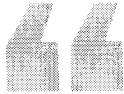


## our view



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Editorial

# Your Tasmania

## Square deal looks real

**D**EMOLISHING the State Offices building at 10 Murray St is controversial but, after much debate and several planning appeals, the final hurdle appears to have been cleared and it is time to get on with redeveloping the site.

Not everyone is happy. That is never possible with a big project anywhere near Salamanca Place or the Hobart waterfront, especially when it involves the State Government.

The Save 10 Murray Group is disappointed at the destruction of the 14-storey tower block, which it regards as a fine example of 1960s architecture.

Some architects question the merits of the new Parliament Square design which is to replace it.

Some taxpayers do not like the idea of selling government-owned buildings to a private developer.

There have been passionate arguments on all sides but no one can argue that the

## MERCURY

decision has been rushed or not thought through.

Esoteric debates over the architectural qualities of 10 Murray St are bound to continue yet most locals do not gaze in wonder at the building. To most, it is just another office block and they are not going to mourn its loss too much.

The 1967 tower dominates the area, creating dead, unwelcoming space at its base. It is out of proportion to the colonial-era buildings beside it, including Tasmania's Parliament.

Two years ago, the public was invited to comment on three redevelopment proposals encompassing most of the city block, two of which involved the demolition of the building at 10 Murray St. The favoured design or something similar is what Hobart looks like getting.

The Citta Property Group plans to transform the site, replacing 10 Murray St with a six-floor office building behind Parliament House but also an open space for the public, with areas to sit and a large screen to broadcast major events, like the one at Federation Square in Melbourne and similar places in many other cities around the world.

Around the new Parliament Square, Citta plans to revitalise several historic, run-down sandstone buildings, including the old St Mary's Hospital on the corner of Davey St and Salamanca Place, buildings which the Government has left abandoned for many years and which it cannot afford to restore now.

Parliament Square is a significant work of urban renewal and another big construction project in Hobart at a time when the state's economy needs a boost. All this at no cost to the taxpayer.

Yes, the Government is to lease office space in the new six-storey block, and yes

that is going to cost money but such arrangements are standard these days. The Government already leases a lot of its offices and has done for a long time.

Parliament Square is another important part of the gradual redevelopment of the Hobart waterfront and Salamanca Place area. It complements nearby projects such as the Princes Wharf No. 1 shed's rebirth as a popular exhibition and entertainment venue.

Most other cities have created fine public attractions around their waterfronts and Hobart appears to be getting some momentum on this at last. After years of acrimony and procrastination, setbacks and the odd success, the Government has woken up to the need for better public spaces and low-rise developments designed with pedestrians in mind.

As various pieces of the puzzle fall into place, the whole area is becoming the real centre of the city, culturally and in every other way.