

**Submission
No 102**

INQUIRY INTO NEW SOUTH WALES PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Organisation: Local Government Planning Directors Group
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22 April 2009

The Director
Standing Committee on State Development
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY. NSW. 2000

Attention: Mr. John Young

Dear John

Re: Inquiry into the NSW Planning Framework – Submissions of the Local Government Planning Directors Group

Please find attached the Submission for the above enquiry from the Local Government Planning Directors Group.

On behalf of the Group, I seek the opportunity for all members of the Group or representatives thereof to present to the Standing Committee as part of the Hearing to be further conducted at Parliament House in Sydney in June of this year.

Yours faithfully

**DAVID BROYD
LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING
DIRECTORS GROUP**

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING DIRECTORS GROUP:
SUBMISSION TO THE NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S PLANNING COMMITTEE ON
STATE DEVELOPMENT: –
INQUIRY INTO THE NSW PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A comprehensive Inquiry into the NSW planning and environmental legislation and planning system is highly welcome and long overdue.
- 1.2 The submission seeks to respond to each of the Terms of Reference and represents the views of a group of nine Local Government Planning Directors in NSW. This Group provides feedback and proposals to the Minister and management of the Department of Planning (meetings are held monthly) for implementation of the Planning Reform agenda – please see Attachment 1 for the Group's 'Who we are' statement. On behalf of the Group, I look forward to the opportunity to present this submission to a formal Hearing conducted in due course by the Standing Committee.
- 1.3 The environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 was good, ground breaking legislation. However, it has been subject to so many "work arounds" and ad hoc changes/"add-ons" particularly in the last 12 years that its positive impacts are now hugely undermined. Reform is needed, not because of the failures of the original legislation, but because of the inadequacies of the subsequent amendments.
- 1.4 Planning legislation across the States and Territories of Australia differs in terms of scope – some systems are more consolidated, while others such as in NSW are very fragmented with natural resource management, environmental assessment and management, bushfire management etc. under different Acts. The main need in NSW is for more consolidation under one revised Act to respond to what, in reality and in practice, is the real, broader planning system.
- 1.5 There is real opportunity with this Inquiry and the approach of the relatively new Minister for Planning, the Hon. Kristina Keneally, to set planning in NSW on a new foundation and fulfil her objective of achieving 'the best planning system in Australia'. Achieving this should mean a shift from process focus to outcomes focus – "achieving good outcomes from a streamlined system".

2.0 Governance

- 2.1 It cannot be over-emphasised how the future quality of planning in NSW and its service delivery to the community requires some fundamental changes in governance such as those indicated above.
- 2.2 Over recent years, the community trust in planning by both State and local government has been eroded. Recent issues and related high level publicity regarding political donations and corruption have exacerbated that progressive undermining of community trust and the credibility of

planning at State and local level. This needs a specific response plan to remedy. A debate on new legislation and governance approaches would be a vital component of this response plan.

- 2.3 The NSW State Government has, over the last 3 years or so, progressively undermined local democracy as an integral part of decision making on planning, development and environmental matters at the local level. There has been a strong trend for centralisation of planning powers and responsibilities in the State Government and in particular under the jurisdiction of the State Minister for Planning. There have been no criteria, and there has been no agreed foundation, to support such removal of responsibilities from local to State level. Many State significant sites and applications under Part 3A have been declared/called in on arbitrary bases (i.e. with no foundation in State and regional significance) and which have generated community perceptions about political motivations.
- 2.4 Joint Regional Planning Panels have been "imposed upon" as enabled by the legislation of June 2008 (the Environmental Planning Assessment & Amendment Act 2008). These Panels would comprise of "experts" who would make decisions on applications valued at \$10M or more, Crown and Council applications valued at \$5M. It does represent an erosion of local democracy and decisions by Panel members who are "remote" from the issues and the local community culture that relates to such decision making.
- 2.5 The establishment of these Panels could be a political over-reaction to a small number of Councils who have not acted appropriately. It has also been driven by development industry lobbying. Our view is that systems should have been put into place to make Local Government accountable and to support increasing efficiency – with Panels as back-up appeal bodies. This would have been far better than State takeover of what have always been local responsibilities (within clear State parameters).
- 2.6 Another example is the formation of the LEP Review Panel. This has some merits in re-establishing consistency at the State level in dealing with rezoning applications. However, it does lead to unnecessary delays compared to the matters being dealt with by the Regional Offices of the Department of Planning.
- 2.7 Governance in NSW planning can be substantially improved by a negotiated Inter-Governmental Agreement between State and Local government that establishes:
 - a) defined respective responsibilities for planning, infrastructure planning and delivery and environmental conservation and management
 - b) clear criteria for Ministerial direction State-wide or embodied in individual regional strategies as to what project are of State and regional significance and therefore are appropriate for Ministerial or Planning Assessment Commission determination. This should also

include fee structures that go with the process of certificates, implementation and compliance monitoring of approvals given by the Minister or the Planning Assessment commission

