



NEWS RELEASE
The Hon. Kristina Keneally MP
Member for Heffron
Minister for Planning
Minister for Redfern Waterloo

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NEW FUNDING FOR JOINT REGIONAL PLANNING PANELS

The NSW Government has allocated \$2.4 million in the 2009/10 budget to establish, operate and administer new Joint Regional Planning Panels.

Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally, announced the new funding boost today at the Shires Association Annual Conference.

“Joint Regional Planning Panels will provide strong decision making on regionally-significant projects, providing a balance of expertise, independence and local knowledge,” Ms Keneally said.

“From July to August 2009, six panels will begin operation across NSW. The panels will consist of three State Government appointed members and two nominees from the relevant local council.

“It will be the job of the panels to stand in the shoes that previously would have been occupied by a council or myself, and make decisions on projects significant to a region.

“Now there is no denying that councils have expressed some concerns about the panels. That said, what I am doing today is assuring councils that they will not have to foot the bill.

“The new funding I am announcing today will cover the costs associated with administration of the new planning panels, as well as employment costs for the three state members.

“Councils will continue to receive Development Application fees and will be responsible for the costs of their two members on the panel, as well as the usual council notification and assessment process.

“I am releasing this information today, ahead of the State budget, to assist councils to finalise their own budgets. More detail on how the additional funding will be allocated will be released shortly.”

Ms Keneally said that the new Joint Regional Planning Panels are an important step in creating the best and most efficient planning system in the country.

“The panels will be integral in achieving a more efficient and transparent planning system, with particular benefits expected for proposals significant to regional NSW,” Ms Keneally said.

“Council staff will assess projects to be determined by the panels, including some coastal projects which are currently assessed by the Department of Planning.

“It’s clear that we will not always see eye to eye, however I look forward to continuing to work with councils and the development industry to improve the planning system.”

Media Contact: Phil McCall – (02) 9228 5811 or 0438 619 987

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