

The Planning Group Year in Review 2023

December 2023



Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges that it stands on Aboriginal land. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and we show our respect for Elders past, present and emerging through thoughtful and collaborative approaches to our work, seeking to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to providing places in which Aboriginal people are included socially, culturally and economically.

Published by NSW Department
of Planning and Environment
planning.nsw.gov.au

The Planning Group
First published: December 2023

Cover: Arcadia, Alexandria by DKO
architecture. Image: Tom Ross.

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Message from the Secretary



This year, the housing crisis has emerged as one of our most pressing challenges. It has underscored the urgency of addressing housing affordability and availability. For many households, mortgage payments or rent have become an overwhelming burden, signalling the need for significant intervention.

We are working with all tiers of government, industry and community to tackle the crisis. We're doing everything we can to ensure that every person in NSW has access to a safe and secure place to call home.

To increase housing supply and improve housing affordability, we must do things differently. This includes embracing a faster, more modern planning system, where housing is approved quicker and there is a pipeline of integrated infrastructure to ensure communities have what they need from day one.

Under the National Housing Accord targets set by the federal government, NSW has committed to build 377,000 new homes over the next 5 years from July 2024.

We have already begun reforming the system to achieve this. Planning reforms underway include:

- support and resources for councils to help them address a chronic shortage of planners and get development assessments moving through the system more efficiently
- new state-assessed pathways and incentives for developers that include social and affordable housing in new developments

- a government-wide audit to identify surplus public land that can be rezoned for housing and community benefit
- additional self-assessment powers for government agencies, such as NSW Land and Housing Corporation, Landcom and the Aboriginal Housing Office, to deliver more affordable homes
- a new infrastructure contributions scheme to make it simpler and fairer for developers to help pay for the infrastructure needed to support growing communities
- boosting the capacity of councils to speed up assessment times and deliver much-needed housing in regional NSW
- the Strong Start program to help NSW councils connect with and invest in new planners and develop a pipeline of planners for the future
- continued investment in our Regional Housing Flying Squad – a free resourcing program that enables regional councils to outsource the assessment of certain housing applications to a team of planners in the department's Planning Delivery Unit
- changes to fast-track a greater diversity of homes like terraces, townhouses, duplexes and smaller 1-and 2-storey apartment blocks in suburbs where they are not currently allowed

- identifying 8 Sydney transport hubs for accelerated rezoning to deliver up to 47,800 new, well-located high-and mid-rise homes
- snap rezoning of 31 locations across NSW to allow for 138,000 new homes within 400 metres of metro or suburban rail stations and town centres and make residential flat buildings up to 6 storeys permissible in all residential zonings within these locations.

We are actively pursuing the government's target of a minimum of 30% social, affordable and universal housing on surplus public land through new pathways and incentives. We are prioritising the delivery of green spaces and infrastructure – alongside our commitments to deliver new housing supply – to ensure that we are building cities and communities that are cooler, healthier, more sustainable and liveable for all.


And we recognise that we are all always on Country. The Connecting with Country framework is our commitment to protecting Country, community and sacred sites in the planning and design of places. We are working with Aboriginal land managers and stakeholders to provide targeted support to fulfil their aspirations.

We know that we cannot tackle the challenge of the housing crisis alone. We are forging partnerships and collaborating with industry and councils, and we have been actively supporting our stakeholders and the community through various engagement functions.

I'd like to acknowledge local councils, our housing delivery partners and all of our industry stakeholders for their dedication and ongoing commitment and for working with us to deliver more places that the people of NSW can call home.

It has been a pleasure to lead the Department of Planning and Environment in 2023. I am looking forward to continuing as the Secretary of the new Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure in 2024 and gearing up for the exciting work ahead.

Regards,



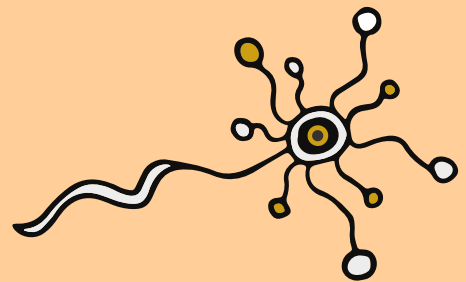
Kiersten Fishburn
Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment



Casba, Waterloo by SJB architects.
Image: Brett Boardman.

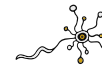


Committing to Aboriginal initiatives



The NSW Government will continue to work collaboratively with our Aboriginal partners and stakeholders across NSW to deliver the best possible outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

Strategic initiatives



Committing to
Aboriginal initiatives

Through continued engagement and listening to the feedback from Aboriginal organisations and stakeholders, we are better placed to make decisions that will help Aboriginal communities flourish and grow.

We launched several strategic and place-based initiatives designed and developed with community input, to build a brighter future for our Aboriginal communities and deliver the support where it is needed most.

Aboriginal Planning Concierge

This has been a year of growth and development for the reach and quality of our engagement partnerships. The Aboriginal Planning Concierge is committed to making sure that its role in 2024 moves from previous engagement into the delivery of outcomes for Aboriginal communities.

The Aboriginal Planning Concierge service has been expanded to provide support to 15 local Aboriginal land councils and Aboriginal land managers, including local corporations, indigenous-owned businesses and federal agencies. We are also working to support the community housing provider industry directly partnering with the Aboriginal Housing Office and the Aboriginal Community Housing Industry Association.

The service provided gives the partners improved access to the planning system. The concierge service connects partners to key agencies and support for planning matters.

Aboriginal planning experts on strategic planning panels

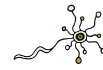
Two Aboriginal land planning experts serve as state members on the 9 district and regional planning panels. They participated in one independent review for a Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council proposal and are members of 2 strategic panels, overseeing planning proposals for the Metropolitan and Darkinjung local Aboriginal land councils. They have also sat on other strategic and district planning panels to hear both strategic matters and regionally significant development applications.

Their participation on the panels has brought diversity and cultural inclusivity and greater participation of Aboriginal people in planning decisions. It has also provided the Aboriginal land planning experts with an opportunity to increase their knowledge of, and participation in, the state planning system as well as work with, and be mentored by, planning, environmental and architectural experts.

20

Aboriginal partners
and projects





Connecting with Country Framework

The Government Architect's Connecting with Country Framework was released in June 2023. The framework provides guidance for government, planners, designers and industry on how to respond to Country in the planning, design and delivery of built-environment projects in NSW.

It aims to better recognise indigenous culture in planning and design, empower Aboriginal voices and learn from and work with Aboriginal communities to promote sustainability, resilience and community health.

The framework builds on extensive engagement with Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal consultants.



Bundyi Aboriginal Cultural Tours guide Mark Saddler sharing his knowledge with tourists. Wagga Wagga, NSW. Image: Destination NSW.



Priority growth areas and precincts – Explorer Street, Eveleigh

Our local precinct planning team at the Explorer Street site in Sydney were able to achieve both tangible Aboriginal housing outcomes for the community and embed Country into the overall design approach in collaboration with cultural design and research consultant Djinjama.

We increased the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affordable housing to a minimum of 20% of the total affordable housing, a figure developed in collaboration with the City of Sydney and Land

and Housing Corporation and in consultation with the Redfern Waterloo Aboriginal Affordable Housing Alliance.

We also incorporated elements from our Designing with Country report into the Explorer Street Design Guide to acknowledge the significance of Country to Aboriginal people and to help make sure that Country elements and inclusive processes are features of the future detailed design.

An artist's impression of Explorer Street, Eveleigh (indicative only) showcasing possible building design possible open-space design.



