

Battle

THE RIVALS

■ Adelaide City Council's Development Assessment Panel includes four elected councillors who are appointed by their colleagues. It also includes five "specialist members" with training and experience in the legal, planning and development industries.

■ The Development Assessment Commission is a seven-person body appointed by the State Government on two-year terms. The presiding and deputy presiding member must have qualifications and experience in planning or a related discipline. The other members are "selected from a range of backgrounds or experience".

THE RULES

■ DAP meetings are open to the public. DAC meetings are not.
■ Applications for developments valued over \$10 million are submitted to the council DAP for comment but decided by the DAC.
■ Council staff prepare reports for the DAP, which then votes on whether to recommend the DAC approves or rejects applications

valued over \$10 million.

■ The DAC considers the council staff reports and DAP recommendation before making a ruling.

■ The DAC and DAP must both refer to the development plan drawn up by the elected councillors to determine whether a proposal should be passed or blocked.

THE GOVERNMENT

Urban Development and Planning Minister Paul Holloway:

"DAC does not rubber stamp proposals but provides an independent assessment based on the merits of a development application, free of the political posturing that has previously bedevilled the planning process in the City of Adelaide."



Paul Holloway

THE COUNCIL

Lord Mayor Michael Harbison:

"We can criticise the quality of the decisions, but not how they make them, that's not our position," he said.



Michael Harbison

THE VOTERS

Residents and Ratepayers Association President Kevin Kaeding:

"We don't get to see the debates, we don't know the reasons for something actually getting approved and something not getting approved."



Kevin Kaeding

THE INDUSTRY

Property Council of Australia SA executive director Nathan Paine:

"There is an argument to suggest that making these decisions in confidence does allow them to speak more freely, openly and honestly."



Nathan Paine

THE BUILDINGS

Developments opposed by Adelaide City Council and passed by the Development Assessment Commission



25-storey office tower on King William St.



Freedom Apartments complex on Grote St.



13-storey office block on Light Square.



21-room hotel on Rundle St.



10-level Franklin St car park.

for the city skyline



TOWER CONTROVERSY: Calls have been made for more transparency after this King William St development was approved behind closed doors on Monday.

COMMUNITY leaders are demanding secret deliberations of the state's most powerful development body be made public after its latest decision to over-rule Adelaide City Council.

The State Government-appointed Development Assessment Commission approved plans for a controversial 25-storey office tower on King William St in a behind-closed-doors meeting late Monday.

The ruling came despite the council's rejection of the proposed building for being too tall and out of character with the existing streetscape.

Councillors and ratepayer

POLITICAL REPORTER

DANIEL WILLS



groups yesterday called on the Government to overturn its policy of shielding DAC meetings from public scrutiny.

Residents and Ratepayers Association president Kevin Kaeding said the commission was unaccountable to voters who questioned why it was at constant loggerheads with the council.

"We don't get to see the

debates, we don't know the reasons for something actually getting approved and something not getting approved," he told *The Advertiser* yesterday.

"It's about public access, open government and transparency. Because everything is behind closed doors, the public is suspicious."

The DAC produces minutes after each meeting which are posted online several days later.

They note the decisions made but include no detail on how individual members voted or debate that occurred.

Lord Mayor Michael

Harbison was yesterday at odds with several of his councillors in opposing the push to open the DAC meetings to the public.

"Opening them up would be the start of a political circus," he said.

Councillor Sandy Wilkinson said the DAC was filled with "yes men" and had become a "rubber stamp" that never opposed development.

Councillor and DAP member Anne Moran questioned the process for selecting DAC members.

"The DAC has a 100 per cent approval rate, that alone bothers me," she said.

"They are Government ap-

pointees and that immediately gives them a huge conflict of interest."

Opposition development spokesman David Ridgway said the DAC should be made as transparent as possible without compromising its independence.

Urban Development and Planning Minister Paul Holloway rejected calls to open the meetings to the public, saying it would encourage political "grandstanding".

"What happens in the city affects all South Australians, so it is important development assessment decisions are made by an independent body that is beyond the in-

fluence of local politics," he said.

Property Council of Australia SA executive director Nathan Paine said the industry was content with the current arrangements and did not "have any issues" with closed-door DAC meetings.

PAGE 62: Wait begins for construction start

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Council shrinks 'wasteful' plan

MT BARKER Council believes it can save more than two-thirds of the agricultural land proposed for urban rezoning while still delivering on the objectives of the State Government's 30-year population plan.

The council yesterday delivered its submission on the controversial Mt Barker Development Plan Amendment, branding Urban Development and Planning Minister Paul Holloway's proposal to rezone nearly 1300ha of land around Mt Barker and Nairne as wasteful.

It has instead proposed a more compact urban vision for Mt Barker that it claims would still enable significant population growth.

Mt Barker mayor Ann Ferguson said the council accepted the region needed to play a role in accommodating an increase in South Australia's population, but said that could be done using far less agricultural land than the Government had slated for building up to 7000 homes.

"We can demonstrate to the State Government that instead of 1300ha,

**DAVID
JEAN**



we can get the same result with 400ha," Ms Ferguson said.

"That is using all the vacant land within the town centre and around the town centre at this point in time."

The Department of Planning and Local Government had received more than 300 public submissions on the project last night. A spokeswoman said the DPA would be released publicly on its website within days.

An independent development policy advisory committee will now assess the submissions before reporting to Mr Holloway, who has the final say on whether the plan goes ahead.

Ms Ferguson hoped the minister would look closely at the council's submission and scrap his plan in favour of a more compact approach.

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Residents fighting for their lifestyle against development

Long road to a crowded future



PROCESSION ROUTE: Mt Barker residents protest yesterday against the proposed new development plans.

Picture: TAIT SCHMAAL

IT was a slow journey with the air of a funeral procession, as Hills residents drove around Mt Barker yesterday to see what the future may hold.

About 100 people met for a tour organised by the Mt Barker Coalition for Sustainable Communities.

They turned on their headlights, strung black crêpe paper from their car aerials and drove through farmland which the coalition fears could be the new home



AMY NOONAN

for up to 30,000 more people. Organiser Brian Haddy said, "seeing is believing".

"We thought that by taking them for a gentle cruise through the areas that are going to be developed, the people would say, 'Good

heavens above, surely they're not going to put houses here?'"

Mr Haddy said he feared it would become a satellite town, without the required infrastructure for water, roads, power and school places.

"What has Mt Barker got for jobs? Not much. What is the vision for jobs? It doesn't exist, so we'd become a commuting town, an outer suburb of Adelaide with very poor public transport and

40,000 people. You've got to be kidding. It's not going to work."

Adelaide Hills Council deputy mayor Bill Spragg will run for the federal seat of Mayo as an independent while the fledgling Stop Population Growth Now party finds its feet.

"The fact we're running in the seat of Mayo is a bit like a test case. Quite clearly it's an issue, and for Strathalbyn and Victor Harbor it's an issue," Mr Spragg said.

Four-year-old protester Ovina donned a piece of material which read, "Paul Holloway made me cry".

Her mother, Cyd Fenwick, said trees felled for a new roundabout on Wellington Ave sparked the tears.

"I wanted them (her daughters) to experience open spaces and the fact that there are food producers up the road, orchards ... (but) the future of Mt Barker is going to lead to more sadness," Ms Fenwick said.