

Tasmanian Leaders Alumni

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TOPIC:

Disruptive Development: Panel Session

Major project proposals from buildings to aquaculture are creating varied reactions throughout our communities. Disparate opinions can be viewed as disruptive and either anti or pro development. But what is disruptive development? Is it just about our built environment or other aspects of development too? What does this mean for individuals? How do we, as leaders, engage rather than polarise the community's views on development to find constructive ways forward? Are new leadership skills required to enable inclusive and meaningful debate and thus development?

This panel will explore these questions and engage your thinking to consider potential solutions and the necessary leadership skills to enable disruption to be a positive influence.

Panel Chair: Leon Compton

Panellists:

- Katrena Stephenson
- Brian Wightman
- Sophie Underwood
- Peter McGlone

*Each person is given 5 to 10 minutes to make a comment before the panel is open for more broad discussion with Leon and then with the audience.

SOPHIE'S PRESENTATION

I would like to start by asking you some questions.

Why do you live where you do?

What do you value most about where you live?

I imagine some of your list would include for your home:

views, sun and privacy

- And for Tasmania, would include:
 - clean air
 - fresh drinking water
 - beautiful natural landscapes and seascapes
 - our built heritage and neighbourhood amenity

I don't think that it would take long for us to find common ground.

Whether you vote Labor, Liberals, Greens or Independent – many in the community would share those values.

However, in my opinion, there is a disconnect between how the Government is translating those values into legislation and this is the breeding ground for 'disruptive development'.

For example, in my view, this disconnect is represented by the proposed Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

Almost 50 community groups from across the state have joined the Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania (also known as PMAT) united in their concern regarding the Scheme.

This is unprecedented in Tasmania and is reflective of both the depth and breadth of the issues.

A full list of our growing network of groups can be seen on PMAT's recently launched website, but it includes residents associations like the Blackmans Bay Residents Action Group, St Helens Progress Association, and the Huon Valley Residents and Ratepayers Association, planning specific groups such as the Tasmanian Planning Information Network and Better Hobart , big and small environment groups like the NE Bioregional Network and the Wilderness Society, and social justice and equity advocates like Anglicare.

The Tasmanian planning scheme will come into full effect in 2018.

Let me be clear, our concerns are not that there is a single planning scheme. Whether there is 1 planning scheme or 29, the substance of the scheme is what counts and how it translates to the local level.

The scheme will set out the way every single land title in Tasmania can be used or developed.

It is a very powerful tool and it will underpin our future economy and our way of life.

The underlying intent of the scheme is economic growth and development, with social and environmental values subservient to this.

In my view, the Scheme is designed to facilitate development for private rather than public benefit which will inevitably lead to 'disruptive development' because developments will be approved which are at odds with the values of people, what they value and why people live and holiday here in the first place.

The PMAT logo [show logo] reflects these values.

Tasmania is likely to end up like Victoria which has experienced similar planning 'reforms'.

Professor of Planning Michael Buxton from RMIT University in Melbourne, published a very insightful academic paper on the impact of planning 'reform' on the Victorian land use planning system.

Buxton's paper states that changes to the planning systems represent a paradigm shift away from careful and considered strategy-led planning, towards market-driven ad hoc development facilitation.

Tasmania is similar to Victoria, where we have seen the Government:

- reduce the strength of land use planning regulations
- Lessen the contributions of local communities, objectors and local councils to planning decisions and empowered development companies.
- Politicised planning by giving more power to the Minister, rather than local Councils or the independent Tasmanian Planning Commission.
- We have also seen the Government's willingness to intervene in planning decisions e.g. the current legislation proposed to facilitate the mount wellington cable car project.

So what does all this mean for all the values that we hold dear?

And what does this mean for disruptive development?

I am just going to outline a few examples under the proposed Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

Our Backyards

Under the new scheme, the following will be allowed without the opportunity for neighbours to have a say:

Smaller block sizes (as small as 450 square metres).

Higher buildings built closer to fences e.g. the average maximum allowable height has increased from 5 m to 8 .5 m – which will have implications for privacy and sunlight into your home and backyard.

An increase in neighbourhood disputes as a result of privacy intrusions is not a positive disruption.

We are already seeing disruption under the interim schemes.

Social housing

There are no provisions to encourage development of social housing.

Without provisions to encourage social housing across the State, an enclave mentality will persist – this will disrupt efforts to improve inclusion and social cohesion.

Our National Parks and Reserves

Commercial tourism uses have been made permitted within all National Parks and Reserves without any guarantee of public consultation, and no rights of appeal.

This is going to cause disruption.

Aboriginal Heritage

There is no provision for impacts on Aboriginal Heritage to be considered in a development assessment.

This will cause disruption.

Heritage Buildings & Heritage Landscape Issues

Limited protections for heritage places

This will cause disruption.

Lack of integration

Forestry, marine farming and dam construction remain exempt from the new scheme.

These issues are already causing disruption.

Your right to have a say

More and more uses and development will be able to occur without public consultation or appeal rights.

This will definitely cause disruption.

Ministerial powers

The changes shift power over planning decisions into the hands of the Planning Minister and away from the Tasmanian Planning Commission, Councils and the public.

This will definitely cause disruption.

I could go on.

So what does all this mean for leadership?

Planning Schemes should ideally be visionary and in the public interest and not based on an ideology of growth at all costs.

You could say that the growth at all costs paradigm is the ultimate in "disruptive" ideologies because it doesn't acknowledge limits to growth or values other than economic ones and as such is fundamentally unsustainable and destructive.

Maybe our leaders will need courage, compassion, kindness and wisdom in the context of ethical and moral leadership.

These leadership skills are not new – but they need to be applied more often.

Leadership needs to respect the views of the people, be sophisticated enough to seek and address feedback, to take the time required to develop a truly sustainable and supported planning scheme.

Leaders should not be afraid of transparency or challenge – rigorous decision making is improved by oversight, so involving the community in decisions, and allowing them to question those decisions is essential to democracy.

It might disrupt a business model, but it leads to better decisions and stronger communities.