Discussion Paper – e-Planning System and the PlanSA website Reform Options

Expert Panel for the Implementation Review

October 2022

Planning System Implementation Review

Government of South Australia

Planning System Implementation Review

Table of Contents

Message from the Chair 4
Introduction 5
Implementation of the e-Planning System 7
Nation Leading 9
System Enhancements 10
E-Planning Stakeholder Engagement 10
AMR Annual Survey Results 12
Early Recommendations to the Minister for Planning 14
User Experience 18
Medium Term (6-12 months) 18
Longer Term (Legislative Amendment Required) 20
User Experience Questions 25
Innovation 27
Innovation Questions 29
Summary of E-Planning Questions 30
How can you get involved? 33

Planning System Implementation Review

Message from the Chair

South Australia's planning system has undergone significant change in recent years. Firstly, with the implementation of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* and *Planning, Development, and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017* and more recently with the introduction of the state-wide Planning and Design Code.

In response to concerns raised by local communities and industry groups, the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Nick Champion MP, has commissioned a review of South Australia's planning system and the implementation of recent reforms made to it.

I am honoured to have been appointed Presiding Member of the independent panel of experts that has been established to undertake this review. Importantly, each of the Panel members has significant experience with the South Australian planning system, having all lived and worked in South Australia for many years.

I'm delighted to be joined on the Panel by **Lisa Teburea**, independent consultant and former Executive Director of Public Affairs with the Local Government Association of South Australia, **Cate Hart**, President of the Planning Institute of Australia (SA) and Executive Director, Environment Heritage and Sustainability for Department of Environment and Water, and **Andrew McKeegan**, former Chief Development Officer and Deputy Chief Executive for the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

The Panel has been tasked with reviewing key aspects of the planning system and identifying opportunities to ensure planning decisions encourage a more liveable, competitive, affordable, and sustainable long-term growth strategy for Greater Adelaide and the regions.

We are pleased to present these Discussion Papers which outline the key areas in the Act, Code, and e-Planning system that the Panel has identified warrant further examination. We encourage all South Australian's – whether industry groups, practitioners, community groups, local government or the general public - to consider these Papers, share their feedback and contribute to the review.

After all, South Australia's planning system affects all of us.

John Stimson

Introduction

The South Australian planning reforms commenced in 2012 with the appointment of the former Expert Panel, which made a series of initial recommendations that shaped new legislation that we now know as the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (the PDI Act).

For the past ten (10) years, South Australians have considered and contributed to planning policy and have now lived with the provisions of the PDI Act and Planning and Design Code (the Code) for 18 months.

The Expert Panel for the Planning System Implementation Review was appointed by the Minister for Planning, the Hon. Nick Champion, to review the new system and to consider where there is scope for improvement.

The Panel has been given a Terms of Reference to review:

- the PDI Act;
- the Code and related instruments, as it relates to infill policy, trees, character, heritage and car parking;
- the e-Planning system, to ensure it is delivering an efficient and user-friendly process and platform; and
- the PlanSA website, to check usability and ease of community access to information.

Importantly, the Panel is not a decision-making body, but rather, a group of subject matter experts brought together to review, consider, consult, and make recommendations to the Minister as to what improvements to the new planning system could be. Those recommendations will, of course, be influenced by the feedback received from the community throughout this engagement process.

In preparing its Discussion Papers, the Panel has acknowledged the volume of submissions and representations that have been made by groups and individuals during previous engagement and review processes. Many of the issues that have been raised over the course of the past 10 years have already been thoroughly examined by various bodies, and the Panel considers that the fundamental elements of the PDI Act are sound.

However, this review is an opportunity to reconsider some of the details and the Panel is looking for new information, new feedback and experiences directly related to the implementation of the PDI Act and the Code, and how the community is interacting with the e-Planning system.

In undertaking this review, the Panel will play a key part at a point in time. A time where the system is still young and arguably in its 'teething' phase, but equally a time that is ripe for considering what amendments – big or small – could make what is already a comprehensive planning regime, even better.

This Discussion Paper seeks to identify the known opportunities for improvement within the e-Planning system and the PlanSA website, with those opportunities being presented through survey results obtained by the Department for Trade and Investment (the Department) and through feedback received directly to PlanSA through its user forums.

It will guide you, as the reader, through the implementation of the e-Planning system in South Australia, how it is currently operating and identify opportunities to enhance the user experience, both now and in the future. It will then ask questions for your consideration and response. Notwithstanding, the Panel is, of course, interested to hear about all ideas for reform that may benefit the South Australian community and encourages you to raise any matters that have not otherwise been canvassed in this Discussion Paper.

The Panel acknowledges and appreciates the time and effort that will be put into preparing submissions for its consideration and looks forward to reviewing and considering all the feedback.

Implementation of the e-Planning System

In 2014 the Minister for Planning engaged an Expert Panel on Planning Reform to review the State's Planning System. Their final report was provided to the Minister in December 2014 and identified several areas where there was opportunity for significant reform.

That Expert Panel undertook several community and sector specific workshops relating to planning processes under the *Development Act 1993* (Development Act) and reported feedback relating to an e-Planning system within the '*Expert Panel – What We Have Heard*' consultation report.

The following ideas were captured by the Expert Panel:

- There should be a clear **e-Planning** governance model within the planning legislation, backed by mandated legislative standards.
- Use Geographical Information System (GIS) to underpin the **online delivery** of spatial information.
- Allow for referral information to be **exchanged electronically** between assessment bodies and government agencies.
- Allow landowners to **download** information about zoning policies applying to their property from an easy-to-access website.
- Use **digital modelling software** to provide a new way to engage with the public on development proposals and strategic planning.

