

MEDIA RELEASE – 22 September 2020

Major Projects Bill – Major Projects process will only exacerbate problems

In May, Residents Opposed to the Cable Car (ROCC) made an extensive submission to the consultation process over the Gutwein Government's Major Project Bill, calling on the Bill to be withdrawn.

In August, analysis by ROCC of all public submissions published on the Department of Justice website made to the Major Projects Bill (MPB), showed that 98% of the submissions were explicitly opposed to the Bill. Many of the submissions raised concern about a cable car within Wellington Park.

Today ROCC repeats its call for the MPB to be abandoned:

“The community has spoken – 98% of the submissions were explicitly opposed to the MPB and many raised concerns about a cable car within Wellington Park. This is bad legislation that sidelines the community and existing planning rules to prioritise the interest of developers. It removes any recourse for legal challenge and will lead to both bad development decisions and increased community conflict. The MPB should be abandoned,” said Phil Stigant, Acting Spokesperson for ROCC.

Despite Planning Minister, Roger Jaensch's, assurances that the Mt Wellington Cableway Company's (MWCC) cable car proposal doesn't meet the criteria of a Major Project, ROCC remains concerned that if passed there would be nothing preventing the new laws being used to further facilitate the MWCC's unwanted development plans even if it is found to contravene the planning scheme and Wellington Park Management Plan.

“Based on the Liberal's historical support for the concept of a cable car on the Mountain and for Adrian Bold's MWCC proposal, Mr Jaensch's assurances are unconvincing,” said Mr Stigant.

If the community is ignored and debate continues in the Upper House, ROCC supports the amendment made by Labor in the Lower House to insert appeal rights into the major projects planning assessment process. The MPB should also be amended to ensure that the decision-making criteria for any major project located on reserved Crown Land or in Wellington Park must be in accordance with the relevant management plan (e.g. the Wellington Park Management Plan in the case of Wellington Park).



“If the government persists with this bad piece of legislation, it must be amended to ensure that the decision-making criteria for any major project located on reserved Crown Land or in Wellington Park must be in accordance with the relevant management plan. This is necessary to give both community confidence and developers certainty and will reduce potential conflict.”

“Tasmania needs a transparent and fair impact assessment process with strong, effective and credible community participation, to address both community and developers needs. This is the only way to build social license, create community cohesion and avoid polarisation. Without this Tasmania will continue to be mired by the kind of concerns about lack of transparency and conflicts of interest that have plagued the MWCC’s cable car proposal on kunanyi/Mt Wellington for the last ten years. The Major Projects legislation will only exacerbate these problems,” said Mr Stigant.

Background

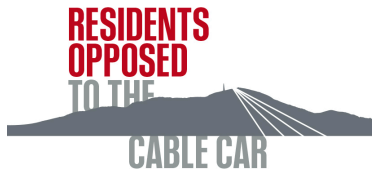
Planning Minister, Roger Jaensch, has said that the MWCC's cable car proposal doesn't meet the criteria of a Major Project and ruled out the laws being used to rush through the cable car proposal.¹

Based on the Liberal's historical support for the concept of a cable car on the Mountain and for Adrian Bold's MWCC, Mr Jaensch's assurances are unconvincing:

- March 2010 - In the lead up to the March election Liberal leader Will Hodgman announced that the Liberals would build a cable car to the top of Mount Wellington and promised to fund a \$200,000 feasibility study.²

¹ WHITELEY, CAMERON. "Minister's pledge fails to ease cable car concerns." Mercury, The (Hobart, Australia), June 13, 2020: 16. NewsBank: Access World News. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.rp.nla.gov.au/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/17B90EEE5F562BC8>; KILLICK, DAVID. "Minister lauds planning laws." Mercury, The (Hobart, Australia), August 26, 2020: 13. NewsBank: Access World News. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.rp.nla.gov.au/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/17D1726E253A7CB0>.

² STEDMAN, MICHAEL. "Libs back cable-car concept." Mercury (Hobart, Australia), March 10, 2010: 004. NewsBank: Access World News. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.rp.nla.gov.au/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/12E5B3624B957828>.



- Sept 2013 - While in opposition the Liberal's promised a "one-stop shop" to streamline planning approvals in Tasmania with the creation of a Tasmanian Major Projects Approval Agency. Cable car proponent Adrian Bold was with Liberal candidate for Denison Tanya Denison and Liberal planning spokeswoman Elise Archer at the launch of the the agency at The Springs.³
- Oct-Nov 2013 - Again while in opposition the Liberal Party introduced a Bill in State Parliament to remove the veto powers of the Wellington Park Management Trust. The Bill was supported by the Government and the veto powers were removed.⁴
- Nov 2014 - The Federal Liberal Government provided assistance to Adrian Bold's MWCC through the Tasmanian Major Projects Approval Agency.⁵
- Sept 2017 - The Liberal's kunanyi/Mt Wellington Cable Car Facilitation Legislation was passed in State Parliament despite widespread community opposition to the cable car and overwhelming negative feedback to the Bill during the public consultation process.⁶

³ ABEY, DUNCAN. "Green light to cut tape." Sunday Tasmanian (Australia), September 1, 2013: 011. NewsBank: Access World News. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.rp.nla.gov.au/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/1488A38FAAB52E88>.

⁴ SMITH, MATT. "END THE VITO Push to allow Mt Wellington developments Development push for Mt Wellington." Mercury (Hobart, Australia), October 14, 2013: 001. NewsBank: Access World News. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.rp.nla.gov.au/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/1496C6EBD35C2188>;

SMITH, MATT. "Liberal win over summit ALP bows on Mt Wellington." Mercury (Hobart, Australia), October 17, 2013: 007. NewsBank: Access World News. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.rp.nla.gov.au/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/1497C2BD2E229F88>.

⁵ "Plans move forward for Mount Wellington Cable Car." Aus Leisure, November 14, 2014. <https://www.ausleisure.com.au/news/plans-move-forward-for-mount-wellington-cable-car/>

⁶ RICHARDS, BLAIR. "Cable car Bill faces opposition." Sunday Tasmanian (Australia), August 27, 2017: 16. NewsBank: Access World News. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.rp.nla.gov.au/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/1668823471D5A120>; Turvey, Jason. "Mountain vision long overdue." Mercury (Hobart, Australia), October 6, 2017: 21. NewsBank: Access World News. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.rp.nla.gov.au/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/1675ADAABB15CF08>.