



Supplementary Attachments

(Item 8- PC12/26)
General Meeting

Wednesday 13 May 2026
at 7:00 PM



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SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS

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ATTACHMENT/S

REPORT NO. PC12/26

ITEM 8

- 1. COUNCIL SUBMISSION - DRAFT STATEWIDE
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN - CPP**
- 2. DRAFT STATEWIDE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
PLAN**
- 3. DISCUSSION PAPER - DRAFT STATEWIDE
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN**



OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

13 May 2026

Kiersten Fishburn
Secretary, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Submitted via the Planning Portal: <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/draftplans/exhibition/have-your-say-proposed-statewide-community-participation-plan>

Submission - draft Statewide Community Participation Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the exhibited draft statewide Community Participation Plan.

At its meeting on 13 May 2026, Council considered Director's Report No. PC12/26 and resolved to forward this submission outlining concerns and implications for the proposed CPP.

The State Government's aim for a single statewide CPP is supported in principle as a means to create consistent community engagement practices across NSW, reduce unnecessary consultation for low-impact projects, and promote meaningful early involvement in planning processes.

However, as drafted, the statewide CPP could result in a perception that the proposed reform is aimed at dissuading community input rather than accelerating assessment times or achieving consistency.

We recommend a number of issues be resolved prior to finalisation as outlined below.

Proposed changes to Strategic Planning and Land use Planning Proposal Engagement

- Although increased exhibition timeframes are welcomed and supported, shifting engagement to strategic planning stages does not always allow for meaningful input, especially for communities who only become aware of impacts when development is imminent.
- The statewide CPP should include opportunities for councils to continue to exercise pre-Gateway notification and exhibition for owner/developer-initiated planning proposals in accordance with their local engagement strategies.
- The draft statewide CPP should be amended to limit the removal of public exhibition requirements at the planning proposal stage to where a masterplan or strategy that includes proposed planning provisions and controls has been adopted or endorsed by a Council
- Consideration should be given to removing the requirement for planning proposals to obtain advice from the Local Planning Panel when the planning proposal is consistent with an endorsed or adopted masterplan or strategy. This would provide a streamlined approach and reduce timeframes without having to limit public exhibition and community input.

Hornsby Shire Council

PO Box 37, Hornsby NSW 1630 | p 02 9847 6666 | e hsc@hornsby.nsw.gov.au | w hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Proposed changes to Public Exhibition for Development Applications

- Reduced opportunities for community engagement have a significant negative impact on community trust and engagement in planning.
- Exemptions from notification mean that community members lose the chance to provide feedback or raise concerns about the detailed design of individual developments.
- Where developments are exempt from notification, how is it proposed that Council's engage with neighbours who will be impacted by the proposed developments?
- Not all of the types of development listed as exempt from notification and exhibition are of a lower impact, in particular residential flat buildings and shop top housing, industrial retail outlets and tourist and visitor accommodation.
- The expectation that the community will be actively involved in the early (strategic) phase of planning is not likely to occur and real impacts will only become clear when development arrives. Development uptake after planning control changes can take several years. As such a DA could be submitted >10 years after the strategic planning engagement took place and the community has changed. Exemptions at the DA stage further reduce opportunities for engagement with the community when it matters to them the most and often the impacts on the immediate neighbours come down to specific design at the DA stage.
- It is unclear how reducing the types of local development requiring notification will reduce the administrative burden on councils, noting the level of assessment required to ascertain whether the proposed development meets relevant planning controls in the Local Environmental Plan (LEP), Development Control Plan (DCP) or State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).
- Accelerating assessment timeframes could be better achieved by revising the referral criteria for Local Planning Panels, which would enable more determinations to be done under delegation whilst maintaining community consultation during the assessment process.

Proposed changes to Reviews and Public Exhibition of S8.2 Reviews

- Exempting unamended s8.2 review applications from public exhibition could result in the community that may have changed since the original application not being consulted and not having their concerns considered in the assessment.
- All amended s8.2 review applications should be notified even if the original application was a development type that met the 'exempt from public exhibition and notification' requirements.
- The notification of an application occurs concurrently with referral to internal branches and external Public Agencies, as such the notification process would not result in any unnecessary delays in assessing any DA or review.

Proposed changes to Notification of Complying Development Certificates

- Changes to remove upfront pre-approval notices of Complying Development Certificates would reduce transparency and negatively impact the community's ability to be aware of proposed development in the immediate vicinity to where they reside as applications do not appear on the Council DA Tracker until they are determined and downloaded from the Planning Portal. The DPHI 'Complying development certificate application tracker' does not provide any search functionality via LGA or address.

Hornsby Shire CouncilPO Box 37, Hornsby NSW 1630 | p 02 9847 6666 | e hsc@hornsby.nsw.gov.au | w hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Council's current practice for notification of Development Applications is that it occurs immediately when the DA is lodged and accepted, while it is still being assigned to an officer and referred to internal branches and public agencies. Therefore, the notification process does not result in any unnecessary delays in the process.

It is unclear how reducing the types of local development requiring notification will reduce the administrative burden on councils, noting the level of assessment required to ascertain whether the proposed development meets relevant planning controls in the Local Environmental Plan (LEP), Development Control Plan (DCP) or State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP). Assessment timeframes could extend if an application identified as exempt from public notification at lodgement is then required to be notified later in the assessment process.

As outlined above, two alternative options for streamlining strategic planning and development assessment timeframes without impacting public notification and community input include:

- Removing the requirement for planning proposals to obtain advice from the Local Planning Panel when the planning proposal is consistent with an endorsed or adopted masterplan or strategy.
- Revising the referral criteria for Local Planning Panels, which would enable more determinations to be done under delegation.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our concerns and potential alternatives that would better assist reduce planning timeframes prior to the finalisation of the statewide CPP.

Should you wish to discuss Council's submission please do not hesitate to contact Katherine Vickery, Director Planning and Compliance on 9847 6744 or kvickery@hornsby.nsw.gov.au.

Yours faithfully

Glen Magus
Acting General Manager

Attachment: Council report and minute – PC12/26

TRIM Reference: F2004/07218-006

Hornsby Shire Council

PO Box 37, Hornsby NSW 1630 | p 02 9847 6666 | e hsc@hornsby.nsw.gov.au | w hornsby.nsw.gov.au

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Draft Community Participation Plan

April 2026

ATTACHMENT 2 - ITEM 8





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Draft Community Participation Plan

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Secretary's foreword



A message from Kiersten Fishburn

We know that planning works best when it reflects what communities need and value. Local knowledge plays a vital role in shaping strategic plans and assessing development proposals.

The *Planning System Reforms Act 2025* lays the foundation for a modern planning system that is faster, fairer and focused on outcomes. One of its key commitments is creating a single statewide Community Participation Plan for all councils and planning authorities.

This plan brings consistency to consultation timeframes across NSW. It ensures communities have a strong voice in the planning system and sets clear expectations that engagement should match the scale and impact of a proposal or strategic plan.

We also understand that the planning system can seem complicated or daunting. That's why this plan aims to make participation easier. It explains the different ways you and your community can get involved at both the local and state level. It also encourages planning authorities to consult widely so decisions reflect your values, priorities and concerns.

Good participation must be accessible to everyone. The plan emphasises the importance of engaging respectfully with Aboriginal communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Everyone should be able to navigate a planning system that works for them.

Planning authorities will still develop their own engagement strategies. These strategies outline how they will work with their communities and ensure local context guides their approach.

This Community Participation Plan applies to the planning functions of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and its Secretary, as well as all councils and relevant planning authorities across NSW.

Planning should be a partnership with people who know their communities best. The plan sets out how and when you can share your views, alongside the many other factors that inform planning decisions, and the development of plans and projects.