Following receipt of the Expert Panel's report, the Government issued a response to the Panel's recommendations, supporting the reform to establish an online planning system. Importantly, the Government identified that it would '*incorporate heads of power to support e-planning's staged roll-out*' in a Bill that was slated for introduction in 2015.

The *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Bill 2015* (PDI Bill) was ultimately introduced and sought to give effect to the Government's commitment to establishing a digital planning framework.

The scope of the proposed e-Planning solution included the:

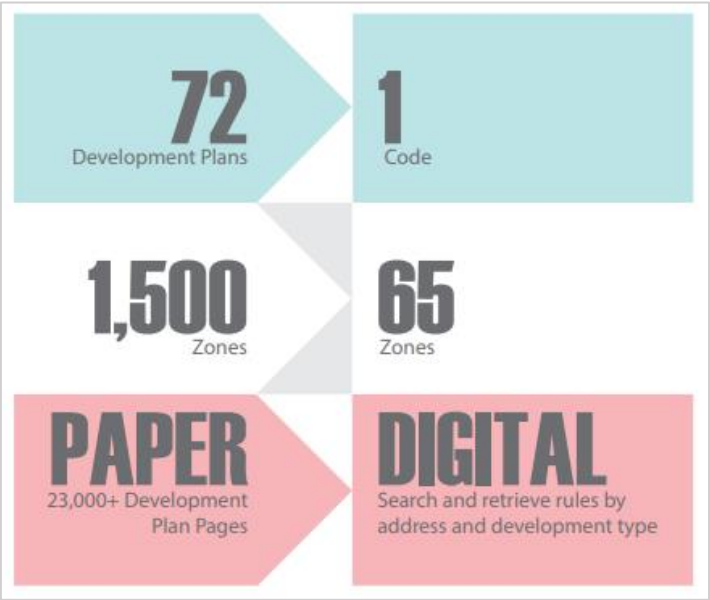
- replacement of aging technology that supported planning processes under the Development Act; and
- the implementation of a new online Planning Portal to provide:
    - 24/7 access;

- a single online planning portal with links to councils, agencies, communities, and other users/participants of the planning system;
- online access to the Planning and Design Code;
- digitisation of development application processes to support new or revised assessment pathways and enable applicants to track their application; and
- improved reporting and monitoring of planning and assessment activities.

Following the implementation of the PDI Act, all aspects of the South Australian planning system are now available through the PlanSA website, which includes statutory documents such as the Community Engagement Charter and State Planning Policies, as well as access to the electronic systems, such as Development Application Processing (DAP), South Australian Property and Planning Atlas (SAPPA) and the online Planning and Design Code (the Code).

It is noted that there are also numerous references throughout the PDI Act to publishing statutory instruments on the PlanSA website, which requirements are duly met through the functionality of the website.

To date, the e-Planning system has received and processed upwards of **67,000** development applications.



Planning System Implementation Review

Nation Leading

The South Australian e-Planning system is an advanced and sophisticated Government system that is yet to be replicated in any other State or Territory in the nation.

Indeed, as of June 2022, there are three (3) states/territories outside of SA offering online lodgement of development applications across state or territory: Northern Territory, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory. However, it is noted that despite the online platforms, the development applications are still sent to relevant councils for processing rather than having centralised processing of development applications.

Accordingly, South Australia is the **only jurisdiction** that has a single state-wide planning system and online lodgement, including a centralised system to process development applications. It follows that as the nation leader in this space, several interstate and overseas jurisdictions have contacted PlanSA requesting information as to how the system was built and ultimately implemented.

System Enhancements

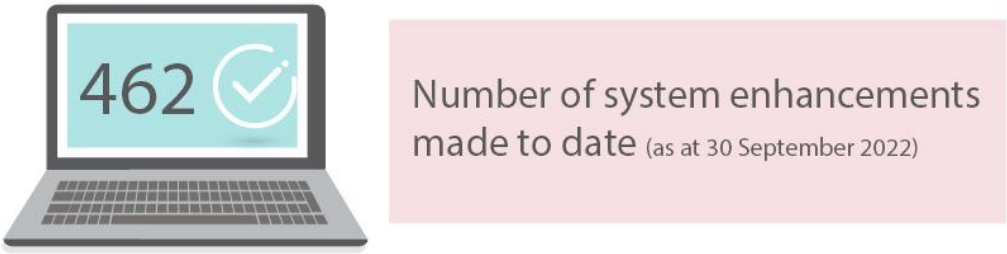
Since the commencement of the e-Planning system, PlanSA has maintained an enhancement program committed to introducing new functions, enhancing user experience, and addressing technical issues.

Enhancement requests are raised through the PlanSA Service Desk and are prioritised based on risk and value to users.

Those enhancement requests are categorised into four (4) associated focus areas – regulatory compliance, system stability, cyber security, and user experience - and are prioritised based on number of parameters including level of positive user impact, reference group input, efficiency gains, compliance matters and associated enhancements already under development.

A Quarterly PlanSA roadmap is published that outline work projects that are both in-progress and planned, as well as a list of completed projects.

More than **450 enhancements** have been made to the system since its implementation in July 2020, and more than **200** enhancement requests are **currently in progress** and linked to projects identified in the PlanSA roadmap documents.



E-Planning Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder feedback is a key driver in determining enhancement work. **80 per cent** of enhancements that are delivered stem from stakeholder initiation.

