

5.10.16

Repent at leisure

WELL may Planning Minister Peter Gutwein say "the new laws would improve the quality and speed of planning decisions" (*Mercury*, September 24), but for whom? I am concerned by the assumption that while potential developers may be shown ways to modify their application to gain approval, objectors find their concerns are not relevant, as they fall outside planning criteria. In a recent Hobart City Council planning committee meeting, for example, the chairman remarked that the interim planning scheme did not cover aesthetics, presumably because of subjective interpretation. This poses a dilemma. How do we cover the gaps? What about dangerous access, increased traffic in narrow streets, or the impact of new dwellings on an iconic landscape such as recently described at Eaglehawk Neck? Surely a proposed development should not be viewed in isolation, but with regard to its environment and social impact in a community?

It is interesting to note in recent months many objections to planning is-

sues, when analysed, covered similar themes such as these. A streamlined state planning scheme should be of the highest quality. To do that requires thoughtful, diverse feedback. Yet how can the public participate in development decisions in their community or area of interest when their concerns appear to be ignored, minimised or labelled anti-progress?

A responsible Planning Minister would do well to remember the well-known adage: Decide in haste, repent at leisure.

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