

Tuesday, 17 November 2020

BUDGET FUNDS TO SHAPE BETTER PLANNING SYSTEM

The NSW Government has pledged \$240 million this financial year and more than \$570 million over the next four years to create a more timely, certain and transparent planning system.

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes said the 2020-21 NSW Budget investment would result in faster planning determinations, better public spaces and a uniform digital platform to be used across state government and local councils.

“The challenges of COVID-19 have given us a unique opportunity to reform the planning system to enable us to build a better NSW and these changes will drive greater efficiency and productivity long after the pandemic,” Mr Stokes said.

“In addition to the highly successful Planning System Acceleration Program, the introduction of a Planning Delivery Unit will fast-track assessments of complex proposals.”

Mr Stokes said that the Planning System Acceleration Program had determined more than 100 projects since April, creating the opportunity for more than 50,000 jobs, 25,000 homes and 400 hectares of public space.

“The first program accelerated shovel-ready projects, but the next phase will focus on medium-term projects,” Mr Stokes said.

“The planning system is one of the levers the NSW Government is using to help stimulate the economy and keep it moving. We are always looking for ways to make the system smarter.”

Funding will go towards:

- e-Planning: **\$22 million** for 2020-2021 (\$92 million over four years) for a single, common digital platform for all councils and state agencies to use for planning matters which reduces development assessment times and drives overall productivity and investment across the state;
- Public Spaces Legacy Program: **\$76 million** in 2020-2021 (\$250 million over three years) to incentivise local councils to accelerate development applications and rezonings and be rewarded with grants for public space in the local community;
- Planning System Productivity Reform: **\$64 million** in 2020-2021 (\$133 million over three years) to significantly reduce timeframes in decision making across the NSW planning system over the next three years, including a 33 per cent reduction (in timeframes) for planning proposals, 25 per cent reduction for regionally significant development approvals and 17 per cent reduction in major project assessments;

- Planning Delivery Unit: **\$12 million** in 2020-2021 (\$28 million over three years) for a team that works with NSW Government agencies to fast-track planning projects. Initial projects will create opportunities for more than 66,500 new jobs and 50,000 new homes across Greater Sydney; and
- Accelerated Infrastructure Fund: Provides **almost \$76 million** in 2020-21 to support the delivery of community infrastructure in high growth areas of Blacktown and The Hills Local Government Areas in north-west Sydney. Includes funding for councils to deliver local roads, stormwater infrastructure and public space.

“These initiatives will help create a planning system that is more efficient and less complex - whether you’re dealing with the NSW Government or councils,” Mr Stokes said.

“These have been challenging times and we are making sure the planning system is doing its bit for our economic recovery.”

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