



PROGRESSING SHORT TERM PLANNING REFORM IN THE ACT

Building on a number of short-term planning reform initiatives announced earlier this year as part of the Planning System Reform Project, the ACT Planning and Land Authority has committed to further short-term planning reform as it progresses with the implementation of long-term fundamental structural change.

The ACT's planning and land administration system is being overhauled to make it simpler, faster and more effective and in conjunction with this, there are short-term reform measures being put in place by the Authority.

These short-term reforms are aimed at benefiting industry, business and the community, and address administrative and process changes that do not require legislative intervention to be implemented, but will ease some immediate pressures.

Short-term reform agenda for 2005-06

In addition to those short-term initiatives already announced, the following actions will be taken to simplify planning and development administration in the ACT over the next 12 months:

Electronic PA Provision

It is no longer a requirement for industry to submit multiple hard copies of a Preliminary Assessment application to the Authority. Instead, the Authority will meet its legislated responsibility to display PA applications by providing them through ACT libraries in electronic format and via the Internet. This follows similar practices relating to electronic provision of development assessment applications. Provision of PA information in electronic format will facilitate savings to the development industry.

Leasing publication

A review of lease administration procedures has commenced as input to broader planning system reform and to identify any policy or process issues needing resolution. A publication will be produced on the role and functions of the leasehold system to assist in the education of the community and industry as well as the ongoing training of Authority staff.

Design workshops with DA staff

Authority design staff will work with DA staff in regular 'studio sessions' to discuss and review applications. This initiative will increase the understanding and knowledge of staff and encourage a whole of agency approach regarding sustainable design outcomes. In turn Authority staff will be better equipped to provide assistance to architects and designers who liaise with the Authority's DA staff.

Building Approval and Development Approval exemptions

The Authority has determined that minor building works including fences, water tanks, heaters and conversion of windows to doorways in houses will now be exempt from the building approval process. This will save industry and the community time and money when undertaking minor building activities.

New regulations are being developed to clarify and supplement a number of development approval exemptions to certain structures such as external decks, stairs, landings, sheds and gazebos. Such structures will not be exempt from heritage requirements. Satellite dishes up to a certain size will now also be exempt from development approval requirements in non-heritage areas.



Online booking system

Lessees about to sell their properties are now able to request building conveyancing information on the Internet. Previously this information could only be requested by fax or by attending the ACT Planning and Land Authority's Mitchell Customer Service Centre.

This service allows any lessee to arrange for building files to be collated for inspection and copying. It allows the required search fee to be paid by credit card. Until now, lessees or their agents acting on a lessee's written instructions have been required to attend our Mitchell Customer Service Centre during business hours to obtain information about their building plans.

Early referral to Planning & Land Council

New regulations are being developed to confirm arrangements for early referral of development proposals to the Planning and Land Council to ensure Council advice is received early in the development of complex proposals. Early referral has been sought by the development industry and the ability to receive Council advice early in project planning will enable industry to take into account the advice of the Planning and Land Council and issues raised by the Authority at the same time.

Commensurately, the Authority will encourage development proponents whose applications are subject to Planning and Land Council advice to brief relevant community councils of their proposal prior to lodging their application.

Validation update

Validation procedures for single residential and dual occupancy applications ceased in October 2005. Validation procedures for other matters are to be further streamlined.

A regulation is being prepared regarding requests for further information on a development application. This regulation will provide a 'stop the clock' provision so the time of a request does not count in connection with the statutory timeframe to determine an application. The regulation will only apply to one request that must be made by the Authority within 10 days of lodgment. This regulation will ensure requests for and the provision of information to progress an assessment will be made in a timely manner.

Where do I get more information?

For further information about the broader Planning System Reform Project, please phone the ACT Planning and Land Authority on 02 6207 1923 or visit our website: www.actpla.act.gov.au

If you are considering a development of any nature, please be sure to contact our customer service staff for advice and assistance early in your considerations. Please phone 02 6207 1923 or visit our website.