A thematic planning framework for NSW

As part of reforms to the NSW planning system, a new thematic framework is being launched to simplify the system and provide a coherent set of focus areas for planning. This document answers frequently asked questions about the new framework.

What is the thematic framework?
The thematic framework is a simplified structure for the NSW planning policy framework. It reduces red tape and provides a clearer and more contemporary context to align and communicate state planning policies and advice.

What is included under the new framework?
The thematic framework identifies 9 theme-based focus areas that provide a foundation to orient and consolidate state environmental planning policies (SEPPs), ministerial directions for planning, as well as planning circulars and other guidance. It is underpinned by the new Minister’s Planning Principles. You can find more information on the Minister’s Planning Principles, consolidated SEPPs, ministerial directions and planning circulars on our website.

What are the 9 focus areas?
The focus areas cover 9 themes that reflect key planning policy areas for NSW and its people:

- Planning systems
- Design and place
- Biodiversity and conservation
- Resilience and hazards
- Transport and infrastructure
- Housing
- Industry and employment
- Resources and energy
- Primary production.

Why introduce a thematic framework?
The thematic framework provides a simpler, clearer, more intuitive structure for NSW planning policy. The framework consolidates the most important planning information into one location to allow users to locate and understand policy on a thematic basis.

This will improve accessibility and navigability of the system. It will enhance engagement with and a better understanding of planning policy in NSW. The new framework is supported by the department’s digital platforms that will present the information.
What about other important policy issues like climate change, sustainability or Aboriginal culture and Country?

Climate change, resilience, sustainability and Aboriginal culture and Country are critical planning issues that cut across the 9 focus areas. The Minister’s Planning Principles specifically identify these as these key topics that need to be addressed across the planning framework. They have also been referenced in a number of principles throughout the 9 focus areas where it is relevant and helpful to draw those considerations out in more detail.

Further Information

For more information, please visit the department’s website or email the Systems and Productivity Team at: SystemsProductivity.Policy@planning.nsw.gov.au.