



Fact sheet – Guidance for Applicants

What's changing for applicants from 1 July 2026

June 2026

The Development Coordination Authority

The Development Coordination Authority (DCA) is a new planning entity within the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI).

From July 2026, DCA will operate as a one-stop shop for NSW Government inputs on planning matters. It will centralise decision-making and advice currently referred to multiple State agencies via a single front door for development applications (DAs), local plan-making processes, State significant projects, and State significant rezonings.

Here's what's changed

- Integrated development, concurrence and consultation requirements for local development applications (DAs) and modifications are now collectively known as 'referrals'.
- The referral provisions for DAs and modifications have been consolidated and revised and are set out in Chapter 4 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021.
- The referral provisions are supported by a new guidance document 'State Referral Provisions', that provides clear guidance on how referrals are considered under the new framework.
- DCA will provide a single, coordinated response to all NSW Government DA and modification referrals, as well as advice on local plan-making processes, State significant projects, and State significant rezonings where DCA has in-house technical expertise.
- A *referral check* process has been introduced, where DCA reviews nominated NSW Government DA and modification referrals before a formal referral is made.
- The DA and modification referral submission period for DCA and other referral authorities has been harmonised to 28 calendar days.
- The referral fee structure for applicants has been revised.
- Applicants can request the review of a DCA decision required under a condition of consent.

Development applications and modifications

Integrated development, concurrence and consultation are now collectively called ‘referrals’

Referral is now the collective term for integrated development, concurrence and consultation requirements.

Referral authority is the collective term for consultation bodies, concurrence authorities, and DCA in relation to integrated development or if it is a consultation body or concurrence authority.

Each of these three input types involves referring a development application or modification application to another body for a response before the consent authority¹ determines it. Given they share this common purpose, they are now treated as a single category and share collective terms under the new framework.

The new referrals framework and changes to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act & Regulation will commence on 1 July 2026

The new referrals framework will come into effect on 1 July 2026, simplifying requirements for when a development application or modification application needs to be referred by a consent authority for consultation or concurrence. The amendment refines and updates over 800 concurrence and consultation provisions across 175 environmental planning instruments and consolidates them into a single, clear list that focuses on managing significant risks to matters of State interest.

It will be accompanied by the State Referral Provisions, which is a new document that provides clear, consistent guidance on how referrals are considered under the new framework.

The amendment also makes DCA responsible for responding to most concurrence and consultation requirements. Changes to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act* will also come into effect on 1 July that make DCA responsible for issuing all general terms of approval for integrated development.

DCA will respond to referrals for all NSW Government matters with a single, consolidated response

All provisions relating to NSW Government matters will be referred by the consent authority to DCA. Referrals can be made throughout the DA or modification process up until the application is determined.

DCA will respond to referrals and provide the consent authority with expert advice in the form of a single, consolidated response within 28 calendar days. This may include DCA advice, concurrences or general terms of approval that are needed for the DA or modification.

Where DCA does not have the relevant expertise, it will liaise with experts in the relevant agency to obtain advice and still provide a single, consolidated response.

¹ In most cases, the consent authority is the local council the application was submitted to.

The consent authority will need to request a referral check before referring a DA to DCA

Prior to formally referring a DA to DCA, the consent authority will need to nominate which referrals they intend to make to DCA and request a referral check through the NSW Planning Portal (the Portal).

Within two business days, DCA will review the nominated referrals and advise:

- whether it agrees or disagrees with the nominated referrals, or whether any have been missed
- if the necessary documentation for the referral has been provided (for example, if a Bush Fire Risk Assessment is required as part of the application).

If DCA has not responded within the two-business day period, the consent authority can proceed with formally referring the application to DCA, ensuring the referral check does not delay the assessment process.

After a referral check is completed, the relevant consent authority will make the final decision on which referrals, if any, need to be made as part of the DA or modification.

The consent authority will remain the key point of contact for applicants

For applicants and developers, the consent authority will remain your key point of contact before, during, and after the DA or modification process. Where a referral to DCA is needed, the consent authority will liaise directly with DCA.

Separately, general enquiries to DCA can be made by contacting dca.enquiries@dphi.nsw.gov.au.

Applicants will be asked to indicate if referral to an agency is required when submitting an application

Several changes are being made to the Portal to support the rollout of the DCA. For applicants, the main change will be the need to answer an updated question when submitting your application, indicating whether referral to any State, Commonwealth or other agency is required, in the application form within the Portal's Online DA service.

You will be required to select the referral provision relevant to your application. If you are unsure which referrals apply, the referrals you identify will be reviewed by the consent authority during its review of the development application and by the DCA during its referral check.

