

Advocate newspaper

Planning scheme amendment 'stifling'

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AN AMENDMENT to the Latrobe planning scheme that prohibits buildings with a total floor space of 250 square metres has been labelled "stifling and anti-competitive".

The group Save our Seaside Village made the claim.

The body, which is up in arms about the Latrobe Council's proposal that a new town centre be established in Alexander Street, Shearwater, has been working with town planner Michael Ball, who discovered the amendment established in 2008.

"The Latrobe Council's prohibition on development and competition within the existing Shearwater town centre is an outrageous attack on Tasmanian-owned and operated small businesses that can only be likened to the planning approach in communist China," SOSV spokesman Guy Barnett said.

"For the existing Shearwater retail businesses the council has tied both hands behind their back and tied their feet together as well. This is a huge injustice that must be stopped."

Mr Michael Ball, who is based in Hobart, said it was the first time he'd seen an amendment like this in his 30 years' experience and labelled the restriction unprecedented.

"It is likely that the only way new retail development can be attracted to the new site is by removing the potential for competition from the existing Shearwater town centre," Mr Ball said. "These changes reinforce my opinion that the council has a clear strategy of changing the function of the existing Shearwater town centre and the creation of a new town centre on a greenfields site."

Latrobe Council manager of development services Ronald Viney said the proposal to move the town centre of Shearwater was something that had been on the cards since about 2004.

"Shearwater is a high-growth area and council expected it to continue," he said.

Mr Viney said the amendment was put in place in 2008 because the town centre in Club Drive was not large enough to cater for the expected increase in traffic that a large commercial store would bring.