

## Upgrade laws to ensure real conservation

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Anyone looking at pictures on the internet of Wineglass Bay in Tasmania, voted one of the world's best 10 beaches in a number of tourist surveys, could be forgiven for thinking they were of our own beach at Sai Wan.

What is happening in Sai Wan is not an isolated example of environmental degradation.

It is frustrating and annoying to hear the standard, helpless responses from various government departments whenever part of our natural heritage is at stake:

- The Environmental Protection Department said its approval was not required as there were no breaches of anti-pollution regulations, but it would monitor the situation;
- The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department said it could not step in since the destructive work was carried out on private sites, even within protected areas or the country park; and
- The Lands Department could not act over tree felling activities on the private site because it was old agricultural land, and leases were granted in the early 20th century under leases for agricultural use without any tree preservation conditions.

One must question the commitment of our government regarding nature conservation when the Environment Bureau says the site should not be seen as part of the geopark, as the park does not contain private land.

What has our government done to conserve our natural beauty and to prevent

continuous molestation of our countryside in the name of economic development?

Surely the government should be proactive, and review existing legislation on private land in country parks as well as its conservation policies.

These laws were enacted when the priority was urban development and few people showed any interest in the New Territories.

Officials should act now and ensure that our environment is conserved and effectively managed.

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