

Mr Michael Edgar
General Manager
The Hills Shire Council
PO Box 7064
NORWEST NSW 2153

Via email: medgar@thehills.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Edgar

The NSW Government's Planning Reform Action Plan, announced earlier this year, aims to create a more timely, certain and transparent planning system. The planning system has a critical role to play in the state's economic and social recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic., and the reforms will help to unlock productivity, creating jobs, supporting the economy and delivering significant public benefit.

The reforms include targets to reduce the time it takes to assess planning proposals, with improved processes for assessing and finalising these more efficiently. This means greater clarity for local government, the community and more certainty for proponents and investors.

The reforms seek to reduce the timeframes for rezoning land to around one year and no more than two years from start to finish. This has been shown to be achievable, particularly in cases where proposals are aligned to a strong strategic planning framework.

As part of our initial work on this, we are seeking to resolve and make final decisions on long-standing or legacy planning proposals which have had a Gateway determination for four or more years by 31 December 2020.

Proposals in The Hills Shire LGA that fall within this timeframe and an outline of next steps are provided as follows:

Proposal	Status	Next Steps
PP_2015_THILL_007_00 – Bella Vista Farm Park (Version 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gateway expired• DPIE understands Council does not intend to proceed with the proposal.• DPIE has written previously to Council requesting that the Proposal be withdrawn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Department intends to alter the Gateway determination and the Planning Proposal will not proceed.

PP_2016_THILL_013_02 – Circa Commercial Precinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gateway expires 15 December 2020 • Proposal is with Council for exhibition. • Proposal has not been exhibited. • VPA has not been resolved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department requests an update from Council by 2/11/20 on outstanding matters and a schedule for the finalising the process. • If the Proposal cannot be resolved in a timely matter, and if there are still substantial issues with the proposal or VPA, the Department will consider amending the Gateway determination to provided that it should not proceed until agreement there is a reasonable prospect of the parties reaching agreement and a clear program to resolve outstanding matters.
PP_2016_THILL_016_00 – Bull and Bush Hotel Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sydney Central City Panel is the responsible planning authority. • The finalisation of the Proposal is pending finalisation of the DCP and VPA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department is liaising with the Sydney Central City Planning Panel regarding any outstanding matters. • The Department understands the proponent's VPA is consistent with Council's resolution 8 September 2020 and is with Council for review. • The Department would appreciate if Council could complete its review of the VPA and send to the proponent by 2/11/20 as it is understood the proponent is willing to work with Council to ensure the VPA is on exhibition as soon as possible. • The Department is examining the opportunity to finalise the proposal by 31/12/2020 when the VPA or a deed is signed by the proponent.

Thank you for working with the Department during recent months to resolve matters relating to these long-standing proposals. The Department continue to collaborate with Council to progress and finalise these proposals in the short term and to enable decisions to be made prior to 31 December 2020.

All proposals will be finalised in accordance with the provisions and options available under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979* and the decisions made will seek to reflect current community needs and expectations as established in Council's LSPS. Finalising

these proposals in the short term will enable council to redirect its focus and staff resources to implement the new directions set under Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS).

Once these planning proposals are finalised, the Department will work with council on any other long-standing proposals that may have had a Gateway determination for a period of between two and four years. Please note this proposed approach does not affect, alter or jeopardise Council's current application for the Public Spaces Legacy Program.

The Department will also work with councils to formulate and implement other process improvements that can help to reduce overall timeframes for planning proposals. We will soon provide you more information and seek your collaboration to co-design these improvements.

We look forward to continuing to work with Council to deliver this bold and ambitious reform program, which will improve and streamline the plan making process and support the development of a world-class planning system in NSW.

We look forward to continuing to work with Council to deliver the Planning Reform Action Plan. If you have any questions about the program or this letter, please contact me on 9274 6070.

Yours sincerely



Jane Grose
Director Central (Western)
27 October 2020

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