

## EDITORIAL, Mercury



Martin Flanagan addresses at meeting at the Hobart Town Hall over concerns about planned developments on the East Coast. Picture: MATHEW FARRELL

## Where's the Government?

EDITORIAL, Mercury

August 23, 2018

MARTIN Flanagan has today nailed it. In his interview with Amanda Ducker in her *Cafe Society* column, he calls out the State Government for having so far failed in its duty to give proper oversight of the proposed Cambria Green development at Dolphin Sands, near Swansea on the East Coast.

“This matter has national and international planning implications,” Flanagan says in the interview.

“Saying it’s all up to the Tasmanian Planning Commission means there’s no parliamentary debate at state and federal levels about it, despite the fact there are issues relating to [everything from] water and land to national security”.

### **FIGHTING BACK AGAINST GOVERNMENTS’ ‘STEALTH’**

Flanagan owns a shack at Dolphin Sands and is one of those opposed to the \$100 million development that would see a luxury hotel, hundreds of apartments, cafes and restaurants built on a 3185-hectare parcel of land near the sleepy town. But

Flanagan's perspective on the role of government in the Cambria Green episode is relevant no matter which side you are on.

As the *Mercury* said here on Monday, we need much stronger leadership on these matters from the State Government. This is, after all, an administration that has made much of its "open for business" mantra — a message that is clearly working. Billions of dollars of investment has flowed into Tasmania since the Hodgman Government swept to power in 2014. The challenge, however, is in always ensuring that cash is being spent appropriately. The Tasmanian way of life, and our environment — both natural and built — is uniquely special. Protecting it is important.

But so is ensuring the strength of our economy and welcoming the right kind of investment. Growth is not necessarily bad. And anyway, we can't pull up the drawbridge and stop it. People want to make a life here. We should be celebrating that.

The chief executive of the consortium behind the Cambria Green proposal is Melbourne-based developer Ronald Hu. In an article written for Tuesday's *Mercury*, he explained that it was his aim that the project was designed to attract tourists to "a destination that embodies local quality agriculture, natural and heritage values, and lessens the area's reliance on day trips from Hobart." He said: "Our desire is to work with the community over the next decade and beyond to enhance the values of the place and the local community and improve the visitor capacity through sustainable development of Cambria Green." He no doubt also wants to make some serious cash, but that's fair enough.

The same day, hundreds of people packed into the Hobart Town Hall for a public meeting chaired by Flanagan that organisers said was mainly designed to raise awareness of the concerns that local residents and shack owners have with the proposal as it stands.

Planning Minister Roger Jaensch was invited but made the questionable choice to instead attend a book launch with charity Save the Children. That's a shame. Because, as we say, the Government needs to get involved. Properly managed, Cambria Green could — potentially at least — become a poster child for the right sort of development. Stuff it up, however, and we could regret it forever. The stakes are that high.