



## HOT TOPIC MAJOR PROJECTS LEGISLATION

# Curb noisy interest groups

ALDERMAN Simon Behrakis is entirely correct (Talking Point, May 11). The only reason noisy minority groups are against the Major Projects bill is exactly because it ends the ability of minority interest groups to hold disproportionate political influence and sway over planning matters in councils subject to political lobbying pressure. In a council where the difference between getting 2 per cent and 4 per cent of the primary vote is the difference between getting elected or not, these noisy organised lobby groups have way too much say in what goes on, often using robo-letters full of deliberate misinformation to pressure council politicians to get their way.

People can still make submissions. That doesn't change. But what this Bill does is remove the hyperbole and brings veracity back to the debate. This Bill is needed to return impartiality and fairness to planning decisions, now more than ever.

**Tony Donaghy**  
 Ellendale

### Play by the same rules

WHETHER one is for or against an application, the Major Projects Bill does not stop the community from making representations. There is no "bypassing citizens" (Letters, May 12). Readers may recall an infamous 2018 HCC motion (designed to effectively block the MWCC from lodging a Development Application to include an access road to the proposed cableway base station behind McRobies Gully). From the public meeting audio record: "The emails that were speaking in favour of the motion we have tonight were much

more nuanced and researched in their approach" (Cr Bill Harvey, August 20, 2018). Alderman Behrakis (Talking Point, May 11) exposes this underlying (lobbyist) influence where "the majority are copy-and-pasted words from a campaign link," such as the email templates facilitated by the Tasmanian Conservation Trust.

While people are completely within their rights to partake in consolidated chain letters, their ability to sway elected councillors based on robo-generated numbers, etc, should be curtailed. It's time both sides to a development play by the same independent rules.

**Mick Bendor**  
 Danby

### Win some, lose some

I ENDORSE Simon Behrakis's comments about good planning outcomes. For example, uncoordinated state and local government approaches to cycling lanes could be better managed by the proposed central planning and approval panel. That Panel could also be charged with development such as the delayed Anzac Bridge and Brooker Highway shared-use bridge. I am confident the Panel could avoid starting work until ready and avoid the design flaws in those structures.

The Panel would, I am sure, take a holistic approach to planning such as reducing Hobart CBD congestion compounded by the RHH K-Block. The Panel could have mandated the RHH be relocated to the showgrounds and the existing site redeveloped for university and hotel accommodation. It would I am confident

arrest uncoordinated and insidious creep of commercial premises into residential zoned land by way of local government visitor accommodation approvals. Let the Panel rezone entire neighbourhoods and allow existing residents time to flee.

Notwithstanding that Alderman Behrakis has supported applications against HCC statutory planning officer recommendations I am sure he would take a "win some lose some" view of Panel rulings. Central planning and approving panel; interesting.

**Don Snodgrass**  
 West Hobart

### The clock is ticking

AT least with this deadly virus we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Time is ticking for a vaccine that will give us immunity from COVID-19 and some form of "new normal". Time is also ticking for submissions into the Major Projects Bill 2020 with a May 15 deadline looming. So while we can hope for relief from the pandemic, there will be no relief from the change to our cherished lifestyle if the Bill is passed.

Our Tasmania that is so special and unique will become like everywhere else. High-rise buildings, mega gated communities, cable cars, poorly sited prisons declared major projects and whisked through a streamlined planning process that takes no cognisance of current planning laws, our councillors or indeed our community. Is this what we really want? No light at the end of the tunnel here.

**Chris Needham**  
 Kingston

## Quickviews

### Professional sport cream on top

PROFESSIONAL sport is a luxury for any country. It relies on a strong underlying economy to be viable. While it does form part of the economy, it's the cream on the top. Club and school sport should be up and running before the glitz of highly paid professionals. Government must address the bedrock of business before swilling on luxury.

**Wayne Bell**  
 South Hobart

### Crack down on cash tradies

IT appears an awful lot of "tradies" have returned to work: I do hope they are not claiming unemployment benefits to give themselves a bonus. Might I suggest a \$30,000 to \$40,000 penalty, especially those taking jobs "cash in hand".

**Peter Churchill**  
 Howrah

### Beef and barley

CHINA doesn't want our beef or barley. Good. I am aware of the balance of trade figures but tell them they can't have our iron ore or coal either. See what that does to their manufacturing industries.

**R. Hughes**  
 Howrah

### Meaty fuel cut wanted

COLES and Woolies are dropping the price of some meat products by 50c a kilogram to help with recovery. I now wait in anticipation for them to really help their customers by dropping the cost of fuel by 50c per litre.

**Phil Brooke**  
 Berriedale

### Manipulation or protest

WHAT Simon Behrakis calls "political manipulation" (Talking Point, May 11) others would call lawful protest against the destruction of what makes Hobart uniquely attractive. This is a conversation summed up by the Cantonese saying, "a chicken talking to a duck."

**John Biggs**  
 Sandy Bay

### Power charges

I AGREE with Graham Roberts when he says we are being ripped off with electricity connection charges ("Charge for empty shacks," Letters, May 11). During the week I am at work and therefore shouldn't be charged a connection fee for the time I am away from home.

**Stephen Halls**  
 Seven Mile Beach

### We have the power

THIS pandemic has shown us that what our society values most, each other, isn't best served by neoliberalism. It has shown we do actually have the power and will as a community to enact a more balanced, equitable alternative.

**Richard Cuskelly**  
 Moonah

### Rethink big population

IT MIGHT be an appropriate time for the Liberal Government to reconsider its policy of massive population increase for our state. No long-term good can come possibly from it.

**Randall Corney**  
 Acton Park

## Webwords



### Tassie's road map out of COVID-19 restrictions

It's good national parks are reopening, saves everyone going to Bunnings to do their exercise. — **Bill**

## TODAY'S TEXT

So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire. And the tongue is a fire. — **James 2:5-6**