

Media Release

4 March 2009

Premier Bartlett's Planning Announcement

The Tasmanian Conservation Trust has mixed feelings about the Premier's announced changes to the planning system and believes that a historic opportunity to improve the system has been missed.

"On the one hand the State Government has resisted calls for the amalgamation of the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal and the Resource Planning and Development Commission and for this the government must be applauded", said Tasmanian Conservation Trust President Bob Graham.

"On the other hand, what the Government has announced will make little or no difference except that we will probably have more political interference in a few major developments" said Mr Graham.

"The new planning arrangements will not make one jot of difference to the vast bulk of proposals. It will not result in more efficient planning approvals for housing, small business, commercial development or industrial developments. These approvals make up over 90% of development in Tasmania and housing and related development alone accounts for over \$1 billion annually. Inefficiencies in the planning approval system can add thousands of dollars to the cost of a new house and one could say that the Premier's hyperbole about these changes is not matched by any significant changes."

"Tasmania has a good planning framework based on the 1993 legislation. It is just that successive State Governments have refused to properly resource it and have not overseen an effective implementation of it. For example, we still have only three state policies, several Councils are still operating planning schemes that were drawn up over 20 years ago, bad development continues to chew up rural and bushland areas at the fringes of our towns and cities and infrastructure is little better than third world standards in some areas."

The TCT calls on the State Government to immediately release the final report on the review of the planning system and specifically provide the following assurances and answers:

- Confirm that the independent advisory role of the RPDC will be maintained under the new Tasmanian Planning Commission.
- Commit to providing adequate resourcing for the new Tasmanian Planning Commission.

- Confirm that third party appeal rights will be included in the new regional planning processes.
- What will happen to the previous role of the RPDC in resource planning i.e. development of State Policies, inquiries into Marine Protected Areas, Review of Reserve Management Plans and Water management Plans.

Further comment:

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