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THE VOICE OF TASMANIA

# MERCURY

## Community has spoken

**T**HERE appears to be little appetite for skyscrapers in Hobart.

Indeed, it has proven difficult to find too many people in key positions of authority willing to come out in strong favour of the proposals.

Everyone from tourism leaders, architects, authors and celebrities to the Premier has questioned the need for towering structures over the centre of the city in the wake of announcements by the Fragrance Group for a towering 457-room hotel in Davey St and a 479-room hotel in Collins St.

And today the people have spoken.

In the first ReachTEL poll on the issue, commissioned exclusively for the Mercury, more than 62 per cent of people opposed skyscrapers in central Hobart.

This grew to 74 per cent in the seat of Denison.

And unlike some other issues, opposition was strong across all three parties, ranging from 56 per cent for Liberal voters to nearly 80 per cent for the Greens.

And almost as many people were undecided as there were in support.

The highest rate of opposition per demographic came from woman (67.5 per cent) and the 51-65 age group (67.4 per cent).

Polls can be fickle but the strong trends in this sample are undeniable.

It comes at a time when we, as a community, are engaged in a serious discussion about the type of city we want to become.

There is serious talk about a \$400 million STEM centre in the CBD, a potential cable car, transport

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changes and infrastructure and, of course, major hotel developments.

But as we have stated constantly — and as Denison MP Andrew Wilkie restated last week — there is a desperate need for an overarching plan to bring together all the varying pieces of the puzzle.

There needs to be an umbrella strategy and, in the absence of a super council, legislation to underpin and enable it.

But what does the community mood against skyscrapers really mean for Hobart?

This does not represent an anti-development push — the same polling showed majority support (54 per cent) for a cable car on kunanyi/Mt Wellington.

What it does illustrate is the type of developments we are prepared to entertain.

The Government is keen not to alienate the Fragrance Group.

It makes the case that this type of international interest from serious developers is something Tasmania could only have wished for a decade ago.

We agree.

But equally, any developers are well advised to work in partnership with the countries and states in which they invest.

Frankly Tasmania and Hobart have some of the best artistic and architectural minds in the world.

It would be a major missed opportunity to not engage closely with these to ensure you can create developments that not only provide the desired commercial returns but reflect the very nature of the state and city we love and, as these results show, are so obviously keen to protect.