

Wednesday, 3 August 2011

Approval of the Greta train support facility
Response given to the Newcastle Herald

Why did the Director-General sign the approval for this project on 18 March 2011 and what are the rules about the DG signing approvals during caretaker period? Who signed the modification of the approval on 23 May 2011?

Department of Planning and Infrastructure response:

The Director-General was acting under a delegation whereby he could determine the proposal because less than 25 public submissions had been received. This is canvassed in the Department's assessment report.

The advice from the Department of Premier and Cabinet on the caretaker period clearly stated that "the routine business of government should continue". This project was clearly routine business. The convention is available at:

http://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/105183/Caretaker_conventions_and_other_pre-election_practices_-_2011_general_state_election.pdf

The project was hardly 'rushed through'. It was exhibited in October 2010 and then not determined until March 2011 – more than five months later.

The application was the subject of a thorough merit-based assessment, which particularly examined issues including traffic and access, noise and vibration impacts, ecology, heritage and air quality.

From time to time, minor errors or issues are clarified through a modification. The approver of the modification was listed as the "Deputy Director General, Development Assessment and Systems Performance". A simple search of the Department's website shows this to be Richard Pearson.

We are happy to bring all the above information, which is already in the public domain, to your attention.