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Dear Sarah,

Re: Submission to the draft State Planning Policies

I am a first-year Social Work student at Flinders University and am interested in participating in the process of drafting State Planning Policies.

It is such a great opportunity to be able to collaborate with SA State Government, comment and provide suggestions in relation to state policies, as the policies affect all aspects of SA residents' lives. South Australia has a proud history of advocacy for equality and embracing diversity, especially during the time when Donald Dunstan was the Premier of South Australia. It is also encouraging to know that the aim of the State Planning Policies for South Australia is to make South Australia a liveable, sustainable and prosperous state.

I am writing to provide feedback on the State Planning Policy 6: Housing Supply and Diversity as requested on the YourSAy online consultation hub. In particular, the feedback I am offering in this letter is focused on dot points 6 and 7, which are:

6. Increase the amount and diversity of residential accommodation in Adelaide City to support a variety of household types for a range of age and income groups, including students, professionals and the ageing.

7. Enable and encourage the provision of Affordable Housing through incentives such as planning policy bonuses or concessions (e.g. where major re-zonings are undertaken that increase development opportunities).

There has been an increase in small families, older population and students and the number is likely to grow in the future, hence, it is pleasing to know that SA Government is focusing on these groups regarding housing. The focus on younger adults is also mentioned, as more and more young people are leaving South Australia for other states for various reasons. The provision of affordable housing by the Government (either directly or via planning policy bonuses and concessions) would be an attracting factor for young adults when considering staying or leaving, especially when the housing market is so high in Sydney and Melbourne.

Social, public and community housing for people with low incomes and the homeless should also be considered under housing policy. Housing is a basic human right. Without adequate housing, the rights to privacy, dignity, health and development might be violated (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017). In 2017, there were about 107,000 households experiencing housing stress; i.e. more than 30 percent of their gross household income (including Commonwealth Rent Assistance) is spent on housing, reflecting a growth in housing stress over the last 5 years (South Australian Council of Social Service, 2017). Furthermore, the provision of public and social housing has, unfortunately, declined since 1991 in South Australia (SACOSS, 2017). In June 2015 about 199,000 households were on social housing waiting lists (Thomas, 2016, p. 88). If the situation continues to exist, becomes prolonged and grows, it is highly likely to create even more stress and will exacerbate the already existing social issue, homelessness.

Housing can create social capital for a household or an individual. Social capital provides resources through social connections and networks within communities, and it acts as a facilitator to coordinate or cooperate to achieve better outcomes and improve the wellbeing of societies. In this context, a house is not just a shelter but also a medium for accessing a bundle of goods, such as education, community networks and public services. Those networks and supports can benefit the health of an individual. For example, having access to community, social and health services, prevention or treatment can be provided and received in a timely manner. This, in turn, creates savings for the State's health budget with hospitalisation minimized. Moreover, reciprocal assistance in neighbourhoods can also be a great help in cases of temporary illness or financial difficulties (Rocco & Suhrcke, 2012, p. 3).

Housing is one of the key social determinants of health. According to WHO, the most important factor of health is the social determinants of an individual, i.e. the conditions where a person is born, lives and works (2008, as cited in Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2016, p. 129). Social determinants of health are the root causes of other health determinants. Inequalities to access stable, adequate and affordable housing are in relation to severe social and health issues, such as poor health, lack of access to health care, hunger and homelessness (AIHW, 2016, pp. 129-132). For instance, an overcrowded housing situation could cause infectious diseases because of high demand on bathroom, kitchen and

laundry areas. A study carried out in Melbourne shows that about 16% of the homeless participants developed mental illness after homelessness (Chamberlain & Johnson, 2011, p. 29). Furthermore, people who are sleeping rough are more likely to experience violence, sexual assaults and insults from other homeless individuals or the public, and they are also more likely to be the victims of theft (Australian Institute of Criminology, 2008). Reducing homelessness will reduce strain on the State's stretched Police and Mental Health resources.

Homelessness is not an unsolvable social issue. Don Dunstan Foundation has started an action plan collectively supported by more than 30 organisations, which include three departments of SA state government (Department for Communities and Social Inclusion, Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department for Correctional Services) to approach homelessness within Adelaide inner city. The target of this Adelaide Zero Project is to achieve Functional Zero homelessness in Adelaide's CBD by 2020. The Functional Zero approach has been proven to be successful across the United States; since 2015, it has assisted 75 communities in the US to house more than 75,000 people, including chronically homeless individuals and veterans (Don Dunstan Foundation, 2018). If ending homelessness could receive State Government-level support (including affordable housing initiatives), the outcome would be achieved more effectively and economically and make South Australia an even more livable, sustainable and prosperous state.

Thank you so much for taking the time reading this letter. I hope it helps in some way.

Warm Regards,

Ming-Chun Yen

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