Project update

2010 will see a rapid escalation of activity in the Electronic Housing Code project. This update covers the key foundation elements that were established in 2009 — the selection of the Role Model Councils and Certifiers, the scoping of implementation options for the shared platform and the initial engagement of the local building and development industry in each of the twelve pilot locations.

Project overview

The Australian Government has committed $30 million from the Housing Affordability Fund (HAF) to develop the IT infrastructure and software needed in each State and Territory to implement electronic development assessment (eDA) systems nationally.

Specifically, this funding is aimed at:

- Delivery of end-to-end eDA processes: achieving maximum efficiencies by the implementation of fully integrated eDA processes.
- Implementing eDA initially in local government areas with high projected growth.
- Supporting the eDA Interoperability Specification (eDAIS) through funding systems which comply with the eDAIS.

The Electronic Housing Code is a joint initiative of the NSW Department of Planning and the Local Government & Shires Associations of NSW (LGSA). The project will develop and demonstrate a shared, integrated platform for end-to-end processing of development applications, including lodgement, tracking, referrals and approvals.

Twelve Role Model Councils have been selected to participate in the project. This group will be the focus for fast-tracking eDA service delivery in priority areas, while developing leading practice models for all Councils to follow over time. A select group of ten private certifiers will also be involved in the pilot.

The pilot initiative will focus on:

- applications made under the current version of the NSW Housing Code (that is, lots greater than 450m²)
- in the 12 Role Model Council areas.

February 2010

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Events featuring the EHC project

- Role Model Certifier briefing session
  4 February 2010
- LGSA Natural and Built Environment Committee
  4 February 2010
- Role Model Council project managers workshop
  22 February 2010
Local industry briefings

Briefing sessions for the local building and development industry were held in each of the Role Model Council areas throughout November and December 2009.

“...the EHC pilot project fits perfectly with initiatives Tweed Council has been undertaking over the last 12 months through its Development Assessment Review Project, and will help the Tweed Council to become a leader among regional NSW Councils in e-Planning.”

Cr Warren Polglase, Mayor—Tweed Shire Council

Meet the Certifiers

The Role Model Certifiers for the EHC project are:

- Andson Building Services
  - Stephen Manning
- Building Code Certifications
  - Ray James
- Coastline Building Certification
  - Mark Thomas
- Express Approvals
  - Gurdeep Singh
- Local Certification Services
  - Craig Hardy
- Local Certification Services
  - Paul Gearin
- MOHare
  - Michael O’Hare
- P & D
  - Peter O’Neill
- Private Certifiers Australia
  - Grant Harrington
- Urban City Consulting
  - Troy Myers

Role Model Certifiers

In order to demonstrate the capacity for the system to interact with non-Government parties, a group of private Accredited Certifiers has been selected to participate in the pilot. Some of the features and functions available to Certifiers will include:

- Capacity to receive applications, provide a quote and receive payment electronically from applicants
- Workflow systems to track processing of applications and automated filing of certificates to Councils.

Benefits for participating Certifiers include:

- Delivery of better customer service for applicants for Housing Code development, including identification of whether a particular site or development qualifies as complying development under the Housing Code
- Opportunities to streamline and reduce processing effort for Housing Code development leading to potentially significant cost savings for certifiers
- Better access to user-friendly information on Housing Code development and local planning instruments and better quality applications
- Industry recognition as a pilot Certifier.
Role Model Councils

Twelve Role Model Councils have been selected to participate in the project. This group will be the focus for fast-tracking electronic service delivery using Code-based applications, and will also play a significant role in sharing their learning with peer Councils and promoting wider take-up of electronic planning systems and processes to the Local Government community.

Meet the Councils

The following Councils have been selected as Role Model Councils for the EHC project:

- Bankstown City Council
  www.bankstown.nsw.gov.au
- Blacktown City Council
  www.blacktown.nsw.gov.au
- Gosford City Council
  www.gosford.nsw.gov.au
- Lake Macquarie City Council
  www.lakemac.nsw.gov.au
- Liverpool City Council
  www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
  www.pmhc.nsw.gov.au
- Rockdale City Council
  www.rockdale.nsw.gov.au
- Shellharbour Council
  www.shellharbour.nsw.gov.au
- Sutherland Shire Council
  www.sutherland.nsw.gov.au
- Tamworth Regional Council
  www.tamworth.nsw.gov.au
- The Hills Shire Council
  www.thehills.nsw.gov.au
- Tweed Shire Council
  www.tweed.nsw.gov.au

The 12 high-growth councils were chosen by an independent selection panel from a field of 25 councils and were evaluated based on a number of criteria, including the volume of residential development applications processed and expected future growth, the level of capacity for e-Planning and demonstrated commitment to fully participate throughout the duration of the program.

While it’s not expected that all Role Model Councils will reach the same service capacity, all will be able to achieve a demonstrable improvement in their service capacity. This approach means that other NSW Councils will be able to identify with a Role Model Council and mimic their improvement pathway.

Each Role Model Council will have a structured program of work that is locally relevant and caters for differing levels of capacity, readiness and scale. Councils will set their own performance levels for the priority area activities, allowing them to create an achievable work-plan that combines a mix of escalated activities with more modest objectives over the program timeframe.

Role Model Council representatives at the Local Government Association Conference in Tamworth pictured with former Minister Kristina Keneally and Cr Genia McCaffery, LGA President.
EHC Steering Committee

The project also benefits from the advice and guidance of a Steering Committee, comprised of the following representatives:

- John Hudson
  Department of Planning (Chair)
- Greg Smith
  Parramatta City Council (Dep Chair)
- Judy Birrell
  LGSA
- Malcolm Ryan
  Warringah Council
- James Davis
  Wagga Wagga City Council
- Andrew Roach
  Port Macquarie Hastings Council
- Andrew Abbey
  Department of Planning
- Clare Larkin
  Housing Industry Association (NSW)
- Craig Hardy
  Association of Accredited Certifiers
- Sarah Hill
  Planning Institute of Australia (NSW)
- Doug Walsham
  NSW LPMA

The NSW Housing Code

The EHC team are working closely with DoP’s Codes team to ensure the project contributes to a continuous improvement cycle for the Code, and a more sophisticated and flexible policy setting in general.

If you have feedback about the Code, please contact Aoife Wynter at codes@planning.nsw.gov.au or phone the Housing Code information line on 1300 305 695.

Contacting the EHC project team

The project is a partnership between the LGSA and the Department of Planning. Overseeing the project on behalf of the partner organisations are:

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The day-to-day coordination of the project is managed by the Department’s e-Planning team.

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From left to right: Peter Lee, Phil Johnston, Ian Kiely, Wayne Williamson, James Treacy, Clare Huxley and Lauren Oakey