Q1 Which part of the Planning and Design Code would you like to make a submission about? (Please click the circle to select which part of the Code you wish to comment on. You can also see which council areas are included in the rural and urban code via the links below.)

My submission relates to Urban code. (click here for council areas)

Q2 Please provide your contact details below (Name, Postcode & Email are mandatory) Please be advised that your submission will be made publicly available on the SA Planning Portal.

Name
Claire Bowmer

Address

Your Council Area
Onkaparinga

Suburbs/Town
Darlington

State
SA

Postcode
5047

Country
Australia

Q3 Which sector do you associate yourself with?

General Public

Q4 Would you like to make comment on

General comments
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I have two comments as a renter and first home builder. Firstly, I am really concerned that HIA have come out publicly and said that trees are the responsibility of councils. As a young person renting, trees are really important to me for cooling the area and attracting birds. I strongly believe that backyard vegetation are critical habitats for South Australian birds and animals. I have put my money where my mouth is, we spent an extra 3 years going through a design firm and small builder to get a sustainable house because I like living with nature. It should be noted that to include sustainability features made us ineligible for the first home buyers grant. There should definitely be strong laws requiring trees be planted with new houses, it will increase the resale value and feel of suburbs. As someone who is going through the build process, there is so much going on so I can see how trees could be left until later if it is not mandated.

My second comment is more concrete. I have had an appalling experience over the past two years. Our neighbours had their design assessed by a private certifier as it appeared to fit the current criteria for that process. Unfortunately, the application did not include retaining walls despite being elevated over 1.5meters from our property. The builder, SA Modern Building services also built beyond what was approved. We now have a 5meter high, 8meter long wall on our boundary and bubbly concrete protruding into our property. The owners have not responded to my requests to remove what crosses the boundary or install retaining. We have gone out of our way to remain civil but followed advice from legal services in providing notice in writing. What they have placed there is loose concrete blocks and metal beams, which could fall and injure someone on our property. The council have been informative and responsive, however, there is nothing they can do. I contacted a Onkaparinga councillor who also was fantastic, they tried to help but found that it all comes down to State Laws. I did everything I could, I contacted the council when I saw the over-regulation formwork going up but they couldn't act until it was built. The police said to build fences, other neighbours locked their driveways to stop the concrete trucks but the builder just ripped the gate our of the ground. I don't understand how you can just build something oversize and then it is all fine. It is now my job to get my neighbours to put in retaining. I'm highly educated and confident but this has been exhausting and I haven't known which department to turn to, it has all been beyond me. It was so stressful when we thought we couldn't afford to build and were going to have to sell with a neigbouring slab falling over into our property. We're going to have to take our neigbours to the small claims court or live with an eye-sore on our boundary. I raise our particular situation to highlight the holes in the current system and that any further streamlining needs to have some form of response if the rules aren't followed.

To conclude, we should definitely mandate trees be planted in each new property and there needs to be clear options for neighbours to question what is approved and there should be ways to remedy where builders have illegally built beyond what was approved.

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Q15 Do you have any attachments to upload?(pdf only)

CB_Concern_regarding_private_certification.pdf (1.7MB)