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## MEDIA RELEASE

25 February 2026

### Huon Valley Council launches AI Planning Agent

Huon Valley Council has launched the first AI Planning Agent developed specifically for the Tasmanian Planning Scheme.

Offering residents free, 24/7 planning help via a public telephone service the Agent provides clear, consistent information on planning rules, approvals and processes, helping residents and businesses understand what they can do and how to lodge applications.

“Smaller councils across Australia are struggling to meet planning assessment timeframes,” Mayor Sally Doyle said. “Our Planning Agent is a practical way to manage workloads while giving our community faster, easier access to planning advice.”

“This service allows people to ask anything in a low-pressure, discreet way and receive accurate guidance,” Mayor Doyle said.

Huon Valley Council Statutory Planner Rahul Babu said the tool is already changing the way staff can work.

“It will save us a huge amount of time on routine enquiries,” Rahul said. “That means we can focus more on completing DA’s, improving customer service for complex applications and spending more time on strategic planning.”

“For residents, it means faster answers, less confusion, and empowers them with reliable information before they commit time or money to a project.”

The public AI Planning Agent is a key step in a broader program of innovation at Huon Valley Council. Council plans to introduce an internal Assessment Agent later this year which is expected to significantly improve planning customer service.

“To manage growth, protect character and cost-effectively serve their communities into the future, Councils need to adopt emerging technologies like AI to complement the work of professionals, Mayor Doyle said.” “We are proud to be at the forefront of innovation in local government planning and hope our experience can become a model for other Councils.”

The HVC Planning Agent can be accessed by calling (03) 6264 0500 with guidance available on Council’s website at <https://www.huonvalley.tas.gov.au/ai-planning-assistant/>

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