PlanSA works with stakeholders to continually improve the system through various forums. Each forum provides an opportunity for attendees to provide input on topics of interest and contribute to the outcome of enhancements and projects. These forums include:

- Planning and Building Forums for Planning and Building professionals;
- Project Working Groups with smaller focus groups with relevant councils and industry professionals who have expressed interest in specific projects and enhancements;

- Heads of Planning and Building Reference Groups as established by the planning regime governance model;
- Discussion with the service desk through raising service requests and having conversations with service desk staff;
- One on One PlanSA and council meetings which may occur weekly, fortnightly, or monthly depending on a council's preference;
- Policy Forums which enable Development Assessment, Policy and Strategic Planners from councils, private sector and agencies to hear updates on a range of strategic planning and policy topics; and
- Local Government Authority and Planning Land Use Services leadership meetings which occur monthly and provide an opportunity for the LGA to provide consolidated feedback based on council advice that it receives.

In addition to these forums, PlanSA conducts a short voluntary user survey following the completion of each application through the e-Planning system, as well as an annual market research survey (discussed later in this Discussion Paper).

The PlanSA website also provides multiple options to enable the community to stay informed through:

- interactive mapping tools such as the Metropolitan Development Activity Tracker, and Code Amendment Map Viewer;
- registers for development applications and applications on notice; and
- the functionality to subscribe to Code Amendments, and to the development application register.

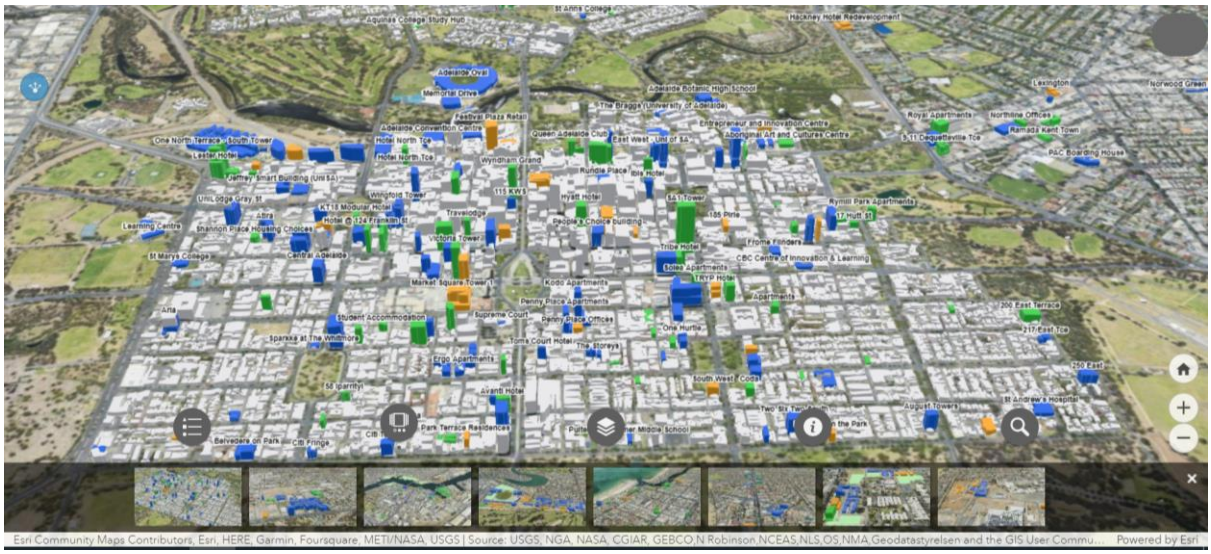


Image: Snapshot of the Metropolitan Development Activity Tracker

Planning System Implementation Review

AMR Annual Survey Results

Action Market Research group (AMR), an independent survey and research consulting firm, recently conducted a survey which included anyone who has had contact with the e-Planning system from 19 March 2021 to 15 June 2022.

Key aspects of this survey were:

1. the survey separated respondents into user groups: Community, Decision Makers, and Industry; and
2. a total of 14,785 emails were sent out, each with a unique survey link and **1,502 surveys** were completed.

AMR presented its final report and findings to the Department on 17 August 2022. The results have since been published on the PlanSA website and are available for public consideration.

The key findings and feedback include:

1. individual applicants and Volume Builders are the **most satisfied** types of users of the new system;
2. Accredited Professionals and Representors are the **least satisfied**;
3. customers are mostly satisfied with each of the elements pertaining to the website, DAP, the online Planning and Design Code and the South Australian Property and Planning Atlas (SAPPA);
4. SAPPA is the **highest scoring element** of the system, with a mean score of 7.39 (out of 10);
5. most customers (75 per cent) believe the new system is an **improvement** on the previous system, and 19 per cent believe the new system **is worse** than the previous system;
6. among respondent types, Other Decision Makers (such as Referral Bodies / Relevant Authorities, SCAP, State Planning Users) and Volume Builder End Users are the most supportive of the new system (87 per cent and 82 per cent); and
7. the key customer sentiment was the positive experience with interacting with customer service officers. A popular description used on the service received was ‘courteous, helpful and always polite’.

Overall, **73 per cent** of survey respondents recorded that they were **satisfied** with the e-Planning system, with the applicants (including volume applicants) recording highest satisfaction and public notification representors recording the lowest satisfaction. The

lower satisfaction recorded by representors could be related to their objection to the development itself, rather than the public notification process.

For a systemic change the scale of the e-Planning system, a satisfaction result of **73 per cent** is significant and demonstrates that the system is operating well.

For comparison, the following table identifies satisfaction results from analogous user surveys. These results further indicate that the e-Planning system is doing well when measured against user feedback for other broad system changes.

