



**Media Release – 12 March 2021**

## **LGAT decision a welcome rejection of another push to weaken planning**

*Please note LGAT voting results below*

Tasmania's Planning Matters Alliance (PMAT) today welcomed the decision of the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) to reject a motion seeking to investigate removing planning decisions from councils and to have councils replaced by 'independent' expert panels.

Mayors/General Managers representing Tasmania's 29 local councils rejected a motion that PMAT described as a further attempt to reduce democratic decision making and minimise community involvement in development decisions, something set to advantage developers at the expense of local people, character and amenity.

"PMAT, awarded Australia's 2020 Planning Champion by the Planning Institute of Australia, is working to strengthen planning rules and increase community empowerment in development decisions to protect the things that make Tasmania special so the rejection of a move to weaken local involvement in development decisions is welcome," said Sophie Underwood, spokesperson for PMAT.

"Planning defines how our communities look and feel - how we live, work, travel and play and can influence our mental and physical health. Local councils are the closest level of government to the people and maintaining a strong role for councils in development decisions is the best way to engage and empower communities.

'Independent' expert panels can lead to poor outcomes for people, local amenity and the environment. One need only look at fish farms and forestry to witness decisions that prioritise industry over community which can lead to ongoing conflict and angst.

"The approval of fish farms and forestry is demonstrably failing many local communities and the environment that sustains them so it's not a model we should expand to other types of development.

"Local councils know and represent their communities and can be held accountable for the discretionary decisions they make. We know that state government planning rules can

unfortunately override a Council's ability to fully represent their ratepayers, but let's strengthen, not weaken their hand in the planning process."

**For comment: Sophie Underwood**

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## ***LGAT Motion Vote Results***

### **WHAT WAS PROPOSED?**

- On the 8 December 2020, at an Ordinary Meeting of the Burnie City Council, a motion was passed unanimously that a motion would be put to the March 2021 LGAT meeting to investigate an amendment to the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993*.
- The motion read "*That Burnie City Council move at the March 2021 LGAT General Meeting that the LGAT investigate an amendment to the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 to: 1) delete the mandatory requirement for a council to act as a planning authority for purposes of determining an application for a permit to use or develop land within its municipal area; and 2) provide as an alternative, the establishment of an independent development assessment panel to determine a permit application.*"
- **This motion was voted on today at the LGAT General Meeting held in Devonport, with the following result:** The motion was lost. We cannot provide the vote breakdown until the LGAT minutes are completed, however the vote was 16 for, 39 against and 2 abstained. Note that the LGAT has a weighted voting system – i.e. it is not 1 vote per council.