

# Our city's charm lies in its scale

IN 1985, I visited Copenhagen and immediately noted that there were no buildings over six storeys. In a recent SBS travel documentary, Michael Portillo stated his great approval that Copenhagen has no high-rise buildings so that one can see an uncluttered sky and the vistas. This year I visited Singapore for several weeks and the effect of multiple buildings of 40-plus storeys high confirmed for me the soullessness of such cities.

This must not happen to Hobart. Let us follow the example of Copenhagen.

**Jennifer Bond**  
West Hobart

## Unique attraction

WHICH of the words "too high" do Fragrance and Hobart planners not understand? High buildings block out sun and create wind tunnels. And we might ask the same question about the words "too tacky". Adorn an ugly concrete block with tacky decorations and it's still an ugly concrete block. Do Tasmania's and Hobart's planners wish to nurture our tourism industry? If so, they should remember why tourists come here, and it isn't to gaze at skyscrapers — they can do that in Melbourne in between shopping, going to the zoo and to big-bang stage shows.

Tourists come to Tasmania for the scenery and to Hobart for its history. Didn't the planners read the wisdom of Ben Targett (*Mercury*, March 2)? "Hobart needs more accommodation but not new hotels that stick out like sore thumbs" and "... hotel development needed to be sensitive because that was what Hobart was all about."

**Ann Greenwood**  
Hobart

## Singapore cloned

AS A keen observer of human nature I have often found it puzzling people's tendency to destroy the very thing they purport to desire the most. Some buy 'bush blocks' as their ideal for living with nature and then promptly bulldoze every tree in sight, built an enormous house and plant a manicured lawn. Then spent the rest of their days developing haemorrhoids from their ride-on lawnmower, obliterating nature sounds with loud audio and killing wildlife. Others purchase houses in heritage precincts and immediately demolish as much as they can get away with before erecting monstrous, out of character additions. They spent the rest of their lives walking straight through the old house and into their glass and shiny concrete paradise. Developers such as Fragrance are not immune to such sentiments. The company has come to Hobart because of what it is but wish to make it into something else, a bit like their home in Singapore. I like Singapore, the people are polite and friendly and unlike here it's disability friendly. High-rise, endless shopping centres, places to eat and just a fraction left of the old China and Indian towns which of course is where tourists actually want to go.

Singaporeans come to see Hobart because it's different and worth visiting. There is, however a positive to the proposed developments. It will save us all a great deal of money. I will be able to appreciate Singapore friends' desire to come here will rapidly fade as they realise we have simply replicated what they can see from their homes. Puzzling indeed.

**Ian Broinowski**  
Battery Point

## Transient benefits

HERE we are in the middle of a housing affordability crisis and what are we being presented with? A super-rich man from Singapore is proposing to build a monstrous glass tower in the heart of our city to give tourists somewhere to sleep for a few nights when they visit. It's time for those who have the power to shape our future to get real. Have they fallen for the current mantra of "jobs and growth" as though that is the be-all and end-all of decision making? Of course proposals such as the latest version of a "crystal palace" have the support of the local business community: they mean more work to help ensure they survive financially. A few hundred relatively short-term jobs would come into being. But what then? Hobartians would have to live with a soulless glass building near the heart of the city. What would be the benefit of such a building to the city? Have we not learnt from the past? What do people think when they look at Empress Towers in Battery Point? The city centre has become increasingly soulless as tall commercial and government offices have been erected in the past 40-odd years. One might well ask, what have those buildings contributed to the singular character of Hobart? I have lived in two big cities overseas: New York and Singapore; and have spent time holidaying in many others in Europe. It is those with their own sense of history and culture which stand out in my memory; those with a sense of beauty and scale have been the ones that were a joy to visit. When tourists come to Hobart, they are looking for something similar.

**Paddy Byers**  
South Hobart