New timeframes will apply to referrals

From 1 July 2026, DCA and other referral authorities will have 28 calendar days to respond to referrals.

The 28-day period starts when the consent authority refers the application through the Portal to DCA and any required fees are paid by the applicant. The clock pauses if additional information is requested and restarts once it has been provided.

If an application is referred under a new provision during assessment, or if an application is re-referred, the 28-day period for the application will reset.

If no response is received within 28 days, the consent authority may proceed with determining the application. However, if DCA is unlikely to be able to provide a response within the statutory timeframe, it will endeavour to communicate the expected timeframe for a response.

New fees will apply to referrals

From 1 July 2026, the following fee structure applies to DAs and modifications. Fees will need to be paid by the applicant before DCA undertakes its assessment.

Fee	Activity
\$1,100	Each unique ^a referral for most development applications.
\$550	Each unique ^a referral for modifications made under s 4.55(2) of the EP&A Act
No fee	All other inputs, including: - any consultation or advice on modifications made under s 4.55(1) or (1A) of the EP&A Act - any referral required under the <i>Sydney Water Act 1994</i> or <i>Hunter Water Act 1991</i>.

^a Re-referring the same clause will not attract a fee.

Applicants will be able to request the review of a DCA decision required under a condition of consent

From 1 July 2026, applicants can request a review of a DCA decision. This only applies to decisions where conditions of consent are required to be carried out to the satisfaction of the DCA. The review will be undertaken by the DCA.

Other pathways

The relevant DPHI team will remain the key point of contact for applicants

For State Significant Development (SSD), State Significant Infrastructure (SSI), State Led Rezoning (SLR), and State Assessed Rezoning Proposals (SARP), the relevant DPHI team will remain the key point of contact for your development.

For Planning Proposals (PPs), the consent authority remains your key point of contact.

DCA will be responsible for issuing BDAR waivers

From 1 July, DCA will also be responsible for issuing Biodiversity Development Assessment Report (BDAR) waivers for SSDs and SSIs that are unlikely to have a significant impact on biodiversity values.

There is no change to how waiver requests are lodged and requests should continue to be submitted to the [Major Projects](#) website or by email at information@planning.nsw.gov.au.

FAQs

The Development Coordination Authority represents a major step change to the planning system that will make it faster and easier to navigate.

We are committed to supporting industry through this change. Here's some answers to frequently asked questions.

For more information on anything not covered in this fact sheet, you can check the DCA webpage at planning.nsw.gov.au/development-coordination-authority or contact dca.enquiries@dphi.nsw.gov.au.

What are the State Referral Provisions?

The State Referral Provisions is a new document that provides clear, consistent guidance on how referrals are considered under the new framework. It sets out the key matters that the DCA and other bodies should consider when responding to a referral, making it clearer how referrals are assessed and helping to ensure important issues are addressed in a consistent way.

Will the new referral framework apply to applications lodged prior to 1 July 2026?

DAs and modifications lodged before 1 July 2026 ('in-flight applications') will continue to be referred based on the referral provisions that existed prior to 1 July.

DAs and modification applications lodged after 1 July will be referred under the new referrals framework.

If an amendment to an in-flight application is accepted by the consent authority after 1 July and it is not minor, the lodgement date of the application will be updated to the date the amendment is accepted by the consent authority and the new referral framework will apply.

In these circumstances, the application may need to be referred under the new framework to the relevant authority if referral provisions apply to the amended application.

What happens if a DA or modification that has been referred to DCA (and the assessment is either in progress or finalised) is amended or withdrawn?

Where a DA is amended or withdrawn, and the amendment will affect an ongoing referral assessment, the consent authority will need to notify the relevant referral authority. The consent authority will then need to make any new referrals or re-referrals that arise from the amendment and/or withdraw any referrals which are no longer required.

For in-flight cases amended after 1 July 2026, any existing referral case that applies to the application will be automatically cancelled. Council will need to initiate any new referrals to relevant agencies required under the new framework. The referral check process will still apply for referrals to DCA in these instances.

A new referral or re-referral will commence a new 28 calendar day response period. However, a re-referral will not attract a new referral fee.

Will DCA handle referrals for non-government matters?

DCA will not coordinate inputs from bodies outside of the NSW Government. This includes Commonwealth departments, interstate agencies, or private companies like gas and electricity

suppliers. The consent authority will continue to liaise directly with these bodies to obtain their inputs.

Will DCA accept pre-lodgement enquiries?

Generally, yes, pre-lodgement enquiries can be made through DCA's Front Door via dca.enquiries@dphi.nsw.gov.au.
