

# Green groups alarmed by park plans

ENVIRONMENTALISTS say the proposed new statewide planning scheme will leave national parks open to rampant development.

Green groups, including the Wilderness Society and Bob Brown Foundation, are concerned new rules will mean local councils are bypassed on development proposals for reserves.

Under draft provisions, they will be considered internally by the Parks and Wildlife Service's Reserve

Activity Assessment process.

Proposals that meet requirements will not need approval from the local council.

"It was never intended to be the main mechanism for the assessment of the development of things like new tourism projects," said Tasmanian National Parks Association spokesman Nick Sawyer.

"Council don't have any right to do anything other than to give it the go-ahead.

"It will be open slather for the State Government to pretty much authorise what it wants within parks."

The move would fit hand-in-hand with the State Government's wilderness tourism expression of interest process, the groups said.

Sophie Underwood, who recently led a campaign against tourism development by the RACT in the Freycinet National Park, said the response demonstrated that the community wanted a say.

"If the Tasmanian Planning Scheme is introduced, the community will lose the ability to properly scrutinise future proposals, opportunity for public comment will be limited and the right of appeal will be taken away," Ms Underwood said.

Planning Minister Peter Gutwein said the new process would not greatly differ from those prescribed by current interim planning schemes.

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Nick Sawyer