



Media Release 18 November 2020

Local concern over planning ‘bomb’ highlights need for change

Ahead of a public meeting in Wynyard this week, Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania (PMAT) is calling on the Gutwein Government to amend Tasmania’s planning regulations pertaining to residential developments, amid a statewide spike in conflict over new residential developments.

The residential development standards (RDS) are enshrined in provisions of the statewide planning scheme and set the rules such as building height and setback from boundaries, block sizes, and multi-unit developments. Described by Tasmania’s planning appeals tribunal as ‘akin to a bomb’, the standards can remove capacity for council involvement and negatively impact values such as neighborhood character, amenity, privacy and sunlight (including to existing solar panels).

“The prescriptive, one size-fits all rules guiding residential development puts at risk local character, amenity, heritage and many other values held deeply by local residents,” said Sophie Underwood, coordinator of PMAT. “They will drive local conflict as developer aspirations trump local values and the rules cut off any avenue for recourse.”

Other entities have also expressed concerns around Tasmania’s RDS including the Local Government Association of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Planning Commission and the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal (RMPAT).

“As long as a development meets new prescriptions, other considerations are deemed irrelevant and Councils are bound to approve them, irrespective of consistency with the prevailing character and density of the area.

In a [2017 judgement](#), RMPAT stated:

*“[31] Clause 10.4.1 A1 establishes the magic number of 325 m2/dwelling; it contains no other considerations. **It is akin to a bomb which, when detonated by a compliant development, obliterates any and all non-numerical planning considerations peripheral to density - such as existing and proposed development density, compatibility with streetscape, character, urban form and so on.** The only matter of any importance is the number. “(emphasis added)*

“This week’s meeting in Wynyard will highlight just how poorly the residential development standards are playing out on the ground in Tasmania,” said Ms Underwood.

“To avoid escalating conflict, marginalising communities and irrevocable changes to the Tasmania locals love, these planning rules need to be fixed to restore balance in Tasmanian Planning decisions.”

For comment: Sophie Underwood 0407 501 999

PMAT was awarded the 2020 Planning Champion prize at the national Planning Institute of Australia awards. This national award recognises non-planners for their advocacy or for making a significant contribution and lasting presence to the urban and regional environment.

For more information visit www.planningmatterstas.org.au

WYNYARD PUBLIC MEETING – THIS FRIDAY

Come to the meeting or watch the live broadcast via PMAT’s Facebook page

Local community members at Wynyard have organised a public meeting regarding a range of issues including local residential planning laws that ‘allow for developments to be approved without oversight of local Councillors or any affected members of the Public.’

PMAT is advocating for residential planning laws that better reflect community expectations as does the Local Government Association of Tasmania.

- **DATE: Friday 20th November 2020**
- **TIME: 6 to 7.30pm**
- **VENUE: The Wynyard RSL, Goldie St, Wynyard**

GUEST SPEAKERS: Anita Dow, Shadow Minister for Local Government and Planning; Sophie Underwood, State Coordinator, Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania; Ken Dorsey, Burnie City Councillor; and Craig Garland.

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