

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure



Community Participation Plan

1 September 2026

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Item 19.1

Enclosure 1

Secretary's foreword

A message from Kiersten Fishburn



We know that planning works best when it reflects what communities need and value. Local knowledge plays a vital role in shaping strategic plans and the assessment of development proposals.

The *Planning System Reforms Act 2025* lays the foundation for a modern planning system that is faster, fairer and focused on outcomes. One of its key commitments is creating a single statewide Community Participation Plan for all councils and planning authorities.

This plan brings consistency to consultation timeframes across NSW. It ensures communities have a strong voice in the planning system and sets clear expectations that engagement should match the scale and impact of a proposal or strategic plan.

We also understand that the planning system can seem complicated or daunting. That's why this plan explains the different ways you and your community can get involved at both the local and state level. It also encourages planning authorities to consult widely so decisions reflect your values, priorities and concerns.

Planning should be a partnership with people who know their communities best. That is why planning authorities can continue to develop their own engagement strategies that outline how councils and other planning authorities will work with their communities and ensure local context guides their approach.

Good participation must be accessible to everyone. This approach emphasises the importance of engaging respectfully with Aboriginal communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Everyone should be able to navigate a planning system that works for them.

This Community Participation Plan applies to planning authorities and functions subject to community participation requirements under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. This includes the planning functions of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and its Secretary, as well as all councils and relevant planning authorities across NSW.

I hope you find this plan a practical guide to participate in planning in NSW.

Kiersten Fishburn
Secretary, Department of Planning,
Housing and Infrastructure

A Statewide Community Participation Plan

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Commencement: This document commences on 1 September 2026.

What is the Community Participation Plan?

The Community Participation Plan (CPP) sets out how and when planning authorities will engage the community and stakeholders in decision-making processes related to planning functions.

This plan is applicable to all planning authorities including the Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure (the Department), local councils and other State Government Departments and agencies. It is designed to clearly outline how and when the community can participate in planning decisions and processes, and when planning authorities exercise their relevant planning functions.

The plan has been prepared by the Planning Secretary to set out the mandatory community participation requirements in accordance with Division 2.6 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act).

Consistency and proportionality in community participation

Consistency and proportionality are key to the broader success of community participation. The Community Participation Plan standardises public exhibition timeframes across all planning functions, providing a consistent approach, no matter where you are in NSW.

Planning functions are subject to different levels of community participation that reflect the scale, complexity and potential impacts of the proposal or development. This ensures that exhibition requirements are proportionate to the scale and impact of the proposal.

This includes extended exhibition periods for draft strategic plans, as they establish the long-term vision and

identify future needs for housing, jobs, infrastructure and connected communities. Early community engagement at this stage is critical, as it helps inform decisions about land use and the location of future development.

In contrast, some low-impact local development applications may not require public exhibition, reflecting their limited scale and potential impacts. This helps focus community participation on matters that are most likely to affect the community.

While some development types may not be publicly exhibited, they are still assessed on their merits. The consent authority must consider all relevant planning matters as part of the overall assessment process including issues such as privacy, overshadowing and heritage significance.

Engagement strategies

Councils and other planning authorities including the Independent Planning Commission can continue to specify engagement methods in their relevant engagement strategy within the parameters set by this plan. An engagement strategy must not specify timeframes for public exhibition of planning functions. These strategies outline the specific methods and tools that a planning authority will use to engage with communities and stakeholders. Every community is different, and engagement approaches should reflect the characteristics, needs and preferences of the communities they are intended to reach.

Councils and planning authorities are best placed to understand their communities and determine how to effectively engage with groups that may be harder to reach, including young people, people with disability, elderly, socio-economically disadvantaged, those living in rural areas, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities and culturally and linguistically diverse people.

Notification and Exhibition

Minimum public exhibition periods

The *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* sets out minimum community participation requirements for the public exhibition of certain planning matters.

During a public exhibition period all relevant documentation is made publicly available, and the community is invited to make a submission outlining their views on the draft policy, plan or proposal.

