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Comments on Changes to the Planning Act to Affect Trees

TO: *the State Planning Commission* DPTI.PlanningReformSubmissions@sa.gov.au

RE: Submission on Phase 2 of the Code

FROM: Joan Gibbs, [REDACTED]

DATE: 28 November, 2019

In Phase 2 of the Code, please take note of the following requirements from a concerned scientist:

- Please ensure the Native Vegetation Council has proper scrutiny of development applications BEFORE lodgement; also, the public has a RIGHT TO KNOW about the intentional loss of native vegetation by developments;
- Please confirm that the job of the NVC is to advocate for the retention of vegetation, including ancient and venerable trees (supposedly protected also by the National Trust), whose removal would be a threat against the historical landscape of South Australia, as proposed by the vision of Colonel Light; allowing the further clearance of mallee bushland would be a tragedy, since SA/Victoria has the only mallee ecosystems in the world, which will become a famous tourist attraction, much more profitable than marginal farming, which only ends in wasteland and poverty (UNESCO); once cleared, mallee habitats cannot be re-created, so offsets are useless there, and the diversity they support will be gone forever;
- Revegetation by tree planting does not satisfy offsets against the removal of functioning ecosystems; Forestry SA calculates that it takes 100 years before suitable tree hollows can form for the proper breeding of the disappearing species dependent on hollows (20+ spp of bats, 5 species of possums, 30+ species of birds (especially parrots) and countless invertebrates; established soil ecosystems, as under trees, make up 90% of Earth's biodiversity, many of which have not been recorded, and their loss has unknown consequences for human habitation;
- Please calculate the economics of loss of functioning ecosystems in conservation zones, which should be protected against development; with tree decline, South Australia will lose valuable hydrological systems that promote replenishment of our empty aquifers, in addition to the loss of established greenspace and Nature that makes Adelaide a bearable and beautiful city. 35 degrees South latitude means that SA is in danger of desertification (UNEP), especially if we lose our stable ecosystems, to be replaced by buildings in a desert.

Please respond, before we move on to Code 3. Thank you for your attention.