

Meeting Overview

- The purpose of the meeting was to investigate and address short-term challenges to ensure medium-term economic recovery.
- An overview was provided of new Ministerial Orders that have been initiated as part of the Government's response to Covid-19. A new order has been gazetted for Part 5 and State Significant Infrastructure developments to extend new weekend and public holidays construction work day hours to include public infrastructure projects.
- The Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment (DPIE) indicated that it is making changes to the legislation (under the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act (EP&A Act) and Local Government Act) to address advertising issues considering some local newspapers are closing their operations. Options for online advertising are being investigated. This interim advice has been made available on the DPIE website - <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/COVID19-response/COVID19-planning-response-frequently-asked-questions>.
- The Land & Environment Court (LEC) is encouraging and facilitating electronic hearings. Statistics show that most proceedings are now taking place via electronic means. Some LEC hearings have been vacated so there may be earlier hearings available.
- Current DPIE work on priority projects that are 'shovel ready' includes establishment of a suitable governance structure, re-allocation of staff resources and consultation with agencies and stakeholders on how to achieve a consistent and appropriate approach.
- The Office of Local Government provided an update on areas of support being provided to councils. These include:
 - Supporting councils' ability to make decisions and retain jobs.
 - Postponement of local government elections by one year.
 - Facilitating processes for electronic meetings and decision making.
 - Interpretation and implementation of the COVID-19 Public Health order.
 - Encouraging councils continue to perform their planning functions.
 - Handling of current downturn in revenue from fees and charges.
 - Workforce management.

- Information about the NSW Government's recently announced review of infrastructure contributions by the Productivity Commissioner is available on the DPIE website - <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/Policy-and-Legislation/Infrastructure/Infrastructure-Funding/Improving-the-infrastructure-contributions-system> The Productivity Commissioner's report on the above review is due by the end of 2020, and a Have Your Say on more immediate proposed system improvements is open for submissions until 12 June.
- DPIE has prepared five proposed system improvement policy papers which are currently on public exhibition:
 - A revised policy planning agreements framework
 - An updated draft special infrastructure contributions guideline
 - Proposed changes to the EP&A Regulation to improve transparency and provide clearer accounting and reporting requirements (for both State and local contributions)
 - Proposed process reforms to contributions plans to support funding mechanisms that are in place
 - A discussion paper about circumstances where a levy greater than 1% can be implemented under s7.12 of the EP&A Act

Peak bodies raised the following issues:

- Whether some Independent Planning Commission (IPC) and regional and local panel meetings are being cancelled.

RESPONSE: DPIE has given advice that these bodies should meet electronically

ACTION: DPIE will check in with the panels to ensure they are operating well and will report back

- Concern that the Productivity Commissioner's report of the review of infrastructure contributions will not be implemented until next year and will slow down projects. It was noted that some 60% of housing in NSW is provided by small to medium builders, and contributions are key to continuation of these businesses

RESPONSE: DPIE will continue to take feedback on this matter and feed into further policy formulation and the Productivity Commission's review.

Projects need to be financially viable as well as 'shovel ready'. When a project is considered for inclusion, DPIE needs to look at the financial position of the proponent.

RESPONSE: Agreed. The extent of investment for a project is one of the factors that will be considered.

- Questions raised about:
 - the operation of development contributions.
 - the recently announced \$70 million funding for infrastructure in Blacktown and North-West Sydney.
 - the operation of the Local Infrastructure Growth Scheme (LIGS).

- **RESPONSE** - Agreed there is a need for further information on the announced \$70 million funding for infrastructure in Blacktown and North-West Sydney. DPIE will continue to engage and receive feedback on the issues with the Infrastructure Contributions system.

ACTION: DPIE will circulate a fact sheet on \$70 million funding for infrastructure in Blacktown and North-West Sydney

Certainty is needed on the provision of social and community infrastructure. Concerns that councils in regional areas need funding, capacity and resources.

RESPONSE - DPIE is mindful of the needs of the regions and will continue to support them.

- UDIA has feedback from some of its members that is relevant to the COVID response and will share this with the group.

RESPONSE: DPIE welcomes any feedback

ACTION: UDIA to provide feedback to group

- Request for update on the 'one-stop shop' system.

RESPONSE – DPIE reported that resourcing is currently being planned for the One Stop Shop with the aim of it being operational mid-year.

- Will the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) be getting more resources?

RESPONSE: Priorities for DPIE and RMS are being discussed at Secretary level.

- DPIE indicated that a central mailbox had been set up to which stakeholders could send ongoing issues and ideas. planning.covidresponse@planning.nsw.gov.au . It is encouraged that any issues/ suggestions are provided to DPIE using this mailbox. DPIE staff will continue to monitor this mailbox for issues that require attention in the short/medium/ long term. Proposals can also be sent directly to William Power at William.Power@planning.nsw.gov.au