Media release

Monday, 20 August 2012

Comment invited on proposal to provide greater certainty for power stations

The public is being invited to comment on a proposed state planning policy amendment which would provide greater certainty to publicly-owned NSW power stations and assist them to perform essential maintenance and upgrades.

The proposed amendment to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) – known as the Infrastructure SEPP – is being publicly exhibited by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure for one month from Monday 20 August to Wednesday 19 September 2012.

The amendment follows concerns by a number of state-owned electricity generating companies – particularly in the Central Coast and Hunter regions. These companies have stated that their power stations have been listed as environmental zones in new standard instrument local environmental plans (LEPs).

This has made it more difficult for the generators to expand the facilities on their own or adjacent land, or perform necessary upgrades or maintenance.

The amendment proposes that applications for routine maintenance, emergency works or installation of new or replacement plant on the existing site could be assessed and self-approved by the public authorities.

The department’s Director-General Sam Haddad said this self-approval role would be limited to upgrade works which don’t increase electricity-generating capacity by more than 2 per cent.

“Generators had these powers before the introduction of the standard instrument and we are simply returning to the previous situation,” Mr Haddad said.

In addition, public authorities would be able to lodge a development application with a local council or the department to expand their existing electricity-generating facilities onto adjacent land.

Any application to expand the facility would be subject to a rigorous development assessment including a thorough analysis of environmental issues.

A copy of the proposed Infrastructure SEPP amendment can be viewed on the department’s website, by visiting www.planning.nsw.gov.au/onexhibition.

The documents are also available to view during opening hours at the department's information centre, 23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney.
Submissions can be lodged until **Wednesday 19 September** and can be:

- Emailed to innovation@planning.nsw.gov.au; or
- Posted to Director, Policy Coordination, Department of Planning and Infrastructure, GPO Box 39, Sydney NSW 2001.

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