

# Good ol' coloured brick trick

WHAT kind of city do we want the future Hobart to be? The sprouting of hotels is radically altering the appearance of the city. Its heritage is at stake. And now there is the threat of more high-rise.

Kudelka's cartoon (*Mercury*, August 9) ridicules the logic of the architect of Fragrance Towers. The architect's response to objections about the height of the towering Davey St hotel is to change the colour of the building to orange, after making it "taller but thinner". "Perfect!" says the objector.

It reminds me of another hotel project in the 1980s, which became the pink bricks controversy. Opposition to its size and site in the historic precinct of Sullivan's Cove was deflected by an argument about the colour of the bricks. The tactic worked. The colour was changed and, voila, the Sheraton (now Grand Chancellor) hotel was built. The Gray government supported the development. Subsequent developments in the precinct have, for better or worse, changed the character of Hobart's waterfront. The amenity of Hunter St is seriously compromised by the Zero Davey apartments. Fragrance Towers will dwarf them all, old and new alike. Surely we are not going to fall for the same trick again?

**Duncan How  
Mt Stuart**

such detail in advance about Chamberboard's plans for the public land at Kangaroo Bay. Why was Clarence City Council so negligent in implementing their community participation policy, particularly after the display of the council-promoted Kangaroo Bay Urban Design Masterplan of 2014, which gave a sense of wellbeing to the community? Chamberboard put in its development application the week before Christmas 2016. The council promptly had a planning scheme amendment made on January 9, 2017, and, lo and behold, approval was given on January 23, with barely a breath allowed for discussion, let alone appeal if one could afford the process. If only the average suburban applicant could have such a quick ride at that time of year for an even simpler application.

Fragrance could be wishing for such an easy ride. Questions as to how this has happened dominate here on the Eastern Shore. People are shocked at the outcome of the approval of two foreshore buildings, each over 20m high, one, the hotel, intruding over what was waterfront public land, for a confidential price, and the other building, a block of flats, a solid 83m long with no setback to the narrow Cambridge Rd. The robotic short answers from local and state government leaders abound. Don't ask, they say, it is done. Done it may be, but not forgotten or justified.

**Rose-Anne Hassell  
Bellerive**

## Wriggle room

PLANNING Minister Peter Gutwein has left himself a lot of wriggle room on whether he will fast-track approval of the Fragrance Group's two proposed sky-

scrapers. The Minister was quoted saying the soon-to-be-introduced major projects legislation "would not be about fast-tracking these sorts of skyscrapers" (*Mercury*, August 10). He has left open the door to fast-tracking slightly shorter skyscrapers. Perhaps the 94m-high skyscraper proposed for Collins St or a Davey St skyscraper reduced from the present 210m to 120m?

The two Fragrance skyscrapers are valued at \$200 million, so I don't trust Mr Gutwein will ignore the developer's pleas, especially after the State election.

Mr Gutwein can reassure the community that he won't fast-track skyscrapers in Hobart by using his powers as Planning Minister to establish height limits in Hobart and other cities. The Victorian government did this in Melbourne. The Minister will soon introduce the Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment (Tasmanian Planning Policies) Bill 2017 to parliament. Under this Act, he could create a state planning policy to protect urban heritage, amenity and the livability of our cities. It could include an absolute height limit (perhaps at the level of existing buildings) that would override all planning schemes and the major projects laws.

**Peter McGlone  
Tasmanian Conservation Trust**

## Double-edged sword

FOLLOWING reader Rod Force (Letters, August 10), David Walsh deserves to be lauded for revitalising Hobart. Might he also be cursed for attracting the attention of those who now see the city's development potential rather than its beauty.

**Ro Dallow  
West Hobart**

## Bellerive bulldozed

I HAVE heard much commentary on the debate for protection of views around Sullivan's Cove. Why didn't we hear the same for Kangaroo Bay, Bellerive? Is one side of the river different to the other? Is not Hobart's foreshore equally valued, east or west? Unlike Fragrance's plans, we in the Clarence community never heard any