



State significant sites

Major projects assessment system: fact sheet 4

OVERVIEW

State significant sites are listed in Schedule 3 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005. These are urban, coastal or regional sites of economic, environmental or social significance to the State, and the wider NSW community.

Sites may also have cultural or environmental significance or redevelopment potential important to implementing State planning objectives. Examples include the Opera House, Luna Park, Redfern–Waterloo, Broadway’s Carlton and United Breweries site and the Kings Forest site in the Tweed area.

The Minister can list an area to be a State significant site if he or she forms the opinion that the listing will deal with matters that are of significance for environmental planning for the State.

When declaring a site to be State significant, the Minister establishes the planning regime for that site. This may include the type and scale of future land uses, zoning changes, and the types of proposals on the site that will be considered major projects and need the Minister’s approval.

State significant sites will be kept under review. When the State’s planning objectives have been achieved, the planning controls for the site are proposed to go back into the relevant local environmental plan.

CRITERIA FOR A STATE SIGNIFICANT SITE

When considering whether a site should be listed as a State significant site, the Minister will consider whether the listing will address matters that are of significance for environmental planning for the State, including whether:

- the site is of strategic importance because of its location and major contribution to regional development (as identified in a State or regional strategy); its importance to a particular industry sector; for employment, infrastructure service delivery; or, its redevelopment potential to achieve government policy goals
- the site is significant to the State for environmental conservation or natural resource reasons, such as sensitive wetlands or coastal areas
- the site is of State significance in terms of amenity, cultural, heritage, or historical significance
- alternative planning or consent arrangements are needed, for example where added transparency is required because of potential conflicting interests or more than one local council is affected.

WHO CAN INITIATE A STATE SIGNIFICANT SITE LISTING

Only the Minister for Planning can list a site as a State significant site. The process can be initiated in two ways:

- a proponent/landowner can request that the Minister agree to consider a site
- the Minister can direct that a site be considered.

It is also possible to lodge a major project application or concept plan for approval concurrently with a proposal to list a site as State significant.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF DECLARING A SITE AS STATE SIGNIFICANT

The State significant site provisions are used by the Government to deliver State planning objectives and implement the Metropolitan Strategy and other regional strategies. The provisions are also used to facilitate major investment in key economic and employment-generating development in NSW and the redevelopment of major State government sites.

In the past, when the Minister determined to change the planning regime on a major site, a new regional environmental plan or SEPP had to be made, which led to a proliferation of site-specific planning instruments. Now the planning controls for the site are able to be included in one planning document — the Major Projects SEPP.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- *Guideline for State significant sites under the Major Projects SEPP* — outlines the processes followed when declaring an area a State significant site.
- Department of Planning website: www.planning.nsw.gov.au