



# The Hon Brad Hazzard MP

## Minister for Planning & Infrastructure

### Minister assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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Tuesday, 27 March 2012

### FEEDBACK SOUGHT ON REZONING CHANGES

As part of the State Government's push to hand back planning powers to the local community, local councils will be given greater powers to approve Local Environmental Plans (LEPs) under draft proposals to make the planning system more transparent and accountable.

"LEPs are the cornerstone of the State's planning system – typically outlining land-use zoning, subdivision sizes and controls on floor space and heights," Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Brad Hazzard said.

"However, many steps in the LEP-making system are slow, wrapped in red tape and there's no guarantee for proponents to get a fair hearing.

"Since March 2011, we've sped-up the creation of new council-wide LEPs and now we're turning our attention to the smaller but equally important amending and site-specific LEPs."

Under a discussion paper released today for feedback:

- Councils (rather than the NSW Government) will have the final approval role on a number of LEP types, including when they support spot rezonings which are consistent with an endorsed strategy or surrounding zones;
- Proponents will be able to request an independent review by a Joint Regional Planning Panel if a council refuses, or fails to make a decision on, their request to prepare a draft LEP; and
- Councils and proponents will be able to request independent reviews of NSW Government decisions as to whether a draft LEP should be exhibited (and any conditions in the Department's decision).

Proposed reviews of council decisions will need to first pass a strict assessment by the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to:

- Ensure they are consistent with endorsed local, regional or State planning strategies; and
- Are properly serviced by infrastructure and deliver orderly planning outcomes.

"For many LEP types, there's no reason for the NSW Government to make the final decision and therefore we are proposing to hand back approval powers," Mr Hazzard said.

"However, if councils are going to get greater final decision-making powers, then we need to ensure that the system is more accountable and an independent review will assist this."

The proposed changes are on exhibition at [www.planning.nsw.gov.au](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au) until 4 May 2012.

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