Where	Year	System	Satisfaction	Comments
New South Wales		ePlanning Portal	• 79.2% of respondents did not find the portal easy to use • 86.7% said their workload had increased.	NSW ePlanning portal is not as comprehensive as SA's ePlanning portal. For example, SA has one Planning and Design Code.
South Australia	2020	Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) Customer Satisfaction Measurement Survey	• Overall DPC survey shows consumer satisfaction index at 7.8 (out of 10). ○ Comparatively PlanSA survey scores system satisfaction at 6.8 and support satisfaction at 6.9. However, the scoring gauge used in the DPC survey ranges from 1 to 10 whereas the PlanSA user survey used 0 to 10. This means the DPC survey will return slightly higher average.	Although this is not a "system" or "support" satisfaction survey specifically related to introduction of new system, it does provide a useful benchmark for state-wide user satisfaction.
	2016	South Australian Digital Landscape	• Overall satisfaction rate for digital services provided by the SA Government is 6.9 (out of 10) • 38% believe digital services have improved over the last 12 months (vs. 8% worsened)	
Scotland	2017	eDevelopment Scotland – User Analysis Report	• Survey response comments used for denoting positive, negative and neutral response categories • Broadly even split between positive and negative (around 37%) and 26% described as neutral	

Early Recommendations to the Minister for Planning

The Panel has been fortunate to consider the results of the AMR survey early in its appointment. Noting that the AMR survey data is current and that there were a significant number of responses received, the Panel was satisfied that it was able to make early recommendations to the Minister for Planning (the Minister) on certain e-Planning and PlanSA matters. This is consistent with, and permitted by, the Panel's Terms of Reference.

The matters that the Panel has made early recommendations on are those that it understands have been the subject of feedback (through both the AMR survey and to PlanSA directly), are able to be implemented in the next **six (6) months** and which are able to be implemented through existing budget forecasts. That is, these improvements will not require additional resourcing and there will be no need to delay the implementation whilst awaiting funding.

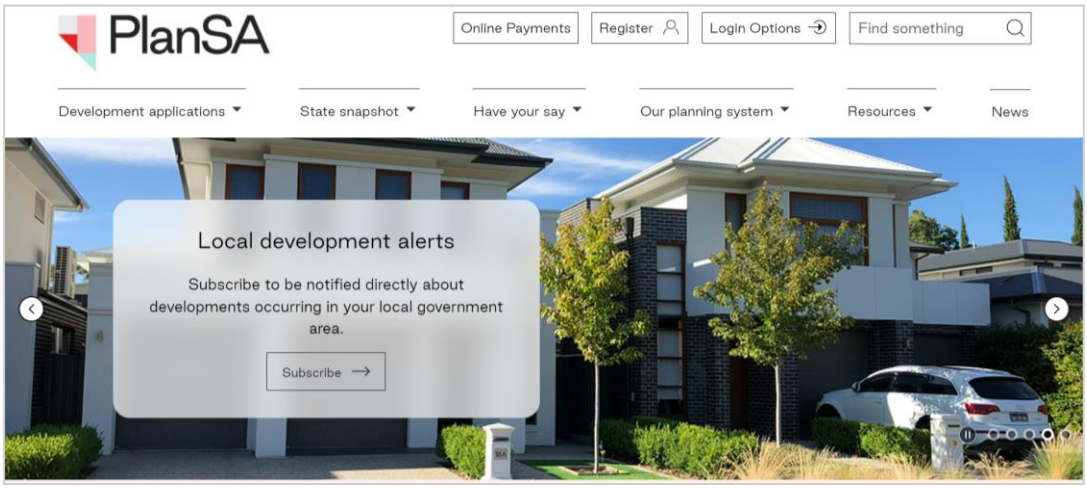
Importantly, the early recommendations are all related to user experience and are intended to enhance the useability and functionality of both the e-Planning system and the PlanSA website.

The Panel is advised that, notwithstanding that these improvements can be implemented in the next six (6) months, any unforeseen additions or regulatory changes may necessarily delay the proposed implementation timeframe.

The Panel's early recommendations to the Minister were as follows:

1. **Subscription Service Improvements**

   The e-Planning Portal currently includes several subscription options for users and the community to subscribe to alerts related to Code Amendments and development applications lodged within the public register.



The Panel **recommends** that these subscription services are refined to include additional opportunities for the community to subscribe to receive notification of:

- applications for certain types of development (i.e., tree removals); and
- changes to the status of applications.

2. Development Application Map

To enable the community to visualise the location of development applications more easily, the Panel **recommends** that a feature be added to the PlanSA website whereby development applications are shown on an interactive map.

The development application point should show key attributes of the development application and provide both a link to the detailed development application public register and a link to the public notification page (if the development application is under consultation).

3. Builders Database

To assist applicants, the Panel **recommends** that a centralised database of Builder's information (or access to Consumer Business Services data) is integrated into the e-Planning portal to remove the requirement for Builder's data to be re-entered for each individual application.

4. Refined Submission Process

The current development application form in the DAP could be improved to make it easier for applicants to understand and use. This arises from feedback relating to the submission form, specifically regarding the:

- management and entry of contacts;
- addition of project reference numbers;
- builder contact details; and
- ongoing access to a development application.

This would provide efficiencies for applicants, particularly those organisations who submit applications on behalf of applicants and low volume applicants.

The Panel **recommends** that the application form is revised to address these concerns, with such improvements potentially including:

- simplifying the application process by reducing the number of clicks and pages;
- increasing the use of predictive selections determined by the organisation information or user signed in;
- providing the ability to save and reuse common contacts; and

- recording a project reference number to assist application management for high volume applicants.

