



ePlanning

Why is planning moving online?

The passage of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* began the biggest modernisation of South Australia's planning system in over 20 years.

Modernising includes moving our planning system online to reduce costs for applicants, councils and ratepayers and deliver faster decisions that support our state to grow.

Our new online solution will revolutionise planning processes to help shape the future of South Australia.

What is ePlanning?

DPTI is creating an online system for assessment of development applications across our state, which is being introduced in mid-2020.

This ePlanning solution, incorporating the SA planning database, online atlas and search facility, will replace the 72 development plans currently in operation with one coherent set of planning rules across our state – the Planning and Design Code. This will create a faster, more efficient service that unifies assessment of development applications between local councils. It will also take a paper based, manual application process online, streamlining it into a single development assessment system for South Australia.

The SA Planning Portal - www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au – has community and practitioner information and online services specifically for planning and development in South Australia. By 2020, it will be the 'one-stop shop' website for all planning information and applications, with a range of benefits which include:

- quick and easy online lodgement, monitoring and tracking for all development applications
- decisions delivered electronically – with faster approvals
- free access to mapping services, interactive guides and data
- an online register of accredited professionals who make decisions on development applications
- access to clear planning rules that make it easier for councils to assess applications
- online submission and tracking of Planning and Design Code amendments
- help tools such as a 'Virtual House' highlighting types of development which do not require approval
- easy access to the latest planning news and updates
- consistent user experience between councils across the state.



What ePlanning services are available now?

- [SA Planning Portal](#) - information and online services for all planning and development
- [State Planning Commission](#) - information about our state's new independent principal planning body
- [Single Land Use and Land Division Public Development Application Register](#) – register of all land division applications and development applications lodged, assessed and determined by the state planning authority
- [CouncilConnect](#) - a handy collaboration tool for councils to engage with each other and DPTI. This is a secure forum environment where participants can contribute to various discussion topics about the modernisation of our planning system.

When will ePlanning be available on the SA Planning Portal?

The full operation of ePlanning will coincide with switching on South Australia's new planning rules – the Planning and Design Code - for all areas of the state by mid-2020.

We are currently investigating and identifying the needs of users. We are aware some councils currently have commercial arrangements with technical providers of other online platforms and we are consulting further with them about this.

ePlanning is part of the modernisation of our whole planning system. You can keep track of the timeline for introducing our online solution via our [Planning Reform Calendar](#).

How will ePlanning improve accessibility and services for applicants?

For the first time, all South Australians will have the planning information they need at their fingertips, and will be able to access the planning system using their computer, phone or tablet. This streamlined service will allow applicants to submit, monitor and receive decisions on development applications online.

It means cost savings for applicants with faster approvals, easier to understand planning and zoning rules, more certainty for complex applications from the outset, ready access to information and more transparency in how their application is progressing via a single interface. All this will help provide greater confidence in application assessment processes and lessen appeals on decisions.

South Australia is focusing on attracting investment and it is critical that fees for development assessments remain competitive. To support this we are undertaking a review to examine fees and charges.

How will those not online lodge development applications?

We expect the majority of development applications will be lodged online, just as applications are received for many other government services. Councils will still be able to receive physical paper-based applications from local ratepayers, and council planners will enter these into the ePlanning system on behalf of the applicant so all records are stored and tracked online. Individuals and organisations who currently do not have access to internet and online services will not be disadvantaged by the introduction of the new system.

How are DPTI and councils working together to develop ePlanning?

The move to ePlanning will be a staged journey. DPTI is currently gathering information for devising the functional features of the new online system. We are working with a cross-section of councils, and providers who deliver online services for councils, to identify the best operational model for ePlanning, which in most cases will involve a level of integration.

It is vital that ePlanning offers optimum outcomes for all users to ensure a consistent user experience across the state, providing the same system capability for each council, whether metropolitan or regional, especially for smaller councils, who may currently have no existing online development assessment system.

It is important we understand our stakeholders' requirements, which is why we are planning a number of workshops to assess the needs of all users, including councils. Over the coming months, there will be a number of opportunities for DPTI and local councils to work together to develop ePlanning to maximise benefits for all users. Involving users to help design and test ePlanning will ensure it is developed in the right way from the outset, and that appropriate technical support is in place when it is introduced.

How will councils be supported during the introduction of ePlanning?

In addition to working closely with councils during the development of the new service, DPTI will assist councils when the system is introduced. We are currently identifying which councils require support to adapt to a new way of working and we will provide easily accessible training, including user guides and an ongoing, dedicated 'Help Desk' for all councils to access.

Will ePlanning integrate with existing council IT systems?

We are working to ensure that impacts of ePlanning are identified and understood, and that solutions are in place to ensure efficient work practices and ease of use. We are investigating all requirements, speaking to councils about their current platforms and working with businesses providing online services to councils, in order to achieve connectivity and efficient data provision between councils and our system, and to ensure councils can undertake their business with correct information from ePlanning when it is switched on.

What will councils contribute towards ePlanning?

All councils have been advised that a levy will be payable for establishment of the new system. The annual cost is calculated on a council's development revenue, averaged over three years, which aims to apportion every council's contribution fairly. Each council is allocated a tier (there are four levels) which determines their annual levy, with exemptions for smaller councils with lower development values.

ePlanning will have significant benefits for councils. As benefits increase, council contributions will be scaled over time. There is a 50% discount in the first year (2018/19) of payments, increasing to a full contribution in subsequent years, over a defined period.

How will councils access records to provide development application activity linked to ratepayers and information regarding Section 7, FOI, inspection and records management?

Electronic records will be available with accurate, step-by-step recording and tracking of the planning assessment processes and subsequent decisions. Councils will use this information to help meet their reporting obligations. Work on this integration will continue after the single solution is introduced and will ensure that existing council processes are maintained where possible.

Will development application documents comply with records management requirements?

All data collected and stored in ePlanning will be compliant with records management requirements. We are working with councils, and providers who deliver online services, to identify security access levels. This will enable Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, for example, to be completed using ePlanning.

Will ePlanning provide performance monitoring and reports?

ePlanning information will all be in one place, which means more efficient, easier monitoring and reporting. This also allows for significant improvements to the information collected and what reports can be generated. We are currently assessing what performance indicators and reporting capabilities are needed.

How will data and information be secured in ePlanning?

The introduction of ePlanning will include development of a strategy and actions to ensure planning data and information can be appropriately shared, and kept confidential where requested. This will comprise standards, policies, guidelines and procedures which enable planning data and information to be managed in a secure, structured and consistent manner, enabling accuracy and applicability.