

10.6. State-Significant Development Applications

AUTHOR	Neal McCarry, Service Unit Manager Strategic Planning
ENDORSED BY	Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Planning and Environment
ATTACHMENTS	Nil
CSP LINK	3. Our Innovative City 3.1 Our commercial centres are prosperous and vibrant 3.3 Distinctive sense of place and design excellence 4. Our Social Vitality 4.2 A centre for creativity and learning 5. Our Civic Leadership 5.1 Lead North Sydney's strategic direction 5.2 Strong civic leadership and customer focussed services

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to update Council on planning approval pathway changes introduced by the NSW Government and seek endorsement of a proposed approach to managing and responding to the resourcing and policy challenges these approval pathways present.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Over the past two years, the NSW Government has introduced a wide-ranging suite of planning and legislative reforms aimed at increasing residential housing supply and approval timeframes.
- In addition to major policy changes introduced through the re-zoning of the St Leonards and Crows Nest precinct (November 2024) and finalisation of low - mid-rise housing reforms (February 2025), the previous and new approval pathways have led to 18 developments sites being, or soon to be, declared as State Significant Development (SSD) in the North Sydney Local Government Area.
- This report outlines the various major development approval pathways and details the resourcing, process, and planning policy challenges that these present, and seeks endorsement of an approach that seeks to balance community expectations and Council's other statutory obligations.
- Whilst the desire to accelerate housing approvals and supply is well understood, in the context of Council's own methodical DA determination improvement strategies, the additional demands placed on Council's resources to properly implement changes introduced by the NSW Government, are significant. This is a clear example of cost shifting to Local Government.

- One of the significant impacts of recent approval pathway changes and amendments to State planning policies is the fundamental potential changes to established policy settings for employment centres. The resulting introduction of residential land uses into the commercial core of North Sydney and St Leonards significantly reduces potential future commercial floor space capacity by over 25,000 jobs, which will affect the long-term role of the North Sydney CBD and the St Leonards Strategic Centre. In the current planning pathways environment, this is likely to occur in an ad hoc, unplanned manner without a sound, endorsed policy basis.

RECOMMENDATION:

1.THAT Council note the status of current and anticipated State Significant Developments (SSD) and associated changes to approval pathways for large scale development proposals, key planning considerations and significant assessment issues associated with Council resourcing, community consultation and meaningful local input potentially being curtailed.

2. THAT Council note the minimal opportunity provide proper and considered Council feedback to SSD applications, particularly if the 14-day notification period is invoked.

3.THAT Council write to the Minister for Planning seeking a moratorium on proposals involving the conversion of commercially zoned land to residential uses until the State Government concludes its current update of the Greater Sydney Region Plan which clearly articulates its strategic direction for CBD environments like North Sydney and St Leonards.

4. THAT Council seek funding from the Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure to adequately resource its capacity to respond to State Significant Developments (SSDs) in a timely, informed, and consultative manner, ensuring proposals are well-founded and that local perspectives on planning, infrastructure, post-determination, and construction management issues are thoroughly considered.

Background

National Housing Accord

In 2022, the Commonwealth Government released the National Housing Accord, which sought to accommodate an additional 1M new and well-located dwellings across Australia over a five-year period commencing in 2024. In 2023, this target was revised to 1.2 million additional dwellings in five years commencing on 1 July 2024, after the state and territory governments had given their commitment to the delivery of their share of housing.

North Sydney Council Housing Targets

In 2024, the NSW Government announced the five-year housing target for North Sydney Council of 5,900 new dwellings to 2029. This was a significant increase given that the previous five-year target had been 3,000 dwellings, which broadly accorded with the number of new dwellings that were being delivered in North Sydney Council historically over five-year periods.

These significantly increased targets occurred across the board in the Sydney Metropolitan area.

Crows Nest Transport Oriented Development (TOD)

The Crows Nest TOD rezoning was implemented in November 2024. Accompanying this was a new approval pathway for development located within the precinct. This introduced a new threshold and criteria for proposals, whereby any residential development over \$60million value within the precinct can access the State Significant Development (SSD) approval pathway. This process is outlined further below.

Low and Mid-Rise Housing

In parallel with the TOD Program, the State Government also finalised the low and mid-rise housing reforms on 28 February 2025. The reforms allow additional forms of low and mid-rise housing to be permitted in identified areas across NSW.

‘Low-rise housing’ is generally one - two storeys and includes dual occupancies (two dwellings on the same lot), terraces, townhouses, and low-rise apartment buildings (manor houses).
‘Mid-rise housing’ is generally three - six storey apartment buildings.

