



Friday 2 August 2019

Adam Searle: Opens Backdoor to Political Planning

UDIA NSW Chief Executive, Steve Mann, today, condemned Labor's proposed amendments to the Planning Act to eliminate rezoning and Pre-Gateway Reviews with no alternative system being proposed.

Shadow Planning Minister, Adam Searle has proposed to move amendments in the NSW Parliament next week to abolish pre-gateway reviews that currently provide independence in the planning system by involving the Department of Planning in the rezoning process.

Pre-Gateway Reviews were introduced in 2012 as a measure to improve integrity and planning for rezoning.

Mr Searle has announced this amendment today without industry consultation after a month in the job and he has failed to meet with key industry stakeholders.

Mr Mann said "The Shadow Planning Minister is shooting from the hip, confusing simple amendments with his proposal that will bring politics back into planning."

"We know there are instances where the planning system has been politicised, the independent review of a proposal based on planning merit is essential to allow trust and integrity in the planning system."

"It is critical that experts are involved in assessing planning merit and consistency with Sydney's strategic planning that has been endorsed through a consultative public processes.

"The rezoning process is the pathway to fulfil the community's vision for the city. It creates a conversation about the future of a site in the context of strategic plans.

"Mr Searle's proposed amendments are currently unknown; however, they risk losing a critical mechanism to retain integrity in the planning system. The Rezoning Review can also be triggered where a council has delayed a response or not made a decision with a 90-day period.

"This ensures that councils are unable to leave proposals in limbo and are required to assess proposals in a timely manner" said Mr Mann.

“The community and the applicant want planning decisions to be resolved efficiently and based on planning merit, as this ensures predictability and integrity in the planning system.

Mr Mann urged the Shadow Planning Minister to engage in productive conversation with industry to ensure that there is a robust pathway to deliver rezonings that fulfil strategic planning objectives.

“The UDIA remains keen to work closely with all sides of politics to ensure there is integrity and community confidence in the NSW Planning System” Said Mr Mann.

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