


The Future of ePlanning in Australia

National ePlanning Vision

PlanDev Business Solutions

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A close-up photograph of a person's hand with a ring on the ring finger, typing on a black computer keyboard. The hand is positioned over a white surface with faint, hand-drawn sketches of a person's head and shoulders. In the background, a green smartphone is visible on the left, and a green pen lies horizontally across the lower left. The overall scene suggests a workspace or a creative environment.

By 2020 ...

**I will be able to access all
relevant information and easily
participate in planning and
development
anywhere, anytime to help
create better places.**

Forward

The Future of ePlanning in Australia

Purpose of the Document

The purpose of this document is to outline a **national vision** and future state for electronic planning (ePlanning) to assist in the development of a roadmap to support each jurisdiction progress their online and electronic services for planning and development activities.

Current Challenges

There has been significant investment by all spheres of government in the past 5 years to transition the function of the planning and development business to electronic tools with appropriate supporting processes and culture. Despite this effort, the task of this transition is not complete with significant further effort required to build on achievements to date.

As a result, fully integrated business solutions, including between stakeholders, are not yet in place. Online services delivered in each jurisdiction are fragmented, primarily focused on automating existing paper based development assessment processes and providing basic property information to the community. While these services represent achievement of foundational services and deliver ongoing benefits the delivery of comprehensive solutions requires further sustained effort.

To achieve the work to date, there has been a heavy reliance on full government funding and delivery, creating a lack of self-sustaining momentum required to continue the journey. The solutions have also not provided access to reliable, comprehensive or integrated data sets that can assist strategic planning activities or provide harmony to the planning system across the country.

A New Paradigm

Planning Reform demands a fundamental change to the way in which planning and development is undertaken in Australia. To maximise the potential of technology solutions for planning and development services, a better connection must be established from development assessment through to strategic planning, establishing a 'line of sight' from a national level through to each region and finally a specific site. This will promote facilitation rather than regulation, as well as providing opportunity for continuous improvement and feedback.

New and emerging technologies need to be harnessed to support business process efficiencies. In addition, the broader community should play an active role in driving the technology and online solutions rather than relying on government; ensuring access to comprehensive, accurate, reliable and timely development and planning information must be the fundamental role of government in an ePlanning environment.

Roadmap Project

The national ePlanning vision is part of a broader project to establish a national strategic direction for ePlanning. The National ePlanning Roadmap will progress ePlanning and support the reform of the planning and development system through the following:

- Developing a vision and future state for ePlanning nationally;
- Review of the current state of ePlanning in Australian jurisdictions;
- Undertake a gap analysis of Australian jurisdictions to determine areas for improvement and opportunities for enhancement; and
- A roadmap to guide the future development of ePlanning technology and processes.



This document is a key deliverable in the completion of the project and sets the benchmark for all other project outputs to be compared against.

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Situation Analysis

Where are we now?

Background

In September 2008, COAG's Local Government and Planning Ministers' Council established a Ministerial Sub-Group on Development Assessment Reform to expedite and streamline development assessment processes. Electronic development assessment (eDA) is one of five projects that the Sub-Group is progressing and a National eDA Steering Committee (the Steering Committee) has been established to oversee eDA-related project activities.

The Steering Committee has commenced the development of a national ePlanning vision and roadmap, which is a unique opportunity for all jurisdictions to develop a common approach and vision to online solutions for planning and development services. The **National ePlanning Roadmap** project is being developed by PlanDev Business Solutions on behalf of the Steering Committee and will consider the existing work undertaken implementing online systems and ePlanning strategies and approaches in each jurisdiction.

The project started in early March 2011 and the Roadmap document will be completed by the end of June 2011. This document is a key deliverable in the completion of the project and sets the benchmark for all other project outputs to be compared against. It is proposed that the roadmap document is reviewed every two (2) years to ensure relevance and track progress of the jurisdictions towards the ePlanning vision.

One of the most critical components of the project is consulting with the key stakeholders including government departments (federal, state and local), the development industry and customers to agree on the vision and future picture for ePlanning in Australia. This means working closely with each jurisdiction to understand their current challenges and work to date, then determining together the high level roadmap required to achieve the ePlanning vision.

What is ePlanning?

Initial work has been undertaken by the National eDA Steering Committee to define ePlanning and the terms that surround its use (see *Appendix – National ePlanning Definitions*). The definition that was initially proposed by the Steering Committee in December 2010 has been outlined below:

Electronic Planning (ePlanning) encompasses business process models, methodologies, specifications, systems, services and technologies which support the planning industry in Australia in delivering efficiencies to its stakeholders.

For the purposes of this document, the definition outlined above will be used to define ePlanning in Australia. This definition will be reviewed and further enhanced throughout the consultation stage of this project. Further description the ePlanning ecosystem is available at *Section 3 - The Planning and Development Framework*.

Drivers for ePlanning

To ensure that the national ePlanning vision and roadmap is effective, it is important to understand the current issues and drivers for ePlanning. The following are some of the broad pressures currently driving the development of a National ePlanning Roadmap:

- **Housing Affordability** - It continues to be a major issue for policy makers in Australia, and the role the planning system plays in the cost of housing is highly scrutinised. The planning system in Australia is considered to be inefficient and out-dated in some jurisdictions¹, heavily reliant on paper-based systems and because of this there is an emphasis on development assessment rather than strategic planning and planning reform;
- **Financial Sustainability** - Resource constraints at all levels of Government mean pressure to make services cheaper and more efficient. A planning system that is complex is often too expensive to operate and a drain on productivity. In Australia, we operate in a competitive global environment and there is increasing pressure being placed on planning systems and authorities to stimulate economic recovery by being more attractive to investment and workers;
- **Customer Demand and Sophistication** - The consumer is increasingly more demanding when it comes to what they want. More affordable computing and internet access has led to increased demand for access to information that supports planning and development activities;
- **Evidence-Based Decision Making** - It is often difficult to access information from planning and development processes and decisions to support policy development and influence key decisions. Having access to an integrated ePlanning service will provide a robust evidence base that will reduce the need for manual process reviews and expensive surveys and reports;
- **Bandwidth and Mobility** - Bandwidth is faster, cheaper and more mobile than ever and because of this, information is being provided in more rich and innovative ways than ever. Government too must innovate if it is to serve the community better and "get the message across". Additionally, the trend towards greater use of mobile devices (such as smart phones and tablet PCs) will likely continue and government services need to cater for information access via these devices;
- **Information Democracy** - Data is now becoming more open and accessible, and consumers of information are finding new and innovative ways to interpret and display information²; and
- **Foundational Work** - Activities have been undertaken in each jurisdiction on eDA and any future vision should leverage these solutions and advance them where possible. While ePlanning has been gaining increased support from stakeholders in each jurisdiction, it has not yet evolved to a point where there is a common strategic view about how ePlanning should be developed into the future. However, in an environment of reduced regulation and red tape, a move towards strategic planning and planning reform in an 'e' environment is considered necessary.

