

Working Together, Approving Faster: Your Collaborative DA Guide

Wollondilly Shire Council is committed to delivering an efficient, transparent, and high-performing development assessment service. This guideline outlines your responsibilities as an applicant to ensure your Development Application (DA) progresses through the assessment system without unnecessary delay.

Regulatory Context & Our Mandate

In 2024, the Minister of Planning and Public Spaces issued a Statement of Expectations Order which sets new benchmarks for Council performance on development assessment, planning proposals and strategic planning.

In line with the Statement of Expectations, Council is required to process DAs within the following timeframes:

- 7 days to process lodgement of applications on the Planning Portal
- 69 days to determine most applications from the date that fees are paid

The NSW Planning System demands rapid, transparent, and legally compliant outcomes. The State Government monitors Council against these strict timeframes. This leaves no room for protracted assessment delays.

To eliminate delays, Council enforces a strict, zero-tolerance policy for incomplete or subpar applications. Both Council and applicants must fulfill specific obligations throughout the process to secure efficient determination. Council will actively manage DAs to meet these targets as far as reasonably possible. Applicants must also work collaboratively with Council by lodging assessment-ready applications and, after lodgement, provide information within the timeframes specified.

Resourcing Fairness

To meet these public targets for assessing DAs, Council must allocate its finite resources equitably, to process complete and compliant applications efficiently.

- We are unable to dedicate limited operational hours to managing or correcting deficient applications.
- We do not have the resources to entertain multiple opportunities for amended information or redesign a DA mid-assessment.

Core Operational Procedures

To meet State-mandated assessment targets, Council operates under a highly structured evaluation model. Applicants must adhere to the following four Core Operational Policies:

1. Pre-Lodgement Consultation

This stage is critical for complex or controversial applications where significant variations are sought. Skipping this preliminary step is the primary cause of protracted assessment timelines, avoidable refusals, and inflated design costs.

- Early Issue Resolution: Pre-lodgement consultation identifies site constraints, conflicting planning controls, and missing documentation before you invest heavily in final architectural or engineering drawings.
- Path to Assessment-Ready Status: This process establishes the definitive list of technical reports (e.g., bushfire, traffic, acoustic) required for your specific site, ensuring a seamless intake on the NSW Planning Portal.

2. Single Point of Contact

At lodgement, the applicant becomes the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for the duration of the DA process.

THE 5TH ACT

- Council channels all communication through one authorised individual (SPOC) to prevent contradictory instructions, eliminate missed updates, and create a structured, legally clear paper trail between both parties.

3. Single-Go Information Delivery

All requests for information must be provided in a **single, complete submission package on the Planning Portal**.

- Submitting information piece-by-piece stalls the assessment process, disrupts the workflow of referral officers, compromises data integrity, and causes compounding delays.

4. The One Strike Policy

Council operates under a strict One Strike Policy regarding Requests for Further Information (RFI).

- This policy prevents applications from languishing in a permanent state of flux. If a lodged application contains clear informational omissions or non-compliances, Council will not continuously issue reminders.
- Council will not send repeated reminders or entertain prolonged back-and-forth exchanges. If the single requested batch of information is not submitted within the specified timeframe, is not up to standard or contains contradictory information, the application will be determined as-is—frequently resulting in refusal.
- Extensions of time to provide outstanding details are an exception, not an entitlement. Failing to organise your consultants or missing an RFI deadline may result in a refusal. In these cases, you may be offered an opportunity to withdraw your application before it is refused.

Summary

To ensure your application is processed without delays, you must note the following steps before submitting your application:

FAST FACTS

- Book and attend a formal Pre-Lodgement Meeting with Council staff for more complex and/or controversial applications.
- Understand that the applicant is the designated a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) during the application.
- Gather all required items from Council's DA Checklist into a single digital bundle.
- Verify that all specialist reports are current, finalised and their recommendations are not contradictory.

If you need to check if your project is ready for submission, please review the [Wollondilly Development Application Guide & Pack](#) or [book a session with our Duty Planner](#).