5. **Conditions and Notes by Element Type**

In the existing system, conditions and notes must be applied to each consent separately. There is the ability to record standard conditions and notes for each organisation, that can then be selected on a consent. There is also no ability to integrate and populate consents with conditions and notes that are typically applied to that element type (i.e., standard conditions that are typically applied to a development application for a shed) or other grouping.

The Panel **recommends** that enhancements are made to the e-Planning system to enable relevant authorities to:

- group standard conditions and notes by element type or other grouping, to enable relevant authorities to apply them on a consistent and typical basis;
- rename, add, view, order and search conditions and notes, to improve how relevant authorities manage conditions and notes;
- allocate Reserved Matters to a specific building stage; and
- set standard Reserved Matters, including a preamble, if required.

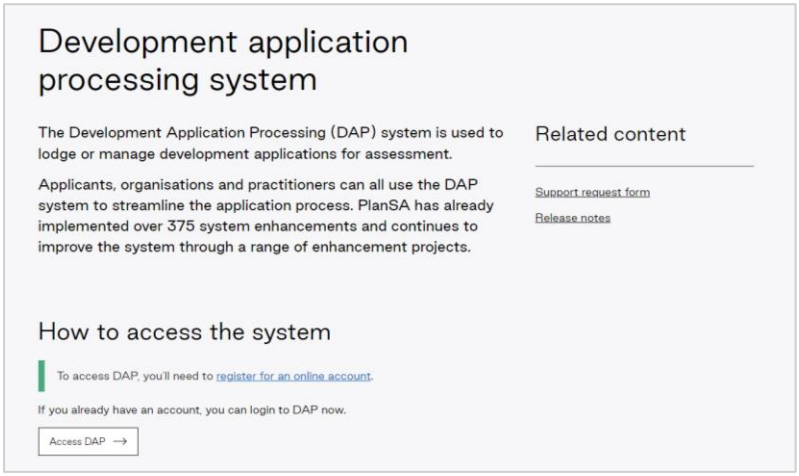
6. **Code Rules as a Checklist**

The DAP system has the existing capability to generate a PDF document of the relevant Code provisions associated with a development application. However, the Panel **recommends** that this is enhanced to enable a checklist to be generated with each application, which identifies the relevant assessment criteria.

This will provide efficiencies to assessors and consistency to the assessment process. It is recommended that the first phase of this project ('Phase One') deals with Deemed to Satisfy applications.

7. **DAP Homepage**

To assist users of the DAP (namely relevant authority assessors and team leaders) to better manage their workloads, the Panel **recommends** that PlanSA develop a new user interface to enable applications to be quickly searched and located within the DAP system.



Development application processing system

The Development Application Processing (DAP) system is used to lodge or manage development applications for assessment.

Applicants, organisations and practitioners can all use the DAP system to streamline the application process. PlanSA has already implemented over 375 system enhancements and continues to improve the system through a range of enhancement projects.

Related content

Support request form

Release notes

How to access the system

To access DAP, you'll need to register for an online account.

If you already have an account, you can login to DAP now.

Access DAP →

It is envisioned that a homepage and dashboard interface within the DAP could identify:

- application workloads;
- outstanding tasks;
- assessment clocks;
- outstanding fee management; and
- referral management.

The Panel was pleased to provide these early recommendations to the Minister on 11 October 2022.

The Panel will communicate the status of the early recommendations in its Final Report which is due to be delivered to the Minister in early 2023.

User Experience

The Expert Panel has been tasked with reviewing the e-Planning system, with a key focus being to ensure that the system is delivering an efficient and user-friendly process and platform.

It follows that the Panel has specifically considered what improvements may be made to the e-Planning system that would enhance the user experience, noting the feedback received through the AMR survey and to PlanSA directly.

The following ideas for improvement are separated into medium term (6-12 months) and long-term implementation (as would require legislative amendment).

Notwithstanding the suggestions and questions that follow, the Panel encourages all stakeholders to put forth their ideas for improvement, if they are not otherwise identified. This will assist the Panel in obtaining a holistic and broad understanding of the pressure points associated with the e-Planning user experience.

Medium Term (6-12 months)

The Panel has positioned the following ideas for improvement as being deliverable in the 'medium term'. This is because further options analysis needs to be undertaken to ascertain the potential resourcing of facilitating the improvement (including specialist skills and budget requirements).

1. **Website Re-Design**

   The current layout of the PlanSA website could be re-designed with the intention to improve:

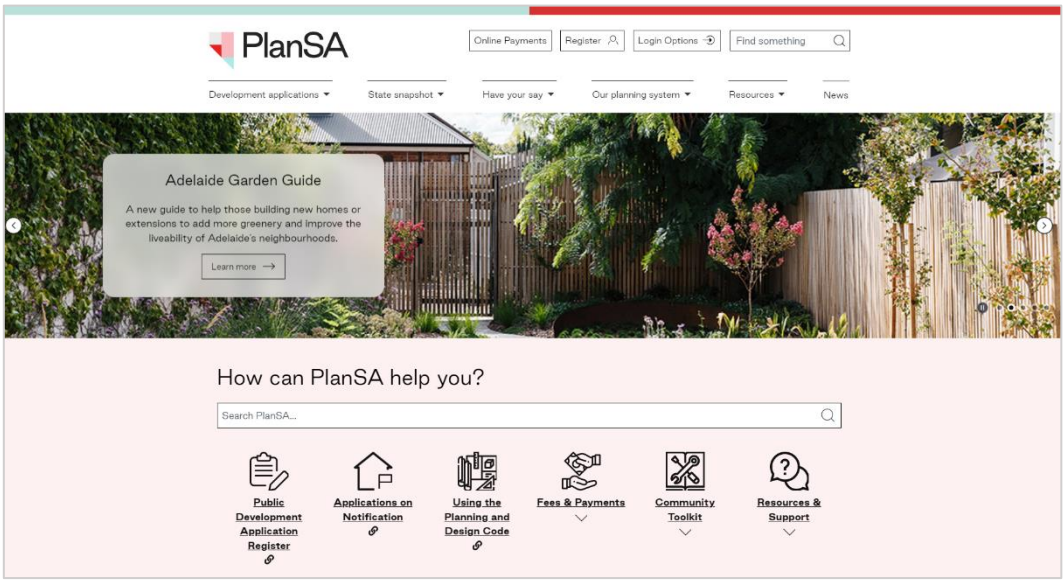
   - search functionality;
   - access to information; and
   - available resources, including tailoring the level of information available to the public and key industry users of the system.