¹ Planning issues highlighted in the NSW report and Productivity Commission report

² Example: <http://www.suburbantrends.com.au/> that "mashes up" publicly available information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Institute of Criminology, the NSW Bureau of Crime and Statistics and Google.

Alignment with Strategies

There are a number of key strategies that the National ePlanning Roadmap and vision aligns with, and provide the key deliverables for, if successfully implemented. These have been outlined below:

Jurisdictional Business Plans

The National ePlanning Roadmap will provide high-level guidance to all jurisdictions on the development of online solutions and electronic systems over the next 10 years. In recent times, a number of states and territories have commenced or already developed an ePlanning vision, roadmap and business case documents.

For ePlanning solutions to be successfully implemented across the country, it is essential that is not an 'after thought' in the planning reform activities that are underway. Post the Housing Affordability Fund (HAF) eDA projects, it is important (if not imperative) that advancements in 'e' services and technology supporting planning system improvements are aligned.

Jurisdictional business plans will be reinforced by the National ePlanning Roadmap and should then be supported by a business case to provide a more detailed cost benefit analysis for specific solutions in each state or territory. Feedback loops should also be established to support learning and knowledge sharing across the various programs of work.

The diagram on the right highlights how the national roadmap will align with other key documents and activities to provide an end-to-end approach to ePlanning solutions in each jurisdiction.



COAG Reform Council

Work has commenced on the **National Objective and Criteria for Future Strategic Planning of Capital Cities** project, which aims to ensure Australian cities are globally competitive, productive, sustainable, liveable and socially inclusive and are well placed to meet future challenges and growth. It is important that any ePlanning initiatives align with and would deliver on a number of the project's key objectives, including:

- Providing capital city strategic planning systems that are integrated across functions;
- Address nationally significant policy issues (such as housing affordability); and
- Providing effective implementation arrangements and supporting mechanisms, including clear accountabilities, timelines and appropriate performance measures, as well as coordination between all three levels of government (with opportunities for linked, streamlined and efficient approval processes) and appropriate consultation and engagement with external stakeholders, experts and the wider community (through online integrated tools).

The deregulation priorities outlined in the *National Partnership Agreement to Deliver a Seamless National Economy* includes the development of a **10-year ePlanning Capability and Investment Plan** (by June 2012). There is a significant opportunity for this project to support COAG in the development of this plan and ensure that there is no duplication of effort between the two activities.

National ePlanning Vision

The **National Affordable Housing Agreement: Baseline performance report for 2008-09** highlights in Chapter 7 that housing market efficiency and responsiveness is an essential part of managing the costs of housing. The outcome that this agreement seeks is for people to have access to housing through an efficient and responsive housing market, and this includes systems and processes that support this effectiveness. ePlanning is a significant contributor to a more efficient and responsive housing market, including strategic planning through to development assessment and compliance activities.

Productivity Commission

The **Performance Benchmarking of Australian Business Regulation: Planning, Zoning and Development Assessments** draft report (2011) highlights a number of Leading Practices to improve planning, zoning and assessment. The effective implementation of ePlanning services and solutions will support the delivery of each of these leading practices.

In particular, engaging the community fully and early, rational and transparent allocation rules for infrastructure costs, improving development assessment criteria and processes, tighter disciplines on timeframes and increased transparency and accountability will be delivered most effectively through integrated, accessible and participatory electronic planning services.

2

National ePlanning Vision

Where do we want to be?

Vision

In 2020 ...

I will be able to access all relevant information and easily participate in planning and development anywhere, anytime to create better places

Stakeholder 'Postcards from the Future'

Outlined below is a narrative of how the vision will be experienced by key stakeholder groups:

Beneficiary

Community and
Private Sector

I use one site to access all relevant data and information about a specific property, submit development proposals as a 3D or interactive model, automatically be notified of new plans for my area and provide and read comments on these from my portable device.

Enabler

Assessment Manager

I receive all development applications as 3D or interactive models and I can use online tools and information to make better-informed decisions to consistently and efficiently assess applications against the intended planning outcomes for an area. The decisions I and others make form part of a larger knowledge base of planning outcomes.

Policy Maker

Strategic Planner

I develop strategies and plans through technology-enabled consultation with stakeholders; I am involved in important development applications with regional significance using interactive visualisation tools and plan for future population growth through full and uninhibited access to data.

Federal Government

I have high quality and timely information on planning and development activity from national strategies to the development occurring at a site through connected systems. This assists me to more effectively plan and manage issues such as the nation's economy, infrastructure, housing supply and affordability, and population growth and migration.

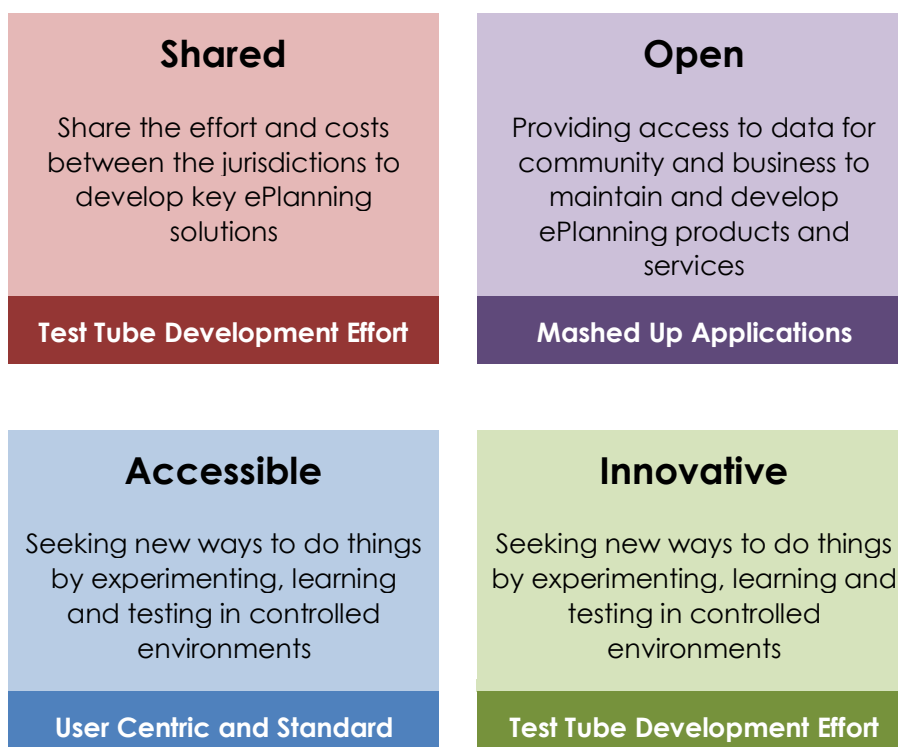
Objectives

The objectives that will be critical for delivering the vision and mission of the National ePlanning Roadmap have been outlined below:

- **User centric** - ensuring the systems, processes and tools are crafted to maximize end user ease of use and “self-servability”, know who the user is and what they want. Information will be collected once and reused appropriately;
- **Simplified** - act with an awareness that being different is expensive, complicated and time consuming for all parts of the system. Simplified business processes and reduced costs through integration or eliminating redundant systems, making it easier for the users;
- **Sustainable** - develop solutions that are not over-engineered, scalable for different jurisdictions, can be re-used for multiple applications and flexible enough to change over time;
- **Interconnected** - develop and maintain common standards for information that align with business requirements, processes and goals, and ensure the effective sharing of data and information;and
- **In Partnership** - leveraging partnerships with users, government and the private sector to improve the delivery of services, including providing open data for greater transparency and accountability, as well as supporting ‘mash-ups’ of government data, information and services.
- **Fit for Purpose** - in a rural setting or a jurisdiction with limited current and future development activity, it will be more important to provide the private sector and community with the ability to understand what the legislation means and find the pieces of information that related to a particular development proposal rather than mature online solutions, such as integrated 3D solutions for application lodgement and assessment

Principles to Achieve the Vision

The National ePlanning Vision will be achieved through the use of the following key principles:



Benefits

Outlined below are the key benefits of a national ePlanning vision:

- **Aligning the effort of jurisdictions**- a national ePlanning vision will allow jurisdictions to identify with a common goal, an agreed long term vision for ePlanning that can ensure jurisdictions avoid duplicating effort and share learnings along the journey;
- **Targeted allocation of resources** - a national ePlanning vision will enable jurisdictions to more effectively and efficiently allocate resources towards meeting the key objectives of the vision and increase productivity;
- **Inform policy** - a national ePlanning vision will ensure policy makers have a more comprehensive understanding of when and where technology and process improvements will be available and their implications;
- **Builds capacity to respond to change**- a national ePlanning vision will provide decision makers with the framework to deliver ePlanning services into the future and allows the easy identification and response to opportunities and challenges to achieving the vision;
- **Greater accountability** – a national ePlanning vision will make government more accountable through increased transparency, enabling people to know exactly what decisions are being made, how they're being made, and whether their interests are being well served;
- **Guide technology industry**- to the providers of hardware, software and services, a national ePlanning vision will provide guidance of the future needs of the planning system and allow a degree alignment with their own vision and goals; and
- **Community assurance**- a national ePlanning vision provides business and the general community with the knowledge that there is an identifiable plan of action by Government aimed at utilising current and future information technology to improve the planning system.

Scope

It is important to note that ePlanning tools are just one part of the broader planning reform agenda that aims to achieve a more simplified and *quality planning system*. The National ePlanning Vision document has been prepared with an awareness of this relationship.

The success of the National ePlanning Vision will be ultimately linked to the success of any process (including instruments and controls) and cultural reform, however it is envisaged that the ePlanning vision will influence and be influenced by cultural and process reform.

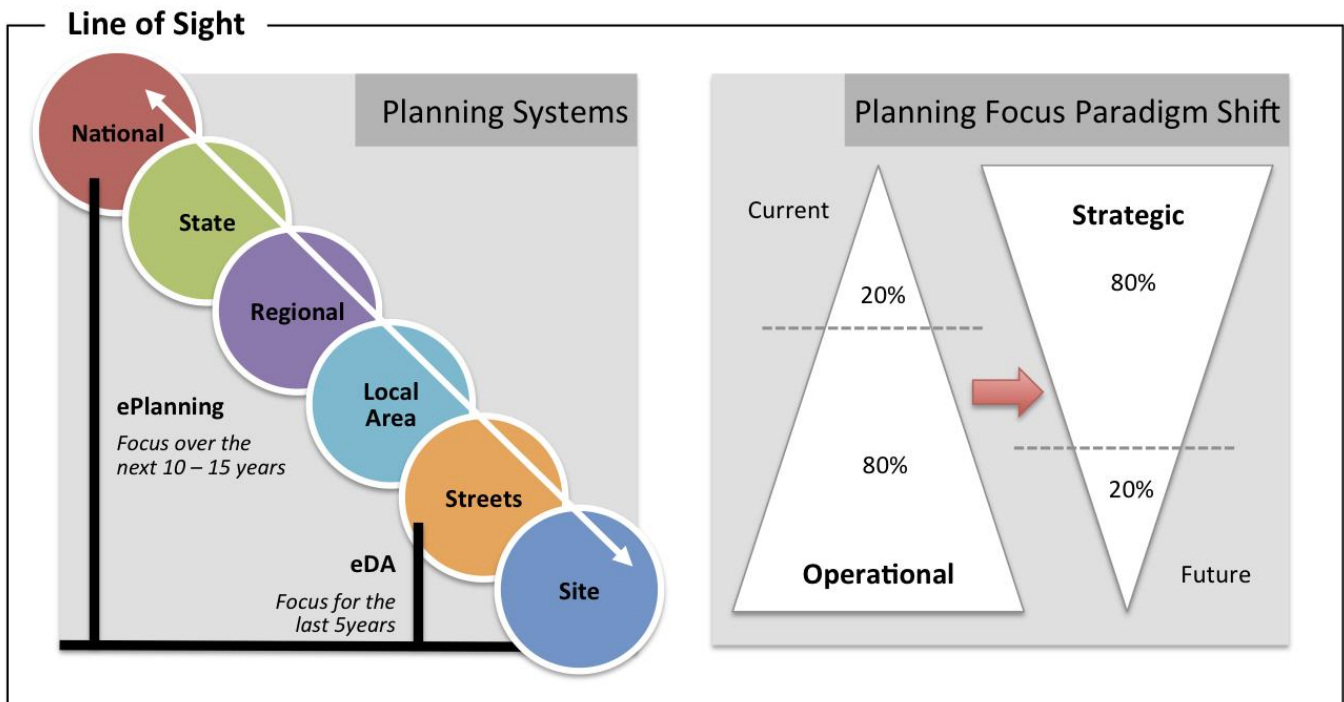


'Line of Sight' Planning Approach

Strategic planning policy in the context of future growth pressures is an important consideration within the planning and development framework. Put simply, if the strategic planning work and policy setting is done well upfront, then the development assessment and compliance activities become easier and in some cases, would be removed from the systems. To achieve this, regulatory reform is a broad agenda that needs to be pursued across all levels of government.

