



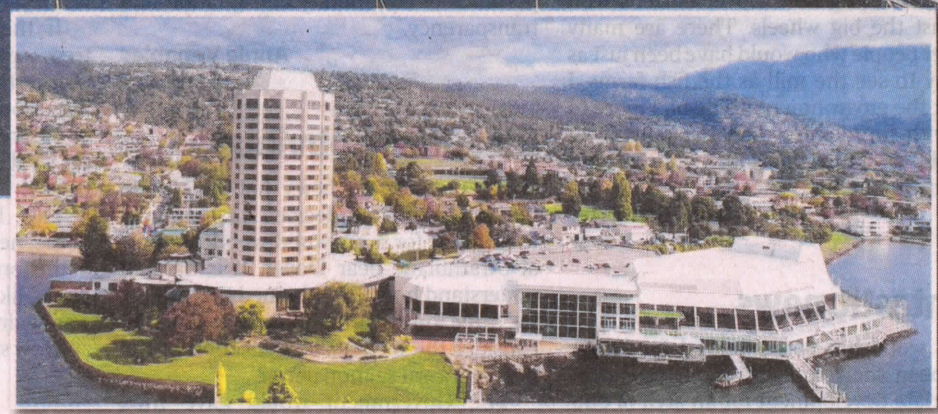
Home sweet home

It's time to decide what we want our capital city to look and feel like, explains **Stephen Poljansek**

HOBART is now big enough to change but still small enough to care. The rest of the world has discovered what those who live here always knew and now more fully appreciate. The stakes are higher than we can remember and the spotlight is on. As a community, with courage and the support of the City of Hobart, we aim to be brave enough to create a plan and follow it through. A plan for a preferred future, not one

driven by greed or left to chance. A plan that aims to inform and inspire those who don't yet understand. The above are just some of the words delivered to a council committee earlier this year by representatives of a panel of 46 community members representing an even larger group of residents of Hobart and Greater Hobart selected to represent a cross-section of our community. More than simply present to council, we told them in no uncertain words — and I believe they listened.

This was the culmination of a facilitated process that spanned several months and a significant voluntary commitment to help create a vision for the City of Hobart — a document to act as the major input to the city council's 10-year Capital City Strategic Plan reset as well as all other strategic and delivery plans. I was but one of many who did not waste this unique chance to listen to the wider community and to understand our place and its future. We collaborated, engaged with experts. Many had sleepless



nights determining what is most important to Hobart and its preferred direction. As we challenged each other and ourselves it was clear there is something about this place that we all felt and knew was true. The mountain, river, and history have given our city a special, human scale.

Hobart is a city where we can be ourselves, of chance encounters and collisions with friends and neighbours. The way of life here — the access and connections to people, nature and meaningful pastimes — is priceless. We marvel at how Hobart is a small city and yet has all the

wonder of a capital many times its size. People want to stay in our city because it is comfortable, wonderful and safe. Visitors feel a sense of friendliness and magic that they miss when they leave. Many carry a spiritual connection to this place. There is a pride in where we are — an



identity, unique and lasting connections with people and place, a shared happiness, comfort and contentment.

This is tempered by a healthy level of trepidation. We are on a precipice. We are happy to grow and share our home but don't want to lose what we love about this place.

We call on developers and architects to prove their fit — to convey how projects support our vision, avoid mediocrity and celebrate, enhance and evolve our identity. Given our limited space and the lasting nature of major constructions,

we demand a high quality of design that will make us proud years into the future.

We each have different ideas of what this city means and how we would improve it. The strength of our connection to our current way of life does not encourage us to stagnate but rather provides guidance for us to move forward.

Those who participated in the process, and those who have read the vision will recognise most of the words in this essay, because they are just a small sample of the actual words used by the people of

Hobart to express the values, principles, and, most importantly, qualities that our city is already lucky enough to have, as well as those extra qualities we desire.

We put this in writing, and I am pleased to convey that last Tuesday, *Hobart: A Community Vision for Our Island Capital* was endorsed.

The City of Hobart committed to ensure the future of Hobart will not be left to chance. It will be an exemplar council, inspiring others to come on board with our vision and using it to develop council

strategies and delivery plans.

We told the council then, and we're telling it now that the people of Hobart will continue to take interest in the implementation of this vision, the successes in delivering on our preferred outcomes, the protection of our unique and highly valued lifestyle, and the steps taken to maintain our Hobart identity.

Stephen Poljansek is a participant on the Hobart vision community panel. He is a business analyst who moved to Tasmania 21 years ago.