



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

Wednesday 25 November, 2009

PLANNING SYSTEM SUPPORTS OVER 2,300 JOBS AND \$1.6 BILLION IN OCTOBER

Since September 2008 the NSW Government has approved 526 Major Projects supporting over 66,000 jobs and almost \$23 billion worth of investment in NSW.

Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally, today said that the Government's planning system has played a significant role in cushioning NSW from the full impacts of the global economic downturn.

"Major Project approvals in October alone will support some 2,335 jobs and more than \$1.6 billion of investment," Ms Keneally said. During October 2009:

- **36 Major Projects were been approved, supporting 1,869 construction jobs, 466 operational jobs and over \$1.6 billion of capital investment in NSW.**
- **Of these 36 approvals, 7 were approved by the Minister under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.**
- **The independent Planning Assessment Commission also approved one project under delegation from the Minister.**
- **A further 28 approvals were made by the Department of Planning under relevant Parts of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.**

"One of the significant approvals in October was for two new gas fired power stations north of Marulan, which will support more than 500 jobs and over \$800 million of investment," Ms Keneally said.

"These power stations will deliver an economic and employment boost to the Southern Tablelands as well as help secure the State's energy supply into the future."

Ms Keneally said conditions of consent would also ensure the environment is protected, with a rigorous study of air quality impacts undertaken as part of the assessment process.

"Both power stations will be required to adhere to strict emissions limits, which are on top of standard air quality criteria that will be met by the project," Ms Keneally said.

"Other concerns about a potential increase in dust emissions from construction and operation have been addressed with the companies agreeing to seal the access road at a cost of around \$900,000."

Ms Keneally also said as part of ongoing improvements to make the NSW planning system the best in Australia, ambitious new timeframes have been set for Major Project assessments.

"Applications will be dealt with more quickly, while still ensuring that all assessments are meticulous and merit-based."

Latest figures show that over the 9 month period from February to October 2009:



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- 62% of Major Projects were finalised in 3 months
- 24% were finalised in 5 months
- 14% were finalised in 8 months.

“This is a significant improvement for the same period in 2008 – including a 12% increase in the major projects finalised within three months, however the bar is now set even higher,” Ms Keneally said.

New Major Project assessment benchmarks aim for:

- 85% of major projects to be finalised in 3 months
- 10% of major projects to be finalised in 5 months
- 5% of major projects to be finalised in 8 months
- No project assessment to exceed 8 months.

Ms Keneally said initial signs are that new Joint Regional Planning Panels will contribute toward a reduction in the time it takes to assess development applications worth over \$10 million.

“The Joint Regional Planning Panels took an average of 93 days to determine their first five applications,” Ms Keneally said.

“That compares favourably to the 2007/08 State-wide average for determining development applications over \$5 million – which was 238 days.

“JRPPs started operation in July 2009, and average time for them to assess applications will inevitably fluctuate as they receive more applications.

“That said, these are very positive initial signs that the panels will make a measurable contribution toward making our planning system more efficient.”

A full breakdown of Major Project approvals is attached.

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Major Projects - State Wide Update - October 2009

1 to 31 October 2009					
	Approvals	Jobs – Construction	Jobs – Operational	Jobs – Total	Capital Investment Value
Minister					
Part 3A					
Concept	1	500	32	532	\$809,000,000
Project	5	1,290	4	1,294	\$593,100,000
<i>Total Part 3A</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1,790</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>1,826</i>	<i>\$1,402,100,000</i>
Part 3A Mod	1	0	0	0	\$0
Part 4	0	0	0	0	\$0
Part 4 Mod	0	0	0	0	\$0
Total	7	1,790	36	1,826	\$1,402,100,000
Department					
Part 3A					
Concept	0	0	0	0	\$0
Project	2	2	0	2	\$6,930,000
<i>Total Part 3A</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>\$6,930,000</i>
Part 3A Mod	9	53	300	353	\$45,861,206
Part 4	10	15	0	15	\$576,800
Part 4 Mod	7	9	0	9	\$3,700,000
Total	28	79	300	379	\$57,068,006
Planning Assessment Commission					
Part 3A					
Concept	0	0	0	0	\$0
Project	1	0	130	130	\$167,500,000
<i>Total Part 3A</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>\$167,500,000</i>
Part 3A Mod	0	0	0	0	\$0
Total	1	0	130	130	\$167,500,000
Grand total	36	1,869	466	2,335	\$1,626,668,006



