

## 10.14.Development Assessment Performance - 2025/26 Quarter 1

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<b>ATTACHMENTS</b>	Nil
<b>CSP LINK</b>	<b>Outcome 8 – An effective, accountable and sustainable Council that serves the community</b> G1. Develop clear goals, create a plan to achieve them, and track progress with transparency and honesty G2. Put community needs at the core of everything we do and deliver excellent customer service G5. Exercise regulatory compliance responsibilities diligently to protect the environment and support our community G6. Commit to efficiency and value for money in service delivery G7. Build a resilient, inclusive and empowered workforce that is committed to delivering community outcomes

### PURPOSE:

This report provides an overview and analysis of Council's development assessment performance for quarter 1 of the 2025/26 year as measured by the NSW Government's Planning League Table.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- In July 2024, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces issued a Ministerial Order of Expectations requiring all NSW Councils to meet certain development assessment targets.
- For North Sydney Council, this included an expectation that in 2024/25, development applications be determined, on average, within 115 days and that in subsequent years, this target timeframe would be systematically reduced.
- Council received a letter from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces on 6 March 2025 stating that North Sydney Council was not currently meeting the set targets, and that a Council-endorsed "action plan along with an associated program to swiftly improve performance" was to be submitted within 28 days of that letter. That action plan was considered and endorsed by Council on 24 March 2025.
- The Minister subsequently responded on 14 May 2025, acknowledging Council's commitment to process improvements, and advised that Council's progress would be further reviewed in three months (mid-August 2025).
- Council's development assessment performance since January 2025 has improved markedly and is now comfortably in compliance with the 105-day target for Quarter 1 of 2025/26.

- Lodgement times for DAs are also subject to a performance target which, this financial year, is seven days (down from 14 in 2024/25). It is pleasing to report that Council is currently tracking at six days, and also in compliance with this component of the Minister's expectations.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- 1. THAT** this report be noted.

## **Background**

In July 2024, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces issued a Statement of Expectations Order requiring all NSW Councils to meet certain development assessment targets. For North Sydney Council, this included an expectation that Development Applications (DAs) would be determined, on average, within 115 days after lodgement. This is tracked via the NSW Planning League Table and updated on a monthly basis. The Order sequentially reduces this target as follows:

- 105 days from 1 July 2025;
- 95 days from 1 July 2026; and
- 85 days from 1 July 2027.

As previously reported, Council staff have actively embarked on various initiatives to reduce DA determination times. Whilst this remains work-in-progress, Council has achieved significant improvements over the last three years as illustrated in Diagram 1 on the next page and more particularly, over the last eight months.

This report details Council's League Table performance for Quarter 1 of the 2025/26 year.

## **Report**

Council considered a report at its meeting of 10 March 2025 which outlined Council's performance for the first two quarters of 2024/25 as well as proactive initiatives to improve this performance.

Following this, a letter was received on 6 March 2025 from the Minister for Planning, stating that North Sydney Council was not meeting these targets and that a Council-endorsed "action plan along with an associated program to swiftly improve performance", was to be prepared and submitted within 28 days of that letter.

An action plan, which was being developed and rolled out before the Minister's letter, was reported and formally endorsed by Council on 21 March 2025.

A response dated 14 May 2025 was received from the Minister, acknowledging and thanking Council for the preparation of the action plan and indicating a further review of performance would occur in three months. At the date of writing, this letter had not been received.

North Sydney was one of six metropolitan Councils to receive a performance improvement letter, with four of those being unable to satisfy the Minister's requirements. Those four are now being "managed" by the Department of Planning.

## **DA Determination Times**

Council's performance since January 2025 has been characterised by consistent month on month improvement as measured by the League Table (see Diagram 1). Whilst there is still work to be done, the improvement trajectory over the last eight months has been both significant and sustained. For the first quarter of 2025/26, Council is averaging 81 days

determination time for DAs. This is an excellent result and well under the 105-day timeframe imposed by the Ministerial Order. It represents a 47% improvement compared with the same period last year.

Council's historic performance since 2022/23 is also included to provide further context for the recent gains and improvements achieved.

