

Submission to the Department of Justice regarding the Tasmanian Planning Commission Review – 14th May 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the forthcoming review of the Tasmanian Planning Commission.

I have on three occasions attended hearings of the Tasmanian Planning Commission (the Commission) as a result of making submissions on local planning matters. I have considered it a privilege to be able to participate in the current system, which, through the Commission, provides fair, independent and expert-based decision-making about the impacts of planning proposals on the citizens of Tasmania. Any recommendation by this review to water down this impartial approach to decision making and/or to reduce citizen participation in planning matters would be a backward step and has the potential to lead, I believe, to reduced quality of life for all residents of Tasmania.

As a result of first hand opportunities to observe the Commission at work I wish to make the following recommendations, which are based on and endorse those of Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania:

Firstly, the review should provide an opportunity to broaden and strengthen the independence of the Commission, so that it can act, and be seen to act, independently of political interference. It must remain free of ministerial influence.

Secondly, the Commission must maintain its functions in the following areas:

a) **Policy Development**, specifically through:

- Retention of its roles to review and hold hearings on representations (the area of my experience with the Commission), to report to the Minister for Planning on draft State Policies and amendments and to amend planning schemes to be consistent with these Policies.
- Restoration of its responsibility for making planning scheme controls and amendments.

b) **Assessment of Projects of State and Regional Significance**, where the Commission's role should not be undermined by the draft Major Projects Bill.

c) **Review of Management Plans for National Parks and Reserves.**

d) **Production of the 5-yearly State of the Environment Reports** and the Commission should be given the scope to rectify the problems it has identified with the reporting process.

Thirdly, the Commission should be given the responsibility to develop, amend and approve the Regional Land Use Strategies in conjunction with public consultation.

Fourthly, it is crucial that the Commission be adequately funded to carry out its roles.

In addition, I strongly urge that the draft of the Review be exhibited for public consultation and comment before it is finalised.

Patricia Ellison [REDACTED]

