MEDIA RELEASE
Tuesday October 22 2013

A NEW ERA IN NSW PLANNING

The NSW Government has delivered on its promise to return planning power to the local community and looks forward to implementing a new system that delivers transparency and certainty for planning in the 21st Century.

NSW Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Brad Hazzard today introduced the Planning Bill 2013 into the NSW Parliament.

“The legislation will mean that for the first time NSW has a planning system that puts the community first, is easy to use, efficient, transparent and where everyone knows what the rules are, upfront.”

Our new planning system will ensure:

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

Mr Hazzard said the Planning Bill 2013 had seen unprecedented community consultation.

“Through the development of the Bill we’ve worked with councils, the community and key stakeholders including ICAC, the Heritage Council and Local Government NSW,” he said.

The new Bill will:

- Put environmental and social considerations on the same level as economic growth when assessing development
- Safeguard what the community values through a new state planning policy for the environment and heritage
- Continue with the existing powers of the Heritage Council to have the final say on State Heritage items, except in very limited circumstances when it cannot resolve an issue with another agency, or there is unreasonable delay
- Maintain all existing legal rights and expand judicial review rights
- Retain the current zoning system
- Not have any target for code assessed development
- Assist local councils to tailor state housing codes to suit their own local conditions
• Enhance checks and balances, with the Minister, councils and other decision makers having to consider community input in all their decisions, and then publish their reasons and say how they have addressed community concerns.

Mr Hazzard said local communities are going to be able to set the scene for how they want neighbourhoods in their area to develop.

“We need to plan for the future. We need housing choices so that people can stay in their community as they age and their housing needs change.

“The same applies for younger generations who want affordable housing choices in their local neighbourhoods.

“We're going about this strategically rather than it being an ad hoc response to pressures.

“Upfront strategic planning is world's best practice and is the best model for certainty and transparency - everyone knows the rules.

“Our Community Participation Charter is an Australian first, and guarantees, in law, that every person in the community can be part of an upfront planning process.

“Once the rules are agreed to, the new system will deliver faster, more streamlined planning for families, saving mums and dads and small business money and time by greatly reducing assessment times for straightforward applications.”

Mr Hazzard said the NSW Government had committed funding for the delivery of the new planning system and a key component would be providing the education, tools and resources required by local government to help implement the new system.

“Local government is a vital partner in the new planning system.

“The partnership is not only about implementing the new system, the partnership also builds on the work we have done in two years in Government on returning planning powers to local councils and communities.

“Our new planning system puts the community first, builds on the promise we made to the community and puts NSW back in business,” Mr Hazzard said.