

May 2021

Frequently asked questions for members of the community

This document answers frequently asked questions regarding the proposed employment zones reform.

What is this reform intending to do?

The employment zones reform will deliver a simplified framework that:

- is fit for purpose
- supports the future of work
- promotes productivity and jobs growth, and
- delivers the community's objectives set through strategic plans and planning priorities.

This reform aims to support the long-term economic recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic through job creation and encourage increased productivity in NSW.

A key outcome of the project is that employment zones provide clarity around their application, increase flexibility around land uses and support the delivery of strategic plans.

The reform does not seek to up zone land as it remains the prerogative of councils to set development standards and controls for height and density.

Why introduce a new employment zones framework?

The way our cities and regions function and businesses operate has changed considerably since the Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan was prepared over 15 years ago.

The continued rise of online retailing, the emergence of advanced and small-scale manufacturing and the growth of dense, mixed use centres have fundamentally reshaped how we plan for centres and industrial precincts.

It is timely to update the current business and industrial zone framework to better support the community and businesses, and ensure the zones are better able to adapt as circumstances change to ensure continued productivity, investment and community benefit.

What are the benefits of the proposed employment zones framework?

The new framework will provide greater certainty for the community, local government and the development industry. It will better support the delivery of long-term strategic objectives and facilitate innovation and changes in business processes now and into the future.

One of the key outcomes is reducing the number of employment zones. This will provide greater consistency and certainty, increase the number of land uses allowed in each zone and provide more flexibility for new businesses to establish and existing businesses to expand or change depending on the circumstances.

One of the key problems with the current framework is that the zones are applied differently throughout the State creating confusion about what development can be anticipated to occur in any

given area. The new framework seeks to improve consistency clearly outlining what development can be anticipated based on how an area is zoned.

How is the reform supporting my local centre and ensuring good planning outcomes?

Councils can still plan for their centres using development standards and controls that manage the height and scale of development rather than unnecessarily restricting specific business types and land uses. This ensures the different scale and character of neighbourhood and local centres can be maintained, delivering on community objectives.

The department will support councils through implementation in planning for their centres.

How will this be implemented?

The department will provide an overview of implementation following public exhibition which will explain the approach, key milestones and next steps.

Resourcing for councils

The department recognises that a significant amount of reform is occurring which councils are having to engage with and implement with finite resources. We will support councils through a number of measures designed to reduce the burden on their resources and provide for the best possible outcome. More information is provided here ([link to the position paper](#)).

When will this reform take effect? What happens from here?

The department will consider all feedback received during exhibition and finalise the proposed employment zones framework. The new framework will be introduced into the Standard Instrument Principal Local Environmental Plan in September 2021. The department in collaboration with councils, will then introduce these changes into Local Environmental Plans by mid-2022.

Which tranche will my council be part of?

Allocation of councils to a tranche will depend on when councils are able to review initial translation detail, that the department will prepare and provide to councils (e.g. zone application maps, land use tables, additional permitted uses and local provisions). The key dates are December 2021 for Tranche 1 and February 2022 for Tranche 2.

How does this relate to the other planning reforms?

The NSW Government is undertaking a significant reform program to improve efficiency, support productivity and jobs growth as well as to facilitate good planning outcomes. More information on the broader reforms can be found [here](#).

I have an existing development application (DA) or planning proposal in the system, will this impact it?

The employment zones reform will not delay or defer development applications or planning proposals that are currently underway.

The department will work with proponents and local government to facilitate translation into the new framework, building on the strategic work that has already been undertaken.

Individual landowners and proponents with applications underway should in the first instance seek help from their consultant planners, council staff or DPIE.

I've recently provided feedback on a council amendment to the local environmental plan. How does this reform impact that?

Recent council exhibited LEP amendments are part of the legislated LEP review program. This work is continuing, and feedback given to councils on changes to LEPs remains applicable.

The employment zones reform seeks to rationalise the existing business and industrial zones. The rationalised zones will be called 'employment zones'. Land uses permitted or prohibited within individual local environmental plans won't change from what councils proposed as part of their LEP review. Councils translation into the new employment zones will deliver on the strategic intent outlined in councils' Local Strategic Planning Statements and as informed by the work councils have undertaken as part of their LEP review program. The translation of LEPs into the new employment zones framework will be publicly exhibited in the first half of 2022.

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