

Mercury
15 May 2017

Assault on Hobart's charm

THE cable car project cycles about every seven years, and we also have cycles of large inappropriate buildings proposed for Hobart CBD. Sadly, we as a city are yet to learn the lessons of Empress Towers and absurd projects like the King Cole development from the early 1990s proposed in Collins St.

Hobart now faces a trifecta of the two proposed Fragrance Towers and the cable car project. These proposals have much in common. The towers are an assault on Hobart's overall heritage values. The cable car aims to devalue the indigenous and natural heritage values of Mt Wellington. Neither fits within current development guidelines. The cable car needs State Government support to purchase land. The Fragrance Towers each significantly exceed the permitted height limits for Hobart. Why are we doing this? The fact that Fragrance needs to employ a public relations consultant says everything about those projects. The developer will seek to massage public opinion, just like the cable car proponent.

This is a time where we need a Government with a backbone and with vision for Hobart. There is no evidence of either. When it comes to corporate interests, our Government is like a cork in the ocean.

If the Hobart City Council refuses landholder consent or planning approval for either of the towers, the developer will be knocking at the Government's door and will expect the red carpet to be rolled out. That seems to be the experience with the cable car.

Tasmania has been burnt by the experience of developers getting an easy ride from government. The debacle around the approval for the Gunns pulp mill is a bright example. It corroded our faith in

the processes that evaluate these large projects. Let's leave the high-rise towers to the likes of Sydney, Melbourne and Singapore. If Fragrance wants to build hotels and the like in Hobart, let them build modest, yet inspiring and sympathetic buildings of which we can all be proud.

**Roland Browne
Glebe**

Point plan

CONGRATULATIONS to actor Essie Davis in voicing her concern regarding inappropriate high-rise buildings in Hobart in general (*Mercury*, May 8) and Fragrance Group's high-rise hotels in particular, which threaten to destroy our historical and heritage appeal.

There is a simple solution, namely to subdivide Macquarie Point into large blocks for hotel and motel development, plus a proportionate loading on the block price to cover the cost of moving the sewerage works. Each block should have a green open space requirement around each of the high-rise buildings into which could be incorporated beer gardens with affordable drinks and meals for locals. As Macquarie Point will not have water access or impact on viewing tunnels this could, and should, prove a delightful area for visitors and Tasmanians alike.

**Michael Scott
South Hobart**

much I suspect. Richard Flanagan thinks that a building in Collins St will shade out the Hobart waterfront. Someone please tell him where the sun actually shines from. The cult of the celebrity has gone too far. Their views hold no more weight in this matter than anyone else's.

**Mike Griffiths
Geilston Bay**

Views for all

SO heartening to hear Essie Davis show her passionate support of retaining our city's unique charm, rather than let foreign businesses alter it at our expense just so they can make money. Hers is a very valid opinion as she is a well-travelled and cultured individual who has seen the world, but chooses to live in lovely Hobart.

If, like me, you are fond of Tasmanian history, you've likely seen black-and-white photos of our streetscape showing beautiful old buildings which no longer exist because they were demolished for the uninspiring structures we have now. And remember, once they are destroyed they are lost forever. The fact that Hobart is a small, waterfront city with a mountain just minutes away is our asset. Why change to become like everywhere else?

If one wants to be in a big city, I suggest taking the one hour flight to Melbourne rather than disrupt our way of life here. Let's not allow individuals and companies who have no regard for the heritage and lifestyle of us proud Tasmanians to take advantage. This is not to say progress isn't welcome, just not at the expense of our irreplaceable Hobart. It really is the city where everyone has a beautiful view.

**Veronica Drake
South Hobart**