

4. Local Development Performance Monitoring Report 2007/08

The NSW Department of Planning has recently released the Local Development Performance Monitoring Report for 2007/08. The report provides an overview of development in NSW and provides detailed information from all 152 NSW Councils.

Group Manager, Planning and Environment

BACKGROUND

10 The report provides detailed information on the volume and value of development in NSW, determination times for development applications, delegation and staffing, legal appeals and reviews and post development certificates.

The report provides not only a State-wide overview but results for each individual council allowing further analysis of the information to assist in initiatives in best practice development assessment.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Since 2006/07 NSW councils have been supplying the Department of Planning with detailed information on each development application and Section 96 modification determined by Council, as well as complying development certificates. The detailed report will be tabled at the Council meeting and is also available via the Department of Planning website at www.planning.nsw.gov.au.

20 For the 2007/08 period councils were provided with a template by the Department which included 20 mandatory fields and 10 optional fields. Some of the data provided was collected manually which significantly impacted on staff resources.

The Department has been working with councils and major software companies to improve the automation of the data extraction process.

Council has now received this software package, however significant staff resources will need to be allocated to input the raw data for the period from the end of the 2007/08 reporting period until now.

CLARIFICATION OF NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS APPROVED IN 2007/08 REPORTING PERIOD

30 The report identifies Council as determining a total of 481 applications when the actual figure from the 2007/08 period was 818 applications.

A data input error has been confirmed and will be corrected in the next Department of Planning Report.

Further examination of the data reported by the Department has revealed that it covers the full range of development types assessed by both Planning and Environmental Health staff and can be considered to be a true representative sample for analysis and comparative purposes.

RESULTS AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH SIMILAR COUNCILS

Bega Valley Shire Council is one of 33 councils identified as a Group 4 Council. This classification is used by the Department of Local Government as a way of comparing councils that share similar characteristics including: population, urban and rural land mix, total land area, operating budgets and staff numbers. The table below provides a comparison of results with other Group 4 councils of interest, the Group 4 average and the State average.

Local Development Performance Monitoring – 2007/08 Comparisons (Group 4)

| Comparator | Bega Valley | Eurobodalla | Port Stephens | Wagga Wagga | Shellharbour | Group 4 (Averages) | NSW Total |
|--|---|-------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------|
| No. of Development Applications (DAs) Determined | 481 (as reported) 818 (actual) | 812 | 1,096 | 691 | 580 | 654 | 82,404 |
| DA Determination Times: | | | | | | | |
| - Mean Gross (days) * | 63 | 82 | 81 | 81 | 57 | 64 | 74 |
| - Mean Net (days) ^ | 56 | 32 | 31 | 42 | 40 | 39 | 46 |
| No. of Complying Development Certificates (CDC) issued | 26 | 4 | 58 | 109 | 189 | 86 | 10,619 |
| Total Estimated Value of approved DAs | \$50m (as reported) \$85m (estimated actual) | \$96m | \$153m | \$123m | \$109m | \$103m | \$21b |
| No. of s96 modifications issued | 92 (as reported) 97 (actual) | 156 | 171 | 70 | 110 | 98 | 15,313 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|------|-----|-----|------|------|-------|
| Determination Time for s96 modifications (Mean Gross) | 32 | 38 | 73 | 72 | 39 | 60 | 58 |
| Total Equivalent Full Time (EFT) positions for Development Assessment | 5 | 8.5 | 8 | 4 | 6.6 | 8 | 1,195 |
| No. of DAs Determined per EFT. | 96.2 (as reported) 163.6 (actual) | 95.5 | 137 | 173 | 87.9 | 81.8 | 68.9 |

* The average time taken by a council to determine a DA or s96 modification application when time is measured from the day the application is lodged to the day the application is determined and no days are excluded.

50 ^ The average time taken by a council to determine a DA or s96 modification application when time is measured from the day the application is lodged to the day the application is determined and stop-the-clock time and referral time are deducted.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the data error, the Development Application determination times compared favourably. The narrow gap between gross and nett days was due in part to the shortage of one effective full time (EFT) planning staff for the year, but presents as an excellent result given the significant case load (163.6 DA's per EFT).

The lower number of complying developments remains symptomatic of the environmental and bushfire constraints borne by far south coast councils.

60 The results provide an interesting comparison with the other Group 4 councils and NSW averages. Bega Valley Shire Council's recent purchase of an integrated software solution includes a planning and development package which will greatly assist in the overall automation process, improve efficiency as well as the accuracy and reliability of development data.

The Department of Planning monitoring report forms part of the suite of material used annually in performance reporting to councillors and community.

RECOMMENDATION

The report is submitted for Council's information.