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Subject: Form Submission - TPC Review
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Name: Mark Westfield

Your Submission to the TPC Review: I would like to make this submission to the review of the Tasmanian Planning Commission. Although I live presently in NSW, I was brought up in Tasmania and have owned a house in Launceston for many years. I plan to return to the State early next year. I am keenly interested in developments in Tasmania.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE TPC RETAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE

The TPC must retain its capacity to perform its current functions independently of government. Its role should be to oversee projects in an objective way to balance commercial objectives with the needs and wishes of communities free of short-term political agendas. The proposed Westbury prison is a classic example of a project driven by political agendas in the face of community concern.

Ideally, the TPC's power to act independently of the government should be expanded, that it should be given the power to make and amend the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

The TPC's governance should be free from Ministerial influence, and no changes should be made that undermine the public perception of the independent operation of the TPC.

THE TPC MUST MAINTAIN ITS FUNCTION IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

It must:

Retain its existing role to review and hold hearings on representations, and report to the Minister on draft State Policies and amendments.

Retain its existing role to report to the Minister for Planning regarding Draft Tasmanian Planning Policies and to amend any planning scheme to be consistent with those policies.

Restore its role as the body responsible for making planning scheme controls and amendments by making the TPC the decision-maker for State Planning Provisions and removing Ministerial oversight for Local Provisions Schedules. This would provide the TPC with an important role in influencing planning policy.

THE TPC SHOULD DEVELOP TASMANIA'S REGIONAL LAND USE STRATEGIES

Legislation should be changed to give the TPC the responsibility to develop, amend and approve Regional Land Use Strategies with public notice and hearings.

THE TPC MUST MAINTAIN ITS FUNCTION OF ASSESSING PROJECTS OF STATE AND REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The TPC must retain its existing responsibility to assess projects of State significance e.g. major projects like Gunns Pulp Mill and Ralphs Bay, and to provide advice and recommendations to the Minister.

The role of the TPC in assessing and approving projects of State and regional significance

through existing processes should not be undermined e.g. through the draft Major Projects Bill.

THE TPC MUST RETAIN ITS FUNCTION OF REVIEWING NATIONAL PARK AND RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLANS

The TPC's role in independently and transparently reviewing reserve management plans must be retained and legislation should be amended to clarify that the TPC may make recommendations for changes to reserve management plans.

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORTING SHOULD REMAIN WITH THE TPC

The problems with State of the Environment (SoE) reporting identified by the TPC in 2013 (and reconfirmed in 2018) should be addressed and the TPC should continue to produce SoE reports each five years. These reports are vital for a range of reasons, including informing good planning.

THE TPC MUST BE PROPERLY FUNDED

Properly fund the TPC to allow it to carry out existing statutory roles, including the State of Environment Report and new State Policies.

Thank you,
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(Sent via [REDACTED])