



Policy document

Engagement Strategy

PURPOSE

This Strategy sets out the goals, methods and formats of community engagement undertaken by the Independent Planning Commission (Commission) when exercising its functions as a decisionmaker for development applications, providing planning advice and reviewing proposed State heritage listings. It is supported by a range of Commission policies and guidelines that are referenced throughout the Strategy to provide the community with a clear overview of what to expect when engaging with the Commission.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION

The Independent Planning Commission of NSW was established in 2018 as an independent statutory body that is the decisionmaker for certain types of major development in NSW.

The key functions of the Commission are to:

- determine State significant development applications following their assessment by the Planning Secretary in cases where one or more of the following applies:
 - the applicant has made a reportable political donation
 - there are more than a specified number of public objections to the proposed development
 - for some types of development, the relevant local council/s has objected to the proposed development
 - the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces (**Minister**) has delegated their decision-making powers to the Commission
- conduct public hearings for development applications and other matters, at the request of the Minister
- provide independent advice on any other planning and development matter, when requested by the Minister or Planning Secretary
- review proposed listings on the State heritage register, when requested by the Minister for Heritage.

For further details about our role please see our website: [Our role in the planning system](#).

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The Independent Planning Commission operates on many different Aboriginal lands throughout the State of NSW. We recognise the Traditional Owners of the land upon which we work, and we show our respect for their Elders, both past and present. The Commission would also like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, upon whose lands the Commission's head office is currently located.

Office of the Independent Planning Commission

OUR VALUES

The Commission's values are set out in our [Strategic Plan](#) and inform all that we do:

Independence	Commissioners are independent and objective in the decisions they make and advice they provide. The Commission is separate from other government departments and agencies.
Integrity	Our processes are undertaken with a high degree of openness and transparency and in line with ethical conduct
Engagement	We encourage and facilitate stakeholder participation in decision-making processes and welcome feedback on our policies and procedures
Quality	The Commission makes fair, timely and robust decisions, and instils a work culture of excellence and continuous improvement
Timeliness	The Commission delivers timely determinations within the legislative and government policy framework to serve the people of NSW

OUR ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The aim of our engagement activities when determining development applications is to support the Commission to exercise its decision-making functions in a fair, transparent and informed manner by:

- providing people who made written submissions to the Department of Housing, Planning and Infrastructure (DPHI) on the application when it was on exhibition with an opportunity to review new material and make updated submissions
- providing other people that are impacted or interested in the development application with an opportunity to review materials and make a submission
- accessing community knowledge, views and expertise through the submission process and considering these views in the Commission's decision-making process
- transparently publishing information and documents for each case in a timely manner to support community confidence in the Commission's process and the NSW planning system.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The DPHI [Statewide Community Participation Plan](#) outlines how the community can participate in NSW planning processes.

Any statutory requirements that are relevant to the work of the Commission, including formal exhibition of development applications, are met earlier in the planning process on the Commission's behalf by the Planning Secretary, through DPHI.

Community engagement that the Commission undertakes and that is set out in this Strategy is in addition to these statutory requirements.

OUR ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

The Commission's community engagement activities are guided by the below principles of Accessibility and Transparency. We report annually on stakeholder feedback about our performance against these principles:

ACCESSIBILITY

Inform community members about Commission cases that affect them and how they can participate by:

- providing guidance on our processes and what to expect when engaging with us
- publishing up-to-date information on our website
- directly contacting community members who have previously provided a submission to the DPHI on a matter that the Commission is determining

Office of the Independent Planning Commission

Make information and engagement processes easily accessible by:

- using methods of engagement that are appropriate for the community and the likely impacts of proposed development
- holding engagement events at suitable times and locations in consideration of holiday periods and other community events
- providing at least two weeks' notice of upcoming consultation events
- assisting community members wishing to participate and responding to the needs of groups and individuals who may find it difficult to participate. If you need specific support for your participation in Commission processes, please email us at ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au with your request
- providing accessible documents in line with the Commission's [Multicultural Plan](#)
- hearing from First Nations peoples and communities in a form and location that is culturally appropriate.

