

NSW TASKFORCE UPDATE - Planning Edition

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Welcome to the first monthly planning edition of the NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan Taskforce Update

The Australian Government's Nation Building Stimulus package requires NSW to spend an additional \$7 billion over 2 years in NSW in the housing and education sectors alone. This means NSW is now embarking on the fastest program of capital expenditure ever delivered in its history. Compare this task to what was delivered for the Olympics - it is a similar budget, to be delivered in half the time and with a hundred times as many projects. This is on top of the existing infrastructure spending of the NSW Government and the funding allocated to Local Government and roads programs from the Stimulus package.

The NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan Taskforce has been established by the Premier to ensure the rapid and coordinated delivery of the Australian Government funded public education and housing facilities within NSW. The aim of the program is to create and retain jobs within the NSW building industry.

NSW legislation was passed in March to give the Taskforce powers to ensure that they achieve this task in the timeframe allowed by the Australian Government.

This special monthly edition of the Taskforce Update is being published for Local Government and Planning organisations and their stakeholders to ensure that your questions are answered and to provide you with the latest information about the progress of the implementation of the legislation.

Please feel free to distribute any of the articles contained in the Update to your own stakeholders.

Guidelines for applications to access the planning approval powers in the NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan (State Infrastructure Delivery) Act (NBJP Act) now available

The contents of the Guideline package include a User Guide, Policy Guidelines, Planning framework, Step by Step flowcharts, Application forms and Checklists (Housing/Education).

The User Guide includes key principles that the Taskforce will use to exercise planning approval powers, including a clear statement that wherever possible, infrastructure projects should use existing development control legislation; and applications seeking to use the NBJP Act must outline the reason why existing legislation cannot be used.

There is also a section titled Guidelines for Project Scoping and Design which is intended to encourage applicants to avoid sites which have significant physical or environmental constraints (eg. sites that require significant remediation; those that might impact on critical habitats / threatened species; State Heritage Items).

To download the Guidelines visit www.nsw.gov.au/nationbuildingtaskforce

Overview of Legislation

The NBJP Act establishes an Infrastructure Coordinator General (ICG) with powers to streamline the approval process by exempting Infrastructure Projects from development control legislation where there is a demonstrated risk that a project will not meet deadlines imposed by the Australian Government for delivery.

The new legislation will apply to any project which is funded or partially funded by the Nation Building program.

The ICG, who is also Chairman of the Nation Building and Jobs Plan Taskforce, exercises these powers.

The legislation is designed to work alongside the existing planning legislation, but allows the ICG to fast track the authorisation of Nation Building Projects, if required, after the appropriate environmental assessment has been undertaken. For a streamlined assessment process, projects should be designed, as far as possible, to meet the relevant planning and design criteria of the applicable environmental planning instruments. This is relevant whether a project seeks approval using existing planning legislation or the NBJP Act.

The powers to exempt projects from development control legislation will only be used where:

1. the Project is confirmed as having Commonwealth Nation Building funding; and
2. the Taskforce Chairman forms the opinion that the Project is at risk of not meeting Australian Government deadlines using the planning approval process under existing legislation.

If a proponent chooses to make an application to the Taskforce Chairman, seeking exemption from development control legislation, they must demonstrate that every effort has been made to meet deadlines and timeframes for the assessment of projects using existing planning legislation. Any application made under the NBJP Act will need to be accompanied by appropriate environmental assessment and consideration of impacts on the environment and adjacent land uses.

How do I find out more?

Guidelines and application forms to support the new legislation are now available. For enquiries email taskforceinfo@dpc.nsw.gov.au or call the **Taskforce Hotline on 1800 752 100**.

The Taskforce web page is www.nsw.gov.au/nationbuildingtaskforce

About the NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan Taskforce

The Taskforce reports directly to the Premier of New South Wales and coordinates the reporting of the delivery of the program to the Australian Government. The Taskforce is chaired by Bob Leece and includes the CEOs of the Departments of Education, Housing, Commerce, Treasury and Premier and Cabinet. The Taskforce is supported by a small team of expert industry advisors who will provide coordination, leadership and assistance to agencies in their delivery programs. Bob Leece is also the ICG, reporting directly to the Australian Government on progress. Paul Gilbertson has been seconded from the Department of Housing as CEO of the Taskforce.

The Taskforce generally fulfils a facilitation role in NSW for all organisations spending the Australian Government's Nation Building and Economic Stimulus Plan funds.

The procurement plans, tendering and implementation of the program are being undertaken by each agency. The Taskforce will approve the works programs developed by Education and Housing agencies and provide additional resources where required, streamline the procurement process, monitor the progress of the works and will also be able to take over projects if needed.

The Australian Government will provide NSW Treasury with the funds to implement these programs. A protocol is being established by the Taskforce which provides Treasury with the authority to release the funds to the agencies following approval by the Taskforce.

If you would like to receive a copy of the industry Taskforce Update which is published weekly for industry, please send your email details to taskforceinfo@dpc.nsw.gov.au

Training Management Guidelines revised

The policy and guidelines apply to all government construction projects, including the NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan program. The policy aims to promote employment, training and skills development opportunities in the construction industry at the enterprise and project level.

This policy applies together with the NSW Government Code of Practice for procurement, the NSW Government tendering guidelines and Implementation Guidelines. The NSW Government policy requires contractors to demonstrate a commitment to the employment and training of apprentices.

Contractors seeking to work on government construction projects will be required to develop and implement training management plans that are appropriate to the nature, size and capacity of their enterprise and projects.

For more information visit www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/publications/memos_and_circulars/circulars/2009/c2009-08_nsw_government_apprenticeship_program_-_training_management_guidelines

Visit the NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan Taskforce Website

Communicating the goals of the Nation Building and Jobs Plan Taskforce to the people of NSW is extremely important and a new Taskforce web page has been designed to do just that. The new page contains useful information about the Housing and Education programs, previous Taskforce Updates and fact sheets about Taskforce programs in NSW. To find out more visit <http://www.nsw.gov.au/nationbuildingtaskforce>



Visit the Commonwealth Nation Building and Economic Stimulus website

www.australia.gov.au/economicstimulus keeps Australians informed about the Australian economy and the Australian Government's early and decisive action to cushion the nation from the worst of the global financial recession.

To view previous Taskforce Updates visit <http://www.nsw.gov.au/nationbuildingtaskforce>

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