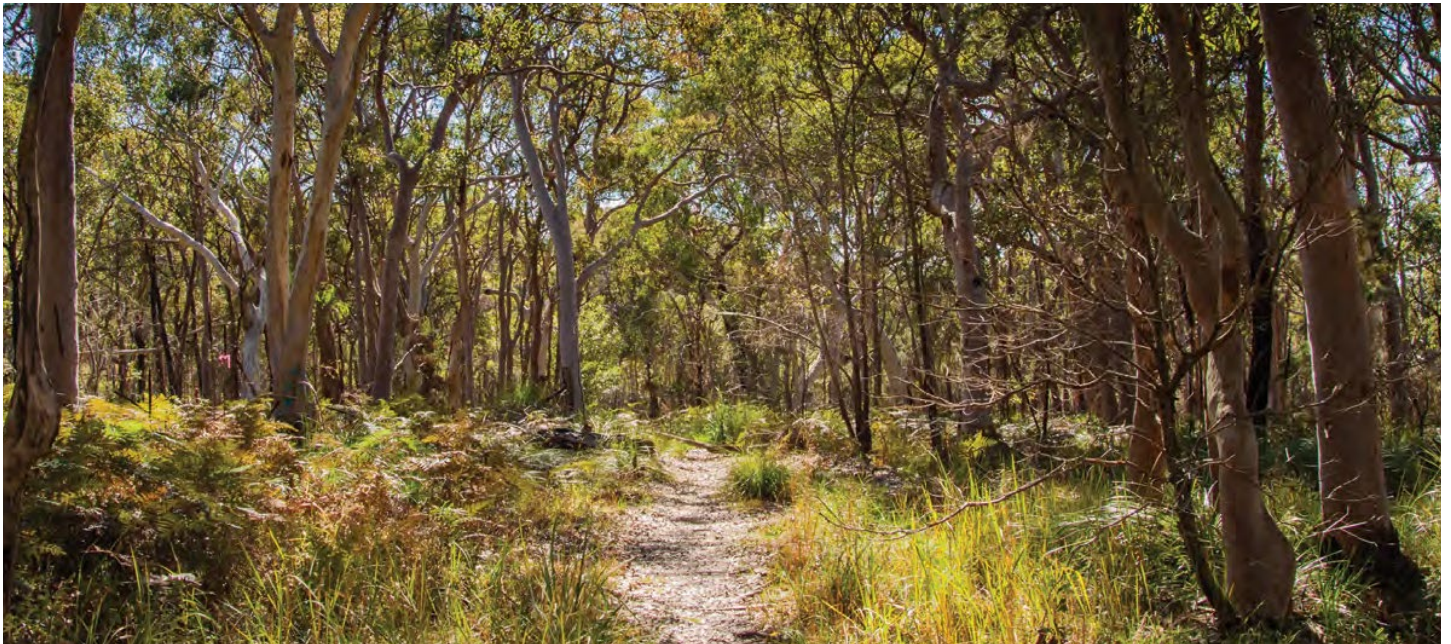
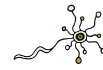
Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan

The Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan's Caring for Country Aboriginal Outcomes Strategy focuses on supporting connection to Country, land management, culture and heritage and economic growth for Aboriginal communities and businesses in Western Sydney. We engaged with the Darug, Dharawal and Gundungurra Traditional Custodians, Aboriginal groups and community organisations.

We partnered with Yarpa NSW Indigenous Business and Employment hub to deliver a \$700,000 business development grant program and with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council to deliver a \$1 million grants program targeted to the 3 local Aboriginal land councils in the area to support the delivery of cultural and conservation outcomes on their land and build their capacity.

\$700,000

Business development
grant program in partnership
with Yarpa NSW



Planning analysis reports

We are preparing planning analysis reports at the request of local Aboriginal land councils. These reports provide an overview of the land owned by the local Aboriginal land council, which has typically come into its ownership through the Aboriginal land claims process under the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983.

Each report provides mapping, imagery and key planning information about the sites. The reports enable local Aboriginal land councils to better understand the location and characteristics of the land they own and inform a process of identifying how individual sites may align with the priorities of a local Aboriginal land council.

Hunter and Central Coast

We have been working with local Aboriginal land councils in the Central Coast and Hunter region throughout 2023 on place strategies and development delivery plans to support self-determination, housing for the community and integrating land-use planning with infrastructure delivery to streamline planning proposals.

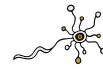
Darkinjung Local Aboriginal Land Council's Development Delivery Plan was approved by the Minister for Planning in December 2022. It applies to 31 sites consisting of 94 lots across the Central Coast local government area. We are in the implementation phase of the delivery plan and have successfully rezoned 2 of the 4 sites that were initially included in the interim development delivery plan.

Northern Region

We have been working with local Aboriginal land councils, native title groups and other agencies on several initiatives to explore positive outcomes for community throughout Northern NSW. These initiatives include a master plan in Byron Bay in consultation with Byron Shire Council, Arakwal Corporation and the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council. The project aims to bring positive changes and benefits for all parties involved while preserving the environment and cultural heritage of the Sandhills Estate.

In Moree, our Closing the Gap team is working collaboratively with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and NTSCORP to enhance housing and economic outcomes for the Aboriginal community in Moree.

Community engagement



Committing to
Aboriginal initiatives

Southern Region

In response to the Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041, we have implemented several initiatives since it was placed on exhibition in 2022 and 2023.

Part of this program includes working with local Aboriginal land councils to develop strategic plans to support long-term land activation. These strategic plans complement community, land and business plans prepared by local Aboriginal land councils.

Early work on these strategic plans has begun, involving Ulladulla, Batemans Bay, Cobowra, Bega, Eden and Merrimans local Aboriginal land councils.

We have established community-based working groups across the region to identify strategies to improve the collective engagement practices across the NSW Government. Further work to implement these strategies will be done in 2024.

Teams from the Planning group joined 50 staff across 12 business units for the department's major sponsorship stall at the 2023 NSW Aboriginal Rugby League Koori Knockout in September.

Planning representatives were on hand to discuss key projects and opportunities for Aboriginal communities across planning processes, employment and procurement.





Addressing housing challenges



Housing is the foundation of our communities. Homes provide stability, safety and the opportunity for growth. The continued success of NSW starts at home as we build a brighter future for generations to come.

A housing plan for NSW



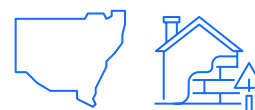
Addressing
housing challenges

The housing challenges affecting NSW are well documented. NSW needs to build more homes to support its growing population, boost housing supply and improve housing affordability.

In October 2022, the NSW Government committed to the National Housing Accord. The accord is a landmark agreement where governments across Australia, institutional investors and the construction sector are collaborating to build over 1 million new, well-located homes over 5 years between July 2024 and June 2029.

In August 2023, National Cabinet increased this figure to 1.2 million homes, of which NSW's target is approximately 377,000, based on its population share.

The Planning group influences housing outcomes by prioritising planning and land uses for key locations, assessing and supporting planning applications, regulating market activity through policy changes and development, investing in infrastructure programs and offering guidance and support to stakeholders.



377,000

New, well-located homes
to be built in NSW between
July 2024 and June 2029

Lumina apartments, Penrith.
Image: Ben Guthrie.



Planning reforms to deliver housing supply



It is essential that we reform the planning system if we are to build the pipeline of future housing and address the demand for new homes across NSW.

The NSW Government has made clear its desire to streamline the planning process, cut red tape and speed up the delivery of more diverse and well-located homes and essential infrastructure.