- c) Systems and accountabilities to enable councils to retain local decision-making on DA's currently intended to go to JRPPs
- d) Focus upon outcomes and how State agencies, Councils and other stakeholders can deliver these – certainly for infrastructure to enable development outcomes.

Recommendations

- **That the legislative review enables the negotiations of an Inter-Governmental Agreement such as that outlined in paragraph 2.7 above;**
- **That Ministerial directions and Regional Strategies establish criteria for sites and developments that are of State and Regional significance and therefore are to be determined by the Minister;**
- **That Joint Regional Planning Panels be discontinued and systems and accountabilities refined for decision-making on the relevant categories of DA's be by Councils;**
- **That Regional Committees be established led by the Regional Office of the Department of Planning and comprising of relevant State agencies and constituent Councils and be responsible for:**
 - **preparing, implementing and monitoring Regional Strategies, and**
 - **evaluating the compatibility of Draft LEP's with the Regional Strategy and State policies – thereby enabling them to proceed in a timely manner without reference to the Head Office of the Department of Planning.**

3.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE 1 (A) - THE NEED, IF ANY, FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW SOUTH WALES PLANNING LEGISLATION OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, AND THE PRINCIPLES THAT SHOULD GUIDE SUCH DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 when promulgated was an excellent and leading piece of legislation. Fundamental questions now need to be asked about the purposes and intended effects of planning legislation. The objects of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 (as amended) may not now, in the main, stand the test of scrutiny in terms of them being effectively adhered to/implemented – particularly the one that relates to effective sharing of responsibilities between the two levels of government.

3.2 Therefore, the Standing Committee is urged to engage in a process of consultation that revisits the debate to articulate a scoping of the system to which the legislation needs to respond, a statement of vision, intended purposes and fundamental objectives of the planning legislation and planning system in NSW. There is, obviously, much national and international knowledge and experience to draw upon here.

- 3.3 Over the last 10 years or so, political and economic expediency and pragmatism have increasingly dominated interpretation of, and changes to, the planning legislation and system. These expediciencies and this pragmatism can be argued as the fundamental causes of the progressive, ad hoc, piecemeal and detrimental changes to the legislation over the last 10 years or so. This indiscriminate change management of the legislation and the system needs to cease. The latest example is the powers of the Coordinator-general to get around the planning system (because it is too hard) to achieve the Stimulus Package outcomes.
- 3.4 In addition to the complex and fragmented legislation that creates the context for State and Local Government, there are excessive and different layers of Plans that apply to any one property and any one DA, i.e. State Environmental Planning Policies, Local Environmental Plans, Development Control Plans etc.
- 3.5 The principles that are advocated to apply to a comprehensive review of the legislation are:
- a) Good governance – i.e. positive and formally agreed working relationships between state and local government;
 - b) The integration of development planning, infrastructure provision and environmental conservation and management;
 - c) Sustainability:
 - Balancing and integrating the social, cultural, economic and environmental and governance factors in delivering an effective planning system (aligned CSP)
 - Including the financial and resource capabilities of local government to play its rightful role in planning;
 - d) Reduced complexity and more efficiency;
 - e) Increased clarity and certainty in the system;
 - f) Increased transparency and accountability of decision making authorities within the planning system;
 - g) The improvement of user friendly legislation and the enabling of more user friendly legal and policy plans;
 - h) Climate Change – adequately responding to this international and national imperative with leadership from the State government to this major challenge;
 - i) Enabling the shift of emphasis of limited professional resources responsible for implementing the planning system from development assessment to strategic planning/policy making.
- 3.6 Review of the planning legislation and system cannot be effective without addressing the fragmented legislation of practice conducted by multiple agencies. This can lead to a plethora of referrals by local government to state agencies that has in part been remedied by the recent Circular on Referrals and Concurrences. This again has been expedient in terms of reducing timeframes for state government agencies to respond (21 days) and then Councils can assume acceptance or concurrence with the

proposal. This does not however necessarily support good consultation, quality and advice and outcomes on the ground. State government agencies in themselves are not required to produce policies that are publically exhibited that would help Councils to have delegated assessment and concurrence functions. Integrated development was an initiative in the Act Amendment 2000 and has a separate formal legal process associated with them, but this does not include key development proposals - notably the Threatened Species Conservation Act which, if there is significant impact, triggers the need for a separate approval by concurrence of the Director General of Environment and Climate Change. Similarly, the requirements of the Bushfire Protection Act require referrals to the Rural Fire Service that are a significant delay factor. The Rural Fire Service position is obviously fundamentally important to a good outcome, but increased clarity of standardised requirements, better resourcing of the RFS to respond to local government development applications and, where appropriate (and endorsed by the RFS), accredited/agreed delegation to local government to determine the level of bushfire protection required or whether indeed an application for development is acceptable in a bushfire prone area.

- 3.7 In the period 2000-2002, a substantial review of planning legislation and practice was also conducted, with various Task Forces established to review Exempt & Complying development, development assessment, strategic planning, statutory planning etc. There were many worthy outcomes of that initiative, including the recommendation to consolidate all relevant State, regional and local strategic planning content into a local strategy and plan for clarity to the local council and to enable easier interpretation of the planning controls that related to any individual property. Such local strategies as pre-conditions for a Comprehensive Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plans should be mandated with appropriate prioritised funding support by State government. Local Environmental Plans are only implementation tools to give effect to local and State strategies.
- 3.8 The prioritisation of regional strategies and the timeframes for completion of new LEPs for those priority regions should be tailored for funding support from the Planning Reform Fund (there has never been any published statements of accounts by the State government of the income and expenditure allocations relating to the Planning Reform Fund, which is totally inappropriate given the contributions by development applicants and the administrative/management role by local government).
- 3.9 the NSW planning system is overly legalistic and adversarial – reinforced by the legislation and practice of the Land and Environment court. The involvement of parliamentary counsel is a major source of delay, cost and frustration in the NSW planning system. New legislation to suck out so much legalistic content would be of significant advantage and need not detract from the statutory imperatives. There are already valuable and productive non-statutory Plans and Strategies – the State Plan and Regional Strategies being prime examples. A major part of the planning

system need not be statutory. Again, development control should serve, not lead/demonstrate the planning system to fulfil social, economic, environmental and governance outcomes.

Recommendations

- **That local strategic plans are mandatory pre-requisites for LEPs and DCPs – with the obligatory referencing of the strategic plan being embodied in the LEP;**
- **That the respective powers of the Minister, Director-General and Local Government are redefined;**
- **That a revised, comprehensive new Act be drafted based upon the principles described in paragraph 3.5 above and that consolidates relevant contents of:**
 - **The Native Vegetation Act**
 - **The Threatened Species and Conservation Act**
 - **The Bushfire Protection Act**
 - **Other relevant legislation**
- **That legislation and practice be reviewed to enable more effective use of bio-certification as currently enabled by (but with limited effect) the threatened Species and conservation Act.**

4.0 TERM OF REFERENCE 1 (B) THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS (COAG) REFORM AGENDA FOR PLANNING IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

4.1 The Commonwealth Government has been “noticeable by its absence” on planning matters. The COAG reform agenda has tended to focus upon “red tape reduction” and cost savings associated with planning processes to increase housing affordability rather than addressing mechanisms to achieve better planning outcomes. These are very worthy goals, however this is leading to the dominance of process and administrative reform as distinct from reform to achieve better outcomes “on the ground”.

4.2 The Development Assessment Forum (DAF) was formed in 1998 to recommend ways to “streamline development assessment and cut red tape – without sacrificing the quality of decision making”. The DAF has done some excellent work which the Ministers of States and territories have endorsed “in principle” on development assessment in particular but the declared intents of the Ministers are not translating into legislative reform and practices – certainly this is not the case in NSW.

4.3 In 2005, the DAF developed the leading practice model for development assessment which sought to achieve greater efficiency and clarity. Ten leading practices were recommended, as well as six pathways through the development assessment system:

- Exempt development

- Prohibited development
 - Self assess
 - Code assess
 - Merit assess
 - Impact assess
- 4.4 The NSW Government has not followed the DAF model. The "Code Assess" pathway is a particular opportunity to deal with minor applications not meeting every complying development criteria. Instead of consequently having to apply every Section 79C head of consideration, the Council could then undertake a simpler, more limited assessment as warranted by such a lower impact application.
- 4.5 In August 2005, the Local Government and Planning Minister's Council endorsed the above framework in principle and commonly stated it as "an important reference for individual jurisdictions in advancing reform of development assessment". Some of the elements can be considered to be embodied in the NSW Planning Reform, but it does not reflect the above framework to a significant extent.
- 4.6 In February 2006, COAG formally requested the Local Government and Planning Minister's Council to:
- a) Recommend and implement strategies to encourage each jurisdiction to:
 - (i) systematically review its local government development assessment legislation policies and objectives to ensure that they remain relevant, effective, efficiently administered and consistent across the jurisdiction
 - (ii) ensure that referrals are limited only to agencies with a statutory role relevant to the application and that referral agencies specify their requirements in advance and comply with clear response times
 - b) Facilitate trials of electronic processing of development applications and adoption through electronic development assessment.
- 4.7 The Federal Government has recently allocated \$30M for information technology initiatives and improvements from the housing Affordability fund in the interests of improving efficiency in approval processes - \$6M of this is allocated to NSW. This again is a highly worthy initiatives and one which will have really beneficial impacts on the system. The amount of money however is inadequate to address the costs that will be involved to local government to upgrade systems and establish sufficient compatibility of software across various Councils.
- 4.8 There are major planning issues at the national level which should be addressed by an enhanced Commonwealth approach to planning (recognising the constitutional parameters for such involvement):
- Climate change and coastal management

- Growth management and infrastructure provision for major cities – limitations on existing and future water supply, road capacities etc. underline the critical need for a strategic approach to major studies to be taken by the Federal Government.
- The continuing demand for growth on the coastline and the related deterioration of social and economic positions of inland towns and rural and regional areas generally
- Funding of infrastructure to enable planning growth to occur in an integrated manner
- Highly relevant to NSW is the planning for the Sydney metropolitan residential demand and supply with related infrastructure provision, particularly insofar as it relates to economic implications and the effects of the immigration program managed at the Commonwealth level;
- Also relevant is the environmental management of the Murray Darling basin and its implications – particularly the social and economic effects on townships and employment – that are intricately related.

Recommendations:

- **That the Commonwealth Government be sought to enhance its role in planning matters to respond to national issues such as those identified in paragraph 4.8 above;**
- **That the Federal Funding for e-planning to directly geared to upgrade systems and electronic capability for development assessment in NSW;**
- **The outputs of the Development Assessment Forum be more explicitly and seriously considered by the NSW State Government – particularly the Code-Assess stream for assessment of minor developments that are not complying developments.**

5.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE 1 (C) DUPLICATION OF PROCESSES UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AND BIODIVERSITY ACT 1999 AND NEW SOUTH WALES PLANNING, ENVIRONMENTAL AND HERITAGE LEGISLATION.

- 5.1 There have not, in the view of this Group, been significant difficulties with duplication between the Commonwealth Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999 and NSW Planning environment and heritage legislation.
- 5.2 There are endangered, threatened and vulnerable species that are classified as such in the Commonwealth legislation but not classified that way in State legislation and vice versa. This has manifested a lack of Commonwealth and State coordination.
- 5.3 The main issue with impact of the Commonwealth EP&B Act is the delays experienced in responsiveness of Commonwealth Department of the Environment.

Recommendations

- Where a development is affected by State and Commonwealth environmental legislation and an Environmental Impact Statement is required to be submitted with the application, red tape could be reduced by the Commonwealth delegating its responsibilities under the EP&B Act to the appropriate State agency for assessment and Ministerial approval. Such delegation would cover small to medium developments with the Commonwealth retaining Ministerial consent for major projects. Such delegations were being considered at the time the EP&B Act was commenced.
- The Ministers for the Department of Planning and the Department of Environment and Climate Change could raise the potential for delegations at the Ministerial Council meetings.

6.0 **TERMS OF REFERENCE 1 (D) CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL RESOURCES ISSUES IN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS**

- 6.1 There is a vacuum of legislation and policy output of the NSW State government on climate change. The Department of Environment and Climate Change has taken a public position that 0.91 metres is a scientifically valid basis for anticipated sea level rise by year 2100. However, there is no expressed consequential policy and there are no substantive policies or reference in the regional strategies produced by the Department of Planning in relation to climate change.
- 6.2 To date the approaches to our risk management of climate change implications for development assessment have been driven by local government. There are initiatives by certain Councils (e.g. Lake Macquarie and Byron Bay) to adopt predicted sea level rises by Year 2050 and Year 2100 and embody such predicted sea level rises in policy positions for guidance of development assessment. There are well-established legal imperatives for Councils to appropriately take into account climate change in development assessment and strategic planning. This again demands extensive resources and financial commitments to information technology upgrades to enable such policy making and scientifically based development assessment. Many Councils are struggling with these resource and funding demands.

Recommendation:

- That the Department of Planning, in consultation with the Department of Environment and Climate Change, produces a State policy for Climate Change.

7.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE 1 (E) APPROPRIATENESS OF CONSIDERING COMPETITION POLICY ISSUES IN LAND USE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL PROCESSES IN NEW SOUTH WALES

7.1 There is no doubt that planning decisions do influence competition in the private sector either by anticipated impacts or by unintended consequences. The zoning of land – particularly for retail and commercial purposes – could be argued to mainly inadvertently influence competitive forces in the commercial world. However, such economic factors are just one key domain of the overall sustainability basis for planning, i.e. such zonings are also fundamentally based upon social factors, community preferences and economic and environmental factors. What is missing most is probably the explicit analysis of how planning and development assessment takes into account such competitive forces and explicit acknowledgement of potential unintended consequences of such planning and development assessment/development determinations.

8.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE 1 (F) REGULATION OF LAND USE ON OR ADJACENT TO AIRPORTS

8.1 Many Councils in the Sydney metropolitan area and in regional areas, e.g. Port Stephens Council, Tweed shire Council and Queanbeyan City Council deal with difficult issues associated with airport operations and planning. A significant new urban release area in Port Stephens has been delayed and could be highly compromised by potential noise impacts of military aircraft operating out of the Williamstown RAAF Base.

8.2 There have also been some significant issues relating to the impacts of proposed retail and commercial developments within airport properties on other retail and commercial centres in proximity, e.g. Coolangatta Airport and the retail and commercial centre of Tweed heads.

8.3 A more agreed, coordinated approach to planning of airports and management of their impacts on adjacent local government areas is therefore needed involving the three levels of government with the result of a State Planning Policy that addresses those issues including the application of AS2021 as a consistent basis for planning for airport noise impacts.

Recommendation:

- That the NSW State Government prepare a State Planning Policy for planning of airports and their related noise and commercial impacts and that this be prepared following a collaborative process with representatives of the relevant Commonwealth Departments and Councils.

9.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE 1(G) INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROLS

- 9.1 There was relatively clear separation of planning and building functions until the amendments to the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act in 1998. Until that time, there were development applications and building applications. In 1998 these were consolidated in terms of having development applications and construction certificates. The former was reconfigured to now encompass a wide range of building and technical matters that extended the detail at the DA stage and therefore extended the development responsibilities and determination times – “everything had to be covered at the DA stage”. There is no legal capability to impose conditions at the construction certificate stage.
- 9.2 Returning to the pre-1998 system would assist efficiency and clarity to a significant extent. It would enable the “concept” of developments, e.g. building footprint, setbacks, design parameters and the land use to be addressed at the DA stage and lead to the engagement of community consultation and the heads of consideration under Section 79c of the EP&A Act whilst the technical building content would be subsequently left to a building application stage that also could be conditioned to ensure compliance with the BCA etc. This is a simple reversion to past legislation and practice that could assist future practice and effectiveness of the planning system. It would better serve the needs of the building industry.
- 9.3 This principle applies also to subdivisions. Generally, Councils have worked collaboratively with developers to resolve the complexities of subdivision approvals and construction processes. The involvement of private certification has complicated it significantly, and many Councils must now “go to the nth degree” to provide the detailed requirements to ensure that private certification results in the inheritance of assets to the public sector that are of adequate quality and sustainability.

Recommendation:

- **That the legislation enable separation between development applications (building footprint, setbacks, design parameters, the land use etc.) and the building certificates/applications (technical building content/BCA requirements) – based essentially on the distinction in the Act prior to 1998.**

10.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE 1 (H) IMPLICATIONS OF THE PLANNING SYSTEM ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

- 10.1 There is substantial research to show that the planning system and developer contributions have only relatively marginal impacts upon the affordability of housing. The issues are much broader and complex – particularly relating to fiscal policies, interest rates and other factors which affect overall residential land demand and supply. The planning system has limited mechanisms to encourage or require the provision of affordable housing – not to say that the planning system should not adjust

substantially to play its part in facilitating more affordable housing and high levels of residential land supply.

