



Protecting green space – the soul of our city

By Louise Denley and Paul Tuffin

The concepts of deep ecology, forest bathing, spiritual ecology, connecting with nature, connecting to land all reflect what we innately know: that our spiritual and physical health is improved by spending time in green spaces.

Meanwhile everyone can see that personal green space is decreasing with urban infill and increased house size. Our community is thus dependent on the maintenance and development of public green spaces to meet both our needs and those of future generations.

As the temperature increases Green Adelaide emphasises the importance of tree canopy for ‘a cooler, greener, wilder and more climate-resilient metropolitan South Australia that celebrates our unique culture’.

In December 2023 the state government purchased the Magill Campus of the University of SA. This 11.26-hectare plot holds a number of community facilities, including a childcare centre and oval, has large areas of green space, a linear walking trail along Third Creek – and over 200 significant trees (at the least being over 110 years old) that not only provide habitats for a range of native birds but importantly, are part of the koala corridor that runs along Third Creek. It has been a focus for the local

community as well as the student body.

It is proposed that this site be used for urban infill (medium to high density housing).

At a recent consultation meeting a poster titled 'Existing Tree Canopy' acknowledged that 'notable heritage trees, including a Bunya Pine, Kurrajong and River Red Gums estimated to be over 150 years old will be protected.' However, it went on to state that 'whilst every effort will be taken to retain as many trees as possible, some mature trees outside the Third Creek corridor and Murray House Heritage zone will need to be removed to accommodate new housing.'

We made a very rough measure and count of trees on the campus (**not** including those along the Third Creek) found 153 significant trees.

We feel the need to speak to protect the whole tree canopy on the campus that will be lost to three generation if replaced with immature trees.

We are not against urban infill to provide housing, but we are committed to 'smart infill'. From the perspective of the Conservation Council of SA, smart infill maximises the retention of existing trees and retains the benefit offered by mature trees rather than shrubs or immature trees favoured by new developments.'

Our community needs creative development that has a starting point maximising green space and existing tree canopies and wildlife corridors. Development needs to be 'right' development:

Right for the local community and wildlife

Right for the Adelaide environment

Right for the environment at large and all future residents.

To quote James Gustave Speth, a former US advisor on climate change;

'I used to think that top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that thirty years of good science could address these problems. I was wrong. Top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy and to deal with these we need cultural and spiritual transformation.'

This transformation not only requires us to recognise the sacredness of creation but also to have access to green spaces to spend time in as an essential part of our spiritual and physical wellbeing.

The closing date for the consultation process on the Magill site has been extended until 10 February 2025. I urge you to add your voice to an issue that affects us all, not just this local community. You can do so through the Renewal SA community engagement portal online at <https://renewalsa.mysocialpinpoint.com>.

The authors are members of the St Mary Magdalene's community and the project has been endorsed by the Adelaide Diocese's Climate Action Task Group

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