We are implementing a set of planning, zoning and land use reforms that provide the direction and certainty to drive increased social, affordable and market housing supply, including to support the NSW target of 377,000 new homes by June 2029.

Casba, Waterloo by SJB architects.
Image: Brett Boardman.





The plan to begin addressing the housing crisis



Transport Oriented Development Program

Tier One – Accelerated Precincts

We've identified eight Sydney transport hubs for accelerated rezoning for the delivery of up to 47,800 new, well located, high and mid-rise homes over the next 15 years.

Bankstown, Bays West, Bella Vista, Crows Nest, Homebush, Hornsby, Kellyville and Macquarie Park will all undergo rezoning by November 2024 to provide significant uplift and support new homes within 1200m of these Metro and rail stations.

To speed up the delivery of homes over the next 5 years, developers will be able to access a new State Significant Development pathway for proposals of \$60m or more, and construction will be required to start within two years of approval.

Affordable housing held in perpetuity will make up to 15% of homes in these locations to make sure essential workers like health workers, teachers and hospitality workers can live closer to work.

Tier Two – Rezoning

We will also snap rezone 31 locations across NSW allowing for 138,000 new homes to be created within 400m of Metro or suburban rail stations and town centres to make residential flat building permissible in all residential zonings.

Low and mid-rise housing reforms

New planning changes will fast-track a greater diversity of homes like terraces, townhouses, duplexes, and smaller 1-2 storey apartment blocks in suburbs where they are not currently allowed. It will also allow residential flat buildings of 3-6 storeys in well-located areas.

The reforms create capacity for industry to deliver up to an estimated 112,000 new homes across the Greater Sydney region, Hunter, Central Coast and Illawarra-Shoalhaven.

These changes will allow dual occupancies (two separate homes on a single lot), such as duplexes, in all R2 low density residential zones across all of NSW.

We also propose to allow:

- terraces, townhouses and two storey apartment blocks near transport hubs and town centres in R2 low density residential zones across the Greater Sydney region, Hunter, Central Coast and Illawarra-Shoalhaven.
- mid-rise apartment blocks near transport hubs and town centres in R3 medium density zones and appropriate employment zones. This means more housing 800m from transport hubs, shops and amenities.

Building well connected communities

To make sure that homes are built in places where people want to live, the NSW Government is providing \$520 million within the Tier One Accelerated Precincts for community infrastructure, such as critical road upgrades, active transport links and good quality public open spaces.

Developing new entertainment hubs including restaurants and cafes, including outdoor dining, and live entertainment venues will also help create vibrant and active precincts with great amenity.

The Government will use the already legislated Housing and Productivity Contributions system to ensure some of the value created by Government investments will fund future infrastructure.

Policy levers for diverse housing types



In response to the National Housing Accord, the NSW Government has introduced a series of reforms that will increase the delivery of social and affordable housing. By working in tandem with the Australian Government and the private sector, more social and affordable homes will progress through the state's housing supply pipeline.

Further powers and changes have been granted to government agencies, with a focus on quickly delivering social and affordable housing at future developments and investing in better outcomes for tenants.

The government has also taken steps to strike a balance between local housing needs and the benefits of short-term rentals in local government areas with high levels of tourism.

Social and affordable housing reforms

We're introducing planning reforms to deliver more social and affordable housing. The reforms support investors, community housing providers and state housing agencies to deliver social and affordable housing projects more quickly.

These reforms will contribute to the NSW target of 30% of **new homes on surplus government land** to be social and affordable housing.

The 2023–24 NSW Budget also included an investment of \$224 million to support the NSW Government's Essential Housing Package, which aims to deliver better outcomes for public and social housing tenants, build more affordable and social housing and reduce the number of homeless people in NSW.

30%



NSW target for new social and affordable homes
on surplus government land

The reforms include:

A **state significant development pathway** for housing developments with a capital investment value over \$75 million that allocate a minimum of 15% of the total gross floor area to affordable housing.

A **new state significant development pathway** to enable the Land and Housing Corporation and the Aboriginal Housing Office to deliver residential developments of over 75 homes and Landcom for developments of over 75 homes that include at least 50% affordable housing.

Extending self-assessment powers to the Land and Housing Corporation and Aboriginal Housing Office for social and affordable developments of up to 75 homes, including residential flat buildings over 3 storeys where these are permissible and Landcom for affordable housing developments of up to 75 homes.

Reducing the minimum lot size (400 m²) for dual occupancies delivered as complying development by Land and Housing Corporation, the Aboriginal Housing Office, community housing providers and Aboriginal community housing providers under the Low-Rise Housing Diversity Code.

Exempting social and affordable housing projects from state infrastructure contributions.

Short-term rental accommodation review

In February 2023, the Independent Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on Byron Shire Council's planning proposal that aimed to reduce the non-hosted day caps for short-term rental accommodation in its local government area to 60 days.

On 21 September 2023, Byron Shire Council's planning proposal was finalised, with a 60-day cap applied to the whole of the Byron Shire local government area, except in some precincts with high tourism appeal in Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads identified by Council. These will operate without a cap, allowing for year-round use.

The department began a comprehensive review of the statewide short-term rental accommodation planning and regulatory framework, following 2 years of the policy's operation.

The review will consider all feedback, including that of councils, communities, hosts and the industry.

In particular, the review will consider the:

Independent Planning Commission's recommendations

Success of day-cap policy settings

Compliance and enforcement framework

Impacts and benefits of short-term rental accommodation on regional NSW and coastal locations where short-term rental accommodation supports diverse outcomes for local tourism economies.



Enabling housing in regional NSW



Addressing
housing challenges

Many of the challenges that face our regional communities need specific measures to help address their needs.

The government has continued to invest in regional NSW, aiming to support housing growth and invest in critical infrastructure for regional communities. The department is working collaboratively with regional councils to make sure that funding is directed where local authorities need it most.

Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund

The [Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund](#) was launched on 25 August 2022 as part of the NSW Government's response to the Regional Housing Taskforce's recommendations.

The Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund is a **\$12 million** competitive grants program that enables and accelerates the delivery of strategic planning projects, technical studies and policies that support increased housing supply, affordability and diversity across regional NSW.

Applications for round 2 of the fund closed on 29 September 2023. The department received 64 applications.

After reviewing submissions for eligibility, the department progressed 62 to the assessment panel for review. The total funding request from the 62 councils was \$10.6 million.

Up to \$3 million in funding is available in round 2, with funding from \$20,000 up to \$250,000 available for each successful project.

Watermark apartments,
Huskinson. Image: Real FX.



Regional Housing
Strategic Planning Fund,
Round 2
Available funding:



\$3 m

\$20,000– \$250,000

for each successful project.

\$30 m

25

Projects approved
for funding

Regional Housing Fund

On 3 February 2022, the \$30 million NSW Regional Housing Fund was announced as an initial response to the recommendations of the Regional Housing Taskforce.

The program provides incentives to councils to address the recommendations of the Regional Housing Taskforce. It offers funding to create infrastructure and open space projects that directly support the delivery of new housing supply.

Twenty-five projects have been approved for funding as part of the Regional Housing Fund. Projects include new roads, sewer upgrades, stormwater works, park upgrades, community facilities and new open space.

The NSW Government has worked closely with councils to deliver the projects to the community by the end of 2025.

The Regional Housing Fund sits alongside existing infrastructure programs such as the Accelerated Infrastructure Fund and NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program to ensure new homes continue to be supported through the delivery of high-quality infrastructure and public and open spaces.



Temporary and seasonal workers' accommodation

Regional NSW faces significant housing supply and affordability pressures, which are compounded by the influx of seasonal and temporary workers. We are developing a Temporary and Seasonal Workers' Accommodation Toolkit to give councils more certainty and clarity around planning and delivering worker accommodation.