I hope you find this plan a useful and helpful guide to participate in planning in NSW.

A Statewide Community Participation Plan

What is a Community Participation Plan?

A Community Participation Plan (CPP) sets out how and when planning authorities will engage the community and stakeholders in decision-making processes related to planning decisions.

This plan will be used by multiple planning authorities including the Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure (the Department), local councils and other planning authorities. It is designed to clearly outline how and when the community can participate in planning decisions and processes, and when planning authorities exercise their relevant planning functions.

The plan has been prepared by the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to meet the mandatory requirements outlined in Division 2.6 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) for community participation which planning authorities must comply with.

Our commitment to community participation

Consistency and proportionality are key to the success of community participation. The new Community Participation Plan will standardise consultation timeframes across all planning authorities, ensuring that engagement is consistent and tailored to the scale and impact of proposals.

The Plan is intended to be used as a reference tool for people wanting to know how and when they can participate in planning matters. The community is broadly defined as anyone affected by, or interested in, NSW's planning system including individuals, groups, organisations and government bodies.

Public exhibition timeframes

The Community Participation Plan emphasises the importance of upfront consultation during the preparation of strategic plans, which set the direction and establish objectives to deliver a liveable, productive and sustainable planning framework in NSW. Input at the early strategic planning stage results in better community understanding of how their area will change over time. This means that when development is planned and occurs in an area there is less confusion and more consensus about what is changing.

Planning functions have different exhibition requirements depending on the scale and impact of a plan or development. These different functions often include planning framework matters such as amendments to planning legislation and policies, strategic planning matters such as creating or amending regional plans, and local and state development assessment matters. For example, low impact development listed in Table 6 that meets relevant planning controls will not be required to be exhibited.

Requirements in tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 are mandatory requirements for public participation.

Council and Agency Engagement Strategies

Further information on how different planning authorities such as councils and NSW Government agencies will specifically engage with their community and stakeholders on planning matters can be found in the relevant authority's engagement strategy.

This includes engagement strategies for determining authorities which are separate to this Community Participation Plan and can continue to outline specific mechanisms and tools for how that planning authority will engage with communities and stakeholders.

Importantly, this will ensure that harder-to-reach audiences, including young people, people living with disabilities, the elderly, those living in rural areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and culturally and linguistically diverse people, can engage effectively.

An engagement strategy prepared by a planning authority must be consistent with the Community Participation Plan, the community participation objectives and the requirements under any other Act or legislation. An engagement strategy must not specify timeframes for exhibition of planning functions.

Independent Planning Commission

The Independent Planning Commission is the declared consent authority for certain State Significant Development applications.

Unlike a typical consent authority, some of the ordinary consent authority functions of the Commission are carried out by the Planning Secretary (through the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure) on behalf of the Commission. Among these functions are, at section 4.6(d) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, "carrying out the community participation requirements of Division 2.6 [of the EP&A Act]".

As part of its commitment to public engagement, the Commission will typically conduct further processes in addition to the formal statutory community participation requirements that are already carried out on its behalf by the Department. Some of these processes are mandatory – the Commission must conduct a public hearing when directed to do so by the Minister – while others are discretionary but standard practice. For example, the Commission will always accept written submissions on matters on which it is deliberating, and may, in certain circumstances, also conduct stakeholder meetings, public meeting or local meetings.

The Commission's Engagement Strategy sets out in more detail the public engagement undertaken by the Commission.

Community participation objectives

Community participation is an essential part in the planning process and is integral to improving the design of projects, promoting built and cultural heritage including Aboriginal cultural heritage, informing decision-making and building confidence in the planning system.

This can be achieved by:

- Facilitating discussion between stakeholders so they can hear each other's concerns and ideas
- Creating opportunities for upfront discussions that can reduce potential disputes
- Assisting decision makers identify community concerns
- Utilising local knowledge and expertise
- Empowering local communities in the planning process

Community participation principles in section 2.23(2) of the EP&A Act have been considered when developing the community participation objectives in this CPP. These objectives are included below and are used when engaging with the community and stakeholders on planning matters.

- Open and Inclusive**

Planning authorities will keep the community informed and promote equitable participation. This includes incorporating culturally appropriate practices where relevant and conducting engagement in a safe environment so that all community members can join in.
- Easy to Access**

Planning authorities will advise the community early about how and when they can participate and will make materials and events easy to access by hosting these activities at convenient times and locations.
- Relevant**

Planning authorities will clearly identify what aspects of the project can be discussed and ensure as many community members as possible can participate. Engagement activities will acknowledge previous community input and be tailored to the context – such as location, application type, assessment stage, and earlier engagement – as well as the scale, nature, and impacts of the proposal.
- Timely**

Planning authorities will start community participation as early as possible and continue it for an appropriate period, providing regular project updates so people stay informed. The community will be given reasonable time to provide feedback, and authorities will maintain ongoing engagement through local networks.
- Meaningful**

Planning authorities will clearly explain how community feedback influenced decisions and be upfront about what aspects of a plan the community can shape. Decision makers will engage directly, provide relevant responses, and genuinely consider all input.

Participating in planning functions

Planning functions

Planning authorities use several participation methods to ensure communities are informed of planning functions and can have their say on planning matters that are relevant to them.

The planning functions are:

State Planning Framework

Setting the rules and regulations

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
 Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021
 State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)

Strategic Planning

How my region and community will change over time

Regional or District strategic plans
 Local strategic planning statements (LSPSs)
 Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) and Planning Proposals to amend or create a new LEP
 Masterplans for urban renewal areas
 Development Controls Plans (DCPs)
 Contribution Plans
 The Community Participation Plan

Development Assessment

Development that may impact where I live and work

State significant projects
 Regionally significant development
 Local development
 Designated development
 Nominated integrated development
 Threatened species development
 Division 5.1 Environmental impact assessment
 Complying development

Further detail on how to participate for each planning function and the relevant exhibition timeframes are provided below.

State planning framework – setting the rules and regulations

Acts, regulations and policies set the structure for the NSW planning system, providing a regulatory framework for planning decisions, including the assessment of development applications, making planning instruments and strategic planning.

You may be asked to provide feedback on the following:








- the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021*, and
- State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)





Case study – Providing feedback on a housing policy change

- Yao was reading the morning news when he came across an announcement from the NSW Government that it would soon be easier to build more types of housing in places with access to good infrastructure.
- Within the article was a link to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's website, which had further information on how different types of development would now be supported around well-established town centres and infrastructure.
- Yao was supportive of these changes, and happy he would get a chance to give his feedback on the policy, as he currently found himself living further from the parts of the city with services and jobs.
- He was worried that since he didn't understand technical planning language, that he would not be able to contribute to the discussion, but he found helpful infographics, videos and plain-English guides on the webpage.
- The Department had prepared an Explanation of Intended Effect (EIE). This document outlined the proposed changes to what was now permissible, and indication of where the changes would apply across NSW.
- Yao submitted feedback through a guided form and subscribed to updates on the policy.
- When the policy was finalised, he was able to go back on the website and read a 'What we heard' document and see how everyone responded, and that he had the chance to contribute to an important change.

