



MEDIA RELEASE

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Tasmania Leads the Nation in Processing Planning Applications

The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) and its member councils reject criticism of Local Government planning authorities, outlined by the Property Council and the Housing Industry Association on ABC TV's *Stateline* last Friday.

Yet again, it has been demonstrated that there is a lack of understanding of the planning processes and reforms in Tasmania.

LGAT President, Mayor Barry Easther said we are disappointed that *Stateline* did not bother to include LGAT or a Planning Authority in their story to present an alternative view and explanation of planning processes.

"There have been some quite extraordinary claims made in relation to delays with planning approval and the consequential impact on costs," Mayor Easther said.

"There will always be anecdotal examples of approval processes that have not gone smoothly and caused frustration to the applicant. Similarly, councils could cite many examples where the delay is not of the council's making, such as the need to follow-up with the applicant where there is inadequate or incomplete information".

"Certainly encouraging people to break the law is irresponsible," Mayor Easther said. "There is a system in place and if changes are required, then the focus should be on fixing the problems, not ignoring them."

"Good developments that meet the requirements of planning schemes get approved. It is this nonsense that causes consternation, and shortcuts lead to problems. If everyone just did what they wanted without regard for anyone else, it would be a miserable place in which to live," he said.

Data for Tasmania does not indicate any pattern of delays in planning approvals. On average, all development applications are assessed within 28 days. Even if 'stop clock' days are considered, the average assessment time is 49 days. These times compare more than favourably with development assessment times in the other Australian States which, in some cases, are more than double those in Tasmania¹.

¹ Local Government Division Data 2011-12

Mayor Easter said, "There is a public perception that the planning appeals process is over-used and contributes to excessive delays in the approvals process. However, the facts show that approximately 3 per cent of all development applications are appealed and less than one quarter of one per cent end up in formal hearings before the Resource Management and Planning Appeals Tribunal."

"Councils are sick and tired of the erroneous and unsubstantiated claims of those organisations whose members have a vested interest in obtaining a decision in their favour."

"Once again, the big end of town is dictating the terms and rather than working with those that have to administer the scheme, sits on the outside taking pot-shots rather than identifying workable solutions that provide certainty and amenity for all," he said.

For media interviews, please contact Mayor Barry Easter on 0408 334 936.