National ePlanning Vision

Within any future planning and development framework, the planning system must be simplified to ensure electronic systems and tools are able to make the most effective impact and provide the efficiencies that it is able to. Clear statements of strategic planning policy intent are required to ensure that development assessment occurs effectively – this is the 'line of sight' which is needed to provide more effective and clearer decision-making. The diagram below outlines the relationship between the levels of the planning system.



The complexity of development assessment process an applicant must navigate should correlate to the risks posed and the stated planning policy objectives. If the application poses low risks and/or aligns with the stated strategic planning policy objectives, the complexity of the process should be low. If the application poses high risks and/or does not align with the stated strategic planning policy objectives, then the application should be subjected to more scrutiny.

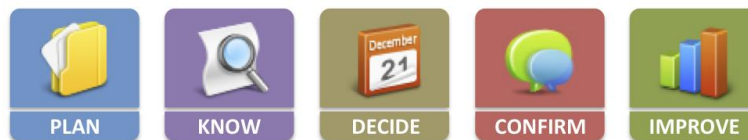
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Planning and Development Framework

What are the future components of the planning system?

About the Framework

There are five (5) key components to the planning and development framework and combined with broader reform, achieving the ePlanning vision. They have been outlined below:



1. **Plan** - Quality strategic planning and development instruments through innovative consultation and participation processes;
2. **Know** - Open data and information in a consistent user-friendly manner to users and information providers;
3. **Decide** - Transparent, accountable and streamlined decision-making;
4. **Confirm** - Simple and effective ways to monitor and resolve issues within the planning and development framework; and
5. **Improve** - An informed and responsive business model that adapts with the changing needs of planning and development framework participants.

ePlanning Components

Each of the components in the planning and development framework has been expanded below:

1. Plan



Quality strategic planning and development instruments through innovative consultation and participation processes

Initiate - the planning authority led initiation and informing the world at large of the intent to undertake a planning process

Consult - the planning authority led request for broad input from interested parties into a planning process

Participate - the targeted "hands on" interaction and generation of ideas with all stakeholders in the planning process

Develop - the formal statutory process of plan making through to plan acceptance and adoption

Maintain - periodic review and evaluation of plans

2. Know



Open data and information in a consistent user-friendly manner to users and information providers

Controls - the amount and quality of information on legislation, codes and costs (infrastructure) provided relevant to the needs of a user

Data - the amount and quality of raw data and statistics made available to information providers and users to make informed decisions

Guide - any assistance provided by planning authorities to perspective applicants in interpreting their information requirements for submission

History - the ability for interested parties to interrogate the assessment process and review previous applications and decisions

Prepare - the amount of and quality of information given to perspective applicants on the components of assembly, fees and potential infrastructure charges associated

3. Decide



Transparent, accountable and streamlined decision-making

Lodge - how an application is submitted to a planning authority for assessment with all information provided and correct fees paid

Assess - the process in which an application is initially evaluated and allocated to the right people involved in assessment at the right time

Clarify - the process in which anyone involved in the assessment of an application seeks further information from the applicant or experts to assist in deciding an application

Determine - how the planning authority consistently decides applications and informs applicants and interested parties in a timely manner

Conditions - the specific requirements imposed by planning authorities that an applicant must satisfy in carrying out approved development

Appeals - the process in which an applicant or interested party may seek a change to the decision or conditions of development provided by a planning authority in relation to an application through a court authority

4. Confirm



Simple and effective ways to monitor and resolve issues within the planning and development framework

Monitor - how the outcomes of the planning process reflect the intent of the planning instruments that govern them and inform the development of future planning instruments

Enforce - how non-compliance with planning instruments and/or development conditions of approval are identified and enforced

Visibility - the publication and consistency of compliance activities undertaken

5. Improve



An informed and responsive business model that adapts with the changing needs of planning and development framework participants

Performance - the evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of systems, processes and people involved in the planning process

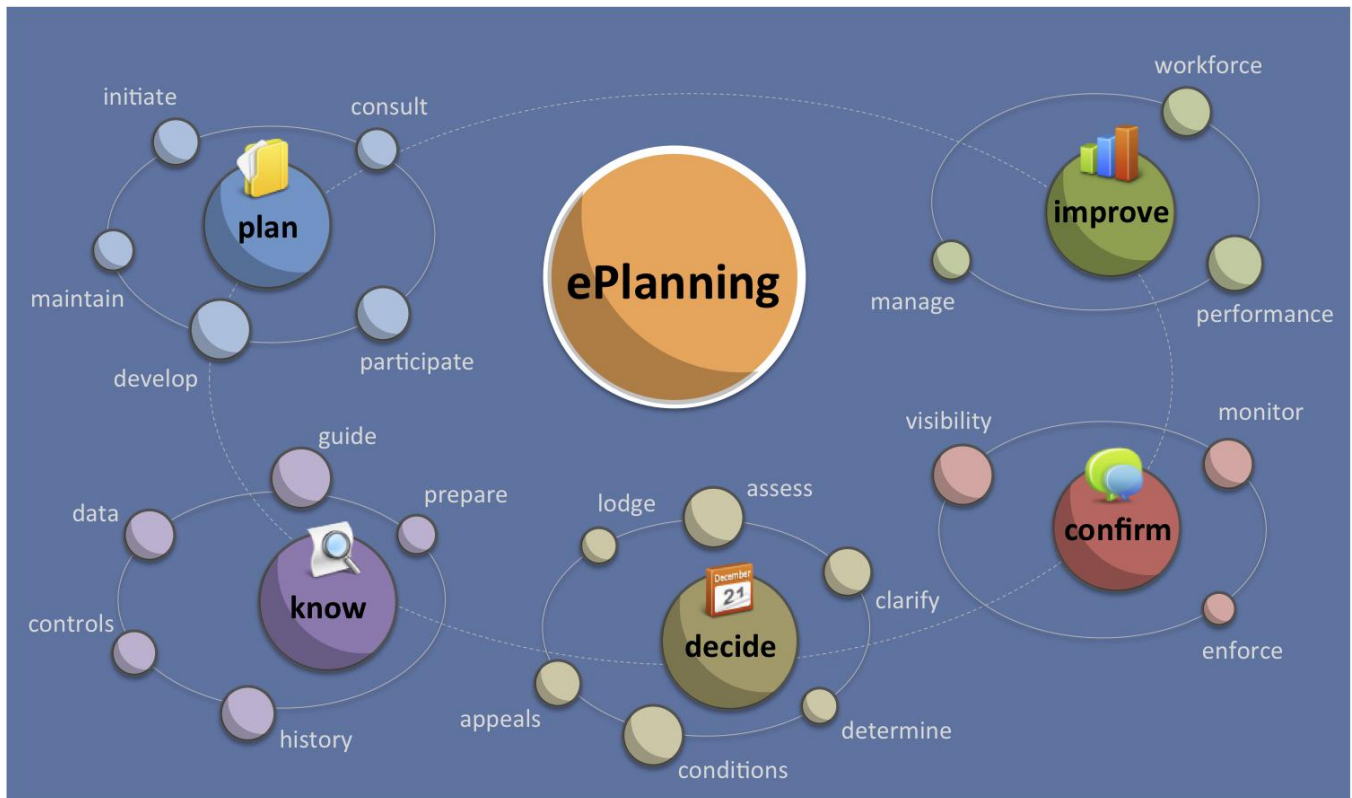
Manage - establishment of business systems that can be adapted or change in order to improve the operation of systems, processes and people involved in the planning and development framework

