1. The Bill creates a duty to publish a national islands plan and lay it before the Scottish Parliament. What are your views on this provision?

The duty to publish a ‘national island’s plan’ is welcome if it puts island communities at the centre of the decision-making process. The plan must be led by and for the communities. The plan should be people and place based, providing a robust equitable framework for the interests of island communities to be fully represented.

2. The Bill will require Scottish Ministers and certain Scottish public authorities, to prepare island impact assessments. Do you agree with this provision? How do you think it should work in practice?

Any island impact assessment should be informed by the communities rather than being prescriptive from government. Any such plans should clearly reflect community views and aspirations which are reflected within their own community development plans. Highlands and Islands Enterprise are engaging and supporting many island, rural and urban communities in the creation of such local development Plans, therefore it would be prudent and smart to work in partnership to achieve what is best for island Communities. When Scottish Ministers are questioning an Island’s status to be an island, questioning if these same islands should even be inhabited, then this bill is greatly needed. Scottish ministers should be fully educated and comprehend the important contribution island communities make to the nation’s economy, to Scotland’s historical, scientific, environmental and Cultural heritage. If this bill is to have any real relevance it is crucial it is achieved in full partnership with island communities. The assessments should be done from the communities upwards. Government, local authorities, NHS and other public agencies should actively engage with island communities to create local real ‘Island proofing’ strategies. Island communities are already leading the way by making positive change for themselves, working together for the betterment of their own communities. Island Communities have assisted in the nation’s economic growth such as the development of new business and enterprise and tourism, however vital public services have been decimated their Health and Social Care, energy, Transport (roads) and connectivity.

Island communities deserve to be at the heart of planning about policies or services especially:

- Health and social care - modelling of services, service provision and delivery,
- Transport – road infrastructure, maintenance and capacity building, the increase in tourism to our fragile environments requires thoughtful and careful consideration.
• Real Island Proofing – for island communities to thrive and become more self-resilient they require real time and financial investment to actualise the infrastructure and resources required.

• No One size fits all approach – government, local authorities, NHS and other public agencies to actively listen and engage with island communities. This will help to save valuable resources rather than the current sticking plaster approach taken to stop a continuous drip effect of resources being misused.

4. The Bill proposes to make an exception to the rules for local government electoral wards to allow areas with inhabited islands to return 1 or 2 members (instead of the usual 3 or 4). What are your views on this proposal?

This proposal is a sensible equitable approach for island communities. It will allow better participation for island communities who are unable to get adequate numbers.

6. Does the Bill achieve its aims and are you in favour overall? Is there anything else that you feel should be included or excluded from the Bill?

Please refer to question 2.

7. Do you have any comments on the bill in relation to human rights or equalities?

Island communities have the same right to have their way of life respected as any other citizen of Scotland. Island communities face the same daily life challenges as people in other areas of Scotland. One of the main differences is Access to services, this is one of the key things most people on the mainland take for granted. Island communities do not have the same access to services either directly or indirectly. It is important for island communities to be treated with due equity in all matter to ensure Real equality.

Raasay Development Trust/Raasay Community Association
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