The low and mid-rise housing reforms increase development capacity on land located within an 800m walking distance of an identified “station or town centre precinct.” This has the potential to redefine the existing character of localities such as Neutral Bay and Cremorne.

State Significant Development

Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act), projects can be declared State Significant Development (SSD) if they are important to the State for economic, environmental, or social reasons.

A development is considered significant to the State if it is over a specific size, is in an environmentally sensitive area, or will exceed a certain capital investment value. Examples of SSD include new education facilities, hospitals, correctional centres, manufacturing facilities, mining and extraction operations, energy generating facilities, and the like.

SSD projects are assessed under Division 4.7 of the EP&A Act and require development consent from the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) or the Minister for Planning (or delegate) before proceeding. The Minister is the consent authority for all other SSD applications. In some cases, the Minister may delegate his decision-making function to Department staff. The IPC's key role is to make decisions on large and contentious development applications (DAs) in NSW. It is important to note that the SSD pathway does not completely over-rule relevant LEP provisions such as permissibility and development standards (e.g., height, minimum non-residential floorspace). However, LEP development standards are possibly varied on merit. DCP controls are only considered as a guide.

All DAs for SSD projects follow a detailed assessment process which includes community and stakeholder engagement (including Council). The main steps in this process are outlined below.

- a) Request Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) - SEARs identify what information needs to be included in the environmental impact statement (EIS). A request for SEARs must be made for all SSD projects before a DA can be submitted.
- b) Prepare Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) - Development applications (DAs) for State significant development must be accompanied by an environmental impact statement (EIS). The EIS must be prepared in accordance with the SEARs. The EIS provides information on the economic, environmental, and social impacts of the project. It helps the community, government agencies, and the consent authority make informed submissions or decisions on the project.
- c) Exhibit Development Application – Generally all SSD DAs must be exhibited for a minimum 28 days. However, a new amendment bill was recently passed (7 May 2025) which introduces the ability to only exhibit for 14 days if a proposal includes residential accommodation. Exhibition periods provide an opportunity for the community and Council to make a submission. They are strictly enforced, with the Department being reluctant to grant formal extensions of time given the current push to minimise assessment times.
- d) Response to submissions - After exhibiting a DA for an SSD, the Department will publish online all submissions including those from statutory authorities such as Council and ask the applicant to prepare a submissions report. The purpose of the applicants' submissions

report is to give the applicant an opportunity to respond to the issues raised in submissions and to help the Department to evaluate the merits of the project. The applicant is also required to address concerns raised by the Department.

- e) Assessment - After publishing the submissions report, the Department of Planning will complete its assessment of the merits of the project in accordance with relevant government legislation, policies, and guidelines, and prepare an assessment report. Once complete, the Department will publish the assessment report online and ask the consent authority to determine the project.
- f) Determine DA – Depending on the proposal particulars, the number of submissions and Statutory Authority Responses, the SSD may be determined by the Independent Planning Commission, the Minister, or his/her delegate. In some cases, there may be additional steps in the SSD process, including amendments to the application and public hearings.

Report

1. Resourcing implications for staff

Throughout the steps detailed above, there is a regular and constant interaction with Council including:

- requests for attendance by Council staff at pre-lodgement meetings;
- requests for attendance by Council staff at State-led Design Review Panel meetings (pre- and post-lodgement);
- requests for ownership details (for notification purposes);
- assessment by Council Planners of detailed proposals including referrals to internal specialists, noting accompanying plans and technical documentation is typically voluminous;
- responding to queries from the community;
- preparation of a submission (within either 14 or 28 days);
- review of an applicants' response to a submission, and the preparation of a further response;
- input into preparation of draft conditions of consent if requested by the Department;
- calculation of relevant developer contributions;
- review of the DPHI assessment report;
- attendance at any public meetings of the IPC (when relevant); and
- post-determination matters including vegetation, landscape, public art, public access, and infrastructure matters including stormwater and associated road works.

No fee is paid to Council for its role and input to the SSD process. Further, the professional involvement by Council's planning and technical staff is made particularly difficult given the expectation that such input is provided within a 14- or 28-day period. Response to an SSD typically involves staff from various departments of Council and requires careful consideration given the scale and potential impact of development that is often proposed.

