



PMAT Media Release - 18 July 2023

Removing democracy & communities from planning decisions

The Rockliff government's surprise decision to create legislation that gives developers the option to bypass local councils as the decision maker on planning applications represents a weakening of planning rules and sidelining of the democratic process.

Just three months ago, in the face of community and council opposition, the government committed to defer the consultation and consideration of this concept.

"During the local government review process, the key concerns we heard were the forced amalgamation of councils and the stripping of their role as planning authority," said Sophie Underwood, State Director of the Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania (PMAT).

"Yesterday we welcomed Premier Rockliff's abandonment of the forced amalgamation agenda, but today, we condemn this new proposal and call on elected members in the Parliament to oppose it.

"Make no mistake, this is a developer-friendly move that will alienate local communities and lead to poor planning decisions.

"This proposal is based on a flawed argument that planning is politicised by councils and councillors. Councils have diligently performed their role as Planning Authority and if a flawed decision is made, proponents and representors have recourse to appeal.

"Bypassing council takes democracy and local decision making out of planning decisions.

"This looks like a face-saving reaction to the realisation the government's local government reform agenda was unpopular and ill directed. It is aimed at appeasing developers while making it appear as though the government has a vision for the future.

"The reality is, this will skew planning in favour of developers and cut out the most important people in planning decisions - the actual people who form the fabric of Tasmania's unique communities."

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