

29TH April 2020

Department of Justice
Office of the Secretary
GPO Box 825
Hobart TAS 7001

Dear Sir/Madam

**SUBMISSION TO THE
TASMANIAN PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Tasmanian Planning Commission Review.

It is very important in a democracy to take into account the compelling and significant concerns of interested citizens who are apprehensive of their state's future and environment if the following matters re this review are not taken into consideration.

A democracy should represent the **demographics of the whole population** with formulation of policies, regulations and laws **which take into account the values of fairness and justice for all** and not just the vested interests of developers and others only concerned with monetary gain at the expense of the degradation of the environment and congenial living conditions.

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 Planning and Management Appeal Tribunal and found it 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 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 such changes as the Local Provisions Schedule's. This is unsatisfactory and should be urgently addressed.

Thank you for your time in reading this submission. It is to be hoped that the relevant authorities take on board the comments in all submissions by concerned citizens who hope that the future of Tasmania is not continually threatened by various vested interests with major monetary profit as their prime and only objective. It would be detrimental to Tasmania's special environment if these valid concerns are ignored.

Yours sincerely,

S. Lafferty

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