

Coalition for Planning Reform



NEWS RELEASE

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120 community groups want major State planning decisions to stop

A coalition of organisations representing more than 120 active community groups is calling for an immediate moratorium on all major planning decisions by the Weatherill ALP government, with a view to creating a new, more democratic, planning system.

South Australia's new Coalition for Planning Reform (CPR) is concerned that the Urban Renewal Amendment Bill is currently before Parliament without public consultation or review in the lead-up to the March 2014 State election.

At the same time, major rezonings are happening under the 30 Year Plan despite inadequate community consultation.

"We call on every community in South Australia that's worried about rushed and significant changes to State planning laws to speak up now," said the National Trust SA's Professor Norman Etherington.

"Members of the Coalition for Planning Reform have lost faith in the planning system, and believe it needs fundamental reform," he said.

"The current system seems geared towards fast-track *ad hoc* development that mostly fails to take account of both climate change and sustainability principles," said the Conservation Council SA's Professor Rob Fowler. "Prime examples of the government's flawed processes and outcomes include the Mount Barker rezoning and changes to the significant tree legislation," he said.

"The government is really poor at community engagement around planning decisions. Consultation has generally happened near the end of the process and with few or no options given, so that community views have had little to no impact on final outcomes," said Dr Helen Wilmore of the Community Alliance SA.

The coalition wants a new planning system that:

1. Adequately addresses long-term, critical issues including sustainability, climate change, transport, infrastructure, food and water security, environmental aspects, biodiversity, social aspects, sustainable design, employment, heritage, health and economic viability;
2. Has genuine and meaningful community engagement;
3. Has transparent, accountable decision-making with an independent and open review process, resulting in outcome-based and enforceable commitments;
4. Reforms environmental assessment of development that currently falls outside of the normal processes; and
5. Reviews the 30 Year Plan or delivers a new planning strategy to replace it.

The National Trust SA's Prof Etherington said: "The Coalition for Planning Reform is also concerned by a lack of transparency in planning decisions. It's our view that the Planning Minister has excessive powers and the development lobby has unfair influence.

"Worse, there is little requirement for the Government and the Minister to account for their decisions," he said.

The Coalition for Planning Reform includes Community Alliance SA, Conservation Council of South Australia and the National Trust of South Australia, representing more than 120 community groups concerned about planning in SA.

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