

SUBMISSION TO THE TASMANIAN PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW

I can see no justifiable reason for any change whatsoever with the current Tasmanian Planning Commission, other than a strengthening in its resources and finances as explained below.

I believe, given some of the constraints also mentioned below, the Tasmanian Planning Commission is performing excellently in its role.

Terms of Reference:

1 STRUCTURE

- It is essential the Tasmanian Planning Commission is able to continue to perform its role as an independent decision maker and advisory body in a fair, just, efficient and effective manner.
- While I have had no particular experience with the Tasmanian Planning Commission Launceston Heritage Not Highrise, of which I am a member, have had recent experience with the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal and found that to be a most effective and fair minded body and believe that that is characteristic of the current Tasmanian Planning Commission.
- The functions and powers of the Tasmanian Planning Commission should be expanded and current powers used more often e.g. public hearings should be mandatory and not discretionary.
- It is accepted that representatives of State Agencies or bodies, such as TasWater and State Growth, should be members of the Tasmanian Planning Commission and this should continue but only in an advisory capacity and NOT as decision makers as this would definitely compromise any decision emanating from the Commission. Having said that it is of concern that some individuals who are current members of the Commission have publicly expressed pro-development views and as such individuals may, or could, bring undue influence on Commission decisions. It is of the utmost importance the Commission is able to, and to be seen to, present fair and balanced views, opinions and decisions.
- The Commission should have a policy role so that they can advise on regional Planning Strategies and Tasmanian Planning Policies in general.
- The Commission should maintain the State of Environment Reporting Function however this appears to have lapsed in recent years and the Commission should be provided with necessary funding and facilities to ensure it can independently perform this essential function.
- In order for the Commission to be able to effectively implement holistic integrated planning laws and policies in Tasmania there must be an end to exemptions such as Forestry on public land, Private Timber reserves, Aquaculture, Mining explorations, Dams, utilities, Agriculture etc.

- The Commission should maintain its role in policy development.
- It is essential the Commission maintains its role in public participation in planning.
- It is essential that the Commission decision making process is evidence based or merit based and NOT influenced by political pressure or influence

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

See previous concerns expressed regarding representatives of State Agencies or bodies.

3. ONGOING STRUCTURE:

- The Commission should be adequately resourced, not just financially but in staff. Without proper resourcing it is simply not possible for the Commission to perform its role. It is understood that at this time it is not properly resourced which no doubt explains the reasons for the lengthy delay in processing changes to the Tasmanian Planning System. This is unsatisfactory and should be urgently addressed.

Submitted by:

Jim Collier,

email:

Phone: