

Community Alliance SA Inc
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Engaging for Reform



7th November 2014

The Community Alliance SA urges you and **the Liberal Party** to vote for the Hon Mark Parnell's disallowance motion proposed in September, to disallow the Government's *Development (Assessment of Significant Developments) Variation Regulations 2014*).

The SA Government's latest Regulations are aimed at 'fast tracking' private development projects valued over \$3 million by effectively allowing the assessment of these projects to be taken away from any local council and to instead be carried out by the Development Assessment Commission (DAC). Developers for these projects can now seek to bypass the normal local council approval process. The DAC is seen within the community as unapproachable, removed from local issues, and unresponsive to ordinary members of the public and their concerns.

It appears the Government is convinced that 'fast tracking' \$3 million dollar development projects will quickly bring vital economic benefits. This is a short-sighted view. In making these changes, the Planning Minister and the Government have again taken important decisions about local matters further away from our Councils and the input of local communities. This arrangement has the capacity to result in approval of developments far less appropriate and less suited to local areas.

The Government's action in bringing in these changes denigrates the Local Government Association, the Councils and the community by suggesting that the locally appointed decision makers are incompetent and cause delays.

We also share the concerns of the Liberal Party, as expressed by Steven Griffiths MP in his letter dated 8th October 2014, that the threshold construction value of \$3m is low and can be easily manipulated by proponents to attract this alternative procedure, including through use of the combined value of multiple projects by the same proponent. A large number of developments would come under this new assessment process that would be better left with local councils. The Community Alliance SA is also seriously concerned that the new process could in many cases be used to replace the already inadequate major project assessment process, which could greatly lessen the degree to which environmental and social impacts are assessed.

The new Regulations came into force on August 14th this year. There was no consultation with local government or the community, which could have helped to identify any 'blockages' in the current development approval process, and identify potential solutions that retain input at a more local level. Furthermore, this sweeping change to the planning system has been introduced while the State planning review is still underway. The Government has decided not to wait for the final recommendations of its Expert Panel on Planning Reform due in December this year. The Government decided to go it alone and ignore everybody.

These Regulations must be disallowed and a firm message must be delivered to the Government and Planning Minister. This is NOT good planning and it runs roughshod over Councils, the Local Government Association and the people of SA. The Community Alliance SA asks you respectfully to vote FOR the Hon Mark Parnell's disallowance motion.

Yours Faithfully

Tom Matthews

President

Community Alliance SA

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We are an umbrella organisation representing resident and community groups Dedicated to 'Putting the People back into Planning and Development' Our goal is a planning and development process that is accountable, transparent and sustainable, and that guarantees genuine community consultation