



30 June 2004

Development Assessment Consultation
C/- Socom Pty Ltd
Level 2
19-21 Argyle Place South
CARLTON VIC 3053

Dear Sir/Madam

Development Assessment Consultation – Draft Model DA

The Urban Development Institute of Australian Western Australia Division (UDIA) is the peak industry body representing the urban development industry in Western Australia. It is in this capacity that we provide the following feedback on the Draft Model DA prepared by the Development Assessment Forum.

UDIA supports the Development Assessment Forum and its aims to simplify and develop a more consistent development approvals processes across Australia. In this regard UDIA commends the forum for the development of the draft Model DA.

This submission provides brief comment on the key practices and related recommendations of the draft Model DA. The submission also incorporates (as an attachment) a more detailed report prepared by UDIA in conjunction with the Property Council of Australia (WA Division) which provides the outcomes of wide consultation with our members and subsequent recommendations to streamline the planning approvals process in Western Australia.

The report has been incorporated into this submission because many of the issues discussed and recommendations obtained significantly overlap with the practices and recommendations of the draft Model DA.

Governance Practices

Proposal: separation of roles

UDIA supports the concept of providing clear roles for elected officials to minimise conflicts and to match skills and responsibilities. You will note that the UDIA/PCA report also recommends training for elected members in the planning and approvals process.

Proposal: defined third party involvement

As outlined in the report, the development approval system in WA does not currently provide for third party involvement. UDIA would not support the inclusion of provisions in the Model DA process allowing for third party involvement. We therefore support the proposed default position of no third party appeals and the suggestion to limit the scope of third party appeals to overriding policy issues rather than individual development proposals.



Professional Practices

Proposal: Technically excellent assessment criteria

UDIA supports the development of clear and consistent rules that can be used across state and local government to provide a uniform approach to decision making.

Proposal: Independent and Expert Assessment

UDIA supports the intention of independent and expert assessment to provide for increased transparency and to match project complexity with appropriate skills. UDIA would support these types of panels being formed at a regional level for the assessment of regionally significant projects to allow for the issues, benefit and potential costs to the entire region to be considered in the decision making process.

Systems and Process Practices

Proposal: Single Point of Assessment

UDIA supports the proposal for decisions on development applications to be integrated by a single entity. UDIA Members consistently face serious problems and delays resulting from inconsistencies in the assessment of development applications across local authorities. This problem has been overcome in the subdivision application process in Western Australia through the establishment of the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) as a centralised approval body. UDIA members in Western Australia strongly support the WAPC model of assessment.

Proposal: Appeals as a Second Assessment

UDIA supports the availability of a second, independent expert body to hear appeals on discretionary planning decisions.

Proposal: Private Sector Involvement

UDIA would support the involvement of appropriate private sector experts in the development assessment process to free up professional government staff to focus on more complex issues and speed up the assessment process. UDIA also believes that there are opportunities for private sector involvement in the process through the establishment of mechanisms for self assessment for appropriate/complying applications.

Proposal: Built-in Improvement Mechanisms

UDIA supports this proposal and suggests that it incorporates regular feedback from the urban development industry professionals as major stakeholders in the assessment process.

Track based assessment practice

UDIA strongly supports the proposal for a streamed, track based approach to development assessment. As outlined in the attached UDIA/Property Council Report we believe that problems with delays in approval systems can partially stem from all applications being dealt with through one approval stream despite extreme differences in the complexities and requirements of the project application. The separation of applications into different streams would assist in alleviating this problem and ensure that appropriate assessment skills within government are allocated to appropriate applications.



Thank you for the opportunity to provide input into the draft Model DA process. We look forward to receiving further information on the progress of this Development Assessment Forum.

We apologise for no UDIA WA representative being available to attend the DAF consultation session in Perth. This was due to me and other UDIA WA staff being at an external study tour and conference.

UDIA would be happy to assist in any future consultation for the Development Assessment Forum through advertising to members or arranging forums with members to obtain their feedback.

If you would like further information on any of the issues outlined in this submission and the attached report, please do not hesitate to contact me on 9321 1101.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Fulker', is positioned below the 'Yours sincerely' text.

MARION FULKER
Executive Director