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Submission re: South Australian Design and Planning Code (phase 3 Urban Areas)

### **1. Character Preservation District Overlay**

1. The Character Preservation district for which Barossa joined with McLaren Vale to achieve what we hoped would be a major protection solution to inappropriate development in both top wine regions hasn't been as we had hoped. It would seem to me to have been more honoured in the breach than the observance.

The lack of acceptance and understanding in my view has been that it did not have a concrete noun in the title. I did raise this with the Planning Minister of the time, The Hon John Rau, suggesting that it should be named the Agricultural Land and Character Preservation Act.

Saving what's left of our reliable Agricultural land is a concrete goal; an understandable goal and one which is easily grasped by those submitting development applications.

2. Alas, we were left with a wonderful Act which has not defined 'character' and which we were assured would have over-arching precedent. Largely it has lain dormant in the general developers' reckoning. The local planners do not have major tangible guideline that they can check off against. We need to have definitions of what constitutes Character to guide planners, perhaps a defined checklist for planners to work from as part of what is clearly largely a nebulous construct.
3. And yet, some of the most satisfying and successful examples, Stellenbosch, South Africa, Edinburgh, Lucerne, England's Lakes District have a strong identity at the defined core and have reaped significant economic benefits. This is the result not generally understood, nor accepted by many developers.
4. The entire Barossa Council and part of Light are in the Character Preservation Zone and as yet I have not become aware of a separate request for a vision statement on grounds that protection is of great economic benefit
5. My understanding of the aim of the complex revamp of the Development Act is to provide clarity by removing the minutiae of planning and in odd/disparate zones where the normal pursuits were deemed non-complying in rural zones for no discernible reason. Eg:- Krondorf Road in a rural zone, growing vegetables were deemed non-complying. This has changed and I support the efforts to reduce red-tape which can be an inhibitor to economic development.
6. This is a good, but does go not far enough and unfortunately the new Planning and Design Code creates less clarity overall and includes very little design policy to guide assessment in areas of high landscape value.
7. Character Preservation must recognise the particular distinctions within the Barossa, which make such an interesting mosaic, which successful businesses have understood and made a precious and valuable basis for the 'Brand Barossa Marketing' which amazingly happens to be truth.

However, as the cliché says, "Do not throw the baby out with the bath water" in the name of so called efficiency.

And in this case the Character Preservation Act which was a source of comfort and reassurance at the time appears to largely have been relegated to being a minor nuisance in the background. My fundamental concern with the structure of the Code is that the policy does not appear to tell a story or provide any vision as to what characterises the Barossa Region.

I agree with the BRRRA submission that it would be clear to applicants that the ground rules be sorted, that there is a clear understanding of the benefits of following Character Preservation requirements .

As an aside: The proposed tourism development at 730 Seppeltsfield Road, Seppeltsfield (Seppeltsfield Winery) is an interesting test case as to the veracity of the proposed Code policy within the Barossa.

We accept that the existing zoning seeks Tourism Accommodation, however architectural design and scale is important and what is being proposed seems to be in complete contravention of the type of architecture that we envisaged that planning policy in the Barossa Valley would prevent.

The Winery Experience Sub Zone that is proposed to apply to this site, provides broad policy references to scale and appropriateness however there is no clear policy direction to prevent a 12 storey building being constructed on an elevated site.

It would be helpful if design parameters were included that defined or set a bench mark for what an 'appropriate scale' actually means within the highly scenic areas of the Barossa Valley.

Many, many of us participated in the discussions about Seppeltsfield in 2010 and were part of the creation of winery Zone for Seppeltsfield. We in the Barossa are proud of that story.

I realise that this will no longer apply with the suggested changes in the Development Act, but serves as an important reminder that the guts of the community concerns who have fought to achieve planning recognition of the importance of "the Barossa Brand" and that this needs to be properly recognised, because this is what makes the word Barossa important

And this is what those who haven't sweated over the future of the Barossa during the dark times don't understand.

What they feed upon is the desirability of doing business in the Barossa, because it is now a desirable place. My fundamental concern with the structure of the Code is that the policy does not appear to tell a story or provide any vision as to what characterises the Barossa Region.

I strongly endorse the BRRRA submission and recommend that 'Character' needs to be defined by the relevant Local Government authorities through the creation of a Code for each Local Government area. These authorities after all, know the endless discussions about how this should work and have a greater ability to tap into community and to create a character preservation zone which will resonate with Barossans who will understand the importance and the benefit which accrues from a solid Barossa understanding of it of its importance to the Barossa economy.

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