Office of Local Government

COVID-19 COUNCIL UPDATE

15 July 2020

Reforms for a world class planning system

Drastically reduced planning assessment times, less red tape, and user friendly e-planning tools will help turbo-charge the State's economic recovery through an $83 million NSW Planning Reform Action Plan revealed by the NSW Government today.

The changes will slash times as follows:

- Rezoning decisions cut by 191 days (33 per cent time savings)
- Decisions on Development Applications (DAs) for larger, regionally significant projects cut by 91 days (25 per cent time savings)
- Decisions on major projects of significance to the State cut by 20 days (17 per cent time savings).

The NSW Government has also invested almost $10 million to enhance its ePlanning platform and ensure all councils can get online to process DAs more quickly and transparently and slash DA processing times by more than half.

All councils will have to adopt the online system by 1 July 2021.

The NSW Planning Reform Action Plan also includes:

- Implementing the next phase of the ePlanning Program to make it easier to interact with the planning system
- A reduction in applications requiring agency concurrences and referrals, and new benchmark timeframes on key assessment and planning functions
- Complying development reforms to support emerging industries and fast track government projects, and
- Boost the role and resourcing of the Land and Environment Court by establishing a new class of appeals for rezonings to help unblock the planning system and, appoint an additional two commissioners to enable more cases to be heard each year.

For more information on the Planning Reform Action Plan click here.

COVID Safe registration compulsory for pubs

From tomorrow (July 17), it will be compulsory for NSW pubs to register as a COVID Safe Business.

Other measures for pubs include:

- The number of people per booking or table will be reduced from 20 people to 10
- A cap of 300 people in a venue at any one time
- A dedicated COVID Safe Hygiene Marshall in distinctive clothing must oversee social distancing, cleaning and hygiene
  - Large hotels with a capacity of greater than 250 people are to have a COVID Safe Hygiene Marshall on duty whenever the hotel is open
  - Smaller hotels with a capacity of less than 250 are to have a COVID Safe Hygiene Marshall employed in peak periods (lunch 12pm to 3pm and dinner 5pm to 9pm)
- Paper sign-in will still be permitted, but hotels must create a digital record of patron names and phone numbers (excel or word) to be submitted within 24 hours.

Councils can access a social media tile and suggested social media posts in relation to this measure here.

Information has been updated on the latest COVID-19 case locations and what to do if you've been in these areas.

The Closing the NSW border easy to read guide can help any members of your communities who have difficulty reading.

For information about COVID-19 and border closures and entry permits, go to nsw.gov.au, which is being updated continuously.

Information and resources

Guidelines for COVID Safe workplaces
Safety plans for a range of businesses and organisations can be found here, and those in the sport and recreation sector here.

Holiday destination assets for download
A range of information and social media assets for NSW holiday destinations are available for download here.

Job Retention Allowance payment applications
Councils can still apply for the Job Retention Allowance payment of $1,500 per fortnight, per eligible employee. Find out how in this circular.

Detailed OLG guidance to councils
Councils can access detailed guidance on:
- Local government legislative amendments
- Local government economic stimulus package

Quicklinks
Councils can access the latest information and resources about COVID-19 on the NSW Government, NSW Health, Commonwealth Government, Commonwealth Department of Health, and NSW Office of Local Government websites.