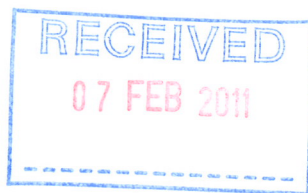


Minister for Planning

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MIN 13063

Mr Steve Old
General Manager
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PO Box 191
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Dear Mr Old *Steve*

United Industry Coalition for Planning Reform “7 Point Reform Agenda”

Thank you for your letter dated 15 December 2010 and the opportunity to meet and discuss reform of Tasmania’s planning system.

My commitment as Minister for Planning is to implement the changes required to make our planning system one that enables rather than creates barriers to sustainable development. The imperative for this is now greater than ever as the GFC Stimulus package spending winds down and the Government faces a tough budget situation. Private investment is critical to sustain economic growth.

As you are aware, there are two major planks to the Government’s reform agenda:

1. Prepare regional land use strategies for the State’s three regions; and
2. Prepare Interim Planning Schemes based on these strategies, a revised Common Key Elements Template (Planning Directive No.1) and statewide planning codes.

While there have been some initial delays, significant progress has been made. The Southern region has received public comment on their strategy document and the North West and Northern Region have recently placed strategy documents on public exhibition. The independent Panel reviewing PDI has advised that it will complete the Template by the end of February 2011. All three regions have commenced work on preparing their Interim Planning Schemes and I expect the North West to submit its Interim Schemes shortly after the Template’s release. The North will follow soon after and the South will submit their Schemes later in the year.

In providing \$2.3 million to the regional groupings of Councils to prepare the strategies and interim schemes, the Government understood the extensive amount of work required and the challenges to be faced in accomplishing such a positive reform initiative. In fact, Councils, their regional bodies and, more recently, the Tasmanian Planning Commission (TPC) are to be congratulated for the energy and commitment with which they have embraced this reform.

While the three projects are now well advanced, the Government has acknowledged that some immediate action was required to progress specific concerns of Coalition members especially in terms of residential codes.

Interim Residential Codes

To this effect, two Planning Directives (No. 3 and No. 4) have been prepared and are currently being formally assessed by the TPC. These Directives cover single residential codes and are intended to apply to existing Planning Schemes.

Notwithstanding the significant work required to tailor and draft specific amendments to particular Schemes, the assessment process is well underway. PD3 has been awaiting legal advice from the Solicitor General and PD4 will come off public exhibition on 24 January 2011 with public hearings to follow as soon as practicable.

As both PDs are in a formal statutory process being managed by independent delegates it is not possible to provide a specific completion date, however, the TPC has advised that both Panels are progressing the assessments as expeditiously as possible.

This addresses Priority 1 of the Coalition's Planning Reform Agenda.

Statewide Planning Codes

As you are aware, one of the aims of planning reform was to produce codes to standardise and make consistent matters of statewide and regional significance. For example, to ensure the single residential code is embraced in new Interim Planning Schemes, it has been included in a package of statewide planning codes currently being drafted by the TPC. The package also includes a multi-residential code and consideration of a commercial code, among others. I am awaiting advice on the timeframe for this work to be completed.

Negotiations will commence shortly with the three regional bodies to have the codes incorporated in Interim Planning Schemes. While I fully expect Councils to embrace the codes in their schemes but in the event that negotiations are unsuccessful, the package will be formally submitted to me as a Planning Directive.

This addresses the Coalition's Priorities 1, 5 and 6.

Ongoing Regional Planning and Implementation

The Government's commitment to planning reform does not end with the production of regional strategies and interim planning schemes but extends to establishing ongoing structures and systems for these strategies and schemes to be implemented, monitored, reviewed and updated.

The two planks of the Government's planning reform program represent fundamental change and will provide the platform for ongoing reform. Realistically, however, implementation and evaluation of the changes made will identify the need for further modifications and improvements to Tasmania's planning system. Planning is not, and cannot be, static – it must be dynamic and responsive to the changing nature of our community and our economy. We must also respond to the national reform program, including Capital City planning as well as introduction of KPIs, electronic development applications and development assessment forums.

Establishing structures and systems for ongoing reform essentially are intended as the third plank in the Government's planning agenda. Given the tight financial situation facing the Government, there is obviously a need for the budget process to work its way through before I can confirm the precise nature of future arrangements.

This initiative will address Priorities 2, 4 and 7 of the Coalition's planning agenda and will support the process currently in place for the Greater Hobart Capital City Plan, which is the Coalition's third Priority.

Engagement, Communication and Education

The final point I wish to make is that underpinning the success of planning reform is effective communication, engagement and education with the multitude of stakeholders involved in the planning system. The Coalition's letter and our meeting established a very positive approach to discussing and resolving planning issues and change.

It is fundamental for us to continue in this direction. We can all learn from, and contribute to, the change process underway and I look forward to maintaining a positive dialogue with the Coalition and its members. Whilst this response aligns the Government's planning reform agenda with the Coalition's priorities, I realise that it may not satisfy the timeframes outlined in your seven point plan. As you would appreciate finalizing timeframes is dependent on the outcome of the 2011/12 budget process, negotiations with Local Government and statutory assessment processes. I would be pleased to address this with you in more detail at our future meetings.

Yours sincerely



Bryan Green MP
Minister for Planning

c.c. Hon David Bartlett MP, Premier
Hon. Lara Giddings MP, Treasurer