

# The Mercury

## The House of Assembly expected to pass major projects legislation after Labor provided in-principle support

**Tasmania's controversial major projects legislation is set for an overhaul as parliament resumes this week, with the "critically important" changes touted to boost the state's economic recovery.**

Blair Richards, Mercury  
August 17, 2020 8:03am

THE state government will be in a hurry to progress major projects legislation when state parliament resumes this week.

Parliament last sat on June 24, and there have been only seven sitting days of the House of Assembly since parliament was suspended due to coronavirus in late March.

Fourteen sitting weeks including the budget session will be crammed into the latter half of 2020 to make up for lost time.

Parliament will see the finer details of the Liberals' overhaul of the state's major projects approval process when legislation is tabled on Tuesday.

The new laws will replace old projects of regional significance rules, which were never used, and applied to high-value or complex major projects, as declared by the Planning Minister or their developers.

Leader of Government Business Michael Ferguson said the changes were "critically important" to the state's economic recovery post-coronavirus.

He said the legislation was in keeping with drafts that had been released for public consultation.

"The rules don't change but the process is better and this is about ensuring complex projects can be given a fair opportunity to be assessed and so we can get projects moving in our state so people can be employed and businesses can do well," Mr Ferguson said.

The government will also aim to push through legislation to allow the state to recover funds from people undertaking hotel quarantine.

Last month Premier Peter Gutwein said non-essential travellers coming to Tasmania would be made to pay \$2800 to cover the cost of 14 days hotel quarantine.

“The legislation guarantees the government has the right to recover those funds when it's necessary,” Mr Ferguson said.

The House of Assembly is expected to pass both pieces of legislation after Labor provided in-principle support.

Deputy Opposition Leader Michelle O’Byrne said Labor would spend its time in parliament focusing on the state’s finances.

“Our focus is going to be on the economic position our state is in and on jobs ... The government is headed for \$273 million in deficit and a huge debt position,” she said.

Ms O’Byrne said the Liberals needed to improve their record on delivering major projects if the state’s economy was to improve.

“(There is still) \$200 million not delivered on infrastructure projects ... the government has never been able to deliver on projects,”

Planning Matters Alliance Tasmania, which represents around 70 community groups across the state, opposes the major projects Bill.

PMAT co-ordinator Sophie Underwood said the new process would prioritise private commercial development over people and create division in the community.

“This process removes any oversight of the parliament and diminishes the rights of people and communities to be meaningfully involved in development decisions. It is anti-democratic and we urge all parliamentarians to vote it down,” she said.

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