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Subject: Form Submission - TPC Review
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Name: Stefan Vogel

Your Submission to the TPC Review: Dear Review Committee

I am writing to you with great concern about the independence of the Tasmanian Planning Commission. In a democracy it is of outmost importance to maintain a strict division of powers between the judicial executive and the legislative powers, between the local government, the state and the federal government powers as well as to ensure that the community input is heard and appropriately considered.

The Tasmanian Planning Commission is designed to provide independence in the planning process and the review and current push of the government to centralise powers is of great concern to me.

I thus request that the independence of the TPC is not only maintained but broadened and strengthened. The TPC should gain additional powers to make and amend the Tasmanian Planning scheme independent from the minister of planning. The making of any amendments to the Tasmanian Planning scheme should further require an extensive face to face as well as online community consultation process.

The TPC needs to retain its existing role to review and hold hearings on representations, and report to the Minister on draft State Policies and amendments.

Any amendments to the planning scheme should require the TPC's approval as well as the approval of a wide public consultation process. Amendments need to be presented to the public at the earliest stage and the public fully engaged into the development of any amendments. The Best outcome is when the Public is fully involved and takes ownership of such amendments.

Another particular concern is the threat to the TPC function in reviewing national park and reserve management plans. The TPC function needs to be strengthened in reviewing National Park and Reserve Management plans. Any such review needs to follow sustainability principles, which preserves our National Parks and Reserves for the use of all for generations to come. This would in particular fully restrict commercial forestry practices and commercial mining activities and to a limited degree restrict other commercial practices like the exclusive use of park and reserve land for commercial enterprises. Further on this a local clause, where community based project should be permitted to develop access to park area like walking trails or recreational accommodation that is designed for the enjoyment of all. An example of such development would be the extensive hut system in New Zealand or the hut and trail system in the European Alps that is in large maintained by walking, mountaineering and other community clubs.

The TPC in 2013 identified significant problems with the State of the Environment (SoE) reporting. This was reconfirmed in 2018. These problems should be addressed as soon as possible and the TPC should continue to produce the SOE reports, preferably more frequent than the current five-year frequency.

Last the funding of the TPC needs to be strengthened so that the TPC can fully function and act on and proactively engage with emerging issues and opportunities.

As discussed above the TPC has a crucial role in the divisions of powers within a democracy, and such division need to be strengthened.

Kind regards

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