



## NEWS RELEASE

The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP

Member for Heffron  
Minister for Planning  
Minister for Redfern Waterloo

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*Embargoed until 5.00am Saturday 1 November 2008*

### **NSW GOVERNMENT RELEASES LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT CARD**

Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally, today released the annual Performance Monitoring Report on the **NSW's 152 councils and shires**.

"Councils are the workhorse of the planning system, last year processing over **82,000 development applications worth \$22.3 billion**," Ms Keneally said.

"The State's **152 councils** and shires really are to be commended for the great job that they do in helping the state government work to build a better state.

"The NSW Government is continuing to work closely with councils to deliver local services and local infrastructure.

**"That's important now more than ever, given that the population of NSW is projected to increase by 33% over the next 30 years."**

Ms Keneally said that the local development performance report showed that, at year's end, there had been a slight downturn in building activity in NSW.

"It's no secret we're in hard economic times and that's being felt across the state, including in the development industry," Ms Keneally said.

"Last year there was a **4.6% drop in development applications** determined and complying development certificates issued, but at the same time the **value of the DA's increased \$600 million to \$22.3 billion**.

At year's end, the high end of the market was doing well with developments worth more than \$5 million up since this time last year. However it is likely that the global economic crisis will have an impact on the development industry. The Rees Government is considering the impact of this on the State's economy, in light of the mini budget.

Ms Keneally said the data released today shows that the fastest council took just seven days on average to process planning applications, with the other top four averaging between 10 and 20 days.

**"Temora, Hay, Broken Hill, Murrumbidgee and Berrigan Councils** are to be congratulated for being the **five fastest councils** in NSW, each processing development applications in less than 20 days on average," Ms Keneally said.

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NEW SOUTH WALES

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“There are also a number of councils in NSW which have significantly **improved their performance**, including **Mosman**, which has slashed its development application processing time by 41%, as well as **Strathfield, Holroyd, and Inverell** councils which also stepped up to the plate.

“The report shows some councils which need to improve their performance, including Ashfield Council which took an average of over five months to determine development applications.”

Ms Keneally said the reports released today show that an overwhelming majority of development applications—some 97 per cent—were for works of less than \$1 million in value.

“**Two-thirds of DA’s last year were valued under \$100,000.** These are working families building and renovating houses, and small businesses expanding their workplaces,” Ms Keneally said.

“In fact 59 percent of the development applications lodged this year were for new single dwellings or residential alterations and additions.

“It’s my intention that reforms to the planning system will help speed these applications up, lifting the burden of the planning system on working families and small businesses, and freeing council staff to focus on bigger projects.

“In particular, a revised housing code will mean that simple housing projects could be approved after they pass a checklist rather than a complicated development application process.

“This year, like last year, we still only had 11% of development projects approved in this simpler way, highlighting that we continue to need to reform this area.”

The report will be available on Monday at [www.planning.nsw.gov.au](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au)

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### **SUMMARY OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE MONITOR 2007-08**

- The State's average gross processing time for all development applications (DAs) by local councils in 2007-08 was 74 days, a slight improvement on the previous year's 76 days.
- Temora Shire Council was the fastest in the State, with a gross mean average determination time of 7 days, followed by Hay Shire Council (10 days), Broken Hill City Council (14 days), Murrumbidgee Shire Council (17 days) and Berrigan Shire Council (19 days).
- Sydney region councils who made significant improvements in mean gross determination time were Mosman, Rockdale, Warringah, Ryde and Lane Cove.
- Ashfield Municipal Council was the slowest in the State, with a gross average determination time of 160 days, followed by Upper Lachlan (154 days), Hunters Hill (149 days), Auburn (146 days) and Wellington (139 days)
- The average time for determining residential alteration DAs was 58 days, while for new single dwellings it was 75 days.
- 59 per cent of the 82,000 determined DAs in NSW last year were for single new homes or alterations to homes. Overall, 94 per cent of DAs had a construction value of less than \$500,000.
- The average gross determination time for projects between \$100,000 and \$500,000 was 85 days, and 150 days for projects between \$500,000 and \$1 million.
- Just 11 per cent of development proposals were assessed as complying development, where they could be approved by an accredited certifier or council if they met set design standards.
- Legal appeals against council decisions dropped by 15 per cent between 2006-07 and 2007-08. This may be due to the overall drop in development applications determined in 2007-08.
- The five councils with the highest number of DAs determined were Blacktown (2,872), Sydney City (2,482), Lake Macquarie (2,303), Shoalhaven (2,066) and Newcastle (2,055)
- Sydney City remains the council with the highest reported local development value. In 2007-08 the total value of DAs determined was \$3.81 billion, 42 per cent higher than the \$2.68 billion total the previous year.

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