

Developers back new laws

Mercury 29 Aug 2017

BLAIR RICHARDS

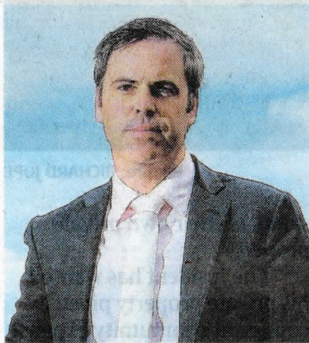
TREASURER Peter Gutwein has assured a new major projects framework isn't about fast-tracking major projects but replacing an unwieldy approvals process shunned by investors.

New draft major projects laws have been welcomed by the developers' lobby, but met with alarm by the Greens.

The legislation will significantly overhaul Tasmania's Projects of Regional Significance framework which has been in place since 2009 but has never been used.

The Projects of State Significance framework will remain in place.

Mr Gutwein said the Projects of Regional Significance framework was found to be a



PRAISE: Brian Wightman

"disjointed" process that was more complicated than going through the normal planning processes.

"The draft laws provide ministerial call-in powers to enable independent assessment of major projects where multiple approvals are required, the project is complex

or there have been unreasonable delays," Mr Gutwein said.

"It's not fast-tracking ... It's a pathway to assessment not a pathway to approval."

Mr Gutwein said the State Government had no specific project in mind as a reason for overhauling the Projects of Regional Significance framework.

"We've been working on this for some time with the planning reform process," he said.

The State Government said it would not use the legislation to step in on proposed skyscraper developments.

Property Council executive director Brian Wightman said ministerial call-in powers, early in-principle support and a clear role for the Co-ordinator General were excellent improvements on the Projects

of Regional Significance framework. "We remain hopeful that the proposed legislation will provide a sophisticated framework for assessing complex investment projects," Mr Wightman said.

Greens planning spokeswoman Rosalie Woodruff said the call-in powers could allow large projects to be "waved through" without proper oversight.

"The proposed legislation shows how far the Liberals are willing to go on behalf of developers. Streamlining and certainty for developers is code for no consultation," she said.

The draft legislation is open for public comment until October 2.

The State Government plans to table the legislation before the end of the year.