Participating in State planning framework changes

Table 1: Legislative amendments that you may be asked to provide feedback on

 Stay informed	 Have your say	 Implementation
<p>NSW Government will undertake targeted stakeholder engagement in the development of framework changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the NSW Government about how and when you can provide feedback. 	<p>NSW Government may release draft policy and planning changes for public feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the NSW Planning Portal to access and read the draft changes. Prepare your submission and lodge it via the NSW Planning Portal during the public exhibition period. 	<p>NSW Government considers feedback and releases final changes following approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final policy is adopted and posted on the NSW Legislation website.
 The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act)		
<p>The EP&A Act sets the structure for the NSW planning system. It is the principal legislation regulating land use in NSW and allows plans to be made to guide the process of development and regulate competing land uses.</p>	<p>The Department develops legislative changes as needed.</p> <p>The NSW Government determines if public exhibition is required and sets a timeframe. </p>	<p>Changes to the Act are enacted through a bill in Parliament.</p> <p>These changes are notified on the NSW Legislation website.</p> <p>Visit the NSW Planning website for supporting information.</p>
 The Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 (EP&A Regulation)		
<p>The EP&A Regulation sets out how the procedural matters and requirements of the EP&A Act are carried out, including the provisions planning authorities must follow when assessing development applications.</p>	<p>The Department develops regulation changes as needed.</p> <p>The Minister determines if public exhibition is required and sets a timeframe. </p>	<p>Once finalised, the changes are made to the regulations</p> <p>These changes are notified on the NSW Legislation website.</p> <p>Visit the NSW Planning website for supporting information.</p>

 Stay informed	 Have your say	 Implementation
 State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)		
<p>Environmental planning policies for state significant or statewide planning matters. They inform how land can be developed and how natural resources can be used, managed and conserved in NSW.</p> <p>SEPPs are also the mechanism the NSW Government uses when undertaking state-led rezoning.</p>	<p>The Department will make SEPP changes as needed.</p> <p>A draft Explanation of Intended Effects may be exhibited unless decided otherwise due to the urgency, scale or nature of the proposal.</p>	<p>Once finalised a SEPP is made to give effect to the changes,</p> <p>These changes are notified on the NSW Legislation website.</p> <p>Visit the NSW Planning website to view supporting information and guidance.</p>

Strategic planning - how my region and community will change over time

Strategic planning helps guide how places grow, change and are protected. It is the foundation for how governments influence the shape of communities, determine where homes are built, where jobs are located, and how services and infrastructure connect across the State and how the environment is conserved.

Early engagement builds community confidence in the planning system, provides greater transparency about how decisions are made and ensures that potential concerns and priorities are explored proactively.








The Community Participation Plan aligns with the object of proportionality by encouraging and strengthening early, meaningful community consultation at the strategic planning stage. This ensures the focus of engagement is targeted on identifying issues and priorities that can be addressed prior to development assessment.










Case study: Providing feedback on the Sydney Region Plan





- Myriam sees a post pop up on her social media account about a new plan called the Sydney Region Plan.
- The post says that the Government is looking for the community to have their say on how Sydney will grow and transform over the next 20 years.
- The post has a link to the NSW Planning website which has copies of the draft Sydney Region Plan as well as some simple survey questions to fill out.
- Myriam responds to the survey questions and then uses the statewide CPP linked on the website, to help her provide planning focused feedback about the draft Sydney Region Plan.
- Myriam would like to see more housing near the local train station as she has been renting but wants more opportunities to buy a home.

Participating in strategic planning

Table 2: Strategic plans that you may be asked to provide feedback on

 Stay informed	 Have your say	 Implementation
<p>A planning authority will undertake targeted stakeholder engagement in the development of each plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community participation may begin before exhibition. Sign up for mailing lists to stay informed once a draft plan is released, and project plan updates. 	<p>A planning authority will exhibit a draft plan for feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the planning authority’s website to access and read the draft plan. Prepare your submission and lodge it during the public exhibition period. 	<p>A planning authority will consider feedback and releases a final plan following approval.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The final approved plan is posted on the planning authority’s website.
 Draft regional and district strategic plans		
<p>Plans developed to support future community needs in regions and districts across NSW. These include plans for homes, jobs, community infrastructure and a healthy environment.</p>	<p>These plans are developed by the NSW Government and updated every 5 years.</p> <p>A draft plan will be exhibited for a minimum of 60 days. </p>	<p>The Minister will make a final plan for publication on the NSW Planning website.</p>
 Draft local strategic planning statements (LSPS)		
<p>Plans that detail the vision for land-use in a local area, special character values, and how change will be managed into the future.</p>	<p>These statements are developed by councils and updated every 7 years.</p> <p>A draft plan will be exhibited for a minimum of 60 days. </p>	<p>The Planning Secretary endorses an LSPS for publication on the NSW Planning website and the relevant council’s website.</p>

 <p>Stay informed</p>	 <p>Have your say</p>	 <p>Implementation</p>
 <p>Masterplans for urban renewal areas</p>		
<p>Plans that set a future direction for areas by creating new communities that build on local character and provide updated housing, work, recreation and business opportunities.</p>	<p>A planning authority develops a masterplan for a precinct, in response to strategic direction.</p> <p>A draft plan may be exhibited for 42 days, unless decided otherwise due to the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal. </p>	<p>A planning authority adopts the masterplan for publication on their website.</p>
 <p>Planning Proposals to amend or create a new Local Environmental Plan (LEP)</p>		
<p>Planning proposals create and amend LEPs which guide planning decisions for local government areas.</p> <p>They do this through zoning and development controls, which informs how land can be used.</p>	<p>A planning authority or proponent can instigate changes to an LEP.</p> <p>A planning proposal will be exhibited for a minimum of 28 days or as specified by the gateway determination which may determine, due to the minor nature of the proposal, that no public exhibition is required </p>	<p>The local plan-making authority undertakes assessment of the planning proposal.</p> <p>Once finalised, an LEP is made to give effect to the proposal.</p>
 <p>Draft development control plans (DCP)</p>		
<p>Plans that provide detailed planning and design guidelines to support the planning controls in a LEP.</p>	<p>A council may draft or require a DCP to be prepared.</p> <p>A draft plan will be exhibited for a minimum of 28 days. </p>	<p>A planning authority finalises the plan for publication on the NSW Planning website and the relevant council's website.</p>

 Stay informed	 Have your say	 Implementation
 Draft contributions plans		
<p>These plans enable consent authorities to levy contributions for public amenities and services required to support development.</p>	<p>A council prepares a draft contributions plan as needed.</p> <p>A draft plan will be typically exhibited for a minimum of 28 days. </p>	<p>Council approves and adopts the plan. They can be accessed on the NSW Planning website and the relevant council’s website.</p>
 Draft Community Participation Plan (CPP)		
<p>The plan outlines how and when community participation is undertaken when relevant planning authorities exercise their planning functions.</p>	<p>The Planning Secretary prepares a draft CPP as needed.</p> <p>A draft plan will be exhibited for a minimum of 28 days. </p>	<p>The Planning Secretary publishes the plan on the NSW Planning website.</p>

Development assessment – development that may impact where I live and work

Development assessment functions are undertaken by several planning authorities who make decisions on proposals in accordance with the relevant development standards and controls. This includes both state significant development applications and development applications assessed by councils (local development).

Exhibition requirements for development assessment are proportionate to the level of impact a project will produce. Development specified in Table 6 will be exempt from exhibition requirements if the development complies with the controls set out in the relevant council's LEP and DCP. These set out the rules for a local area and have been consulted on with communities.

Case study: My neighbour is doing works under a complying development pathway

- Matt receives a letter in the mailbox from the next-door neighbour who is building a deck at the back of their house.
- The letter states that construction of the deck extension will begin in 7 days' time.
- Matt is concerned about noise at night during construction, so he contacted the local Council who showed him the conditions that required construction to be carried out during the day. This is a relief for Matt as he enjoys reading at night and cannot focus if there is noise.
- 7 days later Matt notices that construction has started, however by the time he comes home from work he does not hear any construction noise and is able to read peacefully without any distractions.

