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It is difficult for anyone to respond effectively to papers which are released only to people who happen to have heard about how to get onto the mailing list and which are released far too close to the cut-off date for submissions to be thoroughly prepared. Another difficulty is that often the policies are so vague that their meaning and import is debateable.

The idea of obtaining feedback only during the policy planning period and using a single policy for the whole state prevents people being able to have a say on developments which directly affect them and stops Councils from having any control over developments in their areas. From the information papers it seems that in future all planning decisions will be made by people who have no intimate knowledge of the area where the development is to be placed which is nonsensical. It is the people who live in the various districts and are directly affected by them who need to be considered when new developments are put forward. People and communities are the basis of our society, so it is vital that their views be taken into account as well as people knowledgeable in the history and architecture of an area or era.

Characteristics of buildings and areas in different places are quite different and cannot be covered in a single policy. What gives an area character is that it is different from other areas.

It should be easier to place an item on the heritage list than it is to de-list it as it is this protection which has preserved much of Adelaide's heritage over the past years and once a heritage building or area has been demolished it cannot be re-created.

Only a short time ago all Councils formed development plans suitable for their areas and these were signed off by the Minister, but then he proceeded to totally ignore these, using his power quite unethically to override them by declaring developments as major projects. It is even more important that major projects be subjected to Council regulations as they have a greater impact on those living in the area and there is more likelihood of overshadowing and of parking causing problems. It seems that the present government is continuing in the same manner.

While it is necessary to provide sufficient housing, commercial and other structures for the population and we do not want more of our valuable food producing areas taken up with buildings, the infill and higher rise buildings need to be restricted to areas where they are useful and do not impinge unnecessarily on the amenity of others. We do not want random tall buildings dotted about the city towering over smaller buildings with no regard to what is already in an area. Developments of up to 4 storeys may be acceptable in some areas, and on large blocks higher developments can be scaled in effectively.

It has been shown that re-use of old buildings not only creates a more desirable social area, but aids in the care of old buildings and provides more work and less building debris than destroying them and building new places. We need to enhance the prospects of specialist builders, carpenters, etc. to provide more skilled jobs here in Adelaide.

Overshadowing is very important, especially with the proliferation of solar panels which is the best way of reducing the cost of electricity and emissions, an important matter in today's society. Large, multistorey developments are not conducive to reducing power usage, increasing the plant growth or reducing the flow of stormwater down our streets.

Buildings and areas around them need to be designed to reduce the reliance on air-conditioners. Green space and trees are necessary to help to keep temperatures down naturally and provide more pleasant places in which to walk and live. We keep hearing that the plan is to increase the amount of plant cover, but most new buildings leave little space for plants, never mind decent sized trees. Many areas are subject to flooding in quite minor storms because stormwater is fed straight into our drains and runs out to sea instead of being allowed to soak into the ground or running into rainwater tanks to be used on-site, which would be better for buildings and plants, be less damaging to the sea grasses and sea creatures and conserve our mains water.

Better planning would save money for both individual people and governments, whether state or local. There needs to be an insistence on building designs which use natural phenomena to reduce emissions, such as houses with eaves and verandas, windows facing in more effective directions to maximise the use of natural light and reduce heating/cooling, the installation of rainwater tanks to reduce reliance on mains water and plantings designed to reduce temperatures and increase local wildlife.

Adelaide is classed as a place where people like to live, but if the draft policies outlined in the recent government publications are accepted as they are it will not remain so. Adelaide has its own character, made up of many different facets, and this is attractive to its residents and to visitors. We do not need or want Adelaide to become just like any other city.

I am hoping that this opportunity to put in a submission is not just so that the box indicating "public consultation" can be ticked and that it is really an opportunity for the people who live here and support the local economy to have their opinions genuinely considered. It is much easier and cheaper for governments if the people are happy and working together. Health, happiness and a sense of community mean that people are more willing to make an effort to help improve the place where they live. Divorcing them from decisions which affect them has the opposite effect.

Hopefully the policies will be reconsidered so that both Councils and people are given a chance to make representations in matters of importance to them instead of being side-lined by developers, planners and government officials.

Yours faithfully,  
Elaine Dyson.