

HOT TOPIC SECRET PARKS DEALS

Right to know shot to pieces

AFTER all the publicity with the “your right to know” campaign covered so well by the *Mercury* it is somewhat disappointing to learn of “State’s secret parks deal” and “Gutwein defends secrecy” (*Mercury*, October 24). I am a huge advocate for ongoing tourism and development in Tasmania for all the economic reasons but am concerned with the controversial Lake Malbena project getting the thumbs up at this point in time! As a keen fisherman myself I have no problem with the overall plan provided it ticks all the boxes pledged by the operators. But I do have a problem with “terms and conditions for licences and leases will be hidden forever — as they are commercial-in-confidence”. Hence our democratic right to know is again shot to pieces. Hmm!

Chris Davey
Lindisfarne

Our input too late

THE headline “State’s secret parks deals” should strike fear in every one of us (*Mercury*, October 24). Mr Gutwein has now admitted to secret deals and an Expressions of Interest process that disallows any public knowledge, involvement, communication or participation until the “too late” end stage. As for Mr Gutwein’s statement “the projects needed to be kept secret so other people couldn’t steal the best ideas”. Words fail me. Roll on the election.

Chris Needham
Kingston

Building suspicion

YET again the “mushroom” method for community engagement (keep us in the dark and fertilise liberally with bulls—t) is the preferred choice of government. To read about the Lake Malbena decision,

with more secretive EOI proposals in the pipeline that will not see the light of day (and thus escape public scrutiny) is frustrating and smacks of paternalism, cowardice and an autocratic mindset. The community expects to be informed and involved in decision-making, which will result in long-term impacts on our land.

Silence, obfuscation, selective PR releases that cite “commercial in confidence” simply build community suspicion and mistrust. I may be part of the Silent Majority on many topics but when it comes to handover of public assets without disclosure and rigorous and healthy debate, this, Minister Gutwein, is a step too far. PS, Feel free to “steal this idea”.

Lea Symonds
Hobart

Quiet ones have had it

MR Gutwein, the quiet Tasmanians as well as the sporadically noisy ones like me have had a gutful. Secretly, so objections can’t be raised, you are taking our Tasmania away from us to give to the rich FIFOs. And when it’s all fallen apart, and the rich have moved on from what has become a theme park, you may be retired on your generous pension to the Gold Coast. But we will be left with the trash you have created from treasure.

Gillian Unicomb
Sandford

You must be joking

YOU have to admire the Hodgman Government in managing to sneak through an “exempt from Right to Information” status to developments in our World Heritage Area. The Minister’s apologetic weasel-words about secrecy to maintain “business in confidence” could be straight

out of *The Goon Show*. The secrecy is transparently designed to avoid scrutiny and ease the way for the irreversible loss, in the mid-range tourism industry, of Tasmania’s claim to maintain “wilderness”. Minister Gutwein exhorts us to “trust the Government”. I’ve followed the avalanche of reports and “masterplan” publications all paid for by the Government with the intention of obscuring grounds to question its decisions.

“Trust the Government!” You must be joking. When served by a political organisation with little but the immediate dollar as its limited horizon, and its social sensitivity bogged down in the 1970s, there’s very little left to trust ... or hope for.

Bill Tomalin
Ranelagh

Owned by us, after all

HOW can Peter Gutwein have his smiling face on the front page while announcing the sell-off of our most precious assets, our national parks. And to rub salt into the wound it is all being done in secrecy. Details will be hidden forever, supposedly to protect developers’ “intellectual property”, to stop others stealing their best ideas. What about our, the people’s, intellectual property, it is owned by all Tasmanians after all.

Why keep the details hidden forever, once the process is approved (with no chance of opposition from affected parties) other proponents can’t then steal the idea. This whole process risks being open to corruption and innuendo if it is not an open and transparent one, people will speculate who is getting a backhand. Where is Labor’s voice in this? What a legacy this Hodgman Government is leaving.

S. Ireland
Bellerive