

From: [John and Andrea](#)
To: [DPTI:Planning Reform Submissions](#)
Subject: Removal of Existing Healthy trees in Black Forest & considerations in the People and Neighbourhoods Policy Discussion Paper for the Draft Planning and Design Code
Date: Monday, 3 February 2020 9:44:57 AM

To whom it may concern,

Re: Removal of Existing Healthy trees in Black Forest & considerations in the *People and Neighbourhoods Policy Discussion Paper* (DPTI, September 2019)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed new Planning & Design Code.

We live in Black Forest in the City of Unley and are writing to express our concern about the ongoing loss of existing large trees on private land in recent years that has continued to occur on our street block. This block is bounded by Byron Rd, Gordon Rd, Addison Rd and Canterbury Terrace. In the last three years, at least three large established, and apparently healthy, eucalyptus trees have been cut down on residential properties on our street block.

- Rear of property at 26 Byron Road, Black Forest
- Very large gum tree at the front of the property at 16 Byron Road, Black Forest
- Rear of the property at 5 Gordon Road, Black Forest

In each of these cases we, and other neighbours, only became aware that the trees were being cut down on the day of removal.

The ongoing removal of large trees in Black Forest reduces the amenity of living in our suburb as one of the attractions for us buying into the suburb was the number of established trees around the suburb. And among other factors, the presence of trees has positive [environmental and economic benefits](#) (page 1).

With the number of [hot days above 35°C predicted to dramatically increase in the future](#), the [reduction of the urban heat island effect](#) (page 58) will become increasingly important. A strategy to achieve this, in addition to new plantings, is not to remove large established and healthy trees, regardless of their species or their location on private properties. The established trees provide shading and evaporative cooling that is unable to be quickly replicated when they are removed. We can attest to this as our maturing garden has been more enjoyable to be in this summer, despite the extraordinary heat, than in previous summers.

The [Proposed policy response in the Code within the State Planning Commission's People And Neighbourhoods Policy Discussion Paper \(page 58-59\)](#) states that *Trees contribute to biodiversity, urban cooling, the character and liveability of our suburbs as well as our physical and mental health*, then the policy response does not comment on the need to maintain existing trees on private property. This implies that we could continue to experience rapid loss of established trees in our suburb.

The Proposed Planning and Design Code should include ways to ensure healthy large established

trees, regardless of their location, are sufficiently protected with measures such as:

- A council assessment of tree health when removal is being considered.
- Where possible, encouraging pruning rather than removal of trees
- As the benefits of the trees occur regardless of their location on public or private land, these benefits can be monetised to incorporate the amenity and ecological value of the tree. This could be an extension of the [Melbourne City Council's Urban Forest Tree Valuations for their public trees](#).
- Reducing council rates or land tax (where applicable) for properties that maintain significant vegetation such as 25% tree cover on their properties.

Could these considerations please be taken into account when the [Draft Planning and Design Code](#) is amended.

Kind Regards,

Andrea Baas & John Hicks

