

Recommendation 23

The State Planning Commission should review the size and purpose of catalyst sites.

A catalyst site is a large site which provides opportunity for significant integrated development to occur. The intent of catalyst sites is to provide residential development in concert with small scale commercial development such as restaurants, cafes, and shops. The catalyst site policies apply within the City of Adelaide in the following locations:

- › Business Neighbourhood Zone (Melbourne Street West Subzone)
- › City Living Zone (East Terrace Subzone)
- › City Main Street Zone (City High Street Subzone)
- › Community Facilities Zone (St Andrews Hospital Precinct Subzone).

The Code provides policy dispensation to catalyst sites, allowing them to exceed prescribed maximum building heights and site coverage requirements.

A 'catalyst site' is currently identified in the Code as being a site greater than 1500 square metres. However, the MTECA proposes to insert the following definition of the term 'catalyst site' into the Code, to provide greater clarity:

Means a site greater than 1500m² , which may include one or more allotments.

The notion of providing catalyst site policy is to ensure land available in appropriate locations is not underutilised and underdeveloped, and is premised on a view that *'design, setback and interfaces can be appropriately managed on larger sites'*.³⁸

In the Panel's view, the current policies applying to catalyst sites in the Code are more representative of strategic sites. This view arises on the basis the criteria to establish a catalyst site is limited only to the size of the site, and consideration the requisite site size is not so large as to make it 'catalytic'. On that basis, the Panel believes the minimum size of catalyst sites needs to be dramatically increased so as to ensure the policy applies only to those truly catalytic sites and also to encourage the amalgamation of land. The Panel has not recommended the size a catalyst site should be, as this determination will fall for consideration in the course of the recommended review.

In addition, the Panel also considers there is opportunity to prescribe additional criteria for the creation of catalyst sites. This could include, but is not limited to, considering the merits of:

- › applying additional incentive policy through both planning and non-planning mechanisms to encourage the creation of catalyst sites;
- › including additional design parameters and/or expectations to ensure catalyst sites satisfactorily transition into the urban landscape;
- › requiring the provision of a structure plan for catalyst sites to bring the community into the conversation at the policy level before approvals are sought and obtained;
- › requiring an outline consent to be obtained for catalyst sites (acknowledging the need for a Practice Direction to be prepared in accordance with section 120 of the PDI Act) to give both the applicant and community certainty;
- › preparing additional guidance material pertaining to catalyst sites and what is and is not capable of being deemed catalytic; and
- › appeal rights.

The Panel makes these observations in recognition of the fact raising the size requirement for a catalyst site in the absence of additional policy is unlikely to result in innovative development.

In light of the above, the Panel recommends the Commission review the size and purpose of catalyst sites, with specific thought given to what it means for a site to be catalytic and how to best manage community expectations pertaining to the same. To achieve this, there may also be benefit in the Commission consulting and working collaboratively with the City of Adelaide.

The City of Adelaide is concerned that current catalyst site policies are insufficient to manage the transition in height and scale of development across the city. City of Adelaide cannot support catalyst sites in the city without stronger policy to achieve desired design quality.³⁹