   The Panel considers that any website re-design should focus on overall customer experience from varying user groups, ensuring that it is suitable to those that access the website on both a frequent and infrequent basis.

   This improvement was identified following feedback received in the AMR survey which demonstrated low respondent satisfaction in response to questions whether:

   - the website was easy to navigate; and
   - the information was presented concisely.

In addition, the survey feedback indicated that the overall complexity of the search functions was also a barrier to website satisfaction.



2. Mobile Application for Submission of Building Notifications and Inspections

Building notifications and inspection results are currently only able to be submitted through the DAP on a desktop computer. The DAP is not currently designed to be compatible with mobile devices (neither mobile phone nor tablet).

There is an opportunity for an application to be developed to enable building notifications, and inspections, to be submitted through a mobile device. This has the potential to improve efficiencies as the data could potentially be updated whilst onsite, without the need to return to a desktop setup.

As above, this improvement arises in connection with the AMR survey which indicated respondents' appetite for the website to be better integrated with mobile devices.

3. Online Submission Forms

To lodge a development application within the DAP system, an applicant must first have a PlanSA account and login. This subsequently results in potential one (1) time users having to create an account for this purpose. There is a separate organisation-based user account setup for volume applications (e.g. home building companies).

To simplify the application process, the Panel considers there is opportunity to create a new (optional) online submission form which would allow an applicant to submit a development application, without a login.

This would provide a benefit to those applicants who do not want to track their application through the portal or interact with the full assessment system. Instead, these applicants could be notified of the progress of their application via email, which could attach relevant documents for their consideration.

This has the potential to improve the overall user experience for infrequent users of the system, as it would reduce the time it takes to 'get started'.

4. **Increase Relevant Authority Data Management**

As relevant authorities, decision makers should have the ability to make an informed judgement to alter certain information within the DAP system if it determines a change is required.

There is opportunity to investigate increasing the ability for relevant authority users to 'self-service' changes to development applications in the DAP, to reduce (or potentially remove) the need for PlanSA to provide validation of any amendments. This could be achieved by relevant authorities being assigned ownership of development applications they are determining (or have determined).

For the avoidance of doubt, the Panel recognises that any proposed increase in data management capability would also need to be supported by a comprehensive application audit history, to ensure system stability and integrity.

5. **Inspection Clocks**

The *Planning, Development and Infrastructure (General) Regulations 2017* (the PDI Regulations) and Practice Direction 9 both outline that councils must undertake inspections of different stages of development of certain building works.

Currently, there are no inspection clocks built into the DAP to assist councils in the oversight of this area.

The Panel considers that there is opportunity to add inspection clocks to the e-Planning portal to improve the management, monitoring, and reporting on inspection compliance.

Longer Term (Legislative Amendment Required)

The current legislative framework of the PDI Act and associated PDI Regulations provides some limitations to PlanSA being able to progress certain enhancements and system improvements. Amendments to this framework will assist in being able to progress several of the improvements that have been identified through both the AMR survey, and feedback to PlanSA directly.

To facilitate the following improvements, amendment to either or both the PDI Act and PDI Regulations is required. It will be important for consideration to be given to the resourcing implications and time that may be required to implement the proposal.

In addition, it is also appropriate to recognise that a number of these opportunities have been identified on the basis that they may aid in streamlining the development assessment process, particularly for developments that do not attract complex processes (such as public notification or referrals) for assessment.

6. Lodgement

a. Collection of lodgement fee at submission

PlanSA currently allows applicants to submit development applications into the portal without paying a lodgement fee. However, the version of the Code used to assess the application is only 'locked in' once all 'appropriate fees' (being the planning consent and lodgement fees, as required by section 119 of the PDI Act) are paid. The complexity that arises is that the 'appropriate fees' are only determined following verification of the application for planning consent.

This may have unintended consequences for applicants, particularly in circumstances where there is a Code Amendment scheduled for implementation and/or the verification process is delayed.

To remedy this issue, the Expert Panel proposes to recommend a minor amendment to the PDI Act to make it clear that the provisions of the Code are 'locked in' at submission when the lodgement fee is paid, rather than both the lodgement fee <u>and</u> the planning consent fee. This slight amendment would place the burden of securing the Code provisions on the applicant, as they would be required to pay the lodgement fee when submitting an application.

This amendment could be achieved through defining the term '*appropriate fee*' as the '*Electronic Lodgement Fee*' in the PDI Act.

b. Combined Verification and Assessment Processes

The DAP does not currently allow an application to progress to assessment whilst fees are outstanding. This consequently results in the assessment of simple applications being delayed by the need to request fees and await payment following the verification of the application.