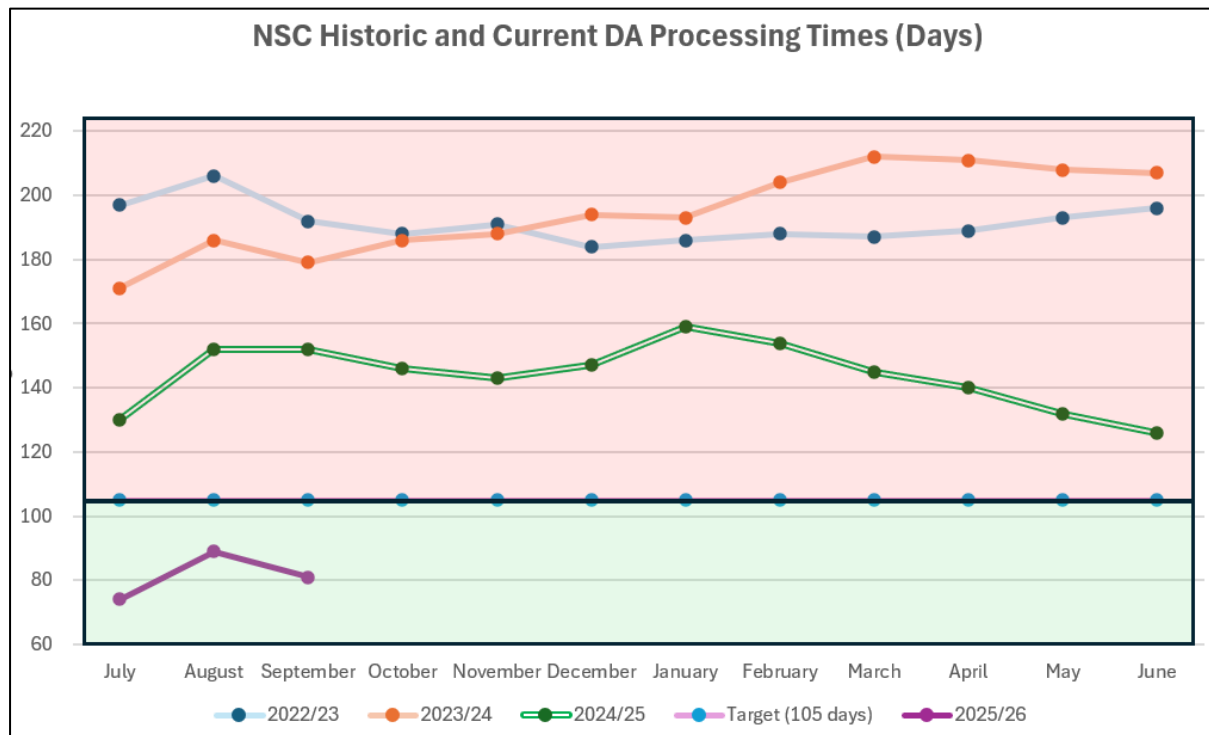


Diagram 1 – Historic and Current DA Average Assessment Days for NSC (Source – NSW Planning League Table)

## Lodgement Times

Lodgement statistics are also captured by the League Table. The lodgement statistic is the number of days between the DA being submitted to the NSW Planning Portal by the applicant, and the time taken by Council to qualitatively assess the completeness of such application prior to accepting it as being formally “lodged”. An application is taken to be lodged on the day on which the applicable fees are paid. In 2024/25, the lodgement target was 14 days.

Diagram 2 below shows that in 2024/25, Council was not meeting that expectation and finished that financial year with an average of 39 days. This was a significant improvement on earlier results which peaked at 78 days in July 2024 but still significantly over the 14-day target for 2024/25.

That target of 14 days has been reduced to 7 days for the 2025/26 year. The results thus far are encouraging and also reflect the significant work done in this area by Council staff. North Sydney Council is now averaging 6 days for lodgements which is an enormous improvement (90%) on the same period in 2024/25.

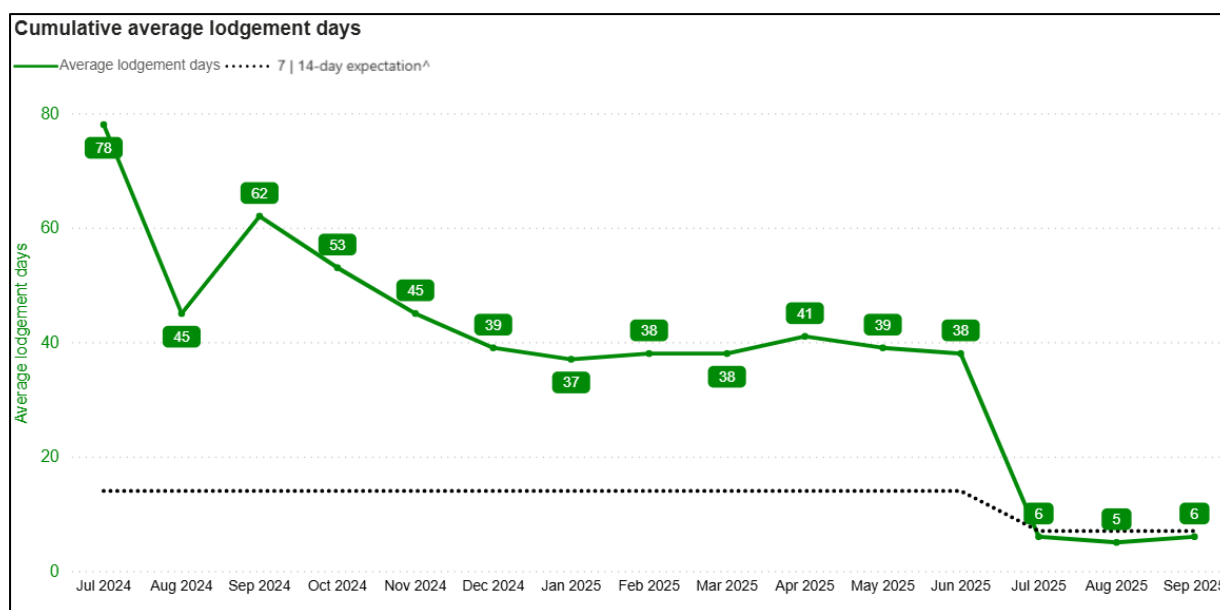


Diagram 2 – Average Lodgement Days for NSC (Source – NSW Planning League Table)

### Further Enhancements/Improvements

Council staff continue to work on improving efficiency and performance to maintain and enhance compliance with the NSW Government's League Table, as well as to maintain and where possible, improve customer service in the assessment and determination of DAs. These initiatives are summarised in the previous report to Council on 24 March 2025 ([link here](#)) which continue to be the road map for sustained improvement in this area of Council's operations.

### Consultation requirements

Community engagement is not required.

### Financial/Resource Implications

The ongoing improvement initiatives and efficiencies are being driven within existing resources and budgets.

### Legislation

The requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and associated Ministerial directions and powers are relevant to this matter.