Workforce - ensuring the right number of staff are trained, available and delegated to undertake the work of planning and development assessment supported by the electronic systems and online tools.

ePlanning Ecosystem

An important recognition is that while there are some linear elements to the planning and development process, not all of the planning and development framework components follow a step-by-step process. The ePlanning Ecosystem recognises that there are interconnections between each and these need to be mapped based on the jurisdictional planning system.

The diagram below provides a visualisation of the ePlanning Ecosystem in the future. Each component has a number of elements that make up the component.



4

Achieving the Vision

Current situation and next steps to achieve the vision

ePlanning in Jurisdictions

In Australia, there has been significant advancement in the development of eDA (as opposed to ePlanning) tools by various jurisdictions. More recently, funding has been provided by the Australian Government to each jurisdiction to improve the online products to offer end-to-end eDA solutions between government agencies and local councils.

It is fair to say that while all jurisdictions are working towards a common goal, each state and territory delivered a unique set of online solutions that still need further work and refinement to become a national ePlanning solution. The emphasis over this period has also been on electronic development assessment (eDA) processes and the benefits that reform in this area can provide on housing affordability.

Current Services

The broad descriptions of the eDA-focused tools used within Australia and their purposes are as follows:

- **DA tracking** – applicants can view the status of their proposal as it moves through council's internal assessment;
- **Smart Forms for electronic submission** – applicants are guided through a checklist specific to their proposed development including specific reports and attachments;
- **Certified planning information** – users can obtain (including purchase) a certified copy of the relevant planning information for their site from a website instantly;
- **Filtered planning controls** – planning controls are drawn out of documents and packaged for specific proposals, negating the need to check multiple documents;
- **Online maps** – users can search for their site and view layers of information, eg zoning, environmentally sensitive areas, and heritage items; and
- **Electronic development activity gathering** – data on development activity is collated for review.

Issues Faced by Jurisdictions

Although the development of these eDA tools is encouraging and contribute towards a boarded ePlanning service, the breadth and scope of implementations varies significantly across jurisdictions. This variation has been brought about by:

- Limited collaboration and sharing of solutions;
- Resource and funding constraints;
- Few jurisdictions having an operational Vision or Roadmap for ePlanning; and
- Regulatory frameworks differing in each jurisdiction.

The key findings and recommendations of the National eDA Implementation project report (2009) prepared by Sinclair Knight Merz (SKM) confirmed that the ePlanning situation and context in each jurisdiction is different and that implementation success was more contingent on process improvement/operational changes being undertaken (at a State and local government level) than technology alone.

ePlanning Internationally

Governments across the globe have encountered similar challenges when developing ePlanning initiatives. Singapore and the United Kingdom are two examples of more mature ePlanning systems.

Both of these Governments progressed ePlanning as part of broader eGovernment initiatives. eGovernment is defined as the use IT, ICT and other technologies to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness in the public sector. This digital interaction consists of governance, information and communication technology and business process re-engineering.

Whilst the United Kingdom (approximately 500,000 applications a year for 243,000km² of total land area) and Singapore (approximately 9,000 applications a year for 700km² of total land area) are of a different scale, there are many similarities to their approach and level of sophistication to ePlanning and are detailed below:

- Central Planning Authority website is media rich with information provided in “plain English”;
- A single national “portal” for customers to access planning and development related information;
- A single national “form” for the lodgement of an application;
- Online fee calculation;
- Electronic lodgement of application and payment;
- Online tracking of applications;
- Systems are able to automate administration procedures and to provide information; and
- Systems are able to produce the full range of documentation associated with a planning application, from acknowledgement, through consultation letters to the decision notice.

Future Opportunities

The following are some of the broad future opportunities driving the development of a National ePlanning roadmap:

Exploiting Existing and Capitalising on New Technology

The use of existing technology (such as mobile phones, tablet PCs and digital cameras) in new ways and new and emerging technology are opportunities for the ePlanning message and agenda to be disseminated to interested parties in richer and more advanced ways.

Visual tools such as 3D modelling, planning schemes being delivered in 3D, augmented reality and high definition video can enable planning authorities and industry professionals to communicate more effectively to stakeholders in the planning process. Any new and richer content has the potential to be delivered over faster wired (NBN) or wireless (4G, WiMax) networks as they become available.

Examples: [Virtual Brisbane](#) (3D model of the city); [Australian Government Cloud Computing Strategy Paper](#); [combining social media and mapping tools](#); Ausgrid national smart grid

New Ways to Effectively Communicate and Engage

Social Networks are increasing as a useful and attractive tool for Governments and Planning Authorities. The use of Social Networks can be a medium for Governments and Planning Authorities to engage more proactively with the community. The Social Networking entry point is within the user's normal environment and the engagement is on the user's terms. Governments and Planning Authorities also have the opportunity to follow users to monitor satisfaction with services they receive. Social Networks and Blogs allow Governments and Planning Authorities to share information with users who share common interests and concerns.

