

18th May 2016

For the Attention of The Hon Mr P. C. Gutwein,
Minister for Planning and Local Government

Re: Draft State Planning Provisions

Comment provided by the National Trust of Australia (Tasmania)

Dear Mr Gutwein,

The following are provided in response to your commissioned explanatory document of the draft State Planning Provisions.

The National Trust of Australia (Tasmania) has been operating in Tasmania since 1960 and is the only National, non-political community body assigned with the independent management and commentary on Historic Cultural Heritage. We exist under an Act of Parliament (the National Trust Act, 2006) and operate in all states and territories. This comment represents consultation from within our membership and volunteer base of over 1,000 Tasmanians.

The purpose of the new Planning Provisions, as over-arching framework and minimum standards to the Interim Planning Schemes is well understood, and its progress has been monitored. Until a decade ago, the National Trust in Tasmania was the referral body for works on Heritage Places, now referred to *Heritage Tasmania* as part of the planning process. The lists used by *Heritage Tasmania* of places, were originally created by the listing and research committees of the National Trust. Those lists were applied nationally with the advent of the *Australian Heritage Commission* in 1981.

What has shifted in the last decade Australia-wide is an enormous growth in new (primarily residential) development, standards, population growth and community attitudes to living, design and quality of life. Part of this is projected future growth. *The National Trust of Australia (Tasmania)* sees that fundamental to **quality of growth** is the **development of human identity**, via layers of built culture and evolving new forms. Perhaps no greater place exists within Australia than Tasmania for the interaction with the built and the natural environment in its purest sense. The built and the historical environment are part of the everyday quality of life in Tasmania. It is, therefore, somewhat lacking in vision to see removed from all planning documents 'desired future character'. What is the planning dream for Tasmania?

From the National Trust point of view, Tasmania is by population, fundamentally rural. All of Tasmania is a regional area. Urban growth studies of Tasmania point to declining rural populations, with ageing populations. Population growth in larger regional towns and Hobart are well under the National averages. Our biggest growth

industry is Tourism, motivated by the natural and built heritage environments. Our World Heritage Listed sites are all sites of convict interaction and incarceration. The National Trust firmly believe that Tasmania must develop a desired future character, of international interest, based on its natural and built environments.

The cultural heritage landscape of Tasmania is of unique national and international character. Those Midlands series of villages: Pontville, Richmond, Kempton, Bothwell, Hamilton, Oatlands, Ross, Campbell Town, Perth, Evandale, Longford, Westbury, Deloraine, plus the whole of the Tasman Peninsula represent Tasmania's growth during the first half of the 19th century under British rule, before the end of Transportation. Yet under the new *State Planning Provisions*, their fate is likely to be zones as villages, their councils (if any) are likely to be amalgamated. New development will accord them the rules of matching village status, with minimum plot and building sizes. By your own Taskforce's admission, *there is inconsistency in the approach to the use of Rural Living Zone in IPS*. The National Trust would ask that specific and particular emphasis be given within the planning scheme to those areas, of great character to Tasmania, with declining populations, which carry the heritage mantle for Tasmania. ***And for those whole town/villages, their approaches, farmlands and natural settings be seen as an interconnected whole.***

Why take this approach?

These are unlikely to be towns that (if identified in an urban growth study), grow substantially. Yet their character deserves careful state monitoring, based on their very Tasmanian Colonial flavour and vernacular identity. They are at risk of cheap, complying, fringe developments. Which the planning provisions allow. Which would turn into a series of identical state-wide suburbs. As is the case with the new complying outer suburbs of Canberra.

Tourists like those places. (There is money in that). We can apply for World Heritage listing of that whole landscape collectively. (There is also money in that). It is a pity that your taskforce did not include anyone with a position within *Heritage Tasmania*, the *Tasmanian Heritage Council*, the *National Trust* or a Heritage Practitioner or local Council Heritage Officer. Which leads us on to:-

Tourism Zones.

Is this it? *14.0 Major Tourism Zone*

The Major Tourism Zone, through IPS, is applied to the following sites: MONA (Glenorchy); Barnbougle (Dorset); Greens Beach Golf Club (West Tamar); Country Club Tasmania (Meander Valley); and Quarmby Country Club (Meander Valley).