Council acknowledges its role in providing for more efficient housing delivery processes. However, the changing SSD planning pathways represent an effective cost-shifting to Local

Government if Council and community feedback and participation is to be meaningful, collaborative, and are to add value to the process. In Council's experience, it is evident that Departmental planners rely on Council staff who have local knowledge and expertise, given the place-based sensitivities of development assessment. Meaningful feedback (including conditions that don't defer resourcing and material consideration to after a consent has been issued) requires thought and careful assessment. In the interests of expedience, especially when local knowledge is not utilised, there can be a tendency to defer material considerations to conditions, which may represent real and avoidable challenges after a consent is issued.

2. Minister's Statement of Expectations

On 1 July 2024, the NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces made a new Statement of Expectations Order under the Environmental Planning and Assessment (EP&A) Act 1979, which sets the expected performance for all NSW councils in relation to planning and development matters.

This Order sets new benchmarks for Council performance on development assessment, planning proposals, and strategic planning.

To promote the meeting of the Expectation Order, the Department of Planning, Housing, and Infrastructure (DPHI) launched the NSW Council League Table on 11 July 2024. The League Table comprises an interactive dashboard on the DPHI's website, which presents data on lodgement and assessment timeframes for DAs for all NSW councils and monitors that performance.

On 6 March 2025, Council received a letter from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, stating that within the first six months of monitoring Council's performance, Council had not met the benchmark timeframes for development application assessment performance. The Minister advised that Council had 28 days to prepare an endorsed "action plan" to identify improvements to its DA assessment performance. A report was considered by Council at its meeting of 24 March 2025, in which an action plan was endorsed, and significant elements of this are already underway.

Council's "action plan" was conveyed to the Minister within the specified time frame. On 15 May 2025, Council received a response confirming acceptance of Council's endorsed action plan. It is noted that since January 2025, North Sydney Council's League Table results have systematically improved on a monthly basis.

The need to respond to an unknown number of SSD's within a 14-day period will have a significant impact on Council's ability to achieve the objectives of its action plan.

3. North Sydney's Character

The well-established character of many parts of North Sydney comprises a complex relationship between landscape and tree canopy, heritage, views, vistas, topography, and streetscapes, which are often of a modest scale. It is a character that is much loved and valued and informs Council's strategic planning vision and direction. Managing change, one of the

principal purposes of the development assessment process, is particularly challenging in North Sydney, especially in the context of the accelerated process as is foreshadowed by current NSW Government proposals.

4. Community Engagement and Expectations

North Sydney has a long and proud history of genuine community engagement. Whilst the consultation that occurs as part of the development assessment process is somewhat limited as it is constrained by the EP&A Act, 1979 (with a requisite expectation of a 40-day determination for the majority of DAs), engagement remains important in the North Sydney community. In this context, the imposition of 14-day notification periods without any allowance for extensions or late submissions for SSD development will impact on the value of community involvement in the state-managed assessment process.

Given these timeframes, it will not be possible to report submissions to Council as has been the case on some occasions in the past.

5. Housing Delivery Authority (HDA)

In December 2024, by Ministerial Order, the Housing Delivery Authority (HDA) was created. The HDA offers a planning pathway for large residential and mixed-use developments to be assessed as SSD, or SSD with a concurrent rezoning. This pathway, which can now include an amendment of planning controls/rezoning, was not previously available via an application being declared as State Significant Development.

The HDA's role is to evaluate proposals submitted through an expression of interest process and recommend to the Minister whether they should be declared as SSD. Following the Ministerial declaration as an SSD, all proposals will undergo a merit assessment process (as described earlier in this report) prior to determination. The Department undertakes the assessment, and the IPC, Minister or delegate, then determines declared applications.

Since its inception in January 2025, 10 proposals/sites within North Sydney have been considered by the HAD, with five of these declared as SSD, three not declared, and two were deferred to investigate alternative pathways. A list of these can be accessed at; <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/housing/housing-delivery-authority>.

In addition to these, there are a further 10 applications within North Sydney that had already been declared SSD prior to the formulation of the HDA.

A table of the sites, application summary, and current status is provided on the next few pages. Note that in some cases there are multiple concurrent applications on the same site.

