in-principle approval, Ministerial call in powers and changes relating to third party appeals.*

2014 Reforms

The amendments in 2014 made a range of changes to the Act to assist in finalising the interim planning scheme process to support introduction of a statewide planning scheme.

A streamlined process for amending planning schemes was also introduced to replace the previous dispensation process and provide shorter statutory timeframes. This included reducing the timeframe for assessing permitted use and development applications from 42 to 28 days.

Other changes included allowing planning authorities to extend permits by another
2 years and clearer provisions for where minor amendments to permits can occur.

Changes were also made to the *Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993* to allow planning schemes to regulate subdivision as either permitted or discretionary development.

Tasmanian Planning Scheme

The Tasmanian Planning Scheme will deliver consistency in the planning controls applying across the State, and provide the necessary flexibility to address local issues.

The *Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment (Tasmanian Planning Scheme) Act 2015* made changes to the Principle Act to allow for the Tasmanian Planning Scheme to be established, consisting of State Planning Provisions and Local Provisions Schedules.

The Planning Reform Taskforce undertook initial preparation of the draft of the State Planning Provisions in consultation with local government and stakeholders and supported by a drafting team comprised of state and local government experts.

Local councils will develop their own Local Provisions Schedules and will continue to administer all of the planning controls that apply to their local area.

A single set of procedures and documents will also be developed for all applications and permits to support the new Scheme.

State Planning Policies

The Government will develop a suite of new state planning policies to provide strategic direction for Tasmania’s planning system, in consultation with local government, stakeholders and the community.

The new policies will inform a review of Tasmania’s three regional land use strategies and the first review of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. They will include principles to support economic development and the future needs of the community.

The Minister has established a State Policies Interdepartmental Committee to oversee this work.

The Government intends to commence consultation on the state planning policies in the second half of 2016.

It is anticipated that these new policies will cover a broad range of planning matters such as economic development, settlement and community infrastructure, transport and infrastructure, natural and cultural heritage, and hazards and risks.

Regional land use strategies

The Government recognises the important role of regional strategies in guiding strategic planning and the spatial application of zones across the State.

Under the Act, the Minister may declare a Regional Land Use Strategy for each regional area and must keep these strategies under regular and periodic review.

These strategies are considered when a local planning authority decides whether to initiate an amendment to local provisions, such as the zoning applying to that land.

Changes to the Act in late 2015 allow these strategies to adopt local strategic documents that provide further detail on the local application of a Regional Land Use Strategy.

The Minister is also now required to consult with the Tasmanian Planning Commission, planning authorities and relevant state service agencies and authorities before declaring a Regional Land Use Strategy.

As noted above, the new state planning policies, once finalised, will guide a review of the three Regional Land Use Strategies.