

18 December 2019

State Planning Commission  
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Dear Sir/Madam

## **Submission – Council Inspection Policies – Draft Practice Direction**

Council refers to the Council Inspection Policies - Draft Practice Direction on Public Consultation until 18 December 2019. The Yorke Peninsula Council provides the following commentary and recommendations for consideration.

### **1. Time Frames for Completion of Inspections**

The proposed one day's notice to inspect buildings for completion is considered to be virtually impossible to achieve in a rural Council context. On a daily basis Building Surveying staff are required to undertake various duties including building assessments, processing of private certification approvals, customer enquiries, Professional Development (to retain required professional accreditation), meetings, Building Fire Safety Committee, internal policy reviews etc. (to name a few) which, would all be required to be put on hold with one day's notice of an inspection. Many of these tasks also have strict timeframes adhered to them under the PDI Act.

Further, there is the issue of multiple completion notifications being lodged on the same day or in quick succession, requiring inspections anywhere from Arthurton (located in the north of the Yorke Peninsula) to Marion Bay (located in the south of the Yorke Peninsula) which is 180kms between Council's northern and southern boundaries. Staff absentees, annual leave and position(s) vacancies also impact on the timeliness of complying with this requirement, and it is noted in the Botten Levinson Lawyers report that assumptions for available work days per officer appears not to have taken into consideration annual leave (4 weeks) or sick leave (2 weeks) per officer. Should the one day's notification not be extended, it is likely that Council will undertake limited completion inspections, opting for the more flexible construction stage inspections.

It should also be noted that at the time of receiving Statements of Completion, most buildings are secured and locked, and as they won't have Certificates of Occupancy, they will be vacant. Arranging access to a building for a completion inspection within one day, particularly in a rural/coastal district such as the Yorke Peninsula where a large proportion of dwellings and additions are holiday homes and the owners (and builders) most likely reside outside of the district.

***RECOMENDATION: That one day's notice to inspect be extended to 2 weeks.***

## 2. Resourcing

In order for Council to provide comment on financial and resourcing implications a fee structure needs to be presented. It is disappointing that a fee structure has not been made available to Council in time to comment on the proposed inspection regime.

***RECOMENDATION: That a fee structure be provided as part of the consultation process to understand implications for Council.***

## 3. Inspection Data

It is noted that inspection data (other than notifications), will not be integrated into or recorded by the new SA Planning Portal System. This means Council's existing tracking system (Authority) will need to continue to be used. This potentially means that Council's administration staff will be required to enter application data twice, once into the Portal, and once into Council's tracking system, creating unnecessary double handling and licensing fees.

***RECOMENDATION: That the Inspection Data be integrated into the Planning Portal to ensure a "one stop shop" system is implemented as promised.***

## 4. Clarification of Farm Building Inspections

Table 2 specifically refers to a farm building or farm shed being inspected within 1 business day's notice of receipt of the completed Statement of Compliance, bearing in mind that inspection requirements for both Table 2 and Table 3 are 100%. There is no size identified in Table 2.

Does this mean that a farm building or farm shed in Table 2, irrespective of its size, requires inspection, but Table 3 doesn't specifically mention farm buildings or farm sheds even though these types of buildings are usually classified as class 7. This is confusing.

***RECOMENDATION: That clarification be given to which Table farm buildings or farm sheds are best suited.***

## 5. Complying Building Inspections

Council questions the need (and additional responsibility) to inspect Complying buildings, particularly Hay Sheds complying with the requirements of Schedule 7(6). Many of these buildings, which are considered low risk by the Regulations, will be proposed and approved with little to no essential safety provisions and therefore a completion inspection is not considered necessary. This is just another unnecessary impost against regional Councils who have large areas to cover with limited resources.

***Recommendation: That inspection requirements for Complying developments be removed, or be listed as "at the discretion of council".***

## 6. Travel Times for Inspections

Council is concerned that there has been little or no consideration given for the time and distance that regional Council Officers would need to commit to undertake inspections. There is no difference between a regional or metropolitan Council. As previously advised, there is some 180km between Yorke Peninsula Council's northern and southern boundaries. This distance means Council Officers regularly face a 1.5 hour travel time (return trip) to an inspection.

***RECOMENDATION: That inspections of farm buildings be reduced to 66% (and 0% for Schedule 7 Complying farm buildings) to reduce the issue of travel time for rural councils. Council also recommend that a fee recovery system be put in place to economically assist regional Councils with travel times and distance. This should form part of the consultation process.***

In summary, the Yorke Peninsula Council are extremely concerned that the draft Inspection Policy is unreasonable and problematic for a regional Council.

Additional inspections (at such short notice) along with routine daily duties coupled together with time and travel based on a fulltime contingent of qualified building staff is unrealistic and placing regional Councils in an unworkable position.

The draft Inspection Policy is very much Metropolitan based document with little or no regard to the implications the policy has for rural Councils along with no appropriate fee structure being drafted that needs to form part of this consultation process.

Council respectfully requests that these comments be carefully considered. Should you wish to discuss further, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely



Roger Brooks

**DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**