



The General Manager
Hornsby Shire Council

Dear Sir,

Review of Council's Development Approval Procedures

The Trust request that Council review its procedures that are currently in use to assess Development Applications (DA).

In light of recent internal and court determinations the Trust requests that Council urgently reviews its development approval procedures. Too often certain applicants, who are experienced in the DA process, are lodging documentation that are of poor quality. The sole aim of submitting such poor quality, even misleading, information appears to be a strategy to delay the development assessment process long enough so a deemed refusal can be achieved. Once achieved, the applicant and Council are in the Land and Environment Court (LEC) where the public has limited input. Often, it is at this appeal stage that fresh plans are produced by the applicant addressing many of the deficiencies of the originally submitted plans. The public has very limited input at this LEC stage. Councillors are excluded too. This strategy that has been perfected by some applicants is no doubt costing Council valuable resources, not to mention frustrating the public.

This strategy appears to have developed since the introduction of the three levels of DA assessment, namely officer delegation, local planning panel and regional panel, where Councillors are prohibited from the development approval process.

Councillors are able to alter the policy and hence procedures for Council officers to follow in the DA process. From the Trust's position it is the initial procedures, covering pre lodgement meetings and initial assessment for acceptance of the DA for exhibition, that need serious review. There may be other DA procedures that also need to be reviewed.

I can be contacted on 0412 257 556 if any Councillors wish to discuss this matter with me.

Yours Sincerely,
Ross Walker OAM
President
Beecroft Cheltenham Civic Trust
6 April 2020