Media release

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_Councils get funding boost to deliver e-Planning initiatives_

Seven NSW councils will share in almost $190,000 in funding to help implement the Electronic Housing Code and give homeowners and builders access to a fast-tracked online approval process.

The Department of Planning and Infrastructure announced today that Camden, Holroyd, Kogarah, Penrith, Warringah, Willoughby and Wingecarribee councils had each been awarded grants of up to $30,000 after they were chosen earlier this year to join the Electronic Housing Code program.

Director-General Sam Haddad said the funding would assist councils to buy software and computer equipment, undertake staff training and upgrade the land and property information which underpins the system.

“The Electronic Housing Code allows residents to access fast-tracked online housing approvals – sometimes in less than a week,” Mr Haddad said.

“This compares to an average of 63 days to have a development application approved where the Electronic Housing Code is not used.

“The online system improves accuracy, reduces red tape and provides clarity for homeowners and developers about what is possible on an individual lot.

“The department is committed to improving NSW residents’ access to e-Planning tools, which was a clear focus of the recently released Green Paper on a new planning system for NSW.

“This funding is just the latest step towards bringing the electronic planning tools to more areas.”

The Electronic Housing Code is already operational in 10 council areas including Bankstown, Blacktown, Lake Macquarie, Port Macquarie, Rockdale, Shellharbour, Sutherland, Tamworth, The Hills and Tweed councils.

“We will soon have 30 per cent of all land parcels in NSW available on the Electronic Housing Code which can qualify for approvals at the click of a button for straightforward applications such as the construction of a new home, or home renovations,” Mr Haddad said.

He said four other councils which were also selected to join the system this year – Campbelltown, Coffs Harbour, Great Lakes and Wyong – will also be eligible for funding in the coming months.

The EHC is being implemented in conjunction with the Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW. Additional councils will be invited to submit expressions of interest to join the program later this year.

**Media contact:** Natalie Christie, (02) 9228 6295