Monday, 4 November 2013

**World renowned planner to visit Sydney**

A leading international thinker on planning for growth and community engagement in planning is visiting Sydney this week to share his experience and gain a first-hand insight into progress of the new NSW planning legislation.

As Chief Planner for the City of Vancouver, Brent Toderian led the development of new approaches for green and liveable design including the EcoDensity program.

The EcoDensity Charter, an important green city initiative, aimed to promote compact, mixed use and walkable communities and built on the city’s extensive record of community engagement on planning issues.

Mr Toderian, who held the Vancouver role between 2006 and 2012, has also been a planning advisor to major world cities including New York, Oslo, Helsinki, Medellin, Auckland, Copenhagen and Sydney.

Jill Reich, the Deputy Director-General, People, Culture and Business with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, said the visit coincides with a major milestone in the move towards new NSW planning laws, following the Planning Bill 2013 being passed by the Lower House of Parliament last week. The next step will be to debate the Bill in the Upper House of Parliament during November.

The landmark reforms to the NSW planning laws will ensure:

- Everyone gets a say
- Certainty in the planning process
- Local planning for local communities

“The NSW Government has drawn on examples of best practice from around the world to help create a modern, new planning system for the 21st century where the community gets a real say, upfront, on planning for their communities,” Ms Reich said.

"Vancouver is regarded as a world leader when it comes to innovative planning and engaging the community in decision-making.

"It is exciting to have Brent Toderian in Sydney. This is a welcome chance for some of our partners and stakeholders to hear how planning reforms and community engagement in planning have been implemented on the other side of the world."

During the two day visit on November 4 and 5, Mr Toderian will be a guest at workshops with local and state government planners, as well as NSW community engagement practitioners.
Mr Toderian said he had been closely following the NSW reform process.

“Implementing improvements to the NSW planning system is a huge opportunity for more successful community-building, including achieving ‘density done well’,“ he said.

“Reform isn’t easy - but asking yourself the right questions, having a robust conversation and ensuring the right values and goals guide your new approach will position you well for success.

“Better city planning leads to stronger cities and nations, and creates value. It’s such an important moment you’re in right now.”

Media contact: Laurel-Lee Roderick, (02) 9228 6585 or 0429 153 139