

Friday, 2 July 2010

Improved public access to State assessment processes

The NSW Department of Planning has taken additional steps to improve transparency in its assessment processes by making submissions received on development proposals publicly available.

Director-General, Sam Haddad, said that all submissions received during the exhibition period will now be made publicly available on the Department's website within 10 days of the end of the exhibition.

The policy applies to the following types of proposals lodged with the Department:

- Projects lodged under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (EP&A Act);
- Development applications lodged under Part 4 of the EP&A Act; and
- Draft State environmental planning policies for State significant sites.

"This represents a proactive step by the NSW Government to ensure full transparency and accountability in the State's planning system," Mr Haddad said.

"It also supports the Government's aim to improve the availability of public information.

"Under existing procedures, the proponent and relevant Government agencies received copies of submissions and the issues raised in these submissions were outlined in the proponent's response and the Department's assessment report.

"However, this new process means that all members of the public will also have direct access to both public and agency submissions, in addition to the existing procedures.

"Of course, the Department will continue to protect the privacy of submitters by removing names from submissions if requested by the submitter."

Submissions will be made publicly available for public exhibitions which conclude after 1 July 2010.

Submissions will be available on the individual project page which can be found on the Major Projects Register on the Department's website at <http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au>.