



MEDIA RELEASE

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Huon Valley Council launches Tasmania's first AI-powered digital Planning Portal

Huon Valley Council is leading the way as the first council in Tasmania to launch an AI-powered digital Planning Portal - a game changer that promises to fundamentally transform the way planning applications are assessed and approved across the state.

Huon Valley Mayor Sally Doyle said, “The groundbreaking platform takes the planning process to a new level, providing a single, end-to-end digital planning service — from property zoning enquiry through to decision. We built this to make planning faster, simpler and more consistent for the community and for Council.”

The new digital Planning Portal is initially being trialled with Wilson Homes, focused on the pre-planning assessment stage, allowing applicants to understand how a proposal stacks up against the Tasmanian Planning Scheme before formal lodgement, identifying compliance issues early and eliminating costly re-work. A full public release will follow this testing phase.

Sarah Wimmer, Statutory Planner, Huon Valley Council said, "As a planner, the value is in getting a head start. The system does the repetitive groundwork so I can focus on assessment and judgement rather than data entry.”

From the moment an application enters the system, AI starts automatically reading plans, confirming property details, identifying overlays such as bushfire, flood and heritage constraints, and running an initial compliance check against the Tasmanian Planning Scheme. What once took days of manual effort now happens in moments, freeing council planners to focus on the decisions that genuinely require professional judgement.

Mark Page, Compliance and Council Manager, Wilson Homes said, “Wilson Homes is proud to be one of the first builders participating in the trial of the Huon Valley Council’s new online AI powered planning portal, marking an important step forward in modernising the development application process across Tasmania.

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"The introduction of the AI-enabled platform is expected to significantly improve efficiencies during the pre-construction phase by streamlining development application submissions and reducing assessment timeframes. This has the potential to enable builders and developers to commence construction of projects sooner, delivering benefits to homeowners, industry stakeholders, and the broader community."

The portal also tackles one of the biggest sources of delay in the planning process - requests for information - by thoroughly and consistently checking applications at the outset.

"Picking up issues at the pre-planning stage means we can guide applicants early, deliver more consistent outcomes, and reduce the need for requests for information later in the process," Ms Wimmer said.

Perhaps most remarkably, the portal doesn't just work within the existing planning system - it actively helps to improve it.

Michael Glazer, Senior Manager Innovation & Technology, Huon Valley Council explained, "Council built this system to flag where the planning scheme is ambiguous and gives us the evidence to provide feedback to the Tasmanian Planning Commission to help improve the Tasmanian Planning Scheme itself."

Designed to scale, the platform has statewide ambition and could support councils right across Tasmania.

"This isn't just about making things easier for the Huon Valley. A stated intent of the Tasmanian Planning Scheme is to deliver consistent planning decisions regardless of Council area. This tool could make that intent a reality with faster, consistent assessments delivering significant productivity gains for Tasmania" Mayor Doyle said.

The new Planning Portal follows Council's launch earlier this year of its free 24/7 AI Planning Assistant 'Michael'. Michael is now servicing 160 call per month with customers appreciating instant, accurate and confidential answers to planning questions about zoning, permits and planning rules, any time of day or night, without waiting for business hours.

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