The toolkit includes a range of new policy initiatives that respond to feedback from stakeholders and the recommendations of the Regional Housing Taskforce.

Measures include:

A standard instrument definition for 'temporary workers' accommodation' so that it is consistently defined throughout the state



Temporary and seasonal worker accommodation guideline that will provide guidance for councils.

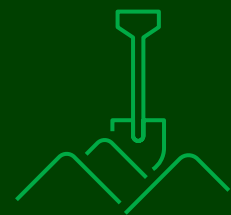


We have also proposed a change to state policy permitting accommodation for construction workers in certain renewable energy zones. This amendment will help facilitate accommodation for workers supporting renewable energy projects and provide a clear permissibility pathway to improve certainty for industry, councils and the community.

We exhibited the draft [Temporary and Seasonal Workers' Accommodation Toolkit](#), draft guidelines and proposed renewable energy zone state environmental planning policy amendments for 6 weeks, concluding on 27 September 2023. We are now considering submissions and refining the toolkit.



Delivering infrastructure and unlocking land



How we use our land is important. Our aim is to create the best possible outcomes for the people of NSW. Rezoning land is crucial to unlocking development opportunities. Making sure that we have all the essential services and infrastructure to support these opportunities is at the heart of the NSW Government's approach.



Rezoning land is an important step in unlocking potential housing opportunities and building sustainable housing and economic growth.

The NSW Government has taken steps to revitalise neighbourhoods, encourage economic development and ensure that we make the most out of the land available.

Initiatives to boost housing supply across NSW:



Investing

\$31 m

(\$74 million over 2 years)

into the **Rezone and Build**
state-led rezoning program.



Planning proposals totalling approx.

51,000

rezoning lots, and

25,000

jobs since March 2023

(as at 22 November 2023)

with a further 9603 lots and
26,168 forecast for completion
by the end of the year.

Delivering infrastructure for NSW



Delivering infrastructure
and unlocking land

The NSW Government has taken big steps to improve the delivery of targeted infrastructure, successfully passing the *Housing and Productivity Contribution Act 2023*. Alongside other recent infrastructure reforms, the Act aims to attract investment, increase productivity and deliver timely infrastructure projects essential to the continued growth of communities across the state.

Infrastructure funding was also a crucial focus of the NSW Government's 2023 Budget. We will continue to work collaboratively with other government departments, councils and stakeholders to deliver timely infrastructure projects.

\$700m

Expected annual state revenue generated from the Housing and Productivity Contribution



Housing and Productivity Contribution

A new approach to state infrastructure contributions was introduced to support housing and productivity in key growth areas for NSW. The reform delivers the certainty needed to attract investment and the funding required to support the timely delivery of infrastructure for new homes and jobs.

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Housing and Productivity Contributions) Act 2023* was passed in the NSW Parliament on 28 June 2023 and commenced on 1 October 2023.

The Housing and Productivity Contribution replaces the previous Special Infrastructure Contribution provisions in NSW planning legislation, consistent with recommendations from the NSW Productivity Commissioner.

The contribution is a fair and consistent development charge that will help fund state infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, major roads, public transport and regional open space in high-growth areas. Administered by NSW Treasury, the

fund is expected to generate \$700 million in annual state revenue.

The Housing and Productivity Contribution now applies to development applications for new residential, commercial and industrial developments (including complying development and state significant development) in the Greater Sydney, Illawarra–Shoalhaven, Lower Hunter and Central Coast regions, spanning 43 councils.

The Housing and Productivity Contribution includes provisions for a 'strategic biodiversity component' to fund environmental measures required as part of biodiversity certifications and a 'transport project component' that can be levied where there is an increase in development potential arising from the NSW Government investing in a major transport project (such as metro rail).

To support funding allocation decisions, we will be expanding the Urban Development Program so that these committees provide a forum for councils, state agencies and the development industry to identify infrastructure needs and make recommendations for funding priorities.

Better oversight of land supply and development



Implementing better oversight of land supply and development is instrumental in achieving efficient urban planning, sustainable growth and well-serviced communities.

A collaborative approach between the department and local authorities means that the NSW Government has a better picture of where supporting infrastructure is needed the most.

The Office of Strategic Lands administers the Planning Ministerial Corporation. The Planning Ministerial Corporation supports the delivery of long-term planning priorities through the strategic acquisition of land and property that has been reserved for public purpose, including for open space, environmental conservation and infrastructure.

In 2023, the Planning Ministerial Corporation portfolio is valued at \$1.999 billion, including 6,140 individual land assets covering 6,318 hectares throughout 43 local government areas, primarily across the Greater Sydney region. This year, the Office of Strategic Lands acquired 4 hectares of land, totalling \$14.2 million. Recently, we have transferred 15 parcels of land with a total area of 2.12 hectares to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service to extend the Wolli Creek Regional Park.

Urban Development Program expansion

The Urban Development Program is the NSW Government's program to monitor land supply and development and coordinate delivery of enabling infrastructure to support new development.

New programs have been established for the Central Coast, Upper Hunter and MidCoast and the South East and Tablelands region (covering Queanbeyan–Palerang, Goulburn and Yass). Existing programs are in place for the Illawarra–Shoalhaven and Greater Newcastle.

The Western Parkland City Pilot was established in 2023 and has facilitated strong collaboration between councils, industry, state

agencies and utility providers to better prioritise and sequence growth and infrastructure priorities. Building on the success of the pilot, we are now undertaking a staged expansion to the Central River City and Eastern Harbour City.

The programs will aid the implementation of the new Housing and Productivity Contribution by supporting the development of infrastructure opportunity plans and making recommendations on infrastructure priorities needed to unlock housing supply.

We have also established online dashboards to enable better monitoring of housing delivery and demand and to inform strategic planning and policy direction to ensure there is adequate housing land to meet need.



We are currently progressing several sites for rezoning that will allow new housing developments at a state and local level.

The NSW Government is committed to unlocking potential new homes through releasing and rezoning land in a responsible manner, ensuring that new developments are well connected by transport, open spaces and supporting infrastructure.

Explorer Street precinct

The Explorer Street site in Eveleigh is about 2 kilometres south of the Sydney CBD within the City of Sydney local government area. The site is roughly 2.3 hectares and consists of 46 townhouses on Explorer Street, Station Street and Aurora Place that are owned by NSW Land and Housing Corporation. It also includes South Sydney Rotary Park.

The Explorer Street rezoning proposal was on public exhibition in late 2023. We will consider feedback during the assessment and finalisation of the rezoning.

The package will help deliver:

Up to 400 new homes including approximately 120 new social homes and 80 new affordable homes

Opportunity for enhanced use of South Sydney Rotary Park, with updated outdoor spaces for recreation and quiet enjoyment

Improved new pedestrian connections to the surrounding street network

Recognition of the significance of the area to Aboriginal people, including its cultural value, to underpin future design and a commitment to 20% of affordable housing to be delivered as Aboriginal affordable housing.

400
new homes



An artist's impression (indicative only) showcasing possible building design possible open-space design





Church Street North precinct

Church Street North is an area within the wider North Parramatta precinct and close to the fast-growing Parramatta CBD.

The rezoning of the Church Street North precinct is now complete. This was led by the NSW Government.

The rezoning of the Church Street North precinct will make more housing possible, in line with the priorities of the NSW Government and investment in the Parramatta Light Rail.

