

DTI:Planning Review

From: Jane Preston [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 7 October 2022 9:11 PM
To: DTI:Planning Review
Subject: YOUR SAY on South Australia's Planning System

Thank you Labor Government for honouring your commitment to review the Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act of 2016 and implementation of the flawed Planning and Design Code. I commend the appointment of an expert panel to examine the state's planning legislation, including trees and infill policy and commitment to Australian best practice tree laws in the election policy document "Heritage for the Future".

SA is losing a staggering 75K of trees per year. We have some of the weakest tree laws in Australia and the current tree Laws do not meet community expectations. Since 2018 I have been a member of Conservation Council SA 'Speak for the Trees' group. During this time I have noticed a change in peoples attitude towards trees that they're no longer seen to be something to cut down but must be protected.

I have been involved with a few issues with trees that defy logic. One was the Avenue of Plane trees, over 100 years old along From road where the developer wanted to cut down two for safety reasons obstructing drivers views. With investigation, publicity, community backlash and a good Council decision it was ascertained that they hadn't looked for an alternative solution and was easily solved by the truck drivers coming in one way and exiting on North Terrace. Another one was soon after the bushfires on Kangaroo Island that destroyed almost 50% of vegetation, DIT was doing road widening and intended to cut down some large remaining gumtrees that were home to the threatened glossy black cockatoos along the main highway. After community backlash I believe only 2 trees were removed, not hundreds.

It shouldn't need community backlash to protect our precious trees, it should be the law of the land.

The fact remains, with so many trees being cut down on private land and the ability of the young trees to grow to maturity, we need Law Reform that supports protection of our big trees. It will take many years for a newly planted tree to provide benefits equivalent to one that is mature and the warming climate is affecting the ability of saplings to even grow to maturity and provide canopy cover. We're also running out of room to plant trees on public land and simply planting new trees is not enough.

Big trees improve our health and wellbeing, increase property values, provide shade and cooling effects, produce oxygen, store carbon and are really beautiful. They are arguably the single best infrastructure investment to prepare our trees and suburbs for a warming climate.

Therefore, I support the Conservation Council's 10 priorities and Recommendations for SA Law Reform.

1. Restore the requirement for DIT and DET to publicly consult and gain planning approval to remove trees. Due to road widening and infrastructure projects we have evidence of the past few years wholesale destruction of thousands of large trees by DIT. There's many examples and where trees could have been saved and also removed under the cover of darkness to avoid accountability and community backlash. I'll leave this for others to document.
2. Remove exemptions from existing regulated/significant tree protections including the 10m and 20m rule and remove and modify the list or tree species exempt from being classified as regulated/significant to better reflect the SA climate.
3. Bring SA into line with VIC and NSW by changing the definition of regulated tree to one that has a trunk circumference of 50cm or more measured 1m above ground or has a height of 6m or more or has a canopy over 9m.
4. Incorporate Vegetation Overlays into the Planning and Design Code, similar to those in VIC, together reflect the expectations of local communities.
5. Remove the ability to prune up to 30% of a regulated/significant tree without council approval and implement a system that requires the use of the AS4373 standard.

6. Increase the use of arborists to assess applications affecting significant trees and allow for streamlined approval process.
7. Modify the Urban Tree Canopy Offset to better reflect the value of the trees to the Community. The offset amount is currently a token gesture. The true \$\$ value of the trees should be used.
8. Increase the amounts payable where permission is granted to remove a protected tree. Currently another token gesture.
9. The removal of protected trees should not be allowed until all relevant planning and development approvals have been granted.
10. Implement new bushfire clearance allowances that reflect the bushfire attack level rating for the property.

With predictions of hotter, dryer, longer summers we must work to make our city more liveable - and trees are critical to that. We need to protect the big trees which provide us with so much. And we need to act quickly before it's too late.

You can find out more about What's Happening to Adelaide's Trees and an action plan to change this at www.conservationa.org.au/trees plus read a new report, compiled by Adelaide University, outlining how we have some of the weakest tree laws in Australia [here](#).

Yours sincerely,
Jane Preston