Case study: Learning about a solar farm in my local area

- There has been a post on a community social media group that a solar farm is proposed near Anne's local town, with many comments objecting to the idea.
- This is the first time she's heard of the project and is curious, so goes online to check if there are any project documents available for her review.
- Anne discovers that the energy company is intending to host webinars next week to introduce locals to their proposal. This is suitable for Anne as she has two young children and is glad, she can join in from home.
- Upon joining the webinar, she discovers that the project is still in early development and a formal application is yet to be lodged. This puts her mind at ease.
- It is also explained that for larger scale projects, such as renewable energy, the State Government assesses their environmental impact, as they are important to the State.
- The community is being engaged as part of preparing the application, and Anne is encouraged to sign up for project updates to find out when the project moves through different stages of the planning process.
- Anne will also be able to submit formal feedback when an environmental impact statement is lodged, and the formal exhibition process opens. It is important to be able to do this, as the submissions will be considered by the NSW Government as part of its assessment of the project.

Participating in development assessment

Table 3: Development types that you may be asked to provide feedback on

 Say informed	 Have your say	 Implementation
<p>An applicant submits an application to the relevant planning authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community participation may begin before exhibition. Sign up for mailing lists to stay informed when an application is submitted, and project plan updates. 	<p>A planning authority may exhibit an application for feedback.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit the planning authority's website to access and read the proposal. Prepare your submission and lodge it during the public exhibition period. 	<p>A planning authority will consider feedback and determine the application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The decision, final approved plans and supporting documents are published on the planning authority's website.
 State Significant Projects		
<p>Development of a large scale and economic value, environmental sensitivity, or deemed significant by the Planning Minister.</p> <p>This includes state significant developments and state significant infrastructure.</p>	<p>Application is lodged with the NSW Government. Early engagement may occur before the formal exhibition period.</p> <p>Development will be exhibited for a minimum of 14 or 28 days (depending on the type of development). </p>	<p>The Planning Minister or the Independent Planning Commission will determine the application and publish a decision and assessment report on the NSW Planning Portal</p>
 Regionally Significant Development		
<p>Certain development applications of a large economic value, scale and/or complexity. Regional planning panels are made up of independent experts that decide whether to approve a development.</p>	<p>Application is lodged with Council who refers the application to the NSW Government.</p> <p>Development will be exhibited for a minimum of 14 days. </p>	<p>The Council prepares a recommendation and assessment report for the Panel.</p> <p>The Panel determines the application and publishes the decision on the NSW Planning Portal.</p>

 <p>Say informed</p>	 <p>Have your say</p>	 <p>Implementation</p>
 <p>Development exempt from notification and public exhibition</p>		
<p>Certain development in a locality that meets relevant planning controls.</p> <p><i>Table 6 lists these development types</i></p>	<p>Council undertakes a preliminary review to determine if the proposal is in this category.</p> <p>Application is exempt from exhibition. </p>	<p>The Council assesses and determines the application. The final decision is published on the Council website.</p>
 <p>Local Development</p>		
<p>The most common type of development applications in NSW. Projects range from home extensions to medium sized commercial, retail, and industrial developments.</p>	<p>Application is lodged with Council.</p> <p>Development will be exhibited for a minimum of 14 days. </p>	<p>The Council assess and determines the application and publishes the decision on the Council website.</p> <p>Where the application is contentious or exceeds variations, the application may be determined by the local planning panel.</p>
 <p>Council-related Development Applications where council is the consent authority</p>		
<p>Councils regularly lodge development applications as an applicant to complete their own projects and achieve outcomes for the community. This includes development such as parks, affordable housing and toilet blocks, as well as commercial proposals.</p>	<p>Council lodges the application and declares how the conflict will be managed.</p> <p>Development will be exhibited for a minimum of 28 days. </p>	<p>The Council assesses and determines the application and publishes the decision on the Council website.</p>

 <p>Say informed</p>	 <p>Have your say</p>	 <p>Implementation</p>
 <p>Development Applications with additional environmental considerations</p>		
<p>Designated development is a category of development that involves a higher level of assessment and scrutiny due to the potential risk it poses to the environment.</p> <p>Nominated integrated development is development that requires certain approvals (such as a permit or license) from a NSW Government agency before it can be carried out.</p> <p>Threatened species development is a category of development that affects threatened species and requires a species impact statement.</p> <p>An Environmental Impact Statement is required if an activity will have a significant impact on the environment. The EIS assess the economic, environmental and social impacts of a project.</p>	<p>Development will be exhibited for a minimum of 28 days. </p>	
 <p>Complying Development</p>		
<p>Complying development is a fast-tracked application process that combines planning and construction approval for straight forward residential, commercial and industrial development.</p> <p>These developments are assessed and determined by a council or a registered certifier without the need for a development application.</p>	<p>Development is exempt from exhibition. </p> <p>Adjoining neighbours are notified 7 days prior to commencement of works being carried out.</p>	
 <p>Exempt Development</p>		
<p>Some minor building renovations or works don't need any planning or building approval. This is called exempt development. Exempt development is very low impact development that can be done for certain residential, commercial and industrial properties.</p> <p>Examples of exempt development include decks, garden sheds, carports, fences, repairing a window or painting a house.</p>	<p>Development is exempt from exhibition. </p>	

Getting involved

Guidance on getting involved

Getting involved in the development of strategic plans or providing feedback on proposed developments is a great way for the community to have a meaningful say in how their local area changes over time.

It ensures future development reflects community needs, creates well designed neighbourhoods including public open space and raises ideas that may improve projects before they are approved.

Most importantly, it ensures a transparent and fair planning system so that communities across NSW feel heard and reflected in the spaces that they live and work in.

Notification

If you are directly impacted by a proposal, you may receive a notification during the public exhibition period that provides information on how to view a proposal and how to lodge a submission. This notification may include:

- a letter
- an email
- an on-site notice

For broader engagement, the following engagement tools may be used to inform of projects happening in your area including:

- drop in sessions
 - public meetings
 - reference groups
 - website content or, social media notification
 - community newsletters and emails
 - updates to subscribers via the NSW Planning Portal.
-

What is an exhibition period?

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* sets out minimum community participation requirements for the public exhibition of certain planning matters.

During a public exhibition period all relevant documentation is made publicly available, and the community is invited to make a submission outlining their views on the draft policy, plan or project.

Why should I make a submission?

When making a final decision, consideration is given to the points raised during the public exhibition period, which may result in changes to the project to protect amenity or environmental impacts. In some cases, the number of submissions on a development application determines who the final consent authority is.

The community will be informed about how submissions were considered in decision-making. A report will summarise issues raised during the public exhibition period and describe how community views influence decision making.

How to write a submission

To have your say on a project you must lodge a submission before the close of the exhibition period. Submissions may be made online through the relevant planning authority's website, or in some instances a letter may be accepted. When making a submission you will be required to include:

- your full name and address
- the name of the application and the application number
- whether you 'support', 'object to' the project, or if you are simply providing comment on the project
- the reasons why you support or object to the project

Ideally a submission should be specific to the type of project or development that is being publicly exhibited. The contents of a submission may be a general response to the project, and not technically detailed. You do not need to be a specialist to have your say. Table 4 provides guidance on how you may write an effective submission.

All persons who lodge a submission are required to declare any relevant political donations and/or gifts in accordance with Section 10.4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act 1979*.

A submission will only be accepted if it is made directly to council or the relevant planning authority. Submissions will not be accepted or acknowledged if received through third party websites.

Table 4: Guidance on writing an effective submission

The consent authority will consider impacts, including:	An effective submission is:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency with planning controls • Any overshadowing impacts • Obstruction of views • Privacy • Visual impacts • Traffic and access • Stormwater and runoff • Odour, noise and light pollution • Environmental impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique • Clear and concise • Captures local perspectives • Relevant, • Evidence based • Not disrespectful, and does not use abusive language.