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8 September 2008 to 31 October 2009					
	Approvals	Jobs – Construction	Jobs – Operational	Jobs – Total	Capital Investment Value
Minister					
Part 3A					
Concept	23	9,263	9,761	19,024	\$7,620,818,630
Project	100	14,829	13,345	28,174	\$11,253,611,197
<i>Total Part 3A</i>	123	24,092	23,106	47,198	\$18,874,429,827
Part 3A Mod	8	2,500	12,087	14,587	\$2,536,594,000
Part 4	9	1	0	1	\$3,086,760
Part 4 Mod	13	23	0	23	\$14,885,858
Total	153	26,616	35,193	61,809	\$21,428,996,445
Department					
Part 3A					
Concept	1	0	0	0	\$0
Project	23	529	613	1,142	\$213,647,494
<i>Total Part 3A</i>	24	529	613	1,142	\$213,647,494
Part 3A Mod	120	176	381	557	\$84,857,706
Part 4	99	143	72	215	\$22,282,154
Part 4 Mod	125	250	51	301	\$642,130,181
Total	368	1,098	1,117	2,215	\$962,917,535
Planning Assessment Commission					
Part 3A					
Concept	1	550	600	1,150	\$120,000,000
Project	4	275	636	911	\$249,390,000
<i>Total Part 3A</i>	5	825	1,236	2,061	\$369,390,000
Part 3A Mod	0	0	0	0	\$0
Total	5	825	1,236	2,061	\$369,390,000
Grand total	526	28,539	37,546	66,085	\$22,761,303,980



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Glossary of Terms

Major Projects

Major Projects are proposals that come to the State Government for assessment and determination under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (the Act). The Major Development State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) provides a list of the types of development which can be considered major projects, along with relevant thresholds or location. If the Minister forms the opinion that a particular proposal meets the criteria outlined in the Major Development SEPP, then it is declared a major project. This is sometimes referred to as a 'non-discretionary' project. The Minister also has the power to declare a proposal to be a Major Development by order in the Government Gazette should the Minister consider the project to be of State or regional environmental planning significance. This is sometimes referred to as a 'discretionary project.'

Part 3A

Part 3A of the Act sets out the steps which must be followed in the assessment of major projects such as public exhibition of the proposal and factors to be considered in the assessment of the project.

Concept plan

A concept plan provides a broad overview of the proposed development and establishes a planning framework for the site. Once a proposal has been declared a major project the Minister may also decide whether to authorise or require the proponent to lodge a concept plan for the project. If a concept plan is approved, further approvals may be required before the project can proceed to actual construction and future project applications for the site must be consistent with the approved concept plan.

Project application

While concept plans can be useful for some larger or more complex sites, the majority of proposals assessed as major projects are 'project applications'. Rather than providing a broad overview, a project application is an application to actually construct something, for example: a power station, tourist facility or hospital. Approval of a project application means that the proponent is able to proceed to the construction phase of the project, subject to the imposed conditions of approval.

Part 4

Part 4 of the Act is that part of the legislation under which the vast majority of development applications (DAs) are assessed across the State, including applications to local councils for matters such as residential unit blocks or commercial buildings. While most proposals dealt with by the State Government are handled under Part 3A of the Act, the Government continues to be the consent authority under Part 4 for certain types of development – most commonly in the alpine area of the State.

Part 3A & Part 4 Modifications

Proponents may apply to have their approval modified to allow for a project to be varied or to proceed in a different manner than originally approved. In order to have a proposal considered as a modification the proponent must demonstrate that the proposal, once modified, will remain substantially the same as the development that was originally approved. If this is not the case, the proponent is required to lodge an entirely new project application under 3A or DA under Part 4.