The rezoning:

- provides for 1,800 homes
- increases homes next to the Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1
- supports the growth of the Parramatta CBD as a major metropolitan centre
- facilitates renewal of Church Street as a vibrant high street and public area
- protects public open spaces including Prince Alfred Square and the Parramatta River foreshore
- strengthens consideration of heritage items, values, and heritage conservation areas.

Rezoning Pathways Program

We progressed rezonings for sites selected under the [Rezoning Pathways Program](#).

The Rezoning Pathways Program is funded through the \$73.5 million Rezone and Build initiative, within the 2022 Housing Package to unlock land for 70,000 new homes by mid-2024.

The Rezoning Pathways Program is helping enable a pipeline of rezonings under 2 state-based pathways – state-led rezoning and state-assessed planning proposals.

We are progressing 7 state-led rezonings and 8 state-assessed planning proposals. This includes the state-assessed planning proposal at Appin (part) precinct, which was approved on 30 June 2023 and is enabling 12,900 new homes.

State-assessed planning proposal industry nomination pilot

In December 2022, we invited industry to apply under a pilot process for the state-assessed planning proposal pathway.

Under the pilot, applications that met eligibility criteria were evaluated through a robust and transparent process against the Rezoning Pathways assessment criteria by a 4-person assessment panel.

In July 2023, applicants and councils were notified that 5 projects were selected to proceed through the pathway to deliver up to 5,803 quality new homes, paving the way for new and vibrant communities.

12,900

new homes unlocked
by rezoning pathways program





Macquarie Park Innovation Precinct place-based strategic business case

A place-based strategic business case was prepared for government on public infrastructure needed to deliver the 7,650 homes and 20,000 jobs in the Macquarie Park Innovation Precinct Place Strategy.

We will prepare further place-based strategic business cases to support the development of other priority precincts and plan for the timely delivery of public infrastructure needed to enable growth.

Place-based strategic business cases provide the economic analysis that is needed to satisfy the first 'gate' of the Infrastructure Investor Assurance Framework that enables the NSW Government to make informed choices about which infrastructure it should commit budgets for to deliver on the vision for the precinct. After government's approval, agencies will then prepare final business cases on fine-grained delivery costs and details to pass the next 'gate' and enable government to make funding decisions.

7,650
new homes



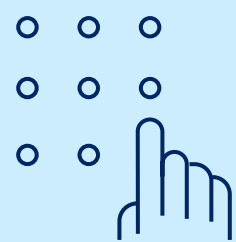
20,000
new jobs

Shrimptons Creek Park,
Macquarie Park precinct





Optimising the planning system



A responsive and adaptable planning system is key to securing a better future for NSW. We want to make sure that the system functions at full capacity, unlocking potential opportunities and delivering the best outcomes for the people of NSW.

Boomerang Tower, Sydney Olympic Park. Image: Brett Boardman Photography

Increasing efficiency and integrity in the planning system



Having a planning system that is fit for purpose and ready to tackle the challenges NSW faces is crucial to unlocking housing opportunities and increasing the supply of homes.

By making the system easier to navigate and giving clearer guidelines at a state and local level, we can speed up processes and create greater consistency of outcomes for local authorities and state significant developments.

Standardised conditions of development consent

We have introduced standard conditions of development consent for key development types and notices of determination generated by councils. By bringing a more consistent approach for councils and planning panels across the state, this project has helped provide greater certainty and consistency, making it easier for all users to understand their development consent obligations.

The standard conditions do not apply to complying development, Crown development or state significant development. They only apply to local development determined by councils or local or regional planning panels.

To support the standardisation of the development application process, we have:

Published model best practice conditions that can be adopted by consent authorities. They include standard conditions for councils for the use of residential development (class 1A), mixed use, biodiversity credits, change of use, food and drink premises and demolition.



Published a guide for councils to develop conditions of development consent.



Created a standard format for notices of determination available through the NSW Planning Portal.



Amended the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation to require a notice of determination be issued in the standard form.



90%

On-time performance
by 30 June 2023

Operation Dasha response

Clause 4.6 of the Standard Instrument — Principal Local Environmental Plan 2006 (the Standard Instrument LEP) has been simplified to provide more certainty about when and how development standards can be varied. The existing test that applicants must meet has not changed, but consent authorities and applicants must now consider the same matters.

Details of all Clause 4.6 variation requests are now available on the NSW Planning Portal, providing increased transparency for the community and monitoring by the department.

We have published a 'Guide to varying development standards' to give councils and applicants more clarity on applying for and assessing

variations. We have also provided guidance on councils' reporting obligations and the approach we will take to monitoring and reporting.

These changes only apply to development applications lodged after 1 November 2023.

Estimated development costs will be used for calculating fees payable for local, regional and state significant development and for determining planning approval pathways. Estimated development costs will replace 'cost of development' and 'capital investment value' from 4 March 2024.

The reforms respond to the Independent Commission Against Corruption's Operation Dasha report, which recommended changes to make the planning system more transparent and corruption resistant.

Concurrence and referral improvement program

Concurrences and referrals are requests for advice or approval from regulatory agencies submitted by councils within the planning system. The total development value of concurrences and referrals in the 2022–23 financial year was just over \$7 billion.

We have worked closely with partner agencies on a Concurrences and Referrals Performance Improvement Program to achieve 90% on-time performance by 30 June 2023. Since the program's inception, on-time performance has surged from 65% to 92% between Q4 FY2021–22 and Q4 FY2022–23.

This success can be attributed to strong program management, improved joint agency reporting, maintenance of strong cross-agency networks and executive oversight and the allocation of additional assessment resources to help certain high-volume agencies determine concurrences and referrals faster.

We are committed to maintaining this strong planning performance. During 2023–24, we will continue to work closely with partner agencies with a particular focus on systems improvements towards standardisation and automation, policy reforms to ensure concurrence and referral triggers are fit for purpose and continued council training to boost potential capability.





Partnering with councils



Councils are a crucial housing delivery partner. The NSW Government recognises the important role they play in the housing pipeline and has invested in making sure that they have the resources and support that they require, to help deliver much-needed homes and supporting infrastructure for the future.

The Gantry, Camperdown.
Image: Martin Mischulnig

Targeted support for councils



Partnering
with councils

The importance of NSW's councils cannot be understated. The NSW Government has identified areas where councils need further support to enable them to continue delivering new housing opportunities and the critical infrastructure to support growing communities.

Planners are essential to the future growth of NSW and we have committed to increasing the number of skilled local planners for the future.

Programs to support local councils

We have continued to support local government to expedite housing development applications, such as via the [Regional Housing Flying Squad](#), Metropolitan Assessment Relief, Expert Assessment, and Central Coast Faster Development Applications programs.

These programs have collectively supported 41 councils to expedite the assessment of 597 applications for 7,289 homes and residential lots with a total estimated construction cost of \$1.58 billion.



Strong Start program

We established the [Strong Start program](#) to help address the planning skills shortage. The program helps NSW councils connect with and invest in new planners to build a pipeline of planners in the NSW labour market.

The program includes:

\$1.85m

in grant funding for 74 NSW councils to subsidise the university fees of new planning cadets they employ



A mentoring program through which

60

student and graduate planners from **48 councils** have been paired with a senior departmental planner as a mentor for 2023



A centralised employment directory for student and graduate planners in partnership with the Planning Institute of Australia



Providing incentives for regional councils to invest in hiring a student or graduate planner in order to be eligible to receive assessment support through the Regional Housing Flying Squad program.





Accelerated Infrastructure Fund

The NSW Government is investing a further \$40.9 million as part of the Accelerated Infrastructure Fund to fast-track critical infrastructure for rapidly growing communities in Greater Sydney and the Central Coast.

