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Mr Patrick Dupont  
Parliamentary Officer  
Environment, Resources and Development Committee  
House of Assembly  
Parliament of South Australia

By email: [ERDC.Assembly@parliament.sa.gov.au](mailto:ERDC.Assembly@parliament.sa.gov.au)

Dear Mr Dupont

### Parliamentary Inquiry into the Urban Forest

Thank you for your email of 2 December 2022 inviting the State Planning Commission (the Commission) to provide a submission for the Environment, Resources and Development Committee (the Committee) Parliamentary Inquiry into the Urban Forest (the Inquiry).

As you may be aware, the Commission has responsibilities under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (the Act) for guiding the development and ongoing evolution of the planning system in South Australia. This includes the responsibility of preparing and maintaining the Planning and Design Code (the Code), as well as advising the Minister for Planning (the Minister) on the administration of the Act (and its associated Regulations).

As part of this role, the Commission has progressed the Open Space and Trees Project (the Project) to better understand the use and benefits of trees in an urban context, and the impact of infill development on the State's urban tree canopy. The Project includes three parts as follows:

- Part 1 involved a review of tree species that are exempt from regulated tree controls and consideration of an appropriate off-set contribution for the removal of regulated and significant trees.
- Part 2 involved a more detailed review of tree regulations, including tree protection sizes and other exemptions from protection.
- Part 3 looks to review the current Urban Tree Canopy Off-set Scheme, review infill tree policy as part of the Urban Tree Canopy Overlay, and review tree canopy targets in *The 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide: 2017 Update* (the 30-Year Plan).

Part 1 and Part 2 of the Commission's Project are now complete.

On 1 September 2022, two reports which were commissioned to inform Part 1 and Part 2 of the Project were made publicly available. This included an [Arborist Report](#) which considers the species of trees which should be exempt from regulated and significant tree protections and a [Research Report](#) from the University of Adelaide which considers South Australia's broader framework for regulated and significant trees and compares it with other States and Territories.

Following the Commission's completion of Part 1 and Part 2 of the Project, Planning and Land Use Services (PLUS) is undertaking an Options and Economic Analysis of various options for regulatory reform. This will include further detailed analysis of the options for change and the broader economic impact of any proposed regulatory changes.

More broadly, the State Government is progressing a number of other important initiatives which will assist in protecting trees in our urban environment and increasing our urban tree canopy. These initiatives include:

- The Department for Environment and Water is currently capturing LiDAR and multispectral datasets for the entirety of the metropolitan Adelaide region. Once available, data output and product analysis will assist in reporting on the extent of tree canopy coverage and heat mapping.
- This data may also inform the review of tree canopy targets as part of the next update to the 30-Year Plan.
- In early September 2022, the Commission and Green Adelaide co-hosted a Development Industry Roundtable to draw in development industry perspectives and explore practical ideas toward implementing an Urban Greening Strategy for metropolitan Adelaide.
- Early September 2022 also saw the release of the [Adelaide Garden Guide for New Homes](#) which provides guidance on the ways to achieve the tree planting and soft landscaping policies in the Code.
- Ongoing collaboration between PLUS and Green Adelaide is well underway toward the development of an urban Greening Strategy for metropolitan Adelaide. Synergies and alignment with the Commission's Open Space and Trees Project along with canopy and heat data recapture will continue to be explored.

In addition, as you may be aware, the Minister has established an Expert Panel to deliver the Implementation Review Project for the planning system. The scope of the Expert Panel's Project includes a review of the Code (and related instruments) as it relates to trees. Recommendations by the Expert Panel will be considered by the Commission in completing Part 3 of the Commission's Open Space and Trees Project.

The Commission anticipates the Minister to write to the Commission on the Expert Panel's findings in the second quarter of 2023. Subsequently, the Commission will provide a response to the Minister, and we would be more than happy to share relevant information with the Committee at that time.

I trust this information is of assistance and I wish the Committee best endeavours in undertaking its inquiry into this important matter.

Yours sincerely



**Craig Holden**  
Chair