TRANSPARENCY

Operate in accordance with the Commission's [Transparency Policy](#) by:

- publishing consultation event transcripts, submissions, correspondence and other case materials on our website in a timely manner
- inviting representatives from local councils to observe site inspections where appropriate
- providing a Statement of Reasons for Decision that includes how the community's views were taken into account
- seeking feedback and regularly reviewing the effectiveness of our engagement activities.

HOW WE ENGAGE WITH THE COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY

The community is anyone directly impacted by, or interested in, a development application under consideration by the Commission. This includes:

- people that have previously provided a submission on the application
- businesses, companies and organisations
- individuals
- local councils and government authorities
- community groups
- First Nations people and communities
- peak industry bodies

When engaging with the community as part of its decision-making process the Commission may structure engagement events to group together and hear consecutively from **impacted** and **interested** people:

- **impacted** people and groups from the affected area that would be directly impacted by a proposed development or planning decision¹, and have lived experience, local information and on-the-ground insights that are directly relevant to the Commission's consideration of the application
- **interested** people and groups that wish to submit information to the Commission about wider, indirect impacts or provide broader commentary about planning and the environment, often raising issues beyond the scope of a single determination.

¹ The size, scope and boundary of the affected locality may vary depending on the scale, nature and location of the proposed development, but would typically align with the "social locality" as identified in the assessment of the application under section 3.4 of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure's *Social Impact Assessment Guideline for State significant projects* (July 2025).

WRITTEN AND VERBAL SUBMISSIONS

The Commission will always accept written submissions on matters on which it is deliberating, and may, in certain circumstances, also invite verbal submissions from the public by holding individual stakeholder meetings, local meetings or a public meeting. The Minister may also choose to direct the Commission to conduct a public hearing as part of determining the application.

Written submissions

Development applications that are decided by the Commission have already been exhibited for written submissions by DPHI during its assessment of the application. When an application is before the Commission for final decision, the community can raise issues, express support, or propose conditions in relation to a proposed development by:

- updating any previous submission they have made, in light of the DPHI's Assessment Report and any recommended conditions of consent
- providing a new submission on the proposed development, taking into account the DPHI's Assessment Report and any recommended conditions of consent
- making a submission on additional materials, in situations where the Commission seeks further submissions on new information it may receive during the course of the case.

Submissions are to be lodged via the Commission's website. Please see our [Public Submissions Guidelines](#) for detailed information and guidance on the process of making a submission.

Verbal submissions

CONSULTATION EVENTS

There are a range of formats the Commission may use when holding consultation events so that the community can make verbal submissions directly to the Commission Panel determining a specific matter.

The Commission may schedule and invite members of the public to register to speak at:

- a local meeting – designed to hear from local community members that would be directly affected by the noise, visual impacts, air quality, traffic and transport, economic and other impacts associated with the proposed development,
- a public meeting, or
- a public hearing, if the Minister has directed the Commission to hold a public hearing.

In some instances, community members may also be invited to speak to the Panel in an individual stakeholder meeting.

Engagement is tailored to the specific features of the case to ensure impacted communities are heard and public resources are used efficiently. The type of engagement method and format used will depend on:

- the scale and likely impacts of a proposed development
- the level of community interest, reflected in the number of submissions received by the DPHI at exhibition
- the 'social locality' of a proposed development or matter on which planning advice is requested
- whether the Commission is the consent authority making the decision on a development application, or is exercising its other function of providing planning advice to the Planning Secretary or the Minister
- whether the Minister has directed the Commission to hold a public hearing.

Please see our guidelines for [local meetings](#), [public meetings](#), and [public hearings](#) for information on how to participate at these events, and our [Standards of Behaviour](#) for how the Commission runs a safe and respectful event.

