

# Questions to Candidates in the City of Unley - 2022 State election

## *Protecting valued built and natural heritage in the City of Unley*

In view of the upcoming elections in South Australia, FOCUS (Friends of the City of Unley Society Inc) is seeking candidates' views about protecting our historic built heritage and a green urban environment. Your responses will be circulated to our membership as well as other community groups. We request that you complete this questionnaire, which is being sent to all candidates in the City of Unley.

Please provide up to 3 paragraphs in response to each question and **RETURN BY 28<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY** by email to [focusonunley@gmail.com](mailto:focusonunley@gmail.com).

1. FOCUS is concerned that our built and natural heritage is under assault in this state, not just in Unley but also further afield, with examples such as Ayers House, Martindale Hall and the Parklands under threat. It appears that residential and commercial buildings which chronicle our history, and are much valued by residents, are no longer valued by government and the development industry.

- **What specific legislative changes will you pursue to restore/improve heritage protection in SA?**
- **What is the most significant change you would like to see made to the current SA planning legislation?**

2. Implementation of the Planning, Development and Infrastructure (PDI) Act 2016 and Planning & Design Code has removed legislative protection for much of the older stone and brick housing stock in Unley. For example, items which were previously considered 'contributory items' can now more easily be demolished, accelerating the loss of valued character and buildings designed to be appropriate for our environmental conditions.

- **How committed are you to stopping demolition of our valued built heritage?**

No position    Undecided    Partially undecided    Committed    Strongly Committed

- **What specific changes will you strive to enact to address this problem?**

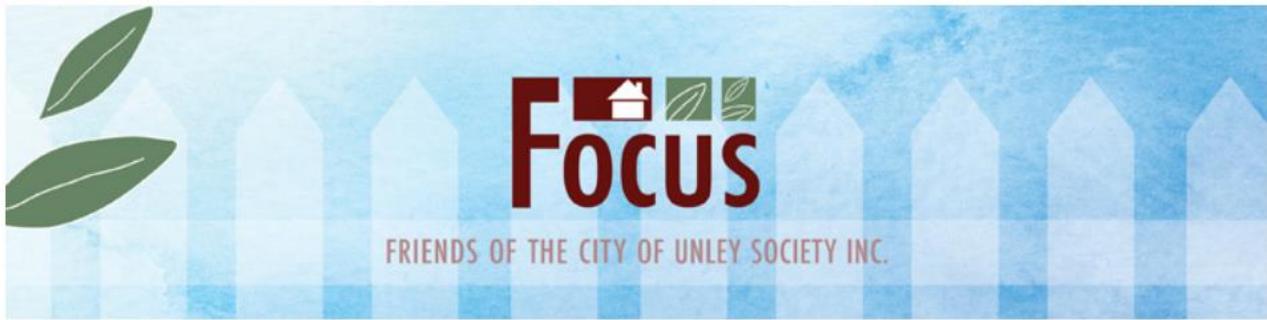
3. Under the Planning & Design Code, opportunities for citizens to participate in decision making about the communities in which they live have significantly reduced, including a lower level of community engagement and transparency with regard to decisions made.

FOCUS advocates for a development application assessment process that insists on rigorous criteria to ensure high quality sympathetic development in Unley.

- **What changes will you actively make so that citizens will be able to participate at all levels of decision making about their built heritage and green environment?**

4. FOCUS is concerned that, with increasing urban infill, there has been a significant loss of trees and vegetation, at a time when many people are concerned about climate change. The State Government has a target to increase the percentage of tree cover by 20% by 2045. However, the current Planning & Design Code mandates only 2% tree cover for new developments on private land which will accelerate the current trend of a loss of 75,000 trees in Adelaide each year (*Conservation Council SA report "A Call to Action: Protecting Adelaide's Tree Canopy"*).

- **Will you commit to amending the Planning & Design Code to ensure that Adelaide's tree canopy increases and meets the 2045 target?**



Friends Of the City of Unley Society (FOCUS) Inc.  
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## **ABOUT FOCUS**

The Friends of the City of Unley Society Inc is a community group formed in 2003 by residents concerned about preserving the historical character of the built form in the City of Unley.

FOCUS aims to promote planning policies that ensure retention of existing amenity, including character, gardens, open space and trees throughout the City of Unley.

FOCUS also seeks to limit the unnecessary demolition of buildings built prior to 1945 and advocates for consultative, transparent and accountable government decision-making processes.

While we appreciate the pressures towards increased urban infill, we believe it is important to provide adequate protection to maintain the historic character of our older suburbs to be enjoyed by future generations.

A high percentage of tree cover on properties has been shown to mitigate the heat in Adelaide's summers. FOCUS is concerned that, with the pressure for increased urban infill, a significant loss of trees and vegetation will lead to Adelaide becoming hotter as climate change escalates.

*If you wish to comment in person, ask any questions, or discuss the above, please contact FOCUS (Philip Henschke, President) on 0416 160 493.*