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MEDIA RELEASE

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COUNCILS OFFERED \$11 MILLION FOR LOCAL PLANNING WORK

The NSW Government is offering \$11.2 million to local councils throughout the State for important planning work that will boost the potential for housing and job creation.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, wrote to councils this week inviting them to apply for funding under the Government's \$10 million LEP Acceleration Fund which will assist in the delivery of new council-wide local environmental plans (LEPs).

"All councils are updating their LEPs to deliver a robust and modern set of planning controls that will lay the foundations for the delivery of new homes and jobs," the Minister said.

"This is a large and very significant body of work and the Department of Planning has been working in close partnership with councils to deliver these plans in line with the Government's Standard LEP Template.

"Now the Government is also assisting councils financially with this work, with a particular focus on helping councils to deliver new LEPs within their specified timeframes.

"I encourage councils to come forward with their funding applications."

The LEP Acceleration Fund could be used to assist councils in a number of key areas including, but not limited to:

- Undertaking or completing any outstanding strategic or technical studies required for LEPs;
- Legal or specialist planning advice to assist in drafting the plan;
- Geographic Information System (GIS) resources to assist in completion of the LEP mapping;
- Backfilling of a position(s) to ensure an existing staff member could be allocated to prepare the LEP on a full-time basis; and
- Assistance from a "Flying Squad" of Department of Planning officers, including planning, legal and policy staff to directly assist in resolving issues with LEP drafting or preparation of maps.

The NSW Government announced a priority program for the delivery of Standard Instrument LEPs in August last year, with 67 council areas targeted for completion by the end of June 2011.

Mr Kelly announced earlier this week, 25 of these LEPs have now been completed with a further 58 well advanced.

"The new funding now being offered will help this progress even further," the Minister said.

The \$10 million LEP Acceleration Fund, to be delivered over the next two years, forms part of a \$44 million Comprehensive Housing Supply Strategy announced in the 2010-11 State Budget.

Last month, an additional \$1.2 million was also made available through the Planning Reform Fund for the delivery of local projects that support the implementation of state and regional planning strategies, as well as projects that improve service delivery and performance across the planning system.
