

DTI:Planning Review

From: Meg Bleby <campaigns@good.do>
Sent: Wednesday, 7 December 2022 9:57 AM
To: DTI:Office of Minister Champion; Michelle Lensink; Peter Malinauskas; DTI:Planning Review
Subject: Urgent action needed to save our trees

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the implementation review of the Planning and Design Code. I am hopeful that the expert panel will meet community expectations by listening attentively and acting on the feedback given.

I love trees. I grew up in a suburb which was full of trees, both in people's properties and along the streets. This experience fostered in me a deep love of trees, and a strong need to be surrounded by trees wherever I am. When we chose to live in our current property, the tree-lined street and the significant gum trees across the road and behind us were, therefore, important factors in choosing our house. Sadly, over the 22 years since we have lived here, all of these significant and regulated trees have disappeared (most of them in the last few years), plus many, many more which were not significant in accordance with any regulations, but were certainly significant to the birds, animals and insects which inhabited them, and to those of us who need to be living near trees.

There is nothing more distressing than hearing a chainsaw rip through a beautiful gum tree for a whole day, and then seeing the cockatoos, rosellas and rainbow lorriquets flying around later that day looking for their home. It is heartbreaking. Tree loss has changed the nature of our suburb; it is so much hotter to go for a walk now, and we now hear all of the trucks travelling along Cross Road, particularly at night time, where we never used to hear anything before the trees started coming down. I despair whenever I see a house for sale in the streets around me as I know that means the trees on the property and all other vegetation will be cleared to make way for 2 "dog-box" style houses with no room for new trees to be planted, and thus more birds and animals will be homeless and our suburb will become even hotter.

I am extremely concerned about the loss of trees on our streets to make way for an extra driveway. It is bad enough for developers to choose to get rid of the trees on the properties which they own, but it is even worse when they request to cut trees down from the footpaths so that they can fit an extra driveway in, which will boost their own profits, but which leaves those of us who live nearby with even fewer trees to enjoy. Developers should be required to be more creative in their building designs so as to incorporate the existing trees into their driveway plans, and, indeed into their house designs, too. If a tree is going to be in the way of a plan, change the plan, not the tree's existence.

I am concerned about the impact of both the code and our poor regulations on tree canopy right across Adelaide. You are no doubt familiar with the significant body of work published by the Conservation Council of SA and partner organisations over the last 2 years. Using an evidence-based approach, these reports highlighted how impoverished our laws have become since 2011 when significant exemptions were added to them, despite protests from both the community and experts. The current regulations are so poor they make a mockery of their very existence.

The Conservation Council and partner organisations have compiled a list of their top ten priorities for reform. Support of these improvements will help make our state's tree regulations best practice, a Labor election practice. Many of the changes are backed up not only by the CCSA reports but also by the independent report commissioned by the State Planning Commission - I urgently ask you to support these changes.

We cannot underestimate the important role that trees play in our daily lives. We need them more than they need us. By doing so you will improve our mental & physical health, clean the air that we breathe, remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, help cool our homes and streets, make our city more livable and mitigate the impacts of climate change for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Meg Bleby
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