

1. POWER TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Baird Government is glad that the Nature Conservation Council recognises that Labor's Part 3A had "become synonymous with unbridled Ministerial discretion", a "disregard for strategic planning", and "over-riding of both local controls and various environmental legislation".

In fact, it may come as a surprise that in one of our first acts, **we abolished Labor's disastrous Part 3A** of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act*. We moved approximately 60 of these pending Part 3A applications to local Councils.

The Baird Government has made significant progress to return planning power to local communities through their local councils.

- We **doubled the threshold** for projects determined by the **independent Joint Regional Planning Panels (JRPP)** to \$20 million, handing more decision-making power back to local communities through councils.
- We also **increased council representation on the JRPP** to give them more say on development applications worth over \$20m.
- Additionally, **we toughened the compliance and enforcement regime** and are **increasing compliance officers on the ground** to ensure companies are adhering to their development conditions.

2. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

When we came to office, many people in the community felt left without a say in the planning system. The Baird Government has sought to restore confidence and certainty to the planning system.

Through our suite of online ePlanning tools, the Baird Government has made the planning system more accessible to NSW businesses and the community, by **allowing them to access and transact with planning services from anywhere at any time**. Around 100,000 people have now used the ePlanning tools since July 2014.

As we move to plan for the homes, jobs, infrastructure and services our State needs, we need to continuously improve the way we consult with the community.

We are **trailing a range of new face-to-face engagement activities**, such as the regional planning program. These include:

- coffee cart 'pop-ups' or stalls at local community events to encourage a range of residents to fill in surveys
- outreach at train stations, shopping centres, parks and other key local locations to provide information and raise awareness
- representative deliberative panels
- 'Talkabout' and 'Urban Conversations' events featuring prominent speakers to educate the community, and raise awareness about consultations and the relevant issues.

We have taken unprecedented steps to encourage community participation and consultation in government decisions. In fact, the Baird Government **has delivered on its pledge to allow People's Petitions to be debated in Parliament House**.

Petitions carrying over 10,000 signatures can now be brought to parliament, empowering communities to directly contribute to the parliamentary agenda. The People's Petition provides a voice to communities previously locked out of decision making processes, giving the people an opportunity to have their views heard in parliament.

3. ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY IN PLANNING

The Baird Government is committed to the principles of ecologically sustainable development. Ecologically sustainable development was inserted as a key objective in the 2014 Marine Estate Management Act, one of the most recent pieces of legislation enacted by the Baird Government.

Similarly, ecologically sustainable development underpins the recently announced Biodiversity Offset Policy for Major Projects. By implementing clear and consistent guidance for assessing and offsetting the biodiversity impacts of major projects, the policy strikes an effective balance between the needs of proponents, communities and the environment.

Applying the principles of ecologically sustainable development in a very practical way, our Government Resource Efficiency Policy, Renewable Energy Action Plan and Energy Savings Scheme all are helping position our State to produce and use energy in ways that are ecologically, culturally and economically sustainable. Through ambitious renewable energy and energy efficiency targets our Government is committed to NSW being Australia's leader in ecologically effective market-based energy efficiency policy. Our clean energy policy is ecologically sustainable development in practice.

With respect to the NCC's concerns about the Government's Biodiversity Review process, the Government will provide a formal response to the Review recommendations shortly. I can, however, reassure your organisation that our Government remains committed to a system of native vegetation management that achieves our dual objectives to facilitate ecologically sustainable development and to conserve our environment.

Last year, the Baird Government released a whole-of-government metropolitan strategy, *Plan for Growing Sydney*, which includes a plan to deliver the Sydney Green Grid project to link open space across the Greater Metropolitan area, complete and implement the Hawkesbury-Nepean Valley Floodplain Management Review, and apply the Green Cover Technical Guidelines in Priority Precincts.

4. CORRUPTION IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM

We have improved transparency and cleaned up the State. The Baird Government has:

- Strengthened powers for the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) - the Baird Government has given ICAC stronger legislative powers to fight corruption, and implemented a Ministerial Code of Conduct under the ICAC Act, giving the watchdog the power to investigate a minister's compliance with the Code.
- Introduced tougher rules for lobbying and ministerial diaries – the Baird Government has taken a tough stance on lobbyists by passing legislation to ban lobbyist success fees in NSW and by establishing the Electoral Commission as the independent regulator of lobbyists. We have increased transparency by publishing quarterly ministerial diaries.
- Toughened regulation of election funding and special measures for the 2015 state election – the Baird Government has increased penalties for breaching donation laws and extended the limitation period for the prosecution of election funding offences.