Ref No	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	DATES & STATUS	# DWELLINGS PROPOSED	COMMENT
SSD-70617459	378 Pacific Highway Crows Nest	Mixed-use development. Infill affordable housing. 31 storeys. 4-storey commercial/retail podium, 5 basement levels for parking.	SEARs issued 5/24 Exhibition concluded 9/12/24 Response to submissions	114	Planning controls recently amended under Crows Nest TOD.
SSD 79240233	378 Pacific Highway Crows Nest	Mixed-use development. Infill affordable housing. 40 storeys. 3 storey commercial/retail podium, 5 basement levels for parking.	SEARs issued 15/1/25	156	Planning controls recently amended under Crows Nest TOD. 10% affordable housing req'd.
SSD-62363217	105-153 Miller Street North Sydney	Build to rent (BTR). Adaptive reuse of existing 14-storey building for a mixed-use development of 340 build-to-rent housing and 2,500sqm of retail space fronting Miller Street.	SEARs issued 20/9/24 Prepare EIS	340	2 other DAs currently being assessed for the site, for commercial and tertiary education purposes.
SSD-72980712	132 Arthur St North Sydney	BTR. Demolish existing building & construct mixed-use BTR & hotel accommodation development of 225 BTR units, 240 hotel rooms, & retail with 3 levels of basement car parking.	SEARs issued 19/7/24 Prepare EIS	225	Also put forward to HDA 7/3/25 (150 dwellings + hotel).
SSD-61000021	146 Arthur St North Sydney	Construction of 46-storey BTR building with a maximum height of 155m of 390 units, ground floor retail, & basement parking.	SEARs issued 22/7/24 Exhibition concluded 12/12/24 Response to submissions prepared.	390	Also put forward to HDA 7/3/25 (300 dwellings).

Ref No	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	DATES & STATUS	# DWELLINGS PROPOSED	COMMENT
SSD-75662958	497-521 Pac Hwy Crows Nest	Mixed-use development. Crows Nest OSD Site A, amending concept SSDA.	SEARs issued 31/1/25 Prepare EIS	452	
SSD-79658964	270 Pac Hwy Crows Nest	BTR. Demolish existing commercial building. Construct 16-storey mixed-use building incl 3-storey non-residential podium, 13 storeys of BTR units, & basement parking.	SEARs issued 31/1/25 Prepare EIS	172	Re-zoned prior to Crows Nest TOD for purposes of commercial building.
SSD-78073736	153 & 157 Walker St North Sydney	BTR. Demolish existing building. Construct mixed-use building with a height of 186.11m: ground floor retail, hotel on levels 1-8, BTR units on levels 9-45, & residential amenities /plant at levels 46 & 47.	SEARs issued 10/1/25 Prepare EIS	481	Note multiple SSDs.
SSD-82599709	153 & 157 Walker St North Sydney	Mixed-use development. 150 guest room hotel, 300 apartments, 2 retail/commercial floors. Separate from concurrent planning proposal to permit shop-top housing & amend max height RL215m to RL238m (~ 50 storeys)	SEARs requested 28/3/25	300	Note multiple SSD + HDA. Concurrent re-zoning req'd.
Proposals considered by the HDA					
HDA-232597	601 Pac Hwy St Leonards	Mixed-use development. Construction of 50-storey shop-top housing.	HDA briefing 19/2/25	600	Re-zoned for 40-storey commercial under CN TOD 12/24. Rezoning req'd to facilitate approval.

Ref No	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	DATES & STATUS	# DWELLINGS PROPOSED	COMMENT
HDA-232546	Rangers Road & Yeo Street Neutral Bay	Mixed use development. No further details on scale/height.	HDA briefing 19/2/25	90	Site recently re-zoned to 6 & 8 storeys. 2 recent applications & associated appeals were withdrawn to facilitate inclusion in HDA process.
HDA-234993	275 Alfred St North Sydney	Mixed use development. 3-storey podium comprising approx. 1,350sqm commercial, retail, & 160 residential units (approx. 35 storeys)	HDA briefing 7/3/25	160	Site currently subject of a (State-led) planning proposal (~24 storeys).
HDA-233741	5 Blue St North Sydney	Mixed-use development. Proposed concurrent re-zoning & redevelopment for shop-top housing, incl. 335 dwellings, 170 for affordable housing. Height not specified.	HDA briefing 24/3/25	335	Concurrent planning proposal as re-zoning req'd.
HDA-233796	15 Blue St North Sydney	Mixed-use development. 1,200sqm retail floor space, 200 residential units, new public plaza & at-grade connection to North Sydney station. Height not specified.	HDA briefing 24/3/25	200	Concurrent planning proposal as re-zoning req'd.
HDA-237320	19, 21, 23, & 25-33 Chandos St St Leonards	Mixed-use development (39 storeys). 182 apartments with 8% as affordable housing, 26 serviced apartments, ground floor commercial GFA.	HDA briefing 4.4.25	182	LEP height limit recently increased under CN TOD to 56m. Proposal will seek ~125m height.

