

PLANNING FOR PEOPLE

A COMMUNITY CHARTER FOR GOOD PLANNING IN NSW

Our vision

A planning system that thinks of both today and tomorrow; is built on fairness, equity and the concept of Ecologically Sustainable Development; guides quality development to the right places; ensures poorly designed developments and those in the wrong place don't get built; and protects the things that matter, from open spaces, bushland and productive agricultural land to much-loved historic town centres and buildings.

Good planning is governed by the following principles:

- The well-being of the whole community, the environment and future generations across regional, rural and urban NSW;
- Effective and genuine public participation in strategic planning and development decisions;
- An open, accessible, transparent and accountable, corruption-free planning system;
- The integration of land use planning with the provision of infrastructure and the conservation of our natural, built and cultural environment; and,
- Objective, evidence-based assessment of strategic planning and development proposals.

These principles will guide a planning system that:

- Respects, values and conserves our natural environment and the services it provides;
- Facilitates world-class urban environments with well-designed resource-efficient housing, public spaces and solar access that meet the needs of residents, workers and pedestrians;
- Provides housing choice, including affordable housing and sufficient housing for the disadvantaged, in a diversity of locations;
- Celebrates, respects and conserves our cultural (including Aboriginal) and built heritage;
- Protects and sustainably manages our natural resources, including our water resources, fragile coastlines and irreplaceable agricultural land for the benefit of present and future generations while maintaining or enhancing ecological processes and biological diversity;
- Retains and protects our crown lands, natural areas, landscapes and flora and fauna for the benefit of the people of NSW; and,
- Gives local and regional communities a genuine and meaningful voice in shaping their local area and region, its character and the location, height and density of housing. Provides certainty and fairness to communities.

I support the Charter:

Signed: Date:

Name:

Address:

Email: *The principles are interpreted overleaf:*

The well-being of the whole community, the environment and future generations across regional, rural and urban NSW

We call for a planning system that integrates short and long term social, environmental and economic considerations to create lasting benefits for communities, now and in the future. This is the concept of Ecologically Sustainable Development (ESD) as currently defined in the *Protection of the Environment Administration Act 1991*. ESD must be the overarching objective of the planning system. *For more information about ESD refer to the Charter Companion document.*

Effective and genuine public participation in strategic planning and development decisions

Everyone has the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. People affected by a planning or development proposal have the right, knowledge and experience to contribute to the final decision. The role of planning authorities includes facilitating community input into the preparation of strategic plans prior to public exhibition and genuine, open dialogue between stakeholders. The role of consent authorities is to consider public comments on development proposals and ensure compliance by developers.

An open, accessible, transparent and accountable and corruption-free planning system

Decision processes must be transparent and accountable. Decisions must be made in public, respond objectively to issues raised in submissions, provide reasons and be subject to the rules of procedural fairness.

The community's ability to seek review of a decision is important in preventing corruption and poor decision-making. All information considered when

assessing a proposal must be publicly available and accessible prior to the decision being made. So called 'fast-tracking' of development does not benefit the public interest. Anti-corruption measures must be effective and enforceable.

Disproportionate influence from vested financial interests has no place in planning decisions. The ability to lobby decision makers is a democratic right. However, it is inappropriate to allow companies, wealthy individuals or lobbyists a greater level of access than is available to the public.

The integration of land use planning with the provision of infrastructure and the conservation of our natural, built and cultural environment

An integrated approach is the key to achieving the kind of sustainable settlement patterns that are needed now and into the future. This type of approach will allow future planning to maintain the integrity of natural areas, take into account natural hazards and constraints, locate employment and key social infrastructure in accessible locations, and ensure the provision of sustainable infrastructure systems that use less energy and resources.

Objective, evidence-based assessment of strategic planning and development proposals

The foundation stone of a good planning system is a sound knowledge base that is publicly accessible and is updated and maintained by government in the public interest. The current system in which the developer pays for reports, such as environmental impact statements, creates conflicts of interests. Whilst it is equitable for developers to pay for reports, the objectivity of reports must be ensured by requiring professional standards and keeping the appointment of consultants at arm's length from developers.

This Charter is accompanied by a Companion document that details how this Charter could be implemented.

© August 2014 **Planning for People: A Community Charter for Good Planning in NSW** has been prepared by a working group of community organisations in consultation with the Better Planning Network, Community Councillors Network, Inner Sydney Regional Council for Social Development, National Parks Association of NSW, National Trust of Australia (NSW), Nature Conservation Council of NSW, NSW Heritage Network, Shelter NSW and the Total Environment Centre.