The investment will support road upgrades at Waterloo, Box Hill and Ryde, improved pedestrian connectivity in Parramatta and a new sporting complex on the Central Coast.

Fast-tracking these projects will ensure around 18,000 new homes planned in these high-growth communities will have the infrastructure needed in time for the arrival of residents. The projects are expected to be delivered by mid-2026.



\$40.9m

Investment to fast-track critical infrastructure in Greater Sydney and the Central Coast.



18,000

New homes supported by infrastructure by mid-2026

Secretary's roundtable with general managers

We have set up a regular council general manager roundtable chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment to discuss collaborative solutions to the housing crisis, in particular our roles and shared responsibilities to achieving targets.

We are dedicated to partnering with councils to ensure we can work together to build more houses.



Planning at work



As the custodians of the planning system, we want to see the best outcomes for the people of NSW. The planning system has an impact on the quality of life of people across the state.

Illume apartments, Little Bay.
Image: Brett Boardman
Photography

Delivering development application assessment targets



Speed and efficiency have been the key words this year when it comes to the planning system. The NSW Government has made clear its desire to cut red tape and reduce approval time frames, create new development pathways and prioritise state-significant projects.

Driving down assessment time frames

In 2022–23, we reduced the average assessment time for state-significant developments to 70 days as of 30 September 2023.

This is 30 days below the 2021–22 financial year target of 100 days under the Planning Reform Action Plan.

Planning proposal assessment time frames have dropped from 571 days in 2020 to 252 days in June 2023, exceeding the 2022–23 target of below 380 days. Shorter assessment times mean development applications are considered earlier and new houses are provided sooner.

On-time concurrences and referrals rose from 75% to 92% in 2022–23 under the Concurrences and Referrals Performance Improvement Program.



70 days

Average assessment time for state significant developments as of 30 September 2023

Planning proposal assessment time frames (days) have dropped from

571 ↘ 252

from 2020 to June 2023

Regionally significant development

The Sydney district and regional planning panels determine development applications that meet the thresholds for regionally significant development.

As of the end of September 2023, the average determination days for a regionally significant development application was 313 days, a substantial decrease from the rolling annual average of 359 days within the 2022–23 financial year.

During the 2022–23 financial year, Sydney district or regional planning panels determined 302 regionally significant developments. There was an 85% rate of approval, which included 24,374 dwellings. This represents 40% of all dwellings approved across NSW.

We estimate that determined regionally significant developments contributed almost \$17 billion in capital investment value to the NSW economy.

313 days

Average assessment time for regionally significant developments as of 30 September 2023

Rate of approval for regionally significant developments

85%

A better regionally significant development application process

We have been testing ways to speed up development assessments of regionally significant projects. This year we led a pilot program to improve assessment time frames for regionally significant developments.

The process has revised time frames from lodgement to preliminary briefing of 40 days and retains the 128-day time frame for an assessment briefing with councils.

The end-to-end process trialled during the program is now available to all councils in NSW. [Read more about the refined process on the NSW Planning Portal.](#)

Compliance

We carry out our compliance functions in a strategic, adaptive, transparent and proactive way.

In 2023, we conducted 566 inspections of state-significant projects to monitor compliance with conditions of consent, increase proponents' awareness of their obligations, and to engage with community, councils and other stakeholders.

As a result of these activities, we:

- issued 11 penalty notices totalling \$165,000
- accepted 2 enforceable undertakings totalling \$120,000
- defended an appeal against a (2019) conviction of one company in the NSW Land and Environment Court – the appeal was dismissed.

Traces, Devonshire Street, Surry Hills
by MHN Design Union.





Creating great places



Encouraging a diverse range of businesses, creating exciting nightlife and building well-designed communities with green open spaces are just some of the ways the NSW Government is investing in the future of the state.

Barangaroo Reserve, Sydney.
Image: Infrastructure NSW

Streamlining planning for businesses



Creating great places

One of the aims of the NSW Government is to support businesses and strengthen the planning framework to allow businesses to operate as efficiently as possible is. We want to make it easier for businesses to do what they do best.

Outdoor dining and entertainment are still feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NSW Government made a pre-election commitment to revitalise the outlook of these sectors. Through the new Vibrancy Reform Package, the government has outlined its plan to work closely with local councils to bring the music back across NSW.

Alfie Arcuri performing at The Beresford, Surry Hills. Photo: Destination NSW



Employment zones

We have been working with councils to consolidate the number of business and industrial zones in NSW and deliver a new framework for employment zones that is fit for purpose, reflective of current and future business models and supportive of innovation and productivity.

On 26 April 2023, employment zones came into effect in NSW across 134 standard instrument local environmental plans.

Key achievements include:

A suite of employment zones with clear strategic intent to capture all employment lands and uses across NSW within the Standard Instrument LEP order



Implementation across all environmental planning instruments so that the zones are now in place and operational with expanded permissibility and clarity of purpose



Updated zoning maps



116



Local environmental plans transitioned to digital mapping delivered via the Digital EPI viewer.



Outdoor dining and entertainment precincts

We are working in partnership with the Cabinet Office and other agencies to deliver commitments within the NSW Government's new Vibrancy Reform Package to support the government's plan for the NSW music scene.

The Vibrancy Reform Package includes a new bill making a range of reforms to encourage vibrant and diverse entertainment opportunities for the people of NSW.

We have developed various legislative and policy changes to improve the uptake and operation of special entertainment precincts, making outdoor dining permanent across the state, streamlining approvals and enabling councils to offer development bonuses to support live music venues.

We exhibited an explanation of intended effects document for a new complying development pathway for outdoor dining on private land and registered clubs. This complying development pathway will replace the temporary exempt measures introduced during the COVID-19 crisis with a permanent pathway for businesses.

We also proposed amendments to the Standard Instrument LEP, with an optional clause for floor space or height bonus to incentivise live music venues in new developments. Councils will determine the appropriate bonus and locations informed by their strategic planning processes.

We are helping the Inner West Council make the state's first special entertainment precinct on Enmore Road permanent by the end of the year.

Streamlining planning for social infrastructure



Creating great places



Cutting back the red tape in the planning system is at the heart of many of the NSW Government's reforms, aiming to create fast-track pathways for a range of developments and social infrastructure projects.

Exempt and complying development for cemeteries

Cemeteries are critical social infrastructure, and there are opportunities to improve the development approvals process for cemeteries.

We have exhibited a proposal for an exempt and complying development framework for minor ancillary works carried out in existing cemeteries.

The proposal seeks to amend the State Environmental Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021 to include fast-track pathways

for cemeteries. These fast-track pathways would negate the need for a development application, cutting red tape for cemetery operators and freeing up council planning resources so councils can focus on other important development applications, such as for housing and employment.

The proposal aligns with the recommendations of the NSW Government's 2020 review of the *Cemeteries and Crematoria Act 2013*, which found the existing exempt and complying framework is not suited to the specific needs of cemeteries.

Reimagining our green spaces



Studies have shown that the environment around you has a direct impact on your wellbeing.

Green and open space plays a part in making communities happier and healthier. That is why the NSW Government has invested in building more parks and open spaces for growing communities.

Parks for People

We have continued to deliver high-quality public open spaces across Greater Sydney through the \$50 million Parks for People program. Designed in partnership with councils and the local community, the parks we are delivering are diverse and reflect the needs of the community.

Two projects have been completed and opened for the public to enjoy. There are 3 additional projects in construction:

- George Kendall Riverside Park, Ermington
- Nandi Reserve, Frenchs Forest
- a new park on Windsor Road, Beaumont Hills.

There are plans for 2 further new parks at Appin and Leppington that are in the final stages of design and will be completed in 2024.

