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## Annual General Meeting 25 September 2022

### President's Report

It's been a year since I became PMAT President (even if Acting) at our 2021 AGM – taking over from Anne Harrison. These were big shoes to fill, but I've been doing my best, although I operate in a different, more behind-the-scenes way than Anne.

I've been involved with PMAT since 2017, but it's only over the past year that I've really begun to appreciate the range of issues that people around Tasmania have with the planning system. There is a huge amount of work being done locally by individuals and groups to protect their neighbourhoods and natural places. It is wonderful that so many of these groups are also part of PMAT's efforts to tackle these issues at a State level.

Our concerted efforts can make a difference.

As you know, PMAT formed in 2016 so we have been going now for some 7 years. We are a not-for-profit providing a community service. That service involves working towards best practice planning and helping the Tasmanian community understand the planning reforms – and what these may mean for individuals, communities and our natural environment. This education role has never been more important.

It also means arguing strongly for changes to the planning laws to achieve what is in our platform – in the face of ever new pressures to water down planning controls and reduce effective public participation in the process.

Over the past year the PMAT Board has continued to work closely with State Coordinator Sophie Underwood looking for ways to inform ourselves, spread the message about good planning and influence government and the media where we can.

#### What have we achieved in 2022?

It has been a very busy year on a number of fronts. I'll briefly mention some of the work we have been involved in, and I'm sure Sophie will say more in her report.

- We continued to work on implementing our initial **strategic plan** – much of it has been advanced. The Plan has now been published on our website, and the Board intends to revisit the strategic plan early next year.
- There has been a revamp of our **website** – and we are looking at how this can be further upgraded.
- PMAT has coordinated a major submission to the scoping stage of the Government's review of **State Planning Policies (SPPs)**. This involved a lot of work and resources – including special reports written by consultants on heritage, residential standards and the Natural Assets Code.

It has been a huge effort – especially on Sophie's part – but it is a rare opportunity to have a say on a core part of the planning reforms. Thank you to everyone involved.

We are now waiting for the State Planning Office to engage with us on the next stage of the review.



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- **Tasmanian Planning Policies (TPPs)**. The Government is now developing these with the aim of providing some much-needed strategic guidance to the planning system. PMAT provided a comprehensive submission putting forward a range of issues and proposed TPP topics.

Just this week the draft TPPs were released for comment.

- PMAT has been engaged in the *Review into the Future of Local Government in Tasmania* currently underway – especially in relation to the role of Councils as planning authorities. There appears to be a strong push to remove planning from Councils – in part or in full. PMAT is undertaking a survey of candidates for the upcoming local government elections on this issue.
- Other issues of involvement include **commenting on draft legislation** such as the *Draft Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment Bill 2022*, the proposed *Homes Act* and seeking to have State of the Environment reporting resumed.
- Two comprehensive **guides** – the *PMAT Property Buyers' Checklist* and the *PMAT What to Watch out for* guide have been published on the PMAT website. These have been produced by PMAT volunteer Fiona Brine. Thank you Fiona for your excellent work on these and other PMAT documents.
- The Board has continued to work hard to connect across the Alliance, with the wider community, to build databases, manage risk and support Sophie.
- In September, PMAT received the Bob Brown Foundation Community Group of the Year award.

**PMAT could not exist and operate effectively without the involvement and effort of a wide range of people.**

#### **Our donors**

Thank you to all our generous donors – you are essential for keeping PMAT going.

#### **Sophie, our State Coordinator**

Sophie is central to PMAT's work. Sophie's energy and commitment is amazing – she does a huge job and does it extremely well. Thank you for all you do for PMAT and Tasmania's future.

#### **Campaign Advisory Group (CAG)**

This group of community leaders from across the State convened by Sophie and representing many Alliance groups, advises and helps identify the way ahead for planning advocacy. Thank you all for your commitment and hard work.

#### **PMAT's volunteer Board.**

The Board works very hard behind the scenes to keep PMAT effective and viable. There is a substantial bank of skills, experience and planning knowledge on the Board and I am very happy that all members are nominating for their positions again this year. Thank you PMAT Board.

Many thanks also to our **Public Officer, Eric Pinkard** for everything he does for PMAT.



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Special mention to **Anne Harrison** – she may no longer be on the Board but she continues to make a big contribution to PMAT's work. Thank you, Anne.

**Alliance member groups.** You are PMAT – and therefore most important of all! Thank you for what you do in your areas, and as part of the Alliance. It has been an honour to represent you as your President this year.

In finishing I would like to say that building networks is central to PMAT, and this is something I think we should try to strengthen. I've met some of you but would like to do more to find out about your issues – and to encourage other groups to join PMAT.

I know the Board and Sophie are always happy to hear from you – please get in touch if you do want to discuss your issues and/or PMAT's role.

**Kerry Burns**  
**President**  
**Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania**