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Subject: Form Submission - TPC Review
Date: Friday, 15 May 2020 12:59:29 PM

Name: Dr Jillian Koshin

Your Submission to the TPC Review: I write to make a submission to the review of the Tasmanian Planning Commission. Please see my submission below.

The Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC) must not be weakened in any way that limits and/or denies public input into planning decisions.

In the interests of transparency and accountability and good governance, the complete independence of the TPC must be maintained, broadened and strengthened.

Any reduction in the provisions for public input, including local councils' input into planning applications and approvals, especially in relation to 'Major Projects' introduces the potential for improper dealings and misconduct in relation to development projects.

The TPC must retain its capacity to perform its current functions independently of government, and independently of any developers and lobbyists. Government members, and other members of parliament, are always targeted behind the scenes by developers and lobbyists for favourable treatment. Any weakening of the TPC's power to act independently would have the effect of giving added power and influence to developers and lobbyists. Therefore the TPC's power to act independently of the government should be expanded. The TPC should be given the power to make and amend the Tasmanian Planning Scheme away from any influence or interference by government.

The TPC's role in the growth of Tasmania's clean, green image and economy:

Any weakening of the TPC to assess projects would see a return to the environmentally damaging and outmoded positions of 'development at any cost' or the mentality of 'the ends justifies the means'. Tasmania loves to proudly spruik its clean green image, across a range of areas, such as environment, scenery, heritage, food /wine production etc. This has only been possible as a result of the role of the TPC in planning matters. Tasmania has built its 'clean, green' image on the basis of consideration of public and local council input into planning decisions by the independent TPC. The current planning process already contains limitations on the satisfactory assessment of the impacts, significance, complex issues etc of a development proposal. There should not be any further weakening of the powers of local government and the TPC simply because of a desire by government to allow fast-tracking of projects.

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 RECOMMENDATIONS

The TPC 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 and strengthened to give the TPC the responsibility to develop, amend and approve Regional Land Use Strategies with public notice and hearings.

It is absolutely necessary to retain the TPC's existing responsibilities to assess major projects, whether of state, regional or local significance and to provide frank and fearless advice and/or recommendations to the Minister.

The role of the TPC in assessing and approving projects of State and regional significance through existing processes must 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 RECOMMENDATIONS

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 RECOMMENDATIONS

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 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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