Ref No	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	DATES & STATUS	# DWELLINGS PROPOSED	COMMENT
HDA-213902	153 & 157 Walker St North Sydney	Mixed-use development.	HDA briefing 19/2/25	300	Has proceeded to SSD-82599709. 300 dwellings under the SSD.
Recently determined SSD applications					
SSD-494722 13	50-88 Parraween St & 59-67 Gerard St Cremorne	Seniors living & aged care facility. Construction of seniors living development incl. 58 independent living units & 41 residential aged care facility beds within 3 x 4-storey buildings, & a 7 storey building.	Approved by IPC 4/4/25	58 independent living units & 41 aged care beds	
SSD-671754 65	173-179 Walker St & 11-17 Hampden Rd North Sydney	Residential. Construction of 2 residential flat buildings (30 & 12 storeys). 239 dwellings with 5 basement parking levels.	Approved 1/4/25	239	Increased height and density achieved via SEPP In-fill Affordable Housing provisions.
SSD-668262 07	391-423 Pac Hwy, 3-15 Falcon St & Alexander St Crows Nest	Five Ways. Mixed-use development. Infill affordable housing. 22-storey with commercial & residential uses.	Approved 23/12/24	188	Increased height and density achieved via SEPP In-fill Affordable Housing provisions.

6. Developers' Response to Low and Midrise Housing Reforms

Most applications lodged under the new Low to Mid Rise Housing changes will be Local Development, assessed by Council and determined by either the North Sydney Local Planning Panel or the Sydney North Planning Panel. To date, there has been some demonstrated interest in utilising the uplift offer by these controls:

- An application for a five-storey residential development in Murdoch Street Cremorne has been withdrawn in the earliest stages of assessment having been lodged utilising the build to rent provisions, which provided the opportunity for the additional floor above

the four-storeys anticipated by Council's controls. It is understood that the proponent intends to submit a fresh application utilising the low to midrise planning controls.

- An existing court-issued approval for a four-storey residential development in Yeo Street Neutral Bay potentially being amended to six storeys, utilising the low to midrise reforms.

If these applications are received (and no doubt others will follow), they will be notified in accordance with Council's usual practices and will likely attract significant interest. The need to process these complex applications within the timeframes required to meet League Table requirements adds to the pressure placed on staff to respond to the significant number of SSD applications listed above.

7. Planning And Policy Implications

This report is not intended to provide a detailed assessment and analysis of each SSD proposal identified above, however, the general nature of many of the proposals clearly challenges the existing statutory framework, State Government's Metropolitan Plan, or Council's adopted policy position including the NSW Government assured Local Strategic Planning Statement. Two particularly concerning issues are outlined below.

7a. Employment Function of Centres

As of 2 May 2025, five HDA proposals and four BTR proposals have been lodged on land zoned E2 Commercial Core in the North Sydney LGA. In addition, an SSD is progressing for a site specifically earmarked for commercial development at 270 Pacific Highway, Crows Nest. These proposals significantly reduce commercial floor space on key employment sites, which will affect the long-term role of the North Sydney CBD and the St Leonards Strategic Centre.

The table below shows the estimated loss in employment capacity (i.e., potential jobs lost) from these proposals, compared to the number of dwellings proposed. Job losses are based on a standard employment density of 1 job per 10 sqm of Net Saleable Area (NSA), using the following floor space efficiency assumptions:

- GBA to GFA: 50% for ground level, 85% for upper levels
- GFA to NSA: 90%

HDA recommended for SSD declaration			
Site	Estimated Commercial jobs lost	Commercial reference scheme applied	Proposed dwellings (HDA)
153-157 Walker Street, North Sydney	4,084	Land & Environment Court approved 46-storey commercial tower (2024)	300 units
5 Blue Street, North Sydney	1,413	Internal modelling with compliant LEP/DCP controls	335 units

15 Blue Street, North Sydney	3,317	Internal modelling with compliant LEP/DCP controls	200 units
275 Alfred Street, North Sydney *	467	Existing commercial building	160 units
601 Pacific Highway, St Leonards	5,018	Planning Proposal (2024)	600 units
Total HDA		14,299 jobs	1,595 units

* The estimated commercial job loss for 275 Alfred St North Sydney reflects current employment capacity of the existing 18-storey commercial building, calculated using a conservative ratio of 18m² per job.

