



Why the major projects assessment system was introduced

Major projects assessment system: fact sheet 1

Fully operational in August 2005, the major projects assessment system includes:

- a new part of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act) — known as Part 3A — which defines the way a project should be assessed.
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005 — which defines what projects are subject to Part 3A and require ministerial approval.

The system is specifically designed to deal with the complexity of major projects. Under the previous system, the same system applied to a house extension as to a \$300 million commercial, residential or retail complex.

The major project assessment system package:

- Engages the community by improving consultation and transparency
- Ensures key environmental and planning issues are publicly identified and addressed early in the assessment process
- Provides, for the first time, a tailor-made assessment system for projects of regional or State significance
- Focuses on achieving the right integrated outcome, rather than simply relying on bureaucratic red tape

The new system allows the State Government to concentrate on assessing only the most significant proposals in NSW. These are vital to the future of NSW as a whole. This may be due to a project's economic importance to NSW, strategic location, environmental impact or because it will provide essential infrastructure. Examples include major road and transport networks, hospitals, schools and power stations.

With Government able to narrow its focus to the most significant proposals, the smaller projects continue to reside with local councils. Planning and assessment responsibilities have been returned to councils in areas where the State planning objectives have been achieved, such as Pyrmont, Walsh Bay and Rhodes Peninsula.

For the first time, the planning laws clearly define in one policy package, the major projects that will be assessed by the NSW Department of Planning and determined by the Minister for Planning.

The State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005 replaces more than 85 planning instruments gazetted since 1979, which made the Minister the consent authority for certain projects.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Department of Planning website: www.planning.nsw.gov.au