When and how you may be notified

If you are directly affected by a proposal, you may receive a notification during public exhibition that provides information on how to view a proposal and how to lodge a submission. Consent authorities may undertake a site visit of the subject site or neighbouring properties to assess impacts as part of their assessment.

Planning authorities will specify how they engage the community on certain types of development in their community engagement strategies. Engagement methods include, but are not limited to the following:

Table 1: Examples of engagement methods for different levels of engagement

Level of engagement	Objective	Method
Make information available	Planning authorities will keep the community informed and promote equitable participation	• a letter • an email • an on-site notice • public exhibition –invite written submissions • documents made available on websites • media releases • mailing lists, Electronic Direct Mail (EDM) • community newsletters and emails • social media posts • updates to subscribers via the NSW Planning Portal
Invite broader community input	Planning authorities will advise the community early about how and when they can participate	
Actively gather community input	Planning authorities will clearly identify what aspects of the project can be discussed and ensure as many community members as possible can participate	• drop in sessions • public meetings • reference groups • focus groups • workshops • surveys • website content or, social media notification
Explore and refine the proposal with affected communities	Planning authorities will clearly explain how community submissions influence decisions and be upfront about what aspects of a plan the community can shape	

Submissions

A consent authority will consider all submissions received during a public exhibition period. In some cases, the number of submissions on a development application determines who the final consent authority is.

Anyone can make a submission. The contents of a submission may be a general response to the project, and not technically detailed. You do not need to be a specialist to have your say.

Late submissions may be considered at the discretion of the consent authority. Submissions must be made in writing and submitted online via the relevant planning authority's website. For the NSW Independent Planning Commission, the panel members will only accept a late submission in exceptional circumstances. It is recommended you contact the relevant consent authority to confirm.

For local development applications, it may be possible to make submissions via the NSW Planning Portal or through other means, such as by post or electronic mail – it is recommended you engage with your council to confirm. For any other consent authorities, it is recommended to contact the consent authority to confirm how submissions can be made.

Where a development is not required to be exhibited, a consent authority is not required to consider submissions as part of its assessment.

Material received outside of a public exhibition period

Feedback can be provided to the consent authority at any stage of an application. This includes planning functions that do not require public exhibition. Where a development application is not publicly exhibited, feedback can still be provided – however it is not considered a formal submission.

Staying up to date

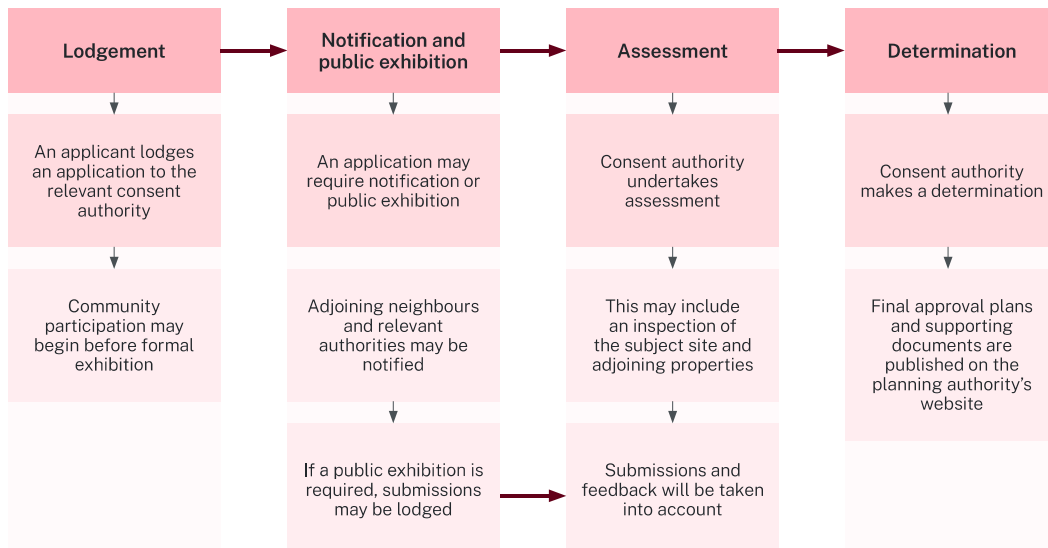
There are many ways to stay updated about development in your local area. You can sign up for alerts on specific projects such as planning proposals, new major projects and State significant development in your local government area.

