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State Planning Commission releases *People and Neighbourhoods* policy discussion paper ahead of Code consultation

The State Planning Commission has released a discussion paper that investigates the makeup of South Australia's population and the structure of our neighbourhoods, and proposes a range of new planning policies to improve residential infill development ahead of public consultation on the Planning and Design Code in October this year.

The discussion paper, written in partnership with Professor Emma Baker and Professor Jon Kellett of the University of Adelaide, looks at the key opportunities and challenges facing South Australia's housing sector caused by changes in South Australia's population. It looks at the trends and changes occurring in our suburbs, providing a snapshot in time of where we are now and an indication of what the future will look like.

"Our tendency towards smaller households, an increasing proportion of older South Australians, a growing number of lone person households and the increasing diversity of our population through migration have all resulted in substantial adjustments in the housing and neighbourhoods required across the state," said Professor Emma Baker, co-author of the discussion paper.

"South Australians are now looking for different types of housing to meet their changing needs," she said.

The discussion paper outlines some of the key considerations which form people's decision on housing choice, including:

- Proximity to work, family and services
- Housing affordability and living costs
- Recognition of heritage and character, and
- Rising impacts of climate change.

Given these changes, the State Planning Commission has identified areas of residential planning that require improvement and is proposing a range of new planning policies to enhance neighbourhood livability, raise the quality of urban infill and stem the loss of tree canopy in the new Planning and Design Code.

"Current residential planning policies have helped facilitate the renewal and revitalisation of our suburbs as well as delivered a variety of new housing options, said Mr Michael Lennon, Chair of the State Planning Commission.

"However we have heard loud and clear that for many residents, these policies have fallen well short in ensuring that new housing is sympathetic to, and integrates well, with their existing surroundings," he said.

The Commission's *People and Neighbourhoods* discussion paper proposes a range of options to improve the planning of our streets and neighbourhoods, including:

- A clearer and more consistent policy framework to ensure planning rules are contemporary, up-to-date and accessible to the community, such as reducing the duplication and complexity of neighbourhood zones as well as providing clearer and simpler development assessment and public notification processes.
- A greater emphasis on high-quality design through referral to the Government Architect, plus state and local design review options.
- Policies to promote residential infill improvements including tree planting and landscaping requirements; street-facing façade requirements, water sensitive urban design measures, car parking rates that align with demand, minimum garage widths and maximum driveway widths.
- Flexibility to develop different housing styles in greenfield and master-planned areas to meet South Australia's needs and preferences.
- Policy to support State Heritage places, Local Heritage places, Historic Areas and Character Areas as well as clearly defined and consistent demolition criteria ensuring heritage and character is preserved and protected across the state.
- Sustainability measures to improve neighbourhood liveability and prosperity in response to the impacts of climate change such as landscaping, tree planting and rainwater tank requirements to cool our suburban environments and manage stormwater run-off.
- Support for housing diversity and preferences by facilitating a range of housing types in established areas such as retirement and aged care accommodation as well as small self-contained units
- Delivery of affordable living measures including the timely renewal of community housing applications to assist people to enter the housing market, live in their community or age in place.

These new and updated policies are being proposed under the biggest modernisation of South Australia's planning system in more than 20 years.

"The introduction of the new state-wide Planning and Design Code in July 2020 provides a once in a generational opportunity to update our policies to improve and enhance the planning of our neighbourhoods," said Mr Lennon.

"It is also an opportunity to provide improved industry guidance to address community concerns regarding the quality of residential infill development," he said.

Formal public consultation on the draft Code, including the proposed policies in the *People and Neighbourhood policy discussion paper*, will commence in October this year.

To download a copy of the discussion paper visit www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au.

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