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RE: Vision for South Australia's planning system: State Planning Policies 6 – Housing supply and diversity.

I am a current Bachelor of Social Work student based at Flinders University. Over the past 8 years I have worked with non-government organisations within mental health, alcohol and other drugs, aged care, children in care and the disability sector. Currently, I am working in partnership with the National Disability Insurance Agency to assist participants to gain access to the scheme. I have read over the State Planning Policy, focusing on item number 6 and wanted to elaborate the thoughts of the State Planning Process a little broader.

Submission Summary

- From a social justice perspective, I believe that it is important for all people living in Australia to feel connected and included, regardless of their ethnicity, race, age, socioeconomic status, gender, language, religion, sexuality and geographical area.
- From my experience I know that people who live with mental health issues and/or a disability find fitting into society much more difficult.
- In my previous roles, I have personally assisted and supported these groups to find suitable accommodation. Not only is there a lack of suitable housing, the steps to gain access to housing can be a stressful process.
- I strongly believe that people deserve the right to have their needs met, receive the services they require to stay healthy, both physically and mentally, while having a safe environment to live and work.
- I urge the policy makers to consider the social planning priorities for this process and consider if these diverse groups can be assisted to enhance their liveability, sustainability and prosperity, thus
- I strongly encourage the policy makers to consider their use of diversity within this policy when two major groups in our community appear to be left out. This will provide the social connectivity for all community members that the State Planning Policy wants to achieve.
- I suggest that the policy makers broaden their consultation to include some, or more of these selected groups, which will then lead to more diversity within the results of the State Planning process. This includes people living with mental health conditions and people with disabilities.

Response to the Draft State Planning for South Australia: State Planning Policies 6 – Housing supply and diversity.

When starting the consulting process, have you considered putting yourself within the shoes of the community, which have been consulted? I can see that some great social aspects have been identified in the plan. The older population is something that has to be acknowledged and managed moving into the future. However, this isn't the only issue with housing when communicating with non-government organisations and our communities.

People with Mental health issues and people living with disabilities have been completely excluded in the consideration of this plan. How can the policy objective highlight social connectivity? A trap identified by Althaus, Bridgman and Davis (2007, p112) is the failure to consult relevant parties, including other agencies of government, opinion makers and affected bodies can be a fundamental mistake.

This State Planning Policy 's objective appears to be targeting a high majority of Australians. I would like to question this objective, when asking your meaning of "diverse" housing? What housing options are being taken into consideration? The State Planning Policy states "housing should be developed to encourage and maintain social connectivity".

How can this be achieved when two diverse groups, people living with mental health issues and people with disabilities, are excluded from this State Planning Policy? Thompson & Maginn explains, it is important to remember that any one time, an individual may belong to more than one group. Also, as people moving through different life stages and experiences, their identification with particular groups typically alters (2012, p227).

By excluding these groups, not only are you going against the objective of the plan, it could affect the long-term outcomes of these individuals. Burdekin outlines, one of the biggest obstacles in the lives of people with a mental illness is the absence of adequate, affordable and secure accommodation. Living with a mental illness – or recovering from it – is difficult even in the best circumstances. Without a decent place to live is virtually impossible (1993).

Point 1, of Policy 6 looks at the lifestyle needs of our current and future communities. This is a great idea. When making the planning policy, were their surveys or questionnaires provided to communities asking about their needs? Were any people with disabilities or issues with mental health consulted to provide their future housing needs? Providing a balance of awareness and control allows individuals to make decisions with increased clarity and confidence (Ingram, 2012).

Point 5, of Policy 6 indicates that accommodation in Adelaide City needs to be increased for people with different income groups and age ranges. Is this what the community desired? The policy plan wants to provide accommodation choices throughout life stages, which is fantastic for ordinary Australians. Have people with disabilities been factored into this? Their life stages will be much more different and complex, compared to ordinary Australians, therefore a more detailed approach would be required to include this diverse group.

In May of 2012, the Australian Government released a report called SHUT OUT: The experience of people with disabilities and their families in Australia. This report was part of the National Disability Strategy consultation process, that lead into the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The report explained, "Australians with disabilities are now largely free to live in the community. Once shut in, many people with disabilities find themselves now shut out. People with disabilities may be present in our community, but too few are actually part of it. Many live desperate and lonely lives of exclusion and isolation. The institutions that once housed them may be closed, but the inequity remains. They are ignored, invisible and silent. They struggle to be noticed, they struggle to be seen, they struggle to have their voices heard".

The big issue here is that this isn't just directed to a small population of South Australia. In 2012, the Government of South Australia conducted a survey, along with the Australian Bureau of Statistics. The Survey of Disability, Aging and Carers 2012, provided figures that indicated that more than 1 in 5 people living in South Australia (21.5% of that current population) at that time had been defined as living with a disability.

From a social capital perspective, connections, networking and human interaction can be viewed as "civic value". These social institutions and the practices that are conducted can grow to become more productive within community engagement. This allows people within these communities to feel

valued and respected. Consultation can ignite inspiration for communities to build on their own social capital, with the government agency standing in, providing support and encouragement (Althaus, Bridgman & Davis, 2007, p113-116)

Conclusion

Anyone who has attempted to consult with a number of individuals and groups understands that the process can be difficult to get all of the needs and opinions voiced. My reasoning and questions to you are more directed at the diverse groups that you have identified as your target audience. I ask that you expand this to include people with disabilities and people with mental health issues. By excluding these groups, a significant amount of the population will be removed from the community. If the planning policy wants to ensure that continuous improvement for our communities is accomplishable, then identifying problems, locating solutions, community participation, reviewing, implementation and community feedback are solutions to being inclusive towards all members of our community, with the hopes that no one feels excluded from the process.

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Individual Public Submission Dated 6th September 2018.

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