PMAT Media Release 11 September 2026

PMAT Convinces Planning Minister to remove power over rezoning land – But will the Minister clarify how he will use his new powers of applying planning Codes

The omnibus *Land Use Planning and Approvals (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2026* (the Bill) passed the House of Assembly on 12 August 2026. The Bill passed the Legislative Council on the 9th of September with significant amendments. The Bill will now be sent back to the lower house for debate maybe in October.

"Had this Bill not been amended at the last moment, by the Legislative Council with critical advocacy by PMAT, it would have expanded and consolidated the Planning Minister's total control over the planning system. The Minister would have had new powers to amend every component of the planning controls. The Minister would have had the ultimate say over our planning system and our future. Nothing could have stopped the Minister for Planning", says Sophie Underwood

"We need to hear if it was the Minister for Planning's intention to have total control over our planning system or was it an unintentional mistake which was implied by the State Planning Office during the parliamentary briefings? The Bill as passed by the Legislative Council creates new powers for the minister to amend and apply/remove the states 16 planning codes and the Minister needs to answer what he intends using these powers for, as it was not explained during the public consultation on the draft Bill?

"It's difficult to see the Ministers new power over planning codes and attempt to have power over rezoning and codes as anything but a radical push for total control of planning decisions around the state, taking decision-making powers away from councils and the community and leaving the system wide open to the risk of corruption.

"For example, the Minister could have rezoned land to help facilitate developments for megascale data centres to large scale residential developments to sand mining and much more and there would be nothing Councils, community or the Tasmanian Planning Commission could do about it", says Sophie Underwood.

PMAT briefed the Legislative Council on the Bill on 2 September 2026 and strongly advocated that no new re-zoning powers be given to the Minister for Planning, arguing the Bill would place too much power in one pair of hands.

"It was absolutely clear to us that this Bill was so incredibly complicated that we needed to be sure that our state's legislators fully understood what the Bill was going to do before it was too late.

"We also strongly advocated for constraining the criteria for making interim State Planning Provisions amendments. These are powerful planning instruments that can bring in changes almost overnight. They are similar planning instruments that made it easier to operate short-stay visitor accommodation statewide, which have received criticism by the Local Government Association of Tasmania.

"When all the proposed new powers were used together, they would have allowed land to be rezoned statewide, overnight - without statutory consultation with residents, councils or community.

"Thankfully we have had a win to stop the rezoning powers with the help of the approximately 270 community members who also contacted the Legislative Council to raise their concerns about the Bill", says Sophie Underwood.

The Planning Minister, due to pressure sustained by PMAT and the community, agreed to amend his own Bill to remove his proposed new powers to re-zone land. But the Minister does have new powers to apply and remove the 16 Planning Codes which form a significant component of the *Tasmanian Planning Scheme*. PMAT tried to constrain these powers but failed. The Planning Minister now has control over for example local built heritage, scenic landscape values, natural values such as priority vegetation and threatened fauna species, how limits are set for land use conflict between uses from noise and odour etc and can now apply codes potentially allowing for future opportunities for electricity transmission infrastructure.

"Also, very seriously, Clause 10 of the Bill passed with no amendments. This Clause will make it easier for the approval of data centres. In fact, it was Cogency who advocated during the consultation process on the Bill to include data centres. Cogency is a Melbourne based firm that specialises in helping developers and landowners secure approvals for complex projects. It is understood Cogency are consultants to 52 renewable energy projects and 4 data centres nationally.

"Now this Bill will go back to the House of Assembly and the question that everyone should be asking now is what will the Minister do with these new powers and will the members of the lower house allow the government to get away with this clear consolidation of power?" says Sophie Underwood.

PMAT's presentation - presented to Legislative Council on September 2, 2026 calling for no new re-zoning powers to the Minister for Planning and to constrain the criteria for making interim State Planning Provisions amendments.

Previous PMAT media release on this issue: PMAT Media Release: Potential extraordinary new Ministerial powers to rezone land across Tasmania, August 26 2026.

For Comment

Sophie Underwood 0407501999