

Response to SMH on ICAC submission July 1, 2013

We are committed to producing a new planning system which reduces corruption risks.

That's why the new planning system supports independent expert panels to decide on development applications – something which North Sydney Council has just decided to do.

We're also encouraged by ICAC's support for innovative ePlanning initiatives to make it easier for people to find out what planning controls apply, or are proposed to be introduced, in their area.

We agree with ICAC that any new planning system should minimise discretion and increase appropriate checks and balances on authority and ICAC's constructive comments on this issue are helpful and welcome.

We will be closely examining ICAC's comments before presenting any legislation to the NSW Parliament.

In regard to lobbyists, the department has very strict requirements for lobbyist interaction and in fact in September 2011 won a Public Sector Risk Management Association award for its protocol which public reporting of lobbyist contact – see <http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/lobbyist-contact-register>

In regard to ministerial decision making, the NSW Government repealed the Part 3A law in October 2011 to take the politics out of planning. The Minister now decides just 2% of major projects, compared with 32% under the previous government.

ICAC's submission represents part of the comprehensive engagement process undertaken for the new planning system, which was seen more than 6,000 people attend government-run forums and events and more than 6,400 submissions received over two years.