These parks will be legacy spaces, taking the vision and ideas of the community and combining them with innovative design to deliver the right type of park for future generations to enjoy.

Tench Reserve

A 10-hectare park on the bank of the Nepean River in Jamisontown, with an investment of \$14.1 million. The upgrades to Tench Reserve provide the community with enhanced facilities that will be enjoyed for many years, including a new riverside precinct with access to the Nepean River, an event amphitheatre, new riverside paths, amenity building, picnic areas, seating, public art and an inclusive play space.



\$14.1m

Investment



Carrawood Park, Carramar

The centrepiece of the park is the new, inclusive 'Big Bass' play space. Inspired by the site's Prospect Creek location, this unique experience is informed by the department's *Everyone Can Play* guideline and encourages people of all ages and abilities to play.



\$2m

Investment



Creating new homes is about more than simply building a dwelling, it is about building communities.

Good design guidelines and evidence-based methodologies have been introduced to help councils, developers and local planners protect and add to the character of their local built environment, while still offering diverse housing options.

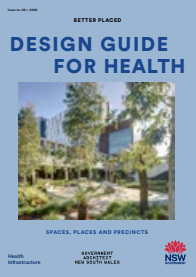
The NSW Government Architect is leading a process of developing a pattern book of endorsed housing designs for both low-rise and mid-rise (up to six storeys) buildings. The pre-approved list of designs will be developed as part of a comprehensive consultation process.

Design Guide for Health

The [Design Guide for Health: Spaces, Places and Precincts](#) was developed in collaboration with Health Infrastructure NSW and released in August 2023.

The guide outlines the principles of good design and explains how well-designed health facilities contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities.

Guidance will assist NSW Health and project stakeholders to develop a comprehensive place-based approach to the planning, design, and provision of health facilities, while providing high-quality clinical infrastructure.

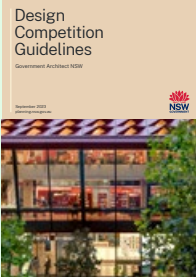


Design competition guidelines

The Government Architect NSW finalised the [Design Competition Guidelines 2023](#) in September.

The guidelines replace the Director General’s Design Excellence Guidelines and provide practical, consistent, clear and fair advice for all participants in competitive design processes required by an environmental planning instrument.

Draft guidelines were exhibited in 2018 for public consultation and were trialled across more than 40 projects. Feedback from key stakeholders was incorporated prior to finalisation. The guidelines give industry and local government certainty on best practice and clarity around expected processes and outcomes when carrying out design competitions.




State Design Review Panel

The [State Design Review Panel](#) delivers independent, consistent design-quality advice on projects that have or will undergo assessment by the state.

The program provides a best-practice state-wide approach to review of state-significant projects, precincts, and infrastructure. Throughout the year over 200 review sessions were held for over 100 different projects.

In May of this year, responding to a significant upturn in demand, the [Wait Time Reduction Scheme](#) was introduced. The scheme establishes capital investment value thresholds for review by the panel, and a maximum 12-week wait time. Projects that do not receive review through the panel must still demonstrate good design and may be subject to design quality evaluation through other means.





Heritage Stoneworks – State of Stone

The minister's stonework program is now in its fourth decade and celebrated its 30th anniversary this year with the release of book 'State of Stone – Celebrating the minister's Stonework Program'.

The book documents the program's legacy and continuing purpose – the specialist repair of state-owned sandstone cultural heritage assets.

The launch of the book was an opportunity to celebrate this innovative, multi-award-winning, industry-leading program. The program is delivered by specialists and uses exceptional homegrown craftspeople to ensure continued cultural conservation.

Apartment case studies

We have prepared [11 case studies](#) showcasing high-quality NSW apartment buildings to guide consent authorities and industry and give great examples of liveable and sustainable housing outcomes. The case studies reference the relevant aspects of the Apartment Design Guide.

The intent of these case studies is to highlight creative site planning and design solutions for achieving good residential amenity in response to different site constraints. The case studies discuss certain building elements that demonstrate outcomes found to be consistent with the objectives of SEPP 65 and the applicable design guidance at the time of the development assessment.

The Gantry, Camperdown.
Image: Martin Mischulnig

Government Architect's prequalification scheme

The Government Architect NSW's Strategy and Design Prequalification Scheme is focused on the delivery of strategic advice, design quality and innovation in the built environment.

The scheme offers a pool of prequalified service providers that can help NSW Government agencies and statutory corporations deliver good design outcomes in the built environment.

This year, 4 rounds of assessment were held, with 27 suppliers successfully prequalified. A new category – 'Aboriginal Cultural Engagement and Advice' – has also been added to prequalify suppliers who can support projects applying the Connecting with Country Framework.





Improving environmental outcomes



We want to leave the environment in a better position for future generations to enjoy. So we must continue to enhance environmental protections and building sustainability through the planning system.

Higher standards for sustainability



The NSW Government has made clear its commitment to hit its net zero targets. Alongside new net zero legislation, the NSW Government has focused on making sure that developments are environmentally conscious, with the goal of building more sustainable communities for the future.

Sustainable Buildings SEPP

The *State Environmental Planning Policy (Sustainable Buildings) 2022* (the Sustainable Buildings SEPP) came into effect in October 2023 and is the first legislation of its kind nationally. It encourages the design and delivery of more sustainable buildings across NSW.

The Sustainable Buildings SEPP supports our net zero goals, sets sustainability standards for residential development and incorporates BASIX and non-residential development such as retail, offices, hotels, schools, health facilities and cultural buildings.

The BASIX tool has moved to the NSW Planning Portal to help streamline the planning process.

The policy contributes to climate resilience and reduced building emissions by:

Increasing BASIX thermal performance and energy efficiency standards in most climate zones including calculating the embodied carbon of building materials.



Introducing provisions for non-residential buildings, including disclosure of embodied emissions for all building types, new energy and water standards for large commercial development and a net zero statement for certain development types.



Enabling clean and reliable energy

The NSW Government is committed to building sustainable communities for future generations.

The energy sector is undergoing a transformation. The share of renewable energy in our electricity supply mix is continuing to grow and plays a critical role in helping us reduce our emissions and hit our net zero targets.

The traditional one-way energy system, supplied mostly by large, centralised coal and gas-fired power stations, is changing. We are moving towards a 2-way energy system.

Renewable energy is now the cheapest form of new power generation in Australia, and NSW is well placed with rich renewable energy resources and a strong pipeline of investor interest in projects.

Exhibition of the draft Energy Policy Framework

From 14 November to 18 December 2023, we exhibited a draft Energy Policy Framework, which was designed to address emerging issues and recommendations from the Energy Reliability and Supply Check-Up. We anticipate the framework will reduce assessment delays, provide greater certainty for investment in renewable energy development and greater transparency for communities about how impacts will be assessed and managed.

The next step for these initiatives is for the department to assess the submissions and amend the draft framework in response to feedback from stakeholders with the intention of finalising the package in 2024.

The draft framework consists of:

An overview policy document – this provides a summary of the package and outlines consequential changes to the existing Large-scale Solar Energy Guideline, which was released last year.



A benefit sharing guideline to encourage renewable energy generators to fund programs that will benefit affected communities.



Updates to the existing wind energy guideline to address visual impacts, decommissioning, and other emerging issues



Introduction of the transmission guideline, a new guideline to provide advice on route selection for new transmission lines and visual impact assessments.



Introduction of the private agreement guideline that gives guidance and a template for landowners entering into commercial agreements to host or accept the impact of solar, wind or transmission development.



Decommissioning calculators for wind and solar.



