



What We Heard

Discussion paper on building inspection policies for future updates

About the discussion paper

The State Planning Commission released the [Discussion Paper on Inspection Policies](#) for public feedback from 5 December 2025 to 19 February 2026.

The discussion paper provided an opportunity for councils, the building industry and the broader community to inform how practice directions can support better quality building inspections, leading to safer buildings for our communities.

Since [Practice Direction 8 – Council Swimming Pool Safety Inspections](#) and [Practice Direction 9 – Council Inspections](#) were introduced in 2019, only minor changes have been made to mandatory inspection targets for different classes of building works and variations have been limited to changes in how inspections are recorded and reported to assist data quality.

The Commission identified the following key areas of focus to guide a more in-depth review and update of practice directions 8 and 9:

- introducing an enhanced risk-based approach suggested by the Australian Building Codes Board – this includes changes to mandatory inspection requirements for different classes of building works, or a more substantial revision of inspection requirements
- the findings of the Consumer and Business Services (CBS) Building and Construction Industry Review
- inspection requirements for class 1a buildings to encourage more inspections during construction instead of at completion
- reviewing the use of 'Metropolitan Adelaide' versus 'Greater Adelaide' for the purpose of council timeframes for undertaking inspections
- whether there should be changes to mandatory notifications
- an alternative approach for councils to require certification or other documentation in lieu of undertaking physical inspections, which may also include guidelines for virtual inspections.

While the Commission identified these key areas for investigation in the discussion paper, other ideas for reform that may benefit the industry and South Australian community were welcomed.

What we heard

A total of 44 submissions were received from 22 metropolitan and regional councils, Local Government Association of SA (LGA), state government agencies, building and development industry, planning professionals and the broader community.

The main areas of feedback included:

- broad support for a risk-based approach to inspections, where mandatory inspection targets should be scaled to the complexity of the building and the level of safety risk
- strong agreement that inspections should happen at key stages of construction, especially before work is covered up (e.g. footings, framing, waterproofing, fire and life safety and final completion)
- support for greater statewide consistency, including minimum required inspection and notification stages, to reduce variation across councils and better align mandatory inspections with those notifications
- strong support for clearer guidance, standard templates and simpler processes, particularly through PlanSA and the Development Application Processing (DAP) system, supported by training
- recognition of the need for fee models that allow inspection and compliance services to be delivered consistently and effectively.

A range of other individual topics were also raised and will be carefully considered in preparing proposed updates to the practice directions.

Engagement activities

Letters raising awareness of the discussion paper and inviting feedback were sent at the launch of consultation to councils, the LGA, building and planning industry, accredited building professionals and planning professionals.

The consultation was promoted more broadly through Planning Ahead, The Building Standard and YourSAy e-newsletters, and social media.

The YourSAy website provided information targeted at the broader community and stakeholders and included an online survey. The PlanSA website provided detailed information targeting key stakeholders and included an online form to submit feedback.

A series of online information sessions and presentations were held to share further details, including:

- 5 December: Planning Policy Forum presentation for council and industry planners, to provide information and answer questions
- 11 December: online information session, open to all interested stakeholders and community to learn more and ask questions
- 30 January: online council workshop to share information and gather input
- 6 February: building and planning industry workshop to share information and gather input.

Submissions were received via email (70% of submissions) and YourSAy online survey (30% of submissions).

Next steps

All feedback is now being collated and considered in detail to help shape future updates to building inspection policies.

The feedback also highlighted that a broader review of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017* may be required to support any updates to the practice directions.

The timing and format of consultation on the proposed updates are still being determined as we consider and develop proposed changes to building inspection policies.

More information

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