

Council Assessment Panel - Annual Report 2024

Strategic Alignment - Our Places

Public

Tuesday, 4 March 2025

City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee

Program Contact:

Steve Zaluski, Associate Director
Regulatory Services

Approving Officer:

Jo Podoliak, Director City
Community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the workload and performance of Council's Assessment Panel (CAP) and Development Assessment function.

While not a legislated requirement, the Annual Report was introduced in 2023 to provide transparency and awareness to Council of the development activity occurring.

The report demonstrates that both CAP and Council's Development Assessment functions are performing their legislative obligations effectively and efficiently.

The data shows the number of development applications received within the City of Adelaide decreased in 2024, as did the number of development applications determined by CAP. These trends are consistent with informal information obtained from other Councils.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 11 March 2025 for consideration

THAT THE CITY PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL

THAT COUNCIL

1. Notes the Council Assessment Panel Annual Report 2024 contained in Attachment A to Item 7.2 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Planning, Development and Business Affairs Committee held on 5 March 2024.
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IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Places Encourage bold, interesting and purposeful development
Policy	Not as a result of this report
Consultation	Not as a result of this report
Resource	Not as a result of this report
Risk / Legal / Legislative	While there is no legislated requirement for the CAP to provide an annual report to Council or Committee, it is considered beneficial for awareness and transparency.
Opportunities	Open, transparent and informed decision making.
24/25 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Proposed 25/26 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Not as a result of this report
24/25 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (eg maintenance cost)	Not as a result of this report
Other Funding Sources	Not as a result of this report

DISCUSSION

Background

1. The Council Assessment Panel (CAP) is established under section 83 of the *Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016* (PDI Act). The CAP acts as the Relevant Authority for performance assessed development applications that require public notification in the City of Adelaide.
2. The CAP delegates the assessment of these applications to Council's Assessment Manager when no speaking representations are received.
3. Development applications are assessed against the relevant provisions of the Planning and Design Code.

CAP Annual Report

4. The CAP Annual Report (Attachment A) provides an overview of the CAP workload and performance throughout 2024.
5. While not a legislated requirement, the Annual Report was introduced in 2023 and considered good governance for providing transparency and awareness to Council.
6. The Annual Report provides evidence CAP and Council's Development Assessment Function are performing their legislative obligations effectively and efficiently.
7. When endorsing the Annual Report at their 29 January 2025 meeting, CAP noted the following:
 - 7.1. A reduced number of development applications are being assessed by the Panel and Panels generally across South Australia.
 - 7.2. As the planning system continues to evolve, changes resulting in Panels being the Relevant Authority for a greater number of appropriate developments are encouraged. These changes are expected to align with community expectations regarding the role of a Council Assessment Panel, which includes Accredited Professionals assembled to assess and determine complex applications.
8. Administration will consider this feedback in future advocacy initiatives.

Development Assessment Activity within the City of Adelaide

9. Tables 1-3 provide a summary of development applications received across the City of Adelaide, in comparison to 2023.

TABLE 1 – CITY OF ADELAIDE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS						
Year	DAs Submitted*	Development Cost	Assessment Manager DAs	CAP DAs	Average Assessment Time	DAs Processed Within Statutory Timeframe
2024	827	\$294.9 million	402	7	17.3 days	93.6%
2023	969	\$231.4 million	526	18	16.3 days	92.6%

*Total DAs submitted includes applications where external Accredited Professionals were the Relevant Authority – such as Accepted or Deemed to Satisfy Developments, often approved by Private Certifiers

TABLE 2 – STATE PLANNING COMMISSION DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS			
Year	SCAP Over \$10 Million DAs Submitted	DA Referral Comments (including over \$10 million and Crown applications)	Development Cost
2024	23	46	\$4.0 billion (includes New Women's and Children's Hospital)
2023	16	42	\$1.4 billion

TABLE 3 – PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS			
Year	Applications Publicly Notified	Representations Received	Speaking Representations
2024	20 (2.4% of DAs)	68	23
2023	32 (3.3% of Das)	197	67

10. In 2024 there was one Appeal against the refusal of an application by Council's Assessment Panel, and one Appeal against the refusal of an application by Council's Assessment Manager, which was refused at the direction of the Minister for Climate, Environment and Water (Heritage South Australia). Both matters are ongoing.
11. The data demonstrates Council's Assessment Manager and the Development Assessment function more broadly are continuing to perform their legislative obligations effectively and efficiently.
12. The decrease in development applications is not unexpected given current economic pressures, and anecdotally this trend is consistent with other Councils.
13. The volume of development applications in City of Adelaide which trigger public notification has decreased each year since planning reforms came into effect in 2021.
 - 13.1. A decrease was anticipated given the changes to public notification triggers within the Planning and Design Code.
 - 13.2. Including more localised and discretionary public notification settings for development in the City of Adelaide formed part of Council's submission to the State Government's Expert Panel review in 2023, however we are not aware of any planned amendments to public notification requirements.
14. Of the 630 development applications granted Development Approval in 2024, 366 (58.1%) notified Council that construction had commenced.
15. This compares to 704 development applications granted Development Approval in 2023 and 351 (49.8%) notifying the commencement of construction. Not all builders/applicants notify Council of the commencement of construction, particularly for shop and office fit-outs.
16. The Development Assessment function is also responsible for undertaking 'Section 7 searches', which are requested during the sale of properties and subject to legislated timeframes. A total of 1,588 requests were processed in 2024, with an average turnaround time of 1.58 days.

Council's Continued Response to Planning Skills Shortage

17. To help address the significant statewide shortage of planners, a Graduate Planner commenced in the Development Assessment team in early 2024 and this will continue until early 2026, as part of Council's Graduate Program endorsed in the 2023/24 Annual Business Plan and Budget.
18. In addition, the City of Adelaide is participating in the 'Para-Planner Cadetship Program' launched by the State Government in 2024 ([New cadet planning program to provide opportunities and address skills shortage | Premier of South Australia](#)).

Local Design Review Pilot

19. In December 2024 Council launched the Local Design Review Pilot with the Office for Design and Architecture, one of the first Councils in South Australia to undertake this.
20. Local Design Review provides expert and independent design advice during the development process to generate quality built-form outcomes. Results of the pilot program will be submitted to Council following the 12-month period.

SCAP Threshold

21. It is noted that Council has an outstanding resolution in relation to seeking a review of the \$10million SCAP threshold. Work is progressing on this matter and further information will be shared with Council in due course.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Council Assessment Panel Annual Report 2024

- END OF REPORT -