

SHORT-TERM REFORMS FOR ACT'S PLANNING SYSTEM

The ACT Government has made a clear commitment to making changes to the current planning system to make it simpler, easier to use, faster and more effective for residents, industry, business and the community. Much of the reform deals with long-term fundamental change to the structure of the system.

There are however, a number of short-term administrative actions that can be taken to address some of the more immediate issues. These are in addition to changes that have been occurring since 2003 and can simultaneously occur with the directions outlined in the Planning System Reform package.

Short-term reform agenda for 2005-06

Further short-term reform is a key priority for the ACT Planning and Land Authority. Over the next 12-18 months, a number of actions will be taken to simplify planning administration in the ACT:

Rationalisation of preliminary assessment processes and planning studies, including removing the requirement from town centre developments

Buildings in excess of 7000 m² and 28 metres in height no longer require a preliminary assessment in Commercial A Civic Centre and is proposed to be removed for all town centres under a current Variation to the Territory Plan.

Changes to preliminary assessment

Preliminary Assessment requirements are now integrated with the development assessment procedures at validation stage. A short form of a preliminary assessment is under development as a model for industry use.

Transfer of Registrar Construction Occupations function

The Manager of the Construction Occupations and Land Regulation Section within the Authority has been appointed as the Registrar of Construction Occupations.

Clearer and consistent direct grants process and policy

Lease and development conditions necessary for direct sales and grants of land will now be determined after development assessment. This reduces a significant administrative delay in finalising a lease.

Clearer and consistent concessional lease process and policy

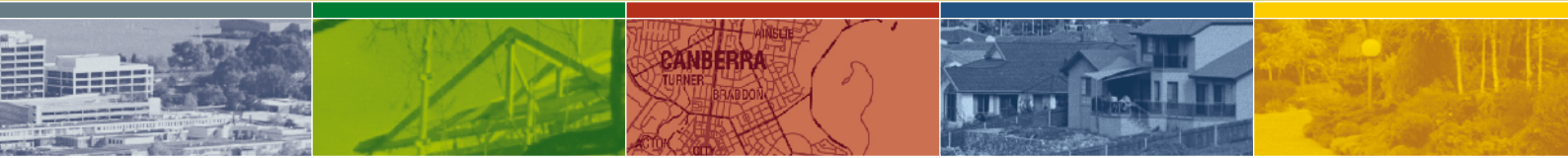
A definition of a concessional lease will be included in the *Land (Planning and Environment) Act 1991*. Further changes are part of the 2006 Planning System Reform legislative package.

Modification to the timing of involvement and advice in regard to Planning and Land Council

The Council will provide advice at pre-lodgement phase. The advice will focus on the relationship of a proposed development to its setting and context. The Council has also asked that information regarding proposed energy and water use efficiency be made available at the early design phase.

Changes to the Design Review Panel process

The Design Review Panel will cease. The Authority will hold regular case management meetings for pre-lodgement cases. Early advice about compliance with codes and/or planning requirements, and the preferred approach to design matters, will be provided to applicants in writing.



Changes to the Decision Panel process

The Director of the Statutory Planning and Development Services Branch at the Authority will chair the Decision Panel. The thresholds for matters to be determined by the panel will be rationalised to 10 or more objections (multiple versions of a form letter or a petition equates to 1 objection) and matters referred to Planning and Land Council.

Validation processes become documentation checks

Validation procedures will cease for single residential and dual occupancy applications in early October. Lease variation applications will be checked by experienced lease administration staff to ensure correct wording and intent. Applicants will need to take increased responsibility for ensuring accurate descriptions of development, with assistance provided during documentation checks. Accurate wording ensures correct notification of development proposals.

Delegations

Better use will be made of trained staff with support for autonomous decision-making.

Review decision notices

Decision notices will be reduced in complexity. Conditions will detail matters that must be resolved prior to release of approved plans and drawings. Other conditions may need to be satisfied at building certification stage or through public asset acceptances.

Removing superseded or conflicting guidelines and policies

An ongoing program of review and deletion of obsolete material is included in the restructure of the Territory Plan.

Issuing of residential lease compliance certificates

To save time for our industry customers, residential lease compliance certificates will be issued at both our Mitchell and Dickson Customer Service Centres. In the past, they have only been issued through the Dickson Customer Service Centre.

Introduction of customer service online booking system

Customers will be able to make appointments with Authority staff online, to come in to the Mitchell Customer Service Centre to speak to a staff member about building conveyance issues.

Where do I get more information?

For further information about the proposed short-term reform proposals, and the broader Planning System Reform Project, please contact the ACT Planning and Land Authority on 02 6207 1923 or visit our website: www.actpla.act.gov.au

How do I contribute to the ongoing reform process?

Public comment about the short-term reforms can be made by emailing the ACT Planning and Land Authority at planning.systemreform@act.gov.au or posted to The Planning System Reform Project, GPO Box 1908 Canberra ACT 2601.