The NSW Government has made clear its commitment to protecting the lives of the people of NSW during natural disasters.

After the tragic 2022 floods, the NSW Government prepared a series of measures so local authorities and communities can prepare and respond better to future natural disasters.

As part of these measures, the government has looked in detail at how new developments in flood risk areas are progressed and managed in the future.

Special flood considerations clause and housekeeping amendments

We have strengthened planning rules to better protect and manage new development in areas that could be at risk during floods through the implementation of the optional ‘Special flood considerations clause’ (clause 5.22) of the Standard Instrument LEP. This clause aims to minimise the flood risk to life and property associated with the use of land within the flood planning area.

The clause has been included in the local environmental plans of 33 councils that have agreed to it.

We have also made flood-related housing amendments to 58 local environmental plans.

Amendments to reflect the new Flood Risk Management Manual 2023

In June 2023 the Flood Risk Management Manual 2023 became the current manual relating to the management of flood-labile land under section 733 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

To ensure a consistent, statewide flood policy is in place, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021, multiple state environmental planning policies and local environmental planning policies have been amended to remove references to the former Floodplain Development Manual 2005 and replace them with the Flood Risk Management Manual 2023.

The special flood considerations clause applies to:

Sensitive and hazardous development, such as caravan parks, hospitals and seniors housing, between the flood planning area and the probable maximum flood



Development that is not sensitive or hazardous on land that the consent authority considers that, in a flood, may pose a particular risk to life and where people may need to evacuate or there are other safety concerns.



Protecting waterways and coastal land



NSW is blessed with over 2,100 kilometres of coastland. We released updates and guidelines for managing and protecting of our coastal waterways so that they can be enjoyed by generations to come.

Update to erosion and sediment guidelines

We are helping protect our waterways by providing accessible, best-practice advice on erosion and sediment control for small-scale building sites (less than 2,500 m²) by updating the 'Guidelines for Erosion and Sediment Control on Building Sites', which were prepared by the NSW Government in 2001.

Once finalised in 2024, the updated guidelines will be referenced in our standard conditions of development consent that are featured in the NSW Planning Portal.

The updated guidelines were exhibited from the 22 September 2023 to 29 October 2023.

The updated guidelines are an action under initiative 1 of the Marine Estate Management Strategy, which aims to improve water quality and reduce litter.





Release of the NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023

The updated [NSW Coastal Design Guidelines 2023](#) were released in November 2023. The guidelines promote high-quality urban design in coastal areas to protect and enhance our waterways, coastline and estuaries.

Planning proposals in the coastal zone must use the guidelines. The guidelines include extensive case studies so they can be easily applied.

Protecting coastal lands

We are responsible for the [Coastal Lands Protection Scheme](#), which has been operating successfully since 1973 to transfer private land into public reserves and national parks.

In celebration of 50 years of the scheme, we developed a new interactive web tool that shows the location and use of coastal land acquired through the scheme.

The key focus of the scheme is to improve public access and to protect and improve coastal scenic and environmental values of the NSW coast.

This year, we acquired almost 100 hectares of coastal dunes, expanding Hat Head National Park in the Kempsey local government area, and 200 hectares of coastal wetlands within the MidCoast local government area adjoining the Minimbah Nature Reserve, managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Services.

100ha

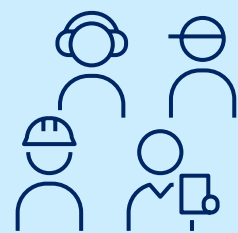
Coastal dunes acquired
Hat Head National Park

200ha

Coastal wetlands acquired
MidCoast local government
area adjoining the
Minimbah Nature Reserve



Building better relationships



The department recognises that at the heart of the planning system are people. We have taken steps to make sure that we listen to stakeholders and the people that engage with the system. Customer service and support is crucial to ensuring that we have a planning system that is easy to navigate and delivers an efficient and user-friendly experience.



Providing support for complex planning needs

We understand that planning is not always easy. We have dedicated teams to help with complex projects and collaboratively work with our stakeholders to find solutions to issues.

Planning Delivery Unit case management

The Planning Delivery Unit managed 131 complex or stalled planning projects in 2022–23. It closed 55 cases involving 45,000 dwellings with a total capital investment value of over \$11 billion.

The Planning Delivery Unit has also provided assessment support through the Regional Housing Flying Squad, Central Coast Accelerated Development Application Program, Metro Assessment Relief program and the Expert Assessment program. This has helped 49 councils and paved the way for a total capital investment of \$2.44 billion, 11,035 dwellings and 296 ongoing jobs.

Responding to stakeholder needs

Listening to stakeholders' needs is an important step in making sure that our policies and decisions are the right ones. We continue to engage with our stakeholders and actively listen to their feedback.

Stakeholder Engagement and Policy Implementation

The Stakeholder Engagement and Policy Implementation team works across all Planning divisions. The team provides an independent 'outside in' lens, synthesising extensive stakeholder feedback to provide insights and inputs into key decision-making. The team's goal is to enable delivery of policy and program outcomes through best-practice stakeholder engagement.

Between 1 March 2023 and 31 October 2023, the team:

Sent approximately

95

policy and process updates to over

7,015

stakeholders via its regular bulletins (digital newsletters)



Hosted more than

60

meetings with the key stakeholder groups from a diverse range of industries



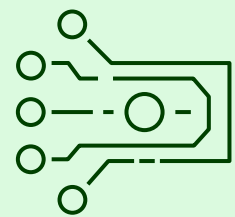
Provided ongoing engagement expertise

to teams in the Planning group and hosted numerous other bespoke engagement forums in partnership with those teams.





Improving our digital planning services



Embracing technology and looking at how it can enhance the planning system is a 'must do' in this day and age. We have expanded our digital program to make the system more user friendly, cutting red tape and making the planning process more transparent.

Managing the NSW Planning Portal

We are continuing to work with our stakeholders to develop digital solutions in support of planning reforms, building reforms and other key government initiatives.

There have been several key digital enhancements released in 2023, including a new range of online tools, that will bring a simpler and better customer experience.



Key digital enhancements released in 2023 include:



A new look and feel for the NSW Planning Portal to enhance the overall user experience and that adheres to Digital NSW’s digital design guidelines.

My home planner, developed in collaboration with the Department of Customer Service, which is an end-to-end home building guide designed to help applicants research, plan and design new project homes.

eConstruction enhancements to improve the user experience for developers and certifiers, including the **‘My Development sites’** page to provide a consolidated view of the lifecycle of a project for developers.

The **conditions of consent project**, which enables consent authorities to create and store conditions of consent and automatically generate notices of determination.

An updated list of development types to enable better categorisation of development applications for improved reporting and to allow applicants to choose a development type that better reflects legislative definitions.

The introduction of **document management** functionality to enable consent authorities to choose their document requirements for specific development types.

A BASIX tool, now part of the NSW Planning Portal, linked to the commencement of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Sustainable Buildings) and the higher BASIX standards.

The Housing Productivity Contributions Tool, which allows for contributions to be calculated online and automates the ongoing administration, tracking and reporting of contributions.

An update to the Housing Evidence Centre to provide key insights and important information on factors impacting housing in NSW.



For questions and feedback related to planning stakeholder engagement activities, please contact stakeholder.engagement@planning.nsw.gov.au

For enquiries and general feedback that relate to the Department of Planning and Environment please contact the Planning Customer Support Team on **1300 420 596** option 2 or email your enquiry to information@planning.nsw.gov.au

For questions and feedback related to the NSW Planning Portal, please submit an online enquiry via <https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/help-and-resources/submit-enquiry>