Throughout this document you will find useful links to trackers and ways to subscribe to projects.

Process for development applications

Figure 2 shows the consultation process of a development application from lodgement to determination and outlines the key stages where participation occurs.

Figure 2: Summary of consultation during development assessment



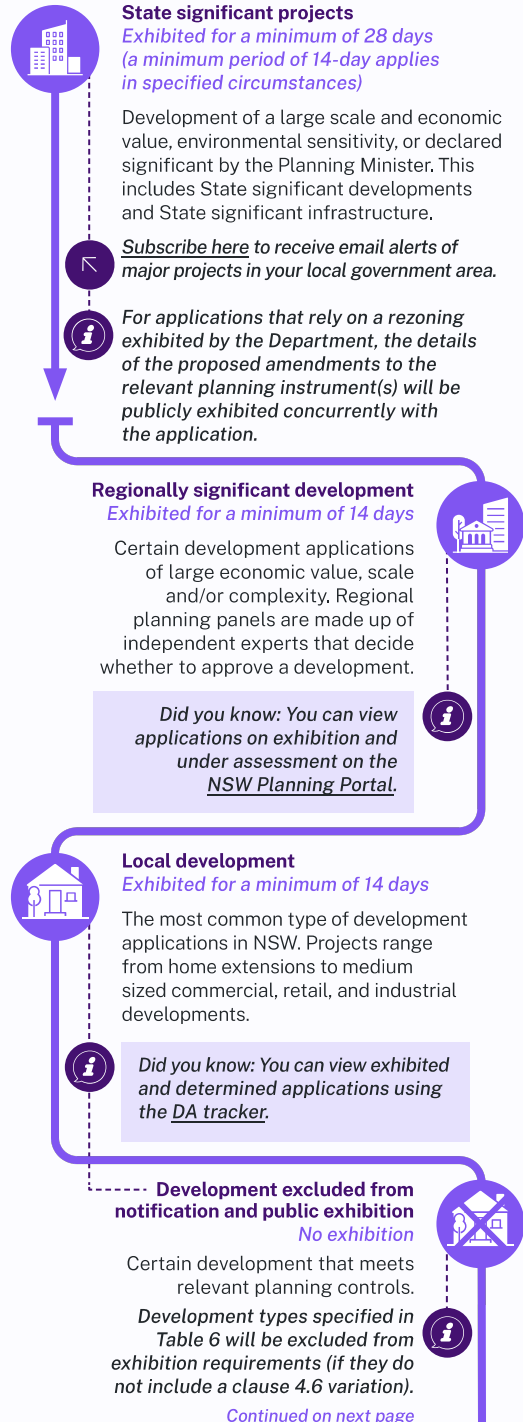
Development assessment Development that may impact where I live and work

Development assessment functions are undertaken by several planning authorities, including councils, panels, the IPC and State agencies, who make decisions on proposals in accordance with the relevant approval frameworks and planning controls.

Exhibition requirements for development assessment are proportionate to the level of impact a project will produce. During exhibition, the public can see how planning controls translate into buildings and places in their community.

Where a development application requires a more rigorous assessment, and additional consultation requirements set out in legislation or a SEPP, minimum timeframes are generally longer. For example, State significant development applications generally have longer minimum timeframes than local development applications assessed by councils.

