

8th November 2019

The Lord Mayor & Councillors
City of Adelaide
GPO Box 2252
Adelaide 5001

Dear Lord Mayor and Councillors

I wish to advise that after having had the privilege to serve as Chairperson of SECRA for the past 10 years I am of the view that it is now time for me to step down and give someone else the opportunity to take over the role. I will continue as a member of the SECRA committee and look forward to working with whoever assumes the role of Chairperson.

During my time as Chairperson SECRA has had a good working relationship with City of Adelaide Councillors and Council Staff to the benefit of residents of the south east precinct of the City. In particular it has been very much appreciated that Administration Staff have consulted with SECRA on matters of interest to residents and has provided advice which has assisted SECRA in preparing submissions on complex issues such as proposed changes to the Planning process.

It has been an enjoyable, satisfying and sometimes challenging experience especially with the changes to the State Planning processes during the past few years which have resulted in many high rise residential developments culminating with the introduction of the proposed new Planning and Design Code. SECRA produced many submissions which frustratedly had little, if any, effect on the outcome.

The following concerns have also influenced my decision to stand down from the position of SECRA Chairperson:

- While the past two Lord Mayors were in office SECRA attended quarterly Lord Mayor's Resident Associations Forums. Unfortunately these Forums have been discontinued under the current Lord Mayor who organised a meeting of resident associations in June but there has been no further meeting. This is a very disappointing situation as the previous forums provided an opportunity for residents' groups to raise residents' concerns and issues with the Lord Mayor and Councillors and for the Council Administration to present new initiatives and proposals. Does this mean that the current Council does not see residents of the City as important?
- Traditionally past City of Adelaide Councils have consisted of independent Councillors with the occasional small faction. The creation of the current Council faction (commonly called "Team Adelaide") could be likened to what occurs in the Eastern States where many Councillors are not independent but are aligned with factions. There is a perception that the faction within the current City of Adelaide Council, which consists of the numbers required for a quorum, is seen as the "defacto" council led by a "defacto" Lord Mayor as it controls the Council decision process with non members of the faction being the only real independent councillors.

- For your information I have had a long association with the City of Adelaide Council. Prior to my retirement 17 years ago I held the position of Manager of the City Projects Department in the Adelaide City Council under Lord Mayors Jane Lomax Smith and Alfred Huang. From my experience the Councils under both those Lord Mayors were committed to preserve and protect the Adelaide Park Lands for current and future generations of South Australians.

Personally I cannot imagine those Councils considering an unsolicited proposal from an organisation such as the Adelaide Football Club to relocate its headquarters to the Adelaide Park Lands. I am confident that those Councils would have rejected outright such an unsolicited proposal as being an inappropriate development in the Park Lands. In particular such a development would be seen as similar to those inappropriate developments in the Park Lands that had been implemented by successive State Governments and opposed by successive Adelaide City Councils including the proposed Hotel at the Adelaide Oval.

It is pointed out that the Adelaide Football Club's unsolicited proposal to redevelop the Adelaide Aquatic Centre by incorporating their new headquarters would not have occurred if successive City of Adelaide Councils had taken action to address the financial burden of the aging Aquatic Centre. The need to take such action has been known for at least two decades and yet while other Suburban and Fleurieu Councils have made decisions regarding their swimming centres it beggars belief that no such action has been taken by past City of Adelaide Councils to redevelop the Adelaide Aquatic Site with a swimming complex that is fit for purpose.

Also the Adelaide Football Club's claims that the Adelaide Crows is the team for all South Australians and that the relocation of its headquarters will revitalise North Adelaide are questionable. Anyone attending either a Crows or Port Power AFL match at the Adelaide Oval would know that there are many South Australians who are not Adelaide Crows supporters as they are wearing the colours of Port Power and interstate AFL football teams. In any event such claims by the Adelaide Football Club are irrelevant as is the need for them to relocate to the aging Aquatic Centre site to ensure the future viability of a redeveloped Aquatic Centre. What is relevant is that the occupation of the Park Lands by the Multimillion Dollar Adelaide Football Club is inappropriate regardless as to what conditions are imposed by Council. Over time what guarantees are there that these conditions will be adhered to? The Adelaide Oval is an example. Who would have envisaged that a redeveloped Adelaide Oval would end up housing a hotel!

Regardless of what I have been personally told by the Lord Mayor, Deputy Lord Mayor and Councillor Hyde during discussions that at no stage has the Adelaide Football Club submitted a formal bid, the fact remains that Council has provided the Adelaide Football Club with guiding principles which indicates that the Council is sympathetic to the proposal.

My concern is that instead of rejecting the proposal outright, as I am confident that past Councils would have done, the proposal will progress to the stage that the only way that the Council will be able to reject the proposal is if there is considerable opposition during the consultation process. SECRA, representing south east city residents, does not support the proposal and from feedback that I have personally received there is overwhelming opposition to the proposal.

SECRA is extremely disappointed that the current City of Adelaide Council does not appear to place importance on maintaining the Park Lands under its control as a non commercial space, accessible for the benefit and enjoyment of all South Australians. If the proposal is to go ahead it will be a monument to a Council that ignored its responsibilities as guardian of the Park Lands on behalf of all South Australians.

With the significant increase in high rise and high density residential developments within the city and inner suburbs the Park Lands will become even more important in the future as a recreational space. The current and future City of Adelaide Councils have an obligation to ensure that this occurs.

The SECRA AGM was held on 7th November 2019 and the first meeting of the new SECRA Committee will be held on 21st November at which a Chairperson to replace me will be appointed.

Once appointed SECRA will advise the Council of its new office bearers.

Regards



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