

Tied up in cable

DOCUMENTS recently released in response to a request for information in relation to communications between minister Groom's office and Mount Wellington Cableway Company since March, 2014, reveal the proponents of the cable car pressured the Government to move the project forward on the company's behalf.

In March, 2016, Christian Rainey, the MWCC company secretary, writes that the company is concerned that there is "significant momentum being lost" and asks Minister Groom to urgently update the "status of the process determination". In August, 2016, the Government responded by attempting to make the cable car a Project of State Significance. When in February, 2017, John Perry, the Co-ordinator-General, determined the project should not be considered of state significance, and that it should follow the normal planning process, the Government chose

to introduce the Mt Wellington Cable Car Facilitation Bill 2017. This Bill will introduce legislation to enable private commercial development by MWCC on Wellington Park public land. The Co-ordinator-General refused to release any details of his assessment of the cable car project, so it can only be surmised it did not meet the criteria to be considered state significance.

The MWCC project was launched in April, 2014. The proponents have had three years to submit a development application, but have not. Failure to submit this DA is the only thing stopping the project being advanced through the planning process. The proponent's unwillingness to follow the process and impatience to push the project forward has raised concern about perceived conflicts of interest in the Government.

This project poses a significant threat to the Tasmania brand, the environment, and Aboriginal heritage. The social, environmental and opportunity costs will far outweigh the financial benefits if any.

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