

Thursday, 1 November 2012

### **Have your say on proposed Statewide template changes**

Feedback is being sought on recommendations to change the Statewide template being used to update local environmental plans (LEPs), including to give greater flexibility to local councils.

The Local Planning Panel – which included representatives from seven local councils and senior staff from the Department of Planning and Infrastructure – has made recommendations following a 12-month review.

The department is publicly exhibiting the panel's position paper and recommendations for one month, to gather feedback on the proposed changes.

Separate to the panel's work, the department is also seeking feedback for 14 days on a draft planning circular prepared to assist councils in defining some types of development under the standard template LEP.

The Statewide LEP template is used as the basis for all new council-wide planning instruments, to bring the State's local planning controls into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Already nearly half of the 152 councils across NSW have a standard template LEP in place, with nearly all other councils in the process of preparing one.

The Local Planning Panel's recommendations include retaining a number of provisions, as well as some proposed changes to the language and structure of standard instrument LEPs, additional zones and greater flexibility to respond to local needs.

The department's Acting Director General Richard Pearson said he was supportive of giving greater flexibility to councils.

He said the department will carefully consider feedback on the report before providing advice to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Brad Hazzard.

Local Planning Panel chair Tony McNamara said the panel found continued council support for standard zones and rules to apply across the state, but said councils were keen for increased local flexibility within this framework.

"This is reflected in the panel's recommendations, which ultimately are about improving local flexibility while still retaining a standardised and simple approach across the board," he said.

The panel was established by the Minister in September 2011 to engage with local councils and key stakeholder groups, before reporting back to the government on how the standard instrument LEP could be improved.

Mr McNamara said the panel conducted widespread consultation including regional meetings with 42 councils and 23 stakeholder groups, while around half of all NSW councils provided detailed feedback through a survey distributed by the panel.

The panel's key recommendations include:

- Implementing a range of additional zones, including a natural hazards zone to deal with sea level rise or other hazards, and additional rural, residential, business, industrial, recreation, environmental protection and waterways zones.
- Giving greater flexibility to councils to prohibit or permit development types for particular locations and include additional development standards to reflect local circumstances.
- Continuing to require councils to permit sex services premises in at least one zone in each council area, in recognition that they are a legal land use and cannot be prohibited outright.
- Continuing to require councils to make places of public worship permissible in low density residential areas, while giving councils discretion on which other zones should also permit places of public worship.
- Giving increased consideration to development in the vicinity of heritage items.
- Introducing a comprehensive standard instrument LEP performance monitoring system.
- Simplifying language and terminology in the LEP template.

The panel's Position Paper and recommendations are on exhibition until **Friday 30 November**, while comments on the draft planning circular can be made until **Wednesday 14 November**.

Documents for both exhibitions, and details about how to lodge a submission, are available on the department's website, [www.planning.nsw.gov.au/onexhibition](http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/onexhibition).

**Media contact:** Laurel-Lee Roderick, (02) 9228 6128 or 0429 153 139