Saturday March 30 2013

MEDIA RELEASE

DELAYS IN DAs HIGHLIGHT NEED FOR NEW SYSTEM

Delays in council approval times for new housing, renovations and commercial construction highlights the urgent need for a new planning system in NSW.

NSW Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Brad Hazzard said the Local Development Performance Monitoring Report for 2011-12, released today, showed councils were struggling with a complex planning system.

“The current planning system is over 30 years old and has been amended hundreds of times leading to slower approvals and more red tape for mum and dad builders,” Mr Hazzard said.

Despite the delays, across NSW $22 billion worth of local and regional projects was approved by councils, private certifiers and joint regional planning panels in 2011-12, an increase of 11 per cent on the previous year.

Eight local government areas had projects approved with a combined investment value of more than half a billion dollars - Auburn, Blacktown, North Sydney, Penrith, Ryde, City of Sydney, City of Newcastle and The Hills.

The report also found:

• Councils averaged 71 days to assess development applications (up from 68).
• 15 councils took more than 100 days to determine DAs (up from eight councils).
• Elected councillors took 171 days to determine DAs - compared with 66 days for council staff.
• About 12 per cent of DA’s were referred to other government agencies – adding an average of 50 days.

Mr Hazzard said fast-tracked approvals for everyday ‘complying development’ – such as new homes and home renovations - took a median time of just eight days.

“While the proportion of applications that went through this process increased from 18 per cent to 23 per cent of all decisions, this is still well short of the proportion which should be going through a quicker assessment and receiving faster decisions,” Mr Hazzard said.

“Delays in development are why the NSW Government is committed to delivering our White Paper which will cut red tape and deliver faster decisions, so we can get on with delivering new houses and jobs,” Mr Hazzard said.

MEDIA: LEE DIXON 0467 742 993