



...leading planning reform

Development industry,
professions and
governments working
together to
lead, reform
and harmonise
Australia's development
assessment systems

What is the DAF?

Harmonising and improving Australia's development assessment system is a long term focus for both the development industry and government. Reduced compliance burdens and more flexible regulatory systems will improve business efficiency, stimulate growth and help business generate employment.

Following a meeting of key stakeholders in 1998, the Development Assessment Forum (DAF) was formed to bring together the relevant parties to reach agreement on ways to streamline the processes used for development approval and cut red tape - without sacrificing the quality of the decision making. The Forum's membership includes the three spheres of government - the Commonwealth, State/Territory and Local Government; the development industry; and related professional associations (see back page for membership details).

Funding for the work programme and Secretariat is provided by the Commonwealth Department of Transport and Regional Services.

The Forum is chaired by Peter Verwer, Chief Executive of the Property Council of Australia and, through its linkages with the Planning Officials Group,

provides advice and recommendations to Planning Ministers.

The Forum's work programme is developed annually with projects undertaken directly by members or consultants. Project findings, technical papers, reports, databases, newsletters and general information may be accessed via the DAF website (www.daf.gov.au) or from the Secretariat. Members also disseminate DAF information material through their own web sites, newsletters, publications and conferences.

Some of the DAF's current projects include:

- developing a leading practice model for development assessment (DA);
- eDA - a national electronic data exchange standard for DA;
- developing and implementing a set of national DA definitions;
- a guideline outlining how to enhance the role of the private sector in DA certification; and
- reviewing the potential for comparative performance measuring and benchmarking.

Message from the Minister



*The Honourable
Wilson Tuckey MP,
Minister for
Regional Services,
Territories and Local
Government*

Although planning is, in most cases, a State/Territory and Local Government responsibility, the Commonwealth has an important role to play in encouraging the best possible land use planning through sustainable development practices and good planning governance.

The Commonwealth and the States/Territories work together through the

Planning Officials Group (POG), which has a broad and ongoing agenda to address planning issues of national concern and to develop appropriate policy responses. A key element of the POG's agenda is to oversee the implementation of the important initiatives of the Development Assessment Forum.

As the Forum approaches its fifth anniversary, and the baton of the Forum Chair is about to be passed on, I wish to thank Garry Fielding from PlanningNSW for his important contribution as Chair over the last three years. In that time Garry has led the DAF in major initiatives such as national agreement on a suite of DA definitions; the set of Principles of Leading Practice – which are the basis for the forthcoming DA model; the highly respected *Good Strategic Planning Guide*; and the visionary eDA project which will establish a national electronic data exchange standard for data transactions

associated with the DA process – across all Australian jurisdictions.

I also welcome Peter Verwer, Chief Executive of the Property Council of Australia (PCA), as the new Chair of the Development Assessment Forum. Industry associations such as the PCA play an important role in the Forum and I am delighted that an industry representative has now taken on the leadership.

I look forward to the Forum continuing to deliver solutions and ideas which will help to further streamline the regulatory regime and bring greater efficiency to the development assessment sector.

A number of projects working towards these goals are described in this Newsletter.

I am also pleased that the Commonwealth can assist planning in Australia through its roles on the POG and the DAF, and through the forthcoming inaugural meeting of the Local Government and Planning Ministers Council.

A DA model for the future

The Development Assessment Forum has appointed the Centre for Developing Cities at the University of Canberra to undertake a research consultancy to develop a leading practice model for development assessment.

The model will be developed on the basis of a series of discrete components which align with the key elements of the development assessment process in Australia. These are:

- application
- assessment
- review
- enforcement
- consultation
- monitoring & evaluation

In developing the model, the consultants will identify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders; assess the use of

innovative legislation, processes and technologies; examine opportunities for the use of performance indicators to deliver better services; and identify ways for enhancing private sector participation.

The model will provide examples of existing leading practice, including case studies, and provide recommendations for disseminating the findings to stakeholders with a view to implementing leading practice on a national basis.

The model is due for completion and consideration by the Forum in mid 2003.