Staying up to date

There are many ways to subscribe to news and announcements about development in your local area. You can sign up for alerts on specific projects such as planning proposals or new major projects and state significant development in your local government area.

Draft plans and policies are included on the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure’s Have Your Say website. On this website you can filter the status of projects on exhibition and provide your feedback on these plans.

The Independent Planning Commission website provides details of any projects lodged with them and more information on how you can participate in any public meetings or hearing processes.

Councils provide details of development applications and planning proposals that have been lodged in their local government area via the applications trackers on their websites.

Planning alerts on the NSW Planning Portal

You can subscribe to receive email alerts and stay up to date about the progress of applications.

Planning Proposals – amendments to local environmental plans or large proposals
<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/news-alerts>

Major Projects – State significant projects
<https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/services/subscribe-notifications>

Exhibition timeframes

Mandatory minimum public exhibition timeframes in the EP&A Act

Requirements in tables 5, 6, 7 and 8 are mandatory requirements for public participation.

Table 5: Mandatory minimum public exhibition timeframes in the EP&A Act

Strategic planning	
Planning function	Exhibition timeframe
Draft Community Participation Plan	28 days
Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to a gateway determination*	28 days or as specified by the gateway determination which may determine, due to the minor nature of the proposal, that no public exhibition is required
Draft development control plan	28 days
Draft contribution plans	28 days
Draft local strategic planning statements	28 days
Draft regional or district strategic plans	45 days
Development assessment	
Planning function	Exhibition timeframe**
Application for development consent (other than for complying development certificate, for designated development, State significant development or a development type listed in Table 6, Table 7 and Table 8)	14 days
Application for development consent for certain residential State significant development *** including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing development carried out by certain public authorities (Planning Systems SEPP Schedule 1, Section 26) In-fill affordable housing (Planning Systems SEPP Schedule 1, Section 26A) Build-to-rent housing (Planning Systems SEPP Schedule 1, Section 27) 	14 days

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors housing (Planning Systems SEPP Schedule 1, Section 28) Development in accelerated TOD precincts (Planning Systems SEPP Schedule 2, Section 19) Development declared SSD under Section 4.36(3) of the EP&A Act that includes residential accommodation 	
Application for development consent for targeted assessment development, including any amended application under the pathway	14 days, unless a different period is specified in a state environmental planning policy
Application for modification of development consent required to be publicly exhibited by the regulations	14 days
Application for the review of a determination or decision of a consent authority (Division 8.2 review) where the application has been amended pursuant to section 8.3(3) of the EP&A Act	Exhibition timeframe is the same as the original application
Application for development consent for all other State significant development****	28 days
Application for development consent for designated development	28 days
Environmental impact statement for State significant infrastructure under Division 5.2	28 days
Application for development consent for nominated integrated development or threatened species development	28 days
Application for development consent for category 1 remediation work under Chapter 4 of SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021	28 days
Environmental impact statement obtained under Division 5.1	28 days
Council related development	28 days

*exhibition of planning proposals must be carried out in accordance with the Departments Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline

** minimum exhibition timeframes can be extended on a case-by-case basis.

*** for applications that rely on a rezoning exhibited by the Department, the details of the proposed amendments to the relevant planning instrument(s) will be publicly exhibited concurrently with the application.

**** exhibition of State significant development applications must be carried out in accordance with the Departments State Significant Development Guidelines

Development types exempt from notification and public exhibition

Exemptions apply for certain development types, listed in Table 6, where the development:

- is permissible in the relevant zone, and,
- meets the relevant planning controls in a local environmental plan, development control plan and/or state environmental planning policy and,
- does not include a 4.6 variation

A minimum 14-day exhibition period applies if the development type is not listed in Table 6, 7 or 8 and does not meet the criteria above.

Table 6: Development exempt from public exhibition and notification

Residential and related uses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alterations – Internal alterations • Alterations and additions existing dwellings • Ancillary development (such as pools, sheds, farm buildings) • Boundary adjustment • Demolition (excluding heritage items) • Exhibition Homes and Villages • Group homes • Heritage item – minor works that does not impact item and is located behind the front façade • Residential flat buildings* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moveable dwellings • New single and two storey dwellings, dual occupancies and attached dwellings • Temporary structures • Rural workers dwellings • Secondary dwellings • Strata and Stratum subdivision • Tree removal where they are not heritage items • Home business and/or home occupation • Shop top housing*

*a pre-commencement of works notification to adjoining neighbours is required 7 days before works commence.

Primary production and rural development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agritourism • Commercial farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive agriculture • Farm buildings
Commercial development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alterations and additions • Change of use • Take away food and drink premises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kiosks • Roadside stalls • Signage

Industrial development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial retail outlets
Community, health, education, recreational and other infrastructure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alterations – internal and external • Environmental facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental protections works
Tourist and Visitor accommodation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bed and Breakfast accommodation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm stay accommodation
Other	
Modifications involving minimal environmental impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications made under section 4.55(1) of the EP&A Act. • Applications made under section 4.55(1A) of the EP&A Act. • Applications made under section 4.56 of the EP&A Act with minimal environmental impact.
Application for the review of a determination or decision of a consent authority (Division 8.2 Reviews)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews where the application has not been amended pursuant to section 8.3(3) of the EP&A Act.

Development in the Activation Precincts and Alpine Region

Table 7 below lists the types of development that the Department are not likely to require to be publicly exhibited across the Activation Precincts and Alpine Region.

Table 7: Development in the activation precincts and alpine region

Generally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modification applications (excluding those required to be publicly exhibited by the EP&A Regulation) • Internal and external building alterations and additions (including development applications requiring approval from the NSW Rural Fire Service under section 100B of the Rural Fires Act in accordance with Section 4.46 of the EP&A Act) • Change of use of an existing building from a lawful use to another lawful use • Signage • Subdivision • Demolition

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure and servicing
Activation Precincts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development demonstrating consistency with the Master Plan and Delivery Plan of the relevant Activation Precinct • Development accompanied by a current Activation Precinct certificate issued under the Precincts-Regional SEPP, Chapter 3 that applies to the development (excluding those required to be publicly exhibited by the EP&A Regulation) • Industrial building works
Alpine Region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repair, maintenance, or replacement of recreation infrastructure, lifting facility, or snow-making infrastructure (excluding development impacting a biodiversity-mapped area) • Development that is consistent with the planning framework, comprising the Snowy Mountains Activation Precinct Master Plan; Precincts-Regional SEPP and Alpine Region DCP.

Non-legislative public exhibition timeframes

For several planning functions there is no legislative requirement for public exhibition. Consistent with community participation objectives, consent authorities typically publicly exhibit documents related to the exercise of these functions and proposals for the timeframes outlined in Table 8.

Table 8: Non-legislative public exhibition timeframes

State planning framework	
Planning function	Recommended exhibition timeframe
Draft legislation, regulation, policies and guidelines (Department)	Discretionary based on the urgency, scale or nature of the proposal
Policies and guidelines	28 days unless decided otherwise due to the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal
Strategic planning	
Planning function	Recommended exhibition timeframe
Draft regional or district strategic plans	60 days*
Draft LSPS	60 days*
Masterplan for urban renewal areas (Department and council)	42 days unless decided otherwise due to the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal

Development assessment	
Planning function	Recommended exhibition timeframe
Re-exhibition of any amended application or matter (Department and council)	Discretionary based on the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal

**There is a statutory public exhibition timeframe of 45 days and 28 days as per the EP&A Act, however the Department will exhibit draft strategic plans for 60 days.*

Additionally, the Department may exhibit other proposals consistent with community participation objectives. For these functions, there may also be occasions where a government priority or administrative requirement demands immediate action, and the usual community participation process may be truncated.