However, if the PDI Act is amended to require the lodgement fee to be paid on submission of an application (and thus 'lock in' the provisions of the Code per suggested improvement 6a above), the Panel has identified that there may also be an opportunity to combine the verification and assessment process of more straight forward applications (i.e. Deemed To Satisfy and less complex Performance Assessed applications).

That is, following submission of a development application (which would necessarily include payment of the lodgement fee), the assessing relevant authority could complete the verification and assessment on the application, without navigating out of the consent in the e-Planning portal.

It is thought that this could be facilitated at the discretion of the assessing relevant authority but would only be available where all required documentation has been provided and where the proposal does not require an agency referral or public notification.

Importantly, this improvement has been identified following feedback from key user groups that having to request fees and await payment following verification hinders the expeditious assessment of straight forward development applications.

c. Automatic Issue of Decision Notification Form

Further to improvements identified above, there may also be scope to investigate the benefit of automatically issuing a Decision Notification Form (DNF) in certain circumstances.

This would necessarily be contingent on the 6a and 6b improvements being implemented. However, if a relevant authority was able to verify and assess an application and then seek the relevant planning fees from the applicant, there is opportunity for the e-Planning system to automatically issue a DNF when all outstanding fees have been paid.

The Panel expects that if this were implemented, it would be structured to enable a relevant authority to determine what type of applications this functionality would be enabled for.

The culmination of improvements 6a-6c have the capacity to provide an efficiency to relevant authorities, which would mean they do not need to track and re-assess a consent following payment of lodgement and planning consent fees.

7. Building Notification through PlanSA

The e-Planning system currently allows builders to submit building notifications directly into the PlanSA portal. However, as this is not mandated, builders still have the option to submit notifications to the relevant council either by telephone or in writing.

The receipt and management of building notifications directly to councils places unnecessary administrative burden on local government. On that basis, the Expert Panel proposes an amendment to regulation 93 of the PDI Regulations (which relates to section 146 of the PDI Act) to require builders to submit building notifications directly into the PlanSA portal.

8. Remove Building Consent Verification

The current regulatory framework requires a development application to be verified for each consent (per regulation 31 of the PDI Regulations). At the planning stage, there are several reasons that an application needs to be verified prior to progressing to assessment, including:

- determine nature of development;
- proposed elements;
- confirm correct Relevant Authority;
- confirm assessment category;
- determine fees and invoice; and
- check plans submitted (for planning consent, requests for information can only be sent once).

However, building consent is less prescriptive. To simplify the assessment of an application, and to remove administrative burden for relevant authorities, the Expert Panel proposes to remove the requirement to verify an application for building consent. It is thought that this may also assist in streamlining the assessment process.

9. Concurrent Planning and Building Assessment

The Panel understands that PlanSA regularly receives feedback that the e-Planning system is too linear and does not provide enough flexibility to undertake multiple processes at once. For example, it only allows for one (1) consent to be assessed at a time.

The PDI Act contemplates that consents can be sought in any order and does not preclude planning and building consent assessments occurring concurrently.

To provide additional efficiencies to relevant authorities (and to potentially reduce end to end assessment timeframes for applicants), the Panel considers there is opportunity to enhance the e-Planning system to enable consents to be assessed at the same time.

This would also likely require subsequent enhancements to the e-Planning system to ensure assessment timeframes are accurately recorded i.e., as each consent has its own assessment clock, the clock would need to be able to be paused once each consent has been assessed.

61,137 applications have received planning and building consents between July 2020 and September 2022 and may have benefitted from the ability for planning and building consents to be assessed concurrently.

In addition to the above, the Panel would also like to hear about any other user experience improvements that could be made to the e-Planning system and PlanSA, and how those improvements may increase the accessibility and useability of the platforms.

User Experience Questions

Website Re-Design

1. Is the PlanSA website easy to use?
2. What improvements to the PlanSA design would you make to enhance its usability?

Mobile Application for Submission of Building Notifications and Inspections

3. Would submitting building notifications and inspections via a mobile device make these processes more efficient?
4. Where relevant, would you use a mobile submission function or are you more likely to continue to use a desktop?

Online Submission Forms

5. Is there benefit to simplifying the submission process so that a PlanSA login is not required?
6. Does requiring the creation of a PlanSA login negatively impact user experience?
7. What challenges, if any, may result from an applicant not having a login with PlanSA?

Increase Relevant Authority Data Management

8. What would be the advantages of increasing relevant authorities' data management capabilities?
9. What concerns, if any, do you have about enabling relevant authorities to 'self-service' changes to development applications in the DAP?

Inspection Clocks

10. What are the advantages of introducing inspection clock functionality?
11. What concerns, if any, would you have about clock functionality linked to inspections?
12. What, if any, impact would enabling clock functionality on inspections be likely to have on relevant authorities and builders?

Collection of lodgement fee at submission

13. Would you be supportive of the lodgement fee being paid on application, with planning consent fees to follow verification?
14. What challenges, if any, would arise as a consequence of 'locking in' the Code provisions at lodgement? How could those challenges be overcome?

Combined Verification and Assessment Processes

15. What are the current system obstacles that prevent relevant authorities from making decisions on DTS and Performance Assessed applications quickly?
16. What would be the advantages of implementing a streamlined assessment process of this nature?
17. What, if any, impact would a streamlined assessment process have for non-council relevant authorities?

Automatic Issue of Decision Notification Form

18. What are the advantages of the e-Planning system being able to automatically issue a Decision Notification Form?
19. What do you consider would be the key challenges of implementing an automatic system of this nature?
20. If this was to be implemented, should there be any limitations attached to the functionality (i.e., a timeframe for payment of fees or the determination will lapse)?

