Public comment sought on proposed planning changes for NSW shooting ranges

The NSW Government today called for feedback on proposed changes to provide better planning for outdoor shooting ranges across NSW.

“Shooting ranges are a specific land-use and it is important that we have clear and consistent planning controls in place for them,” said Department of Planning and Infrastructure Director General Sam Haddad.

Mr Haddad said there had been an inconsistent approach to zoning for shooting ranges in recent years as local councils updated their local environmental plans.

“This may cause complications for the ongoing operation and potential modification of existing lawful shooting ranges,” he said.

“In addition, in 2009, the Land and Environment Court found that ‘range danger areas’ form part of a shooting range and should, therefore, also be appropriately zoned and subject to a formal development assessment process.

“We support this measure which ensures ‘range danger’ areas are properly planned to eliminate safety concerns rather than left to chance.”

Therefore, the Government is considering whether it is appropriate to change the Infrastructure State Environmental Planning Policy to:

- make existing lawful shooting ranges a permitted use on their land; and
- make shooting ranges, including the range danger area, permitted on adjacent land, if that land is zoned for primary production, rural landscape, recreation or environmental conservation or management purposes, and subject to development consent.

“The changes will mean that existing lawful shooting ranges across NSW will be able to continue with their current operations, regardless of land zonings applied under new council plans,” Mr Haddad said.

“It also means that shooting ranges can seek to expand their facilities – including the range danger area – once they obtain the consent of the adjacent landowner and receive approval following a full merit assessment process.

“By making the rules for shooting ranges more consistent and clear, we can assist them to operate in a way which safely integrates with the surrounding area with minimal impact on nearby residents.”

Mr Haddad said that it was important to resolve this issue since these facilities provide venues for a popular recreational sport in NSW.

The proposed changes will be on exhibition until 4 November, 2013. The draft amendment and other information on the changes can be viewed at: www.planning.nsw.gov.au/onexhibition

Media contact: Mark Worley (02) 9228 6174