

From: [Nadja Osterstock](#)
To: [DPTI:Planning Reform Submissions](#)
Subject: Planning and Design Code - Trees
Date: Monday, 24 February 2020 12:55:33 PM

To Whom it may Concern:

I am a resident and small business operator in south-western Adelaide. My work and community life bring me into regular close observation of the loss of vegetation in this area and subsequent worsening of the effects of climate change.

I am writing because I want to ensure that the new Planning and Design Code for SA thoroughly values, prioritises and protects our existing trees - both native and introduced - for the many ecosystem services that they provide. More specifically, I hope to see protections against tree removal for infill housing development strengthened to address the needs of communities, rather than watered down to meet the commercial demands of property developers.

With Adelaide being the hottest and driest state capital in Australia - and yet having the lowest level of tree canopy cover of any state capital - **we can't afford to keep losing trees faster than they are being replaced.** Losses both on private land and in transport and infrastructure projects are adding up to create suburbs that are more than ever paved, concreted, built-over, and exposed to dangerous levels of summer heat as well as increasing wind speeds and flood risk. This is placing an unreasonable health burden as well as a cost burden on communities - and it is felt most strongly in those areas that are least well resourced to cope.

I am pleased that the State Planning Commission has indicated that currently Significant and Regulated trees will be transitioned into the new Code.

In addition, I believe that there needs to be an urgent rethink of the 'business as usual' approach to completely bulldozing existing gardens - and especially their mature trees - for the purpose of residential infill development. Why lose the beauty, cooling shade, habitat and often productivity of existing trees which could be incorporated into better-designed new developments? Why set back the establishment of new properties by decades and expose their occupants to extreme heat while they wait to re-establish valuable canopy trees, when we know that these trees can increase property values, decrease energy bills, improve mental and physical health and support vital biodiversity?

The planning code needs to address this urgent problem in a range of ways:

- **Including reasonable protections for healthy and useful trees** that are not listed as 'Significant' or 'Regulated' but which nonetheless hold value for local communities and potentially for future home occupants.
- **Placing the onus on property developers and builders** to demonstrate why such trees need to be removed on a case-by-case basis, rather than assuming that development should typically take place on a 'blank canvas'.
- **Notifying surrounding property owners** (at least one street block around the site) when tree removal is proposed and providing an opportunity for community feedback to be considered.
- **Offering a range of design templates** (tailored to various orientations) for sensitive and energy-efficient residential development that can feature existing vegetation as an asset rather than an obstacle to be cleared away.
- **Maintaining adequate block sizes** to enable canopy trees to fit in all gardens and

road verges and to ensure that there is sufficient unpaved garden space for stormwater absorption.

Please allow sufficient time to fully consider and incorporate feedback from all interested community groups into the Code, and prioritise these concerns over commercial interests.

Yours faithfully,

Nadja Osterstock

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