

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC  
Chair, Environment and Public Affairs Committee  
Parliament House  
2 Harvest Terrace  
West Perth WA 6005

Dear Chair, 

**Re: Petition 96 – Subiaco Draft Local Planning Scheme 5**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission for Petition 96 regarding the Subiaco Draft Local Planning Scheme 5 (LPS5).

The situation in Subiaco is entirely representative of the issues Perth is facing in becoming a denser, better connected, more liveable city. Subiaco is a well-established and very desirable suburb that already contains a mix of low and medium density housing in and around the town centre, with very few higher density developments.

The majority of residents of the area acknowledge the need for Perth to have greater density and to open the economic, education and lifestyle opportunities of living close to the city to more people. The City of Subiaco put forward a plan to meet the mark set in the *Perth & Peel @ 3.5 million* strategic planning document. This is the LPS5 upon which the community was consulted. While there were naysayers in the initial consultation, the link between state-wide strategy and the LPS5 was clear and understandable.

The response of the WAPC to the initial draft LPS5 was to both increase the amount of infill required and to expand the areas that would experience infill. This response was not anticipated by the community and the need for this level of infill is not reflected in our current planning documents. These are the documents that have been the centre of substantial and ongoing community consultation. It is not reasonable or fair for the first time the community is asked to consider substantially greater infill is as an imposition from the WAPC.

This desire for such substantially increased density is difficult for the community to understand in an area that also includes the Subiaco East Project and the future use of the Princess Margaret Hospital site. Both of these projects have the potential to house a substantial number of people. It would seem unnecessary to go ahead with a plan that increases density beyond that originally discussed with the community.

One of the concerns that we have seen in many communities and that is very present in the discussion around Subiaco is the lack of certainty about what increased density will mean. We have seen a number of older communities a little further from the city lose a great deal of amenity through the process of densification undertaken through R-code changes.

In the recent green paper review of the Western Australian planning system, Evan Jones clearly identified reasons that R-code changes are so concerning to the community. One of the things Jones identified was the absolute discretion in all elements of approving a planning proposal.

The community cannot rely on any elements of the Local Planning Scheme to impose a hard limit on any proposed design. Indeed, the volume and number of strategic documents that need to be considered is so substantial, that it is possible to find strategic support for most design outcomes. With the lack of third-party right of appeal, the community is very limited in the ability to refuse specific developments.

There are a number of design documents through the Department of Planning's Design WA in draft or in development that, with appropriate hard boundaries, could provide a much higher level of certainty to the community. Of particular concern are the rules around medium density, as it is this sort of development that we have seen destroy character and amenity, and create additional traffic – all without bringing any noticeable economic or cultural opportunities to the area.

Currently Subiaco has a number of areas that are under the control of the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority. Despite the recent concerns regarding the approval of substantially over-height towers in Scarborough, the MRA has consistently been able to work collaboratively with the community to create a vision of the areas under its control. It has also largely followed through in building that vision.

The blunt instrument of changes to the R-codes provides no similar vision of what will happen in the area – and our examples of what has happened in previous areas are not great. It is entirely understandable that the residents of Subiaco are deeply concerned about the proposed density changes to the LPS5.

I encourage the Committee to look further into the planning system and to consider the progress of the Government in responding to the Evan Jones green paper. I anticipate that we will see similar protests and concerns about increasing density in all inner-city suburbs until such time as there are clear and understandable rules and requirements about increasing density enhancing rather than compromising existing neighbourhoods.

Yours sincerely,



Hon Alison Xamon MLC  
Member for North Metropolitan

07 January 2019