

A fairer, faster, cheaper, simpler planning system

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The Plan to make Tasmania attractive
for investment, to create jobs

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The Liberals will replace the more than 30 inconsistent planning schemes with one statewide planning scheme

A Majority Liberal Government has a plan to fix the Labor-Green planning mess:

- One single statewide planning scheme
- Streamlined approvals, one set of documents
- Overhauling major projects approvals, including in-principle approvals
- Ministerial call-in powers
- State policies for consistency
- An expert Planning Reform Taskforce
- Cracking down on third party appeals

A simpler planning system

One single statewide planning scheme

The Liberals will put in place one single planning scheme for Tasmania, replacing the more than 30 inconsistent planning schemes we currently have.

Immediately after the election the Liberals will establish within the Department of State Growth a **Planning Reform Taskforce** which will commence work on the single statewide planning scheme.

The Planning Reform Taskforce will comprise of local government and public and private sector experts who understand the need for an appropriate planning and approvals system to help grow the economy and create jobs.

To ensure that the single statewide planning scheme is fairer, faster, cheaper, and simpler for all Tasmanians, the Planning Reform Taskforce will be instructed ensure that:

- The work already undertaken to create the three Regional Land Use Strategies is taken into account;
- All land uses are appropriately covered by the planning scheme;
- All special zones and overlays are dealt with by the scheme – such as specific heritage, rural or other unique attributes covered by the existing planning schemes;
- The single statewide planning scheme is aimed at encouraging appropriate investment and providing certainty for the community; and
- Councils and industry have input into forming the new scheme.

It is important that we **fix Labor's planning mess once and for all**. The Liberals will ensure that all relevant stakeholder groups, including industry representatives, local government and community groups are consulted and are part of this important reform of our planning system.

The Planning Reform Taskforce will also develop a single set of procedures and documents for all applications and permits.

Small business and Tasmanian families struggle daily with the red and Green tape involved in development applications. A majority Liberal Government will remove this burden. This is part of our plan to cut red and Green tape by 20 per cent.

State policies to provide consistency

Immediately after the election, a majority Liberal Government will provide the leadership and consistency that has been lacking under Labor and the Greens. We will commence drafting state policies to provide the necessary guidance to councils on how to implement the single statewide planning scheme and plan for Tasmania's future land use needs.

These policies will make clear the government's intention to once again make Tasmania 'Open for Business' and provide certainty to both investors and the community about how the planning scheme will work.

State policies will include, for example, objectives such as:

- Planning and land use is to be geared toward facilitating economic growth and investment;
- Planning and land use is to take into account future needs of the community and potential growth; and
- Sustainable and sensible development is to be encouraged to assist in conserving and allowing access to Tasmania's parks and reserves.

All state policies will be drafted pursuant to relevant laws and regulations.

A fairer planning system

Cracking down on third party appeals

Labor and the Greens have allowed anti-development front groups to abuse the appeal process in our planning system.

A majority Liberal government will crack down on third party appeals, introducing a test limiting those able to make a third party appeal to those directly affected by a proposed development or community groups with a longstanding interest — not groups expressly set up to oppose development.

Further, we will make any legislative amendments required to **award costs to the successful party in an appeal, as is the norm in other legal proceedings.**

This measure will ensure Tasmania is in line with other jurisdictions and will act as another deterrent to third party appeals designed to simply obstruct.

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Making unreasonable objectors pay

In addition to restricting who may appeal development applications, a majority Liberal Government will increase the fee required to lodge an appeal with the Resource Management and Planning Appeal Tribunal (RMPAT). Appealing a decision is a serious matter and the fee should reflect this.

Until recently parties only needed to pay approximately \$70 to lodge an appeal. Late last year, Labor belatedly increased that fee to approximately \$300. That fee will be doubled to \$600 to be more in line with a fee for a writ in the Supreme Court for matters of this magnitude.

It is important to note that this will not prevent parties from lodging representations to a project during the normal planning approval process with Councils. However, once the project has received approval, this new fee will apply to appeals to RMPAT.

Successful appellants will have their fee refunded if costs are awarded in their favour.

Ministerial call-in powers

Under Labor, investors and the community have been left without leadership when it comes to planning. The Liberals will restore certainty and fairness by utilising existing 'call-in powers' for the Minister for Planning where appropriate, enabling the Minister to act if necessary.

Under the Liberals, Ministerial call-in powers will be available for projects that make a significant economic contribution, require significant capital investment, or if the project has been unreasonably delayed in the development assessment process. A similar threshold exists for the as yet unused assessment of Projects of Regional Significance.

The failure to use such call-in powers has resulted in the Labor-Green Government needing to introduce specific legislation just to get a sensible project through – like the Parliament Square project.

A faster planning system

24 hour approvals

Under a majority Liberal Government development applications made for single residential dwellings in residential zones (pursuant to Planning Directive No 4), if compliant, will be granted approval in no more than 24 hours.

Despite the simple nature of applications made under the Single Dwelling Residential Code, planning authorities can and still do take up to the full 42 days available to approve this simple application.

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Shorter assessment timeframes

For other applications for permitted use or **development we will reduce the timeframe for assessment from 42 days to 21 days, and the timeframe for the request for further information from 21 days to 14 days.**

Currently these applications can take not only the legislated full 42 days for assessment but much longer when, by virtue of the 'stop the clock' provisions, further information is requested.

These delays are unacceptable and our policy will shorten the time taken for an outcome, providing greater certainty for investors and the community.

The proposed shorter timeframes are achievable and the Liberals are committed to working with local government to ensure that we make Tasmania an easier place in which to invest and do business.

We also support private certification of simple, residential developments falling within permitted residential zones as a means of speeding up the approvals process.

A cheaper planning system

In Tasmania, preparing a development application and dealing with the Labor-Green planning mess is a lengthy, complicated and therefore, costly process.

Under the Liberals' single statewide planning scheme, preparing a development application and complying with the requirements of the scheme will be far simpler and, as a consequence, much cheaper.

In-principle approval for major developments

Too often investors spend large amounts of time and money on preparing reports and studies to comply with onerous bureaucratic planning requirements, only to have their proposal rejected. This is not conducive to attracting much-needed investment to our state.

Investors need certainty that a development is right for an area and will likely gain the necessary planning approval before they spend this money.

The Liberals will establish an in-principle approval system which will provide developers with greater certainty before proceeding to engage expensive consultants. This in-principle approval will be subject to a number of conditions or requirements that may need to be met for a full-approval to be granted. The initial application for in-principle approval a plan must indicate how any planning issues that arise will be resolved.

An in-principle approval provides investors with a greater level of certainty when investing before they proceed further.

Additionally, the Office of the Coordinator General will assist in attracting investors, providing guidance on the planning approval process and assist in cutting red and Green tape.

Costings

Zero. This policy will be implemented from within existing departmental resources.