



NEW SOUTH WALES

NEWS RELEASE

The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP

Member for Heffron

Minister for Planning

Minister for Redfern Waterloo

Friday 12 December, 2008

10-DAY HOUSING APPROVALS UNDER NEW STATE-WIDE CODE

The Rees Government will today launch a new code that allows home builders to get approval for new houses and extensions within 10 days, saving 110 days and \$6,500 per application.

The new complying development code will cut red tape for housing approvals in time for people to take advantage of the increased first home owner grants from the Rudd and Rees Governments.

Under the code, proposals for lots over 450 square metres can be approved by an accredited certifier or council within 10 days if they meet set standards and are the following type of development:

- New single or two-storey detached houses;
- House alterations and additions; and
- Other ancillary development, such as swimming pools.

Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally, said the new code will help create a faster approval system for new detached houses, house extensions and minor development.

“If a proposed house meets set standards which limit its potential impact on neighbours and the look of a street, it should not be tied up in red tape,” Ms Keneally said.

“The code I am launching today will speed up the time it takes to approve a new house or housing extension, and allow Councillors and council staff to focus on bigger, more important projects.

“Under the new system, a new home or extension will go through a ‘checklist-style’ complying development code which will see it approved within 10 days if it meets specified standards.

“The code provides a straightforward approval process for straightforward buildings. For example, it currently covers some 80% of all project homes available on the market.

“The checklist includes set backs from the street, neighbouring properties and back fence. If a proposed house exceeds these limits, it would go through the development application process.

“The code will protect neighbours’ rights and privacy and ensure they are informed before work starts. It will also protect streetscape character and won’t allow the demolition of heritage controlled houses.”

Ms Keneally said that the new code would provide a much-needed boost to the housing industry in NSW, which saw only 16,000 NSW housing approvals last year compared to 31,000 in Victoria.

“Last year NSW homeowners had to collectively wait more than one million days for their new detached houses to be approved through the development application process,” Ms Keneally said.

“They also had to collectively wait an additional 1.9 million days for development application decisions on home alterations and additions.”

Ms Keneally said the code’s 27 February 2009 start date would allow Councils time to adjust to the new system, and first home buyers time to access increased first home buyer incentives.

Page 1 of 2



NEWS RELEASE
The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP
Member for Heffron
Minister for Planning
Minister for Redfern Waterloo

Friday 12 December, 2008

The \$14,000 Australian Government additional grant for newly-built homes expires on 30 June 2009, while the NSW Government's \$3,000 supplement expires on 10 November 2009.

"Development applications need to be processed before most home construction contracts can be entered into, and that's an eligibility requirement for first home owner grants," Ms Keneally said.

"Last year it took an average of 123 days to approve development applications for new detached houses in Sydney, and 53 days in regional areas.

"The new housing code will be introduced 123 days from the expiry of the Rudd Government's increased First Home Owner scheme.

"That means the 27 February start date will allow first home buyers time to get their homes approved while the extra \$14,000 Rudd Government and \$3000 Rees Government grants are on the table."

Ms Keneally said that the code will also bring major sustainability gains by including limits on house sizes and ensuring all homes complied with BASIX, the NSW Government's sustainability code for dwellings which over the past three years has saved 5.7 billion litres of water.

The code will also, for the first time, create a consistent system allowing homeowners across NSW to install solar water heaters and photovoltaic systems without going through a development application process. At present, rules on such systems vary between local councils.

"The Housing Industry Association (HIA) estimates a complying development code could save an average \$6,654 per application in Sydney and \$2,549 in regional areas," Ms Keneally said.

"I would like to thank the large number of organisations and individuals that have contributed to the development of the code during widespread consultation.

"The codes have been tested against hundreds of real projects to ensure they will deliver a large number of houses under the new system.

"And the code will undergo regular review during its first year to take into account local feedback, including the creation of local variations and exclusions."

More information on the code will be available from www.planning.nsw.gov.au/housingcode.asp

Media Contact: Phil McCall – (02) 9228 5811 or 0438 619 987