

Mr Michael Lennon,
Chair, State Planning Commission,
GPO Box 1815,
Adelaide, 5001.

The Secretary,
Kensington Residents' Association Inc.,
Mr A Dyson,

Kensington, 5068
17th October 2018.

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17 Oct 2018
DPTI

Re: Accredited Professionals Scheme

Dear Sir,

Our Association is opposed to increased planning powers for private certifiers. We believe that the existing planning powers should remain with councils and are opposed to the privatisation of planning decisions.

Under this scheme, councils will deal with a lesser range of applications and have less control over planning and development in our local environment. This raises a number of issues, including:

- Communities' expectations of their local government's ability to influence the local environment, and provide information about the planning system.
- Councils' ability to influence development compliance and enforcement, and ability to resource any involvement in compliance and enforcement as councils will still be responsible for granting development approval for development in their area, but without say in or control over any of the component parts that make up the final approval.
- How important information for development assessment held by councils will be accessed by relevant authorities (local knowledge, flood mapping, engineering advice, site history resources) and how Councils will recoup the costs of providing this information.

In spite of the PDI Act 2016 reducing councils' role in decision making, councils will continue to be the first port of call for members of the community, and will continue to have an interest in development matters affecting their communities.

The expanded role of the private certifier raises concerns around transparency of process, vested interest, accountability and potential for misuse of the system. There are no prescribed standards for the auditing of private certifiers. We are aware of reports about the failings of a similar scheme of private assessment in New South Wales and that changes to the system are being implemented. Why adopt a failed system when our existing system works well to protect the overall interests of the community as opposed to the interests of the few?

Private certifiers will be paid by applicants, and unlike local government officers do not have a statutory responsibility to the public interest. Council staff are independent - there is no 'fear or favour' and their salaries do not depend on commercial relationships. Potential concerns are conflicts of interest, and misuse of the Deemed Consent aspect of the new system.

Private accredited professionals should not be the relevant authority for performance assessed development, which involves judgement based assessment. This role should be undertaken as currently occurs within local government with access to a full range of information about local context and conditions (traffic, heritage, waste management, engineering, site contamination etc).

In conclusion our Association opposes any further erosion of local government control of planning and development decision making and any increased role for private certifiers.

Yours faithfully,



Stewart Caldwell
President ()

Andrew Dyson
Secretary ()

cc The Premier, Mr Steven Marshall
Deputy Premier, Ms Vickie Chapman
Minister for Planning, Mr Stephan Knoll
City of Norwood, Payneham & St Peters
Community Alliance South Australia
Australian Civic Trust