MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday November 16, 2011

APARTMENTS BY DESIGN: HAVE YOUR SAY ON UNITS OF THE FUTURE

The NSW Government is inviting residents and industry to have a say on how apartment blocks are built and renovated in NSW.

Planning and Infrastructure Minister Brad Hazzard has today released a discussion paper on the existing State planning policy (SEPP 65) which aims to improve the design standard of apartment blocks in NSW.

Mr Hazzard is asking councils, residents and industry for feedback on the current State Environmental Planning Policy 65 - Design Quality of Residential Flat Development (SEPP 65) and the related Residential Flat Design Code.

“Over the next three months we are calling for ideas on how to improve the current design standards to ensure residential units are affordable, quality places to live - while also ensuring there are no unnecessary constraints stalling the delivery of new housing in NSW,” Mr Hazzard said.

“This State planning policy has arguably helped improve the design of apartment blocks for almost a decade - but the new Government is determined to listen to stakeholders and ensure it is working as effectively as possible.

“Residential units designed with appropriate standards and reflecting community demand will be a major plus for families hunting for homes.

“With redevelopment of older areas playing a critical role in easing the housing crisis created under the former Labor Government, it is imperative NSW design guidelines are sensible and practical,” Mr Hazzard said.

The review has been welcomed by the Australian Institute of Architects. NSW President Matthew Pullinger says the discussion paper is an opportunity to explore a number of sensible measures to preserve and strengthen the SEPP after a decade of successful operation.

“As our population grows and the density of our cities increases, residential apartments will continue to be an important type of housing for greater numbers of people in Sydney and NSW. Now is the time to refine and strengthen the design policy,” Mr Pullinger said.

The discussion paper will be on exhibition until Friday 24 February, 2012 and is available on the Department of Planning and Infrastructure website.

Five public information sessions will be held during the exhibition period at Parramatta, Ballina, Newcastle, Port Macquarie and Sydney.

“Councils, residents and industry are being given three months to have their say and I strongly encourage them to make use of the opportunity provided,” Mr Hazzard said.

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