Strange that this list does not include Mt Wellington, Port Arthur, Richmond or Freycinet. Or some of the historic villages listed previously. Salamanca? The National Trust's own *Hobart Penitentiary Chapel & Criminal Courts Historic Site* is second on Trip Advisor only to Mt. Wellington. This list would seem to be comprised of those particular businesses that put their name forward in the drafting process, rather than as a result of discussions with *Tourism Tasmania* etc. It would also be likely to change emphasis and scale over time (i.e. the new Port Arthur Hotel).

This area of the State Planning Provisions is totally inadequate and needs careful wording and crafting to aid this key future area of Tasmania.

23.0 Local Historic Heritage Code

These codes interact with the larger local Planning Schemes, where lists exist. The de-listing of Heritage Places (*the Integrity Project*), the National Trust conversely believes needs to be better funded to ultimately include extra extensive listings, streetscapes and evolving towns. To this code needs to be linked 25, *Scenic Protection Code*. Together these form the Cultural Heritage landscapes that are the experience and **pride of much of Tasmania**. It is the concern of the National Trust that areas not adequately listed, not in larger towns or without a heritage officer for that town, are at risk of planning compromise, modification or demolition without any legal recourse. Clear future listings can redress this.

The draft Local Historic Heritage Code needs to be reworded to take into account Scenic Protection Code and changes in future heritage knowledge / listing. (i.e. where a new development found a significant site of Tasmanian Aboriginal / European habitation, as the Brighton Bypass, a convict made road or future history such as the site of MONA, Marion Bay Falls Festival site etc)

Development Standards

These have been summarized in your *Table 9.1: Summary of numerical standards for the Residential Zones*. The National Trust, in consultation with National Trusts Australia-wide notes that these are derived from other state planning schemes and Australian Standards. They are part of wider Australian trending of urban unity in planning approval processes, and increased density. **Clear standards have not been articulated for how these are to be administered. Is the applicant to pass these through a compliance consultant and approval be automatic? Does the local council, neighbour or THC have the ability to arbitrate on an automatic approval? Are discretions possible? Can an applicant push the Standards with reference to larger precedents?**

Of the Draft State Planning Scheme, the whole of these standards are the key areas for concern. As a new, overarching scheme, all evolving flavour, urban character, community involvement and local Council expertise can be removed. It is a great pity for the very essence of evolving difference and local pride that defines Tasmania. For heritage, it is placed on a shrinking back burner. How can a fine architect achieve a tower of stairs and light as proposed for Ingle Hall in Hobart by Penny Clive? Whilst attempting to find a one size fits all, once process catches all, community is lost and quality of design is irrelevant.

Questions:

What are the buffer zones of rural living / agriculture / urban zones? What is the “desired zone”?

What of Tasmanian Aboriginal Heritage? Existence and how to treat with interaction?

Can Landscape conservation zone include heritage?

C6.9.1 Significant Trees. What of Avenues of Honour throughout the Midlands highway and near soldier’s memorials. Church yards? Many of these trees cross towns and zones.

In summary, the *National Trust of Australia (Tasmania)* is aware of the forces of planning nationally. The above is the beginning of spotting holes and inconsistencies. The National Trust is aware of political needs for development and making Tasmania easier to do business with. It is also aware of shifting demographics within Tasmania and the need for insertions of new building stock. It is aware of the shortage of local funds and professional input throughout the State. Nonetheless, the proposed state- wide approach does not seem to provide an ideal future character that addresses the unique history of Tasmania. The *Draft State Planning Provisions* need much more work and community involvement. The document does seem lazy. The result needs to articulate a long term goal, allow clear distinction and celebration of Tasmania’s built environment assets, both small and large. The *State Planning Provisions* need to build well on these assets, its unique island heritage, whilst allowing a greater diversity of future possibilities. Future applications need to be carefully checked over, teamed with a planning approval process that includes community. The consequences, without further careful work on *The Draft State Planning Provisions*, are very dull indeed.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Smithies,

Managing Director,

National Trust of Australia (Tasmania)

tpc@planning.tas.gov.au