

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26, 2016

Planning horrors

THE Talking Point by Rosemary Sandford (*Mercury*, August 15) is timely. While the proposed building scenario at the South Hobart former Blundstone site may seem impossible to comprehend because of multiple impacts, for example, overshadowing, loss of privacy, cluster infill buildings, traffic and parking problems to name a few, the reality is these types of developments and associated issues will become the norm if the Statewide Planning Provisions, which are a key part of the statewide Tasmanian Planning Scheme, are passed in their current form.

This draft legislation is pro-development, aimed at making it easy for developers to forge ahead with few, if any, checks and balances and protection for amenity, neighbourhood character and all the other local values residents hold so dear. The Tasmanian Planning Scheme enabling legislation is also top heavy in that all decisions concerning approval of the Scheme are ultimately made by the Minister.

Whilst local councils would still retain some authority on local issues, their input and ability to maintain or guide the local character of areas is severely impacted by the new scheme. So, horrific as it sounds, the scenario described by Rosemary Sandford can now happen anywhere, any place, any time. It could be happening next door to you, for providing the developers tick all the boxes, the first you would know about it would be when the bulldozers are brought in. The draft Tasmanian Planning Scheme needs a lot more work and input from the community. The major planning reforms proposed are very poorly understood by the vast majority of Tasmanians. The Tasmanian Government needs to put a halt to the current process and make a fresh start that engages the community. Tasmania's statewide planning scheme deserves a statewide conversation.

Chris Needham
Blackmans Bay