

NSW Planning Portal Industry Reference Group – Quarter 3 meeting

Held on: 11/09/2024 – 1.30pm to 2.30pm

At: Online via Teams

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

Attended

Natalie Allan, MMJ Real Estate	Emma Strickland, Australian Institute of Building Surveyors (AIBS) NSW
Richard Barry, Urbis	
Michelle Blicavs, Australian Consulting Surveyors (ACS) NSW	Matthew Thrum, Ethos Urban
Jill Brookfield, Association of Australian Certifiers (AAC) NSW	Nerida Mooney, DPHI
Tom Forrest, UrbanTaskforce	Kieran Babich, DPHI
Melanie Gibbons, Australian Consulting Surveyors (ACS) NSW	Shantanu Chakraborty, DPHI
Ross Grove, Property Council*	Margaret Gomez, DPHI
Michael Said, Housing Industry Association NSW (HIA)	Yashna Kumar, DPHI
Brian Seidler, Master Builders Association NSW (MBA)	Luke Goldsmith, DPHI*
	Katerina Sotiropoulos, DPHI
	Natasha Pindar, DPHI
	Lisa Walton, DPHI
	Caitlin Williams, DPHI

* Partial attendance

Apologies

Juliet Grant, Planning Institute of Australia NSW (PIA)

Kellie Hassab, Representing Australian Consulting Surveyors NSW

Cathy Towers, Housing Industry Association (HIA) NSW

Material

A copy of the presentation to the Reference Group is attached with these minutes for reference:
NSW Planning Portal Reference Group - Industry - Quarter 3 - Presentation_11092024.pdf.

Actions

ID	Action	Responsible	Due date
I24.3.1	Discuss the feasibility of extending super-user rights to other user types, including certifiers.	Principal Solution Delivery Manager	Q4 2024 meeting
I24.3.2	Review the BASIX fact sheets within the digital service to ensure the content is still accessible.	Principal Solution Delivery Manager	Q4 2024 meeting

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:
 - delays to receiving customer support for BASIX service (HIA NSW)
 - complicated process for applicants using the BASIX service (HIA NSW)
 - the use of the digital services for both planning and building matters made the system difficult to use (UrbanTaskforce)
 - lack of naming convention on the Portal meant different processes for each consent authority / delays to record keeping at consent authority (AIBS)
 - a 'one size fits all' approach is not practical, as each council operates differently
 - ability to supersede / rename documents after determination
 - ability to have multiple representatives acting on behalf of the applicant similar to the major projects functionality (Urbis).
- The department advised that they would be continuing discussions with stakeholders, including industry professionals, to identify and validate any other pain points.

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 (6 votes to 2)
 - The filter categories included in the mock-up address the main search options the members would use, being user type as the most popular.

Development application co-design findings

- The department provided members with an overview of the insights obtained from the DA process discussions at the NSW Planning Portal Customer First co-design workshops.
- Members validated the main pain point themes identified in the discussions with councils and raised the following additional pain points:
 - Variation in the Conditions of consent document and difficulties councils are having using the online format. It was suggested that if there were known workarounds that they should be communicated widely or that aspect of the Portal removed.
 - The PAN is not searchable in Council DA tracking tools as their local systems do not use this reference number. This makes it difficult to track an application via the council DA tracking tools. (Ethos Urban)
- Urban Taskforce recommended that the department consult with larger planning consultancies to obtain their input into the DA process as they are repeat applicants. Ethos Urban requested that they be involved in these discussions.

Workshop: Industry 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 industry professionals. 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.

- Members discussed the benefits and risks of providing super-user access to certifiers as well as councils, in particular the risk to data. This discussion will be continued outside of the reference group.

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, text in the banner 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.
- Members were advised that they can contact Caitlin Williams, Planning and Engagement Manager, for any training requests on email caitlin.williams@planning.nsw.gov.au.
- MMJ Real Estate thanked the department for their positive engagement with NSW Planning Portal users recently, noting that they felt heard and understood.
- AIBS NSW advised that the previous BASIX fact sheets were no longer available within the digital service. The department will review the service and provide a response to AIBS NSW.

Upcoming meetings

Next meeting: 14 November 2024