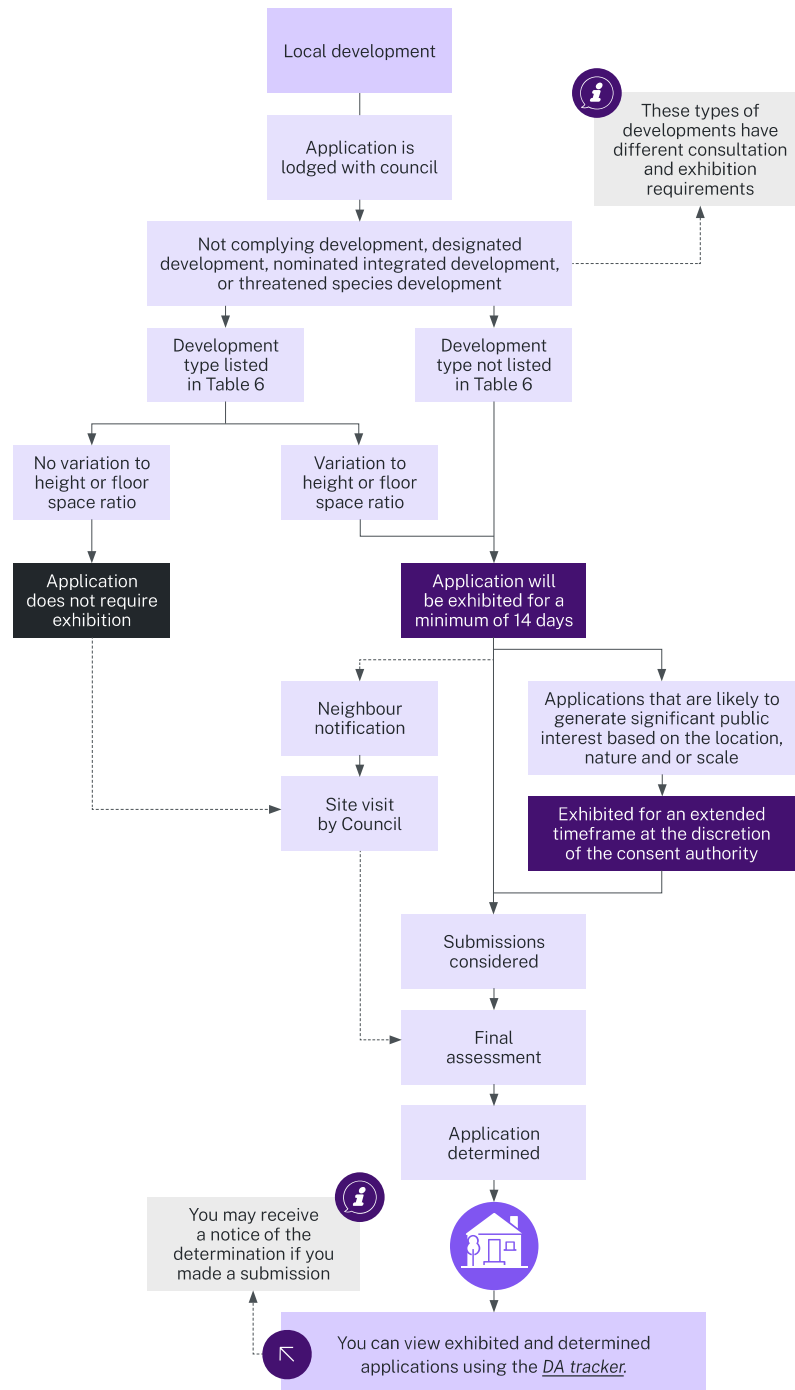
You may be invited to lodge a submission on the following:



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Figure 5: Exhibition process – Local development



Public exhibition timeframes

Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 set out mandatory requirements for public exhibition
Table 6 sets out when certain development types are excluded from public exhibition.

State and local planning framework

Table 3: Public exhibition timeframes for policy and legislation

Planning function	Minimum exhibition timeframe
Draft legislation and regulations (the Department)	Discretionary based on the urgency, scale or nature of the proposal
Policies, guidelines or strategies publicly exhibited for a planning purpose	28 days unless decided otherwise due to the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal

Additionally, the Department may exhibit other proposals consistent with community participation objectives. For these functions, there may also be occasions where a government priority or administrative requirement demands immediate action, and the usual community participation process may be truncated.

