

## NEWSFRONT

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# City limits risk to investors: group

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THE Property Council of Australia says the decision of the Hobart City Council to fast-track the pursuit of a maximum building height limit in the city threatens to disenfranchise potential investors.

Describing the decision as one that was being made in haste for short-term political gain, Property Council of Australia's Tasmanian executive director Brian Wightman said it was one Hobart could not make half-heartedly.

"Any response to amending

building height controls should be carefully considered as the economic stakes for the city are high," he said.

"The Hobart City Council, as a statutory planning authority, is legally bound to uphold the planning schemes which it administers, it cannot make up its own rules," he said.

"There is a need for sound process in the making of decisions. Expert advice must be collated [such as the Woolley Report] and then released for public comment to ensure it meets community expectations."

On Monday night, Hobart's

City Planning Committee agreed to pursue a limit for building heights — a limit yet to be determined. The limit would be based on modelling by council planning officers and work done by urban design consultant Leigh Woolley.

Mr Wightman said the bid risked sending the wrong message to potential investors.

"Any planning" scheme amendment needs to be prepared to reflect expert advice and follow a statutory process," he said.

"Hobart City Council's current pursuit of building height limits is based on only partial

investigation of the issue, relies on endorsement of an expert report which has received no public review, and is prefaced by a rushed-through and ill-considered planning scheme amendment to one of its two schemes."

City Planning Committee chairman Jeff Briscoe said Mr Wightman was "scaremongering".

"We did not put in a height limit. I can't say why they are getting upset about this, it could benefit them," he said.

The proposal will go to a meeting of the full council next week.