Crowdsourcing is loosely defined as the trend of leveraging the mass collaboration enabled by Web 2.0 applications (such as blogging, tagging and social bookmarking) to achieve a certain goal. Although it may be difficult to crowdsource complicated tasks, simple work tasks can be crowdsourced cheaply and effectively. Some of the opportunities presented by Crowdsourcing are:

- Access to cheaper business inputs, generating better results, and undertaking problems that would have been too difficult to solve internally (such as identification and recording of localised flooding impacts);
- Planning authorities can submit problems in which contributors can work on to provide input and possibly resolve planning problems or issues;
- Testing of new software and other services with lowered expectations; and
- Certain aspects of customer support can have customers solve other customer's issues and questions.

Examples: futuremelbourne.com.au (wiki-based strategic planning approach); fixmystreet.com; seeclickfix.com; queenslandfloods.crowdmap.com; govspace.gov.au (government blogs)

Openness and Privacy Attitudes

The making available of content, systems and software over the Internet as part of a larger "Open Movement", this philosophy has been gaining momentum and recognition amongst businesses and Governments across the world. Of particular interest to Australian jurisdictions and Planning Authorities are the concepts of:

- "Open Data" is a concept requiring that certain data be freely available to everyone, without restrictions from copyright, patents or other mechanisms of control; and
- "Open Access" loosely means free availability of information on the internet, permitting any users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to.

By embracing "Open" principles, Governments and Planning Authorities can become more effective, transparent, and relevant to community. By making data more available Governments and Planning Authorities can better understand the needs of their community and users may participate more fully in their government.

The public is generally becoming more at ease in giving out personal information in exchange for specific services, giving Government more latitude as to how and when it can use data for decision and policy making. However the collection of personal information and the secondary use of information once it's collected continues to be a grey area.

Examples: planningalerts.org.au; suburbantrends.com.au; communityindicators.com.au; everyblock.com; mashupaustalia.org; openaustralia.org; [LG Toolbox](#); [Interactive Disaster Map \(QRA\)](#)

Growing Focus on Strategic Planning

There is wide agreement that planning contributes to managing greenfield development, population growth and density and providing a diverse range of housing. However as Governments and communities look for solutions to increasing quality of life and the liveability of places, planning is becoming more interconnected with Government policies on the provision of transportation and public infrastructure, health services, economic development and preservation of the environment. The planning system can benefit from this increased focus and enhance its ability to influence other policies and actions at all levels of government.

Examples: [Geelong Regional Plan](#); [UK Planning Portal](#)

ePlanning Implementation

There are four (4) levels in the journey to the future complete ePlanning implementation. They include:

1. Online;
2. Interactive;
3. Integrated; and
4. Maturity.

These levels are merely a guide and are not linear as elements of each can and have been achieved by planning authorities during different phases. The table below provides a brief description of the actions occurring at each phase.

Online	Interactive	Integrated	Maturity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Putting information and some services online.• Limited to form filling or are simple single agency services.• Little integration with other departments and customers may be asked to repeat transactions with multiple authorities.• Significant efficiency savings can be achieved.• Most councils and jurisdictions have made some progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Characterised by user portal access to services.• Illusion of integration as services from multiple authorities offered through the same portal• More complex, multi-step transactions may also be provided• Common authentication mechanisms across services.• Little transformation of organisations and business processes – just a lower cost and more convenient way of accessing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Real transformation of planning services begins• Processes within and across authorities are integrated where they have common functions or serve common user groups.• Business process management tools are used achieving this integration• Primarily a change process rather than building enabling technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integration of business processes across government, partners, suppliers and users.• Convergence of physical and digital infrastructures• Systems produce intelligence that is infused into business processes• Users complete more complex transactions online, independently.• Governments can provide smarter services at a lower cost.

National ePlanning Vision

The levels of ePlanning implementation have been compared against the components outlined in the planning and development framework. The table below provides an example of the final maturity stage for each component to demonstrate the type of environment it may look like in 2020.

Components	Features of the Maturity Stage
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social media and web 2.0 approaches used for strategic planning activities• Wiki-style technology used for collaborative plan development
Know	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interactive information online when determining appropriate development (eg. place a development type / design onto a lot and it brings up relevant issues)• Information is accessible and 'open' (such as requirements and application history) to be mashed up by private organisations and the community• Application preparation tools (like wizards) to ensure they are 'well made'
Decide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision rules integrated into application lodgement to automate low risk applications and identify critical issues relating to higher risk applications• Automated referrals to other organisations / experts based on triggers• Standard conditions are assigned which are consistent across a jurisdiction with some local variation• Integrated knowledge base for government decision making staff
Confirm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lodging compliance issues by click on a location and submitting details• Learnings from compliance connecting into plan making exercises• Enforcement activities displayed on developers that do not comply
Improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reporting provides key business plan metrics and workforce planning tactics• Manage staff activities and workloads through automated systems

Fresh Approaches: Mash Up Solutions

ePlanning has been hampered in the past by government believing that they must develop all of the electronic and online services required by customers. This approach is often very costly and solutions can be over engineered to support the technology architecture required to deliver integrated solutions across multiple organisations. In many places around the country, the business case may not stack up.

As government starts to provide access to public sector information, greater innovation can occur at an often reduced cost (ie. to develop and maintain) through partnerships or empowering the technology community to develop lower costs solutions. An example of this approach is demonstrated in the [MashupAustralia](#) competition that was held by the [Government 2.0 Taskforce](#) to show why open access to Australian government information is good for the economy and society.

If government provided open access to data and information on planning matters, and encouraged the technology community to solve some of the technical barriers that exist (with possibly more simple solutions), it may reduce the overall cost of managing and maintaining the future ePlanning solutions.

Project Steps

An important first step for the National ePlanning Roadmap is obtaining general agreement on the vision and priority areas for each jurisdiction to achieve the ePlanning future. The priority areas will be discussed during each of the jurisdictional visits and then confirmed by the National eDA Steering Committee prior to the completion of the project activity.

The next steps for the implementation of the National ePlanning Vision are outlined below:

Step 1 - Confirm Vision

Achieving the vision will be a consultative process, between the key stakeholders from government departments (federal, state and local), planning agencies, the development industry and customers to agree on the vision and future state for ePlanning in Australia.

This will mean working closely with each jurisdiction to understand their current challenges and work to date, then determining together the high level roadmap required to achieve the National ePlanning Vision. During this stage, comparisons will be made with current and emerging jurisdictional ePlanning visions, roadmaps and related approaches.