Strategic planning

Table 4: Public exhibition timeframes for strategic planning

Planning function	Minimum exhibition timeframe
Draft community participation plan	28 days ¹
Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to a gateway determination*	28 days or as specified by the gateway determination which may determine, due to the minor nature of the proposal, that no public exhibition is required ²
Draft development control plan	28 days ³
Draft contribution plans	28 days ⁴
Draft local strategic planning statements	60 days
Draft regional or district strategic plans	60 days
Draft activation precinct masterplans and delivery plans (including infrastructure delivery plans)	28 days ⁵
Structure plans, precinct plans and masterplans for urban renewal areas	42 days unless decided otherwise due to the urgency, scale and nature of the proposal

* Exhibition of planning proposals must also be carried out in accordance with the Department’s Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline.

¹ EP&A Act, Schedule 1, clause 1.
² EP&A Act, Schedule 1, clause 4.
³ EP&A Act, Schedule 1, clause 5.
⁴ EP&A Act, Schedule 1, clause 6.
⁵ State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021, sections 3.6(6), 3.7(6).

Development assessment

Table 5: Public exhibition timeframes for development applications

Planning function	Minimum exhibition timeframe ⁶
Application for development consent. Exclusions: a) complying development, b) designated development, c) nominated integrated development, d) threatened species development, e) State significant development, and f) targeted assessment g) development listed in Table 6	14 days
Application for consent for the following State significant development: - Housing development carried out by or on behalf of the Aboriginal Housing Office or the Land and Housing Corporation under the <u>Planning Systems SEPP, Schedule 1, section 26</u> - In-fill affordable housing under the <u>Planning Systems SEPP, Schedule 1, section 26A</u> - Build-to-rent housing under the <u>Planning Systems SEPP, Schedule 1, section 27</u> - Seniors housing under the <u>Planning Systems SEPP, Schedule 1, section 28</u> - Development in accelerated TOD precincts under the <u>Planning Systems SEPP, Schedule 2, section 19</u> - Development declared under the <u>EP&A Act, section 4.36(3)</u>, Including on the recommendation of the Housing Delivery Authority	14 days
Application for development consent for targeted assessment development, including any amended application under the pathway	14 days, unless a different period is specified in a State environmental planning policy ⁷
Application for modification of development consent required to be publicly exhibited by the regulations	14 days ⁸
Application for the review of a determination or decision of a consent authority (Division 8.2 review)	The same period as the development application or modification application was originally notified or advertised
Application for development consent for all other State significant development	28 days
Application for development consent for designated development	28 days
Environmental impact statement for State significant infrastructure under Division 5.2	28 days
Application for development consent for nominated integrated development or threatened species development	28 days
Application for development consent for category 1 remediation work under Chapter 4 of SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021	28 days
Environmental impact statement obtained under Division 5.1	28 days
Council-related development applications	28 days
Re-exhibition of any amended application or matter	The period (if any) determined by the person or body responsible for publicly exhibiting the application or matter

⁶ Development applications that are likely to generate significant public interest based on the location, nature and or scale may be exhibited for an extended timeframe at the discretion of the consent authority.

⁷ EP&A Act, Schedule 1, clause 9C.

⁸ Excluding applications to modify a development consent made under section 4.55(2) specified in Table 6.

Development types excluded from public exhibition

Applications for development consent listed in Table 6 (other than applications for complying development certificates, designated development, nominated integrated development, threatened species development or for State significant development), are excluded from public exhibition, where the development:

- Does not require a variation to height of building or floor space ratio, under clause 4.6 of the Standard Instrument LEP (or an equivalent provision of any other environmental planning instrument).

