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State Planning Commission
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Submission: draft Planning and Design Code (the Code) – phase 3

Thank you for allowing me to comment upon the draft Code.

Replacing the 72 development plans with one universal, state-wide document perhaps seems like a good idea in theory, but the devil is in the detail. And this 6000-page document and Update Report is very daunting for the average citizen to go through. Not only that there are 6000 pages but that some areas also seem incomplete and/or inaccurate. Thus, some of my comments may be generalizations.

- The Code is claimed by the Government to be policy neutral, but this would not seem to be the case considering the new, or altered policies.
- The Historic Area Statements, which form the core of the Historic Conservation Areas and detail the existing character of the area, the look of the buildings, the periods of construction, architectural features, pattern of subdivision, etc all need to be detailed. It would seem that the Statements rely on policy contained in the Historic Area Overlay of the Code. These policy areas maybe are not all as they seem. A major problem is to get into them via the e-planning section to actually study them. Now, a friend and myself spent two hours one day trying to do this, but we failed. Or maybe we did not fail, but it is the system not working or being user friendly. Anyway, by not being able to get and have a proper look, it really comes down to ‘trust us’, and with past experience e.g. Minister Holloway’s 2010 Ministerial DPA for Mount Barker, trust is in very short supply.
- It would seem that in order to accomplish dense urban infill, buildings of up to six stories in residential areas will be allowed. I was told that one of the Planners at the District Council of Mount Barker said that the Code would allow six-story buildings in Callington. If this is true, it is but one example of the foolishness of this Code.
- There seem to be changes in how members of the public can comment on proposed developments. Category 3 seems to have gone and at one of the information sessions we were told that a public notice would have to be on the site of a proposed development – but what good this if people cannot easily comment, or even oppose?

- There is a call for an increase in tree canopy cover in the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide, but this Code seems to allow easy removal of trees. It says that in development areas one tree should be planted on each block. Fabulous – but maybe not so fabulous when you consider the time it will take to grow to give the benefits of the removed tree/s, and also unless they are watered, they will not grow. Who is to water them?
- There seems to be little attention to sustainability, climate change and biodiversity in the Code. This only sharpens the common judgement to the notion that the Code is for the developers and not the community.
- Whilst the idea of an e-planning system seems good in practice, but it has to be easy for poor old Joe Average to use, and at the moment it is not.
- And the Code also has to be good. The devil is in the detail which at times is hard, or impossible, to find.

At the moment I think that it is being given about a D- by many Council, Community Organizations and individuals.

And how the DPTI writing team for the Planning and Design Code got the Planning Institute of Australia President's Award for planning excellence in 2019 is beyond me. Collusion? Any respect I had for the PIA has not gone.

And as I said before there is a big feeling about that the Code is for the developers and not the community, exemplified by the seeming conflict when it would appear that three of the four members of the State Planning Commission are developers.

I hope that my points, and those of many others (for example the submission from my local council, Mount Barker District Council), about the deficiencies in both the Code itself and the operation of it via the e-planning platform will be acted upon and that the implementation of the Code is delayed until redrafted and fixed.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Laurence Gellon