

August 2020

The Action Plan aims to attract investment, ensure ongoing job growth, reduce time and cost associated with the planning system and make it more transparent and easier to use.

The following provides responses to frequently asked questions about the Action Plan.

Why has the Government announced the Planning Reform Action Plan?

The response to Covid-19 has demonstrated the planning system has a major role to play in keeping investment in NSW, attracting new investment and ensuring industries, such as construction and property, can continue to employ many people across our State as well as supporting the social recovery from COVID with protection of our environment, social and affordable housing, quality design and great public spaces.

The NSW Planning Reform Action Plan outlines long term structural reform of the planning system to help unlock productivity of NSW and leave a legacy of great places for our community. It will turn our recent momentum through initiatives like the Planning System Acceleration Program and Planning Delivery Unit into business-as-usual. The Action Plan addresses the need for reform, as well as the challenges and opportunities presented by Covid-19, which recognise the critical role the planning system can play in the state's economic and social recovery.

What information will be provided on Action Plan initiatives and when will more information become available?

The Action Plan consists of a series of initiatives. The Department is developing these initiatives and we will update councils, industry and the community on the progress of the different components of the reform package as our teams bring them forward. Further information and details on progress will be made available on our website [here](#).

What engagement will occur on the specifics contained in the reforms?

Engagement with stakeholders will occur as the Department develops the package of improvements for each component of the Action Plan.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department has worked alongside all stakeholders to solve problems and meet challenges as they arise. This has been a genuine and successful approach to collaboration, an openness on all sides to the obstacles we all face and a willingness to focus on a common goal. We want this to continue as we look to implement the next stage of reform – the advice and counsel of the development industry, local government, the planning industry and the community will be critical to achieving successful outcomes.

Some of the reforms are expected to require changes to legislation, such as the new class of appeals for rezonings in the Land and Environment Court. The Department will follow standard processes for these changes, including broad public exhibition.

What is the aim of setting up a new class of appeals in the Land and Environment Court for amendments to Local Environmental Plans?

It can take several years to assess planning proposals, and unlike development applications, there are restricted opportunities for proponents to arbitrate or review these proposals.

To drive greater accountability on decision-making timeframes for planning proposals for both the Department and councils, a new class of appeals in the Land and Environment Court on planning proposals will be established.

In developing a new class of appeals the following matters will be considered:

- How to accelerate rezoning outcomes
- Mechanisms to provide for conciliation and adjudication to assess and progress planning proposals
- Establish new performance measures for planning proposals
- Increase accountability for councils and the department to process planning proposals promptly

The new class of appeals will be designed to ensure that planning proposals considered by the Land and Environment Court is consistent with strategic plans and that the appeal is not determining the strategic vision for an area.

Further consultation will occur as we develop this reform.

What are the benefits of assessing projects faster?

Reducing assessment timeframes leads to significant benefits and outcomes for industry, the community and government including:

- reduced developer holding costs
- reduced business compliance costs in preparing reports for applications
- increased certainty and transparency in decision-making
- unlocking housing supply quickly
- reduced compliance costs and less time spent navigating the planning system.

Who do I contact about these reforms?

Please contact us on planning.covidresponse@planning.nsw.gov.au or call 13 77 88.

© State of New South Wales through Department of Planning, Industry and Environment 2020. The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing August 2020. However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that the information upon which they rely is up to date and to check the currency of the information with the appropriate officer of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment or the user's independent adviser.