Building Notification through PlanSA

21. Would you be supportive of mandating building notifications be submitted through PlanSA?
22. What challenges, if any, would arise as a consequence of removing the ability for building notifications to be received by telephone or in writing to a relevant council? How could those challenges be overcome?
23. Would this amendment provide efficiencies to relevant authorities?

Remove Building Consent Verification

24. Would you be supportive of removing the requirement to verify an application for building consent?
25. What challenges, if any, would arise as a consequence of removing building consent verification? How could those challenges be overcome?

Concurrent Planning and Building Assessment

26. What would be the implications of enabling multiple consents to be assessed at the same time?

Innovation

The changes to the planning system that commenced ten (10) years ago were referred to as a '*once in a generational*' change for the development industry. The scope and implementation of a fully digital system has been proven to be nation, and indeed world, leading.

The questions that follow then are, what does the digital future of planning look like in South Australia? And what else can be integrated into the e-Planning system to ensure that we are continuing to innovate and improve on the foundation that has been built?

The Expert Panel has considered what innovations and industry leading ideas may be available and now seeks your views on whether you would consider that these ideas would improve the overall experience and useability of the digital system, and whether they would provide demonstrable value to the State.

Whilst the ideas listed below are not 'project-ready' and further investigation is required as to how they may be facilitated, the Panel has included them in this Discussion Paper to encourage 'future thinking' and to demonstrate the possibilities that are available to the State.

1. **Automatic Assessment Checks for DTS Applications**

   Technology currently exists to automate the assessment of development applications with clearly defined rules. For certain applications, particularly DTS, it may be possible for the system to:

   - do the assessment to review, consider and assess proposed developments that meet the DTS requirements of the Code; and
   - highlight the rules that the proposed development passes or fails.

   A tool like this would have the capacity to assist in the pre-lodgement phase of an application, as well as during the assessment of an application. In addition, it may provide resource relief to relevant authorities (namely councils) in facilitating the assessment of applications in the requisite timeframes.

   Whilst this technology already exists, it would need to be further developed for it to be integrated into the e-Planning system.

2. **3D Modelling for Development Application Tracker and Public Notification**

   The Expert Panel considers that there is scope for the e-Planning system to accept 3D renders and to digitally display approved, in-progress and completed developments on the Development Activity Tracker. This would require the expansion of the Development Activity Tracker across the State.

The way this would be facilitated is yet to be explored in full, although it is thought that there may be a future requirement for 3D modelling to be provided with a development application (potentially limited to those of a certain size/status/classification) such that the community can experience the impact that a development will have in a locality. This can be taken further by also building in a tool to show the visual and overshadowing impacts for the development.

A mobile application of this nature may also assist public notification as a QR Code linked to the 3D model of the development could be featured on the on-site notice.

3. **Augmented Reality Mobile Application**

   Further to the inclusion of 3D modelling, and in terms of increasing transparency of information for the community, a mobile application could be developed that would enable anyone to use their mobile phone to view planned and in-progress developments in augmented reality.

   As with the 3D modelling, the development of an application of this nature would enable people to experience the impact that a development will have in a locality, through augmented reality.

4. **Accessibility through Mobile Applications**

   The e-Planning system and PlanSA website are not particularly mobile friendly, and currently expects the user to be on a computer to use it to its full capacity.

   In a world that is becoming increasingly mobile, it seems logical to the Expert Panel that adapting the PlanSA website to be mobile friendly should be in the plan for the future.

   However, given the complex nature of the e-Planning system, particularly the use of maps, this idea necessarily falls within the future innovation category of improvements as it will take both time and significant resourcing to adapt it for full mobile consumption.

In addition to the above, the Panel would also like to hear about any other innovative improvements that could be made to the e-Planning system and PlanSA, and how those innovations may increase the accessibility and useability of the platforms.

Innovation Questions

Automatic Assessment Checks for DTS Applications

1. What do you consider would be the key benefits of implementing an automatic system of this nature?
2. What do you consider would be the key challenges of implementing an automatic system of this nature?
3. Would you be supportive of the Government investing in developing this technology so that it may integrate with the e-Planning system?

3D Modelling for Development Application Tracker and Public Notification

4. What do you consider would be the key benefits of the e-Planning system being able to display 3D models of proposed developments?
5. Do you support requiring certain development applications to provide 3D modelling in the future? If not, why not? If yes, what types of applications would you support being required to provide 3D modelling?
6. Would you be supportive of the Government investing in developing this technology so that it may integrate with the e-Planning system?

Augmented Reality Mobile Application

7. Would you be supportive of the Government investing in developing this technology so that it may integrate with the e-Planning system?

Accessibility through Mobile Applications

8. Do you think there is benefit in the e-Planning system being mobile friendly, or do you think using it only on a computer is appropriate?
9. Would you be supportive of the Government investing in developing this technology so that the PlanSA website and the e-Planning system is functional on mobile?

Planning System Implementation Review

Summary of E-Planning Questions

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Planning System Implementation Review

How can you get involved?

You can participate in this process and contribute to the Expert Panel's deliberations by providing a submission to the Panel:

Via email: DTI.PlanningReview@sa.gov.au

Via post: Attention: Expert Panel, GPO Box 1815, Adelaide SA 5001

Via phone: 08 7133 3222

You can also complete a survey on the Expert Panel's YourSAy page: https://yoursay.sa.gov.au/planning_review

For more information about the Expert Panel and the engagement events that it is facilitating, please visit www.plan.sa.gov.au/planning_review

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