

1 June 2020

Grant Barnes
Chief Regulatory Officer
NRAR
GPO Box 5477
Sydney NSW 2001

By email: grant.barnes@nrar.nsw.gov.au

Dear Grant,

Re: PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS LACKING IN HUNTER & CENTRAL COAST

The Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) - NSW Division is the State's leading property development industry body. We represent over 500 organisations from the public and private sectors and focus on developing liveable, connected and affordable cities. Our members include developers, planners, engineers, academics, regulators, and local government. Our extensive Committee and Regional Chapter structure involves more than 300 of the development industry's key players in policy formulation, and our Hunter and Central Coast Chapters are active participants in our work.

UDIA was grateful to participate in a series of process improvement workshops held by the Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) in 2019 where we discussed improvements to the way NRAR manage Integrated Development Applications and controlled activity applications (CAA), among other services. We commend NRAR for that initiative which has resulted in new guidelines and improved efficiencies in many areas.

We also note that NRAR has recently made significant progress in resolving the management of dams and water for the Pondicherry release precinct. This precinct will be an important source of new greenfield housing supply in south west Sydney and we commend NRAR for its efforts in helping to progress this release.

We acknowledge NRAR's efforts in 2019 when we were told that an additional resource was contracted to assist in clearing the backlog for the Hunter. That dedicated resource was instrumental in a short-term service improvement in the Hunter region specifically; however, since that resource was removed, the delays have returned.

We are writing to report that the recent general improvements from the workshops are not being enjoyed in either the Hunter or Central Coast areas. Members including developers and councils in both regions continue to experience long delays and frustrations with Integrated Development Applications and CAA processing.

We would highlight that there does not seem to be a reliable NRAR contact for Hunter or Central Coast projects. Our members are directed to various NRAR offices around the State apparently depending on staff capacity at the time, with no opportunity to build local relationships. Our members report that it is taking 6-8 weeks simply to get an officer assigned to a project. Until then, councils and developers do

not know who to contact, and calls and emails into the general contact line are not answered.

UDIA respectfully calls on NRAR to ensure that its process improvements are enjoyed by all areas in NSW. We recommend that:

- dedicated staff and resources be assigned for Hunter and Central Coast projects;
- processing times meet acceptable KPIs; and
- staff respond to email and call queries in a timely manner

UDIA appreciates the collaborative approach with industry that NRAR has recently sought to establish. We look forward to assisting to ensure that the efforts and resources already devoted to process improvements can result in improved customer service outcomes.

We would be pleased to meet to discuss this matter further. Please contact Elizabeth York at eyork@udiansw.com.au or 0434 914 901 to arrange a meeting.

Yours sincerely



Steve Mann
CEO
UDIA NSW



Geoffrey Rock
Chair
UDIA Hunter Chapter



Caine King
Chair
UDIA Central Coast Chapter