

COMMUNIQUE FROM PLANNING MINISTERS

LAND USE PLANNING AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Australian Government Minister for Cities, the State and Territory Planning Ministers, and President of the Australia Local Government Association, agree planning systems and the development approvals pipeline in Australia must continue to function during the COVID-19 crisis so that jobs and businesses can be maintained at this critical time and that the system supports economic recovery.

To make sure this can take place while also meeting public and workplace health and safety requirements, adjustments to jurisdictional planning systems will be required.

Noting that every state, territory and local planning system is different, and changes will need to consider the relevant legislative requirements and local context, we agree the following principles should be considered in making any changes:

- Decision making in the public interest is a paramount theme in all planning systems and this must continue as a guiding consideration.
- Transparency for stakeholders about changes to systems and particular decisions.
- Decisions made within jurisdictions are consistent, where possible.
- Consideration of the level of public interest in a particular planning change or development proposal.
- Balancing administrative and legal review rights with the need to address the pandemic emergency and to assist community and economic recovery.
- All reasonable effort is made to maintain the usual pace of planning approvals recognising, as far as practical, community consultation will continue through new forms of communication recognising social distancing requirements.

We commit to considering lessons learned from this period, particularly around the use of technology to facilitate community participation and other planning processes, response to future emergency events, sharing of information between jurisdictions and improvements to planning systems for potential ongoing implementation once we return to business as usual.

Noting that these principles are agreed at a point in time when the priority of governments is responding to the dual health and economic crises brought on by COVID-19, we agree to review these principles in June 2020, with a view to updating them to support the economic recovery stage to follow.

Communique issued by:

- Hon. Alan Tudge MP, Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure, Commonwealth
- Hon. Rob Stokes MP, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, New South Wales
- Hon. Richard Wynne MP, Minister for Planning, Victoria
- Hon. Cameron Dick MP, Minister for State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, Queensland
- Hon. Rita Saffioti MLA, Minister for Transport; Planning, Western Australia
- Hon. Stephan Knoll MP, Minister for Planning, South Australia
- Hon. Roger Jaensch MP, Minister for Planning, Tasmania
- Mick Gentlemen MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management, ACT
- Hon. Eva Lawler MLA, Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics, Northern Territory
- Mayor David O'Loughlin, President, Australian Local Government Association