

Following discussions at the Business Roundtable on Land Supply and Planning, the ACT Planning and Land Authority has developed an action plan to further improve service delivery and guide the Authority's work into the future. The first part of the plan, launched today, outlines measures that will enhance the development assessment system and associated processes involving other parties, as well as implement a new arrangement for engaging with industry.

The plan also looks to the future, taking into account the upcoming review of the Territory Plan, future policy directions, land releases and planning for town centres.

Development Assessment

Improve service delivery and customer service

ACTPLA will ensure its staff resources are directed to where they are needed most, such as redeploying officers with DA experience to assess development applications to deal with extra workload and to clear spikes in applications.

ACTPLA's customer service staff have undergone extensive training and more flexible working arrangements have been put in place to enable staff to be shifted to provide back up to teams in need of assistance during times of peak activity. ACTPLA will continue to expand its focus on staff development by expanding the range of mentoring and training programs to enhance its customer service.

Engage with industry and the community

ACTPLA will establish an industry monitoring group to include the Housing Industry Association, Master Builders Association, Property Council of Australia and the Department of Territory and Municipal Services to monitor implementation of the Plan, to listen to industry concerns, exchange ideas and act to address issues.

ACTPLA will engage with architects, builder designers and planning professionals to assist them to meet the statutory requirements, and improve the content and quality of development applications to help speed up the assessment of their proposals.

Improve internal processes

ACTPLA engaged Ernst and Young to assist the organisation to undertake a complete review of its statutory processes to align with the introduction of the new planning system in March 2008. This will make it easier for users of the system to understand what procedures the Authority uses for the wide range of decisions it has to make.

ACTPLA is looking at ways to further cut red tape, including by reviewing the operation of completeness checks prior to a development application being accepted and examining best practice solutions adopted by other cities.



The Authority's information technology infrastructure is being redeveloped to provide for electronic lodgement of development and building applications to reduce delays, duplication of effort and diversion of resources brought about by the unreliability of the outdated legacy systems it is dependent upon for service delivery. This capability will be progressively rolled out to industry and staff over 2 years from early 2009.

Engaging with other Government agencies that are integral to the development assessment process about the way they can assist speed up development assessment, such as the documentation of certain standards as rules within the Territory Plan, is a vital component in the strategy to streamline service delivery.

Along with other relevant agencies, measures will be taken to reduce the time taken to process unit title clearances, thus minimising holding costs to industry once development has been completed.

Enhance planning system performance

ACTPLA will introduce the following changes to enhance system performance:

1. A Technical Variation to the Territory Plan to remove utility endorsement for most single dwelling development, removing 30% of DAs from the Merit track into Code track or Exempt;
2. The incorporation of a saving provision through a new regulation that provides for development applications to be assessed against the rules contained within the Territory Plan at the time they were lodged not the time they are determined;
3. A combination of a Technical Variation and regulation to remove a number of trivial development application matters, such as: shade structures for school playgrounds, demolition of burnt out buildings, flag poles and window awnings and coverings, that distract resources from more significant matters and fuel an adversarial environment; and,
4. A regulation to ensure that elements of a development proposal that would have been exempt if they were a stand alone development either remain exempt work or are an allowable encroachment for a single dwelling.

