

**Greater Sydney Commission
Commencing the Sydney Planning Panels – Frequently Asked Questions****May 2016**

This FAQ answers questions regarding the commencement of the Greater Sydney Commission's Sydney Planning Panels and the process of transition from the existing Joint Regional Planning Panels by 21 November 2016.

Q 1: What are the Sydney Planning Panels, what is their geographic remit and function?

- The *Greater Sydney Commission Act 2015* (the GSC Act) commenced on 27 January 2016. The GSC Act enables the Minister for Planning to create Sydney Planning Panels. A Sydney Planning Panel is taken to be a Joint Regional Planning Panel (JRPP) under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* (the EP&A Act).
- Sydney Planning Panels will be established to replace the existing Sydney East JRPP and the Sydney West JRPP.
- The Sydney Planning Panels will:
 - determine regionally significant development applications (generally development with a capital investment value of more than \$20M) within the Greater Sydney Region (as defined in the GSC Act); and
 - consider pre-Gateway (rezoning) reviews, through which proponents can request a review if a council decides not to support a rezoning request or doesn't make a determination within 90 days.
- These are the same functions as the current Joint Regional Planning Panels.
- The City of Sydney will continue to be excluded from the operation of the Sydney Planning Panels for the consideration of development matters. The Central Sydney Planning Committee will continue to operate as normal. Pre-gateway (rezoning) reviews for the City of Sydney will continue to be undertaken by the Planning and Assessment Commission.

Q 2: When will the Sydney Planning Panels commence?

- The Sydney Planning Panels will commence on Monday 21 November 2016. Until then the existing Sydney East JRPP and the Sydney West JRPP will continue to operate.
- Starting the Sydney Planning Panels in November 2016 will allow the Commission and specifically the Commissioners, to focus initially on the important strategic work of developing the draft District Plans for exhibition. It allows time for a smooth transition with minimal disruption to operations and decisions.

Q 3: Who will be the members of the Sydney Planning Panels?

- The Sydney Planning Panels will comprise of five members:
 - A Greater Sydney Commission District Commissioner – the Chair
 - Two state appointed representatives
 - Two council appointed representatives

Q 4: How many Sydney Planning Panels will there be?

- Six Sydney Planning Panels will be established, one for each district in Greater Sydney.
- The boundaries for the Sydney Planning Panels will reflect the district boundaries declared under the EP&A Act.
- The relevant District Commissioner will chair the Sydney Planning Panel for their district. As with the JRPPs the council appointed representatives for the relevant local government area will sit on the relevant Sydney Planning Panel when considering matters in their local government area.
- The new members of the Sydney Planning Panels will be announced by the end of June 2016.

Q 5: Why have more than two Sydney Planning Panels?

- A key outcome of establishment of Sydney Planning Panels is to improve the timeframes for the determination of development applications and pre-gateway (rezoning) reviews. Creating six panels evens the workload across Sydney allowing for faster decisions.
- District Commissioners will continue to build relationships with the councils within their District and build strong ties that will help councils to assess development matters in a more effective and efficient manner.

Q 6: What role will the draft District Plans play in consideration of local plans by the Sydney Planning Panels?

- The draft District Plans are currently being developed and will be exhibited by no later than January 2017.
- The draft District Plans will be a matter the Sydney Planning Panels must take into consideration when reviewing local environmental plans and considering pre-Gateway (rezoning) review requests, as part of the strategic basis for future land use outcomes.

Q 7: What happens if I have a matter with the Joint Regional Planning Panel and it has not been finalised?

- Any development application or pre-Gateway (rezoning) review that was lodged but has not been determined by 21 November 2016 will be determined by the relevant Sydney Planning Panel.
- If a JRPP has been appointed as the relevant planning authority for a rezoning prior to 21 November 2016 that function will transition to the relevant Sydney Planning Panel.

Q 8: What is the role of the Department of Planning and Environment (Department) with the Sydney Planning Panels and planning proposals?

- The Department will continue to provide the same level of secretariat support for the new Sydney Planning Panels.
- The Department will continue to review planning proposals, issue Gateway determinations and make LEPs as a delegate of the Greater Sydney Commission until advised otherwise (please see **Q 9**).
- The existing plan making delegations to local government remain in place.

Q 9: How will the Sydney Planning Panels improve procedures and outcomes?

- The new approach of six Sydney Planning Panels will aim to improve determination time frames by at least 10% within 12 months of establishing the Sydney Planning Panels, and reduce pre-gateway (rezoning) review timeframes to less than 90 days for 85% of requests.
- The Greater Sydney Commission will monitor the functions of the Department of Planning and Environment as their delegate and will review the efficiency of process and effectiveness of outcomes regularly.
- The Government is committed to the smooth transition from the JRPPs to the Sydney Planning Panels and the new Panels will be supported throughout their establishment and during the transition to minimise any disruption to important development and rezoning decisions.

Q 10: When will the review of the pre-Gateway (rezoning) review process be finalised?

- The Department of Planning and Environment has recently undertaken a review of the pre-Gateway (rezoning) review process to ensure it is achieving its objectives and operating in the most transparent and efficient manner. The outcomes of this review are proposed to be finalised and implemented by June 2016.

Q 11: Where do I get further information?

- If you require further information about the operation of Sydney Planning Panels please contact the Joint Regional Planning Secretariat on 02 9228 2060 or at jrppenquiry@jrpp.nsw.gov.au

- If you require further information about the role and functions of the Sydney Planning Panels, please contact the Greater Sydney Commission on 02 8289 6200 or at info@gsc.nsw.gov.au