Key points to note about public exhibition

- Timeframes are measured in calendar days and include weekends.
- As outlined in Schedule 1 to the EP&A Act, the period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive of each year) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition period.
- In certain circumstances there may be merit appeal rights for a person who makes a submission to object during the public exhibition of a development application for designated development and some state significant development projects.
- Public authorities are not required to make available for inspection any part of an environmental impact statement where this publication would, in the opinion of the public authority, be contrary to the public interest due to its confidential nature or for other reasons defined in relevant legislation, such as the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.
- As outlined in sections 287 and 287A of the EP&A Regulation, submissions on state significant projects and other development applications where the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Planning Secretary or Independent Planning Commission is the consent authority, must be made through the NSW Planning Portal.
- When receiving submissions, a planning authority will adhere to its Privacy Policy and ensure defamation and discrimination laws are not breached.
- The safety of community members, other stakeholders and staff must be considered. Everyone has the right to participate in a respectful environment and are expected to behave in a manner that supports everyone's right to present their point of view.

Glossary

Planning terms and definitions	
Alpine region	means the Alpine Region identified on the <u>State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021, Kosciuszko Alpine Region Land Application Map</u>
Activation precinct	A dedicated area within regional New South Wales which has been identified by the NSW Government to drive regional economic development and declared to be an Activation Precinct in a Schedule made under Chapter 3 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021
Community participation plan	The community participation plan prepared and published under Division 2.6 of the EP&A Act
Contribution plans	A plan developed by councils for the purposes of imposing conditions requiring local infrastructure contributions to fund new and upgraded public amenities and/or services required to accommodate development
Delivery plan	for an Activation Precinct means a delivery plan for the Precinct that is approved by the Planning Secretary under section 3.7 of Chapter 3 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021
Designated development	Designated development refers to high-impact developments (e.g. likely to generate pollution) or those located in or near an environmentally sensitive area
Development control plans (DCP)	A plan providing detailed planning and design guidelines to support LEP planning controls
Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)	An EIS provides information on the economic, environmental, and social impacts of the project. It helps the community; government agencies and the consent authority make informed submissions or decisions on the project.
Gateway determination	A gateway determination is issued following an assessment of the strategic merit of a proposal to amend or create an LEP and allows for the proposal to proceed to public exhibition
Local environmental plan (LEP)	An environmental planning instrument developed by a planning proposal authority, generally a council. An LEP sets the planning framework for a Local Government Area

Regional strategic plan	20-year plans addressing community needs for housing, jobs, infrastructure and a healthy environment for a region
State environmental planning policy (SEPP)	An environmental planning instrument developed by the Department, relating to state significant or statewide planning matters
State significant development (SSD)	Developments may be declared to have State significance due to their size, location, economic value or potential impacts, for example new schools, hospitals and energy generating facilities
State significant infrastructure (SSI)	SSI includes major transport and services developments with significance and impact beyond the local area, for example rail infrastructure, road infrastructure and water storage or treatment facilities
Masterplan for urban renewal areas (Department and council)	<p>Growth centres: Land identified in SEPP (Precincts – Central River City) 2021 and SEPP (Precincts – Western Parkland City) 2021, earmarked for the establishment of vibrant, sustainable and liveable neighbourhoods that provide for community well-being and high-quality local amenity</p> <p>Areas identified as having good access to existing or planned public transport connections, suitable for rejuvenation with new homes and jobs</p> <p>State significant precincts which are large areas of predominantly State-owned land within Greater Sydney, identified by the NSW Government as areas for growth because of their social, economic or environmental characteristics</p>

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124
W: dphi.nsw.gov.au

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Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Community Participation Plan

Discussion Paper

April 2026

ATTACHMENT 3 - ITEM 8





Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land, and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

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Community Participation Plan

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Introduction

The NSW Government is implementing legislative reforms to make the planning system faster, fairer and more outcomes focused. As part of these reforms, a single Community Participation Plan is proposed to apply across the State, standardising public exhibition and notification requirements and, providing certainty for all stakeholders who interact with the planning system.

There are currently over 120 different Community Participation Plans and community engagement strategies implemented across NSW, leading to inconsistent consultation practices and timeframes for public exhibition of draft proposals. These inconsistencies mean that similar developments proposals can require different processes depending on location.

A new statewide Community Participation Plan will reduce unnecessary consultation for low-risk or strategically assessed projects while preserving meaningful community input on significant developments. The new plan encourages community participation during the consultation process, highlights ways that you can stay informed on strategic plans or developments in your local area and provides guidance on how to respond to developments or plans that affect you.

Purpose of this discussion paper

This discussion paper outlines the key changes proposed to community participation for local development applications, complying development certificates, and strategic planning and other planning matters.

This paper should be read alongside the draft statewide Community Participation Plan that is currently available for public feedback and the broader reforms to the NSW planning system introduced by the NSW Government.

Feedback on this discussion paper will be used to inform the final version of the statewide plan and possible further changes to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) and *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* (EP&A Regulation) required to implement any final changes.

Have your say

The NSW Government invites feedback on the information outlined in this discussion paper including proposed consultation timeframes for development applications, changes to complying development certificates, strategic planning, and other planning matters.

Public exhibition period details are included in the draft statewide Community Participation Plan on the NSW Planning Portal. To give your feedback, you can:

- upload a submission via the NSW Planning Portal
- participate in the online survey on the NSW Planning Portal
- email questions about the discussion paper and draft statewide plan to the project team at CPP@dphi.nsw.gov.au

Background

Role of the Community Participation Plan

The plan provides detail on how planning authorities will engage with the community and other stakeholders in the decision-making process for planning decisions. The draft plan sets an expectation that public exhibition and engagement is proportionate to the impact and type of development proposed, and the scale of a strategic plan or planning instrument. The draft plan will provide a consistent approach across the state, making it easier for stakeholders and communities to understand the minimum and typical public exhibition timeframes.

The draft plan highlights the importance of using engagement strategies to outline specific mechanisms and tools for how councils and other planning authorities engage with communities and stakeholders on planning matters. This will ensure all audiences, including young people, people living with disabilities, the elderly, those living in rural areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and culturally and linguistically diverse people, can engage effectively.

Currently there are large differences in how councils notify the community and stakeholders of different development types.

Some councils rely on default public exhibition timeframes of 14 days for all development types, while other councils specify different public exhibition timeframes for different types of development, ranging from zero to 28 days.

This has created confusion and adds unnecessary time to the assessment of development application between different local government areas.

To encourage greater participation in the early stages of the planning process such as regional and district strategic plans, longer public exhibition timeframes are proposed. Community knowledge is critical in creating a shared vision for an area at this stage, and this approach will ensure more meaningful upfront engagement, accessibility and inclusion early in the decision-making process.

The draft plan brings together the strengths of current Community Participation Plans used by councils and other planning authorities into one applicable statewide document, that is simple to navigate.

Current public exhibition timeframes

A review of councils' existing Community Participation Plans found that they can vary significantly between councils, even adjoining councils. Differences include the information provided in the plan, timeframes for public exhibition of the same development types, and default public exhibition timeframes.

Table 1 highlights the current differences in public exhibition timeframes for the same development type found from a selection of metropolitan and regional council public exhibition timeframes for the same development type.

Councils should be applying consistent minimum public exhibition timeframes for low impact development types in the first instance and only increasing public exhibition timeframes to 14 days where development will result in higher impacts. Where a proposed development already meets the

agreed development controls which were informed by upfront strategic planning and community and stakeholder engagement, notification may not be necessary.

