Simpler Planning Means More Certainty

The Hon. Pru Goward MP
Minister for Planning
Minister for Women

MEDIA RELEASE

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Simpler Planning Means More Certainty

Minister for Planning Pru Goward today announced a suite of improvements to how state significant development proposals are processed, speeding up the state’s planning system and providing more certainty to communities and business.

Ms Goward said it was in the interest of communities and industry to have a planning system which assesses and determines applications efficiently.

“We have listened to communities and to industry who have highlighted their concerns about assessment delays and uncertainty,” Ms Goward said.

“To rebuild NSW we need a planning system that’s nimble and predictable, providing business and the community certainty about the process and timeframes.

“It is unreasonable for communities and industry to wait years for projects to be determined, when we can optimise the processes to reduce the time taken.

“We expect councils to assess development applications without delay, so we should hold ourselves to the same standards. The Government’s commitment is to reduce the average time it takes to process state significant developments like manufacturing plants and mines by up to 170 days.

“These large and complex applications often require expert advice from government agencies other than the Department of Planning and Environment and this can add time to assessments.

“We will start by introducing clear and measurable timeframes for assessments and ensuring government agencies work better together to meet these timeframes.

“Importantly, opportunities for the community to have its say on developments will not change.”

The reforms include:

- Introducing clear timeframes for the PAC and other NSW Government assessment processes and clear accountability for meeting those timeframes;
- Appointing case managers from the Department of Premier and Cabinet to manage planning applications through complex government processes and be accountable to a Cabinet committee for delivering outcomes on time;
• Establishing a whole-of-government approach to assessing state significant mining applications to make sure that agencies responsible provide timely advice and feedback;

• Setting up a panel of independent experts who will advise the NSW Government and the PAC on technical issues;

• Giving clearer guidance to the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC) on the application of government policies;

• Engaging better with communities affected by mining proposal by providing clearer information and more opportunities for community questions to be answered; and

• Appointing additional compliance officers in regional areas and ensuring conditions are being adhered to.

Ms Goward said the reforms would be implemented over the coming weeks and months to ensure certainty for both communities and industry across the state, who depend on a robust and efficient planning system.

MEDIA: Nick Tyrrell – 0467 733 876