Organisations and individuals who wish to participate by contributing ideas, issues and case examples are invited to contact the Centre for Developing Cities directly at damodel@canberra.edu.au or by telephoning (02) 6201 2201.

eDA – going online

As electronic business applications play an increasingly important role in all sectors

of the economy, the Forum has identified the need for a national electronic data exchange standard for data transactions associated with the DA process – for all Australian jurisdictions.

At present most consent authorities, such as local councils and State/Territory planning agencies, accept only hard copy development applications. Some do provide, via their internet sites, electronic copies of their application forms, but generally these need to be printed out and manually completed.

The eDA project is examining ways to establish an interchange standard that will encourage the on-line lodgement of building and land development applications. eDA will deliver significant time and cost benefits to consent authorities, developers, applicants, and the community.

A draft standard and data inventory for the interchange of DA information has been completed. The standard will enable the data provided electronically by

applicants to be easily identified and transmitted to the various consent authorities that need to view and access the information. It does not, however, require agencies or councils to adopt a generic set of data in a common form – flexibility of data collection to meet local requirements is not affected.

Stakeholder consultations commenced in November 2002 and preparations for pilot testing are well underway.

If you would like to learn more about eDA or wish to participate in piloting the new system contact your member representative (refer to back page) or the Secretariat at daf@dotars.gov.au.

Defining moments

The use of consistent terminology and meaning in DA definitions across Australia is essential for the harmonisation of DA practices and systems.

During the first phase of this difficult project some 14 definitions were agreed to by State Planning Ministers. The second phase is now underway – and tackling some of the more difficult definitions. A project task force has been established, which includes planning, industry and legal expertise, with input from the Australian Building Codes Board.

If you wish to contribute to this project contact your representative or the Secretariat at daf@dotars.gov.au.

Private Certification – can it work?

The Development Assessment Forum has examined the potential for greater private sector involvement in the DA process. It has produced a Practice Guideline as a reference for State/Territory and Local Governments to examine opportunities for appropriately qualified professionals to assist councils and other decision making bodies in certain assessment functions. The guideline, supported by case study examples, reviews options for extending

private certification; identifies the key underpinning principles; and outlines the potential benefits of extending private certification within current systems.

The Guideline is now available on the DAF website at www.daf.gov.au and an accompanying information brochure will soon be available from DAF representatives.

Does your performance measure up?

A study of *Comparative Performance Measurement and Benchmarking of Planning and Development Assessment Systems* was recently completed for the Development Assessment Forum. The study was undertaken to provide the Forum with an overview of existing performance based initiatives; an analysis of the issues for cooperative benchmarking; and options for a national framework. This comprehensive analysis and its recommendations may be viewed and downloaded from the DAF website at www.daf.gov.au. The Forum is reviewing the findings and invites your feedback – either through your member representative (see contacts on back page) or directly to daf@dotars.gov.au.

Is it a matter for the Commonwealth?

Did you know that the DAF website contains a database of all current Commonwealth Acts, Regulations, Agreements, Covenants, Frameworks, Standards, Policies and Strategies that impact upon planning and development assessment systems and processes? This free browse and search facility can be approached by Agency, subject matter, Act, Regulation or Instrument – and is ideal for use by both development proponents and assessors.

The database can be accessed via the DAF website or directly at <http://www.daf.gov.au/cpi/>

Message from the Chair



Peter Verwer,
Chief Executive
Property Council
of Australia

The Development Assessment Forum (DAF) is committed to fostering a world class development assessment system in Australia.

The assessment process has a major impact on the efficient allocation of resources, the productivity of our national infrastructure and the quality of our built environment.

In other words, DAF's agenda has ramifications for the entire community.

The Forum has already made huge strides toward designing a more efficient development assessment framework and continues to deliver initiatives that will encourage better decision-making.

As the DAF's new Chairman, I look forward to ongoing fruitful collaboration with my colleagues in the State and Territory governments; Local Government; private sector stakeholders, planning and related professionals; and community groups to forge a system that best serves the nation's interests.

