



Hon Tony Kelly MLC  
Minister for Planning  
Minister for Infrastructure  
Minister for Lands  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council  
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **STREAMLINED PLANNING FOR CRITICAL TELCO FACILITIES**

The NSW Government has amended the State's planning system to enable fast-tracked delivery of telecommunications facilities, including new broadband infrastructure.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, said streamlined planning processes would make NSW a national leader in the roll out of the Federal Government's National Broadband Network, and would particularly benefit rural communities.

"The delivery of a \$43 billion National Broadband Network requires a great deal of infrastructure such as cabling, satellite dishes and telecommunications towers," the Minister said.

"The NSW Government has acted to ensure these essential facilities can be rolled out efficiently and effectively, while still ensuring community safety and appropriate protection of the local environment and amenity."

Proposed amendments to the Infrastructure State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) were publicly exhibited last year along with a draft Telecommunications Guideline.

The exhibited drafts outlined the types of infrastructure that, subject to strict criteria, could be processed as 'exempt' or 'complying' development – that is, either with no requirement for approval at all or through a simple 10-day approval system.

This approach removes the need to lodge a time-consuming and costly development application (DA) with the local council for a number of low-impact facilities.

Under the new measures, all new telecommunications facilities in NSW must be consistent with a set of principles covering issues such as site selection, design, construction and operation.

A number of changes were made in finalising the policy based on feedback received in submissions, including:

- Stronger incentives for the co-location of telecommunication towers or extension of existing facilities rather than building a new tower;
- Ensuring consultation is compliant with the legally-enforceable industry code requiring carriers to adequately consult local communities when new infrastructure is being planned and installed;
- Expanding the range of facilities to which visual impact restrictions apply in heritage areas; Emphasising health and safety requirements – with all types of exempt or complying development to meet national exposure standards as published by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA); and
- A requirement that land associated with all underground telecommunications facilities be restored to a standard comparable to its condition prior to installation.

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Mr Kelly said the accessibility of high-speed internet is a critically important issue for the State's ongoing prosperity.

"This is particularly the case in rural and regional areas where, historically, access has at times been difficult to attain.

"Under this amendment, new telecommunications towers required to deliver broadband or mobile phone access in certain rural or industrial zones would be allowed as complying development subject to amenity and safety issues like height limits and separation from residential areas.

"And the installation of broadband internet access via satellite in rural areas will be made easier by allowing larger satellite dishes to be classed as exempt development than is currently the case under existing planning provisions."

Other facilities covered by the new provisions include:

- Base stations (including macrocell and microcell installations);
- Facilities for subscriber connection (e.g. broadband);
- Above ground housing for telecommunications infrastructure;
- Temporary, ancillary and maintenance facilities.

The initiative has received strong industry support including from the Mobile Carriers Forum (MCF), the peak industry body representing the four mobile phone carriers deploying networks in Australia.

MCF Program Manager, Matt Evans, praised the NSW Government's **vision and foresight** in delivering "**Australia's leading framework** for the deployment of advanced telecommunications infrastructure".

"The NSW Government's approach responds to the increasing demand for new telecommunications infrastructure delivering broadband services such as video-conferencing, interactive services and video streaming," Mr Evans said.

"These are services that are increasingly important in the day to day running of our society and the ongoing health of our modern economy. They are also services that rely on broadband connectivity.

"These amendments to the State's planning system now clear the way for improved telecommunication services to the people of NSW and represent a regulatory environment that is **superior to any other Australian state.**"

Director of Government and Corporate Affairs for Optus, Maha Krishnapillai, also said the changes would facilitate investment in NSW.

"Instead of the planning system unnecessarily delaying the delivery of new telecommunications infrastructure, these changes will undoubtedly lead to more rapid and efficient planning approvals and subsequent services for people in NSW," Mr Krishnapillai said.

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