Key	
	Exempt from exhibition

Table 1: Public exhibition timeframes across a sample of 14 different councils

Council	Development Type								Notes
	Internal building (residential)	Demolition	Dwelling - one storey	Alts / adds - one storey	Ancillary residential	Secondary dwellings	Boundary adjustments	Signage	
Blacktown	7	7	7	7	7	7*		-	*up to two storeys
Canterbury-Bankstown						14		-	
Inner West		*	14	14	14	14	14		*ancillary structures
Fairfield		14	14	14	14	14	14		
Liverpool		14				14	14		
Parramatta			14	14	14	14		-	
Wollondilly			*	*	7^	7^		14*	*criteria applies for exemption (i.e setbacks, heritage) ^only exempt when in residential zones
Woollahra	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	exemptions only apply for emergency works
Kempsey		14							
Narrabri	14	14	14	14	14	14		-	
Shellharbour		-				14			In greenfield release area
Shoalhaven									
Dubbo		14				14		14	
Wollongong						14	*	^	*minor adjustments ^ business zones

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Proposed changes to notification and public exhibition of strategic planning

Public exhibition of strategic planning

As part of the suite of planning system reforms passed by the NSW Parliament in November 2025, the objects of the Act have been updated to better reflect today's planning priorities. The new objects embed proportionality into planning processes and decision-making, ensuring that assessment efforts respond to the scale and impact of development proposals.

Early engagement builds community confidence in the planning system, provides greater transparency about how decisions are made and ensures that potential concerns and priorities are explored proactively rather than reactively.

For example, public exhibition of the draft Sydney Plan was recently open for 58 days (Christmas period excluded) due to the significance of this strategic document.

The draft Community Participation Plan aligns with this intent by encouraging and strengthening meaningful upfront community consultation at the strategic planning stage, ensuring the focus is on engaging earlier in the process with individuals and communities so that issues and priorities are identified and addressed prior to development assessment.

The Department is proposing to commit to a longer exhibition timeframe beyond the legislated minimum 45-day public exhibition timeframe in the plan to provide more time for the community and stakeholders to respond to strategic planning documents and proposals.

Strategic land use plans set out a clear framework for areas of growth, infrastructure needs, environmental challenges and economic opportunities. It is the single most important stage in the planning process as individuals and communities can have a say on where they think development should occur and where infrastructure is needed most.

Extension to minimum public exhibition timeframes for regional strategic plans

In the draft plan, it is proposed to introduce:

- a minimum non-legislated 60-day public exhibition timeframe for draft regional or district strategic plans
- a minimum non-legislated 60-day public exhibition timeframe for local strategic planning statements

These changes will provide a greater opportunity to undertake targeted engagement with communities and allow additional time for stakeholders and the community to consider and provide meaningful submissions when it is most valuable. To facilitate the proposed changes, amendments to legislation will be considered.

Proposed changes to notification and exhibition of land-use planning

Public exhibition of planning proposals

Public exhibition period of a planning proposal

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 specifies that unless a public exhibition period for a planning proposal is specified in the gateway determination, a minimum public exhibition period of 28-days should apply.

The appropriate public exhibition period is guided by the *LEP Making Guideline – August 2023*, which includes recommendations based on the categorisation or perceived impact of the proposal. The current legislation allows for gateway determination to specify a shorter period, or no-exhibition if so specified. The planning proposal may be varied by a Planning Proposal Authority at any time and re-exhibition of the proposal may be required if the minister (or delegate) determines further consultation is required.

Local environmental plans are tools to implement the strategic planning priorities of the state and local government area, through changes to local zoning and development controls.

Planning proposals are the first step in the process of amending a local environmental plan which describe how statutory changes will link with strategic plans.

Planning proposals can be site-specific, apply to a precinct or make changes across a local government area.

Pre-rezoning: precinct plans, master plans, and structure plans

When councils or the Department propose changes to a precinct through rezoning, they prepare a master plan (or equivalent) which precedes the local environmental plan making process.

Precinct and master plans take a place-based approach to guiding growth, and detailing actions and objectives for specific areas based on broader strategic plans. They outline the future vision for development, infrastructure, land use and public spaces at a high-level.

Before adopting a master plan, councils or the Department undertake community engagement to seek feedback on the proposed framework. While public exhibition periods for master plans are not legislated, the draft statewide plan proposes:

- a standard 42-day public exhibition period for masterplans as best-practice (unless adjusted due to urgency, scale or the nature of the project).

Removing the requirement to re-exhibit master plans at the planning proposal stage

The draft plan proposes to:

- shorten or remove public exhibition requirements at the planning proposal stage, where consultation has already occurred as part of a recent masterplan or related strategic planning update. This would involve a change to the LEP making guidelines to outline that the

recommended period of public exhibition for a planning proposal where consultation has occurred and is consistent with an exhibited masterplan stage is zero to 14 days.

This approach avoids duplication, promotes early engagement at the strategic planning stage and shortens planning proposal timeframes so homes and infrastructure can be delivered faster.

Further updates to the *LEP Making Guideline – August 2023* will outline the process moving forward.

Proposed changes to notification and public exhibition of development applications and complying development certificates

Notification of a complying development certificate

Complying development does not require public exhibition like a development application, so public input is not considered by the certifier or council in determining a complying development certificate.

The certifier's role is to assess proposed development occurring on land where complying development is permitted and to determine whether it meets the relevant development standards of the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Code) 2008*.

There are currently inconsistencies in how CDCs are notified across NSW:

- in 34 metropolitan local government areas – certifiers cannot determine a complying development certificate for 14 days after notice is given for certain forms of complying development. 7-days' notice is also given to neighbours before works commence for certain new additions and demolition of existing buildings
- other local government areas – There is no requirement to notify neighbours before determining complying development certificates and two days' notice is also given to neighbours before works commence for certain new additions and demolition of existing buildings

This results in different complying development certificate determination timeframes and notice requirements across NSW, from 20 days for the 34 select metropolitan local government areas, 10 days for the other local government areas, and, 10 days for Pattern Book related development.

Standard 7-day pre-commencement notice for complying development certificates

To provide consistency across NSW, the following changes to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* are proposed:

- removal of the 7 and 14 day written notice requirements before a complying development certificate is determined.
- retention of the notice to council advising the CDC determination.
- a 7-day pre-commencement of work notification for new buildings, additions and demolition in all local government areas.

These changes are proposed given submissions and objections cannot be made and the certifier or council's role is to determine whether the development is compliant with the existing relevant environmental planning instrument. Increasing and providing consistency for the pre-commencement of work notification across NSW will give greater notice to adjoining neighbours of proposed works before they commence.

Public exhibition of local development applications

Under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, councils have discretion on how local development applications are notified. This has resulted in inconsistent public exhibition timeframes that currently range from zero to 28 days.

Currently, councils can specify shorter or longer public exhibition periods than the standard 14 days in their Community Participation Plans. Higher impact proposals – such as environmentally sensitive, designated, or nominated integrated development – require extended public exhibition periods of 28 days.

Councils also have discretion to choose certain types of low impact development. This typically includes internal residential alterations, new one or two storey dwellings, subdivisions, and ancillary structures such as pools, sheds, and garages.

Development exempt from public exhibition means that adjoining neighbours will not be notified by their council that a development application has been received for a site, allowing councils to complete their assessment of the application.

Development exempt from public exhibition and notification

The draft Community Participation Plan, proposes:

- certain development types will be exempt from public exhibition and notification, listed in Table 2, where the development:
 - is permissible in the relevant zone and,
 - meets the relevant planning controls in a local environmental plan, development control plan and/or state environmental planning policy and,
 - does not include a 4.6 variation

Development types exempt from public exhibition and notification will allow development to be assessed quickly, reducing the administrative burden on councils and supporting their alignment with the Minister's Statement of Expectations and the NSW Government's Faster Assessments program.

