

Paul Scully

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Ron Hoenig

Minister for Local Government



Media Release

Artificial Intelligence trial to speed up local planning systems

Friday, 5 July 2024

Sixteen councils will trial technologies to speed up development assessment timeframes, as part of the NSW Government's \$5.6 million investment into introduce artificial intelligence into the planning system.

The successful councils applied for grants under the State's Early Adopter Grant Program to trial technologies that will improve the quality and accuracy of information when a development application is lodged.

Councils assess approximately 85 per cent of all residential development applications and this process is often strained by administrative delays, duplications and mistakes, or site-specific requirements that are not met prior to submitting a development application.

These are all issues that could be identified and resolved before a development application even arrives on a planner's desk, leaving our skilled planners to approve homes more efficiently.

Improving the quality of the original application reduces the number of requests for more information which saves significant time.

For example, of nearly 500 applications accepted into the Regional Housing Flying Squad Program in the past year additional information was required for around 30 per cent of development proposals with applicants taking, on average, an additional 42 days to respond with the information.

The combined saving of not having to request additional information on this relatively small group alone would be around 6300 days – or the equivalent of 17 years. If that is applied across the nearly 60,000 applications that are submitted in NSW each year, it means a saving of hundreds of thousands of days.

Unless we support the delivery of more homes, we will continue to lock young people out of housing or lose them to other states.

Each Council grant recipient will be supported to trial their nominated new technology for a year.

The Early Adopter Grant Program recipients include:

- Bayside Council
- Blacktown City Council
- Burwood Council
- Cessnock City Council
- City of Canterbury Bankstown
- City of Newcastle (with co-applicants: Central Coast Council and Muswellbrook Shire Council)
- Cumberland City Council

- Eurobodalla Shire Council
- Hawkesbury City Council
- Inner West Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Randwick City Council
- Wagga Wagga City Council
- Wingecarribee Shire Council

The grant funding forms part of the NSW Government's wider AI in NSW Planning package.

The AI project seeks to identify how the planning system can benefit from the implementation of AI.

The next phase of the project will examine technologies that can work with the NSW Planning Portal to make the benefits of artificial intelligence available to all applicants.

For more information on successful councils and their grant projects, visit the [AI in NSW Planning](#) website.

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Paul Scully said:

“Using technology to assist in the assessment of development applications is a critical way the government can support councils to speed up development assessment times to better address the housing crisis.

“Introducing AI into the planning system is about reducing the administrative workload of planners so that they can get on with their main job of planning. It also helps applicants as it reduces delays by making sure all the required information is provided without repeated requests. This will free up their time and help build more homes faster.

“There is no denying that after a decade of confusing planning reforms and a challenging macroeconomic environment, that approvals have slowed down. As a government we are examining every way we can to speed up our planning system and build homes for our young people, our families and our workers.”

Minister for Local Government Ron Hoenig said:

“Councils are responsible for determining approximately 85 per cent of all new dwellings in NSW and I know firsthand the amount of work they do to assess development applications.

“I believe that utilising AI will accelerate the planning process and will help councils to get on with delivering for their communities.”

MEDIA:

Alexie Hamilton | Minister Scully | 0473 679 892

Clare Dowswell | Minister Hoenig | 0448 540 073