

NSW Planning Portal Agency Reference Group – Quarter 3 meeting

Held on: 10/09/2024 – 10:00 am to 11:00 am

At: Online via Teams

Chaired by: Jane Blakeney, A/Director Communications, Planning and Housing, DPHI

Attended

Cat Donaghy, Customer Service NSW	Nerida Mooney, DPHI
Margaret Kitchner, NSW Rural Fire Service	Liam Alagh, DPHI
Christine Laing, SIRA	Kieran Babich, DPHI
James Martin, DPHI – Alpine	Shantanu Chakraborty, DPHI
Paul Narkle - Ausgrid	Margaret Gomez, DPHI
John Oswald, Ausgrid	Natasha Pindar, DPHI
Elizabeth Owers, NSW Environment and Heritage	Katerina Sotiropoulos, DPHI
Neil Pengilly, NSW Rural Fire Service	Helen Vallance, Housing Taskforce
Mark Willoughby, DPHI - Alpine	Caitlin Williams, DPHI

Apologies

Alan Bawden, NSW Rural Fire Service	Richard Potts, SIRA
Yin Man, Customer Service NSW	Matt Press, Building Commission NSW
Damian Pfeiffer, Transport for NSW	Nicole Watts, Transport for NSW

Material

A copy of the presentation to the Reference Group is attached with these minutes for reference:
NSW Planning Portal Reference Group - Agency – Quarter 3 _Presentation_10092024.pdf

Actions

ID	Action	Responsible	Due date
A24.3.1	Provide the department with information on the customer support tickets that were not properly actioned.	NSW Rural Fire Service	30/09/2024
A24.3.2	Heritage NSW to share a copy of the sludge audit with the Housing Taskforce (via DPHI)	Heritage NSW	20/09/2024

Minutes

Update on NSW Planning Portal Customer First Program

- The department provided an update on the 6 NSW Planning Portal Customer First co-design workshops, held in July and August 2024. 232 attendees from 92 councils participated in these sessions.
- In September the department also connected with a broader range key stakeholders to obtain their feedback on the Portal, including:
 - Urban Development Institute of Australia
 - Planning Institute of Australia
 - Association of Consulting Surveyors
 - Environment and Planning Law Association
 - technology vendors.
- The main categories of feedback received from councils were shared with agencies, who confirmed that they had similar feedback based on their experiences. Some additional items were:
 - changes to building reforms will have downstream application impacts and this is something that is being considered as part of the reforms (Building Commission)
 - agencies assist councils with the processing of concurrences and referrals which is an additional resource burden for staff (RFS)
 - customer support tickets were closed without the matter being properly resolved (RFS)
 - councils are submitting items under the incorrect clause which causes processing delays (Heritage NSW)
 - councils are having difficulty editing or adding new documents to concurrence and referral cases which results in information being provided outside of the system (Heritage NSW)
- RFS advised that there are no knowledge management guides for specific agencies available for councils currently and that this may assist with their use of the Portal. The materials are currently for how to use the service and not agency specific requirements. The department advised that they were looking to make improvements to the portal to minimise the need for additional support guidance or training.
- The member representing DPHI – Alpine provided a personal anecdote on his experience as an applicant and supported a revision to the language used in the post consent certificate services.

- The department advised that they would be continuing discussions with stakeholders, including agencies, to identify and validate any other pain points.
- The department proposed utilising the NSW Planning Portal Agency Reference Group to assist with the review of the concurrence and referral process.
- Heritage NSW asked how the department was going to ensure that the user experience improvements needing to be addressed would not be impacted by any policy changes.
Response: The department advised that the program would be progressively implementing small user experience improvements in an agile way. The user experience is a key consideration of any potential changes to the digital services.
- The Housing Taskforce team provided an update on the work currently being undertaken to progress the building of more home completions between 2025 – 2027. The taskforce will not be duplicating work already underway in this area and emphasised that the NSW Planning Portal is fundamental to achieving the targets.

Customer support update

- An update was provided on the level of open customer support requests. Members were advised that the team remains focused on reducing the number of tickets.
- The department advised that the team receives many calls about the eConstruction pathway, which takes a significant amount of time and resourcing for staff to address. The department will continue to work with the Building Commission NSW to resolve some of these issues and roadblocks.
- Members were reminded that they can escalate any outstanding tickets to Margaret Gomez at Margaret.Gomez@planning.nsw.gov.au.
- The department provided an update on the new 'Support Hub' which will host all customer support and training resources for all stakeholders. This will include short videos, quick reference guides (QRGs) and FAQs. The content will be migrated to the new format in 3 phases, with the first targeted for end of October 2024.
- Members were advised that there would be opportunity to participate in testing of this new format.
- Members were shown a mock-up of the page layout and asked to provide their early input into the design:
 - The filter lists should display the top 4 most frequently used options and then the remainder in alphabetical order (5 votes to 1)
 - The filter categories included in the mock-up address the main search options the members would use, being user type as the most popular.
 - The RFS suggested a filter for 'address'.
- The Rural Fire Service advised that having multiple windows open could be problematic to manage. The department is considering additional improvements to how this information is accessed from within the digital services.

Agency backlog items

- The department provided members with an overview of the process for collecting and managing the programs' backlog items.

- Members were provided with the existing backlog as reported by agencies. If there were any additional items for inclusion on the backlog, members were asked to forward these to Kieran.Babich@environment.nsw.gov.au, along with their contact details, information about the problem and the desired outcome.

Other matters

- The department provided an update on proposed changes to the release communications to include expansion of the contact list via a subscription form, banner image on the NSW Planning Portal dashboard and release showcases.
- Members were encouraged to circulate any program communications with their colleagues to assist with knowledge sharing.
- The department advised members that a new multi-dimension training approach for the NSW Planning Portal digital services was being implemented. This would improve the access to information in a more timely manner.

Upcoming meetings

Next meeting: 12 November 2024