



NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

The Hon Frank Sartor MP

Minister for Planning

Minister for Redfern Waterloo

Minister for the Arts

6 November 2007

WAGGA PANEL APPOINTED TO RESOLVE LOCAL ISSUES

The NSW Government has appointed three independent panel members to exercise certain planning functions of Wagga Wagga City Council.

Planning Minister Frank Sartor said the panel would help to resolve some outstanding local planning issues and would be dissolved when a new comprehensive Local Environmental Plan (LEP) was in place and working effectively.

The move follows a Department of Local Government report on the Council, which recommended the Minister consider appointing a planning panel or administrator.

Following that report, the Minister for Local Government, Paul Lynch, wrote to the Planning Minister requesting his intervention.

The planning panel will include:

- Former Environment Minister and former Parramatta City Councillor Pam Allan (Chair); and
- Town planner, Landcom development director and former Wagga Wagga resident Stephen Driscoll.

At the request of Wagga Wagga City Council, an Albury council planner Terri O'Brien has also been appointed to the panel.

The panel is expected to meet for the first time in the next few weeks and will deal with a range of planning matters including:

- Development applications which are inconsistent with the existing LEP or Rural LEP;
- Certain changes of land use;
- Developments which exceed certain height and floor space controls by more than 10%; and
- Oversight of the preparation of a new comprehensive Local Environmental Plan.

Specific concerns addressed in the Local Government report included:

- 200 outstanding planning matters with Wagga Wagga City Council, dating back as far as 1997; and
- There were ...'many examples where councillors do not accept the recommendations of planning staff'.

"Before making a decision on whether to install a planning panel, I considered Wagga Council's written submissions and met with the Mayor and other representatives in person," Mr Sartor said.

"Mums and dads deserve a planning system which works efficiently and processes applications in a timely way."