Membership + contacts

Commonwealth Government

Department of Transport and Regional Services

Mr Adrian Beresford-Wylie
02 6274 6581
adrian.beresford-wylie@dotars.gov.au

Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources

Ms Yvonne Noordhuis
02 6213 7286
yvonne.noordhuis@industry.gov.au

State and Territory Governments

Australian Capital Territory

Mr Richard Johnston
Planning and Land Management
02 6207 2585
richard.johnston@act.gov.au

New South Wales

Ms Amanda Spalding
PlanningNSW
02 9762 8004
amanda.spalding@planning.nsw.gov.au

Northern Territory

Mr Jim O'Neill
Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment
08 8999 6109
jim.oneill@nt.gov.au

Queensland

Mr Stan Wypych
Department of Local Government and Planning
07 3237 1241
stan.wypych@dlgp.qld.gov.au

South Australia

Mr Bob Teague
Planning SA
08 8303 0776
teague.bob@saugov.sa.gov.au

Tasmania

Mr Jeff Gilmore
Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment
03 6233 6399
jeff.gilmore@dpiwe.tas.gov.au

Victoria

Mr Peter S Allen
Department of Sustainability and Environment
03 9655 8822
peters.allen@doi.vic.gov.au

Western Australia

Mr Paul Frewer
Department for Planning and Infrastructure
08 9264 7700
paul.frewer@dpi.wa.gov.au

Development Assessment
Forum Chair
Mr Peter Verwer
Property Council of Australia
02 9336 6926
pverwer@propertyoz.com.au

Industry Associations

Housing Industry Association

Mr Wayne Gersbach
02 8878 0404
w.gersbach@hia.asn.au

Master Builders Association

Mr Wilhelm Harnisch
02 6249 1433
wh@masterbuilders.com.au

Property Council of Australia

Mr Paul Waterhouse
02 9252 3111
pwaterhouse@nat.propertyoz.com.au

Urban Development Institute of Australia

Mr Chris Schomburgk
07 3852 5455
udia@udiaqld.com.au

Professional Associations

Australian Council of Building Design Professions

Mr Ian Blyth
03 9650 4011
bdp@raia.com.au

Building Designers Association of Australia

Mr Barrie Wright
02 9413 9352
bwright@fast.net.au

Institution of Engineers Australia

Ms Leanne Hardwicke
02 6270 6544
lhardwicke@ieaust.org.au

Institution of Surveyors Australia & Association of Consulting Surveyors Australia

Mr Anthony Thorne
02 6583 2666
tonyt@kingcampbell.com.au

Planning Institute of Australia

Mr John McInerney
02 6262 5933
natpresident@planning.org.au

Royal Australian Institute of Architects

Mr Craig Smith
08 9386 2800
craig.s@sah.com.au

Local Government

Australian Local Government Association

Cr Dr Sara Murray
02 6122 9400
john.pritchard@alga.asn.au

Local Government NSW

Ms Carina Gregory
02 9242 4000
carina.gregory@lgov.org.au

Local Government Association of the Northern Territory

Mr Tony Tapsell
08 8936 2888
tony.tapsell@lgant.nt.gov.au

Local Government Association of Queensland

Mr Steve Greenwood
07 3334 2222
steve_greenwood@lgaq.asn.au

Local Government Association of South Australia

Mr Chris Russell
08 8224 2030
chris.russell@lga.sa.gov.au

Local Government Association of Tasmania

Mr Evan Boardman
03 6233 5974
evan.boardman@lgat.tas.gov.au

Municipal Association of Victoria

Mr Matthew Evans
03 9667 5555
mevans@mav.asn.au

The Western Australian Local Government Association

Ms Alison Hailles
08 9321 5055
ahailles@walga.asn.au

Secretariat

C/- Department of Transport and Regional Services
GPO BOX 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601
daf@dotars.gov.au

Mr John Lauder
02 6274 8127
john.lauder@dotars.gov.au

Visit our Website...

The DAF website contains general information on the DAF, project reports, technical papers, databases, newsletters, and links to a range of useful sites.

www.daf.gov.au