

ITEM B COUNCIL ROLE IN NSW PLANNING SYSTEM

In New South Wales, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment set the rules that apply to all councils for land use planning and development. Council is required to prepare a Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and Development Control Plans to guide how development occurs across the LGA. When this is done, it involves a lengthy consultation process over a number of years.

Wollongong City Councillors do not make decisions about individual Development Applications with most being determined by Council staff under delegation. Some DAs, including those that are considered to be regionally significant or attract a lot of community interest, are sent to independent groups for decision. These groups include the Wollongong Local Planning Panel and the Southern Regional Planning Panel.

When Council staff or an independent group assess a DA, they will compare what is proposed to the LEP, DCPs and State policies. As part of the assessment, consideration is given to any objections and feedback that has been received during the exhibition period. Other factors taken into account include the environmental impact of the development, land use constraints and whether or not the development is in the public interest. Community consultation and public participation are an important and valued step in the assessment process however submissions are just one component of an assessment and do not automatically veto a development.

The role of Councillors and community within the NSW planning system is not always understood. There is a need to provide residents with clear information on how planning decisions are made.

RECOMMENDATION

Wollongong City Council -

- 1 Develop a clear, plain English communication strategy to inform and educate residents about the NSW planning system and the role that Councillors and community feedback play in the planning process, more specifically Development Applications and Planning Proposals.
- 2 Write to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces requesting that the State Government also prepare clear information for the community on the NSW planning system.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.