The proposed development types exempt from public exhibition and notification are identified in Table 2. These development types were informed by public exhibition exemptions from current council Community Participation Plans and development types that can be undertaken as complying development under the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008* without public exhibition.

Table 2 Mandatory exhibition requirements - Development types exempt from public exhibition and notification

Residential and related uses	
Alterations - Internal alterations	Moveable dwellings
Alterations and additions to existing dwellings	New single and two storey dwellings, dual occupancies and attached dwellings
Ancillary development (such as pools, sheds, farm buildings)	Temporary structures

Boundary adjustment	Rural workers dwellings
Demolition (excluding heritage items)	Secondary dwellings
Exhibition homes and villages	Strata and Stratum subdivision
Group homes	Tree removal where they are not heritage items
Heritage item – minor works that does not impact item and is located behind the front façade	Home business and/or home occupation
Residential flat buildings*	Shop top housing*
<i>*a pre-commencement of works notification to adjoining neighbours is required 7 days before works commence</i>	
Primary production and rural development	
Agritourism	Extensive agriculture
Commercial farm	Farm buildings
Commercial development	
Alterations and additions	Kiosks
Change of use	Roadside stalls
Take away food and drink premises	Signage
Industrial development	
Change of use	Industrial retail outlets
Community, health, education, recreational and other infrastructure	
Alterations – internal and external	Environmental protections works
Environmental facility	
Tourist and Visitor accommodation	
Bed and Breakfast accommodation	Farm stay accommodation
Other	
Modifications involving minimal environmental impact	Applications made under section 4.55(1) of the EP&A Act. Applications made under section 4.55(1A) of the EP&A Act. Applications made under section 4.56 of the EP&A Act with minimal environmental impact.

Application for the review of a determination or decision of a consent authority (Division 8.2 Reviews)	Reviews where the application has not been amended pursuant to section 8.3(3) of the EP&A Act.
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Public exhibition of division 8.2 reviews

To support the NSW Government's Planning Systems Reforms, and increase the uptake of internal reviews, the draft Community Participation Plan proposes changes to the public exhibition period of certain types of reviews. Currently, review applications are to be exhibited for 14 days unless the Community Participation Plan specifies otherwise.

To resolve unnecessary exhibition, in the draft Community Participation Plan the Department is proposing:

- that an application for review that has not been amended pursuant to section 8.3(3) will be exempt from public exhibition. The consent authority will consider submissions made on the original application in determining the review. Notification to previous submitters may still be made.
- where an application has been amended under section 8.3(3), the public exhibition period is to be the same as the original application.

Residential flat buildings and shop top housing

Residential flat buildings and shop top housing are development types which are proposed to be exempt from standard public exhibition and notification across NSW where:

- residential flat buildings or shop top housing are permissible in the relevant zone, and,
- the development meets the controls under a local environmental plan, development controls plan and/or a state environmental planning policy, and,
- does not include a 4.6 variation.

To ensure communities are still being informed, a new pre-commencement notification that requires written notice to adjoining neighbours 7 days prior to works commencing is proposed.

Targeted assessment

The targeted assessment pathway introduced as part of the planning system reforms allows certain steps in the development assessment process such as public exhibition to be turned off where those matters have already been addressed through earlier planning processes. This would be implemented through the introduction of a state environmental planning policy.

Public exhibition requirements for the targeted assessment pathway are detailed in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and included in the draft Community Participation Plan.

Higher impact development

The current minimum 28-day public exhibition timeframe for high impact development such as development that requires an environmental impact statement, designated development, and nominated integrated development will remain unchanged to reflect their impact and proportionality in the planning system.

Using engagement strategies to specify how the community can engage on local planning matters

A council's Community Engagement Strategy (CES), required under the *Local Government Act 1993*, sets how council intends to engage the community for plans, policies, programs and key activities including Council's community strategic plan, plans of management, and council's planning and delivery of services and infrastructure.

When incorporating planning activities into their CES, the principles for engagement under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the statewide Community Participation Plan should be considered. Guidance is available to assist in preparing their engagement strategies through the Office of Local Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines and Handbook

Savings and Transitional arrangements

A large number of councils and planning authorities currently have combined community participation plans and Community Engagement Strategies. Transitional arrangements will be in place to confirm that Community Engagement Strategies that are combined with community participation plans remain valid, while any timeframes referenced in community participation plans regarding planning processes have no effect on adoption of the proposed statewide plan.

Determining authorities under Part 5 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and the Independent Planning Commission

Determining authorities

Several determining authorities can carry out development without consent as part of their everyday responsibilities, such as water supply infrastructure being constructed by a water utility provider.

Self- assessment of these activities is undertaken under Part 5 of the EP&A Act, which ensures determining authorities consider environmental issues before they undertake or approve an activity that does not require development consent from a council or the Minister.

These authorities were previously required to prepare their own community participation plan if an environmental impact statement was required.

The consultation requirements for these authorities will now be incorporated in the statewide plan. Agency specific engagement strategies will continue to sit alongside the statewide plan and continue to outline specific mechanisms and tools an agency will use to engage with communities and stakeholders.

Independent Planning Commission

The Independent Planning Commission is the declared consent authority for certain State significant development applications.

Unlike a typical consent authority, some of the ordinary consent authority functions of the Commission are carried out by the Planning Secretary (through the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure) on behalf of the Commission. Among these functions are, at section 4.6(d) of EP&A Act, carrying out the community participation requirements of Division 2.6 (of the EP&A Act).

As part of its commitment to public engagement, the Commission will typically conduct further processes in addition to the formal statutory community participation requirements that are already carried out on its behalf by the Department. Some of these processes are mandatory – the Commission must conduct a public hearing when directed to do so by the minister – while others are discretionary but standard practice. For example, the Commission will always accept written submissions on matters on which it is deliberating, and may, in certain circumstances, also conduct stakeholder meetings, public or local meetings.

The Commission's Engagement Strategy, as updated from time to time, sets out in more detail the public engagement undertaken by the Commission.

Planning system reforms

Planning system reforms

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendments (Planning System Reforms) Act 2025* was passed by both Houses of Parliament on 11 November 2025 and received assent on 24 November 2025. The first stage of the reforms commenced on 15 December 2025, introducing the new objects, establishing the Housing Delivery Authority (HDA) and Development Coordination Authority (DCA) in law, changes to the matters for consideration in determining a development application, and commencing initial changes to planning panels.

A second proclamation was made on 25 February 2026 to commence additional provisions including changes to appeals and reviews, a broadening of the scope of minor modifications, and the introduction of targeted assessment and proportionality into Part 5 assessments. These provisions commenced on 21 March 2026.

The remaining provisions will commence as part of a subsequent proclamation at a later date to allow for further consultation, system updates, and alignment with future regulatory changes, including the commencement of the new statewide Community Participation Plan.

Further changes

There are further changes that will need to occur associated with the introduction of the new statewide plan. These include:

- savings and transitional arrangements to confirm existing engagement strategies continue to apply following the making of the draft statewide plan, but the statewide plan prevails to the extent of any inconsistency in terms of any exhibition periods for development applications and modifications
 - savings and transitional arrangements so that existing development applications, strategic plans and planning proposals are not subject to any additional notification requirements.
 - an amendment to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* to deliver the complying development certificate notification changes and review other changes.
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Monitoring the Community Participation Plan

The Department will monitor and evaluate its engagement activities by reference to the measurable actions outlined in the draft statewide plan.

A review of timeframes may be undertaken within 12 months of the publication of the final statewide plan.

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

ATTACHMENT 3 - ITEM 8

Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124
W: dphi.nsw.gov.au

