

A large, spreading tree with dense green foliage dominates the left side of the frame. Its branches extend across the top and right. The ground is covered in dry, yellowish-brown grass. In the background, a green fence and more trees are visible under a cloudy sky.

# **TREES NOT TESLAS**

**Save Chestnut Court Reserve**



# INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY REPORT

## Case Against:

“Chestnut Court - Proposed revocation of community land”  
City of Marion Council

Report by  
**Trees Not Teslas**

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27 / 06 / 25

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## Who We Are

Trees Not Teslas is a grassroots independent collective of people concerned for the community, formed as a response to the City of Marion’s proposal to revoke and sell Chestnut Court Reserve.

We live and/or work within the City of Marion Council district, and from the support and traction this campaign has gained now have a growing online presence.

We acknowledge we are living on the traditional lands of the Kaurna people and recognise the Kaurna people as the traditional custodians of the land.

Sovereignty was never ceded — it always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

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## What's Happening: The Short Version

**The City of Marion Council wants to revoke community land and destroy a green space for a Tesla battery recycling factory and showroom. We, the community, believe that's a terrible idea.**

The Council ran community consultation, which came back with a **95% disapproval rating**.

They ignored this and approved the proposal anyway – taking the first offer they received, and choosing to sell and privatise community land on the prediction of profits and jobs.

One of these companies is Tesla, who:

- ⊂ Is an unreliable investment, with drastically fluctuating stock values and sales.
- ⊂ Is currently part of a 10,000 person Australia wide class action lawsuit.
- ⊂ Is being litigated in multiple cases across multiple countries for multiple violations.
- ⊂ Has an extensive and documented record of union suppression, unsafe working conditions, and racial discrimination within their facilities.

And ultimately, who's CEO and largest shareholder is **renowned fascist Elon Musk**.

The land is contaminated, and has been neglected by the local government for years. Promises from private companies to clean and decontaminate public land are ahistorical, as proven by the direct history of the area.

Clearing the area will mean **removing at least 58 developed trees** that actively fight the ground contamination, destroying the ecosystems that live there, and reducing Adelaide's already dwindling parklands percentage further.

Instead of funding remediation and maintaining a green space for the community and wildlife – which has shown to be possible and effective – the Council are choosing to wash their hands of responsibility, privatise public land, and do business with fascists for money.

**This is about more than just the sale of public land;** it has become (and fundamentally is) about the power and influence large corporations and their “promises” of “jobs and money” – money that largely goes back into private hands, and not into the community – have on Local (and State) Government's decision making.

## What We're Asking

We're calling on the State Government to:

1. Reject the Council's request to revoke and sell the land.
2. Do what the Council has failed to do, and actually represent the words of the people.
3. Commit to decontamination and preservation of community land.
4. Prevent the expansion of Tesla facilities into the communities.
5. Limit Musk's global reach and influence he has over the SA Government.
6. Do what should be an easy bare minimum: recognise and reject fascism before it spreads into the community.

## What's Happening: The Long Version

The City of Marion Council has **approved plans to revoke the community status** of green space at 7A Chestnut Court Tonsley and allow out-of-state developer MAB CCT Pty Ltd **to build a factory and showroom for** tenancy by American company **Tesla**.

As legally required under the Local Government Act 1999 (SA), the Council ran community consultation on the proposal and was met with:

- ⊂ nearly **1,000 responses**,
- ⊂ a **95% disapproval** rating, and
- ⊂ over **1250 comments** from the community **not supporting** the proposal.

The City of Marion Council then **approved the proposal anyway**, and has now submitted to Labor's Minister for Local Government Joe Szakacs for final approval, who we are asking to block the proposal.

The developer wishes to build a factory which will repurpose Tesla batteries, perform servicing and (ultimately) be a showroom for Tesla vehicles. Their proposal claims it will create over 100 jobs, and generate \$56 million – though it does not show or mention specifics at how they arrived at these figures.

This means the City of Marion (and SA Housing/Renewal SA) have **abandoned their original plans for a nearby public housing development** and green community space when faced with the promises of money through privatisation; a move that ultimately does not serve the people.

**The Council have taken the first offer on the table** without considering any other options, and have agreed to do business with the world's richest man, and fascist, Elon Musk. They wish to strengthen their connections to Tesla – an unreliable company with drastically unstable value and a terrible public image.

We recommend having a look at the Council's Community Feedback Report; **99 of the 117 pages are the community's comments opposing the proposal**.

The proposal and Council's Community Feedback Report can be found here:



**City of Marion Page**  
makingmarion.com.au/chestnut



**Proposal Document**



**Community Feedback Report**

## What We Believe

By ignoring the overwhelming response from the community, we believe **the City of Marion Council has failed in its responsibility** to actively consider the views and opinions of the public when making their decision.

The Council may then be in violation of said requirement from s 194.2(b) of the Local Government Act 1999 (SA), as s 3 of their Public Consultation Policy (May 2019) states that:

- ⊢ the Council will be “ideally presenting a number of options”,
- ⊢ the community’s “concerns and aspirations [will be] consistently understood and considered”,
- ⊢ the Council will “[collaborate] in partnership with the community”, and
- ⊢ the Council aims to be “placing the decision-making...in the hands of the community”.

