

# Planning to do better

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developers and investors, neighbours, local councils, builders, State and possibly Federal Governments and the general public. Clearly there needs to be more transparent rules and effective mechanisms to deal with building applications and disputes that might arise expeditiously and economically.

Some of the components of a 'best practice' planning system, which Master Builders has recommended to Mr Jones, include:

- A reduction in the number of different planning schemes, estimated at over 140, around the state.
- Greater clarity in planning schemes which govern density and height parameters.
- Exempting single-level detached homes which comply with the residential design codes from being subject to separate planning requirements. This will enable new homes to be built quicker.
- Greater consistency in planning requirements across local metropolitan councils.
- Prescribed time limits for local councils to deal with different planning applications.
- Less complexity in planning schemes which will enhance everyone's understanding and reduce disputes.



**Planning, Transport and Lands Minister Rita Saffioti MLA has appointed Evan Jones to carry out an independent review of WA's planning regime. Master Builders Director Michael McLean reports on what this review is all about.**

Master Builders Association welcomes the review of our state planning system because we believe it can operate more efficiently and fairly for everyone's benefit. It is also timely for this review to take place because our housing styles are changing along with greater use of public transport.

It should be acknowledged at the outset that planning can be a complex and, at times, emotive issue. That's why an effective and progressive planning regime needs to be able to manage expectations from a diverse cross section of stakeholders.

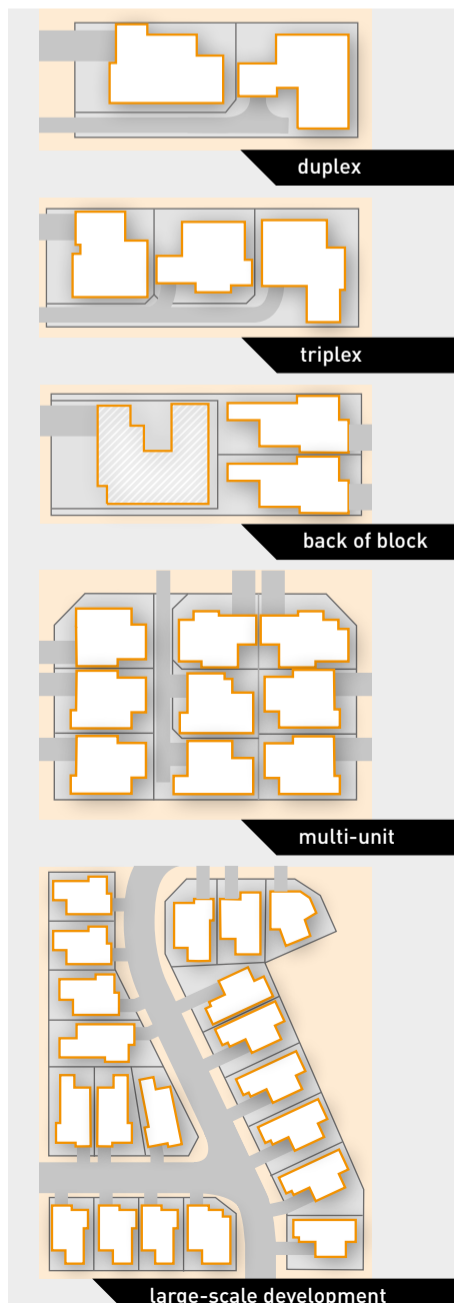
The interests that need to be reconciled include home and property owners,

- Better and more regular communications from the Department of Planning.
- More extensive and ongoing consultation from the WA Planning Commission.
- Fine tuning the role of Development Application Panels (DAPs).
- Establishing a hotline to record examples of problems with the planning system experienced by anyone. This should help to reduce red tape on an ongoing basis and highlight the poorest performing local councils which may require special attention.
- Establish caps on developer contribution schemes.
- The registration of town planners to

enhance their professionalism, ongoing education and accountability.

A discussion paper is anticipated from Mr Jones by the end of March. This document is likely to set out his views, after initial consultation with industry stakeholders such as Master Builders. Hopefully Mr Jones' final report and recommendations will be submitted to Ms Saffioti by the end of July this year. If you have an interest in our planning system, I encourage you to make a submission to Mr Jones via [planningreform@planning.wa.gov.au](mailto:planningreform@planning.wa.gov.au).

A better planning system will benefit everyone, so it is up to anyone who has an interest in this subject to communicate your views (or forever hold your peace, as the saying goes).



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