



Annual General Meeting 5 September 2020

President's Report

Thanks to each and every group in the PMAT Alliance - 60 going on 70. From this Alliance, 20,000 members/supporters is a reasonable estimate.

One very discerning supporter, tuned in to media and PR, has recently said to me that PMAT is now a critical part of advocacy in Tasmania. In his view, PMAT is professional, informed, and our work across the Alliance empowers all other member groups. He told me we are definitely getting traction, and above all he can see how we are translating the dry, technical analytical side of land use planning into something which resonates with the public. After all, land use planning determines how our communities, cities, wild places and rural land look - and how they work.

Thank you to everyone here today for being part of this. We share the load, assist each other where possible, and all of us together have made PMAT a significant advocacy group.

Welcome to new groups recently arrived

NTAG (No Turbines Action Group), SOLVE (Supporting Our Loongana Valley Environment), Taroona Community Association, BBKA (Blackmans Bay Community Association), NWECC (North West Environment Centre).

We acknowledge the PIA award

PMAT is Tasmanian Planning Champion 2019. Special thanks to the Tasmanian Planning Institute for their vote, and to Evan Boardman for the original nomination.

Sophie Underwood, our State Coordinator and fearless leader, made a super video to accompany our nomination to the national awards and the very telling image on you-tube was a full, overflowing Hobart Town Hall.

Today, I am thrilled to be able to announce just last night PMAT was awarded National Planning Champion!

Sophie, you go above and beyond with your tireless work and effective leadership of PMAT's planning campaign. Your leadership of the 34 groups trying to navigate the Major Projects Bill (MPB) and find the way forward was exceptional; it entailed real sacrifice on your part. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts and we wish we could pay you double. Our successes are your successes!

When the Minister for Planning talked about 'formidable opposition' on ABC radio 3 weeks ago, he really meant it. He may well have been listening to one of our many Zoom meetings about the Major Projects Bill. I acknowledge all the groups involved, as well as people who attended many meetings at Parliament, especially East Coast Alliance Anne Held, Hobart not Highrise Brian Corr, Tasmanian Conservation Trust Peter McGlone and Sophie. The Environmental Defenders Office and their lawyers Nicole Sommer and Jasper Lambe have



been with us through this whole process and we are very glad for their clever, wise, legal advice.

In the middle of the MPB back in July, Sophie submitted a terrific piece on the **residential standards**. This is a contentious part of the State Planning Provisions (SPPs) and this review has been a long time coming, since the end of 2016. Sophie's submission for PMAT was long, detailed and compelling. We want to stay at the table on this very important review, we want all residential groups to be involved in this review.

I also acknowledge the work of the PMAT Board, who have kept PMAT going and viable. Todd, Kez, Jennie, Vicki (such a champion) and Oliver (what a treasurer) - both have done an outstanding job for PMAT.

What PMAT needs

Right now we need assistance with facebook, the website and, above all, we need to place PMAT on a financially sustainable footing. This is a lot of work for the incoming Board. I would love to declare that PMAT is redundant, but we are not there yet, and it's not going to happen any time soon. PMAT is definitely going to be needed into the future.

Massive issues remain

The Tasmanian Planning Scheme (TPS) is generic – it ignores topography, local character, the wishes of local communities.

We also know the SPPs, a huge part of the TPS, only look at planning on a block by block basis. This is the opposite of the neighbourhood/street approach. It's not holistic and it's not strategic. I think it works against, and definitely does not preserve, heritage, amenity and precinct planning (or planning for place).

This generic TPS simplifies design and could well allow for laziness on the part of developers.

One other issue in particular I want to share with you today that I have learned from Indra Boss, highly experienced planner with a Master in Environmental Planning and BSc (Hons) who advises TasPIN (Tasmanian Planning Information Network):

One of the fundamental problems of the new TPS (to come in later this year or next year) is that:

- TPS removes integration. It does not recognise the complex system that is planning, including the imperatives of social housing and climate change mitigation.
- A core aim of the TPS was to remove duplication and to rely on other acts administered at different stages. Hence, the TPS relies on:
 - Urban Drainage Act – to replace Stormwater Management Code
 - Local Government Building and Miscellaneous Act – for Open Space requirements. Open space is no longer in the TPS subdivision provisions.

The integrated governance structure has been split up. Dismembered. DIS-integrated.



One example of the erosion of integrated planning under the mantra of removing green and red tape is with the Bushfire Directive from 2017.

Bushfire Hazard Assessment for both visitor accommodation use and non-subdivision development has in effect been moved to the building stage. This is often too late for designs that could protect biodiversity or landscape values.

Contrast this to the Federal Bushfire Commission's Review and recommendations to plan more, and better for anticipated bushfires. Basically, that better planning is required.

Should PMAT be pushing for a new position of State Architect?

Tasmania used to have one, and the office created the Greater Hobart Plan which pulled together numerous infrastructure and other strategic and Council plans to create greater cohesion. WA has a State Architect and the role is described as:

“The Government Architect provides leadership and independent strategic advice to government to improve the design of public buildings and spaces and enhance the quality of the built environment.”

VIC has a team, namely the Office of the Victorian Government Architect (OVGA) , and the role is described as:

“At OVGA, we put quality design at the centre of all conversations about the shape, nature and function of our cities, buildings and landscapes. We are an independent voice for Victorian design. Our team advocates for an approach founded in a deep understanding and respect for people and place. OVGA promotes high-quality design principles, processes and outcomes. We want to ensure that Victoria is a place that our community is proud to call home.”

Note the aspirational language – no mention of faster, cheaper, simpler, or cutting red and green tape.

It's an attitude and a set of values that go beyond economic thinking and focusing on creating certainty for developers.

Anne Harrison
President
Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania