



Hon Tony Kelly MLC  
Minister for Planning  
Minister for Infrastructure  
Minister for Lands  
Deputy Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council  
Leader of the House in the Legislative Council

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### NSW COUNCIL REPORT CARD ON DA ASSESSMENTS

Homeowners and businesses are reaping the rewards of NSW Government planning system improvements, with decision times on development proposals being slashed despite more applications being lodged.

The *Local Development Performance Monitoring* report for 2009-10 published by the NSW Department of Planning shows the average processing time for the 71,550 development applications determined last year was 67 days.

This represents a reduction of seven days in average processing time from 2008-09.

Furthermore, the number of councils averaging assessment times of more than 100 days has more than halved from 21 in 2008-09 to just 10 in 2009-10.

Planning Minister Tony Kelly said that another big change shown by the report is that there was a 56 per cent increase in the number of applications processed via the 'fast-track' complying development approval system.

This system allows projects such as new homes, home extensions or changing the use of retail premises to be approved in less than two weeks by an accredited certifier if they meet a set design code.

"This report illustrates that major reforms implemented by the NSW Government are bringing down decision times – meaning everyone from 'mums and dads' through to larger companies are getting a quicker outcome," he said.

"The NSW Government is committed to delivering Australia's best planning system and this latest report shows clear progress in terms of efficiency and effectiveness.

"It is also appropriate to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of many councils in reviewing their assessment processes and meeting the challenges as the planning system is reformed."

The NSW Government began a series of planning improvements in 2008, which has included:

- Introducing Joint Regional Planning Panels to make independent, merit-based decisions on regionally-significant development applications, following an assessment by the local council;
- Creating the NSW Housing Code to allow decisions in less than two weeks for new homes or home extensions which meet strict design standards;
- Creating the NSW Commercial and Industrial Code to allow decisions in less than two weeks for low-impact commercial, retail or office developments, such as shop renovations or changing the use of premises; and
- Removing some 1,300 unnecessary clauses which previously required applications to be referred to State agencies for comment or approval, and monitoring the speed of State agencies in responding to these requests.

Key findings of the 2009-10 report show that:

- A total of 100,868 applications were processed including new development applications, modifications and complying developments – an increase of 5 per cent from the previous year.
- At the same time, average development application determination times fell by seven days to 67 days.



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- The number of fast-tracked complying development approvals increased by 56 per cent to 14,315, with the total value of these approvals rising from \$850 million to \$2.98 billion.
- More than 40 per cent of complying development approvals were processed under the NSW Government's codes, with councils reporting 501 new single dwellings, 1,819 residential alterations and additions and 906 commercial, retail and office developments approved via this fast-track system.
- State agencies took an average of 43 days to comment on referred development applications, down from 54 days in 2008-09.

Planning Minister Tony Kelly said the latest figures show significant and continued improvement in the efficiency of the NSW planning system.

Mr Kelly also praised the efforts of the councils which significantly reduced the time taken to process applications compared to the previous 12 month period.

"All of the five slowest councils from 2008-09 – Wellington, Manly, Parramatta, Hunters Hill and Palerang – have moved out of the bottom five through improvements in the efficiency of their assessment systems.

"I congratulate these and other councils who have improved their assessment processing and encourage them to keep up the good work."

Councils with the greatest reduction in average determination time include Gilgandra Shire Council, Ashfield Municipal Council, Conargo Shire Council, Walcha Council and Wellington Council. The councils in the Sydney region which most significantly reduced their determination times were Ashfield, Parramatta, Manly, Rockdale and Warringah.

Temora Shire Council was again the fastest council in terms of DA assessment times, averaging just six days. Others with short approval times include Berrigan (13 days), Conargo (16), Bland (17) and Urana (18).

The five councils with the longest average determination times in 2009-10 were Cooma-Monaro (163 days), Botany Bay (128), Gunnedah (117), Leichhardt (113) and Upper Lachlan (110).

The full report can be found by visiting the Department of Planning's website and clicking on About Us, then Performance Monitoring.

### Further information

- Six councils had more than half of their determinations as complying development, including: Conargo (68%), Coolamon (66%), Port-Macquarie Hastings (58%), Junee (54%), Lachlan (52%) and Uralla (51%).
- Of the councils with the highest number of complying development determinations those with the highest proportion made under the Government's complying development codes include Hornsby (95%), Blacktown (82%) and Wollongong (55%).