

Waverley Independent Planning Panel

Discussion Paper

Waverley Council is committed to ongoing improvements in the Development Assessment process and the provision of high quality development outcomes for the community.

In line with these objectives, the Council has resolved to trial an Independent Planning Panel responsible for determining a range of development applications for Council. It is intended that the Panel will determine all development applications that would normally be referred to the Council for determination. The Panel is due to be established on 1 July 2013 for a two year trial.

Aims:

- Maintain transparency and increase community confidence in the planning process
- Promote independent expert decision making alongside community representatives and depoliticise the assessment of Development Applications
- Promote additional Councillor and community involvement into making key strategic planning decisions about Waverley

Matters for consideration:

- Reduce timeframes for processing of major proposals
- Increased ability for Councillors to focus more on strategic and policy based issues in planning, guiding development in Waverley through the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan
- The Panel would include independent people with expert technical skill and experience in law, architecture, planning, environmental science and urban design to determine difficult and/or contentious applications
- Cost savings with regard to administration
- Costs associated with set up and maintenance of the Panel
- Removal of political lobbying from the Development Assessment process
- Community representation on the Panel is essential
- Potentially reduce legal costs by having fewer appeals to the Land and Environment Court
- Provide Council and the community with confidence that planning decisions will be made on planning grounds, and are legally and technically robust if an appeal was to be lodged against a decision
- Perceived loss of democratic involvement by removing Councillors from decision making role in Development Assessment
- Community members will still be able to make submissions in the same way, but will be unable to lobby panellists.

Council is seeking your feedback on how the Panel will work. Draft documents relating to the operations of the Panel have been prepared, including the Panel's:

- Charter;
- Code of Conduct;
- Operational Guidelines; and
- Memorandum of Understanding.

What's next?

The documents will be on exhibition from 24 April 2013 to 22 May 2013 and can be viewed at:

- Customer Service Centre, 55 Spring Street, Bondi Junction;
- Waverley Library, 32-48 Denison Street, Bondi Junction;
- Council's website www.waverley.nsw.gov.au; and
- Council's consultation hub, Have Your Say Waverley haveyoursaywaverley.com.au

Submissions will be received up until Wednesday 22 May 2013 and should be sent to Waverley Council, PO Box 9, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355 or email to waver@waverley.nsw.gov.au, Ref: A13/0229