Office of the Independent Planning Commission

Phone (02) 9383 2100
Email ipcn@ipcn.nsw.gov.au

	Development applications decided by the Commission		Advice on planning matters provided by the Commission	
	Where a local meeting, public meeting or hearing is <u>not</u> held	Where a local meeting, public meeting or public hearing is held	Rezoning and Gateway Determination Reviews	State Heritage Register Proposal Reviews
Notification of the opportunity to make a submission	- Everyone who made a submission to the DPHI are contacted via email advising how to participate in our process - The broader community is notified via the Commission's website, social media and media coverage of media releases of how and when to make a written submission - Updates are provided on the Commission's website and social media channels - Prior submitters to DPHI and people who made submissions to the Commission will be notified by email of the outcome of the decision.	- Everyone who made a submission to the DPHI is contacted via email advising how to participate in our process - The broader community is notified via the Commission's website, social media and media coverage of media releases of: - meeting details, dates, times and formats - how and when to register to speak - how and when to make a written submission - Depending on the nature of the development and the type of consultation event, the Commission may also place advertisements in local publications - Updates are provided on the Commission's website and social media channels - Major updates, including the outcome of the decision, are provided by email to those people that have made a submission to DPHI or the Commission	- The Commission's website will detail any written submission opening and closing dates and other updates on the case - Anyone who made a written submission to the Commission on the matter will be notified of the advice outcome.	- Individuals, groups and organisations who made a submission to Heritage NSW will be contacted via email advising how to participate in our process - The broader community is notified via the Commission's website, social media and media releases, about how and when to make a written submission - Any updates will be provided on the Commission's website and social media channels - Prior submitters to Heritage NSW and people who made submissions to the Commission will be notified when the review has been completed.
Consultation and in-person events	- The Panel may choose to hold transcribed meetings with key stakeholders and community members. Commission staff will contact you should you be invited to participate - Community members invited to attend or host a locality tour will be contacted directly by Commission staff.	- Public hearings are only held if directed by the Minister - Meetings may be held in person, virtually (online) or as a mixture of both and may be livestreamed on the Commission's website - Community members can register their interest to speak on the Commission's website - A transcript of the meeting or hearing will be published on the Commission's website. A video recording of livestreamed meetings and hearings will be published on the Commission's YouTube channel. - Community members invited to attend or host a locality tour will be contacted directly by Commission staff.	The Panel may request transcribed meetings with key stakeholders and community members as part of its consultation process. Commission staff will contact you should you be invited to participate.	The Commission Panel will meet with key stakeholders as required by the <i>Heritage Act 1977</i> in a transcribed meeting as part of its consultation process.
Written submissions	- The Commission will open for public submissions within a few days of receiving the case and will remain open until after the local meeting, public meeting or public hearing is held - Submissions are to be lodged via the Commission's website. Written, audio or video submissions are accepted - If the Panel seeks further public submissions on additional materials, previous submitters will be notified by email.		Submissions are to be lodged via the Commission's website. Written, audio or video submissions are accepted	

OBSERVING CONSULTATION EVENTS

Community members are welcome to observe a local meeting, public meeting or public hearing to hear the views of other community members and speakers. Unless they are held entirely online, public consultation events are typically held in a location near to the site of the development and the affected community.

Public meetings and hearings are also usually livestreamed and video recorded to allow community members the opportunity to observe the meeting via our website or YouTube channel in a manner convenient to them.

You may also be asked to complete a feedback survey on the Commission's processes following your attendance.

WHEN A MATTER IS WITH THE COURTS

If you have made a submission either to DPHI or the Commission on a State significant development application that is determined by the Commission and later appealed in the Courts, any public participation in those proceedings is governed by the rules of the Court, not by the Commission.

KEY POLICIES

In addition to the Statewide Community Participation Plan, this Engagement Strategy is informed and supplemented by several Commission policies and guidelines. These include but are not limited to:

- [Complaints Management Policy](#)
- [First Nations Engagement Statement](#)
- [Multicultural Plan](#)
- [Privacy Statement](#)
- [Public Hearing Guidelines](#)
- [Public Meeting Guidelines](#)
- [Local Meeting Guidelines](#)
- [Public Submissions Guidelines](#)
- [Scope of Rezoning and Gateway Reviews](#)
- [Standards of Behaviour](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Transparency Policy](#)