

***Speech by Essie Davis delivered at the official launch of the Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania,
Brooke Street Pier, July 6, 2017***

I love Tasmania

I was born and raised here. I have had the privilege to explore many parts of it with my parents, family and friends. It's beautiful wilderness, pristine beaches, rolling hills, mountains, rivers, peninsulas, coastlines, farms, suburbs, galleries, heritage buildings and gardens.

It's a unique amazing state and Hobart is a jewel.

I have had the privilege of living and working in most cities of Australia and I have lived and worked and travelled through many cities and towns around the world. Some large, some small, some high rise and some historical cities where they have built new medium-rise buildings that complement and enhance their already iconic heritage surroundings. And some that have lost their identity and become copycat cities with insensitive architecture drowning what may have once been a pretty location. You wouldn't believe how many homes I've had or hotels I've stayed in.

But Tasmania is always home and every time I fly back here my breath is taken away by what spectacular beauty we have here. Even driving over the hills of Bellerive it takes my breath, crossing the Derwent, approaching the bridge, looking at the ever changing Mount Wellington and the Derwent River we in Hobart are surrounded by.

I have always boasted to my friends and colleagues around the world that Hobart is the place where everybody gets a view. Of the mountains or the river or the sea. And even if that's not true of your work place or your home, it's true of riding, walking or driving around here even on brief journeys to school or the shops or work. We are so so lucky.

It's one of the most beautiful, breathtaking, rich and warm, aesthetically pleasing cities in the world.

And sadly there have been some very ugly additions which is why planning and community involvement is vital now for our future.

My family and I are currently living in Hobart and many friends and colleagues from around the world have been visiting us lately to work on upcoming films with my Husband Justin Kurzel, a film director, and myself. All of them comment on Hobart's charm, great beauty, surprising grandeur and pleasing historical and aesthetic qualities. More and more film makers want to come and film here because of our unique historical heritage buildings and visually spectacular landscape. We have had projects like The Kettering Incident and my friend Jennifer Kent's feature film The Nightingale recently filmed here.

With Dark Mofo and MONA and all the wonderful food and cultural festivals of Tasmania now we are in a unique situation. There is a resurgence of interest in this place.

People come here because it is different.

People return here because it is different.

If our City / our State is to really flourish as it is starting to we need to absolutely protect and preserve what is unique about it.

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So that all who come to Tasmania for a different experience:

- to taste something different
- to see something different
- to experience something different

are leaving inspired and telling everyone to come as opposed to leaving and saying "well it just reminded me of Adelaide... or.... Toronto or Brisbane.. or...

Difference and preservation of what is unique is going to become our greatest asset. Especially for tourism but also importantly for those who live here.

It's time to fight for our own input into the future of this city and state.

It's history, what has happened here, the landscape, buildings and architecture should reflect our uniqueness, our voice, our pride. New buildings should be complimentary to our landscape and heritage. They should be beautiful and timeless such as the outstanding Baha'i centre for learning which is a pleasure to look at and feels both contemporary and as if it has always been here. We should be at the front line of environmentally 5 star rated buildings. We should be holding the bar high demanding the best architects as our state develops and the greenest and cleverest public transport systems. We must retain every body's view of the mountain and the river and Hobart city not block them out for a privileged few and the expense of our winter sun and leafy green open spaces.

The Fragrance group has just opened their Macquarie street hotel. Is it a thing of beauty? Is that 2&1/2 meter square wall of plants the full extent of their vertical garden? Is this the best we can do? These are the people planning the horrific sky scrapers for Hobart's waterfront. Do we need or want these? They have also just purchased the university's Conservatorium of music. Home of my father GEORGE Davis's prize winning mural. This is a heritage listed art work but the governments planning legislation is removing properties from heritage listings and allowing big developers to make their own rules. What will happen to this work of art? What will happen to our heritage buildings, parks, art works?

Please don't let this city become a tasteless mishmash of the cities who got it wrong.

Let's embrace our differences, let's hold out for the best of the best, let's respect and enhance our environment in a careful and considered way.

What we have here is special. It's why tourists love it. It's why we love it. It's vital now to retain the natural beauty of our incredible state Tasmania and the rare jewel of Hobart within it. I love this place. I think you do too.

Careful, considered, and sensitive planning really matters. And so do our voices.

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I would like now to officially launch the Planning Matters Alliance of Tasmania, the voice of 46 groups from around Tasmania, and to launch their Platform document which they will be taking to the state election.

The success of this campaign will depend on donations. Buckets will be coming around now if you would like to make a contribution. There is also a donation table if you are able to give more generously.

I'll hand you back to the wonderful Sophie Underwood. Thank you for listening.