



14 August 2008
In reply please quote: Item 15

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The Hon. Paul Lucas
Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning
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Dear Minister

Re: Determination of Development Applications

At the annual conference of the Urban Local Government Association of Queensland held recently in Gympie members resolved that representations be made to the State Government to maintain the status quo with regard to development application assessment and determination.

] Recent events interstate have seen the introduction of external Development Assessment Panels determining development applications.

Planning reforms that have been criticised for diluting the role of local government in the development assessment process were recently passed by the New South Wales Parliament.

The contentious provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Bill, passed by the Upper House in the early hours of June 18, include the establishment of Joint Regional Planning Panels and the increased use of complying and exempt development, especially for residential development, commercial and retail fitouts.

The NSW Local Government and Shires Associations are strongly opposed to the establishment of the planning panels because they will reduce the role of councils in determining the future of projects with state or regional significance.

The associations are also opposed to the extension of complying and exempt development because it widens the number of projects that can be undertaken without development applications being made to councils.

Under the terms of the recently-tabled Local Government and Planning Legislation Amendment Bill, council General Managers will have to maintain a public register showing how councillors voted on planning issues.

The General Managers will also have new obligations to report any suspicions they have relating to the disclosure or management of conflicts of interest arising from political donations.

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The bill requires all reportable donations made to Councillors and gifts made to council staff to be disclosed publicly at the time planning applications are made or are under consideration.

NSW Attorney General, John Hatzistergos, says "the provisions of the Bill are consistent with the recommendations made in late 2007 by the Independent Commission against Corruption."

Your consideration of the matter and advice in due course would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

**P PISASLE
PRESIDENT**

Copied to:

The Hon. Warren Pitt
Minister for Main Roads and Local Government
PO Box 1031
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