

1 April 2019

State-first scheme to raise the bar on accountability in the planning and development sector

The State Government is pleased to announce that South Australia's first Accredited Professionals Scheme for planning and building professionals is effective as of today.

The Scheme aims to enhance the reliability and accountability of decision-makers in the planning and development system and give the community greater confidence in the way that their development applications are assessed.

It is a key reform under the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016*.

"South Australia is leading the way in professional planning practice with this state-first scheme, which will require all planning and building professionals to become accredited according to universal criteria in order to make decisions in the planning and development system," said State Planning Commission Chair, Michael Lennon

"Importantly practitioners will need to demonstrate that they are sufficiently skilled and experienced to make key decisions within certain classes, and abide by a strict code of conduct that has legislative status.

"This will help establish a high-profile community of practice that leads the nation in professional standards and values ongoing professional development.

"As a result of the Scheme, we will see enhanced transparency and better decision-making in the planning and building sector, as well as faster processing times for development applications and a safer and more durable built environment.

"This is crucial if we are to renew public faith in planning and building decisions and mitigate the risk of preventable failures such as Sydney's Opal Tower," Mr Lennon said.

Presiding Member of the State Commission Assessment Panel (SCAP), Simone Fogarty, will be among the first to become accredited under the new Scheme and says that it is an important moment.

"I'm delighted to register as an accredited professional and pleased to announce that all members of SCAP will lead the planning profession in becoming accredited.

“South Australia has always been an innovator, and now we are setting the example for our interstate peers by embedding a culture of integrity and excellence in the planning and development sector.

“This scheme ensures that the right people are in charge of the right decisions at the right levels and have the appropriate qualifications for the job. It also ensures that the skills and experience of our planning and building professionals are publicly recognised,” Ms Fogarty said.

The Accredited Professionals Scheme will include a new auditing and compliance process to ensure that there is a clearer line of sight between development decisions and outcomes and that all complaints can be investigated swiftly and fairly.

From today onwards, all accredited professionals will be registered on a central directory on the SA Planning Portal, making it easier for practitioners and applicants to access up-to-date information on all planning and building decision-makers, including their areas of expertise.

Though the Scheme is officially operational today, planning and development professionals will not need to become accredited until the new Planning and Design Code becomes effective in the council area in which they operate. For regional council areas, this will be late 2019, and for metropolitan council areas, this will be mid-2020.

More information on the Scheme and the accreditation process is available on the SA Planning Portal at www.saplanningportal.sa.gov.au.

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