

# Council's cable car land grab 'concerns'

BLAIR RICHARDS

HOBART City Council general manager Nick Heath has written to state MPs outlining the council's "grave concerns" about the State Government's plan to acquire land on kunanyi/Mt Wellington.

The Liberals last weekend released draft legislation aimed at clearing the way for a cable car to the summit of the mountain.

The legislation waives landowner consent for a development application and paves the way for the Government to acquire the land needed for the development.



Nick Heath

In a letter to MPs sent just before the draft legislation was released, Mr Heath said the council was concerned the

Government was setting a dangerous precedent by moving to acquire public land for the benefit of a private development.

"The council has written to and met with ... Matthew Groom and subsequently considered this matter at various council meetings as it has grave concerns around the precedent being set by the State Government in compulsorily acquiring public land for the benefit of a private development, especially land on kunanyi/Mt Wellington," Mr Heath wrote.

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# 'Grave concerns' over land grab

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"We feel it is important to bring this matter to your attention to ensure that a proper process is adhered to and that the significant natural and cultural values of kunanyi/Mt Wellington are protected."

Mr Heath said council staff were analysing the draft legislation and a report would be discussed at the full council meeting on Monday.

If passed, the law will allow proponent Adrian Bold's Mount Wellington Cable Car Company to access Mt Wellington Park to undertake assessments and prepare a development application without the consent of Hobart City Council.

From there, the project will be assessed under the normal planning process, the Government says.

Much of the eastern face of kunanyi/Mt Wellington is managed by the City of Hobart and forms part of Wellington Park, which is managed by the Mt Wellington Management Trust.

Greens leader Cassy O'Connor said the Government's bid to acquire land on the mountain could have state-wide ramifications.

"The Hobart City Council was right to be concerned

about the precedent this land takeover sets, and every other council should be worried," she said.

A State Government spokesman said the legislation would not change the need for any cable car to get the necessary approvals, including environmental protection.

He also said no public land would be sold as any part of the development and all costs would be paid by the proponent.

"The idea of a cable car on Mt Wellington has been around for over 100 years and it is time to take the next step," he said.

"The Government believes the proposed laws get the balance right and we invite everyone to have their say, including the Hobart City Council. To be very clear, this legislation merely clears the way to allow a cable car project to be assessed under the normal statutory planning process by the Hobart City Council."

The draft cable car legislation was first flagged by the State Government in February as a means of providing a clear path forward for the company's cable car.

The legislation replaced an assessment of the cable car as a project of state significance.