

9 October 2017

Ms Jo Chapley  
Labor Candidate for the Seat of Adelaide  
Email: [Jo.Chapley@alp.org.au](mailto:Jo.Chapley@alp.org.au)

Dear Ms Chapley

The South-East City Residents Association (SECRA) has been an active group of residents and others committed to strengthening our local community. The issue which brought us together 12 years ago was a government proposal to build an enormous permanent pavilion in Victoria Park in support of the V8 Motor Sport event. We successfully persuaded the government to not proceed with such a major alienation of the Adelaide Park Lands and we have continued to be very strong advocates for sensible, inclusive and sustainable use of this great South Australian asset.

Our focus over the years has been to engage with the Adelaide City Council and the State Government in many proposals to develop the city in general and the south-east corner in particular. We have watched with growing concern as the State Government has steadily, and may we say, stealthily, re-written the planning laws invariably without genuine consultation and at the same time has greatly weakened the roles and responsibilities of local government, in particular those of the Adelaide City Council.

Recently we were invited to make a submission on the Community Engagement Charter which has been prepared by Minister Rau as a means of giving the community a chance to have effective input into changes to Development Policy and Plans as they affect communities. Our submission in part is as follows:-

*"If a Community Engagement Charter is to have any meaningful value it will have to deliver the outcomes which the community needs in the planning process. The proposed charter in no way compensates the community for what it has lost through recent changes to the planning process within the State, nor does it address the issue of the ability of the Minister to make ad hoc planning decisions with no accountability to the local legislated development plan or even to the parliament. Recent examples have been the rezoning of areas adjacent to the St Andrews Hospital precinct (to meet the demands of a single developer) and more recently the approval of high-rise aged care developments in the eastern suburbs with disastrous impacts on the local communities. Such high-handed actions have to be stopped and the Minister required to follow due process.*

*The community needs to be involved in every aspect of planning and every stage: from early involvement in strategic matters, to the more detailed precinct and neighbourhood planning, to the "nitty-gritty" of the development proposed for next-door or down my street.*

*A charter requires the awarding of powers and privileges. What powers and what privileges? And why is the community merely to be "engaged" rather than consulted?*

*The recent changes to planning laws have taken away the power of the community and individuals:*

- *to be consulted on most developments (now that they are largely considered “complying”)*
- *to “have their day in court” at a Development Assessment Panel*
- *to have their elected local government representatives involved in such panels.*

*The community now asks: Who is accountable for planning decisions? Who decides that my one-storey heritage cottage or two-storey townhouse is now to be overlooked, and overshadowed for most of the day, by a fifteen-storey development, and that my narrow street is going to be choked with traffic? Who is able to challenge a Minister who decides to rezone a key area at the stroke of a pen to suit the request of a developer?*

*Over the last few years, under the regime of the Labor government with John Rau as the Planning Minister we have seen the gradual emasculation of the role of Local Government in the planning system. Local Government has been the voice of the people through the input of their local elected representation on Development Assessment Panels”.*

Over recent years, the term ‘planning’ has been replaced by the term ‘development’; in our opinion, this reflects the fact that this government has become beholden to powerful, well-funded lobby groups such as the Property Council, the UDIA and the Business Council of SA. The big losers have been residents and small businesses who are the victims of a planning system that has been ‘reformed’ too much in favour of the developer who invariably moves into an area, over-develops it and then moves on, without any regard for the longer-term effects of their endeavours. Good planning has to be about people and places rather than private greed and excessive profit.

We look forward to meeting with you on 26 October 2017 to discuss our concerns, particularly about planning (as detailed above), proper protection for the Adelaide Park Lands, public transport and lowered speed limits in our streets. We are also concerned about homeless and vulnerable people in our community and the high level of unemployment especially as it impacts on the need for affordable housing in the city, and support for small businesses as evidenced in recent publicity about business closures in Hutt Street.

Yours sincerely,



John Underwood,  
Chairperson,  
South-East City Residents Association

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