

The Mercury

Anti-cable car group opposed major projects bill bid

UPDATED: The group opposing the proposed Mt Wellington cable car says proposed government legislation to fast-track major projects should be abandoned. Here's why.

DAVID KILLICK, Mercury
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About 1000 people attended a human banner against the Mt Wellington cable car proposal in South Hobart. IMAGE: ROB BLAKERS

THE government's major projects legislation would make it easier for development proposals like the Mt Wellington cable car to bypass planning schemes, those opposed to the project say.

Residents Opposed to the Cable Car have made a submission opposing the legislation, which removes councils from the assessment of major projects and puts them in the hands of expert panels.



Vica Bayley spokesman for Residents Opposed to the Cable Car at Waterworks Reserve in South Hobart. Picture: NIKKI DAVIS-JONES

ROCC spokesman Vica Bayley said the bill was flawed and should be withdrawn.

“This is a fast-track, shortcut approval process tailor-made for complex, controversial projects that would struggle to make it through a proper assessment and approval process,” he said

“This is bad legislation that sidelines the community and existing planning rules to prioritise the interest of developers.

“The Major Projects Bill should be abandoned.”

Mr Bayley said he was not reassured by assurances the legislation would not be used for the project.

In its submission, the ROCC said existing processes such as the Projects of State Significance and unused Projects of Regional Significance processes should be retained.

It said the draft Bill limited public consultation and transferred power from councils into the hands of minister and panels, while curtailing rights of appeal.

Premier Peter Gutwein said he believed the legislation would be welcomed by most Tasmanians.

“I think the legislation that we have currently out for consultation is a very sensible framework, and it’s one that I would hope the vast majority of Tasmanians would support,” he said.

Tom Allen from the Wilderness Society said the legislation was “a developer’s dream”.

“The Bill proposes radical changes that represent an assault on the Tasmanian way of life, that will weaken the fabric of the state for generations to come,” Mr Allen said.

“The Major Projects Bill covers World Heritage land, national parks and public reserves.

“Why would you want major project legislation to cover such special and pristine places unless you intend to develop them?”

Hobart City Council Alderman Simon Behrakis is a vocal supporter of the legislation.

“That so many anti-development lobby groups have come out of the woodwork with baseless fearmongering to oppose this legislation should be a signal to the government and the community that this legislation is on the right track to improve planning outcomes in Tasmania,” he said.

“These groups, whose business model solely relies on agitating and waging political war on development, are simply defending their own interests.”

Hobart city Council will on Monday vote on its position on the Bill.

Council officers have recommended council votes to inform the government that the Bill is unnecessary: “That the Tasmanian Government be advised that the City of Hobart sees no need for the draft Land Use Planning and Approvals Amendment (Major Projects) Bill 2020 to amend the Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993 and the Environmental Management and Pollution Control Act 1994.”