



 Cassy O'Connor at budget estimates at Parliament House in Hobart. Picture: SAM ROSEWARNE.

— Tasmania —

Government stays mum on proposals for crown land

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TASMANIA'S Co-ordinator-General is involved in “approximately six” proposed projects on crown land but will not reveal details or locations, citing privacy protections of businesses’ commercial interests.

During State Budget estimates last month, Greens leader Cassy O'Connor asked State Growth Minister Matthew Groom how many crown land proposals had been submitted to the Co-ordinator-General.

Answers provided by Mr Groom said the Co-ordinator-General was involved in projects that were significant to the state, including tourism developments in wilderness areas and a northern cities development initiative, both of which involve crown land.

“Outside of the wilderness tourism initiative and the Northern Cities Development Initiative, the office is currently involved in approximately six projects that relate to crown land. These details are commercial-in-confidence until they reach a stage where it is appropriate for wider dissemination or broader consultation,” said a statement from Mr Groom.

Three proposals under the Government’s program to promote wilderness tourism required leases of crown land (the Blue Derby Pods Ride, Recherche Bay Eco Resort and Flinders Island Crossing) but none involved the sale of crown land.

Mr Groom’s response said no land was sold, leased or licenced by the Co-ordinator-General, but the office engages with the relevant government agencies.

In response to the refusal to release any information on the six proposals, Ms O’Connor said the continued lack of transparency around potential projects on public land was deeply concerning.

“There is zero transparency about these deals. Private developers are in discussions with the Liberals over exclusive rights to coastal crown land from Swansea to Stanley and inside our protected areas,” she said.

“We’ve been trying to get to the bottom of this trading in crown land in question time and estimates ... it is well past time [the Government] laid it all on the table. Crown land and protected areas don’t belong to the Liberals, they belong to the Tasmanian people.”

The Office of the Co-ordinator-General, created by the Liberals to attract major investment, has been criticised by the Government’s political opponents because of a perceived lack of outcomes and for its confidential dealings with developers interested in public land and buildings.

The office cost \$2.7 million to run last year and received an additional \$600,000 in the 2017-18 Budget for “investment attraction and major projects facilitation”.