

# Media Release

29 AUGUST 2017



## CALLS FOR GREATER TRANSPARENCY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Despite new legislation passed by Parliament this week, the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA WA) is calling for even greater steps to be taken to increase local government accountability and transparency, saying the introduction of mandatory performance reporting on planning matters and Development Contribution Schemes should be included.

The call comes following a state government bill passing the Legislative Council which aims to increase local government accountability by extending the Auditor General's powers to local governments and providing independent oversight to improve local government standards.

“UDIA has met with relevant state government ministers to outline industry concerns regarding the lack of transparency and accountability in local government, particularly in relation to the timely performance of planning functions,” UDIA WA CEO Allison Hailes said.

“All too often processing timeframes are blown out, decision making processes constantly change and fees and charges vary between local governments,” Ms Hailes said.

“The lack of consistency and delays in processing increase development and building costs and the consumer is the one that loses out,” Ms Hailes said.

“There needs to be more accountability by local government for their role in the planning approvals system,” Ms Hailes said.

“A planning performance reporting system, similar to what already happens in the Eastern States, would enable those local governments that are performing well to be recognised and those that aren't to be given assistance” Ms Hailes said.

“UDIA is also concerned about the lack of transparency and reporting on the funds held by local governments in Development Contribution Schemes” Ms Hailes said.

“These concerns include the extended timeframes over which Local Governments are collecting contributions, and the cost increases that are being applied for new infrastructure despite price reductions for civil works being seen across the board by other sectors,” Ms Hailes said.

Development Contribution Schemes are the mechanism by which local governments require land owners and developers to contribute towards the cost of new infrastructure in green field and established urban areas, when they are undertaking development projects.

“UDIA is keen to see local governments performing as efficiently and effectively as possible and it is only through the introduction of additional planning performance reporting requirements that the State government, industry and the public can have confidence this is the case” Ms Hailes said.

**Ends.**