Planning Law Reforms | Many changes this year under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Planning Systems Reforms) Act 2025

Pending reforms will affect the most comprehensive overhaul of the planning system in New South Wales for some time. They are being implemented in stages, stage I having commenced on 15 December 2025, stage II having commenced on 21 March 2026 and the remainder expected to commence later in 2026.

What are the new reforms?

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Planning Systems Reforms) Act 2025 includes reforms which are heavily focused on housing supply, with provisions creating new planning pathways and others simplifying and expediting use of existing pathways. Much of this involves changes to the hierarchy of planning authorities and associated consultation requirements. As a result, these reforms will be of primary importance to developers. However, all stakeholders in the strata sector will need at least some familiarity with them, as they will impact in many ways relevant to ongoing use and amenity of property.

Key changes include:

- Restated objects of the act, placing new or increased focus on issues such as housing supply, productivity, resilience to climate change and natural disasters and adoption of a proportionate and risk-based approach to environmental planning and assessment.
- Restructuring of the hierarchy of planning authorities with creation of a Development Coordination Authority, confirmation of the Housing Delivery Authority, transition from Sydney District and regional planning panels to local planning panels.
- New planning pathways and amendments to existing planning pathways, including changes relating to state significant development, a new targeted assessment development pathway and changes relating to the complying development certificate pathway.
- Replacement of individual Council community participation plans with a single statewide plan.
- Changes in relation to environmental planning instruments, particularly consultation requirements.
- Changes in relation to planning agreements.
- Numerous changes in relation to development consent, including in relation to consultation requirements, assessment criteria, environmental impact statements, development

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We have considerable experience with these issues and would be pleased to provide you with whatever assistance you may require.

If you are a Compliance Pack member, please click here to download our Planning Law Reforms Guide.

Key takeaways

- The planning law reforms in NSW will significantly impact housing supply and planning pathways.
- Key changes include a restructuring of planning authorities and new consultation requirements.
- The reforms aim to enhance resilience to climate change and streamline the planning process.
- Stakeholders in the strata sector must familiarise themselves with these reforms to understand their implications.
- Bannermans Lawyers offers assistance regarding these upcoming changes.

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Prepared by Bannermans Lawyers
Updated 9 November 2026

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