Step 2 - Assess Foundational Capabilities

Once the direction has been set and the current situation reviewed, an analysis can be completed to understand what is required to achieve the vision outlined in the roadmap. This will inform the development of an action plan with a more detailed description of the key strategies to implement the vision.

Step 3 - Develop the Roadmap

Finally, the roadmap will be developed to outline the vision and blueprint for ePlanning in Australia. It will include all the key actions and measures for success to allow each jurisdiction to work towards meeting the vision for ePlanning.

Jurisdictional Steps

After the completion of the National ePlanning Roadmap project, each jurisdiction will be responsible for considering how the vision and roadmap applies to them and then implementing a number of key deliverables. Guidance will be provided to the jurisdictions through the roadmap document, however work will be required on the development of jurisdictional business plans, detailed business cases and then implementing and embedding the changes.

Step 1 - Business Plans

To localise the National ePlanning Roadmap and vision, jurisdictions are encouraged to develop a *Business Plan* (or Jurisdictional Roadmap) that outlines the strategy for maximising the jurisdiction's service improvement activities towards achieving the vision, as well as identifying opportunities to implement continuous improvement and other innovation strategies.

Within the jurisdictional Business Plan, improvements that need to be made will be highlighted including a high-level scope of activities and strategies will contribute to achievement of the vision in that jurisdiction. These will vary between states and territories, and should be developed as priorities for between 2 to 5 years and beyond for key implementation activities to be achieved.

The development of each business plan is the responsibility of the jurisdictions, however they will be supported by the National ePlanning Roadmap project outputs (including the gap analysis and roadmap tailored for each jurisdiction). Priority of effort and focus of any implementation activities will be at the discretion of the jurisdiction.

While a range of online systems and electronic tools have been implemented in each jurisdiction in the last decade, the challenge will be to implement and embed the future opportunities into the various organisation and operational processes of that jurisdiction. An ongoing assessment needs to take place on success of the implemented systems and the suitability of various solutions over time.

Step 2 - Business Case

Once the jurisdictional business plan has been developed, a business case can be developed to highlight the various stage implementation activities, budget required and benefits to be achieved. The business case should outline the deliverables, timeframes, resources, costs and benefits of the online service or electronic solution being considered. Importantly, the business case must consider the people and process side of the implementation activities, including training and change management approaches.

Step 3 - Build Ownership and Commitment

Ownership can be defined as processes where local stakeholders take control and responsibility for the design, implementation, and ongoing monitoring of the services and solutions. This 'sense of ownership' is especially crucial to the sustainability of technology solutions delivered for planning and development services. These initiatives will not be sustained without local owners who continue to be responsible for it after external assistance or direction ends.

Recent experiences with information, communication and technology projects have shown that it is not easy to get ownership and commitment issues right. A focus on technologies has resulted in many projects where equipment is on the ground, where skills have been built or transferred, but where organisational commitment is limited to an individual 'champion' or two. Mobilising 'buy-in' from presumed stakeholders or network members is hard to achieve.

Building ownership and commitment to the vision and roadmap is fundamental for successfully implementing change, in particular when changes are due to technology. A significant business change management process needs to be undertaken in parallel with the ePlanning implementation to ensure 'transformational change' occurs within the participating organisations.

A stakeholder and engagement plan will be critical to optimise the National roadmap's effectiveness. Initially, the vision and roadmap will be presented to the eDA Steering Committee, POG, DAF and other bodies (as required) to generate top-down momentum and commitment. There will also need to be 'champions' within and across the various stakeholder organisations to support the implementation and ongoing sustainability of the solutions.

5

Appendix

Related material and information

National ePlanning Glossary

Developed by the National ePlanning Steering Committee in early 2011.

Term	Definition
Applicant Agent	The entity that has been delegated responsibility for executing an Application on behalf of an Applicant .
Appeal ³	<i>"The process of preparing for, hearing, and making determinations on appeals against decisions. This may also include a mediation and alternative dispute resolution".</i> In eDA terms, this is the process to review the Determination of an Application . An appeal can also be made for not making a determination.
Applicant	The individual or organisation that wishes the application to be processed.
Applicant Contact	(see Applicant or Applicant Agent)
Application	The information package lodged with the relevant Responsible Authority to enable an assessment of a given proposed Development to be conducted.
Application Type	Applications may include the following types but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use and/or Development Applications • Application for planning permission • Application to subdivide (land or building) • Application for building permission, all building etc.
Assessment Authority	(See Responsible Authority).

³ Source: www.daf.gov.au/reports_documents/pdf/principles.pdf

Term	Definition
Assessment Category	An Application may be classified by Statutory Documents into one of the following categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code Assessment • Exempt • Impact Assessment • Merit Assessment • Prohibited/undesirable. • Self-Assessable
Building	The act of construction (i.e. to build) or a building or structure (or portion thereof), whether temporary or permanent, used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or continuous occupancy.
Certificate of Title	A document or certificate issued pursuant to an Act (the relevant statutory document for that Jurisdiction), which certifies that the person named therein as the registered proprietor has title to the land described in that certificate.
Consent Authority	(see Responsible Authority)
Council	(See Local Government Authority).
DA	See Development Assessment .
Decision ⁴	A decision is required for the validity of the Application and its decision support systems requirements (Application Type , exhibition requirements, information available, and impact assessment processes). After those decisions have been made to progress the assessment there is a final Determination on the Development Project as described in the Application . Decision activities precede the Determination of an Application .
Decision Authority	(See Responsible Authority .)
Determination ⁵	Determination is the process of finalising an Application .

⁴Source: Leading Practice Model of Development Assessment Process, Final Report to the Development Assessment Forum, Leveraging the Long Term: An Operational Model of Leading Practice Development Assessment, Appendix 1 – Index of terms.

⁵Source: Leading Practice Model of Development Assessment Process, Final Report to the Development Assessment Forum, Leveraging the Long Term: An Operational Model of Leading Practice Development Assessment, Appendix 1 – Index of terms.

