Statement on zoning for infrastructure

January 31, 2011

The Department’s policy on land-use zoning for infrastructure will assist the NSW Government in delivering upgraded and new facilities across the State.

For the last three years, the NSW Government has advocated a more flexible approach to planning for infrastructure.

This has involved phasing out the current approach where infrastructure could only be placed in marked ‘special use’ land-use zones which were largely drawn around existing facilities.

This archaic system meant it was very difficult to expand or build new facilities.

The Department is advocating that many types of existing facilities (including police stations and schools), along with new facilities, be allowed in a much wider range of zones as councils across NSW update their plans.

In the case of existing facilities, this has often meant them picking up the zoning which applies to adjoining land.

As outlined in the Department’s practice note on zoning for infrastructure, this approach “avoids the need for spot rezonings when the infrastructure use expands, ceases, is realigned or is downsized in the future.”

The Department’s approach is not new. For instance, the 13-year-old South Sydney local environmental plan takes a similar approach, by allowing development on land zoned ‘special uses’ if the development is permissible on adjoining land.

The sale of land is a matter for infrastructure providers, not the planning system.

Furthermore, any development applications on land where an infrastructure use has ceased would typically be exhibited for public comment.

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