

Western Australia: Major Planning Reforms to Drive Economic Recovery

May 2020

Premier Mark McGowan today announced major planning reforms to assist in driving economic recovery across West Australia following COVID-19. The plans which include 26 key reforms of the State's planning system are labelled as a once-in-a-lifetime reform.

The McGowan Government's planning reforms are the culmination of three years of extensive consultation, which are now being urgently brought forward to support the wider economic response to the pandemic, protect WA jobs and create new job opportunities

The first initiative will introduce a new development application process for significant, job-creating projects for the next 18 months to provide immediate support for the State's economic recovery.

In the short-term, the Western Australian Planning Commission will be the decision-maker for such projects, with plans to create a new Special Matters Development Assessment Panel after the 18-month period based on a similar model.

A significant development would be defined as:

- development proposals with an estimated cost of \$30 million or more; or
- residential dwelling proposals with 100 or more dwellings; or
- commercial developments with a minimum 20,000sqm of commercial floor space; or
- regional or tourism projects that may not meet the criteria but are considered important to assist in the COVID-19 recovery.

The planning reforms will include initiatives that respond to community and stakeholder feedback, such as:

- abolish change of use approvals for a number of different types of small business, which is often required by local government to start up or adapt a business;
- exempt a wider range of small residential projects such as patios, decks and extensions from planning approval;
- abolish onerous requirements on small businesses to pay cash-in-lieu for parking shortfalls up to 10 bays; and
- improve community consultation by mandating consistent consultation processes across the State.

The proposed amendments are part of the State Government's Action Plan on Planning Reform and follow three years of consultation to remove barriers in the planning system, provide greater clarity and consistency for users of the system and reduce the administrative burden on the State's 134 local governments.



Further consultation will be undertaken with all stakeholders on proposed regulatory changes which will be introduced as soon as drafting has been completed.

Premier Mark McGowan has commented that "These reforms will cut red tape, support small businesses, create more jobs and deliver an overall better outcome for our community," a focus of the McGowan Government through, and following the impacts of COVID-19.

The full media release from Premier Mark McGowan is available [here](#).

Comments attributed to Planning Minister Rita Saffioti are available [here](#).

More information on the Planning Reforms is available [here](#).

Further Information

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