10.2 The Federal and State Governments need particularly to review policies and approaches regarding:

- a) the provision of public housing – this has been progressively reduced substantially;
- b) the need for alternative tax incentives and review for more encouragement of housing affordability;
- c) improving of the integration at, and between, all three levels of Government of infrastructure planning, funding and delivery with planning of future development patterns.

Recommendation:

- **That the Federal and State Governments review policies and approaches regarding:**
 - **Provision of public housing;**
 - **Need for alternative tax incentives and review for more encouragement of housing affordability**
 - **The improvement of the integration at, and between, all three levels of Government of infrastructure planning, funding and delivery with planning of future development patterns.**

**DAVID BROYD
CHAIR, AND ON BEHALF OF,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING DIRECTORS GROUP**

22 April 2009

ATTACHMENT 1

DIRECTORS GROUP – “WHO WE ARE”

CONTEXT

The Group was initiated by invitation by the Minister for Planning the Honourable Frank Sartor in response to submissions made by Messrs. Gardner, Crofts and Broyd regarding the (then) draft Bill for the Planning Reform Legislation.

The Group was established through nominations/selection by Graham Gardner and myself and comprises:

Graham Gardner	Greater Taree Council
Alison Mc Gaffin	Tamworth Regional Council
Catherine Van Laeren	Mid Western Regional Council
Elizabeth Stoneman	Leeton Council
Glennys James	Blacktown City Council
John Brunton	Sutherland Shire Council
Tim Fletcher	Shoalhaven City Council
Malcolm Ryan	Warringah Council

It must be emphasised and acknowledged that a number of members of our Group do not agree with some of the major contents of the *Environmental Planning & Amendment Assessment* Act 2008 eg., the replacement of “Local democracy by establishment of joint regional planning panels”.

It is agreed that a major purpose of the coordinated approach between the Department of Planning,, Management and this Group is the building of significantly improved working relationships between State Government and Local Government on the planning system.

Statement of "WHO WE ARE":

Following discussion amongst members (all members of the Group) we wish to emphasize that we are:

- Independent in the carriage of our views – not a reference group to the Minister or Department of Planning;
- Non political, and independent of the Local Government Shires Association/Local Government Association or any politically representative organisation;
- Endorsed by the Planning Institute of Australia (NSW division);
- Representative of Local Government Professionals engaged in managing the Planning Reform Legislation ie., Planners, Heath and Building Surveyors, Engineers and Support Staff;
- Endeavouring to support as smooth and a managed transition for the implementation of the Environmental Planning & Amendment Assessment Act 2008 as far as possible;
- Conduits of the major issues and questions from Local Government Professionals; and providing responses thereto;
- Ambassadors/Communicators to Local Government Professionals particularly in terms of:
 - (a) the content of the drafting and finalised Regulation;
 - (b) the program of implementation of the Planning Reform Legislation;
 - (c) the State Government, Ministerial and Departmental intents and purposes for some of the provisions in the Act, Regulation, SEPP's and Circulars;
- Supporting Local Government capacity to manage the roll out of the reform agenda and seeking a properly managed co-ordinated response between State and Local Government to that effect
- Assist the Department of Planning by ensuring awareness of the impacts and implications (particularly resource capabilities)
- Intending to strongly contribute to the Upper House Inquiry into the NSW Planning System

MECHANISMS

To achieve the two way communication between the Department of Planning and Local Government Professional generally this Local Government Directors Group will:

- (a) Allocate approx 17 councils to each member of the Group for communication of the outcomes and meetings with the Department of Planning and therefore be strong communicators of information via the Directors of Planning or equivalent in those 17 councils.

- (b) To be in consistent contact with the Directors of Planning/Equivalent in those 17 Councils and to identify any issues, questions, concerns etc., before communication to the Department of Planning and as appropriate to the Minister in terms of implications for achieving the content and timing/program for implementation of the Reform Agenda.

Graham Gardner
Director, Planning & Building
Greater Taree Council

Alison Mc Gaffin
Director , Environment Planning & Economic Development
Tamworth Regional Council

Catherine Van Laeren
Group Manager, Planning & Development
Mid Western Regional Council

Elizabeth Stoneman
Manager, Planning & Development Services
Leeton Council

Glennys James
Director, Planning & Development Services
Blacktown City Council

John Brunton
Director, Environmental Services
Sutherland Shire Council

Tim Fletcher
Director, Development & Environmental Services
Shoalhaven City Council

Malcolm Ryan
Warringah Council

David Broyd
Group Manager, Sustainable Planning
Port Stephens Council