

New state planning laws a disruptive attack on communities

WHAT will you do if you wake up one morning in a few months' time and find that, without any notification, a developer has bought the property next door, pulled down the existing house and is putting up a high building right on a third of your boundary, rising to 8.5m?

Or a developer, with planning permission, puts a 15m-high block of units next door, which blocks your view of the River Derwent or your view of Mt Wellington?

With the amended Tasmanian Planning Scheme, this can happen.

Linley Grant fears that social amenity will be lost with the emphasis on making a fast buck

I have been aware for some time that changes in the scheme were going through State Parliament, but I, like many others, have just woken up to the dire consequences for many homeowners,

especially those who chose their homes for their views.

State Parliament seems oblivious of the social amenity it is destroying.

In the former planning scheme, new buildings on a block were a reasonable distance from the boundary and could not be built to 15m high. They could not block their next-door neighbour's sunshine. Yet, unless a neighbour lodges an objection, with all the stress this entails, this can now happen, and views do not count at all.

A home with a view is more valuable than one without.

The *Mercury* real estate section confirms this each week. On every TV program featuring prize-winning houses, the views are always of considerable value and often influence the design.

The amendments to the scheme have not delivered a fairer system. The emphasis favours closer density development and developers, including foreign investors, hiding behind developers, who may not live in Tasmania.

This seems an unfair way to treat long-term residents who have paid taxes over years and contributed to the community.

Greater consistency statewide does not allow adequately for differences in topography.

Will housing be of better quality for the cuts in red tape? The changes are unfair if you have to go to court to try to achieve a fair go because your amenity and views are gone.

The emphasis by politicians on the short-term buck rather than maintaining social amenity has made many concerned for the future.

It is wealth-making at the expense of social cohesion.

Already buildings in the city dominate their surrounds

and destroy the cityscape for those who live on surrounding hills. Infill housing is important, but it needs to integrate with the existing environment, not dominate.

Space and views are the reasons many residents have bought or built their homes.

The recent changes in the planning scheme are a sure way to reduce neighbourhood friendliness and feelings of safety and serenity which go with the enjoyment of reasonable space and an outstanding view.

The Government does not seem to appreciate that its

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emphasis on development at all costs for short-term finance will cause social destruction of our neighbourhoods.

The Government does not recognise that public exhibition of the draft State Planning Provisions last year was inadequate to allow the community an understanding of what the amendments would mean, so very few citizens feel they have been able to make input and voice their concerns. Councils did not have a chance to review the Interim Planning Scheme and were forced to put developments through.

The new planning provisions still have to go to councils for approval of the local provisions.

However, do Tasmanians want the amenity of their cities to be lost because developers have taken over?

Or do the majority want Hobart to remain a city of extraordinary beauty and livability?

Linley Grant is state president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She has received many awards, including an Order of Australia Medal for community service.



SCENIC: Many locals bought their homes because of the views.