Table 6: Development types excluded from public exhibition

Development types excluded from public exhibition ⁹
• Ancillary development to existing residential accommodation (such as but not limited to pools, sheds, pergolas and carports) • Bed and breakfast accommodation • Change of use (excluding a change of use to a registered club or pub, and excluding any development that adjoins, or is located on, land in a residential zone) • Demolition • Dual occupancy (up to two storeys) • Attached dwelling (up to 5 dwellings) • Dwelling house (up to two storeys) • Multi dwelling housing (up to 5 dwellings) • Secondary dwelling • Exhibition home • Extensive agriculture • Farm building • Home business • Home industry • Home occupation • Industrial retail outlet • Infrastructure facility in the Alpine region¹⁰ • Internal and external alterations and additions (excluding residential accommodation) • Internal and external alterations and additions to existing residential accommodation resulting in no more than two storeys • Kiosk • Repair and maintenance of recreation infrastructure, lifting facility, or snow-making infrastructure in the Alpine region • Roadside stall • Rural worker's dwelling • Signage (excluding where it adjoins or is in a residential zone) • Subdivision of land resulting in no more than 5 new lots • Subdivision of land that is subject to an existing development consent for its current use. • Temporary structure • Tree removal on private land • Applications to modify a development consent made under section 4.55(1) of the EP&A Act • Applications to modify a development consent made under section 4.55(1A) of the EP&A Act • Applications to modify a development consent made under section 4.56(1) of the EP&A Act with minimal environmental impact • Applications to modify a development consent made under section 4.55(2) of the EP&A Act where the development the subject of the consent is specified in this Table

⁹ Where a word or expression used in the Table is defined in the Dictionary to the standard instrument set out in the *Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Order 2006*, that definition applies to the word or expression as used in the Table.

¹⁰ As defined in Schedule 4A to *State Environmental Planning Policy (Precincts – Regional) 2021*.

Item 14.6- Submission: Proposed statewide Community Participation Plan (CPP)

Enclosure 1 - Submission on Proposed Statewide Community Participation Plan

The exemptions are intended to apply where '*... the development is permissible and meets the relevant planning controls in a local environmental plan, development control plan and/or state environmental planning policy*' however notification needs to occur immediately following lodgment of an application. This means that a Council has not yet assessed the application to determine if it does or does not '*...meet the relevant planning controls...*' and therefore the proposed exemptions will be difficult to implement from a practical sense. It is therefore suggested that the exemption be based on 'development types' so that this is easily identifiable upon application lodgement. In Council's experience it is common for DAs to seek a variation of DCP controls. Identifying if a DA includes a DCP variation often involves a full assessment of a DA to determine if there are any variations proposed.

Council's general practice is to issue the fee request as part of the DA lodgement fees. Therefore, the notification requirements need to be determined as part of the application lodgement process. As noted above, it will be unclear if an application is fully compliant, and therefore whether an exemption does or does not apply until the assessment has been completed.

In a practical sense to comply with the draft CPP if a DCP variation is identified later in the assessment, this would have the effect of prolonging the assessment timeline due to the impact of Council raising notification fees after lodgement and the exhibition period not occurring in the early stages of the assessment. It is suggested that the exemptions be revised and granted on the following basis:

- *is permissible in the relevant zone;*
- *meets the principal development standards in a local environmental plan, setback guidelines in a DCP and/or relevant state environmental planning policy;*
- *does not include a 4.6 variation.*

The proposed changes may result in a significant reduction in the number of development applications that are notified. This will reduce the overall community participation in planning matters, which may be contradictory to the object of the Act. The proposed changes may result in an increased development application lodgement timeframe as the application will need to be reviewed to determine if it needs to be notified or not.

There may be a benefit to Councils in the reduced notification requirements. The administrative process of notifying applications includes identifying if the application requires notification and if so the timeframe, identify adjoining landowners who need to be notified, generating letters and sending this in the post, ensuring that the required documentation is publicly available (ie on a Council's website), receiving and acknowledging submissions, considering submissions, notifying submission makers of the outcome and any further modification or review applications. This would therefore result in efficiency and cost savings for Councils, and a more streamlined assessment process as there are no submissions to consider.

It is expected that there will be community opposition to the proposed notification exemptions, as neighbouring property owners will not have an opportunity to comment on the impacts that a proposed development may have on their property and amenity, or offer any suggestions in regards to shadowing, view loss, and overall design outcomes. It is suggested that this be further considered to ensure that any statewide CPP meets the object of the Act: *The community has a right to be informed about planning matters that affect it.*

Item 14.6

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Enclosure 2

8.0 How the community can participate in planning assessment functions

As part of Council's planning assessment functions Council determines, by way of approval or refusal, a range of development applications. Council's planning assessment functions enable Council to **consult** and **inform** the community.

