

State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA)

Written by Jeff Seeney



Brisbane 1 July 2013. A major overhaul of Queensland's development assessment system reaches a new milestone today with the launch of the State Assessment and Referral Agency (SARA).

Acting Premier Jeff Seeney said SARA would revolutionise the way developers dealt with development applications referred to or assessed by the state.

"My department is now the single point for state assessment or referral of these development applications, meaning gaining approvals will be much more straightforward," Mr Seeney said.

"Developers will no longer need to juggle proposals through multiple state agencies or manage the conflicts that existed under the previous government.

"Instead, it will be a case of visiting a one-stop shop and receiving a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to state development assessment."

Mr Seeney said a single agency lodgement point and a single point of contact would provide less frustration, fewer delays and a decrease in unnecessary costs, allowing industry to respond quickly to new opportunities, as well provide greater clarity for local government.

He said a final decision-maker would ensure no unreasonable requirements were imposed on applicants.

"This simpler, fairer development assessment system has been driven from extensive consultation, and forms part of the government's second six-month action plan," he said.

"My department is delivering real and substantial change to our planning and development assessment system.

Mr Seeney said the *ePlan Portal* had also been introduced to assist councils and state agencies handle planning documents.

It enables local governments to lodge documents, state agencies to access those documents and provide comments, and the department to coordinate the review process for planning schemes and temporary local planning instruments.

"The new *ePlan Portal* was another clear example of how the government was cutting multiple process handling," he said.

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“It will cut current delays by eliminating the copying and repeated distribution of draft documents, notifications, receipting responses and resolution of issues via numerous emails or meetings.

“The Flood Commission of Inquiry recommended that planning information to state agencies should be made more easily accessible, and that’s exactly what we’ve delivered via the *ePlan Portal* .”

For more information on the planning reforms, visit <http://www.dsdip.qld.gov.au/about-planning/planning-reform.html>