Community and stakeholders to have their say on housing and infrastructure plan

The NSW Department of Planning today sought public comment about its proposed regional infrastructure contribution plan for the Lower Hunter and Illawarra, which replaces the existing site-by-site contribution system.

The Department’s Deputy Director General Strategies and Land Release, Ian Reynolds, said the documents on exhibition detailed how the new Special Infrastructure Contribution (SIC) would improve on the existing State developer contribution system.

The material on exhibition until 25 February 2011 includes a draft contribution determination, which provides the system’s legal framework, and a worksheet showing how the contributions were calculated.

It also includes maps showing the areas where the contribution will be levied and a fact sheet to help explain the proposed new system.

Mr Reynolds said the new uniform contribution system was not a new charge for the development industry.

“Some 42 local environmental plans approved across NSW since 2003 have required the developer to provide for regional infrastructure,” he said.

“Additionally, there are dozens of site-by-site voluntary planning agreements (VPAs) either in place or being drafted to collect these infrastructure contributions.

“These VPAs typically take eight to 12 months to process, with some individual agreements taking up to 18 months and generating $100,000 in legal costs.”

While VPAs are suitable on a stand-alone basis and will continue to apply in many parts of the State, Mr Reynolds said a more co-ordinated approach through a uniform contribution was preferred for high growth areas like the Lower Hunter and Illawarra.

“What is being proposed here is a more efficient and streamlined uniform contribution system, which assists both land supply and infrastructure provision,” he said.

The money raised by the SIC will help to fund $1.2 billion in new infrastructure required across the two regions. This total also includes the cost of debt to fund infrastructure while contributions are still being collected.

Mr Reynolds said maps on exhibition from today clearly indicated the areas of both regions where the SIC would apply.
In the southern Illawarra, the contribution is limited to the region’s three major greenfield land releases west of Lake Illawarra – Tallawarra, Calderwood and West Dapto.

In the Lower Hunter, the contribution will cover 69 sites identified or rezoned for urban release across the region’s five council areas.

“I urge all interested parties to take the time to look at these important documents,” Mr Reynolds said.

To access the documents, follow the link to the ‘On Exhibition’ page of the Department of Planning’s website at www.planning.nsw.gov.au

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