

Tuesday, 10 June 2008

ACTION NOW TO CREATE AUSTRALIA'S BEST PLANNING SYSTEM

Deputy Premier Kevin Foley announced today that the State Government is to embark on an ambitious reform program to give South Australia the most efficient and modern planning system in Australia.

Mr Foley says the new planning system will reduce the cost of building approvals to families and business, enhance South Australia's economic competitiveness and improve home affordability.

"These are the most comprehensive and progressive set of planning reforms to be enacted in Australia, and they will position South Australia as the No.1 State for conducting business in this country," Mr Foley says.

Mr Foley says the reforms will allow South Australia to better meet the challenges of climate change, improve management of the State's water resources, and help make the most of the Rann Labor Government's \$2 billion investment in public transport announced in last week's Budget.

"Last Thursday's budget, with its bold program of investment in modern, advanced transportation for Adelaide, is key to making planning and development reform work in this State," Mr Foley says.

The key elements of the Government's planning and development reform strategy comprise:

- a 30-year plan to properly manage Adelaide's growth and development;
- a huge investment in building efficient transport corridors that encourage the creation of new commuter-friendly neighbourhoods within existing suburbs;
- a 25-year rolling supply of broad acre land to meet the residential, commercial and industrial needs of a growing population and expanding economy;
- simplified and faster assessment of new housing and home renovations; and
- five regional plans to help guide the development of the State outside of Adelaide.

Mr Foley says KMPG estimates these sweeping reforms to the planning system could add about \$5 billion to Gross State Product within five years by attracting people and jobs to South Australia.

"These reforms are estimated to slash red tape by \$75.6 million a year, cut mortgage costs for homeowners by up to \$5,000 and yield savings to the housing industry of \$62 million a year through a reduction in delays," he says.

Mr Foley says the planning reforms will encourage Transit Oriented Developments, or TODS: higher density and well designed neighbourhoods to be located along Adelaide's enhanced train, tram and bus corridors.

He says these "walkable neighbourhoods" will help reduce Adelaide's reliance on cars, foster greater public use of the Government's expanded public transport network and create energy and water-efficient communities within existing suburbs.

“If fuel prices rise a further 50 per cent, South Australians living in these new neighbourhoods will face far lower living costs than most commuters living in other major cities,” he says.

“The improved efficiency of these new developments will in turn help to drive down energy and water bills and sharpen South Australia’s competitive edge in terms of business operating costs.

“None of this would have been possible without the revolutionary changes to South Australia’s train, tram and bus networks that I announced in last Thursday’s budget.”

Minister for Urban Development and Planning Paul Holloway says much work has already been done in the past six years to improve the efficiency of South Australia’s planning system.

“But more can be done to build on these achievements. We need better planning for a better future,” he says.

Mr Holloway says the reforms announced today by the Government follow the painstaking work of the Planning and Development Review Steering Committee, led by Michael O’Brien MP.

The Steering Committee also included representatives from industry and local government, working with international accounting and consulting firm, KPMG.

Mr Holloway says the Rann Labor Government has endorsed more than 90 per cent of the recommendations made by the Planning and Development Review.

An expanded Planning and Development Steering Committee will continue to provide independent advice on the implementation of these important reforms.

Mr Holloway says a streamlined development assessment process, achieved by broadening the range of developments that will no longer require planning approval and the introduction by September 2009 of a Residential Development Code, is a key element of the Government’s reforms.

“By removing minor matters from the planning system and reducing the number of referrals between agencies, assessment times for family homes and renovations could be slashed by nearly 70 per cent,” he says.

“The decision to streamline assessments alone is estimated to yield a total interest saving on mortgages of up to \$5,500 for each application.”

Mr Holloway says the South Australian community will be consulted during the next three months to determine the content of this Residential Development Code.

The Government has also endorsed a strategy for the timely release of adequate land for residential, commercial and industrial use to better meet an expected rise in demand from an expanding economy and growing population.

Mr Holloway says this sequencing will involve the introduction of a 25-year rolling supply of broad-acre land, with 15 years of zoned supply at all times, for residential, commercial and industrial land. Other measures to improve land supply and land use including careful expansion of Adelaide’s urban growth boundary and fast tracking of rezoning.