

This document answers some frequently asked questions about the Design and Place State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).

Policy overview

Why does NSW need the Design and Place SEPP?

The NSW Government is committed to modernising and reducing complexity in planning processes. The [Design and Place SEPP](#) is part of a review of environmental planning policies. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has requested a plain-English policy to simplify, consolidate and support design and place considerations in the planning system.

What topics will the Design and Place SEPP cover?

The Design and Place SEPP will bring together a range of considerations that impact the design of places in NSW. It will deliver objectives of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* as well as the Premier's Priorities for building a better environment. The SEPP will highlight key considerations, including connecting with Country, sustainability, resilience and overall design quality. It will also prioritise public space and green infrastructure.

How does the Design and Place SEPP relate to Better Placed?

The Design and Place SEPP will draw on existing and new guidance material, including the [Draft Greener Places Design Guide](#), [Urban Design for Regional NSW](#), [Practitioner's Guide to Movement and Place](#) and the [Apartment Design Guide](#).

Government Architect NSW are overseeing the development of the Design and Place SEPP within the Department of Planning Industry and Environment. The Design and Place SEPP will build on the seven objectives for a well designed built environment defined in : An integrated design policy for the built environment of NSW.

What is the process behind creating a new policy?

The NSW Government must follow formal processes to create and implement new policies. This includes consultation within government through working groups, policy control groups and steering committees, as well as engagement with key stakeholders through public exhibitions. The Parliamentary Counsel Office and the departmental legal team. Cabinet approval may also be sought for some policies.

Scope of the Design and Place SEPP

What type of development does the Design and Place SEPP apply to?

The Design and Place SEPP will be relevant to all new developments in NSW. It will apply to both public and privately owned developments across the state. The SEPP will include site and precinct scale thresholds to explain when and where particular considerations will apply.

Will the new Design and Place SEPP impact existing SEPPs?

[SEPP 65 Design Quality of Residential Apartment Development \(2002\)](#) and the [Building Sustainability Index BASIX SEPP \(2004\)](#) will be superseded by the Design and Place SEPP. The content of these SEPPs will be relocated to the Design and Place SEPP. Reforms to the *Apartment Design Guide* and to *BASIX* will occur in unison. The Explanation of Intended Effect, due for public exhibition in early 2021, will provide more information on reforms.

Frequently asked questions

Will the new Design and Place SEPP affect existing planning proposals?

The Design and Place SEPP will include a transition phase to ensure applications still pending at the time that the SEPP commences are assessed and determined in accordance with existing policies and provisions.

Will design review processes change as a result of the SEPP?

The Design and Place SEPP will support a more consistent approach to design review in NSW. This includes clarifying when design review applies and providing guidance that supports establishing project-specific and council design review panels. This process also includes exploring additional ways to introduce design skills into the planning assessment process. The SEPP will promote early engagement in the design review process to minimise amendments and reduce approval timeframes.

The Design and Place SEPP will not change provisions for design excellence.

Consultation and milestones

When will the Design and Place SEPP come into effect?

The Design and Place SEPP is scheduled to come into effect towards the end of 2021. An implementation plan and transition period will simultaneously come into effect to help councils and industry effectively integrate the SEPP into their planning processes.

Who will be consulted about the Design and Place SEPP?

Collaboration and consultation are instrumental to the success of the Design and Place SEPP. We are collaborating across the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to develop the SEPP, with input from state agencies and consultants. Councils, professionals, industry groups and the public will have various opportunities to provide feedback on the Design and Place SEPP.

Early engagement with industry peak bodies from August to October 2020 has helped guide the Explanation of Intended Effects. Formal feedback and hold targeted workshops for all stakeholders during the public exhibition of the Explanation of Intended Effects in early 2021 and the public exhibition of the SEPP later in the year.

To register your interest, email designandplacessepp@planning.nsw.gov.au.

Impact on councils

How will local character be impacted by the new Design and Place SEPP?

Local character and context considerations are integral to good design. The Design and Place SEPP will apply a principle-based approach to ensure that design outcomes properly consider local character. Care will be taken to align the SEPP with existing local character guidelines and planning instruments, including Local Environment Plans and Development Control Plans.

What support will be available to councils to implement the SEPP?

An implementation plan is in development to support state and council assessment planners to apply the Design and Place SEPP. Support will include guidance, assessment tools and capacity building for assessment teams. More detail about supporting material will be provided during the public exhibition of the SEPP.