Build To Rent proposals on sites zoned for commercial development (SEPP provisions)			
Site	Estimated Commercial jobs lost	Commercial reference scheme applied	Proposed dwellings (BTR)
105-153 Miller Street, North Sydney	4,040	SSDA commercial tower (2025) – under review	340 units
132 Arthur Street, North Sydney	2,868	Internal modelling with compliant LEP/DCP controls	225 units
146 Arthur Street, North Sydney	2,908	Internal modelling with compliant LEP/DCP controls	390 units
153-157 Walker Street, North Sydney	4,084	Land & Environment Court approved 46-story commercial tower (2024)	389 units
270-272 Pacific Highway Crows Nest	1,681	Land & Environment Court approved 13-storey commercial tower	172 units
Total BTR		15,582 jobs	1,516 units

In total, the estimated job loss on land zoned E2 Commercial Core or earmarked for non-residential development as a result of HDA and BTR proposals is approximately **25,797 jobs**, with **2,722 dwellings** proposed in return.

(Note: where multiple proposals have been lodged for 153–157 Walker Street North Sydney, the HDA scheme has been used for calculation purposes.)

7b. Proper Use of Planning Provisions

Particular attention is drawn to the site at 19-33 Chandos Street St Leonards (HDA reference 237320). This site was the subject of the (State-led) Crows Nest TOD rezoning which was finalised in November 2024. The site received an uplift in maximum building height from 31m to 64m (a 106% increase).

The HAD, in considering the proposal (for 39 storeys or approximately 125m), noted that an SSD pathway is already available to the site (as came into effect with the TOD precinct rezoning) and that the Department should consider the site-specific merit of additional uplift as part of a clause 4.6 variation.

Whilst there is no numerical upper limit to the application of the use of clause 4.6, the potential use of clause 4.6 to vary a development standard from 64m to 125m (a further 95% increase) would have widespread and deeply concerning implications for the proper use of planning controls across the State.

Aside from the obvious conflict with the recent strategic precinct wide re-zoning exercise, there have been various principles and tests that the Land and Environment Court have applied when considering applications to vary a development standard, against which, a variation of this magnitude would simply not be possible to reconcile. The priority to delivery housing is understood, however, it must not come at the expense of community expectations and confidence in the established statutory planning framework.

8. Financial and resource implications.

As noted above, there are at least 16 foreseeable SSD applications in the pipeline which will require some form of response from Council.

While some of these applications would be SSDs in their own right, a significant proportion would have come to Council for assessment, with appropriate fees being paid. For example, the now-withdrawn DAs for the 1-7 Rangers Road site attracted fees of around \$210,000, of which around \$100,000 constituted the planning reform levy. However, when the SSD for the site is lodged, there will be no compensation paid to Council for any assessment needing to be provided by Council. Ideally, Council should be compensated for the time spent in providing its considered response, even if that response is not as detailed as a full assessment.

9. Council's Response

It has been identified that, to manage the challenges that HDAs will present, a different approach to Council's previous response to SSDs is required. The imposition of a 14-day response time which mirrors the general notification period will not give adequate time to respond meaningfully or comprehensively.

The focus needs to be at the earliest stages of the SSD process. This is at the time that SEARs are issued for the proposal. However, the project detail at this stage is often minimal and at best, conceptual. For example, SEARs have been issued for the Rangers Road site yet the only information available on the Department's web site is the request for SEARs, the actual SEARs, a concurrent rezoning request, and a basic description ('Shop top housing development, Rangers Road/Yeo Street'). No plans or other documents appear.

In this example, considerable work was done in the assessment of the now withdrawn applications, and it is envisaged that much of this will be applicable to the new application.

However, there is no material insight into what this proposal will be nor the issues that it will subsequently present.

It is acknowledged that this approach is far from optimal. However, given Council's current and ongoing commitments to reductions in DA determination times, the potential instigation of 14 day-notification periods and the need to coordinate assessment and feedback from a range of Council's business units, comprehensive and meaningful feedback after the SSD project is notified to Council will be extremely challenging.

This report therefore recommends that, to somewhat ameliorate these challenges, and to ensure that meaningful input is provided, the NSW Government assist to implement its own fast track approach, by resourcing Council's timely and informed feedback capacity.

Consultation requirements

Community engagement is not required.

Financial/Resource Implications

The progression of numerous State Significant Developments has a direct impact on Council's resources in the form of staff capacity. It is recommended that resourcing (to fund additional staff) be sought from the NSW Government to assist its processes being more successful.

Legislation

The issues raised in this report have been considered in the context of the relevant provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979.