8.1 What applications will be notified?

Council will publicly exhibit the following development types:

- a) All development applications (including designated) with the exception of the following:
 - Single storey residential outbuildings and single storey residential additions and alterations that comply with the relevant height, floor space ratio, setback and cut & fill requirements
 - Subdivision of existing buildings (i.e. the subdivision of an existing dual occupancy etc.)
 - Changes from one commercial use to another, excluding changes for licensed premises.
- b) Modifications of development consent with the exception of the following:
 - Modification fixing minor error (i.e. wrong plan numbers, error in approval etc.)
 - Modification involving minor environmental impact where no public submission/s was received to the original development application
- c) Review of planning decision only where a public submission/s was received to the original development application.

8.2 Who will be notified?

When publicly exhibiting applications, described in Section 8.1 above, Council will notify affected property owners of development applications. Affected property owners are those that own land that is directly adjoining the land for which an application has been lodged. Adjoining land means land which abuts an application site or is separated from it only by a rail or road corridor, pathway, driveway or similar thoroughfare.

Where adjoining or neighbouring land comprises a strata titled or community titled development Council will notify the individual property owners within the relevant Owners' Corporation or Association.

Additional property owners may be notified if, in the opinion of Council's assessing officer, the enjoyment of land for those properties may be detrimentally affected by the development proposal.

For Modifications and Reviews of Planning decisions where a submission/s was received to the original development application Council will only notify the individual/s who lodged the public submission.

8.3 How will people be notified?

Affected property owners will receive a written notice from Council which provides information about the proposal and how they may make a submission in relation to the applications, described in Section 8.1 above.

Other member of the community will have access to development application information through:

- a) Council's DA Tracker,
- b) periodic notice in a local newspaper of development applications that have been received
- c) specific notice in a newspaper in compliance with the Regulation for designated development, State significant development and

- d) a sign shall be erected on the proposed development site during the notification period for:
- designated developments
 - proposals with a value of works in excess of \$1,000,000
 - subdivision in excess of 10 lots

The sign shall be installed at the site boundary at the commencement of the notification period

- e) Significant and major development applications that are likely to attract significant public interest and/or are situated on prominent sites will also be referred to the relevant Precinct Committee or Ratepayer Association

8.4 How long will development proposals be notified for?

Type of application	Minimum exhibition period
Development applications, described in Section 8.1 above (excluding those listed below)	14 days
Applications for designated development	28 days
Environmental Impact Statements obtained under Division 5.1	28 days

The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculations of a period of public exhibition.

If a particular matter has different exhibition or notification periods that apply under this Part, the longer period applies.

8.5 What information will be made available?

All information relating to an application will be made available on Council's DA Tracker for the extent of the exhibition period. The information is also available for inspection at Council's Administration Building. Some of the information relating to an application is covered by Copyright laws. Once the exhibition period has closed Council is unable to make such information publicly available.

Council is not required to make available for public inspection any part of an environmental impact statement whose publication would, in the opinion of the public authority, be contrary to the public interest because of its confidential nature or for any other reason.



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Community Participation Plan

Our Community Participation Plan 2019 details how we engage with our community on planning matters.

We believe the best planning outcomes are achieved when communities are involved early in the planning process.

Community participation varies depending on the type and nature of a proposal being considered, and its potential impact.

On 1 September 2026 the NSW Government's Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure adopted a Statewide Community Participation Plan (CPP) which replaces Council's CPP.

The Statewide CPP can be viewed here: [Community participation plans | Planning](#)

Council is in the process of updating its Community Engagement Strategy to include how Council will engage on planning matters and will then formally revoke the 2019 CPP.

Item 19.1 - Question with notice: Councillor Lawton - Interim
community notification of DAs under the Statewide
Community Participation Plan

Enclosures 4 - Council website
statement on the State CPP and the
Community Engagement Strategy