

News release



NSW GOVERNMENT
Department of Planning

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\$8 billion worth of projects approved during 2007-08

The NSW Government determined more than \$8 billion worth of projects last year, which had the potential to create more than 32,000 jobs, a new report has found.

The Department of Planning today published the Major Development Monitor 2007-08.

The report, the third of its type, provides important information about the work of the NSW Government assessing major projects and new local environmental plans (LEPs).

Department Director-General Sam Haddad said the report shows that 296 projects were determined by the Minister or Department in 2007-08, with 159 of these being modifications of existing projects.

Out of these 296 determinations, just over a quarter were new major project or concept plan applications assessed under Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

The number of projects determined by the NSW Government had fallen from 350 in 2005-06 to 296 in 2007-08.

"This shows that the Department is increasingly focussing its efforts on projects with genuine regional or State significance," Mr Haddad said.

During 2007-08, the capital investment value of industrial projects jumped from \$2.136 billion to \$2.9 billion.

Major industrial approvals include the:

- The \$70 million Tooheys Brewery upgrade at Lidcombe;
- The \$150 million new Amcor Paper Mill at Matraville; and
- The \$100 million Four Arrows Ethanol plant near Colleambally

During 2007-08, the Department handed back the determination of 20 coastal projects to local councils, along with delegating the assessment of another 11 projects to councils.

Other key facts from the 2007-08 year are that:

- 47 proponent environmental assessments were deemed to be inadequate;
- More than 14,000 submissions were made on development proposals exhibited by the Department, up from 11,000 last year;
- Nearly 167,000 website visits were made to project information on the Department's website;
- Four independent hearing and assessment panels were formed; and
- More than 60 per cent of determinations were for projects in regional areas.

"This year's Monitor has several case studies which outline the importance of community consultation and how it has vastly improved the final project which has been approved," Mr Haddad said.

Mr Haddad said the Department was working to strengthen community confidence in the assessment system and improve relationships with local councils.

"These issues will be a high priority for the Department in the coming year," Mr Haddad said.

Ms Haddad said the report also outlines the work of the Department's LEP Review Panel, which provides advice and guidance to local councils on proposed new LEPs, including before they are exhibited.

The panel made 230 decisions on local environmental plans, compared to 426 in 2006-07.

"The reduced workload is largely due to the Department encouraging councils to concentrate on producing new council-wide LEPs to plan for their entire area, rather than making smaller 'ad hoc' changes," she said.

During 2007-08, the panel supported 77 per cent of LEPs proceeding further, only marginally down on last year's 82 per cent support rate.

Long-term regional and subregional planning strategies being produced by the Department are providing important guidance to councils when preparing new LEPs.

More than three-quarters of LEPs not supported in 2007-08 were inconsistent with the relevant regional or subregional strategy.

The report is available at www.planning.nsw.gov.au by following the 'What's New' link on the right hand side of the home page.

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