### Approving this proposal will:

- ⊢ Permanently put more community land in private, corporate hands.
- ⊢ Destroy the diverse ecosystem of trees and wildlife that currently live on the site.
- ⊢ Mean the people working the proposed jobs will be working for Tesla – a company with a long history of labour and workers’ rights abuses, and who are currently subject to an Australian class action lawsuit.
- ⊢ **Mean that our government and representatives are happy to do business with fascists – an action with enough historical precedence that it should not need an explanation to why that is unacceptable.**

**Public lands must stay public and green, for the health of our communities and our planet.**

Demonstration held at City of Marion Council Office (04/06/25)



## The Facts

**Adelaide metropolitan can't afford to lose more green spaces:** we're only 10% parklands (compared to Sydney's 57%) and have some of the lowest levels of tree canopy coverage, in the driest state on the driest continent in the world.

The **ground contamination** in the area, which was historically **exacerbated by previous car manufacturing**, is larger and more spread than most realise. Clearing this public land will mean removing at least 58 trees – trees that actively help fight the ground contamination and have been doing more for remediation of the land than the Council or Government have done for over a decade.

The proposal claims it will make use of this contaminated land that cannot be used for housing or recreation, however in order to be fit for their purpose the land **must undergo remediation regardless**.

Renewal SA commissioned BlueSphere (an environmental consultancy group) to attempt remediation nearby, which showed a 95% reduction in TCE groundwater contaminates. They showed this process to be cost effective and presented to this to Renewal SA, who have since done nothing with this information. The government **can and should** commit to decontaminating and preserving the land itself.

Electric Vehicle battery recycling and handling comes with serious hazard and fire risks, things that Tesla are not famous for managing well. Plus, there are already world class **Australian companies** who can provide these services (such as Livium's Envirostream). Why should we be voluntarily giving this share of the market to an overseas American company?

Tesla is a **bad and unstable financial investment**; their stock value is constantly in flux, dropping over 15% since the start of the year, and any guarantee on returns is not secure.

Doing business with someone like Elon Musk **tarnishes the reputation of the city, as well as South Australia as a whole** – the people have already spoken and said **they do not want this**.

**A "green energy" company that destroys trees and public green spaces is only green in name.**



All resources for information provided and more can be found at: [treesnotteslas.com.au/whysayno](https://treesnotteslas.com.au/whysayno)

## Our Change.org Petition

Shortly after the Council approved the proposal, we needed to do something, and started a change.org petition.

We, a small group from the community with little to no resources and reach, have managed to receive **well over 3 times the responses** the City did with their own community consultation, and in less time.

This proves one thing quite clearly:

**The community stands by what they said in the feedback, and do not want community spaces revoked and sold to corporations like Tesla.**



# 5,028

Signatures

12:00 (27/06/25)

## Community's Comments from Our Petition

### **Jess**

Marion Council ignored 95% of public opposition & voted to sell public land to Tesla. Tonsley is residential – we say Trees not Teslas. This isn't progress, it's corporate capture.

### **Ember**

You can't "just do business" with Nazis and pretend you're not complicit.

### **Katie**

Ignoring 95% public opposition is the clearest demonstration of putting profit before people. Especially when the CEO/founder/majority owner of the company in question is a known racist, homophobic, transphobic, pro-genocide, bigot - and that's putting it lightly. The City of Marion Council approving these plans makes them complicit in the long list of horrible things supported or funded by Musk/Tesla, most importantly the current genocide of Palestinians. Marion Council - do better, listen to the people, stop being cowardly, and stand up for what is right and what is being asked of you. Do your job.

### **Alex**

The Marion Council just sold us out, approving a Tesla factory on contaminated land despite 95% of public submissions opposing it. That's not consultation, that's contempt and a giant middle finger to our community. Let's be crystal clear: every councillor who voted "for" this mess has made their choice. We'll remember it come election time. **You don't get to ignore the overwhelming voice of the community and keep your seat.** You work for us, not for corporate lobbyists or ego-tripping billionaires.



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**Nastasja**

Marion Council should not ignore the major backlash from this decision. They are supposed to be a representative of community.

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**Pauline**

I moved back to Adelaide in large part because of its plentiful green space. Once parks are gone we will never get them back. This is a bad decision. **This type of decision will affect my voting decisions in the future.**

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**Cathy**

HARD PASS! I don't wish to be known as the state who supported the business of a Nazi sympathiser for the sake of increasing the state economy. I also oppose the practice of building out instead of up which the state government seems to continue to commit to, despite evidence-based reasons not to. We need to retain and install more green spaces more than ever!

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**Justin**

In addition to all above, during current housing crises industrial construction should be being deferred to allow all construction resources to get sufficient housing up. Marion Council looks dodgy in this decision and state Government should at least vet them for bribery and other irregular influences.

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**Erin**

95% said "no". That should have been enough to stop this from going through. I absolutely agree with "trees not Teslas" but I'm more concerned with the fact that Marion council are willing to do business with someone that openly did a Nazi salute and spreads dangerous, right-wing ideology. We don't need his business or his influence in Australia.

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**David**

I thought the Mayor of Marion was an environmentalist?? He can show that he is.

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**Jenny**

I cannot understand why the Marion Council (and the South Australian Government) would want to hook their carriage to a fast moving train going downhill at speed! Makes no sense!

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**Lance**

Western democracy is under threat, and not since WW2 has it been more important to stand up and be counted.

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**Demis**

Kris Hanna should lose his job over this disgraceful decision.

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**Sibella**

The local people, those who will be most affected, do not want this to happen! Do you have no concern for how the wellbeing of both them and the surrounding natural environment will be negatively affected at all?! **If I were you, I would seriously be watching myself come the next election, as not only will this affect your career,** but the mess you help to create will be the responsibility of the community in the future as well, with only you to blame.