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Proposed changes to Tasmania's Coastal Policy touches community nerve

A coalition of community groups concerned for Tasmania's coasts have welcomed the hundreds of public submissions made in response to the Tasmanian Government's proposed legislation to retrospectively change the *State Coastal Policy* – a Policy that has protected Tasmania's coasts for almost 30 years.

The community was given little more than two weeks in which to make submissions to the Tasmanian Government. The submission period closes today, and public meetings have drawn hundreds of attendees.

"The community turned out in amazing numbers to the public meetings at short notice, despite them being held on cold winter nights, because they are so concerned about the threat to the *State Coastal Policy* and the absence of information released by the State Government" Peter McGlone, Director of the Tasmanian Conservation Trust said.

"The Tasmanian community is very passionate about their coastal environment and want to see the *State Coastal Policy* retained as a key tool to protect it against inappropriate development" he added.

Avoiding the prescribed processes for community consultation and review undertaken by the Tasmanian Planning Commission, the Tasmanian Government is fast-tracking legislation to assist a multi-national developer to overcome the Policy.

"The Tasmanian community expect their views to be respected. With so many submissions and high attendance at public meetings organised at short notice in the midst of a Tasmanian winter, clearly the proposed legislation has touched a nerve with the Tasmanian community", Sophie Underwood, State Director of the Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania said.

"Rather than modifying the proposal to be consistent with the *State Coastal Policy*, the Tasmanian Government intends to modify the Policy to accommodate a developer. This is utterly wrong and sends the wrong message" she noted with concern.

"Hundreds of concerned members of the Tasmanian community have already turned out on cold, winter's evenings to public meetings on the Validation Bill that will weaken the *State Coastal Policy*, and more meetings have been requested by the public around the state" noted Rebecca Howarth, Environment Tasmania's Marine Campaigner.

"We know that hundreds of submissions have been made. The government has made a grave error imagining they could slip this dodgy, retrospective piece of legislation through quietly without the community noticing, turning lutruwita/Tasmania from the paradise we love, into a commercial developer's dream" she added.

"We have the coast today thanks to the Tasmanian Coastal Policy" said Dr Eric Woehler OAM co-chair of the Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Coastal Society. "In stark contrast to the Tasmanian Government's claims to protect the Tasmanian way of life, the proposed changes will do the exact opposite. It seems that a multi-national company has more say on Tasmania's coasts than do Tasmanians" Dr Woehler added.

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