National ePlanning Vision

Term	Definition
Development	<p>Development is a term that encapsulates all aspects of developing land, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the use of land, and • the Subdivision of land, and • the erection of a building, and • the carrying out of a work, and • the demolition of a building or work, and • any other act, matter or thing that is controlled by an environmental planning instrument.
Development Assessment ⁶	<p>Development proposals may be for one or more Application Types.</p> <p>Relevant Jurisdictional Statutory Documents determine appropriate decision support system requirements (the assessment track, and Responsible Authorities) for the Application.</p> <p>The process may involve the following process activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Application • Lodgement • Notification / Consultation • Assessment • Determination • Appeals • Enforcement / Compliance.
Development Control	<p>Development controls are manifestation of planning strategic objectives, as rules and detailed criteria for assessment of Development Projects, and as such are documented in various Planning Schemes.</p>
Development Project	<p>Any major or minor works or activities, or change of use, leading to material changes to land or property which generally leads to an Application.</p>
eDA ⁷	<p><i>"eDA refers to the electronic processing of planning and development applications. It covers the whole lifecycle from investigation through lodgement, referral, request-for-information to determination and covers the full range of planning and development activities of sub-division, change-of-use, regulated use and building."</i></p>
eDAIS	<p>See Electronic Development Assessment Interoperability Specification.</p>

⁶ Source: www.daf.gov.au/reports_documents/pdf/principles.pdf

⁷ Source: http://www.daf.gov.au/current_projects/eDA.aspx

Term	Definition
Electronic Development Assessment Interoperability Specification	The Australian National Standard which defines Interoperability specifications to support the business system interoperability among Stakeholder systems.
Enforcement ⁸	Enforcement comprises those processes for detecting and determining non-compliance with the development control system and for applying incentives, disincentives and sanctions to ensure compliance with application, assessment, review and consultation processes.
ePlanning	Electronic Planning (ePlanning) encompasses business process models, methodologies, specifications, systems, services and technologies which support the Planning Industry in Australia in delivering efficiencies to its Stakeholders . (Note: to be reviewed during the development of the National ePlanning Roadmap project)
ePlanning Vision ⁹	"Using technology to maximise efficiencies and improve service in the Planning industry".
eSubdivision	Systems, services, databases or other technologies that support Subdivision .
Integration	Whereby multiple computer systems are connected via one or more Interfaces OR via Interoperability .
Interface	Technical facility to enable data to be read from or written to a database maintained by another system.
Interoperability	Whereby computer systems exchange data with one another in an orchestrated and specified manner.
Jurisdiction	An Australian Government, State or Territory Government and Local Government Authority.

⁸www.daf.gov.au/Reports_documents/pdf/principles.pdf

⁹ Victorian National ePlanning Roadmap Survey – BI01Glossary (draft document)

National ePlanning Vision

Term	Definition
Local Government Authority ¹⁰	Any of the 565 bodies established nationally for the purposes of local government by or under a law of a State or Territory ¹¹ . As part of their role, powers and functions, LGAs are a Responsible Authority and/or Referral Authority , according to the requirements of the relevant Jurisdiction . Councils are represented nationally by the ALGA through their State Local Government Associations.
Lodgement ¹²	The process of lodging an Application with all relevant information and fees to the responsible authority.
Notification	Interrelated parties are advised of an Application.
Occupier	The lessee of a property. Each property may have tenancies consisting of one or more individuals and/or one or more organisation or one or more Owner .
Overlay	Spatial representation of specific Planning Scheme themes and provisions, which may include heritage, design and development, environmental assets and risks, building heights and density requirements, etc.
Owner	The title holder or lessee of a property. Each property may have ownerships consisting of one or more individuals and/or one or more organisations.
Parcel	The actual piece of land described by plan and parcel identifier. The smallest unit of land which is able to be owned and sold.
Permit	Legal document giving permission for a land use or development, and may include, or be separately required for all building work.
Planning ¹³	Planning, also called urban, rural or regional planning, is the process of making decisions to guide future action and is specifically concerned with shaping cities, towns and regions by managing development, infrastructure and services to improve social, economic and environmental outcomes. It includes assessing development proposals and devising policies to guide future development and affects diverse policy areas of housing, energy, health, education, communications, leisure, tourism and transport. (from PLA website)
Planning Authority	The authority, generally a council, responsible for the preparation and maintenance of a Planning Scheme .
Planning Overlay	(see Overlay)

¹⁰Source: <http://www.alga.asn.au/about/>

¹¹Source: austlii.law.uts.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/aca199757/sch1.html

¹²Source: www.daf.gov.au/Reports_documents/pdf/principles.pdf

¹³Source: adapted from www.planning.org.au/becomeaplanner

Term	Definition
Planning Scheme	Part of the regulatory framework associated with Planning. It is <i>"a legal instrument that sets out the provisions for land use, development, and protection. The function of a Planning Scheme is to facilitate fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use of land - by providing for the individual needs of an area."</i> ¹⁴
Primary Responsible Authority	<p>Where the Application is over subject land or a building that transcends more than one authority, or where Determination is forced or requested to be handed to another authority, Primary Responsible Authorities and Secondary Responsible Authorities are required.</p> <p>The Primary Responsible Authority is the maker of the Determination for that Application, and the Secondary Responsible Authority refers to the organisation that would otherwise have made the Determination.</p>
Proponent	(see Applicant)
Public	Member of the community
Referral Authority	An organisation to which an Application must be referred for the purposes of providing consent, objection or other comment.
Responsible Authority	<p>The body with responsibility of administering a Planning Scheme and applying the decision support system to an Application and empowered to make Determinations for that Development Project, and to ensure compliance with that Determination.</p> <p>Where the subject land or building transcends more than one authority, or where determination is forced or requested to be handed to another Responsible Authority, then Primary and Secondary Responsible Authorities are required. A Responsible Authority may be a Jurisdictional assessor or an authorised independent assessor</p>
Secondary Responsible Authority	<p>Where the Application is over affected Properties that transcend more than one authority, or where determination is forced or requested to be handed to another authority, Primary Responsible Authority and Secondary Responsible Authorities are required.</p> <p>The body with responsibility of administering a Planning Scheme and applying the decision support system to an Application and empowered to make Determinations for that Development Project, and to ensure compliance with that determination.</p> <p>The Primary Responsible Authority is the maker of the Determination for that Application, and the Secondary Responsible Authority refers to the organisation that would otherwise have made the Determination.</p>
Stakeholder	Any identified entity directly involved in the Application process.

¹⁴<http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/PlanningSchemes/glossary.html>

National ePlanning Vision

Term	Definition
Subdivision	Subdividing or consolidating a parcel of land – or a building which exists on the land – for the purposes of creating new Certificates of Title .
Submitter	Person who has input into planning and/or to Application process
Vision	(See ePlanning Vision .)
Zone	The statutory description of allowable uses and development of land as set out by a Planning Authority in a Planning Scheme .

