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Submission
Submission on Design and Place SEPP

I am greatly concerned about climate change and how this affects living in an urban area. It is important to me that the NSW government implements strong, enforceable policies that will reduce carbon emissions, require buildings that will withstand the effects of climate change, increase tree canopy and biodiversity and have more open spaces for community use.

In the first paragraph of the government's website, the purpose of this proposal 'aims to simplify and consolidate how to deliver good design in NSW.'

However, the proposed Design and Place SEPP contains nothing to convince me that the government is serious about the intentions described in the proposal to create liveable urban areas. Instead, it is a document allowing developers to further control the process of development applications and sideline communities and local councils who have concerns or objections about proposed developments.

There are no best practice standards being set by the Department of Planning in this proposal with no clear targets and no transparency as to whether the best practice standards are being met. We need certainty that the government is taking seriously the urgency required to deal with climate change. A better, more transparent SEPP is required.

The wording in the proposal indicates that making basic environmental and liveability requirements as 'matters for consideration'

by using 'flexibility', 'trade-offs' and moving away from 'prescriptive controls' are what the developers want to continue to do. We have seen so many inappropriate and poorly built houses and apartment blocks in suburbs throughout Sydney in the last decade the Coalition has been in power in NSW. It seems that everything from water management, green infrastructure, emissions, resource efficiency and tree canopy is entirely discretionary on the part of developers whose vision is only short-term. This is a complete failure on the part of the government to protect NSW citizens from the long-term consequences of climate change.

The current BASIX requirements including energy targets need to be strengthened to build more resilient buildings that will serve us well into the future and mitigate the effects of climate change. For example, the uptake of PV has led to a significant reduction of electricity costs for households and businesses and a decrease in the state's carbon emissions. Weakening the BASIX will not help the government reach its net zero carbon emissions target by 2050.

I am also greatly concerned that the government's own 40% tree canopy target cannot be met if offsets such as green roofs are permitted. Trees are a vital component in countering the effects of Urban Heat Islands as well as providing habitat for our native fauna and flora, providing shade and health benefits and improving urban water quality. The protection of green space zones that local communities want and value are likely to be lost under this proposal. Mandatory open space targets must not be offset by weak alternatives.

I have seen in my own street what happens now when a developer buys a house with the intention of its demolition and rebuild. On a block of land were seven healthy, mature trees that provided habitat for possums and birds. The council placed a preservation order on one particular tree after residents in the street lodged a petition asking for its protection. Residents also pleaded with this developer not to remove the trees. He was astonished that residents would dare question his decision to remove them. He defied the order and had the tree, plus the other six removed, confident the council was powerless to take action against him. He said replacing the trees was a low priority to him only to be considered later. The design of another house he has recently built strongly suggests this next house will not be future proofed and will not have trees or any significant green space. If this is what developers can do now, it is truly disturbing how much more power they will have in what and how they can build if this proposal is allowed.

The resilience of our communities in the face of climate change is vital and requires strong policies that protect the health, vitality and biodiversity of where we live. Removing the voice of communities and councils who oppose inappropriate must not be allowed. I want to see the government controlling this process, not developers.

I therefore most strongly object to what is currently being proposed by the government.

I agree to the above statement

Yes